STEM Connection
Haddix program connects high school students with Creighton researchers
Just as we were beginning to give a tentative, collective sigh of relief that the pandemic might be waning, the world experienced horror in late February and early March as events unfolded in Ukraine due to the Russian invasion. The Creighton community and our alumni across the country and around the world were united in prayers for peace in the face of tyranny and oppression.

While we learn significant lessons from the past and strive for excellence in the present, we also simultaneously lay the groundwork for Creighton’s auspicious future. This edition of Creighton magazine brings you insights into your University’s past, present, and future that I hope you will enjoy.

Our cover story on the Haddix 24th Street STEM Corridor Program details one way Creighton is taking its expertise and leadership in undergraduate research out into the wider community. Each summer, the program invites soon-to-be seniors at three area high schools to conduct eight weeks of STEM research with College of Arts and Sciences faculty and students. I think you will agree that the results, and the potential, are impressive.

The grant-funded Financial Hope Collaborative, located in the Heider College of Business, has had great success helping low- and moderate-income families achieve financial stability. Recently, an interprofessional group of Creighton researchers teamed up with the collaborative and found financial stability is also linked to better health outcomes. The research was published in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine, and you can read more about it inside these pages. The possibly far-reaching implications of this research hold great promise for improving people’s lives.

“What is Ignatian Leadership and Why Does it Matter?” explores the essence of what sets Creighton apart and why our alumni are well equipped to become leaders in their communities and organizations. Ignatian-inspired leadership development provides a structure and context for people to learn more about themselves and those they serve, and it permeates every aspect of a student’s experience at Creighton. Our alumni are an extraordinary group, and Ignatian leadership has a lot to do with that fact.

Similarly, I am happy to share thoughts on a book I wrote that was recently published, Jesuit Higher Education in a Secular Age, which suggests reasons I believe Jesuit education offers a unique answer to this time in history. With its emphasis on relationships, a broader range of intellectual capacities, and Jesuit education’s Renaissance humanist foundations, Jesuit higher learning today can lead students toward more self-awareness, a greater sense of global solidarity, and increased aptitude for inspiration, awe, and gratitude.

This spring we resumed our Presidential Lecture Series, on our Omaha and Phoenix campuses as well as virtually, inviting renowned, award-winning writers to address the topic of race. Authors Edwidge Danticat, Colson Whitehead, Damon Tweedy, MD, and Isabel Wilkerson each eloquently delivered unique perspectives and insights on racial injustice and ways to counteract it.

May this Easter season bring you, and your families, the assurance of God’s love even as spring brings fresh air to a world in desperate need.

Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD
President
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Algorithmic Bias and How It Impacts All of Us

BY KATE MALOTT

G
oogle and other search engines know nearly everything about us. They know our age, gender, race, income, location, education, marital status, interests, political affiliation and more. So, it is no surprise these companies personalize and commodify each individual online experience, in a way that is not only effective, but profitable.

“They want to keep you engaged in order to influence you, sell you things, sell you ads,” says Thomas Freeman, JD’07, MS’09, MBA ’12, an instructor in business law and ethics at Creighton.

Companies do this using algorithms, systematic and repeated mathematically designed insights inspired by data, that often create flawed, unequal and oftentimes unjust outcomes. However, error-prone assumptions by both human and artificial intelligence, known as algorithmic bias, have harmful implications.

“Algorithms use the past to make predictions of our future, and a lot of what you see online is determined by increasing algorithms. They are increasingly dictated by algorithms.

Freeman says.

Algorithms dictate the suggested products you buy on Amazon, articles to read on Facebook, matches on Tinder and more. Freeman’s work with the Institute for Digital Humility is focused on algorithmic bias and other data science issues.

“Bias can emerge from the design of the algorithm, or the unintended or unanticipated use of data or decisions relating to the way data is coded, collected, selected, or used to train the algorithm,” Freeman says.

It impacts political advertisements, employment opportunities, housing options and more. It’s increasingly used in policing and health care, too, Freeman says.

“The problem with algorithms, although useful at times, is they tend to reinforce social biases on gender, ability, race, sexuality and ethnicity. Algorithms are making assumptions about you, and this bakes in historical, predictive biases of the past,” Freeman says.

Employment opportunities, housing options and more. It’s increasingly used in policing and health care, too, Freeman says.

“So, how do we as a society ensure that emerging technology is transparent and free from racial, gender and other biases?” Freeman says there are three ways.

First, people need to be educated about algorithmic bias and the power of this framework. The public, educators, lawyers and legislators need to be informed about the increasing influence of technology personally and globally. “Most people don’t understand the effects, or really understand the decisions being made about them, or how to go about challenging those decisions,” Freeman says.

Second, legislative policy and protections, along with guardrails on incorporating artificial intelligence in business, need to be created and regularly evaluated and audited to hold developers accountable.

While working at the Nebraska Attorney General’s Office, Freeman recognized the need to look at large-scale impact.

“I was going after smaller businesses and I thought, ‘Why are we doing this when Google and other companies have been, at a very wide scale, violating our privacy?’ Why is the government not involved in this?”

Third, additional legal protection is necessary. The problem, Freeman says, lies in the lack of comprehensive regulation. He says there is a lack of comprehensive privacy laws, and each state is left to develop its own rules.

“Algorithms are a very useful tool, but, like any tool, we have to be careful that we’re assigning them tasks they are capable of, they are designed properly, and they are regularly evaluated and audited for accuracy and to eliminate bias. We have to be aware of how they affect our lives.”

The Rev. André Brouillette, SJ, associate professor of systematic and spiritual theology, is the newest holder of the Anna and Donald Waite Chair in Jesuit Education, which was established at Creighton in 2011.

Fr. Brouillette is a native of Quebec, Canada. He joined the Society of Jesus in Montreal and earned graduate degrees in philosophy, history and theology in Europe and North America. He taught philosophy and Church history for two years in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and then spent a visiting scholar at the Universidad Pontificia Comillas in Madrid, Spain.

An expert on St. Teresa of Avila, Fr. Brouillette specializes in 16th and 17th century spiritual theology and history, as well as the systematic theological issues of pneumatology and soteriology. He is the general editor of the Classics of Western Spirituality (Paulist Press).

The English translation of his first book was published by Paulist Press, and under the title Teresa of Avila, the Holy Spirit, and the Place of Salvation.

The Waite Chair was established by Donald Waite, B’62, CSJ, and his wife, Anna, to augment the Jesuit presence on Creighton’s campus. The Waite Chair sponsors visiting Jesuits who pursue writing, research and teaching on law, philosophy, business ethics, health care and more, opening doors for learning across international borders and cultural divides.

Health Care Partnership a Win-Win in Phoenix

Creighton health sciences students are finding benefit as much as those they serve through a partnership between the University and has an organization in Phoenix dedicated to fostering independence for adults with autism and other neurodiversities.

Through the agreement between Creighton University Health Sciences Campus – Phoenix and First Place AZ, Creighton health care providers offer services and education to residents of First Place–Phoenix, an innovative residential community.

Many adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury and other neurodevelopmental challenges face unique challenges in daily living. First Place–Phoenix is designed to nurture a sense of community, independence and
interdependence within a supportive and caring environment. It also offers sites for education, training and creative expression. “This collaboration helps build a supportive community culture so that health care providers not only understand autism but also people with autism through its many forms and expressions,” says Denise Resnik, founder and president/CEO of First Place AZ. “Our partnership with Creighton offers valuable insight into the lives of health science students while providing them with experiences that deepen their understanding of neurodiverse populations and appreciation for the challenges inherent in navigating systems of care.”

Residents received flu shots last fall from pharmacy faculty in a familiar setting at First Place-Phoenix. In 2022, pharmacy and occupational therapy faculty and students have begun working with First Place residents to provide medication history and education, as well as to improve daily activities with OTr support.

Students review residents’ medications and learn about their daily activities throughout the conversation, the residents and students work together to set goals and recommendations to work toward more lifestyle independence.

In one case, after the medication review, an occupational therapy student identified that a resident was having trouble opening a pill case. The pharmacy student then noted that the medication was being filled and mailed from another state. Together, their recommendation was to find a physician in Arizona to support the person’s medication needs and to acquire a different, larger pill case for easier opening.

The School of Medicine offers an occupational therapy student to teach White medical student Elia Bloom, rural medical student Claire Gravel and pharmacy student Danielle Truett. They have spent time working with residents at First Place-Phoenix.

The School of Medicine in Phoenix, says the goal of the course is to improve the community of care for adolescents and adults with autism and other intellectual and developmental delays.

There is often a well-organized pedi-atric team that cares for these patients during their childhood, but their care can often be nonexistent or poorly coordinated as they move from pediatric to adult care,” Richardson says, which is the “gap” mentioned in the title of the course.”

He says Caroline Kim Kugler, MD, assistant professor of medicine who directs the course, helps students understand the challenges and opportunities in the health care system for treating and caring for “this underserved, underrepresented and often underestimated cohort of patients.”

Amy Friedman Wilson, PharmD’95, interim dean of the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, says the partnership with First Place has given students a “fantastic” opportunity to serve the community in an interprofessional manner alongside health sciences colleagues.

And students are finding satisfac-tion in helping empower the residents to become more independent. Says Sarah White, a first-year occupational therapist student: “Independence—that’s the key word.”

Study Faults Bishops for Silence on Climate

According to a recent study by two Creighton professors and an alumna, most U.S. Catholic bishops were silent about climate change around Pope Francis’ 2015 ecological encyclical Laudato Si’.

Sabrina Danielsen, PhD, assistant professor, and Daniel DiLeo, PhD, associate professor, both in the Department of Cultural and Social Studies, along with Emily Burke, BSc, published a peer-reviewed article, “U.S. Catholic bishops’ silence and denialism on climate change” last October in Environmental Research Letters, a top environmental science journal.

Since its publication, the article is in the top 5% of all research outputs scored by Altmetric, which measures scholar-ship attention and influence. They also published an op-ed on their research in Religion News Service, which was republished by the Washington Post, National Catholic Reporter and other news media. Since then, their find-ings have been discussed in New, Inside Climate News, New Yorker, New York Times articles and were referenced three times by the National Catholic Reporter, which called the research “eye-opening” in an opinion article.

The researchers examined more than 12,000 columns published from June 2014 to June 2019 by bishops in offi-cial publications for 171 of the 178 U.S. Catholic dioceses (representing 96% of all U.S. dioceses). “The research shows U.S. Catholic bishops’ diocesan communications largely ignored Catholic teachings on climate change,” says Danielsen. “This is surprising given the climate crisis we’re in and indicates that the top U.S. Catholic leaders have not capitalized on the spark of Laudato Si’.”

When bishops did address climate change, they often downplayed parts of Laudato Si’ that conflict with a con-servative political identity ideology, the researchers said. The encyclical repeat-edly calls for public policies to address climate change, while U.S. political con-servatives often oppose climate actions. Among the 93 bishops’ columns that do mention climate change, only 14 columns (15%) reference climate change policies.

“Our data suggest that as individu-als, U.S. bishops have failed their duty to teach the fullness of Catholic faith that includes Church teaching on climate change,” says DiLeo, who also directs Creighton’s Justice and Peace Studies Program.

The bishops also disproportionately prioritized social issues that are

Professor Draws Art from Life

A monotype born from the painful experience of watching a teenage son undergo brain surgery placed third last fall at the Lore Degenstein’s 12th Annual Figurative Drawing and Painting Exhibition at Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania. Rachel Mindrup, MFA, assistant professor of Fine and Performing Arts and the Richard L. Deming, MD, Endowed Chair in Medical Humanities at Creighton, titled the 24- by 18-inch painting Uncertain Outcomes, “In 2019, my son had surgery on a brain tumor,” Mindrup says. “The neurosurgeon let us know that there might be temporary brain damage, which includ-ed paralysis and blindness. The image is how my son looked when they wheeled him into the ICU. Thankfully, he came through without permanent or temporary brain damage.”

The genetic disorder that afflicted her 15-year-old son, Henry, is neurofibromatosis. Since 2010, Mindrup has worked on the Neurofibromatosis (NF?) series to bring awareness to this little-known genetic disorder that affects 1 in 3,000 individuals.
Faculty Write on Racism, Ignatian Spirituality and Black History

Two Creighton faculty members were recently published: The Crucible of Racism: Ignatian Spirituality and the Power of Hope was written by Patrick Saint-Jean, SJ, PhD, instructor in psychology, and The Black History Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained by Ogechukwu Williams, PhD, Saint-Jean, SJ, PsyD, instructor in psychology, and Environmental Sociology Program include chapters on the 19th century, which describes the health challenges facing Black Americans and how their care is conducted in a world riddled largely of white medical professionals. Meeting those challenges, and his role as a Black physician, led Tweedy on what he describes as “an intellectual and emotional journey” that he shared with Pease.

Racial Healing Shaped 2022 Presidential Lecture Series

Creighton’s 2022 Presidential Lecture Series concluded March 22 after featuring four African Americans from the world of literature. Designed as an expression of the University’s commitment to becoming an anti-racist institution, the series gave voice to both immigrant and native-born African American authors who addressed issues ranging from advancing the basic humanity of people.” Damon Tweedy, MD, spoke on Feb. 23 at the Creighton University Health Sciences Campuses - Phoenix. Associate professor of psychiatry at Duke University School of Medicine, Tweedy authored the bestselling Black Man in a White Coat: A Doctor’s Reckoning on Race and Medicine, which describes the health challenges facing Black Americans and how their care is conducted in a world riddled largely of white medical professionals. Meeting those challenges, and his role as a Black physician, led Tweedy on what he describes as “an intellectual and emotional journey” that he shared with Pease.

Novelist Colson Whitehead spoke March 1. Whitehead has twice won the Pulitzer Prize, placing him in the company of Booth Tarkington, William Faulkner and John Updike. He is also the winner of the National Book Award. Whitehead is the author of The Underground Railroad, which chronicles a young slave’s travels as she pursues freedom in the antebellum South. He also authored The Nickel Boys, a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about two unjustly sentenced to a cruel reform school in Jim Crow-era Florida. Among the many was Isabel Wilkerson, who spoke March 22. Wilkerson, winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Humanities Medal, is author of the New York Times bestsellers, The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migrations and Caste: The Origins of our Discontent. The Fruit of Others was the fruit of 15 years of research involving more than 1,000 interviews of African Americans who migrated from the American south during the Great Migration years of 1915-1970. In Caste, Wilkerson describes eight pillars that she believes underlie caste systems across all civilizations and how they have impacted the lives of Black Americans.

Wilkerson, a native of Washington, D.C., is the daughter of a Tuskegee Airman who, like her mother, traveled north during the Great Migration. She describes herself as part of a movement of African Americans who looked to the future and wanted to make a better life for themselves and their children. She began the fully accredited program in January 2021. Prior to the move, Creighton had been educating and training nurses in central Nebraska for more than 30 years through its campus in Hastings. Now the college is located at CHI Health St. Francis, a regional hospital and referral center that employs more than 100 public health professionals and more than 1,100 employees.

“The new campus is conducive to a learning environment with dedicated classroom space, simulation lab space, a faculty conference room, and four faculty offices,” says Judy Goodpasture, assistant professor and accelerated faculty chair at the Grand Island Campus. And St. Francis in Hastings— that allow students to see a variety of faculites and learn about care that are available in central Nebraska,” she says. The inaugural class was engaged and interested in the local culture and communities. Goodman says, and represented a diverse and outgoing group of students from Nebraska and across the country, including California, Colorado and Tennessee. “The students who come here are so dedicated, motivated and driven to be successful, and that really is evident, not just in their classroom learning, but in the care they provide,” Goodman says. “It’s wonderful to be able to contribute to the community through quality health care providers.”

Other experiences included work with community partners, Third City Community Clinic, Hope Harbor’s three communities — CHI Health St. Francis in Grand Island, CHI Health Good Samaritan and Richard Young Behavioral Health in Kearney, and Mary Manning Healthcare in Hastings — that allow students to see a variety of facilities and learn about care that are available in central Nebraska,” she says. The inaugural class was engaged and interested in the local culture and communities. Goodman says, and represented a diverse and outgoing group of students from Nebraska and across the country, including California, Colorado and Tennessee. “The students who come here are so dedicated, motivated and driven to be successful, and that really is evident, not just in their classroom learning, but in the care they provide,” Goodman says. “It’s wonderful to be able to contribute to the community through quality health care providers.” Other experiences included work with community partners, Third City Community Clinic, Hope Harbor’s
Senior Island Campus helps address longest-running accelerated Bachelor to contribute to the community.”

Creighton has been able to educate and training a new workforce of health care professionals, many of whom stay in the region. “There’s a documented shortage of nurses that’s only going to continue to increase, and hospitals and communities need well-educated nurses to provide adequate care to patients,” Goodman says. “Being able to educate nurses at that baccalaureate level is important. Creighton is known for the BSN class from the Creighton College of Nursing Grand Island Campus was honored with a convocation and pinning ceremony in December 2021.

**Student, Alumna Address Pope on Climate Change**

Creighton student Henry Glynn and alumna Emily Burke, B’21, had a clear and burning question for Pope Francis: “How can young people embrace nonviolent action to force the issue?”

In a world in which secular and Catholic leaders have failed to address climate change with the proper urgency, how can young people embrace nonviolent action to force the issue?

The question was part of a historic virtual meeting in February between Pope Francis and university students from across the Western Hemisphere. Hosted by Loyola University Chicago, Building Bridges North-South: A Synodal Encounter Between Pope Francis and University Students, allowed groups of students from North, Central and South America to directly engage the pope on important issues.

Glynn and Burke were chosen by their peers to speak directly to the pope from a working group of more than 20 students representing the central U.S. and Canada.

When their turn to present came, Glynn, a political science and theology major in Creighton’s College of Arts and Sciences, cited stark figures for the pope. According to estimates from the United Nations, climate change will displace 29 million people annually, resulting in at least 1 billion climate refugees by 2060.

“The Church has a responsibility to act through its people, money, infrastructure, land, schools and advocacy efforts,” Glynn said. “Our synodal group discerned a shared frustration that U.S. Catholic leaders have not taken appropriate action.”

Burke, currently a doctoral student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and social media manager for Catholic Climate Covenant, proposed a strategy somewhat new for climate change, but celebrated throughout Christian history: nonviolent direct action.

“Through a translator, the pope responded that the very act of neglecting the environment is itself an act of violence. And that, he said, is in direct opposition to the Christian idea of God full of ’tenderness and compassion.’

He continued: ’God forgives always. We forgive sometimes. Nature never forgive. If we destroy nature, then we create a chain of violence, and we can see that with our own eyes.’

Burke said she felt “incredibly nervous,” but as soon as she started speaking, she felt more calm.

“I saw Pope Francis nodding along with what Henry and I had to say, and taking vigorous notes, and I was overcome with a moment of, ‘Oh my gosh, this is really happening.’ I felt listened to, and valued as a young Catholic. It was truly an experience.”

**IT’S A MATCH**

**Student Research**

Creighton is known for the research opportunities it offers students. Here’s a brief insight into one student’s project.

For Aidan Herrera, being a doctor means more than donning a white coat. “I want to understand medicine in its cultural and social context,” says Herrera, a medical humanities major in the College of Arts and Sciences.

“What does health care look like in different societies? How does our current system produce inequalities between different social groups? And how can health care providers treat patients in a way that takes those social factors into account?”

His interest in the intersection of the medical and social sciences led him to the lab of Erin Blankenship-Sefczek, PhD, resident assistant professor of biological anthropology. There, Herrera studies the bones of people who died during the Late Classic Maya Period, between 200 and 950 AD.

His project is centered on infants and sub-adults, taking a close look at how age and sickness affected how the individuals were buried, and drawing conclusions on what those burials tell us about the Mayan culture of the time.

Herrera says he hopes to continue his research over the summer, eventually publishing a paper on his findings. A soon-to-be graduate of the Class of 2023, Herrera plans to attend medical school and become a physician-anthropologist.

His goal, he says, is to enter residency education and teach doctors how to approach medicine through a public health lens. “It’s a path he says he may have never known about had he not chosen to become a Bluejay.

“I’m so grateful to Creighton for showing me that this path exists,” he says. “When I graduate, I know I’ll leave with a more complete understanding of health care and the issues facing it today. Because of my experience here, I feel called to do what I can to help however I can.”

**Why Health Science Meets the Human Spirit**

Creighton is known for the research opportunities it offers students. Here’s a brief insight into one student’s project.
Herself lucky to have found such a fulfilling career in dentistry. She looks back at the opportunities that were given to her and always pays that forward and gives people the opportunities that she would have wanted.

"Mary Jo’s generosity will be the cornerstone of her legacy," said Joshua Farnum, MS, right, with dental student Jillian Wallen, BDS, left, and Keely Orndorff in the adult dental clinic.

A Passion for Dentistry: New Dental Dean Shares Her Journey

Creighton University’s new School of Dentistry dean, Jillian Wallen, DDS, MS, shares the story of her journey from a child growing up in a small village in Scotland to a career in dentistry and academia that eventually landed her in Omaha.

Throughout it all, she considers herself lucky to have found such a fulfilling career in dentistry. She looks to share her passion for the profession with the students coming to Creighton’s dental school.

"The opportunities that have been given to me have just been amazing," says Wallen, who accepted Creighton’s last August. "I’ve made it my philosophy to always pay that forward and give people the opportunities that were given to me.

You can read her story online at creighton.edu/news/DeanWallen.

Comedy Podcast Helps the Show Go On

Caleb-Jones, BA ’20, saw nothing funny about the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Although COVID’s full impact was not yet evident, it would not be long before rising death counts paralyzed the normal, free-wheeling spirit of American life. Restaurants and cinemas closed, as did comedy clubs. And then the music died, as bands with significant local followings lost their venues.

"People think that comedians are just funny people who get up there and tell jokes but it’s not that simple. There is a lot of work that goes into preparing these sets, and there is a lot of technique involved. One of my favorite aspects of the interviews is asking these experienced individuals about how they do what they do — getting into the weeds of all that has been very enjoyable."

Podcasts do not happen overnight, and Prenosil and Jones spent months honing the concept, gathering the equipment and partnering with a receptive Backline to host the podcast. Five comedians have now been interviewed, all with Omaha ties. Some perform locally, some nationally.

"We wanted to give local artists a break from these difficult times, to have conversations and see where they would lead. It’s amazing that we were able to do that," Jones says.

Video podcasts are available on YouTube: search Backline Comedy.

Law School Receives $4 Million Gift from Alumna

With her passing in April 2021 at the age of 91, Mary Jo Connell Cleaver, BS ’52, JD ’54, MA ’68, established the largest endowed scholarship endowment in the history of the law school — a $4 million gift designated to help deserving law students attain their dreams of becoming attorneys.

"Mary Jo’s generosity will be the cornerstone of her legacy," said Joshua Farnum, MS, right, with dental student Jillian Wallen, BDS, left, and Keely Orndorff in the adult dental clinic.

Students Net BIG EAST Research Poster Honors

Creighton students Keely Orndorff and Lauren Barbush watched the Creighton men’s basketball team battle for the Big East conference title March 12 knowing that no matter what happened down there on the Madison Square Garden court, they were bringing conference honors home to Omaha.

Orndorff took first place and Barbush third in the inaugural Big East Undergraduate Research Poster Symposium held earlier that day, also at Madison Square Garden.

The symposium was a Creighton creation, stemming from a proposal by Julie Strauss-Soukup, PhD, BSChm’93, professor of chemistry and biochemistry and associate vice provost for undergraduate studies.

For much of her professional career, Mary Jo Cleaver was an engineer trial attorney with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Mary Jo’s generosity will be the cornerstone of her legacy," said Joshua Farnum, MS, right, with dental student Jillian Wallen, BDS, left, and Keely Orndorff in the adult dental clinic.

In December, the School of Medicine awarded 23 physician assistant (PA) students their Master of Physician Assistant Studies (MPAS) degrees during the program’s inaugural commencement ceremony. These professionals are graduating at a time when the health care system needs them the most," said Staphanie VanderMeulen, associate professor and Physician Assistant Program Director.

"They are compassionate physician assistants dedicated to impacting the lives of patients and providing service to the communities they will serve."

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"Mary Jo’s generosity will be the cornerstone of her legacy," said Joshua Farnum, MS, right, with dental student Jillian Wallen, BDS, left, and Keely Orndorff in the adult dental clinic.
Bluejay Influencers

We have a few famous Bluejays flying around out there. Several Creighton alumni and professors have become influencers, going viral on social media, appearing in national conversations and attracting followers for talking about sports, life, finances, body image and photography. Many have followers in the thousands, and a few have racked up millions. These are some of Creighton’s biggest influencers.

Adedayo Kosoko
Adedayo Kosoko, BA’05, has more than 22,000 followers on his Instagram page (@thearthype), where he posts his photography work, including things he’s made for Hugo Boss, Gucci, GQ, Facebook and many more.

Recently, he’s been posting photos from a series called Moon Melanin, which “touched on the relationship between melanated people and the moonlight that illuminates us. The moon provides a direct reflection of the sun, and in this light we find aspects of us that have been kept in the shadows.”

Thomas Wong
Thomas Wong, PhD, saw a need for a quantum computing textbook, so he wrote one. Then he put it out for free online. His tweet announcing the book’s publication and free download has since been retweeted more than 650 times and earned more than 2,200 likes.

Wong, assistant professor of physics in the College of Arts and Sciences, studies quantum computing at the intersection of physics and computer science. “Quantum computers are the next generation of computers, and there is a need for the basics to be taught at the undergraduate level and not just in graduate school,” he says.

Danae Mercer
For more than 2.4 million followers on her Instagram account (@danaemercer), Creighton alumna Danae Mercer, BA’09, promotes body positivity, often showing how perfectly posed and exquisitely edited photos distort our perceptions of people’s bodies.

A recent post said, “We see these images as casual, momentary snapshots, but in reality they’re each taking 30 to 40 minutes to create. The result is, we look online and we think, ‘Everyone is perfect but me.’” Mercer has written for numerous publications and appeared on Good Morning America.

Anthony Tolliver
The NBA player, former Bluejay basketball standout and 2007 Heider College of Business alumnus has about 40,000 followers each on Instagram and Twitter, where he posts on a range of topics, from basketball to family and faith. A real estate investor through his company Say You Can, Tolliver also often posts about investing and building wealth with tips such as, “The best tip I can give anyone that wants to start investing is educate yourself. Read books, find financial literacy mentors that you can learn from, and ask questions. Stay focused on your plan, and put your faith in God.”

Harmony Latham
You may have seen pictures of Harmony Latham, BSN’21, bouncing around the web lately. Latham, a former Miss Rodeo USA winner, recently graduated from Creighton’s accelerated nursing program as part of the first cohort from the program in Grand Island, Nebraska. She blogged during the experience for CHI Health, Creighton’s clinical partner. During her journey at Creighton, she wrote about why she chose Creighton, the skills she learned, the friends she made along the way and what’s next. (Hint: She got a great job.)
The High Cost of Dying and Green Burials

BY BLAKE URSCH

F or many Americans, death is something they don’t want to think about until they absolutely have to. Blame it on anxiety or cultural conditioning or a combination of both. Whatever the reason, avoiding the reality of our own and our loved ones’ mortality is the root cause of widespread problems in the funeral industry that compound the suffering of those grieving, says Victoria Haneman, JD, LLM, the Frank J. Kellogg Professor of Trusts and Estates in the Creighton School of Law.

“The law has been controlled by the funeral industry for almost a century,” Haneman says. “And what’s really interesting is, we’ve allowed this to happen. We’ve allowed it to happen because we don’t like thinking about death, and consequently, as consumers, we don’t behave normally with regard to death care expenses.”

Haneman has become a leading voice in the national discussion about the financial and environmental impact of the funeral industry in the United States. She has published several studies on the legal issues surrounding death, including “Tax Incentives for Green Burial” in the Nevada Law Journal and “Funeral Poverty” in the University of Richmond Law Review. She has also been quoted by several high-profile media outlets, including the New York Times, National Public Radio, Wired and Phil Niswanger.

It’s a topic that’s, sadly, more relevant than ever as the U.S. COVID-19 death toll climbs toward 1 million.

The center of her criticism is this: A funeral and burial for the average American will cost about $9,000. A significant amount, given that at least 40% of Americans say they can’t afford an unexpected $400 expense.

“That $9,000 is more than a lot of people pay for a car. And yet, nobody is behaving normally with an expense like this,” she says. “When we don’t think about death, we create a norm of dis- tress purchasing. We don’t research anything ahead of time, and when death inevitably hap- pens, the funeral director holds all the cards. We rely on guidance from professionals who always have a profit-seeking objective.”

The traditional open-casket funeral is what drives the cost, Haneman says. Embalming, cos- meticized remains, flowers, the casket itself. All the trappings of a traditional service are opportunities for the funeral home to upsell the bereaved. And about that funeral home: Only 16.8% of consumers ever call more than one. Haneman says.

Cost aside, the traditional methods of laying the dead to rest — casket or cremation — have a serious impact on the environment. Haneman says. In her published research, Haneman reports an estimated 5.3 million gallons of embalming fluid are buried along with bodies annually in the U.S. Caskets are made of non- biodegradable chipboard. Fire-based cremation burns fossil fuels, releasing an estimated 250,000 tons of carbon dioxide into the atmo-sphere every year.

But increasingly, Haneman says, people are turning to alternatives.

“There’s a death positive movement that’s started arising over the past 10 to 15 years,” she says. “With the rising age of the baby boomer generation, you see less interest in traditional death care practices.”

Haneman points to several innovative companies piloting new methods of burial with green technology. One, Seattle-based Recompose, uses a process called natural organic reduction to transform human remains into topsoil, which the deceased’s loved ones can then use to grow whatever they want.

Tech companies have also explored other, even more novel methods of burial, Haneman says. One, called promission, involves freeze- drying a body and turning it into nitrogen-rich dust. Another, alkaline hydrolysis, or liquid cremation, involves dissolving a body with environmentally safe chemicals, and was notably chosen by the Rev. Desmond Tutu at his death in December 2021.

There are still other methods. Actor Luke Perry was buried in a mushroom suit — a cotton suit with mushroom spores sewn into the fabric. Upon burial, mushrooms feed on the body and aid in decomposition.

By sharing the many possibilities, Haneman says she hopes to get her students and the wider public thinking about what they and their loved ones want when they die. Sometimes in an irreverent, light-hearted way.

“I’ve had students email me about death tech. One of them asked me about a service that turns you into a glass ball.” Haneman says. “That’s when I say, ‘Do you want to be sold at a garage sale in 30 years?’”

The point is to destigmatize thinking and talking about death, to get people comfortable with planning for their own end. Haneman says she hopes to shift the narrative and create a space where students feel comfortable asking questions that they would otherwise find taboo, with the goal of helping others to have more free-flowing conversations about a topic that is an unavoidable part of life.

“We all understand the sensitivities around death,” Haneman says. “What we’re not accus- tomed to is dealing with the more insouciant side of it. Having fun with it. When we do that, I think we’ll be better equipped to make those important decisions.”
Israel Bryant has always had a lot of questions: How does this work? Why does it work like that? Could it work another way?

“When I was growing up, my parents couldn’t answer all of my questions,” says the Central High School senior and Creighton research assistant. “So they would sit me down in front of the Discovery Channel, and say, ‘Here, discover something.’”

Through hours upon hours absorbing the “nerdy fun” of science shows, Bryant discovered quite a bit — many answers to many questions, but just as many new questions, too.

Bryant’s bottomless curiosity about the world led her to pursue a career in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), specifically architectural engineering. Along the way, she’s found plenty of opportunities to quench her inquisitive mind.

One especially great experience was a program that — across multiple STEM fields — dares to ask (and answer)…

BRYANT IS ONE OF DOZENS OF OMAHA PUBLIC high school students to be accepted into the Haddix STEM Corridor Program over the past four years.

Each summer, the program invites juniors at North, South and Central high schools to conduct STEM-focused research work with faculty and students at Creighton. Haddix scholars are paid for their time and give poster presentations of their research at the program’s end.

The University has long been known as a leader in student research. Creighton is continually named a Top School for Undergraduate Research/Creative Projects by U.S. News & World Report. The Haddix STEM Corridor Program has taken this strength into the community.

“Israel Bryant, left, and Andrew Ekpenyong, PhD., M210 assistant professor of physics in Ekpenyong’s lab.

“I’m still in high school, but I’ve already done something that’s going to help the world.”

ISRAEL BRYANT
2021 Haddix STEM Scholar
Senior, Omaha Central High School
“With this program, you see a wonderful alignment of Creighton’s mission and vision,” says College of Arts and Sciences Dean Bridget Keegan, PhD. “We’re so grateful to the Haddixes for helping us achieve this for our students, our faculty, and the community at large.

George, PhD, MArA, and Susan Haddix made the program possible with a $10 million gift, which also supported renovation of Riege Science Building labs, faculty research, an Ignatian advising program and the Dean’s Fellows student leadership program. Their gift is the largest ever made to the College of Arts and Sciences.

The STEM Corridor program connects a few key threads from George Haddix’s life. George — also a former Creighton faculty member — grew up along the 24th Street thoroughfare, where each of the program’s participating high schools resides. He went to high school at Omaha North. His father worked for a South Omaha meat-packing plant.

Now he and his wife have strengthened the roots between the University and the iconic stretch of Omaha that shaped his life and career.

Susan Haddix has supported and volunteered at many organizations over the past 40 years. "Sometimes, it can be difficult to see the difference you’re making. That’s not the case with this program," she says. "We see what it’s doing, and we see how these students are flourishing. It’s one of the best things George and I have ever done (or not) with your life."

ANY PROGRAM STEEPED IN RESEARCH must itself be assessed methodically. The Haddix program has plenty of data to draw from. The results so far:

“My program has engaged so many high school students in meaningful research work,” says Kayode Oshin, PhD, associate professor and director of the Haddix program. “I am grateful to all Creighton faculty members who have mentored these scholars. I am equally grateful to the Haddix family for directing their philanthropic efforts toward this kind of program because it makes a real difference and truly impacts the career trajectory of each student participant.”

Of the dozens of Haddix scholars who have graduated high school, nearly all are now attending college, most pursuing STEM degrees.

Having actual research experience has been a part of their college applications. Many have received national awards and scholarships because of their Haddix experience. There are a few especially notable success stories.

Former Haddix scholar and Omaha North graduate Audrey Anderson, for instance, parlayed her research project with biology professor Carol Faubinder-Orth, PhD, into more than $70,000 in scholarships.

Meanwhile, Central High grad Xavier Herbert — who conducted research with Nathan Pennington, PhD, associate professor of mathematics — is one of three Haddix scholars to be accepted into MIT, where he’s studying theoretical mathematics. He has continued to conduct research, spending one summer working on “space math” at NASA.

Herbert had been teaching himself advanced math concepts since eighth grade, but before the Haddix program, he didn’t really know what mathematical research entailed. “It was very enlightening,” he says. “But it’s not just a research program; it also helps you apply to college, develop some really essential skills and figure out what you want to do (or not do) with your life.”

One great thing the Haddix program does for its scholars — especially first-generation students — is to normalize college, says Alexandra Griswold, a North High grad and psychology/philosophy junior at Creighton who conducted research with Jake Siedlik, PhD, assistant professor of exercise science.

“I remember my summer in the program, that experience of walking across campus and into the building, meeting with my professor and doing my research,” she says. “I had so much authority, so much autonomy in my life. I felt like I belonged here.”

Central High graduate and Creighton biochemistry sophomore Ashton Hagen — who conducted research with biochemistry associate professor Lynne Dieckman, PhD — says his Haddix experience drew him to the College of Arts and Sciences not just because of the opportunities for undergraduate research but for the mission underlying that research.

“I need to know what I’m working on will eventually benefit someone else,” says Hagen, whose Haddix project studied how cloned proteins would interact with cancerous cells. “That’s true for my peers, too. You won’t find a lot of people here who do research just to build a resume. We want to help others. That’s the purpose of research at Creighton.”
Sometimes, it can be difficult to see the difference you’re making. That’s not the case with this program. We see what it’s doing, and we see how these students are flourishing. It’s one of the best things George and I have ever been a part of.”

SUSAN HADDIX

THE BENEFITS OF THE HADDIX program have been as significant for the community as they have for Creighton.

“This program is exactly what’s been needed in Omaha for some time,” says Dan Sitzman, longtime science educator and president of Omaha’s Metropolitan Science & Engineering Fair. “It’s a phenomenal way to help create opportunities.”

The program, he says, “gives students the opportunity to conduct meaningful research at a prestigious university with a Creighton professor who will take the time to get to know them as a person.”

The program’s reach extends far beyond the Haddix scholars themselves, says LaDessa Jackson, curriculum specialist for science and art at Omaha North.

“The Haddix program has been the best thing to happen to our own science program in many years,” she says. “A lot of high school students don’t think they like science. But when the Haddix scholars come back and tell their classmates about their experience, a lot of students get excited.”

At Omaha Central, the Haddix program has even shifted the way faculty teach high school science.

“The program has encouraged our teachers to incorporate more research into the classroom,” says Janis Elliott, former science department chair at Central High. “They now understand the potential in young people,” he says. “I am no longer waiting for them to get to a certain level before I ask for their help to attack a cutting-edge scientific question. They are already ready.”

One Haddix scholar who shifted Ekpenyong’s expectations is Central High senior Israel Bryant.

BRYANT’S RESEARCH DIDN’T END with the Haddix program. As her high school graduation nears, she’s continued to work with Ekpenyong at Creighton. The two co-authored a paper they presented at the Biophysical Society Annual Meeting, an international science conference, earlier this year.

Their research explores the physics of cancer, using a device called the microfluidic micromixer, OOMM, which mimics cell behavior in the body’s circulatory system.

The MMM allows Ekpenyong and Bryant to simulate the effects of chemotherapy drugs on cancer cells. Their hypothesis is that certain chemotherapeutic drugs make the surviving cancer cells more likely to spread to other parts of the body.

Bryant knows that this research could lead to how cancer is treated, that it might one day save lives. She also knows that looks great for college and scholarship applications.

“But it also just feels good,” she says. “I’m still in high school, but I’ve already done something that’s going to help the world.”

That inquisitive girl glued to the TV screen is now a published scientist looking through the microscope. But for Bryant, the core questions remain the same for every endeavor —

“How does this work? Why does it work like that? Could it work another way?”

“Creighton takes mentorship seriously. My professors have helped me explore science at a deeper level. They’ve helped me form new thinking, new approaches, new ways of seeing the world.”

SYDNEY WESTPHAL

2018 Haddix STEM Scholar

Third-Year Environmental Science Major

THEMED: Geology and Environmental Science

Third-Year Environmental Science Major is a STEM Corridor Program poster presentations.
Researchers at Creighton have published a study linking financial stability to better health outcomes. “Improving Health Through Action on Economic Stability: Results of the Finances First Randomized Controlled Trial of Financial Education and Coaching in Single Mothers of Low-Income” was recently published in the American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine.

The study is the result of a collaborative effort of several Creighton health sciences programs — the School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, School of Medicine and College of Nursing — and the grant-funded Financial Hope Collaborative, housed in the Heider College of Business.

The research focused on a group of low-income single mothers in Omaha who were selected to receive financial coaching and education through the Financial Hope Collaborative, which works with low- and moderate-income families in the area to help them achieve financial stability.

The results: The women who completed the Financial Success Program “significantly reduced” their financial strain, making them more likely to quit smoking and less likely to avoid medical care due to cost.

The study — which the researchers believe is the first randomized, controlled trial examining the impact of financial education on health — is just one way in which experts at Creighton are examining the link between financial health and physical health.

In November 2021, the University announced that it would spearhead pioneering research investigating whether better finances can lead to better health outcomes in patients with diabetes, following a $2.3 million investment from the Diabetes Care Foundation, co-founded by...
“With research increasingly tying better health outcomes to greater financial stability, there’s the potential to create a new model that incorporates the financial element of care and gives patients the resources to build healthier lives.”

NICOLE GILLESPIE WHITE, PHARM D’10

former Board of Trustees member Jim Greisch, BSBA ’80, and chaired by former Board of Trustees member Mark Huber, BSBA ’96, “Incomes are the No. 1 predictor of your health in America,” says Julie Kalkowski, founder and executive director of the Financial Hope Collaborative. “The higher your income; the better your health. The lower your income; the worse your health.”

Economic stability is one of the five major domains of the Social Determinants of Health, defined by the World Health Organization as “the nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes—the conditions in which people are born, work, live and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.” They are things like income and social protection, education, food insecurity, housing and working conditions. Though numbers vary on how much of a population’s health can be directly attributed to the social determinants, most experts agree that their impact on health outcomes is significant.

“Physical and financial health are very highly interrelated,” says Nicole Gillespie White, PharmD ’13. associate professor of pharmacy practice in Creighton’s School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and one of the principal investigators of the Finances First study. “When you think about access to medical care, your income level plays an important role. Just being able to afford to see your doctor; to take medications; is influenced by how much money you have.”

But a person’s financial situation impacts their health in more ways than whether they have the money to pay for doctor visits, White says. The problem goes much deeper than that. “For one thing, any type of stress creates problems in the body,” she says. “Stress increases inflammation in the body and dysregulates the immune system, both of which increase the risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other chronic conditions.”

For another thing, continuous financial pressure่อน creates a person’s ability to make healthy lifestyle decisions. The concept, Kalkowski says, can be explained using what social scientists have dubbed the “limited resource model of self-control.”

The idea is that, in any given situation, a person has a limited amount of energy available to govern his or her own behavior. For example, if you haven’t slept much in the last few days because you’re worried about your bills, it’s harder to focus on just about anything, let alone concentrate on eating healthier or exercising. People with low incomes, White says, are forced to make difficult decisions and regulate their behavior more often than those with higher incomes. Over time, this can erode self-control and lead to the adoption of unhealthy habits, such as smoking, drinking, poor diet and sedentary exercise.

In the Finances First study, which took place between April 2017 through August 2020, women who were known to be making less than 200% of the 2017 U.S. Federal Poverty Guideline were randomly assigned to either receive financial counseling via the Financial Hope Collaborative’s Financial Success Program (FSP) or be assigned to a control group with no counseling.

The program, which has been around since 2009, focuses on monthly cashflow management. In the study, the single mothers selected for the program received one-on-one financial coaching and attended classes that taught them how to track their expenses, improve credit and credit reports and create a payment plan for bills and other expenses. The program was offered in both English and Spanish.

“We focus on the immediate, small steps that people can do to improve their situation every month,” Kalkowski says. “That was the most people begin to feel they have more control over their lives and feel that things can get better. When things start to work, it motivates you to keep moving forward.”

Deborah Dogba entered the Financial Success Program in 2020. She joined, she said, because she was trying to boost her income and get a handle on her finances as she worked to launch her own small business.

“I was really living paycheck to paycheck, but my paycheck was invested in my business,” she says. “At the end of the day, I didn’t have a lot left.”

She says she benefitted most from the accountability the program provided through regular meetings with her financial success coach.

“The FSP brought a lot of clarity to me on my journey to financial freedom. The accountability aspect of it made it possible to achieve goals such as paying off debt,” she says. “One key component that provided a clear picture of my financial situation at that time was tracking income and expenses—budgeting.”

Since completing the program, Dogba has been able to quit her regular job and run her business consulting and publishing company, Afro Swag Media and Magazine, full-time.

The study also showed that women who participated in the program were less likely to avoid medical care due to cost after 12 months, with the percentage of those reporting they had avoided care dropping from 40% to 32.6%. The control group remained unchanged.

The Finances First study and the upcoming research funded by the Diabetes Care Foundation open the door to creating a more comprehensive picture of what health care can be, White says. So much of health care, she says, currently focuses on reactively treating physical disease instead of proactively preventing illness.

“With research increasingly tying better health outcomes to greater financial stability,” White says, “there’s the potential to create a new model that incorporates the financial element of care and gives patients the resources to build healthier lives.”
early 500 years ago, St. Ignatius of Loyola quietly started a spiritual revolution that reverberated through the ages and has found fresh dynamism at Creighton. The founder of the Society of Jesus initiated innovative teaching and learning methods through the Spiritual Exercises and developed tools and practices to form leaders empowered to change the world.

Today, fostering Ignatian-inspired leadership is at the core of Creighton’s mission in a multitude of ways, and especially in the development of students — both in and outside the classroom.

What exactly does Ignatian leadership look like? Is it possible to learn it, and employ it in your own life, even long after you have graduated from Creighton?

At its root, Ignatian-inspired leadership development provides a structure and context for people to learn more about themselves and those they serve.

“Ignatian leadership does not begin from anything other than our relationship to God,” says Tom Kelly, PhD, professor of theology in the College of Arts and Sciences. “It is not based on outcomes or money gained,” says Kelly. “One can be immensely successful according to the dictates of the ‘world’ but if we lack love, what does it benefit us? This is our driving question in Ignatian leadership.”

A FOCUS ON REFLECTION

A primary component in Creighton’s Ignatian-inspired programs — including those in the undergraduate, graduate and professional schools, student advising and programs through the divisions of Mission and Ministry and Student Life — is reflection, just as it was for Ignatius and his followers.

That means before, during and after experiences that promote Ignatian-inspired student leadership development, students are asked to reflect — to look within themselves for the movements of God. Faculty and staff who work with the students also engage in the same type of reflection.

For example, Nicole Piemonte, PhD, assistant dean of student affairs for the medical school in Phoenix, assistant professor of medical humanities and the Peeke Nash Carpenter Endowed Chair in Medicine, says written personal reflections are embedded throughout the medical school curriculum.

“I spend time discussing with students the idea that being a future Creighton doctor means being an advocate for the marginalized, underserved and disenfranchised, in addition to being a competent and compassionate clinician,” Piemonte says.

In Creighton’s Heider College of Business, the mission statement and the entire undergraduate curriculum, called the Heider Mindset, are shaped by Ignatian values.

The Heider mission statement reads: “Guided by our Jesuit heritage, we form leaders who promote justice and use their business knowledge to improve the world.”

The Heider Mindset undergraduate curriculum came about through the work of dozens of the college’s faculty members through a task force that began in the summer of 2017 and completed its work in 2020.

“We felt it was vital that any revisions to our undergraduate curriculum both reflect and strengthen the mission of the Heider College,” says Matt Seevers, PhD, professor of marketing.
Creighton Alumnus
Assistant Professor of Medicine (Phoenix)

and CEO, one of my desires is to create I take St. Ignatius' challenge to 'go set the
I engage a customer, current or potential team-
I need. This may mean continually revising and

students who choose to attend a Jesuit institution such as Creighton may be familiar with the Jesuit mission, but it is just as likely the Ignatian tradition and Ignatian leadership

Some students may be surprised with dis-
cussions that, on the surface, seem to not con-
tribute to advancing in their chosen field. They
might even present a sort of 'push back' when

Creighton medical students are being prepared to be leaders who expect more
We want our graduates to see business as
in the Graduate School, that Creighton gradu-

Students and graduates then bring this to
life every day in their work. ‘They invest their
life in serving others, building communities and
promoting social justice. And me to see, address and care for students as
matters just as much as who they are
ignatian spirituality and Ignatian leadership are
the center of every decision.”

Faculty who impart Ignatian-based principles

Once a man is in the company of a man, it is

Today, Moss Breen has an expertise on leadership and

Moss Breen is an expert on leadership and

It only requires one short step toward this
It is core to so much of my teaching, especially

Who our students are becoming as people
Who our students are becoming as people
whether that actions be aligned with
values and that patients should always be at

BRINGING SOMETHING MORE
It’s because Creighton seeks to impart Ignatian
in each student, including Ignatian-
spiritual and Ignatian leadership is

CREATING OTHER LEADERS
One graduate who is thoroughly steeped in
Ignatian leadership principles is Charles
Thomas JR, MD, PhD, EDD ’94 Creighton Alumnus

students to see patients as whole people, but for
dentify to see, address and care for students as

Cura personalis, which translates as care
for the whole person.

who are marginalized,” says Seevers. “And we
want our medical students to see patients as whole people, but for

Students who choose to attend a Jesuit institution such as Creighton may be familiar with the Jesuit mission, but it is just as likely
the Ignatian tradition and Ignatian leadership are completely unfamiliar to them.

Some students may be surprised with dis-
cussions that, on the surface, seem to not con-
tribute to advancing in their chosen field. They
might even present a sort of ‘push back’ when
discussions of faith, St. Ignatius or spirituality are
mashed with concrete knowledge and appli-
cation of field-based topics,” she adds.

Who our students are becoming as people
just as much as who they are becom-
ing physicians,” says the medical school’s
Piemonte. “We are committed to their character
formation and virtue development so that our stu-
dents can continue to reflect, lead, advocate for and care well for patients when they
need it most.”

She says Creighton medical students are
being prepared to be leaders who expect more from
the health care system: “Leaders who believe that actions be aligned with
values and that patients should always be at the
center of every decision.”

One graduate who is thoroughly steeped in
Ignatian leadership principles is Charles
Thomas JR, MD, PhD, EDD ’94 Creighton Alumnus

If you’re interested in learning more about
a Jesuit education taught me that I don’t have to know all
the answers right away. When I’m not sure what
to do, I simply make the next right decision, and
that is usually a small step in the desired
direction. As long as I can do that, I can lead
myself and others to our desired destination.”

As the leader of the Ignatian tradition, he says
his ‘entire focus is to lead well. Every day when
I engage a customer, current or potential team-
mate, or a teaming partner, I take that as an
opportunity to offer value. I take St. Ignatius’
challenge to go out in the world on fire! ‘Seriously,
and as co-founder and CEO, one of my desires is to create other leaders. It is a leadership man-
date, in my opinion, to lift others as we climb.”

He adds, “Leading is not about telling people
what to do. It is about creating a vision, being
thoughtful, leading by example, and pursu-
ing excellence as a demonstration of human
potential.”

SHAPED BY IGNATIAN PRINCIPLES
Faculty who impart Ignatian-based principles
to their students find that they, too, are shaped by the Ignatian
ideas. If they haven’t, they probably wouldn’t be as nearly effective.

Theology professor Kelly says teaching, for

One can be immensely successful
good according to the dictates of the ‘world’ but if we lack, what does it benefit
us? This is our driving question in Ignatian leadership.

CREIGHTON PURSUING LEADERSHIP CLASSIFICATION
Creighton has successfully completed a Carnegie Foundation pilot application process for a new Leadership for Public Purpose Elective Classification. Creighton was invited to participate in the pilot process, which is the only Jesuit institution, invited to participate in the pilot process.
The elective classification process recognizes colleges and universities for leadership in the "public purpose" field and verifies how well they prepare educated, engaged graduates who contribute to public good in their careers, communities and broader society. The Carnegie project is a partnership with the Dover Institute for New leaders at Rice University.
The elective classification process requires rigorous self-study by universities in order to receive the Carnegie designation. Successfully achieving the Leadership for Public Purpose Elective Classification would elevate Creighton to an even greater extent as a national leader in leadership-education and development.

Jennifer Moss Breen, assistant professor in the EdD in Interdisciplinary Leadership program, is leading Creighton’s University-wide self-assessment in the year-long elective classification application process, with the full support of Carnegie Foundation President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, and Provost Mardell Wilson, EdD.

“Everyone involved with the pilot process is grateful to Fr. Hendrickson and Provost Wilson for supporting this important initiative,” Moss Breen says. “Giving forward now with the formal application and self-study helps Creighton fully define our deep commitment to developing leaders for the improvement of our world.”
An American Love Story

Creighton alumna discovers parents’ World War II love letters
By Blake Ursch

Jan. 28, 1945
A young sailor sits hunched in his quarters in San Francisco on a Sunday evening. He’s due to ship out to the Pacific any day now. But right now, there’s only one thing on his mind.
And, curiously enough, the radio in his room seems to know what it is.
Oh Rose Marie, I love you
I’m always dreaming of you

Ensign Cletus Joseph McCann, BS'41, JD'48, makes note of the song — the title track from the 1936 MGM musical *Rose Marie* — as he scribbles a letter in hasty cursive to his fiancée, Ensign Rosemary Mulligan, BS'41.

The two had gotten engaged just two weeks previously at Colonial Lake in Charleston, South Carolina, when Cletus paid a whirlwind visit to Rosemary at her duty station. Now, Cletus writes, he feels overwhelmed with all the things he wants to say that he can’t seem to put on paper.

“Well,” he writes, “we can make it up when this is all over and we sit around on an evening telling the children sea stories, and (about) when we were in the Navy — and about Colonial Lake and the great event that took place on its shore.”

The love letter is just one of 100 others that Cletus (who later went by his middle name, Joseph) wrote to Rosemary between December 1944 and October 1945. In meticulous detail, the letters document the young couple’s relationship as they navigated an engagement and marriage during the waning months of World War II.

For any reader, the letters are an almost cinematic glimpse into the personal lives of two young Creighton alumni at a critical turning point in their lives, when their futures were still being shaped by historic world events. But for Maureen McCann Waldron, BA ’75, MA ’98, retired associate director in Creighton’s Collaborative Ministry Office and the fourth of the couple’s six children, they’re even more precious.

“They’re a chance to get to know my parents as young people,” says Maureen, who, after discovering the letters in a drawer at her mother’s assisted living facility after her father’s death, had them copied and bound for her siblings. She has since sent the originals to the Center for American War Letters at Chapman University.

Pre-War
CLETUS WAS BORN IN 1918 in Creston, Iowa. He graduated high school at the age of 16 and eventually enrolled at Creighton.

One night, while a student at Creighton, he went on a double date with another couple. The woman in the other couple was a fellow undergraduate, Rosemary Mulligan. And though the two would remember each other after this date, they went their separate ways.

Cletus graduated from Creighton in 1941 and, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 of that year, joined the U.S. Navy. Though he joined as an enlisted man, he was eventually accepted into an officer training program and attended classes at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Rosemary was born in Omaha in 1920 and grew up in the shadow of Creighton’s campus. She attended St. John’s grade school on campus and, after high school, eventually transferred to Creighton after a year studying at Rosary College in Illinois. She graduated from Creighton in 1941.

With her mother’s encouragement, Rosemary joined the Navy’s Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) program and shipped out to Boston for training.

The collection consists of only one side of the correspondence: Cletus’ letters to Rosemary. Maureen suspects that her father, stationed on several vessels during the Pacific Theater of the war, probably had to toss her mother’s letters overboard in the interest of traveling light.

Still, she says, the letters have given her a vivid new perspective on who her parents, now both deceased, were.

“I knew my father as a typical ’50s dad of six children,” Maureen says. “But in these letters, he’s so romantic, so optimistic, so hopeful about the future. In the letters, I can see the beginnings of the people they both grew to be.”

Pre-War

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Dec. 16, 1944 – Jan. 4, 1945

THE LETTERS BEGIN WITH CLETUS writing to Rosemary from the Naval Operating Base in Norfolk, Virginia. As he will in many other letters to come, Cletus begins his discussion of military life: his living conditions (“The quarters themselves are of a war-time structure of small frame buildings, plainly furnished but clean”) and his work schedules (“was pretty glad to hear that I don’t start work until Monday morning. I can use the extra time to catch up on sleep…”). As the weeks pass, Cletus grows frustrated that he’s cool-sounding and the negativity he hearing from his parents and friends regarding Rosemary and the war effort winds down. Because Cletus and Rosemary were married Aug. 14 — the day before an Aug. 15 deadline — he received an extra 10 points — enough to go home.

In early January, Cletus begins writing of his plans to make a trip to Charleston to see Rosemary for the weekend. In January, Cletus grew frustrated that he was serving in the Navy and was unable to see Rosemary. He wrote to her that he was thinking of her frequently and that he was looking forward to seeing her in Charleston. In his letter, he also mentioned that he was looking forward to seeing her in Charleston again shortly.

The two would raise six children together, living up and down the East Coast. The children were a constant source of joy for Cletus and Rosemary. They would travel around the country together and would often spend time in Charleston, where they lived. The family would reunite with other members of the family, and they would spend time together on holidays.

In April, he comments on the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt — “even the most bitter anti-Roosevelt men were sad to hear the news,” he says, adding his own personal take: “I suppose that it will be some months yet before most (of) the fellows will get back from over there.”


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MAUREEN MCCANN WALDRON, BA ’75, MA ’98

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

“Knew my father as a typical ‘50s dad of six children. But in these letters, he’s so romantic, so optimistic, so hopeful about the future. In the letters, I can see the beginnings of the people they both grew to be.”
A new book by Creighton’s president focuses on how Jesuit higher education can address the crisis of modern Western secularism

Restoring ‘Fullness’

The following is adapted from Jesuit Higher Education in a Secular Age: A Response to Charles Taylor and the Crisis of Fullness (Georgetown University Press, April 2022), a new book by the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, president of Creighton, which focuses on the loss of “fullness” in our lives and the distraction and relevance of Jesuit higher education today in educating students toward a better self-awareness, a stronger sense of global solidarity, and a greater aptitude for inspiration, awe, and gratitude.

I have long been inspired by Charles Taylor, PhD, a Canadian professor and Catholic philosopher whose renowned 2007 book, A Secular Age, challenged Western culture to rediscover the significance of genuine spiritual experience and thereby to better appreciate a sense of “fullness” in our lives, or a lack thereof. Taylor is the recipient of the Templeton Prize, the Kyoto Prize, the Kluge Prize, and the Templeton Prize, the Kyoto Prize, the Kluge Prize.

In this book, then, I discuss Taylor’s diagnosis of the crisis of modern Western secularism by focusing on the loss of “fullness” in our lives—essential points of contact with our interior lives; communities of family, friends, and associates; and beyond us, a greater “ontic” reality.

Defining and applying Taylor’s concept of fullness, I articulate how Jesuit higher education restores contact with ourselves, others, and an Other through three “pedagogies of fullness.” These pedagogies of study, solidarity, and grace reflect the Renaissance origins of Jesuit education as they seek to restore for us a sense of wholeness. As such, Jesuit higher education facilitates ways to understand and envision meaningful connections, a richer, broader sense of relationship. This Jesuit imaginarium—where we seek to reframe for us a sense of wholeness. As such, Jesuit higher education facilitates ways to understand and envision meaningful connections, a richer, broader sense of relationship. This Jesuit imaginarium—where we seek to reframe for us a sense of wholeness—educates students toward a better self-awareness, a stronger sense of global solidarity, and a greater aptitude for inspiration, awe, gratitude, and God.

I begin with Taylor’s diagnosis, expressed primarily through A Secular Age. He argues that the kind of secularism influencing our lives in North America and Western Europe is lessening, weakening, or diminishing essential “points of contact,” and that an ultimate point of contact is with God, or a higher power or what he refers to in the book as an “ontic” reality. As such, Taylor describes us as “porous”—less able to feel the impact of others and the world upon us. Instead, we are “buffered,” protecting ourselves from the power of our emotions, the needs of others, and even the call of God. Taylor speaks about a sense of “disenchantment.” Then, and before we are once again more haunted by joy, beauty, disgust, injustice, equality, the Holy Spirit, and so on. That is, Taylor wants us to be enchanted by the realities beyond us.

Jesuit higher education, I propose, can make us porous. We can be reenchanted. Our way of educating facilitates a “Jesuit imaginary”—an envisioning of all the relational possibilities around us, and a greater appreciation of all the realities of our lives that are beyond our control.

In this book, I trace the origins of the fundamental values and ideals of Jesuit education from Greek antiquity through Rome’s Cicero to Pierre Paolo Vergerio, the first educational theorist of the Italian Renaissance whose De Institutione Morali and Liber Civitatis Studii. The Character and Structure Befitting the Prince Born Youth (444B), represents a paradigm shift in Western teaching and learning that continues to inform educational practices.

For Vergerio, as with ancient Greeks and Romans, the upright life of the individual is an individual-in-community. Unlike the Scholastic interest in esoteric truths, a return to comprehensive approaches of educating, and reality, to humanism, demonstrated a practical concern about daily life of the public, which for Vergerio necessitated an active and responsible execution of one’s citizenship.

The earliest vision of Jesuit higher education augmented a humanistic movement that was in active rebirth when Ignatius of Loyola was completing his studies at the University of Paris, and becomes the heart and soul of Jesuit education, both in its origins and in its impressive proliferation around the world. Ignatius and his companions did not invent humanism, but they deployed it in a new form through fresh tools and networks. They recognized the importance of their holistic approach as a pedagogy and carried it to a new level. This is the way that Jesuit education expanded so quickly, and so internationally.

Jesuit education facilitates a broader, deeper awareness. Its commitment to the humanities, whereby we study ourselves and others, the practice of discernment, wherein we become both more self-aware and socially conscious: the work of community engagement and global study and immersion, allowing students to encounter others who look and live quite differently; and myriad programs, such as retreats, liturgies, genuine conversation, mentoring, and so much more that awe, gratitude, and wonder fill our lives.

Although current expressions of Jesuit higher education in the United States are vulnerable to current trends of fragmentation, superficiality, and instrumentality, recent gestures through highest superiors of the Jesuit organization suggest a steadfast relationship with the humanist origins of Jesuit education and investments in addressing specific social ills regarding the rights and dignities of the underprivileged, the forces of socioeconomic poverty, and environmental and ecological devastation.

The pedagogies of fullness help to equip students of Jesuit higher education with a common imagination. Deeply and personally inquisitive, easily adaptive and widely relational, and open to the inexplicable is one way to frame the Jesuit imaginary. Holistic self-jury-related, and receptive of beauty is another way to regard it. So, too, are conceptions of being at home with oneself and with others, and of being hospitable to an Other (or a transcendent power).

Forming a learned imagination for students of Jesuit education—that is, a Jesuit imaginary—is my purpose in proposing these pedagogies of study, solidarity, and grace. A Jesuit imaginary is fueled by the distinctive tradition and pedagogy of the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits, and regards the self, society, and our world hopefully. In how the self is studied, how solidarity with alterity is ever possible, and how the world and we are graced, hope is prevalent in the pedagogies of fullness.

— by the rev. daniel s. hendrickson, sj, phd

Book Description

In A Secular Age, the philosopher Charles Taylor challenges us to appreciate the significance of genuine spiritual experience in human life, an occurrence he refers to as “fullness.” Western societies, however, are becoming increasingly secular, and personal occasions of fullness are becoming less possible.

In Jesuit Higher Education in a Secular Age, the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, shows how Jesuit education can respond to the crisis of modernity by offering three pedagogies of fullness: study, solidarity, and grace. A pedagogy of study encourages students to explore their own thoughts, behaviors, and emotions to help amplify their self-awareness, while a pedagogy of solidarity helps them relate to the lives of others, including disparate cultural and socioeconomic realities. Together, these two pedagogies cultivate an openness in students that can help them achieve a pedagogy of grace, which validates the awareness of and receptivity to the extraordinary spiritual Other that impacts our lives.

Fr. Hendrickson demonstrates how this Jesuit imaginary—inspired by the Renaissance humanistic origins of Jesuit pedagogy—educates students toward a better self-awareness as a spiritual work of global solidarity, and a greater aptitude for inspiration, awe, and gratitude.

“In this timely book, Fr. Hendrickson provides a path to revitalize Jesuit higher education for the secular age,” writes James K.A. Smith, professor of philosophy at Calvin University and author of How (Not) to Be Secular: Reading Charles Taylor. “This book should catalyze a conversation across all sectors of higher education.”
New Endowed Chair Continues Creighton Couple’s Legacy

Nearly 50 years ago, Subhash Bhatia, MD, arrived at Omaha’s Eppley Airfield with $8 in his pocket and no place to stay for the night.

It might have been an unsettling experience were it not for the friendly man from Creighton who offered him a warm welcome.

Beverly Mead, MD, chair of Creighton’s psychiatry department at the time, drove Bhatia to a Ramada Inn, paid for his room and had a faculty member pick him up that following morning for work.

“Dr. Mead was so kind to us; being Hindu and from India, we probably feel like we were related to him in our previous life,” says Shashi Bhatia, MD, Subhash’s wife of 50 years.

The better part of a lifetime later, the Bhatias see that moment as the first in a long line of kindnesses they experienced at Creighton.

The Bhatias — professors emeriti and longtime leaders in the School of Medicine’s psychiatry department — say that they were longtime faculty members in the School of Medicine.

As the first holder of the endowed chair bearing the Bhatias’ name, Tampi says, “It’s about hard work,” Subhash says. “It’s about the people who have changed our lives. This gift is our way of showing our gratitude.”

Shashi adds, “You can never forget the places and people who have gotten you where you are. Coming to Creighton was the best thing that ever happened to us.”

In March, Rajesh Tampi, MD, was installed as the inaugural Bhatia Family Endowed Chair. Tampi comes to Creighton from the Cleveland Clinic, where he served as the chief of geriatric psychiatry and the chair of psychiatry at Cleveland Clinic Akron General.

“I take the Bhatias’ love for Creighton very seriously,” Tampi says. “They have done so much for patient care, for education and for mentorship at Creighton.”

As the first holder of the endowed chair bearing the Bhatia’s name, Tampi says, he carries forward the legacy of a couple who helped shape and shepherd Creighton’s Department of Psychiatry for more than 40 years.

“We have been so blessed, and it’s not just about hard work,” Subhash says. “It’s about the people who have changed our lives. This gift is our way of showing our gratitude.”

“Even Robert ‘Bo’ Dunlay, MD, studied under Subhash, back when the School of Medicine drew was a Creighton medical student. “This has always been a strong, innovative department with some of the top teachers in the medical school,” Dunlay says. “But even in the history of this terrific department, the Bhatias stand out as exceptional human beings.”

The Bhatias say they see their gift as an endowed chair as the culmination of their collective careers of service and education at Creighton.

“We both came to America with nothing but the hope of a better tomorrow,” Tampi says. “We didn’t know what we would find here. And to pay it forward.

Dr. Shashi and Subhash Bhatia, MD, recently retired and left, and Shashi Bhatia, MD, recently retired and left, and Shashi Bhatia, MD, recently retired and left.

Paul D. Determan, BA, Gian Diego Diago, was recently cited by The Spokesman-Review for being one of its most prolific and best-loved satirists and op-ed news writers.

Douglas E. Garland, MD, Pismo Beach, California, recently published The Tulip Poppy Syndrome – The Joy of Cutting Others Down.

Daniel E. Mommert, JD, Wichita, Kansas, of Monnat & Spurrer, Chartered, was recently honored by the Nebraska State Bar Association for being a member of the association for 50 years. Subhash, who retired from practicing law in 2015, also completed his goal of walking at least 5 kilometers in all 50 states in the U.S. plus Washington, DC. Additionally, for the last 12 years, Feudon has submitted grant applications on behalf of Cornell Diabetess Connection, a public foundation based in Omaha that operates a 28-foot Winnebago 10 in which nurses and student nurses administer free screenings for diabetes and related conditions to economically disadvantaged individuals.

Dr. Amy M. Haddad, BSN, Omaha, recently published her first poetry collection titled An Otherwise Healthy Woman. The poems in the book delve into the complexity of modern health care, illness and healing, offering an alternative narrative to heroes and miracles. Haddad is professor emerita in Creighton’s School of Pharmacy and Health Professions and served as director for the Center for Health Policy and Ethics at Creighton from 2004 to 2018, where during her tenure she led the development of a fully online graduate program in health care ethics.

76 Michael G. May, BA, Fort Calhoun, Nebraska, has been named a 2021 recipient of the Baldrige Leadership Award in the nonprofit category. Dunn, the former president and CEO of Donor Alliance, retired in 2020 after a career that spanned more than three decades. During her tenure, Donor Alliance achieved top decile performance in key industry metrics to further the mission of providing organs and tissue for transplantation. In 2014, Donor Alliance was named a Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner.

The Hon. James P. O’Hara, JD, Overland Park, Kansas, retired in November after 22 years of active, full-time service. He retired as chief magistrate judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas. He continues to serve the court part time as a recusals (senior) judge.

Nancy White McCall, JD, Salisbury, Maryland, retired in January from her career as a legal services attorney and most recent position as chief attorney of the Eastern Shore offices of Maryland Legal Aid.

The Hon. Mark A. Moreno, JD, Parris, South Dakota, appointed a full-time U.S. magistrate judge for the District of South Dakota in May 2021. Before his appointment, Moreno served the district as a part-time magistrate judge for 28 years, and practiced law in a Pierre law firm for 30 years, specializing in mediation. As a judge, Moreno handles cases from six of the district’s nine Indian reservations.
Donald J. Higgins, BSBA, Streamwood, Illinois, released his novel But Who Will Save the Children, a narrative/ action thriller. Carrie Martin Meyer, BSN, Chicago, gave a virtual presentation at the Association of Vascular Access (AVA). Her presentation, “Wait, What? There are complications I need to know when placing PICCs in ECMO patients” was co-presented with Gregory Schears, MD, from the Mayo Clinic.

The Hon. Stephanie A. Charter, JD, Las Vegas, was elected to the 8th Judicial District Court, Department V, in Clark County, Nevada, in November 2020. She is assigned to hear child abuse and neglect cases.

Regency M. Frieden, RA, Portland, Oregon, joined Providence Health Plan Inc. as chief of staff, serving as a key communications strategist and advisor to the CEO.

Gerald L. Zimmerman Jr., JD, Geneva, Illinois, was named senior vice president and deputy general counsel for the Affalite Corporation. In this role, he leads a team that counsels the corporation on government affairs and public policy at the state and federal levels.

Shun Lee Fong, BA, Valley Village, California, is celebrating 15 years of the Greenhouse Arts & Media, the Los Angeles-based community of creative artists and professionals that maximizes the potential and productivity of individuals engaged in the creative arts. He is president and creative director of the long-standing organization that fosters members through relationships, mentoring, group discussions and artistic projects. The organization’s journal, The Greenhouse Arts Journal, has featured writing by Eileen Wirth, PhD (professor emeritus of journalism at Creighton) and Dr. Susan Spencer, PhD (director of the Creative Writing Program at Creighton).

Mark A. Babbitt, DDS, Camarillo, California, has launched a website featuring his photography at MarkRabbit.com/Photography. Denti Las Posadas, BS, Greenwood, Indiana, was recently featured in the Archives of Indianapolis newspaper. The Criterion. The article discusses her passion for helping others through baking. She is currently an adjunct professor at Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), Indiana University Kokomo and Butler University.

Dr. James P. Zorn, BSVE’59, JD, Omaha, was the recipient of the George Wolfe Koone award from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in November 2021. Zorn is the Omaha District’s deputy district counsel.

Sara E. Zdrojewski-Gates, BS, Fremont, Nebraska, received her education specialist degree and Doctorate of Education from Doane University. Her dissertation was titled “Leading Ladies: Why Credentialed Women Aren’t in Leadership Roles.”

Lori J. Johnson, BA, North Beach, England, recently signed a four-book deal for a historical mystery series. The first book in the series, The Strangled Servant, was released in January. The second book, The Poisoned Clergyman, was released in June. Johnson writes under the name E.L. Johnson.

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ALUMNI PROFILE

Creighton Law Grad Assigned Leading Role at Mayo Clinic

Twenty-four years after graduating from the Creighton School of Law, CHRISTINA ZORN, JD’98, will guide a 73,000+ employee health care team at the world-renowned Mayo Clinic.

On Dec. 1, 2021, Zorn became chief administrative officer of Mayo Clinic, the country’s top hospital for the past six years as ranked in U.S. News & World Report’s Best Hospitals guide.

In her new role, Zorn partners with Mayo Clinic President and CEO Giannina-Farrugia, MD, to remove clinical practice, research and education, as well as the proper functioning of shared services, including development, enterprise risk management, facilities, finance, human resources, information technology, planning services, public affairs and security.

It’s a significant responsibility, Zorn says, but also one she approaches with confidence because of the strength of her team. “Mayo Clinic is only the best of the best,” she says. “We have highly talented teams. We seek talent who demonstrate drive, passion and diversity of thought. More so, we prioritize a commitment to values-based service not only to our patients but to each other and our communities.”

The key to her personal success, Zorn says, has been curiosity, courage and a willingness to challenge the status quo. “Challenging problems, characteristics she says were nurtured during her years at Creighton.

“There’s immense value in being curious,” Zorn says. “We should all seek out different passions, expand our interests into different areas, and never stop exploring and learning.” Creighton always stimulated and rewarded critical and creative thinking. Creighton allowed students to chart their own courses through their academic careers,” she continues. “There were so many electives, not to mention the third-year self-study, where I really designed my own research project and curriculum, and where I was able to focus on what interested me. At Mayo Clinic, that kind of innovation is critical to our success.”

In her role as CAO, Zorn is responsible for the financial success of Mayo Clinic and its operations in Minnesota, Florida, Arizona, Wisconsin and Iowa, as well as internationally. While the budget is remarkable, Zorn says it reflects a purpose.

“Mayo Clinic inspires hope and promotes health through integrated clinical practice, education and research,” she says. “We are transforming medicine to connect and care for the global authority in the care of serious or complex disease.”

For example, Mayo Clinic has been a trusted leader during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayo staff have treated nearly 160,000 COVID-19 patients, administered more than half a million vaccines and provided more than 21,000 monoclonal antibody infusions to date. The way Mayo Clinic cares for its patients is a source of pride for Zorn — as is Mayo’s vision for the future of health care.

The current health care system costs too much, she says, poses obstacles to access and is underperforming from a quality perspective as evidenced by COVID-19 mortality rates in some communities that compare unfavorably even with developing nations. The Mayo strategy for the future focuses on curing, not just alleviating, chronic illness: connecting people and data to make health care more intuitive and convenient; and transforming health care by harnessing the power of the digital revolution to give everyone better access to data and treatment.

“There’s never been a greater need for change in health care,” Zorn says. “And we’ve never been in a better position to drive it forward. I’m confident that over the next few years, we will make progress.”

Zorn joined Mayo Clinic in 2002 as legal counsel. In 2009, she was named chair of the Florida division of Mayo Clinic’s legal department and served as chief administrative officer of Mayo Clinic in Florida for six years before taking her current role.

Prior to joining Mayo, Zorn practiced with the Milwaukee law firm Foley & Lardner LLP, with a focus on health care and transactional law — by EUGENE CURTIN

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One Saturday in February, WILLIE MILLER, BSN’21, walked to his car, slid the keys in and let himself feel an impossibly complicated mix of emotion.


Miller, a former fullback with the University of Nebraska Lincoln Cornhuskers who played on the 1997 national championship team, had just finished taking the required exam to become a licensed nurse in the United States. Years of struggle and study came down to this.

“I just thought, ‘Whatever happens, God’s opened these doors for me. Even if my result isn’t the best today, next time it will be’,” Miller says.

It’s an attitude that has seen Miller, who last year graduated from the College of Nursing’s Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program through his share of challenges over the years. He left UNL with a bachelor’s degree in communication studies and severed back pain that led to a prescription for opioid painkillers — the beginning of a decades-long addiction.

After college, he landed a job in pharmaceutical sales — an industry that he soured on after a few years. Unhappy in his profession and battling addiction, he figured he could bring a unique perspective to his patients.

“I know what it’s like to be a patient, to be scared in that hospital room and not know what’s going on,” Miller says. “I experienced legal troubles that worsened the situation. I basically crashed and burned,” he says. “I lost the house, the car, the job, everything. So, during that time, I wanted to do the best that I could, and I’m pretty proud of how I did.”

After a few restless days, Miller found out that he had passed his licensing exam. Weeks later he started a new job as a cardiovascular operating room nurse with Methodist Health System.

While at Creighton, Miller says he received positive feedback from his clinical instructors naming his ability to relate to patients as one of his strengths.

“That’s a tribute to how we’re taught at Creighton. It boils down to those Ignatian values,” he says. “Having had my own personal journey, I can relate to those so strongly. I know what it’s like to make six figures. I know what it’s like to be homeless. So, for me, it doesn’t matter what the patient looks like, I’m going to give loving care to every single one. Because that’s what I’m called to do as a nurse.”

— BY BLAKE URSCH

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Photo top: Willie Miller, BSN’21, visits with a vaccine recipient at the Creighton COVID-19 community vaccine clinic in March 2021.

Photo bottom: Miller receives his Creighton diploma from College of Nursing Dean Catherine Todero, PhD, BSN’72, at the nursing pinning and hooding ceremony in December 2021.
Globally Prepared

For one group of Creighton University undergraduate students, the brick-lined, multiple dining opportunities and modern buildings that enliven Creighton’s Omaha campus are a portal to global adventure.

These are the Global Scholars, members of a program inaugurated four years ago by Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. Born of Fr. Hendrickson’s company to attend medical students, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty scholars, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty

Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. Born of Fr. Hendrickson’s company to attend medical students, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty

Scholars in May.

“Those are the Global Scholars, members of a program inaugurated four years ago by Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. Born of Fr. Hendrickson’s company to attend medical students, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty scholars, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty

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...the program is celebrating its first graduating class of 16 Global Scholars in May.

“This marks a significant achievement for these students and a milestone for Creighton University,” Fr. Hendrickson says. “Our Global Scholars go beyond their comfort zones to embrace both the beautiful and harsh realities of the world in order to become more globally conscious, critically engaged, and open-minded global citizens.”

Grace Hibbert, a biology major, says her Global Scholars experience in the remote mountain community of Venu in the Dominican Republic confirmed her decision to attend medical school after graduation.

“Those are the Global Scholars, members of a program inaugurated four years ago by Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD. Born of Fr. Hendrickson’s company to attend medical students, the bricked walkways, multiple dining opportunities and staff opportunities to embrace global perspectives, the Creighton Global Initiative, which offers students, faculty

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**WEDDING**

Mary Kate Hanes, BSN, and Carson Shaffer, MD, are living in Lee’s Summit, Missouri.

**BIRTHS**

Marie McCarthy, Boston, Massachusetts, Aug. 6, 2021.

**DEATHS**


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**FORWARDBLUE**

A Bold Future for Creighton University

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**DEATHS**


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**DEATHS**

Pursue excellence. "It doesn't matter at what point you are in your career, you can always learn by hearing from others and where they are. When you think about continuous improvement and evolving where you are at as an individual, education is one way that can help you do that." —Mindy Simon, MBA '18

Creighton Alumnus Named Bishop in Michigan

THE MOST REV. JEFFREY WALSH, MA '98, will always feel a sense of loyalty when it comes to Creighton. It is, after all, why he keeps coming back. "I had a very, very positive experience at Creighton, and I do feel it prepared me in a very positive way spiritually," he says.

In March, Walsh, an alumnus of Creighton’s Christian Spirituality program, was installed as the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord in Michigan. But throughout his decades-long career with the Church, he has tried to find time, every three or four years, to return to Omaha to serve as a spiritual advisor with the Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF), headquartered on Creighton’s main campus.

"I love the campus, and I love the city," Bishop Walsh says. "And I always thought that, since the diocese invented me getting a degree from Creighton, I wanted to go back and pay it forward."

Bishop Walsh came to study at Creighton in the mid-1990s at the behest of the bishop of the Diocese of the Diocese of Scranton in Pennsylvania. While completing his degree, he encountered the then newly formed IPF, which is dedicated to helping seminarians, priests and bishops grow in their faith.

"Once I got my degree, I came back to Creighton every few years to serve as spiritual director for men preparing for the priesthood during their eight-day retreat," Bishop Walsh says. "I've always looked at it as a way to keep those lessons fresh in my mind as well."

Before being named Bishop of Gaylord, Walsh served as a priest in the Diocese of Scranton in Pennsylvania. The transition, while exhausting, has been "absolutely wonderful," he says. "I couldn’t be happier or more filled with gratitude and joy. What I’ve experienced here in Gaylord has been a wonderful outpouring of hospitality and warmth."

In September, Bishop Walsh will travel to Rome for the so-called ‘baby bishops’ school,’ in which he and other new bishops will become familiar with the governing structures of the Holy See.

Bishop Walsh says his time at Creighton has prepared him academically, spiritually and professionally for his latest challenge. For one thing, he says, his summers on campus have provided him with valuable opportunities to network with priests from all over the country. And his academic experience, he says, continues to bear fruit.

"At Creighton, I had the opportunity to delve into the firsthand accounts of saints who wrote books that I wouldn’t have had access to or wouldn’t have taken the time to read otherwise," Bishop Walsh says. "That element of Ignatian spirituality led to an understanding of the dynamics of our faith which has benefited me in every aspect of my ministry ever since." —BY BLAKE URBACH

IN REMEMBRANCE

We remember Creighton University faculty and Jesuits who have recently passed.

James E. Plato, PhD, professor emeritus, Department of Biology, College of Arts and Sciences, Nov. 7, 2021.

L. Kirk Benford, PhD, dean emeritus, School of Pharmacy and Health Professions, Dec. 28, 2021.

"Faculty and Jesuits who are Creighton alumni are listed in the alumni deaths section of Montagu magazine.
In November 2021, Creighton President the Rev. Daniel S. Hendrickson, SJ, PhD, named Sarah Walker, PhD, vice president of the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI). The Heider College of Business professor had been interim VP since March 2021. The division collaboratively leads the University in developing and deepening its commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Last fall, Walker helped direct a campuswide climate survey of students, faculty and staff to help determine what initiatives best foster a sense of inclusion and belonging at the University.

Walker also co-hosts, with Heider College of Business professor Todd Darnold, PhD, a new Creighton-produced EDI podcast, *Threads of Equality*, that features interviews and conversations on a national scale. The podcast is available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Play.

How would you define the terms equity, diversity and inclusion?

There is a simple analogy that diversity is being invited to the party, and inclusion is being invited to dance. Diversity is about differences — each person's status — and today that goes beyond race to include gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, disability and even hairstyles and weight in certain states. You can have diversity, but if you don't have inclusion, people will not dance and stay. Equity is about fairness and justice, acknowledging that we don't all start from the same place and that there are systemic and structural barriers, both intentional and unintentional, limiting personal growth and success for everyone.

Where would you say Creighton is right now in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion?

There are some things we're doing really well as a university. There are some opportunities for us to get better. We — as faculty, students and staff — do not yet reflect the communities that we serve. We've seen some significant gains since a cabinet-level position in diversity and inclusion was created in 2018, and it's important we keep up this momentum and do what we need to do to create a place where everyone will flourish.

How do we best recruit and retain students from underrepresented minority groups?

The biggest barrier continues to be the cost of attendance. Scholarships are the key to providing more opportunities for underrepresented minorities. Funds like the Union Pacific Diversity Scholarship and the Next Generation Leaders Scholarship are doing so much to support individuals who haven't historically been in these spaces. But ultimately, Creighton needs more full-tuition scholarships to create a more diverse campus.

Once these students come to Creighton, it's about providing opportunities for them to fully participate in the life of the University. The students we retain are really embedded in the campus community. That means mission trips or student activities or studying abroad. If you do not have enough money to do these things, you are not fully experiencing everything Creighton has to offer. We need the resources to give our students the opportunities to really engage, and as a result they will be more likely to persist, to stay and to graduate.

How is Creighton reaching out to the local community?

We continue to work to strengthen the University's relationship with the Omaha community, particularly with our neighbors to the north and south. In January, Creighton celebrated a week of events around Martin Luther King Jr. Day. In February, the University launched a Presidential Lecture Series focused on race. Our goal was to use these events, which were open to the public, as a launchpad to change discussions and change experiences and increase inclusivity here at Creighton.

What has been the reaction from campus and alumni?

There is such a willingness to want to grow and develop within the Creighton community. I do not think that is true everywhere. It's exciting to know that in the students, faculty, staff, alumni and leaders, I have true partners who want us to be better — and believe that we can be.

Want to support the many exciting initiatives of the Division of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion? Make a gift to Creighton's Forward Blue campaign at creighton.edu/supportforwardblue.
Creighton Days is Reunion Weekend reimagined — new date, new name, same incredible Creighton community.

Creighton Days is a celebration for all Bluejays, a celebration of this amazing place we hold so close to our hearts.

Join us for four days of reunion parties, campus festivities, food, fun, music and so much more. *Bring the whole family!*