

SPRING 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON MAGAZINE

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT:
Campus Activities Help Students Continue to Rise



FROM THE PRESIDENT



For a university president, there's something very energizing about walking through a student union in the middle of the day.

Almost every time I visit UA's Jean Hower Taber Student Union, I see students picking up information about ways to get involved with intramural sports teams, future career organizations or academic clubs. Other students representing their service or social organizations or special interest groups staff the information tables, and they almost always take a few minutes to share their passion with interested fellow students looking to engage at UA.

Student engagement is critical for a university community. It's a very important piece of how students build social networks, learn about leadership, and make an impact on and off campus.

In this issue, you will read about some of the ways in which student engagement impacts our community and how much fun students have while involved in these activities.

You will read about UA's esports programs, a relatively new field that has seen explosive growth on college campuses across the country. UA esports programs were recently ranked second in the nation.

You also will read about our award-winning residence life program, the experience of international students on campus, and a new intramural sport called

Spikeball, which you can frequently see students playing on Coleman Common in the warmer months. And we had to include a story about the UA Ohio's Pride Marching Band, which is one of the University's longest-running and most visible student organizations.

This issue also notes milestone anniversaries for our popular WZIP radio station and E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall.

As for off-campus engagement, this issue includes stories about how students interact in the community through volunteering with serveAkron, supporting small businesses downtown with Zips Invade and learning valuable nursing skills at Akron's Grace House.

I also want to note that two of the stories in this issue were written by students whose work first appeared in the Buchtelite, UA's independent student-operated newspaper and news website. The Buchtelite is another long-running and popular student engagement activity.

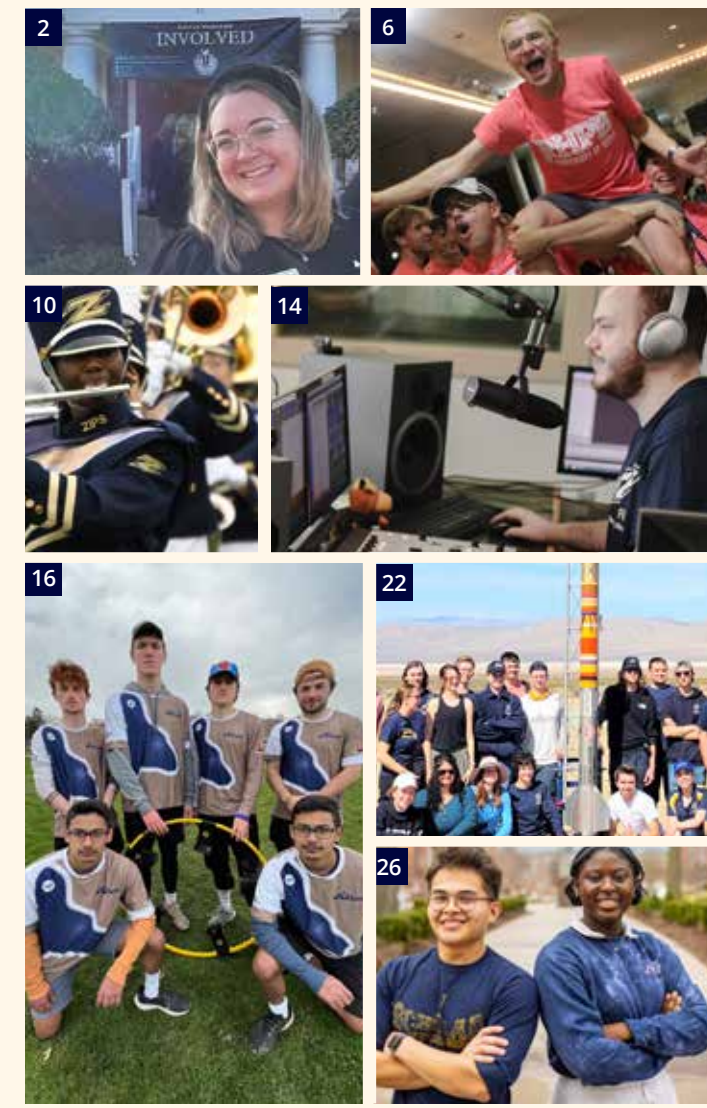
There is so much more for students to explore — Greek life, varsity athletics, outdoor activity clubs, performing and fine arts groups, student government, and organizations that celebrate diverse experiences and backgrounds, to mention a few.

Many of these activities are supported by the Department of Student Life, which is committed to building community through collaborative learning experiences that provide our students the opportunity to engage, serve and lead.

The comradery and learning opportunities that develop from engagement, service and leadership activities are often the memories that resonate the most with graduates. It is exciting to think our alumni might one day use those experiences to make an impact in their own communities long after they have moved on from UA.

Gary L. Miller

Gary L. Miller
President



CONTENTS

Features

- 2 Getting Involved on Campus
- 5 Zips Invade Akron Businesses
- 6 Engaging Residential Students
- 8 International Student Flourishes
- 10 Marching Band Entertains
- 12 Community Volunteering
- 14 WZIP Students Gain Experience
- 16 Esports Continues to Grow
- 18 Spikeball Club is a Winner

Campus News

- 20 Local Men Get Second Chance
- 22 Akronauts Reach for the Sky
- 23 Success Rooted in Safety
- 24 Helping Hospice Patients
- 25 E.J. Thomas Hall Turns 50

Alumni and Giving

- 26 O'Neil Scholarship Honors Hero
- 28 Bevilacqua Strengthen Scholarship Support
- 29 Learning Through B-STEM
- 30 Funding the Future
- 30 Alumni Connection: Class Notes
- 32 Grutzmachers Stay Musical



PRESIDENT
Gary L. Miller

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING
Tammy Ewin, Vice President, Chief Communication and Marketing Officer

EDITOR
Cristine Boyd, Senior Director of External Communications

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Tony Barnes, Sr. Manager, Alumni and Development Communication
Alex Knisely, Marketing and Communications Specialist
Jessica Whitehill, Communication and Content Manager
Student Writers, Beau Balizet '25, Savannah Johns '22, Natalie Mowad '23, Owen Pinion '23

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Tymcio Hoffman & Company

EMAIL magazine@uakron.edu
SEND CLASS NOTES TO alumni@uakron.edu
WEBSITE uakron.edu/magazine

@uakron
 @UniversityofAkron
 @uakron

Getting THE Most OUT OF COLLEGE LIFE

One student's journey in moving past the pandemic and exploring campus

BY NATALIE MOWAD '23

Editor's Note: Below is a first-hand account of how one student moved beyond pandemic paralysis to get involved with campus life at The University of Akron (UA). This story first appeared in the *Buchtelite*, UA's student newspaper.

College is Hard When You Have No Friends

After my first semester in fall 2019, I went home for winter break [Aliquippa, Pa.] and told my mom I had no friends.

As an out-of-state, "one-person-from-my-high-school-goes-here" student, it was quite the adjustment. My friends that I grew up with for 18 years were no longer with me, and my high school extracurricular activities were over.

Though I was in marching band at UA, and had a few acquaintances, my mom recommended I join a sorority.

I was not interested.

Mom told me to investigate it before saying no so, just like any other Gen Z, I went to Instagram. After a bit of "researching," I thought that I could maybe see myself joining one of the sororities, so I did.

The process was fun and a little stressful but, in the end, I found my second home with girls that I knew would be in my life forever. I joined a few other clubs and finally started to find my groove.

Everyone Knows What Happens Now: March 2020

Just like everyone else, I had my struggles during lockdown. Not seeing friends, being stuck in my house, trying all the weird TikTok trends people were doing.

My entire high school life I had enjoyed being on the go with sports, band, theatre, school. I had just started to find that busy, belonging feeling with college when the world shut it all down.

Through lockdown though, there was a true effort put in by my sorority and other organizations to stay connected. Zoom became my laptop home screen, but it was okay because I could still see and interact with the people I cared about.

As lockdown went on longer, it got easier to interact but harder to stay positive about the future when I had no idea what it would bring.

I went back to campus for fall 2020 semester because I needed interaction, and knew I needed to get involved, even if it was from six feet away. I got a job on campus in the Department of Student Life, I stuck with my sorority and the marching band, and joined a few new organizations. I was finally getting a taste of the "college experience" I had wanted.

Finally, I Had Friends

Eventually, I started hearing that we were "back to normal" with classes in person, club meetings and campus opening back to pre-pandemic norms. Unfortunately, though people were excited to return, it's almost as if as a student body, people are reluctant to come back.

During the pandemic, students added more work to their schedule because online courses didn't occupy the same time blocks. That also made it hard to succeed in school. Now that we're back, students are still trying to maintain their pandemic work schedules on top of in-person course loads. Some younger students just aren't used to being part of campus life; they started online.

Guess What That Means?

Fewer people are available for organization meetings, activities or fun get-togethers with classmates. This not only impacts student organizations, it's also impacting us.

Without involvement, we are missing out on opportunities for leadership, professional experience and experiences that can make us more well-rounded.

Involvement for Today's Students Remains Relevant and Necessary

You don't have to take my word for it. I reached out to some of the people I look up to on campus for their thoughts on involvement.

"My campus involvement has been impactful to me as I have grown as a leader, and I've developed relevant experience in a field I am interested in," said Camryn Moore, president of Zips Programming Network (ZPN). "I feel that working and leading organizations on campus has allowed me to utilize the things I am learning in my classes to be put to work in real-life situations."

Moore is not only part of ZPN, but also serves on The University of Akron Public Relations Student Society of America officer board. Both allow her to put public relations, event planning and social media skills from the classroom into practice.

Opposite: Mowad outside her sorority at The University of Akron

Right: Mowad and UA mascot Zippy after a marching band performance. (Images courtesy of Natalie Mowad)



Other students emphasize the importance of making connections and growing as a professional.

"I can positively say that I am a better person because of my involvement on campus. It has given me lifelong connections and helped me improve my time management and leadership skills," said Jena Mies, president of Alpha Gamma Delta.

Involvement is what helps you find your people. You may only see students in one class or two but, when you become involved, you can meet others who share your interests and develop deeper friendships.

"Being involved on campus has been such a fulfilling and rewarding experience for me. Within my organizations and music ensembles, I have found people who share my interests and hobbies that truly make feel at home at UA," said Karlynn Baker, treasurer of Kappa Kappa Psi and Ohio Collegiate Music Educators Association.

Mowad working her student job at The Source.

The Relationships You Can Build and Experiences You Can Have Are Unique to the College Environment

"I have met all my forever friends through being involved in some way on campus, and truly it has made my college experience something that I will always cherish and remember," Baker said.

My dad always told me to be involved in as many activities as possible because, in the end, it will benefit me in more ways than one and I can confidently say he was right.

My experiences and involvement have led me to more opportunities than I ever would have thought and introduced me to some of the greatest people I have ever met. I have learned so much from every activity I have done. I know I wouldn't be half the person I am today without it.

Getting involved helped me get myself together when the world was falling apart. It helped my mental health. It taught me more about people and life than anything else could have.

And it made me so proud to be a Zip! ■



EXPLORING THE CITY, SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS: UA Students Get to Know Akron Through Zips Invade

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

The University of Akron campus is so well integrated into the City of Akron that in some areas it's hard to tell where UA ends and downtown begins. The proximity allows students many opportunities to explore their community.

One way students can get acquainted with the City is through Zips Invade. Held a few times each semester, Zips Invade uses social media to drive students to downtown businesses in exchange for a free or discounted item. Students show their Zip Card, receive a treat and get to know their community, while businesses benefit from increased social media followers and, hopefully, return customers.

Zips Invade is supported by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation which, among its many community efforts, is focused on revitalizing downtown Akron and strengthening residents' attachment to the City.

The program has sent students to "invade" popular downtown spots such as Diamond Deli, the Peanut Shoppe, Akron Coffee Roasters and Chill Ice Cream — all places that are walkable from the UA campus. Some of the Zips Invade events have brought more than 300 students into downtown businesses — certainly a huge single-day bump in customers that could generate repeat business over time.

A recent Zips Invade was held at Essential Dipped Delights, a business located in Northside Market. Owner Takila Nuss invited students to choose from several sweets, including chocolate-covered strawberries, brownies or cookies.

When UA reached out to Nuss about partnering for a Zips Invade event, she was thrilled. UA students are among her regular customers, and she frequently receives orders from students' parents looking to send their child a sweet treat for a birthday, Valentine's Day or other occasion.

"I'm always excited when someone takes an interest in the business and what we do because every outlet, whether it's social media or something else, is an opportunity to reach customers," Nuss said. "I'm excited to be able to be part of that and to be connected with students and people who are interested in possibly one day being their own boss."

JP Garchar, president of the Undergraduate Student Government, and an Akron native, said Zips Invade has taken him to businesses he never before visited.

"Akron has so much to offer, everything from nationally renowned national parks to historic restaurants," said Garchar. "Students should be given every opportunity to take advantage of this and, with Zips Invade, I feel it's making it easier to do just that." ■



Residence Hall Program Board HELPS BUILD CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

BY **BEAU BALIZET '25**

A thriving campus life can make all the difference for college students.

Year after year, research from Gallup, a national data analytics firm, shows a direct connection between college and success in life. Data from 2021 surveys shows students who are highly engaged in campus activities outside of the classroom are 1.4 times more likely to report thriving in all aspects of their lives and 1.8 times more likely to be thriving in their future careers.

"I am beyond pleased with the collective hard work that my team produced to make this honor happen again," said BreAnna Piorkowski, a senior from Massillon, Ohio, who serves as president of RHPB. "Putting on programs for resident students and giving them a space away from their academic life to make memories is the absolute favorite part of my job. I am, and always will be, proud to be a Zip!"

How Did RHPB Receive This Honor for Two Consecutive Years?

RHPB engages students with its creative networking and programming skills that bring top-of-the-line entertainers to campus. Students have been able to enjoy accomplished singers, comedians, magicians, hypnotists, psychics and speakers. Addison Agen, first runner-up on The Voice, season 13, and Manny Torres, who finished 14th on America Idol in 2016, recently visited campus, in addition to renowned comedians such as Ronnie Jordan, who wrote the music video for Life is Good (feat. Drake) and was a creative consultant on Wild'en Out.

Last year, RHPB partnered with Residence Hall Council (RHC) to host its largest casino night, which was held in E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall.

Above: Piorkowski (far right) studies with friends in her residence hall.

Below: Entertainment in the Student Union



MAKING AN IMPACT

Tom Faessel is a UA fixture. For forty years he has been a driving force of the student experience in his role as associate director of residence life activities in the Office of Residence Life and Housing.



Since joining UA in 1983, Faessel has helped to advise, encourage and mentor thousands of student leaders through the Residence Hall Program Board and Residence Hall Council. And many others have enjoyed the Disney Leadership Class he teaches. Additionally, he began the Richard L. Hansford Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary in 1985, spearheaded the Emerging Leaders program in 2001 (UA's first Living-Learning Community) and launched the Sigma Lambda Freshman Honorary in 2009.

Highly decorated in his field, there may not be an award in existence that Faessel has not received. His most notable award, among the many, is the Associate for Promotion of Campus Activities Lifetime Achievement Award he received in 2016.

An eternal optimist, Faessel's positive demeanor makes a difference to his students. "I have been here 40 years and I have never lost my excitement about the job," he said. "It is fun to work with the children of former students, but I think I need to retire before their grandchildren arrive!"

"The casino night with RHC took a lot of time, but we had our biggest turnout ever," said Piorkowski. "I am thrilled with what our team has done, and it definitely contributed to us winning the award again."

Thomas Faessel, associate director of residence life activities, commended RHPB on its efforts. "Our residence hall student leaders work extremely hard to ensure our residential students have a stellar co-curricular experience, and receiving this award for two consecutive years is a testament to their hard work. I am very proud of the programming efforts of RHPB, especially as we are emerging from COVID."

A Day on Campus

How does an award-winning campus life program affect a student's day? Piorkowski shares with us what her typical day looks like.

- 8 a.m. Wake up, excited for the day!
- 9:15 a.m. Grab breakfast/coffee from Einstein's Bagels and Starbucks
- 9:45 a.m. Report to the RHPB for work
- 11:30 a.m. Lunch at Rob's with one of my advisors
- 12:15 p.m. Back to the office
- 2:45 p.m. Work the Admissions Visit Day and give tours of the residence halls
- 4 p.m. Head to Honors colloquia course, Nature vs. Nurture
- 5 p.m. Go to the Rec Center and walk on the track
- 6:30 p.m. RHPB show prep for stand-up magician Derek Hughes
- 8:08 p.m. Derek Hughes Show - Huge success!
- 10:20 p.m. Get burgers and fries with friends at the Union Market
- 11:30 p.m. Hang out with friends - talk, laugh and throw a ball around
- 1:30 a.m. Finally go to bed after getting some homework done

"Working with RHPB and attending their events has been amazing! They have helped me network with other students in other residence halls and have helped me build meaningful connections with students, staff and many others that will last forever," says Piorkowski. ■



FROM ETHIOPIA TO AKRON: BUSINESS STUDENT PREPARING FOR

Career in Coffee

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

There are thousands of miles, millions of people and many other differences that separate the cities of Akron and Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia and one of the largest cities in Africa.

The two cities do have one major connection, however. Three siblings from Addis Ababa have all studied at The University of Akron (UA), with the youngest set to graduate in May 2023.

Eden Dukamo is a senior who is double majoring in marketing and sales management. Her older brother, Kenean Dukamo '19, studied computer science, and her older sister, Bethlehem Dukamo '21, was a nursing student.

UA has been a special experience for all three siblings, who found community in a place more than 7,300 miles from where they grew up and where nearly all of their family still lives.

"Coming here really opened my mind to a lot of things that I wouldn't have known if I was back home," said Eden.

Coming to the U.S., Finding UA

The Dukamo siblings attended an international high school in Kentucky, which was their introduction to the U.S. and life far from home. Kenean was getting ready to graduate and looked for higher education opportunities close to Kentucky. One of those options was UA. After he was accepted, Eden visited Kenean during her school breaks, since regular trips to Addis Ababa weren't feasible.

She recalls visiting many places such as Bierce Library and growing very comfortable on campus.

"He loved it and graduated, so we all followed the same path," she said.

The Dukamo sisters now live together in Akron. Bethlehem recently began working at Cleveland Clinic Akron General Hospital.

International Students at UA

International students make up around three percent of the current UA student body. China, India and Saudi Arabia, respectively, are the top three countries out of 70 different countries with students enrolled. Eden is one of eight Ethiopian students this year.

International student interest in UA is growing, especially now that COVID restrictions have been relaxed. UA's global reputation has also reached new levels, especially following a 2022 rating as the top university in the world for polymer and plastics engineering.

The University's International Center provides support at every step along the way, including help with the application process, ensuring students have the correct immigration paperwork, working with parents who are overseas, and even making sure incoming students know how to preorder bedding and towels for their residences.

Dr. Deborah Owens, associate professor and chair of the Department of Marketing, appreciates the richness that international students add to the UA experience.

"I absolutely love our international students. They have helped me to broaden my perspectives and I know that they have done that for other faculty and students," she said. "I try to get to know them personally, and often invite them to share a meal so they get a look into the life of an American family."

Owens and other UA faculty and staff have been a big part of Eden's support system in Akron. That was especially meaningful during the pandemic, when she was unable to return home for two years.

"Professors like Dr. Owens make the time to email me and check up on me," Eden said. "They don't have to do that for individuals, so that has really touched me. It can be hard for [international students] and they consider that, which I really appreciate."

Eden has also found community in other areas, including her job as a student assistant in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center and by gathering with others to go bowling in the Roo Lounge at the Jean Hower Taber Student Union.

Brewing a Career in the Coffee Industry

Although she has chosen a very different academic program path from her siblings, Eden's long-term goal is to support her family's business in Ethiopia. In a country renowned for producing some of the best coffee in the world, her father and uncle own a coffee exporting business called Daye Bensa Coffee. She is eager to jump into that industry, too.

As a double major, Eden was required to do two internships for credit. For her marketing major, she interned with Bereka Coffee, an Akron-based company that was started by Nardos Street, who is also from Addis Ababa. She not only learned about marketing coffee by managing social media accounts and designing marketing materials, but she also had the opportunity to network and assist with events.

For her sales internship, she spent summer 2022 in Addis Ababa with her father's company. She made cold calls to potential new accounts, shadowed sales team members, managed email marketing campaigns and learned how to establish long-term client relationships.

After graduation, Eden wants to stay in the U.S. to learn more about the coffee industry and eventually help her father establish his business here. She knows UA has shaped her and given her the experience she will need to continue to bridge the distance between her home country and adopted nation.

"I've had the opportunity to do internships, career fairs and to make connections with companies," she said. "I would definitely recommend UA to other international students. I've really met a lot of friends who have become family." ■





OHIO'S PRIDE Marches on FOR UA

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

For more than 120 years, The University of Akron's (UA) marching band has been one of the most visible student organizations on campus.

From intricate pre-football game marches on InfoCision Stadium's Summa Field to rousing appearances at major University events and beyond, the marching band, known as Ohio's Pride, fills crowds with UA spirit.

There is so much more to the band, however. It's an educational experience for hundreds of students eager for careers in music education. It's an outlet for non-music majors who want to stay active, be engaged and cheer for the Zips. It's a recruiting tool for the University.

For students in the program, band offers more than an opportunity to play music, said UA Director of Bands Galen Karriker, who has been with the program since 1999.

"Some love to perform. Some love football. Some just want to hang out with friends in the stands," he said. "It's a fascinating thing about a band. You celebrate the diversity in the individual because that's important to

the makeup and fabric of the organization, yet we're striving for uniformity in everything we do."

Growing the Band

In addition to its visibility in the community, the marching band is also one of the University's most enduring student programs. The band was founded between 1900 and 1910, and in 1938 it began to perform at Zips football games.

Numbers climbed steadily over the decades — the addition of a small stipend in the 1970s boosted numbers, as did the University's decision to allow marching band to fulfill the physical education requirement. There are now around 240 members, and the stipend is \$1,000 a year per student.

The band performs at all home football games and one Mid-American Conference away game each season.

The band also hosts recruiting events. The Zips Invitational High School Band Show features marching bands from all over the state. Zippy's All-Star Marching Band offers individual high school marching band members the opportunity to play alongside the UA band during a halftime performance at a football game. During High School Junior/Senior Day, prospective students can sit with the band in the InfoCision Stadium stands.

Marching into a Teaching Career

A portion of the current members intend to pursue a career in music education. That means the band program is a vital learning experience for students who want to teach and is the reason the band uses a few different styles of marches in its programs. Karriker wants students to be prepared for a range of marches they might encounter in any program.

UA band members also have an opportunity to learn important lessons by becoming involved in the organization's student leadership structure. Each spring, band members apply for positions, such as squad leaders, who teach marching fundamentals to groups of four in their instrument groups, and music leaders, who focus on performance techniques for their instrument groups. The students who are selected go through leadership training in the spring and summer.

Kristen Flinner, a flute player and third-year instrumental music education major from Louisville, Ohio, said she's learning both classroom and life lessons she intends to pass on to future students.

"Being involved in marching band inspires me to be a better music educator, teammate and person," said Flinner, who was part of the leadership in 2022. "The lessons we teach and rally behind in marching band, such as 'Leave it better than you found it,' 'Go to class! (and sit in the front row),' 'Who we are, what we do,' I will carry with me and those will become lessons I will teach my future students."

There are plenty of non-music majors in the band, however. Students come from nearly every college of the University.

"One of the things that is beneficial about this experience is you can have friends [in the marching band] that are in your major and in class with you," said Harley Nunez, a third-year dual instrumental music education major and percussion performance major from Canton, Ohio,

who plays the tenor drum, known as the quad. "But it's healthy to have another group of friends that aren't, so you're not just talking about what it is you're majoring in."

Building Bonds in the Pre-Season

UA marching band members spend many hours with each other during home football game days, but the first bonds of friendship and team spirit are established well before the season has started.

Each summer, the band gathers for a weeklong pre-season camp. It's an intense experience of 12-hour days when all band members learn the music and marching fundamentals for the 11-minute pre-game show. First-year members realize they have a lot of new traditions and marching styles to take in, and almost everyone is exhausted by the end.

It's also the week during which the band becomes a cohesive unit.

"Pre-season camp is very important," Nunez said. "Our members come from all different backgrounds and styles of marching, so we have to unify what our style is and teach that to everyone. It is a tough week, but there's something special about knowing the couple hundred people around you have the same goals and desires and are in it with you even if you

hardly know anyone there yet."

The band also spends a session learning about how to function in the stands during the games — what happens when the Zips score, for example.

"That's always a cool night, because that's the first time they get to play the fight song together," Karriker

said. "These are just more moments on their journey. You know, marching band is not easy. But these students have a lot of pride in what they do." ■

Below:
Galen Karriker,
UA marching band
director



“IT'S A FASCINATING THING ABOUT A BAND. YOU CELEBRATE THE DIVERSITY IN THE INDIVIDUAL BECAUSE THAT'S IMPORTANT TO THE MAKEUP AND FABRIC OF THE ORGANIZATION, YET WE'RE STRIVING FOR UNIFORMITY IN EVERYTHING WE DO.”

Galen Karriker
UA Director of Bands



RISING TOGETHER THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

BY ALEX KNISELY

3,486 UA students completed 14,404 service hours in 2022

When Kelsey Jennings stepped onto The University of Akron (UA) campus, she didn't know a single person, especially since she moved to Northeast Ohio by way of Layton, Utah. So, as she began her rigorous career as a student in UA's School of Law, she decided to make her own community through volunteerism.

"I remember my first week at Akron looking over the [University] email, I saw [a list of] monthly service projects, so I signed up for every single one," said Jennings. "Volunteering has helped me to have a more balanced life through school and has also provided me a community of people who care about me."

Providing access to civic engagement opportunities is part of UA's mission to "develop enlightened members of society" through service to the community. And through the Department of Student Life, students can be connected to volunteer opportunities and educational and awareness events in Greater Akron and beyond.

"Service is a great way to grow empathy and compassion," said Corie Steinke, coordinator of UA's serveAkron program. "When students are placed in a situation to serve, they grow their capacity to understand other people. Students want to be anchored and connected, and giving back to their own community is a great way to make them feel that way."

Torrin Todd, a second-year financial planning major from Akron, who is a service engagement guide for serveAkron, added, "Volunteering helps students to gain experience outside of class in problem solving, teamwork and communication."

1,400 Service Hours in 2022

UA students like Todd and Jennings have made an impact on campus and in the Akron region. In the 2022 calendar year, 3,486 students completed 14,404 service hours among programs coordinated by serveAkron and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Thanksgiving 2022 was a memorable experience for Jennings. She volunteered with the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank where she was put with a group that managed a large drive-thru service for boxes of dry goods, baked goods, produce and a turkey.

"It was a non-stop process for more than two hours, and we found out afterwards that we had given out more than 1,000 turkeys," Jennings recalled. "It was amazing just to see all the faces of people who were so grateful because they had no idea how they were going to feed their families during the holidays, let alone provide a Thanksgiving dinner."

One large project facilitated through serveAkron is the annual national Make a Difference Day, held every fall, where the University deploys hundreds of volunteers to provide community service in the Greater Akron area with dozens of partners.

And the projects don't stop there.

During Alternative Spring Break service projects, undergraduate students travel outside of Akron to serve others in need during their time off from classes.

Drop-in service projects enable students who may have busy schedules to volunteer a few minutes or more of their time for such things as bagging up care packages or making Valentine's Day cards for children in the area.

UA's Greek Life community is committed to giving back through hands-on service and philanthropic support. Chapters supports a philanthropy — a local or national non-profit organization — with physical and monetary donations. Chapters hold a number of on-campus fundraising events throughout the academic year and also complete projects together to empower members to become socially responsible, active and contributing members of society.

Additionally, during National Volunteer Week each spring the University spotlights the people and causes that inspire service and celebrate the volunteers who gave their time and talents to make their community better.



Growing serveAkron

Steinke has been coordinator of serveAkron for a little over a year. And in that time, she's certainly seen the impact of the program.

One of the standout moments she recalls is getting students to register to vote, which is one of her passions. During RooFest 2022, serveAkron set up a voter registration area, which paid off.

"I don't know what my expectations were for turnout, but surprisingly almost 40 students registered to vote. And they were students who were really excited to register and excited to be part of democracy," said Steinke.

A newer component of serveAkron's programming is Awareness Wednesdays where students discuss an area of service and bring awareness to it, such as ways to help eliminate poverty. Steinke said she's been impressed by student interest in the program and their desire to help others.

"It's showing me that UA students are ready to go deeper into the service and civic engagement than just doing projects, and want to really think critically about issues in communities," she said. ■

To learn more about its work, follow the office on Instagram @serveAkron



Above: Students coordinate a "Wall of Love" with free personal care items.



WZIP

turns 60

Students and alumni
reflect on 60 years of learning
in the Z88 studio

BY SAVANNAH JOHNS '22
AND OWEN PINION '23

Akron's #1 radio station for nonstop hits, WZIP-88.1 FM, has changed the lives of many University of Akron (UA) students for decades — six to be exact. The station celebrated its 60th anniversary on Dec. 10, 2022.

When the station began, it operated under the call sign "WAUP" which stood for Akron University Programs. The broadcast of WAUP consisted of campus news, taped educational discussions and fine arts programming. The call sign was changed in 1989 to WZIP, in honor of the Zips, UA's athletic nickname.

Today, WZIP operates out of Kolbe Hall and has more than 125,000 listeners each week — reaching about 22 counties in Northeast Ohio over the airwaves and additional listeners via online streaming. Operating commercial-free, it is a top station around Akron, particularly for younger listeners, and is one of the most-listened-to, student-run radio stations in the country.

WZIP allows students to get training and experience in all aspects of radio station operations. Students can become on-air DJs playing music and interacting with listeners, or they can work with music programming, news, production, promotions, sports or underwriting. All give students hands-on opportunities to learn how a radio station is run.

Current Students and Alumni Agree, These Experiences Just Can't Be Taught in the Classroom

WZIP also opens up opportunities for employment in the industry. Current members often get jobs at stations in the greater Akron area while still in college. And hundreds of WZIP alumni have taken what they've learned to start prominent and successful careers in the entertainment and media industry.

Rachel Evans '21 says that her time at WZIP helped her land her job at Akron station WQMX-94.1 FM, and she is grateful for the mentorship and opportunities she received from WZIP General Manager Chris Keppler '91, '14 and Sarah Kay at WQMX.

Evans was a member in a variety of departments and also served as both the entertainment director and music programming director.

"I learned about the ins and outs of how a radio station works," she said. "I also learned how to edit audio, mix music and network with people, all important skills I still use today."

Beyond the experiential learning and career success, WZIP has always been a place to make friends and have fun. "If you're looking for a cool way to spend your time and meet new people, it's a great way to do so," Evans said.

Cody Brown '16 joined WZIP as a sophomore. He shadowed other members and eventually worked his way up to serve as DJ director, where he booked and interviewed celebrity guests.

The friends and connections Brown made gave him a leg up. Today, he works as an on-air personality at WMMS-100.7 FM in Cleveland.

"People in the industry now will tell you, it's not always what you know it's who you know," Brown said. "I know people that work in the industry in all the major markets in the country. They [Zips] look out for one another, so networking is key. I know a lot of people who got their biggest break from someone who was from WZIP and ZTV."

Building Confidence

"One way that WZIP helps just about anybody, particularly people who are on the air, is that it builds their confidence," Keppler said. "Having solid communication skills and confidence can help you in any capacity and can be applied anywhere in life."

Keppler was involved in the station as a student and understands that faculty can have a great influence in the lives of students.

Amber Good '12, '16 used her time to help better the lives of others. While at WZIP, she had the opportunity to conduct an interview with an employee of ACCESS Women's Shelter and remembers that interview as a moment she was able to create change within her community.

"Ultimately, I learned the power of reporting and how to use my voice to be an advocate for the community," she said. "I was making the public aware of an organization that provided vital services to women of all ages and backgrounds who were faced with some of the most challenging times in their lives for whatever reasons."



Above: Yvette Nicole Brown '94 visits WZIP students in the studio.

Film and television actor Yvette Nicole Brown '94 agrees. "I learned so much at WZIP and I use so much of what I learned in what I do now as an actor and host."

Opportunities for All Students

When asked about advice for current students, Evans said that the station isn't just for communication majors and recommended everyone [from all majors] give the station a try.

Cody Brown also encourages students to join. "Excuses will always be there, opportunities won't," he said. "What do you have to lose? If you're looking for a place to build a resume and develop yourself as a personality and as a professional, then WZIP is the place to do it." ■

For more information, visit www.uakron/wzip.

*This article originally ran in the Buchtelite, UA's student-run newspaper. www.buchtelite.com





ESPORTS CONTINUES TO MAKE NAME FOR ITSELF

BY ALEX KNISELY

In the five years since The University of Akron (UA) became the first public university in northern Ohio to create a varsity esports program, the Zips have earned 28 Div. I national championships, grown to seven competing varsity teams and have inspired younger generations. Today, UA is a collegiate leader in the esports industry.

“The simplest way to describe esports is that it’s team competition in an electronic format,” said Nate Meeker, director of esports at UA. “Esports teams are essentially an analog version of a traditional sports outfit, but tend to be smaller with three to five players competing against other collegiate teams across the country.”

Zips Esports has 52 student-athletes, including subs and coaches, across seven game title teams:

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II, a team-based militaristic battle game that is set in a realistic battle zone

Fortnite: Battle Royale, a survival game where players and their teammates are pitted against other teams in a large arena after their characters skydive onto an island

League of Legends, a multi-player game similar to capture the flag

Overwatch, a team-based battle game against robots with artificial intelligence set 60 years in the future

Rocket League, a vehicular action soccer game where three players control rocket-powered cars to hit a ball into an opponent’s goal to score points, much like traditional soccer

Tom Clancy’s Rainbow Six Siege, a five-on-five tactical game where the teams work against each other to defend or secure certain objectives

Valorant, a five-on-five, team-based tactical game taking place in the near future

Next year, the program expects to add Super Smash Bros. as a varsity team. At UA, student-athletes compete in the esports arena inside InfoCision Stadium during regular season play where competitions are held remotely against other teams. Championships are typically held in person at large sports arenas in such cities as Atlanta, Chicago, Las Vegas and New York City where upwards of eight teams battle to earn national titles. The UA varsity Rocket League team has earned the national title for three consecutive years, in addition to three Mid-American Conference championships.

The program not only gives students an opportunity to showcase their abilities, they also learn valuable soft and hard skills that can be applied to their careers.

“Esports has helped me build my resume and skills,” said Mike Mandato, sport business major from Mentor, Ohio. “An esports industry professional who spoke to one of my classes mentioned some important experiences esports programs provide that can help a student get ahead in the industry such as facility operation, tournament operation and team management. As she was speaking, I started to realize that I had already gained a lot of the experience she recommended.”

The impact of UA’s program and the rise of esports nationwide has brought new ventures for the University. In 2021, the College of Business began offering an interdisciplinary Esports Business certificate in response to the industry’s need for properly trained college graduates to fill such esports-related positions as team manager, tournament manager, event coordinator, marketing specialist, social media specialist, sales manager, content creator and more.

Since its launch in December 2017, the program has partnered with well-known and reputable brands, such as Samsung, Intel, Gravity Gaming and Elgato. In 2018, the University opened up three spaces across campus that house the components of esports — varsity, club and recreation. Today, there are about 2,400 students involved in the club component of Zips Esports.

The impact of Zips Esports extends beyond campus. The program has been very involved with the startup of similar programs at area high schools. It also hosts events for high school students to spotlight the esports program and establish relationships with prospective students.

“We work a lot with high schools and their students, whether it’s visiting established programs, helping to build new programs, practice and, most importantly, recruit student-athletes,” said Meeker. “We see ourselves as leaders in the industry and we want to help other players and programs startup.”

Zips Esports also hosts several events on campus, including an annual summer camp for youth and high school students. This year, UA is playing host to Ohio’s state esports tournament where 48 teams from across the state will converge at UA to compete in May. Earlier this year, the program hosted an educational summit with the National Association of Esports Coaches and Directors for high school coaches and administrators to help them improve their programs.

Zips Esports student-athletes are eligible for scholarships offered through the program, which rely on the generosity of alumni, donors and sponsors. Zips Esports alumni can continue to be involved in the program at its annual alumni gatherings and by joining the program’s Discord server at uakron.edu/discord.

“Zips Esports does a great job at providing experiences in all aspects of the industry,” said Mandato. “Whether it’s playing competitively, facility management, stream production, community engagement, or even event production, this program does it all and it still continues to grow. Every year I have been here, the program has improved. The community is amazing; it has always been super inclusive and accepting of everyone.” ■



SPIKEBALL

UA STUDENTS FIND SUCCESS

IN A *unique club sport*



BY **BEAU BALIZET '25**

If you take a look around campus when the weather is nice, you'll notice there is always a group of people out on the lawn playing Spikeball, and they play a lot. The University of Akron (UA) Roundnet Club is one of the most successful club teams on campus, and members understand that practice brings success.

You may not have heard of roundnet, but the game has been around since the 1980s. It began to peak in popularity in 2015 when it was marketed as Spikeball and appeared on the television show Shark Tank. A few years later Spikeball appeared on ESPN2 for its coed SummerSpike tournament, making the game a household name.

And for the past five years, it has been a staple on the UA campus.

"During New Roo Weekend, I saw students playing it for the first time and was fascinated," said freshman Michael Smith of Akron. "I am not good enough to play competitively because UA players are really talented, but it's something fun to do with my roommates when the weather is nice."

Spikeball rules are simple, and it is easy to set up, which is why it is adored by many, especially college students. The game accommodates four players (two teams) centered around a circular net. One team begins the game by hitting a small yellow ball onto the net toward the opposing team. After the serve, the opposing team can move in any direction to spike the ball back on the net, however, they are only allowed three touches to do so. If the opposing team can't get the ball on the net in three touches, or if the

ball hits the ground, the serving team gains a point. Think of it as reverse volleyball but, instead of hitting the ball over a net, you hit it onto a net.

Today, Spikeball sponsors a tour series across the country and within Europe, which has become a large part of its brand. At the college level, there are three main tournaments: Fall Sectionals, Spring Sectionals and College Nationals.

UA's Roundnet Club team is no stranger to competitive college Spikeball. The team competes in Division 1 and has proven to be successful.

"We have worked really hard and have won our sectional twice — last spring and this fall," said Luke Nickel a senior from Bay Village, Ohio, who is president of the Roundnet Club.

Not only has the team proven to be successful in sectionals, but they are the best college team in the nation.

"The team was ranked #2 in 2021 and is currently ranked #1 in the nation by The College Board of Roundnet," Nickel said proudly.

The team's success doesn't come easily. Like any other sport, the UA team practices multiple times each week to achieve its prestigious reputation, both in groups and individually. Nickel and his teammates can often be seen practicing near the Union and the soccer fields and regularly invite others to step in and learn the game.

The UA Roundnet Club is at the top of its game, representing UA in a unique sport, but the team has a big goal for the rest of the 2022-2023 season. "We hope to win the national tournament," says Nickel. ■

Opposite above: UA's competitive team for the 2022 spring sectionals included (top left to right): Cody Dryer, Grant Klapwijk, Luke Nickel, Justin Barr and (bottom left to right) Kanishka Kumar and Krish Kumar.

Opposite bottom: Luke Nickel and Lindsay Metzger compete at a tournament.



CLUB AND INTRAMURAL SPORTS KEEP STUDENTS ACTIVE AND ENGAGED



Student Recreation and Wellness Services is home to all things fitness. The Rec Center building is a hub of activity where students can work out, take fitness classes, swim in the pool or join in on outdoor adventure trips. They also offer UA clubs and intramurals as an additional opportunity to engage in a fitness activity and build social skills.

Intramurals gives students the chance to play against other UA students in games such as wiffleball, floor hockey, basketball, futsal, volleyball, flag football and even euchre!

UA also offers a variety of club sports that compete against other institutions. Teams often fundraise to cover equipment and travel costs. In addition to Spikeball, UA students compete in sports such as ice hockey, men's lacrosse, English equestrian, bowling, water polo, billiards, dodgeball and many more.

For more information, visit www.uakron.edu/rec/



LOCAL MEN GET *second chance* AT *education*

Michael Sutton and Kenny Phillips have waited a long time to get to college.

Both men were wrongly convicted in 2007 of charges of attempted murder stemming from a 2006 shooting incident in Cleveland. The two men spent 15 years in prison before being released in May 2021. They were finally exonerated in September 2022. The Ohio Innocence Project helped Sutton earn his release, and the Wrongful Conviction Project assisted Phillips with his exoneration.

Now they are getting a second chance.

The University of Akron (UA) offered both men full tuition and fee scholarships.

This wasn't the first scholarship Sutton had received. He was originally planning to come to UA in 2006, and just learned that he had received a full scholarship when he was wrongly arrested.

Both men visited UA to address the student body about their case and the work of the Ohio Innocence Project (OIP) as part of the 2023 campus Rethinking Race series. The event was co-sponsored by the OIP-u student organization and the Sociology Club, mentored by



Dr. Daniela Jauk-Ajamie, assistant professor for sociology and criminal justice.

Because of the event, administrators heard their story and wanted to give them a chance to start anew. They were invited back to campus to meet with UA's president and other members of campus who will help them navigate this new endeavor.

"We are doing this as a way to present an opportunity to two gentlemen who had their opportunity ripped from their lives," said President Gary L. Miller. "An education gives you the opportunity for a fresh start."

Both Sutton and Phillips were happy and humbled by the opportunity to earn a UA degree.

"An opportunity like this does not normally come around twice," said Sutton. "This is a dream come true. I am so grateful. This gives us hope."

Phillips agrees. "I thought I had lost everything. There are so many others who are innocent but are serving time. And there are others who are guilty. They all deserve a future. And I am so fortunate to now have this chance." ■



Top: (l to r) President Miller, Sutton and Phillips

Right: Sutton and Phillip celebrate with family and friends

UA HONORED AS ONE OF *top universities* FOR PATENTS

The National Academy of Inventors (NAI), in conjunction with the Intellectual Property Owners Association (IPO), issued its 10th annual report on top-ranked U.S. and international universities receiving the highest issuance of U.S. utility patents by the United States Patent and Trademark Office in 2021.

The University of Akron (UA), one of the nine founding NAI charter members, has been ranked in the top 100 every year since 2017.

"To see UA recognized among the top 100 is, again, confirmation that UA's faculty and students are not only inventive, but that together we can take that research and transform it into innovation," said Dr. Suzanne Bausch, vice president for research and business engagement and dean of the graduate school.

The latest round of recognition would not be possible without UA's research faculty, students, efforts of the



UA faculty are pictured here with President Gary L. Miller celebrating new patents. (l to r) Dr. Yilmaz Sozer, Dr. Abraham Joy, Dr. Marnie Saunders, Dr. Joseph P. Kennedy, Miller, Dr. Lu-Kwang Ju, Kelly Bialak and Dr. Phil Allen.

Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) and the University of Akron Research Foundation.

By supporting development and commercialization of UA's intellectual property, OTT helps to bring faculty and student research from the lab to the market by facilitating the discussion of ideas and disclosure of inventions. ■

UA STUDENT AND TWIN BROTHER WALK THE *Gucci Fashion Show*



Just like out of a movie script, Nate Bartel, a freshman computer science major from Twinsburg, and his brother Jack, who attends the University of Cincinnati, were literally picked out of a crowd and offered the opportunity to model for an international designer.

The Twinsburg high school graduates attended the annual Twins Days Festival in August 2022 — a celebration of biological twins — held in Twinsburg, Ohio. While at the festival, they were approached by a talent scout from Gucci, who offered to fly them out to Milan for tryouts where

hundreds of other twins were auditioning. The brothers made the cut, being one of only three sets of Americans to model alongside 68 other twins in Milan, and walked the runway for the "Gucci's Twinsburg" fashion show during Milan Fashion Week. Although the two hadn't dressed alike since they were kids, they were happy to wear matching red metallic outfits on the runway. ■

AKRONAULTS *Rocket Design Team* GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

BY CRISTINE BOYD

The Akronaunts Rocket Design Team is impressive. Designed to give University of Akron (UA) students the opportunity to work on cutting-edge aerospace projects, the team has grown from 30 members just a few years ago, to more than 260 members today and is led by Riley Myers, a mechanical engineering major from Diamond, Ohio.

Although dominated by engineering students, members also come from many other majors, which has allowed the group to expand its ability to excel and take on more projects. There are currently more than 50 leadership positions available.

"We can find a place for anyone," Myers says. "We have nursing students that lead our environmental health and safety team, education majors who lead our work with local schools, and even finance majors who have helped set up our ordering processes and track costs."

The team focuses on three goals; the first to design and build a rocket to compete in the annual Spaceport America Cup competition in New Mexico. Students are responsible for every component that is a part of the launch vehicle, including the airframe, motor



and propellant, and the avionics, payload and parachutes. The team has an outreach program with the LeBron James Family Foundation I Promise School and used this project to get kids excited about engineering and aviation. The rocket they took to New Mexico in 2022 was painted with the handprints of participating I Promise students. The team won the Technical Excellence Award for their efforts.

The second is to build a rocket that can reach the Kármán line, which is 62 miles above sea level and is the boundary between Earth and space, by 2024. The team is developing a series of rockets, named the Emergence Series, working to improve each rocket to overcome a new set of hurdles and reach a higher target altitude than the previous one.

Emergence I was flown in Springfield, Ohio, in 2021 and reached an apogee of 14,244 ft. Emergence II was flown in March 2022 at Friends of Amateur Rocketry in Mojave, Calif., reaching an apogee of 21,964 ft. and Emergence III was launched in Dec. 2022 in Mojave and reached 38,005 ft.

The final goal of the team is to be the first team in Ohio to fly a rocket propelled by a



liquid engine. In September 2022, members hit a major milestone by becoming the first collegiate rocket team in Ohio to design, build and hot-fire a liquid engine. They are now working to integrate their liquid engine design into a flight vehicle. Liquid rocket engines are more widely used in the space industry, compared to solid motors, because of their reusability and ability to be throttled or turned off, but are more difficult to design and build and are hard to achieve at the collegiate level due to their difficulty and resources required.

Like all technical work, rockets are built upon years of team experience. "This [liquid engine] test was the result of over two years of hard work from dozens of people, including several who graduated before seeing their efforts materialize," said team Vice President Dillon Petty, a senior from Canal Fulton, Ohio. "It is rare to be successful in the first attempt and we did it!"

Along with gaining valuable aerospace experience, the group also volunteers. The team is currently building an aerospace museum exhibit in the Akron Children's Museum. ■

Above: Akronaunts
President Riley Myers

Left: Using teamwork
to prepare a rocket
for flight



STUDENT SUCCESS ROOTED IN *safety*

BY CRISTINE BOYD

The University is focused on student success, and The University of Akron Police Department (UAPD) believes that safety is an important aspect of achieving it.

Commissioned in the 1960s in response to civil unrest on college campuses, today's department is focused on building relationships.

"We see our work as less of a policing model and more of a safety model," said Chief Jim Gilbride. "At the end of the day, our goal is to work with our students so that they know we have their backs — to help them feel prepared for emergencies, but also to feel comfortable and safe in the classroom, residence hall and walking across campus."

UAPD officers help students succeed in a number of ways — educating them on crime prevention (locking doors, putting valuables out of sight), conducting trainings (active shooter/alcohol/drugs/sexual assault), providing safety escorts, unlocking cars or jumping those with dead batteries, and conducting self-defense courses. They also investigate crimes on campus, work with students on capstone projects, and assist in providing security on campus and at athletic events.

Undergraduate Student Government (USG) President JP Garchar, a senior from Akron, sees the relationship between students and UAPD as very beneficial. "The UAPD helps

students in so many ways. Not only are they prepared for large emergencies, they also consult with us on ways to make campus safer and more welcoming for all who come to campus."

USG and UAPD recently hosted an officer/student meet-n-greet to help students get to know officers better. "I love having them here — they check on my rental home when I am out of town and always smile and ask if we need anything when they see us on campus," said Julie Miller, a sophomore from Cleveland, who attended the event. "It gives me peace of mind."

UAPD is comprised of 34 officers, most of whom have degrees or are working toward degrees, and know what it's like to be a college student. Chief Gilbride encourages them to be involved in the community and the department provides a variety of trainings to help officers be more understanding and responsive to the ever-changing student population.

The newest member of the UAPD is K9 Dunkan. Trained in bomb detection, he is a friendly face on campus and will soon begin training to also become a therapy dog.

"Our goal is to be able to effectively protect our students as we continue to create a feeling of safety for all segments of our community," said Gilbride. "It's our hope that their experience at UA is the best it can be." ■



Top and middle: UAPD
Meet-n-greet with UA students
in the Student Union

Bottom: K9 Dunkan and
Officer Tre Richardson read
books to local students.

NURSING STUDENTS LEARN COMPASSIONATE CARE AT AKRON'S Grace House

BY CRISTINE BOYD

The School of Nursing at The University of Akron (UA) believes that nurses are the backbone of today's health care system. And it is dedicated to training and empowering the next generation of transformational innovative medical leaders. Compassionate care is one important aspect of that training. Although students rotate through



a variety of settings, they truly understand the meaning of compassion after completing clinicals at Grace House, a comfort care home in Akron.

Grace House opened in the fall of 2022 and provides a caring environment for hospice-enrolled individuals who are without a caregiver or cannot afford a private caregiver. Founders Holly Klein and Cindy Browning have spent much of their careers working with hospice patients and Grace House is a product of their dedication. Both believe that everyone deserves to die in the presence of care, compassion and dignity, and that no one should die alone.

The home has six beds and individuals come through referrals from families, social workers, hospice and hospital systems. All care to residents is free.

"Grace House gives UA students a wonderful opportunity to see compassionate care in action, and to work on their communication skills," said Karen Fitzgerald, professor of instruction in the School of Nursing. "It is so important for nurses to learn to work with patients and families on a human level, and to understand how these interactions impact patient care."

"It introduces them to more than starting IVs and being in a hospital setting," said Browning.

"Being here marks a big transition in the life of our patients and the support our staff and the nursing students provide them creates meaningful interactions that make a difference in how their day goes," said Klein.

Sarah LaTampa, a UA nursing student from Tallmadge, Ohio, recently finished clinicals at Grace House and says it is a privilege to be able to step into someone's life when they are facing their greatest challenge. "The focus here is compassion and awareness. That's hard to train."

"Knowing that a lot of these people don't have someone available 24/7 to care for them, you have to bring a piece of you here you probably wouldn't have brought in a normal acute care setting," said LaTampa. "I enjoyed this rotation. It has been eye opening." ■

For more information on Grace House, visit gracehouseakron.org.



Holly Klein, founder of Grace House, works with UA nursing student Natalie Truelson '23.



E.J. THOMAS PERFORMING ARTS HALL SHOWCASES *the arts in Akron for 50 years*

E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall opened in October 1973 to rave reviews. Occupying three acres on the western edge of The University of Akron (UA) campus, adjacent to downtown, this beautiful facility is owned and operated by UA for use by students and faculty of the University and by community and civic organizations active in the performing arts.

The University will celebrate the 50th anniversary of this gem on Sept. 29 with a special performance by the Akron Symphony Orchestra.

"The Akron Symphony Orchestra was the inaugural act of the facility when it first opened, so it is fitting that we kick off the celebration with a performance from them," said Margo Ohlson, director of theatre operations.

Named in honor of Edwin J. Thomas, retired chairman and chief executive officer of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company,

long-time member of the University's Board of Trustees, and a driving force for community progress for more than a half century, the building remains very active. It regularly features a variety of speakers, private events, graduations, and musical and theatrical acts. It also serves as home to the Akron Symphony Orchestra and Tuesday Musical Association.

"E.J. Thomas Hall is a great place for everyone to come," said Ohlson. "We offer diverse programming, convenient parking and ticket prices for all budgets. Most important is that it's located right here in Akron, so there is no need to go far for Broadway performances and musical acts."

A complete calendar of celebration events will be listed at uakron.edu/ej. ■

To support one of Akron's great treasures, please visit uakron.edu/ej/giving/

UNIQUE DESIGN

Architects Caudill, Rowlett and Scott of Houston, and Dalton, Van Dijk, Johnson and Partners of Cleveland created an overall design for E.J. Thomas Hall which resulted in one of the world's finest multi-purpose halls in terms of design, acoustics and creative mechanisms.

The building boasts a three-level auditorium, featuring continental seating (no center aisle), with seating capacity of 2,955. One of the focal points of the building is the movable 44-ton ceiling which can close off either the Flying Balcony or both the Flying Balcony and Grand Tier creating a one-, two- or three- level auditorium. The unique movable ceiling allows overseers to regulate the volume, manipulate the acoustics and alter the physical dimensions of the main hall.

Located in Goodrich Lobby and weighing in excess of 40 tons are the 27 chrome Witzman Counterweights which balance the ceiling in the house and are computer controlled. The configuration of the counterweights determines the position of the ceiling in the house. The entire transformation takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The building also features many works of art from Akron metal sculptor, Don Drumm.

O'NEIL SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS STUDENTS, Honors Akron HERO



BY ANTHONY BARNES

Behind every scholarship is a deeper story; a spark leading to benevolence that changes the course of another person's life.

But occasionally, there are stories that stand out, narratives that stand on the shoulders of heroes.

Hugh Michael O'Neil was 19 years old in the summer of 1964. He had graduated from Akron's Archbishop Hoban High School, was a student at Georgetown University, and his entire life was before him. However, on a fateful Tuesday in July, as he drove through a rainstorm that deluged the City, he saw an anxious group of bystanders at a parkway catastrophe and stopped his car to see if he could help.

Joshua Panchana Cedeno and Naomi Moore are two of the hundreds of students who have received the Hugh Michael O'Neil Scholarship since its establishment in 1965.

The Hugh Michael O'Neil Scholarship at The University of Akron (UA) honors his selflessness and compassion. It honors the memory of a man who, along with others that tragic day, risked their safety and lives. It is a scholarship that has for more than 50 years honored the solemn resolve of Akron, though shattered by calamity, to embrace the families of the victims.

An Act of Bravery

Velma Shidler was driving her car headed east down Tallmadge Parkway on July 21, 1964, in a torrential downpour. In the backseat were two children, her daughter, Claudia Shidler, 10, and her friend, Janet Lewis, 13. They were returning from a Firestone High School swim class. According to media accounts, as Shidler drove on the parkway, the road collapsed. Reports say Shidler swerved, but the car plunged into a 40-foot sinkhole near the Akron, Canton and Youngstown Railroad trestle.

As chaos ensued, people stopped, some, frozen by the horror of what had unfolded, unsure of what to do. Hugh O'Neil also stopped and was later joined by Akron Police Officer Ronald Rotruck. The sedan had landed on its back end, almost vertical, with the roof against the sloping wall of a crater 30 feet deep and 20 feet in diameter. O'Neil volunteered to go into the crater, using an 18-foot ladder, attached to a rope that had been tied to a truck. With a rope tied around his waist and held by several men, O'Neil descended the ladder, dropped 13 feet to the crater's floor and made his way to the sedan.

Rotruck arrived, asked for a rope and descended into the crater. O'Neil forced open one of the car doors removing Lewis, as Officer Rotruck was able to get to Mrs. Shidler. As they were lifted out of the crater, the men returned to the scene to look for Claudia. Water began bubbling up on the floor of the crater, causing sliding, with the disintegrating foundation eventually giving way, trapping both men and the child.

Over the next 48 hours, Akron was veiled in grief. O'Neil was a grandson of General Tire & Rubber Co. founder William O'Neil. Rotruck, a five-year police veteran, had a wife and three young children. Eventually the bodies of O'Neil, Rotruck and Claudia were recovered.

The road, which was closed for 100 days following the tragedy, was renamed Memorial Parkway in honor of the victims. Both men posthumously received the Carnegie Medal for Heroism from the Carnegie Hero Fund Commission.

Tragedy Turns to Scholarships

Six years before the accident, UA alumnus Ferdinand Brubaker presented the institution with a stock transfer in the Brubaker Gear & Manufacturing Co., establishing the Ferdinand A. and Lorry Brubaker Scholarship Fund. He closely followed the parkway tragedy and was moved by the efforts of O'Neil and Rotruck. Subsequently, he paid tribute to the young man by changing the name of his fund to the "Hugh Michael O'Neil Scholarship Fund."

In the nearly 60 years since the catastrophe and the scholarship award's establishment, more than \$300,000 has been distributed through approximately 500 scholarships. It has helped students not only prepare for professional careers but, for some, it has touched their own deeper sense of purpose.

Emma McIntyre, an O'Neil scholarship recipient from Conneaut, Ohio, majoring in criminology and criminal justice, said the bravery of the men and volunteers was moving, and touched her profoundly.

"After reading the story behind the scholarship, I have to say I am shocked and inspired. I had no idea there was such a heroic story behind it," McIntyre said. "It was incredible that he ultimately gave his life to save individuals in need. If I could, I would (thank) Hugh O'Neil for his bravery. It takes a special kind of person to be courageous enough to act."

Naomi Moore, an Akron native and an O'Neil scholarship recipient majoring in speech-language pathology and audiology, was struck by O'Neil's poise and bravery in a horrifying moment.

"At only 19 years old, he boldly helped others. Although many other people stopped to look at the accident, it was Hugh who took action and went into the crater," Moore said. "His story has made me evaluate my life and see areas in which I can help others."

Kim Cole, vice president for advancement and executive director of the UA Foundation, agrees. "There are many layers of impact and influence in this touching Akron story. Both O'Neil and the Brubakers gave selflessly to help others. Today, Naomi, Emma and hundreds of students like them now carry the energy of these good deeds into their lives of influence."

"We are grateful for the generous human spirit that propels UA friends and alumni to lend a hand and make the promise of tomorrow a reality for so many," Cole added.

Just as UA honors heroism, plans are underway for the City to do so as well. According to recent media reports, a monument will soon honor the memory of those who died that day in 1964. Plans call for the monument to feature the date of the disaster and pictures of the three victims, and for the stone to include inscriptions in white letters: "In Honor of All Who Helped That Day" and "In Memory of the Lives Lost That Day." It will also carry the Biblical inscription from John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." ■

To make a gift to the Hugh Michael O'Neil Scholarship or to establish a fund of your own, please contact Andrea Collins, assistant director of development special projects, at acollins@uakron.edu or 330-972-2603.



“IT WAS INCREDIBLE THAT HE ULTIMATELY GAVE HIS LIFE TO SAVE INDIVIDUALS IN NEED. IF I COULD, I WOULD (THANK) HUGH O'NEIL FOR HIS BRAVERY. IT TAKES A SPECIAL KIND OF PERSON TO BE COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO ACT.”

Emma McIntyre
O'Neil Scholarship Recipient

FRANK AND MARIE BEVILACQUA STRENGTHEN THEIR UA SCHOLARSHIP SUPPORT

BY ANTHONY BARNES

Distinguished University of Akron (UA) alumni and longtime benefactors Frank '72, '74 and Marie '71, '74 Bevilacqua have generously increased support to their scholarships in the College of Business and the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences.

"Our lives have been touched and enhanced in so many ways by The University of Akron," said Frank. "Marie and I know what solid educational foundations can produce in young people. The University is

an outstanding example of an institution committed to shaping young adults and preparing them to win professionally."

Frank earned a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Finance. With longtime friend and UA classmate Ron Winer '71, Frank established Winer & Bevilacqua (now W3 Global Accounting) in 1980. In 2001, he also founded W3 Wealth Management, LLC, a financial services and investment company.

Marie earned both a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science in Elementary Education. She taught in Akron Public Schools and at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School before becoming a bookkeeper for Winer & Bevilacqua, Inc. She later opted to become a stay-at-home mother

using her expertise to give their children a solid base in education.

"The Bevilacquas are outstanding leaders and active alumni," said UA President Gary L. Miller. "I am deeply appreciative of their lasting commitment to the University and to higher education."

The Frank P. and Marie Bevilacqua Endowed Scholarships in Education and Accounting, both established in 2006, assist students with tuition costs and fees, with awards being open to Ohio residents entering their junior year, majoring in accounting and education, respectively. Scholarship recipients must maintain a 3.0 grade point average, and eligible students in education must be enrolled full-time in The LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education and plan to teach at the K-8 level.

"Their generosity demonstrates a strong commitment to the value of a College of Business education and will create opportunities for some of our top accountancy students for generations to come," said R.J. Nemer, dean of the College of Business.

Dr. Mitchell S. McKinney, dean of the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences, was equally appreciative. "By giving back to the programs that changed their lives, they are creating pathways forward for today's hardworking, deserving students," he said. "Their support for education majors, in particular, will help us recruit and retain top students at a time when excellent teachers are in demand, locally and nationally." ■



"THE UNIVERSITY IS AN OUTSTANDING EXAMPLE OF AN INSTITUTION COMMITTED TO SHAPING YOUNG ADULTS AND PREPARING THEM TO WIN PROFESSIONALLY."

Frank Bevilacqua



STUDENTS *get down to business* DURING B-STEM PROGRAM

BY ALEX KNISELY

Curious students from East Community Learning Center in the Akron Public Schools built small cars, programmed a robotic snake and learned about business plans, among other things, during weekly activities focused on the intersection of business and science, technology, engineering and mathematics, commonly known as STEM.

It was all part of The University of Akron's (UA) free five-week B-STEM program where seventh and eighth grade students participated in hourly innovative activities led by UA faculty and students.

"Projects like this ignite a student's creativity," said Ava Pavkov '20, a graduate student in

the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education, who led the project. Pavkov was joined by Dr. Henry Astley, associate professor of biology; Lucas Biondich '23 of the NASA Mining Robotics Design Team; and faculty from the College of Engineering and Polymer Science. William Casterlow, a Middle School Academy coach at East Middle School Community Learning Center, recruited students, guided workshops and provided on-site management.

At the start, participants had an introduction to the engineering design process and business topics. They later built a crash test dummy car, constructed a circuit with UA's NASA Mining Robotics Design Team

and learned how to program a robotic snake. They even got to tour the student design center, the 3D printing lab and the senior design display room in College of Engineering and Polymer Science.

"Experiences and activities like these can help to enhance the interest in STEM topics among younger students," said Dr. Craig Menzemer, dean of the College. "This program also allows us to engage with local students and offer them a glimpse into not only academics, but college life as well."

Pavkov agrees. "The engineering design process that we introduced to them was a general process that describes how to create a product and make it better. Students can use this process and apply it to writing a paper, editing it and making it better until the final copy. And teaching them how to engineer a product teaches them to use logical thinking, to think abstractly and, most importantly, how important it is to fail," she said. "When testing our crash cars in our first lesson, some students were getting discouraged because their cars weren't travelling in a straight line, so we thought about the problem logically, and found a solution. Students learning how to properly deal with failures, or roadblocks, is imperative to helping them learn how to think logically and to work through barriers in their own lives." ■



Funding the Future

The B-STEM program is offered through a generous donation from Mr. and Mrs. Raymond and Sylvia Lee.

Raymond Lee is a 1975 graduate of East High School and graduated from UA in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Lee is a past member of the Foundation board and served on its Executive Committee. He is also a former member of the College of Business Advancement Council. He earned the Dr. Frank L. Simonetti Distinguished Business Alumni Award in 2010 and the Beta Alpha Psi Outstanding Alumnus Award in 2003.

Sylvia Lee, is also a graduate of UA, having earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 1980 and a Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design in 2009.



ALUMNI PROFILE

ALFRED V. CIRALDO, M.D.,
RECEIVES *honorary degree*

Alfred V. Ciraldo, M.D., was honored with an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree at UA's winter commencement ceremony on Dec. 10, 2022.

Ciraldo earned a bachelor's degree in biology from UA in 1976.

He graduated from The Ohio State University College of Medicine in 1979 and completed an internship and residency in general surgery at Akron City Hospital. He became a board-certified general surgeon in 1984, and established his longstanding practice, based at Summa Health Medical Group Summit Surgical Associates.

A member of the UA Board of Trustees from 2013-2022, he served as vice chair and as a member of numerous other committees, including those which selected President Gary L. Miller and helped to navigate the University through the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ciraldo has committed his time and talent to worthy causes dedicated to improving the lives of others, including providing surgical care via annual overseas mission trips and sponsoring and participating in local Susan G. Komen Annual Race for the Cure fundraising events for breast cancer research. He also generously supports The Louis J. Ciraldo, Sr. Endowed Scholarship in Electrical Engineering at UA in loving memory of his father. ■

Social Justice Fund RECEIVES
ANONYMOUS \$1 million ESTATE GIFT

Anonymous donors have made an estate gift commitment of \$1 million to support the Office of Multicultural Development Social Justice Fund, housed in The University of Akron (UA) Office of Multicultural Development.

This commitment represents the largest gift to the Office of Multicultural Development in University of Akron history. In addition to the estate gift, the donors have committed to annual gifts to the Office of Multicultural Development Social Justice Fund that will be available for immediate use.

Established in 2021, the fund supports the office's efforts in providing wrap-around services to UA students of color in their pursuit of college degrees and into professional life.



"This generous donation will support our efforts in recruitment, retention and advancement of students of diverse backgrounds, particularly those who are underrepresented at UA," said Dr. Sheldon Wrice, vice president of inclusion and equity and chief diversity officer. "This will be of great assistance as we carry out the primary mandate of this office to cultivate, sustain and enhance the requisite environment for diversity and multiculturalism on campus." ■

ALUMNI
CONNECTION

Class Notes

1980s

George S. Crawford, A.A.S. '85, B.S. '86, M.A. '88, has retired from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) as lead counterintelligence/counterterrorism special agent at the John Glenn Research Center in Cleveland. He concluded his 34 ½ years of federal service with 14 ½ years at NASA preceded by 20 years with the U.S. Air Force in the Air Force Office of Special Investigations. His awards include the NASA Exceptional Service Medal, NASA Distinguished Achievement Award, National Intelligence Meritorious Unit Citation and the Bronze Star Medal. In retirement, he plans to spend time with family and friends and travel.



Stephen A. Robbins, J.D. '80, recently published his first novel, "The Healer's Miraculous Discovery." The book is set (in part) at UA, and the two principal characters are UA graduates in the 1960s. The book is available via online book sites, such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Goodreads.

1990s

Robert G. Bryant, M.S. '90, Ph.D. '95, is being inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame for his invention of LaRC-SI (Langley Research Center-Soluble Imide). A NASA chemist, he developed the polymer LaRC-SI, taking it from laboratory discovery to application as an insulation material for leads in implantable cardiac resynchronization therapy devices.



Barbara Lopez Kunz, M.S. '90, was appointed to Caidya's Board of Directors, effective Nov. 1, 2022. Caidya is a multi-therapeutic clinical research organization serving innovators worldwide. Lopez Kunz is an internationally savvy executive with a history of visionary leadership and transformation in complex global environments.



William V. Mars, B.S.M.E. '94, received the Harold Herzlich Distinguished Technology Achievement Medal on Sept. 14, 2022, at the International Tire Exhibit and Conference, the largest tire manufacturing trade show and conference in North America. The Medal is only awarded every other year to recognize a tire industry pioneer whose career and accomplishments have changed the industry for the better, leaving a lasting impact on tire design, development and manufacturing.



Caroline L. Sangal, B.S. '98, Ph.D. '04, was appointed to Omicron Delta Kappa National Board of Trustees. Sangal is the chief executive recruiter at The Chatham Group, part of MRI Network. She focuses on helping client companies secure top talent and candidates to advance within their chemical industry-related careers.

G. Todd Thompson, B.S.B.A. '94, was featured in an article published in the January 2023 issue of Orlando Arts. Thompson is a director, writer, producer and sometimes, actor. His Orlando-based production company, Stars North, creates a variety of intriguing films — many of them documentaries for which Thompson wears multiple hats.

2000s

Rachid Bendali-Yahya, B.S.M.E. '01, current vice president, operations for the Engineered Materials Group at Parker Hannifin Corporation, was elected by the Board of Directors as vice president and president — Engineered Materials Group.

Tiffany S. Collins, B.S.I.M. '00, was named a notable executive in diversity, equity and inclusion for 2022 via Crain's Cleveland Business. These executives are working actively and with intentionality to promote understanding and generate diversity and inclusion, for the benefit of all. Collins is currently the global director of diversity, equity & inclusion at Avery Dennison.

Amy K. Corrigan-Jones, J.D. '01, joined Oriana House as vice president of behavioral health. She most recently served as a Summit County Common Pleas judge, a position she held since 2012. Oriana House is a private, nonprofit behavioral health and community corrections agency



with programs in seven Ohio counties and has been providing services since 1981.

Joshua "Josh" R. Davis, B.A. '02, B.A. '02, J.D. '05, associate vice chancellor for global affairs and senior international officer at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, now serves as the chancellor's chief of staff. In his new role, he will serve as a senior advisor, reporting on a variety of strategic and executive duties, including internal and external relations.



David H. Hamilton, B.A. '07, is serving as the administrative/presiding judge of the Akron Municipal Court for 2023. In this role, he oversees the court's administration, docket and court calendar, as well as the observance of the rules of superintendence and the timely reporting and termination of all cases in the court.



Jennifer L. Highfield, B.A. '01, was named president and executive director of Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens. Highfield worked at Stan Hywet from 2006 to 2010 as its director of fund development for the estate. Stan Hywet is the former estate of Goodyear co-founder, F.A. Seiberling, and is a National Historic Landmark and among the largest such estates open for public tours in the country.

2010s

Chelsea K. Ball, B.S.ED. '17, has taken her passion for teaching to the top of her profession. Ball, a sixth-grade teacher at Louisville Middle School in Ohio, was named "National Teacher of the Year" as part of Gannett's Amazing Teacher program. The Amazing Teacher program is sponsored by Walsh University, and the program is a company-wide initiative that recognizes teachers across the nation. Throughout the year, community members nominate teachers from their local school districts, provide their information, and give a description of the extraordinary ways that a teacher makes a difference.

Joseph A. Manno, B.S. '11, J.D. '14, was named to the 2023 Ohio Rising Stars list. Rising Stars are outstanding lawyers who are age 40 or younger or who have been in practice for 10 years or less. While up to



5% of the lawyers in a state are named to Super Lawyers each year, no more than 2.5% of the lawyers in a state are named to Rising Stars. Manno is a member of Tucker Ellis's national and local counsel teams that defend manufacturers, suppliers and distributors in mass tort and product liability claims.

Jessica L. Sublett L.L.M. '14, J.D. '14, became CEO of Akron's Bounce Innovation Hub, effective January 2023 after serving as COO. Bounce Innovation Hub, founded in 2018, serves Northeast Ohio entrepreneurs, startups and small businesses. The nonprofit organization comprises more than 300,00 square feet of coworking, event, meeting and professional office space. With more than 50 organizations in the building, Bounce accounts for more than 250 people working and creating.

Kendra Weekley, B.S. '15, won the Olympic-distance Athena 39 and younger national title in a time of 2:43:42. Not only is Weekley a UA alumna, but she is also now a triathlon national champion!

Moved? Changed
Names? New Job?

Update your information by scanning the QR code, emailing alumni@uakron.edu or calling 330-972-7271.

Connect with Your
Alumni Association

- [Facebook.com/uakron.alumni/](https://www.facebook.com/uakron.alumni/)
- [@uakronalumni](https://www.instagram.com/uakronalumni)
- [@uakronalumni](https://twitter.com/uakronalumni)

Contact us:
**The University of Akron
Alumni Association**,
375 E. Exchange Street,
Akron, OH 44325-2602
or email alumni@uakron.edu

Farewells

For more Farewells, visit the website.

Jordin Andrews, B.A. '21, June 1, 2022

W. Gerald Austen, Sept. 11, 2022

Roger E. Baird, B.S.B.A. '81, Aug. 28, 2021

Thomas F. Barbnitz, B.S.A. '84, M.B.A. '94, Sept. 9, 2022

Christopher J. Camp, B.S.E. '94, M.S.E. '07, M.A.E. '10, Jan. 24, 2023

Robert A. Canfora, B.S. '74, April 6, 2022

M. Elaine Daigle, B.A. '85, Oct. 25, 2022

Wayne V. Denny, M.A.E. '67, Ph.D. '73, Jan. 24, 2023

Richard N. Esber, B.S.I.M. '89, Aug. 13, 2022

Christopher J. Freeman, B.S.B.A. '03, Nov. 25, 2022

Stephen J. Ganocy, B.S. '71, M.S. '76, Nov. 4, 2022

William E. Geib, B.S. '70, Nov. 27, 2022

Richard E. Hall Jr., B.S.E. '16, Sept. 9, 2022

Erick J. Hendrickson, B.A.E. '74, M.A.E. '81, Oct. 5, 2022

Aaron A. Howkins, B.S. '17, July 20, 2022

Melvin T. Johnson, A.A.S. '73, B.T. '73, B.S. '77, Nov. 2, 2022

Lorraine J. Johnson, B.S.N. '92, Jan. 14, 2023

Cynthia L. King, B.A. '85, Feb. 15, 2023

Sarah Kramer, B.A. '43, Aug. 15, 2020

William A. LeFaiver, J.D. '69, May 7, 2022

Ted A. Mallo, B.S. '67, M.S. '68, J.D. '72, Oct. 9, 2022

Dann A. Miller, B.S.I.M. '79, Feb. 3, 2023

Joan A. Nelson, B.S.E. '64, Aug. 12, 2022

Gustalo Nunez, J.D. '67, March 14, 2022

Robert E. Oesch, A.A.S. '73, July 28, 2021

Timothy P. O'Sicky, B.S.I.M. '75, June 16, 2022

James R. Peacock, M.A. '96, Ph.D. '96, Jan. 21, 2022

Robert M. Phipps, J.D. '59, Aug. 5, 2021

Jill R. Regenos, B.A.E. '90, M.A.E. '05, Sept. 9, 2022

Jon C. Robeson, B.S.I.M. '62, Oct. 7, 2022

William K. Sizemore, B.S.E. '75, Dec. 24, 2022

Samuel T. Snyder, B.S.C.E. '20, Sept. 24, 2022

Shirley J. Waltermire,* B.S.E. '72, June 9, 2022

*Reprinted with corrected grad year

AKRON ALUMNI COUPLE SHARES LIFELONG *Joy of Music*



University of Akron (UA) alumni Dave '71, '75 and Patricia '71 (Pogorzelski) Grutzmacher have shared a life together, framed by their lasting commitment to each other and buoyed by their love of music, a comforting background accompaniment.

Both Akron natives — Dave, a Kenmore High School graduate and Patricia, an Akron North High School alumna — the two met as freshmen in The University of Akron Marching Band.

Pat recalls their 1967 meeting like it was yesterday, calling it a wonderful time when it seemed everything was new. "The band had gained a new director in Richard Jacoboice; we had new music, new uniforms."

The harmony between the Kenmore trumpet player and the clarinetist and oboist from Akron North would be the start of a lasting duet that has played throughout their more than 48 years of marriage. The Grutzmachers have continued their connection to the band as

enthusiastic alumni band participants for several years, performing with Ohio's Pride every UA Homecoming.

Both first-generation college students, the Grutzmachers marvel at the life they have seen together. Dave holds two UA degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and a Master of Business Administration. He worked in chemical engineering with BF Goodrich, Uniroyal, Michelin and ProQuip, retiring in 2022. Patricia earned a Bachelor of Science in Music Education. Two years later she earned a master's degree from The Ohio State University and went on to teach music in Wooster Public Schools and served as assistant band director at the high school. She continued her education at Kent State University and then spent 38 years as a music professor at Kent's Stark branch, and later at Kent's main campus, where she was also coordinator of music education, before retiring in 2016.

Music has always served as a connector for the couple. As UA seniors, Dave assisted in Patricia's senior oboe recital, playing the trumpet. When Patricia founded a college/concert community band in 1996, she wanted Dave to play in it. "But I made him audition," says Patricia, who was awarded

the Outstanding Music Educator Alumni Award by the UA music department in 2009.

While always special, Homecoming had an additional meaning for the couple last year. In May 2022, Dave suffered a stroke that required surgery, and they didn't know if alumni band participation would be possible.

"Homecoming is always special, but it was especially so [in 2022]. To be able to perform together, to rehearse with the other alumni band members and join in with the current college students, it was tremendously special," Dave says.

The Grutzmachers are thankful for UA's contributions to their lives and for the sound footing it gave them to advance in life.

"We have gained so much from Akron," Patricia says. "The liberal arts education we received in various disciplines — including history, math, English, the sciences, the arts — all of our studies set us up for success in our careers." ■

Want to perform with Ohio's Pride at Homecoming 2023? Reach out to uabands@uakron.edu.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!
The University
of Akron

UPCOMING EVENTS

● UA Alumni Social – Cleveland

Thursday, June 15

Truss Event Venue, 5:30–8 p.m.

Join us at our UA Alumni Social at Truss Event Venue. You and a guest are invited to join President and Mrs. Gary L. Miller and connect with local UA alumni over food and drink.

● Fall Kick-Off and Akron Alumni Social

Thursday, Sept. 7

Downtown Akron, 4:30–6:30 p.m.

Join fellow UA alumni and friends for the, "Fall Kick-Off," in downtown Akron. Enjoy live music, food and more!

● UA's 100th Homecoming Celebration

Saturday, Oct. 7

UA's Family Weekend, Oct. 6–8

Join us in celebrating The University of Akron's 100th Homecoming. More information coming soon at uakron.edu/homecoming.



THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

For more information and to RSVP for these events,
visit uakron.edu/alumni/events.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



HAVE YOU BEEN CONSIDERING GRAD SCHOOL?

**BROADEN YOUR OPPORTUNITIES WITH
GRADUATE EDUCATION AT UA.**

The University of Akron offers doctoral and master's degrees and graduate certificates from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business, Engineering and Polymer Science, and Health and Human Sciences. Learn more at uakron.edu/gradschool

