

illumine

—University of Southern Indiana—

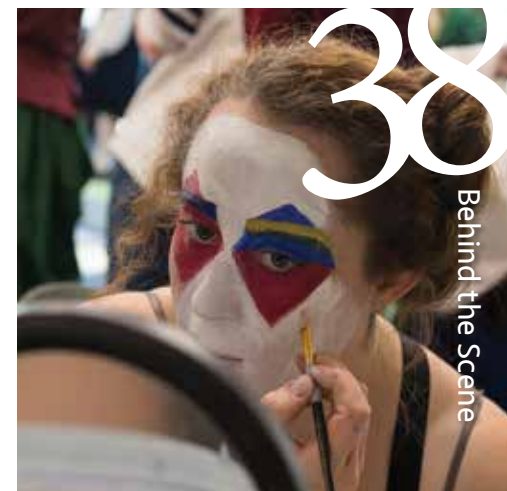


PREVAIL | FALL 2020



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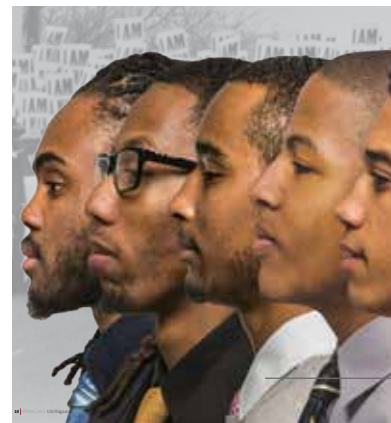
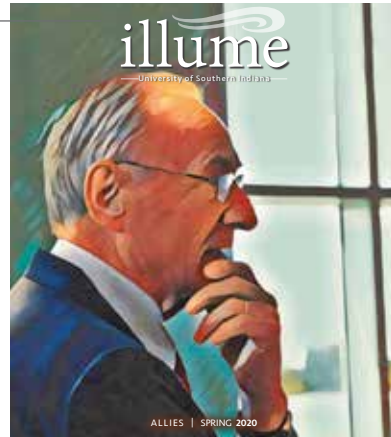
A LEGACY OF LISTENING

I just received my Spring 2020 issue of *illumine* with Dr. Rice on the front cover and inside back cover commemorating his death in January. This brought a few memories to mind about my few personal contacts with Dr. Rice and what he did for me, and others like me.

I was, what is now considered, a non-traditional student when I attended ISUE (USI) from 1973 to 1979. I worked full time and took classes primarily at night and over the summer and graduated with an accounting degree. Of all the wonderful accomplishments that Dr. David Rice brought to this fledgling University, the one I remember most is the time he took to listen to students such as myself, and there were many then, regarding the concerns these students had with class scheduling, who would teach at the off times and evening activities, which included us in campus life.

I recently retired from a 40-plus year career that I never would have had without my degree. And I never forgot the, perhaps, most important lesson I learned while there, to really listen to and act upon my coworkers' cares and concerns. And, I never forgot who taught me it and lived it.

We can look back at the tenure of Dr. Rice and see many great accomplishments, getting the University off the ground, obtaining institutional independence in 1985, the growth of the campus and enrollment, the growing importance of USI and many more. These are to be lauded.



But the bright lights and adulation were not there when Dr. Rice took the time to talk to me and a few fellow students, sitting at a break table during evening classes, and listen to us. I am forever grateful for the listening ear and encouragement to persevere that I received from Dr. Rice.

Michael D. Fendrich '79
Mount Vernon, Indiana

ALLIES IN BUSINESS IMPRESS

Love the collaboration and partnership between these alumni businesses in the Spring "Tale of Two Companies" story! #ScreaglePride

Dr. Jennifer Hammat
Evansville, Indiana

CLASS ACT

Not enough superlatives exist to describe *illumine* publications. The quality of photography, the layouts, the designs and most importantly the writing so truly reflects the glory of USI. Over the decades, I have inherited the distinct honor of working on much of the legal work for the projects and contracts that have underpinned USI's mission and growth. Reading *illumine* indeed brightly illuminates for the outside world, and reminds us insiders, of USI's many advancements. Reading *illumine* and its so very classy communications makes me and all of us in southwest Indiana so proud. Many thanks to you and your team for this outstanding work!

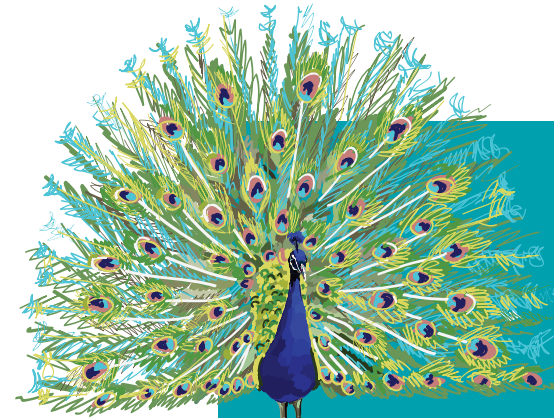
Mike Schopmeyer
Evansville, Indiana

THE STORY CONTINUES

Shining stars!! God bless. "An American Story" Spring 2015, reposted on social media.

Gloria Rivera
Evansville, Indiana

We invite readers to comment on articles and start conversations by bringing unique perspectives to relevant magazine topics. Correspondence and comments will not be limited to letters mailed to the editor, but may be from email or social media networks. Letters mailed to the editor may be published in the magazine unless the author states it is not for publication. Letters should be kept to 250 words, and may be edited for style, length, clarity, grammar and relevance to USI issues. Letters to the editor should be sent to magazine@usi.edu.



THINGS THAT MAKE US PREEN

WHEN CHUCK ARMSTRONG, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF GRAPHIC DESIGN, HEARD A STUDENT IN A ZOOM CLASS DISCUSSION SAY THAT WHEN COVID-19 CLOSED CAMPUS, HE LOST ACCESS TO HIS MEAL PLAN AND MUNCH MONEY, THEREFORE KEEPING HIM FROM EATING, ARMSTRONG ACTED. TO SERVE USI STUDENTS AND ANYONE IN NEED, HE SET UP A GOFUNDME ACCOUNT HOPING TO RAISE \$100 TO SEND NON-PERISHABLE FOODS WITH AN ENCOURAGING NOTE TO THOSE HE KNEW NEEDED HELP. HE SURPASSED HIS GOAL, RAISING \$9,251 AND MAILING 580 CARE PACKAGES NATIONWIDE.

THE COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS, THE BIOLOGY, GEOLOGY AND PHYSICS DEPARTMENTS DONATED MORE THAN 1,500 MASKS, 400 GOWNS AND GLOVES TO AREA HOSPITALS AND USI'S HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE.

WITH LIMITED ACCESS TO CAMPUS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ANDREA WRIGHT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LIBRARY SERVICES, BEGAN COORDINATING LAPTOP DELIVERIES AROUND THE EVANSVILLE AREA TO MAKE SURE USI STUDENTS AND

EMPLOYEES HAD THE EQUIPMENT THEY NEEDED TO CONTINUE LEARNING AND WORKING.

ALUMNI, ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF— TOO MANY TO NAME—JUMPED AT THE CALL FOR MASKS AND FACE SHIELDS TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY SAFE. TO MENTION A FEW, DR. KHALILAH DOSS, VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS, AND HER MOTHER MADE MASKS FOR THE STUDENTS WHO REMAINED ON CAMPUS. CHRISTOPHER NORRICK '98, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS FOR CREATIVE AND PRINT SERVICES, 3-D PRINTED 50 FACE SHIELDS AND "EAR SAVERS" FOR COLLEAGUES AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS FROM HEALTHCARE TO STORES. KATHY BELL '05 STITCHED CLOTH MASKS FOR NURSES, FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS.

FIVE VENTILATORS IN THE USI RESPIRATORY THERAPY LAB WERE SENT TO ASCENSION ST. VINCENT EVANSVILLE AND DEACONESS HOSPITAL TO ASSIST THE BROADER COMMUNITY WITH THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE. THE HOSPITALS CLEANED AND CALIBRATED THE MACHINES FOR POSSIBLE USE IF A SPIKE IN CASES RESULTS IN A SHORTAGE OF VENTILATORS.

TO READ MORE COVID-19 GOOD WORKS BY USI FOLKS, VISIT USI.EDU/SCREAGLEPRIDE.

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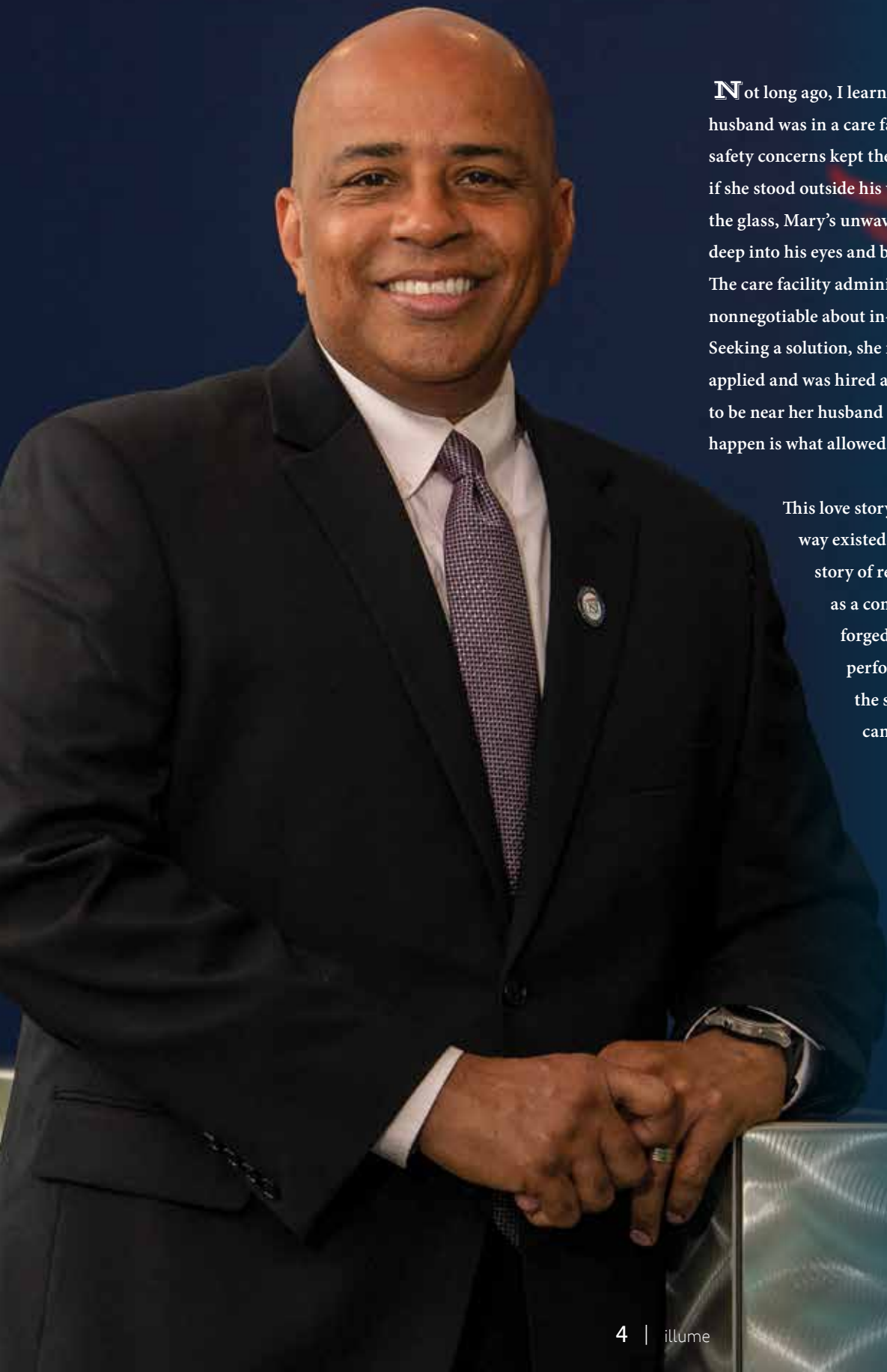
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Not long ago, I learned of a woman named Mary whose husband was in a care facility. COVID-19 rules and health safety concerns kept the two apart, and she could only see him if she stood outside his window. Their hands pressed against the glass, Mary's unwavering desire to touch her husband, look deep into his eyes and be with him grew stronger each day. The care facility administrators, although sympathetic, were nonnegotiable about in-person visits. This did not deter Mary. Seeking a solution, she noticed a job opening at the facility, applied and was hired as a dishwasher. Mary's perseverance to be near her husband and finding honorable work to make it happen is what allowed them to be successfully reunited.

This love story—Mary's desire to make a way where no way existed—is echoed in USI's own incredible love story of resilience and perseverance to be reunited as a community. During the pandemic, we too forged a path where none existed. We too performed honorable work at all levels, from the staff who cleaned and disinfected the campus to prepare for our return, to Public

Safety who patrolled the campus day and night to keep it secure, to the grounds crew who maintained the landscape so it would be as beautiful upon our return as when we left, to the faculty who transformed their classes into online learning environments and supported our students daily, to the students who resiliently sought academic enrichment and intellectual engagement remotely, to the administrators who Zoomed tirelessly to sustain our campus community.

Mary found her way to her husband's side by opening herself to opportunity. Flexibility guided her, as it has this institution. It was crucial to our ability to support students and ensure their academic progress as we redefine the 2020-2021 academic year. We reshaped our courses to maximize the offerings in which education can be pursued, with health and safety top of mind, and remained true to the tenor of our mission—quality education. This flexibility, with the aim of inclusivity, enables all students access to education at USI regardless of their technological resources.

COVID-19 delivered a blow to life and education as we knew it. As a nation, we have lost 190,000* lives—a disproportionate number from our population's most vulnerable segments. Like some of you, I too lost a loved one to this illness. This gave me incredible pause and made me appreciate what it means to be a member of a family, a member of a community, a member of a nation that cares about *the other*.

Like Mary, USI never abandoned its desire. We too selflessly rose to the occasion to aid our community and fulfill our mission. The word appreciation does not convey how deeply I admire and respect the students, staff, faculty, administrators, Board of Trustees and elected officials whose work supports and sustains this University. We are what I call "a one community bucket." We are not divided by class or credentials; we are a whole that relies on each other to survive, prosper and serve.

The pandemic shook but it did not break higher education at USI. Instead, it inspired and engaged us to look at new means of achieving success. A success that is interdependent on each other—not only at this institution, but across the nation and globe. Without a web of connectivity, our successes will never be as impactful as they could be. We cannot do this alone. We need to uplift each other. Our failure to recognize this universal fact would be our greatest undoing. Please join us on this transformative journey.

*Number of U.S. deaths as of September 5, 2020.

EAGLES SOAR. WHAT THAT MEANS TO DR. ROCHON

Support

This is at the heart of USI. Supporting our students begins with faculty, staff and administrators supporting each other. It's great to know we have one another to depend on. We are stronger because of it. Our support must go beyond the borders of our University's campus and remain intentional so we can continue to touch and transform lives within our community.

One

My mom taught me I was no better or less than anyone else. At USI, we are a one community bucket. We all are striving for the same collective goal—to deliver quality education. We are here today because of our interconnectivity to each other. If staff did not keep the campus clean and beautiful, admissions would falter. If faculty did not excel as educators, students' success would suffer. We are dependent upon one another to do our jobs. We are one.

Appreciative

It is something I feel deeply every day. The fact that we lost so many of our elders in nursing homes and assisted living facilities who were unable to say goodbye to their families is tragic. The pandemic made me more appreciative of life, of people, of the ability to love and especially of the USI community, who show up every day to do their job and carry out our mission.

Responsive

This has been part of USI's DNA from our inception until now. In the 1960s, we were responsive to the need for affordable, public higher education in southwest Indiana. Last spring, we were responsive to the needs of our students and the campus community by closing campus to all but authorized personnel to reduce COVID-19 risk. This fall, we were again responsive to our students by enacting enhanced safety measures and providing several modalities, face-to-face, hybrid and online options, in which they can continue to pursue their USI education.



Be creative, fun and succinct in writing your caption and send it to magazine@usi.edu or C. L. Stambush, editor, University of Southern Indiana, 8600 University Boulevard, Evansville, Indiana 47712



Every picture tells a story, or is that a picture's worth 1,000 words? We don't want you to write 1,000, just a line or two, putting some words into the mouths of these Screaming Eagles.

~~~~~  
Last Pen a Caption winner



"Ma'am, I don't care about your mode of transportation, but those bell bottoms are a CRIME against fashion!"

Xavia Harrington-Chate



A little bit of icing and some sprinkles makes every situation more bearable—just ask our international students. Kara Beu, Administrative Associate in the Center for International Programs, assembled and delivered spring-themed sugar cookie kits to international students still in housing after the pandemic closed campus. She put together the kits complete with freshly baked sugar cookies, colorful icing, pastel sprinkles and a personalized note with a link to a how-to decorate video making for the perfect sweet tooth-satisfying study break.



# Unearthing Experience

When Derrick Maurer '20, anthropology, approached Dr. Michael Strezewski, Associate Professor of Anthropology, about an independent study program in Fall 2019, Strezewski knew the perfect location for the budding professional to conduct his field work. The pair headed to the long-gone Terry School (aka School Number 4), a one-room schoolhouse (1840-1914) situated on the Evansville State Hospital grounds to collect, download and analyze data using geophysical instruments.

To determine the school's precise location, Maurer used USI's magnetometer, something Strezewski acquired along with a resistivity meter using a National Science Foundation grant with additional contributions from the USI Foundation. The device looks a little like a treasure-hunter's metal detector, but it is exponentially more sophisticated and costly. Sweeping it over the ground, it can detect artifacts and soil disturbances up to about three feet below the surface.

Strezewski knew the schoolhouse was brick and its location from historic maps and photos. "I thought it would be an ideal spot for Derrick to get experiential, hands-on training because nothing has ever been built on top of [the site]," he said. Over the course of three days, student and professor walked the grounds under the 210-plus-year-old Cherry Bark Oak tree on the bank of the little lake on Lincoln Avenue. Picking up signals that transmitted a ghostly image from more than 100 years ago, an outline of the school's foundation emerged.

"The location of the one-room schoolhouse has been determined," says Maurer, and the study has conclusively shown that its remains are intact below the surface. He will use the information with data collected from the magnetometer to produce a report for the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology.

This fall, Maurer is pursuing his master's degree in archaeology at Florida State University and he cites the experience gained in the independent study as a big factor in making it possible. "It increased my chances of being accepted into a program," he says. "After graduate school I hope to find work as an archaeologist for a government agency like the National Park Service."



# Going to the Dogs

During finals time last spring, students, faculty and staff were consumed with Zoom calls in preparation for exams and presentations. But all work and no play aren't the USI way. Paws and Play is an event normally held on campus, where therapy animals and their owners visit with students to alleviate stress during finals week. But with campus closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the David L. Rice Library, the Recreation, Fitness and Wellness Center and the USI Counseling Center got creative,

offering the beloved event virtually. Three Zoom Paws and Play sessions in April gave students, faculty and staff the opportunity to hang with therapy animals and their owners, and even show off their own pets. The always popular Paws and Play event minimizes stress during finals, which this spring were different but also no different.



# 55 YEARS OF TRAILBLAZERS AND COUNTING

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO THE 19TH AMENDMENT

TO THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION WAS RATIFIED, GIVING WOMEN THE RIGHT TO VOTE AND INSPIRING THEM TO SEEK THE LIVES OF THEIR CHOOSING. For the past 55 years USI has helped scores of women fulfill their educational and life dreams, graduating 28,136 women since the University's inception in 1965. Some have pioneered in politics, science, art and business, while others turned to healing and education. While the individual roles they've played in the world is beyond the scope of our editorial knowledge, we are confident in saying their collective role has bettered the world for tomorrow's women. We're proud to call them alumnae.

# THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Knowing students deserved recognition for their hard work and thinking quick on their feet, the Art and Design Department faculty put together a self-recorded awards ceremony for the 55 students included in USI's 50th Annual Student Art Show. For the first time ever, the show was revealed virtually outside the walls of the unique, on-campus McCutchan Art Center and Pace Galleries. Faculty wanted to provide students with a sense of normalcy in not so normal times. Not only did the virtual awards ceremony showcase students' award-winning art, but it also allowed students to virtually reunite with professors and mentors in a time when they needed to see familiar faces most.

# AN EAGLE'S LIFE: INSIDE A DAY

Archibald T. Eagle (Archie), USI mascot, bounded onto the basketball court as a nameless raptor for the first game of the 1970-71 season. In 1978, students held a contest, naming him Archibald T. Eagle—the T standing for "The." Affectionately known as Archie today, his look may have changed but his role as lead spirit rouser remains unchanged. Before the pandemic hit, Archie's days brimmed with activity—events he'll return to as soon as it's possible. Of course, he'll be practicing all the safety guidelines—handwashing, social distancing and wearing a mask—and educating students to do the same!



## TODAY'S SCHEDULE!

- 7-8**  Awake to USI school fight song alarm. Scroll through USI and USI Athletics Twitter pages to make sure I'm up to date on the important stuff. Stretch wings and enjoy scenery along the USI-Burdette Trail as I fly to campus. "Fresh air early in the morning helps my energy stay consistent throughout the day."
- 8-9**  Spirit-team breakfast at The Loft. Check my calendar to see what athletic, campus and community events are scheduled for the day. "My days are usually packed full, so it's important that I eat a good breakfast and stay organized."
- 9-10**  Meet with Archie's Friends to prepare for public appearances in the coming week. Discuss how to be the best celebrity possible. "It's important that the team and I know when and where we need to be to show off our Screagle Pride."
- 10-1**  Attend events with fellow Screagles. "I'm a lifelong learner at USI. If I'm not at an athletic, campus or community event during the day, you'll likely find me in Rice Library brushing up on my USI history."
- 1-5**  Hang out in the UC, visit the USI Campus Store to check out the latest USI gear and grab a quick dinner at Archie's Pizzeria.
- 5-6**  Attend Archie's Army meeting. "Archie's Army is the epitome of Screagle Pride. They plan all themes and giveaways for athletic events."
- 6-7**  Get dressed and hyped up for a USI athletic event. "This is my time to get pumped up for the awesome Screagle crowds. I rehearse my dance moves, listen to music and practice signing my autograph for Screagle fans."
- 7-9**  Cheer on Screaming Eagles. "Athletic events are great because we get to showcase our student athletes, and I get to mingle with alumni, students, faculty, administrators and community members."
- 9-11**  Snack, relax and go to sleep. "It takes a bit of time for my hype to wear off some nights, especially after those late-night athletic events. I usually eat a snack, watch some TV—catching up on USI Athletics highlights on local news channels—and hit the sheets. Another busy day will be here in a few hours."

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- 26 (A) (B) (C) (D) (E)

# TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSIONS APPROVED

USI's Board of Trustees (BOT) approved the elimination of required standardized test scores for undergraduate applications beginning with the 2021-2022 academic year. The Provost's Office presented the policy change to the BOT at May's meeting, along with documentation of test-optional policies being embraced by a growing number of other institutions across the nation.

While test scores can be a helpful tool in predicting collegiate student success, research shows that in some cases, standardized tests do not accurately reflect academic potential. By adopting a test-optional policy, USI allows each student to determine how to showcase their academic ability. USI will encourage students to submit test scores if they feel it will benefit their admissions decision.

## DIGGING IN:

### WHO'S THE MAN BEHIND POTT COLLEGE'S NAME?

Robert Pott never attended or taught at USI but his legacy to the institution has educated thousands. The self-taught engineer with a thirst for knowledge helped revolutionize the tool industry and workplace with his invention of the impact wrench in 1933. The tool, first marketed as the Ingersoll-Rand Pott Impact Wrench, was popular in heavy industry—railroad, oil refineries, auto manufactures, the military—as it removed bolts and nuts that previously could only be removed by chisel and a blowtorch.

Pott and his wife Elaine created a foundation in 1963 to benefit educational engineering institutes in Wisconsin and Indiana (their respective birth states). *Campaign USI* in 1998 received \$2 million from the Robert H. and Elaine H. Pott Foundation toward the development of today's Pott College of Science, Engineering, and Education. At the time, it was the largest gift in USI Foundation history. Today, Pott's invention is known as an air gun and is used by F1 and Indy 500 pit crews to change four tires in **five seconds**.



## FUTURE OF EDUCATION

Traditionally, there's been one primary path to higher education, and it started right after high school ended. But that's no longer the case. Today, adult learners (25+ years old) are equally interested in college, and USI's new adult student task force team is seeking to ensure the University can meet their needs.

Led by a task force formed by the Provost's Office, the adult-learner team contains members from across campus who are exploring ways to improve programing and add graduate, certificate and/or completion programs. That means understanding what potential students are interested in learning.

Teenagers and adult learners look for different things in their college of choice. Adult learners, many who work fulltime and have families, focus on scheduling flexibility and quality education at a fair price. USI is already well ahead of the game in all three areas.

The adult-learner team is currently working on two initiatives. "A grant proposal to the Lilly Foundation was submitted in June," said Dr. Ann White, taskforce Chair and Dean of the College of Nursing and Health Professions. "This \$2.5 million grant, if awarded, will assist USI in creating an efficient and effective infrastructure to support the adult learners." USI will submit a concept paper to the Lilly Foundation for a second grant to create an academic-business partnership to address adult learner and workforce needs in the tri-state area.

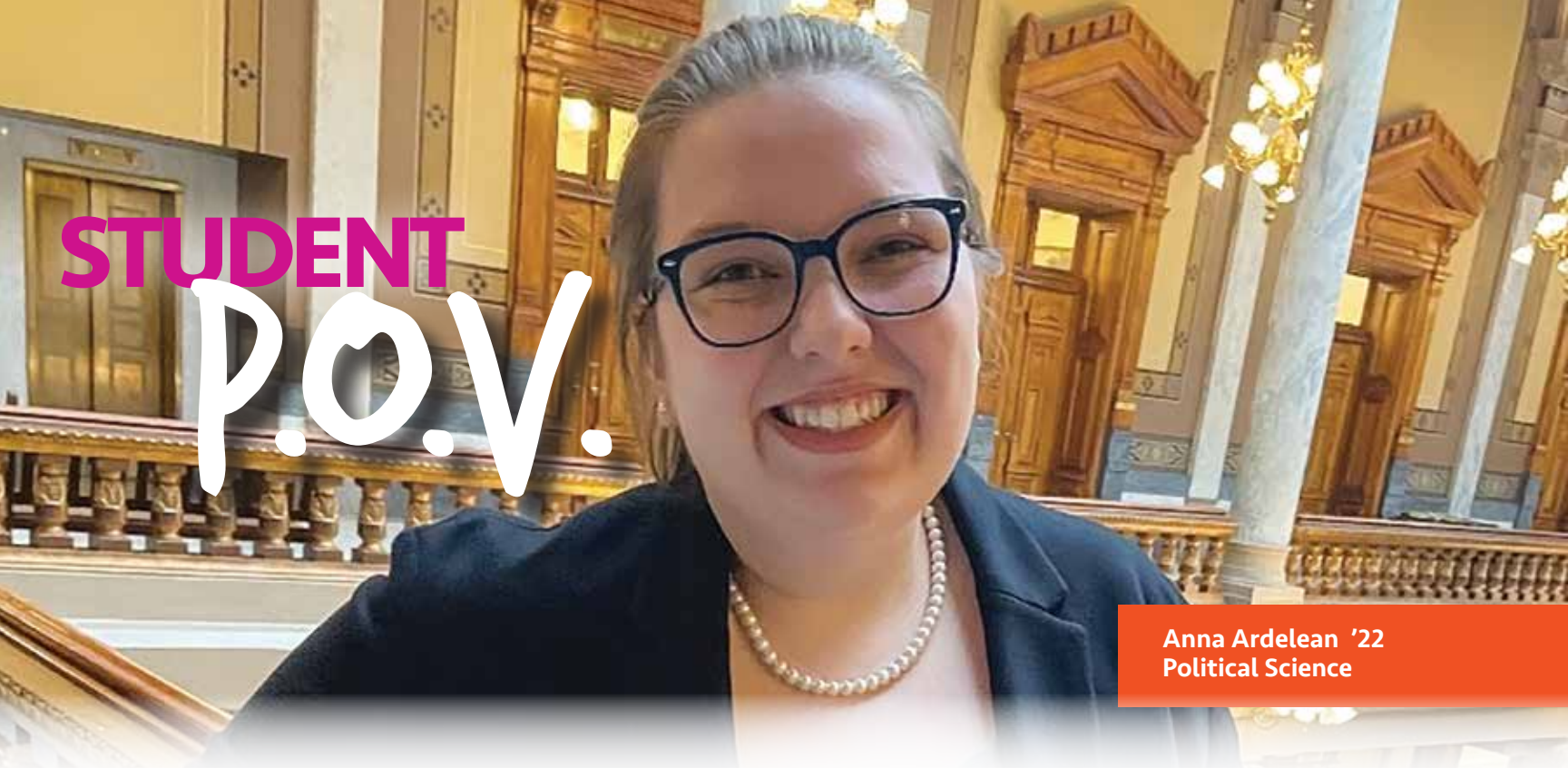


Looking for a way to keep students engaged and connected to campus after USI moved to online instruction during the Spring Semester due to COVID-19, Dr. Sarah Stevens, Director of the Honors Program, with the help of USI's IT Department, created a Minecraft server for gamers to build a virtual USI campus. "After looking at a lot of ideas, I polled the Honors students and Minecraft emerged as something they wanted.



It's something creative to do, somewhere to go and a way for us to show how much we love USI." The design and construction process requires architectural and engineering skills, as well as creative thinking. Stevens plans to keep the Minecraft server operating and students playing for at least a year.

# STUDENT P.O.V.



Anna Ardelean '22  
Political Science

## More Than an Institution

I have always been honored to call myself a Screagle. With every class I have felt myself growing into a scholar, with every meeting I have felt myself growing into a professional and with every passing day I have felt myself falling more in love with the school I call home. From the moment I toured the University of Southern Indiana as a senior in high school, I knew that I would be happy here. What I didn't know was that this University would be my absolute favorite place. In fact, I didn't fully realize this until I had to leave due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Of course I was upset that the semester was being cut short, but sitting at home gave me a lot of time to think about all that I was missing.

I missed sitting in the UC with my friends chatting about the lecture we were just in. I missed scrambling to plan meetings for my organization and really believing the font on the poster was the absolute most important thing. I missed sitting in the Multicultural Center and feeling the chaotic energy of the room as everyone rushed to welcome each other and ask about their days. I missed walking across The Quad and seeing a professor, with

whom I had only met once or twice, wave at me with excitement. I missed laughing with my classmates before the professor walked in. I missed my friends challenging me to take on new leadership positions. I missed the loud rumble of Starbucks contrasting with the click of my shoes as I walked toward the silent library. I missed hanging out in the Honors office. I missed seeing the wonderful theatrical productions. I missed sitting in the basement of the library until 10 p.m., discussing and debating philosophy. I missed arguing with professors and classmates over which policy would be most effective. I missed the late nights of studying or planning. I missed seeing all the friendly faces in the administrative wing. I missed the thrill of seeing my favorite parking spot being empty. I missed fist bumps with James the bus driver. I missed the excitement of seeing Dr. Rochon walking around campus. I missed my friends and acquaintances because they were all part of my world and the life I had built at USI.

The University of Southern Indiana isn't just a school. It's a life. It is the first thing I see when I wake up in the morning and last when I fall asleep. It is my journey to becoming the

professional I have always wanted to be. It is opportunity and second chances. It is help when I need it and service when I can give it. The University of Southern Indiana was the first thing in my life that was really mine. I could shape my experience here into whatever I wanted. I could be as successful as I dared. I could push boundaries and explore my interests.

USI is constantly changing and moving. Growing. Improving. It allows for the self-actualization of its students. If we see something missing, we can work to improve it. We can create concrete change in this ever so stubborn world. We can make an impact here far beyond our short time as students.

The University of Southern Indiana has proven to be the steppingstone I needed to take me from a kid with big dreams to a young adult with tangible skills to make those dreams a reality. USI has become the home I didn't know I was missing and the family I never want to leave. And that is why I will always be proud to be a Screaming Eagle.

Anna's essay won the USI Alumni Association's 2020 Founder's Day Essay Contest.  
The full essay can be read at [usi.edu/ILLUME-ARDELEAN](https://usi.edu/ILLUME-ARDELEAN)

# DESK OF... FROM THE



My childhood could easily be lyrics to a John Mellencamp song. I grew up in a small farming community with a population just over 1,000. The summer days were filled by playing basketball with the boys down the road until the sun went down. I walked to my grade school when the weather was nice and knew who lived in each house along the route. My family's farm was about a mile from the high school where I spent countless hours playing sports.

College, for me, was a way to have more options in my life and when a small private institution spoke to me about playing basketball for them, it seemed like an easy transition, since it would not be much different from my high school setting. My identity was always tied to athletics, but a part of me wanted to shed it. At 17, the thought of reinventing myself was both exhilarating and terrifying, and something told me to look for a greater challenge.

I struggled with being comfortable in who I was, never truly feeling as if I belonged. So, I played it safe and never wanted to venture out, until I looked at USI. Its size and population meant meeting someone new every day and immersing myself in a collegiate environment where academics were my focus and not athletics. For the first time in my life I jumped—diving into the deep end of unfamiliarity and uncertainty—with no idea if I had what it took to be successful in this new chapter.

ANDREA (SEIB) GENTRY '05  
USI Foundation Director of Development

Trying to discover who I wanted to be made me doubt my abilities, until I met Dr. Tamara Wandel, a public relations professor whom I idolized. She was intelligent, funny and her personality was magnetic. Dr. Wandel noticed me when I felt uncomfortable being noticed. When she asked questions in her classroom, I wanted to answer but hesitated to speak up. She sensed my reluctance and began calling on me. She placed me in leadership roles in class, and I gradually came to enjoy the opportunity to guide and share my interpretations of the course material with my peers. It gave me my footing, and I slowly gained confidence. I became comfortable opening new doors and, luckily, one of the doors led to Dr. Michael Dixon. He was worldly and treated me as an equal. He asked his students for their opinions, and he truly wanted to hear them. He taught me how to express my views in a professional manner, but more than anything he taught me how to listen. Because of Dr. Dixon, I saw myself for the first time as a citizen of the world. He embraced diversity and showed others how to as well. I didn't realize how much there was to see until I became willing to look through a different lens.

USI not only transformed me, it became my home. The day after graduation I began full-time employment in the Development Office, which supports efforts for the USI Foundation. When I invite alumni and friends to support the University with their charitable gifts my invitation is genuine. I know there is a student, just like me, who needs the USI experience more than they know.

Throughout the journey I never lost who I was, but because of USI I found who I could and wanted to be. USI took a chance on me as much as I took a chance on it. In the end, it was the best decision I ever made.

*Andrea Gentry*





## A TRIP DOWN MEMORY LANE



### Slam Dunk!

In a tense battle for a second shot at winning the NCAA Division II National Championship, USI trailed California-Riverside Highlanders by 22 points in the first half of the 1995 game after being defeated by Cal State Bakersfield the previous year. This time, the Screaming Eagles surged to win with a score of 71-63, scoring 14 of the game's final 15 points to earn the University's historic first national championship win. [The Softball (2018) and Baseball (2010, 2014) teams have since snagged three more for USI's win column.] Twenty-five years later, the Men's Basketball players from that first winning team and their coach, Bruce Pearl, returned to campus last spring for a reunion.

### Where are they | NOW?



When Anna Hackert '15, two-time All-American and USI Women's Basketball leading career rebounder, graduated and began teaching mathematics and technology to elementary and middle school students, she found herself at a crossroads. Who is Anna without basketball?

After graduating, feeling the need to continue to immerse herself in the sport, Anna stayed connected to basketball

as an athletic director and coaching elementary, middle and high school students. She brings what she learned from USI Women's Basketball Coach Rick Stein to all the students' lives she touches today.

"Coach Stein really cared about you as an individual, and he really wanted you to succeed off the court," she says. "Being a teacher, I care about my students and what they

do in class, but I also want to see them be successful later on in life, too."

Many things have changed in Anna's life since her USI days, but one thing remains



constant—her love of the sport and how it shaped her. While USI basketball continues without Anna—albeit with her mark on it—there is no Anna without basketball.



FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

# OVERHEARD QUOTABLES

“I SO MISS WHEN *James* SAID 'SEE Y'ALL LATER' WHEN WE GOT OFF THE BUS. CAN SOMEONE DESIGN A JAMES-THEMED SHIRT THAT HAS *waving*, FIST-BUMPING, SEE Y'ALL LATER AND A BUS ON IT? I'LL BUY.”

LAUREN WOJCUTCH | on James the METS/USI bus driver

“JUST AS WE RELY ON MEDICAL *experts* TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES TO STOP THE SPREAD OF COVID-19, WE MUST ALSO RELY ON INFORMATION EXPERTS TO TELL US HOW TO STOP THE SPREAD OF MISINFORMATION.”

ERIN GIBSON | USI Instructor in Communications

“SHOUT OUT TO MY *DONNA* FROM SAUDI ARABIA. MISS YOU AND *miss you* SAYING MY NAME 'HELLO MO' EVERY SINGLE TIME I GET MY COFFEE. #CLASSOF2019 *stay safe* EVERYONE. I WILL GET MY SWEET TALL LATTE VERY SOON.”

MOHAMMED ALANAZI | on the encouraging video message from Donna from the campus Starbucks

“THERE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE *good and bad* DAYS IN OUR LIVES. WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON THE GOOD ONES AND LEARN FROM THE BAD ONES. EVERY DAY IS A NEW DAY, AND THE SUN WILL *rise* TOMORROW. DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS. THINGS HAVE A WAY OF *working themselves out*, EVEN IF IT ISN'T GOING AS WE ORIGINALLY PLANNED.”

MEGAN BROWN '20 | diagnostic medical sonography, minor in gerontology

“...MY LAST DAYS IN EVANSVILLE SO IT WAS A *heartbreaking* MOMENT. HOWEVER, IT BRINGS ME GREAT JOY FOR IT REMINDS ME OF THE BEST PEOPLE I GOT TO SHARE LIFE WITH AND STILL DO. I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MATCHED WITH BETTER ROOMMATES! EVEN THOUGH MY EXCHANGE PERIOD GOT CUT SHORT, I CAN ONLY BE *grateful* FOR THE INCREDIBLE THREE MONTHS THAT I GOT TO SPEND IN THE U.S. AND I WILL *return* FOR A VISIT AS SOON AS IT IS ONCE AGAIN POSSIBLE.”

ILVI RAITILA | Finland exchange student

“I *wish* THIS LETTER COULD BE TAPED TO THE FRONT OF EVERY REFRIGERATOR DOOR IN AMERICA WHERE IT COULD BE READ EVERY DAY. IN TRYING TIMES LIKE THIS, IT IS HARD TO MAINTAIN A *positive* OUTLOOK. SOME DAYS THE NEWS IS SO DEPRESSING IT SEEMS LIKE WE ARE WATCHING THE END OF *America!!!*”

SHARON PARKER | referring to USI's President Rochon's Open Letter

“EVEN WITH AN EMPTY *campus*, THERE IS *energy* AROUND USI.”

JOHN SPRUANCE | Assistant Men's Basketball Coach

“LOVING MY *Black* friends, COLLEAGUES AND STUDENT-ATHLETES IS NOT ENOUGH. I NEED TO LISTEN, HAVE DIALOGUE AND TAKE ACTION. I RECOGNIZE MY PRIVILEGE AS A WHITE MALE, AND I *need* TO BE BETTER.”

JON MARK HALL | Director of Athletics

# ADAPTIVA

Education  
in the  
Time of  
COVID-19

By C. L. Stambush

# ATTENTION

As you read this, things may have already changed, but that's an issue for later. Since mid-March and the COVID-19 outbreak, USI has heavily focused on educational shifts and health and safety. Students and faculty were on Spring Break when the campus transitioned to remote operations. To prepare for the pivot, USI extended Spring Break,

affording faculty a brief 14 days to transform any classes that were designed for in-person for in-person into online learning environments.

The effort took a team of departments—from Online Learning, Instructional Technology, Disability Resources, David L. Rice Library, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, and Office of Planning, Research and Assessment—working together to deliver workshops and services to assist faculty's shift to online



“Department chairs and directors worked diligently since campus closed to ensure faculty members were equipped with needed technology—laptops, webcams, scanners, headsets, tablets and software—to teach their classes remotely,” says Dr. William Elliott Jr., Chair of the Geology and Physics Department.

While faculty, staff and administrators hustled to keep student learning on track, the University assembled a presidential task force with four committees to address returning to campus safely, student progress and educational successes, student issues outside of academics and operational needs for returning to campus in the fall. Assisting the main task force were five essential support teams, for a total of 129 administrators and staff partnering to reopen the University in a manner that strived to safeguard everyone's health and continued to provide academic excellence on and off campus.

“When we surveyed students in May, they overwhelmingly wanted the in-person course offerings, meaning they want things to be as close to normal as possible,” says Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Dean of Students. “And,

learning and staff to remote work environments, says Dr. Shelly Blunt, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs. Meanwhile, the advising centers, Academic Skills and the Registrar's Office provided tutoring, writing assistance, captioning for online lectures and other services to students off campus.

according to social media, most students seem willing to don a face covering to be able to come back to campus for classes and access to services.”

In the weeks leading up to the Fall Semester, USI's Facility Operations increased fresh air intake in the buildings, installed plexiglass barriers in offices, stickers on classroom seats indicating where to sit, “foot openers” on doors for hands-free access, hand sanitizing stations, signage and floor markers to remind everyone of the safety protocols.

Each classroom's maximum occupancy had to be determined per social distancing guidelines and the Fall schedule reconfigured to accommodate—a herculean task that each college's department chairs undertook with guidance from the task force, deans and faculty.

The future is about flexibility and options—providing learning-modalities to fit students' learning preferences and their individual health and safety needs while keeping their educational goals on track. The Academic Affairs Committee of the Presidential Task Force determined the percentage of the four instructional modes already used at USI: face-to-face, technology enhanced, hybrid and online.

“These course modalities allow us to offer an on-campus experience for the students who want to return to campus,” says Blunt. “These modalities are better suited for courses with experiential learning outcomes, such as laboratories, clinicals, studio, practicums, etc.”

Many classes traditionally taught on campus in a classroom were converted to hybrid courses because of classroom capacity limits. Students in these courses will be online 50% to 74% of the time, with the remaining being face-to-face. For example, classes meeting twice a week (Tuesday/Thursday) could have half the class attend Tuesday while the other half Zooms from home, switching places

on Thursday. Each faculty member determines the online versus face-to-face ratio and informs students which days they attend in-class versus Zoom.

Faculty teaching any course, except those already designed as online, had to develop a contingency online course plan in case the campus closes again. “They prepared each week/section/module for both in-person and online delivery methods for the Fall Semester,” says Dr. Kim Parsons, USI's Chair for Council of Chairs and Program Directors. “While we hope course delivery will continue as planned, we recognize that our situation is fluid and changes may be necessary. Additionally, the online delivery method may be required even when courses still meet face-to-face, since it may be necessary for students to quarantine if they have been exposed to COVID-19.”

Developing an online learning environment requires far more of faculty than taking a course designed for in-class and uploading it to the internet. Seeing a growing need for online learning, the University created the Online Course Development Program (OCDP) in 2015 to assist faculty with the design, development and delivery of effective online courses founded on preestablished objectives. “The success of the OCDP has to do with the fact that instructors are paired with one of USI's three instructional designers,” says Dr. Belle Cowden, Executive Director of Online Learning.

The instructional design process not only teaches professors to develop highly effective courses, other academics rigorously vet their classes. “As they begin to teach the course, three peer reviewers from other institutions assess their course,” says Cowden. Faculty are paid a





**"WE ARE MAKING SURE  
ACADEMIC WELLNESS  
IS REDEFINED."**

President Ronald Rochon



stipend to develop a course and record content that is then owned by the University and can be used by other faculty with tweaks, such as a new intro video from a different professor.

To help faculty teach the various new modalities offered in the Fall, a series of boot camps and workshops were launched to assist faculty and instructors in online course design and prepare them to use the available technology—Zoom, VoiceThread, Blackboard and more—to enhance classroom experience and engagement.

"The Course Mapping Boot Camps and other workshops have offered an opportunity for faculty to reflect on the learning objectives, our resources and how we can meet those learning objectives using different course modalities," says Dr. Kenneth Purcell, Associate Professor of Physics and past Chair of Faculty Senate. "This increased knowledge of the possibilities and the increase of resources available will make a last-minute change much less disruptive for our students."

Some students had a rough ride last Spring. "About 20% of our students did not have reliable access to the internet to transition to a remote learning environment when they moved off campus," says Elliott.

Overall, the Spring Semester's learning curve revealed more positives than problems because of the attitudes faculty, staff, students and administrators showed up with every day. "Students were resilient, engaged and appreciative of faculty efforts," says Blunt. "It was gratifying to observe faculty collaborating with colleagues in their departments to make the transition to quality online learning in the Spring as smooth as possible. They shared resources and ideas for creating an effective learning environment for students."

Money can be a game changing resource for students. Mary Jo Harper, Director of Student Financial Assistance, says the University received \$2.9 million from the Federal program HEERF (Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund) through the government's CARES Act in emergency financial aid grants for students. The funds help them cover expenses related to the campus' disruption due to the novel coronavirus. "Although the funding is heavily regulated, we are following the Department of Education's guidelines and have been successful in serving 4,798 students with need, totaling just over \$2.8 million in awards" she says, noting the remaining funding will ensure more student access to education this Fall. "The Financial Assistance team has done an outstanding job of serving our students."

The pandemic certainly shook and shuttered the world, but as USI planned for the 2020-2021 academic year, its mission and vision remained, as always, fixed on the future. "It was not always easy," says Parsons, "but the amount of grace, empathy and caring that was demonstrated during these times revealed the true character of our USI community. It's what I consider the greatest success of the Spring Semester!"



## BY THE NUMBERS

April 1 through May 6, 2020

**81** students  
SERVED remotely

**366**  
telecounseling hours

**14** days to shift to  
distance counseling

**5** hours of counselor  
telehealth training

**1,002**  
text messages sent to students

**6.4** counselors  
**7** ZOOM WELLNESS  
PROGRAMS  
PER WEEK



## ADVICE FROM COUNSELING PROFESSIONALS

### Dr. Thomas Longwell, Director of Counseling

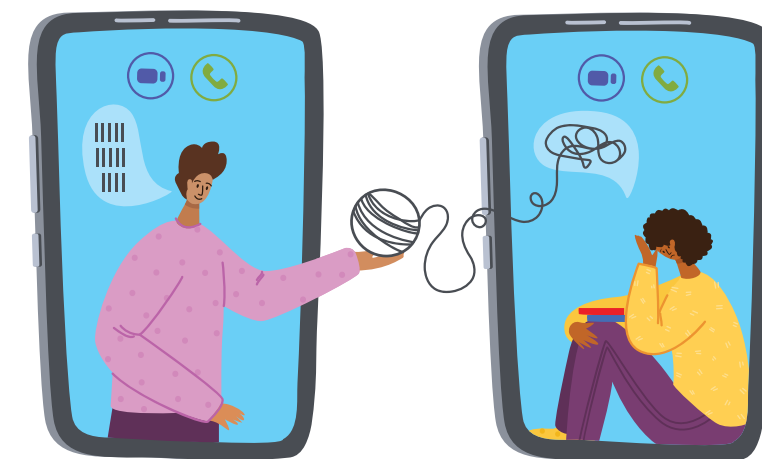
"If you need to make decisions about school, work or other significant matters related to the pandemic, schedule a specific time (or times) to do your research, get advice and weigh your options. By scheduling a specific time and place to do this, you can allow yourself to focus on other, less stressful, matters the rest of the day. Also, keep your thinking in check by asking yourself: what am I still grateful for, what are positive and hopeful ways to view my situation and what do I tell others to cheer them up that apply to me too?"

### Dr. Ashley Evaritt, Assistant Director of Counseling Center

"When feeling overwhelmed during a period of crisis, it is most important to attend to basic needs. While it is understandable for sleep quality to decline when you are experiencing stress, sleep deprivation often leads to irritability, increased stress and can have a detrimental impact on your interpersonal relationships. Try to establish a good bedtime routine, which includes not using screens in bed and practicing calming activities (e.g., journaling, reading, drinking non-caffeinated tea) about 30 minutes before trying to fall asleep."

### Mary Mireles '14, Staff Counselor

"When we are in states of stress and survival there is no ONE RIGHT WAY to cope. It is normal to feel drained and unsettled during times of uncertainty. Try tapping into your basic needs (i.e., hydrating, eating, sleeping, joyful movement, talking with a friend, etc.). I encourage you to practice compassion for yourself, and for others through this time—community healing can be so powerful."



## A HELPLINE TO MENTAL HEALTH

The closing of campus in March didn't stop students struggling with sadness, overwhelming pressure to perform, anxiety and more from needing USI's Counseling Center, but it did prevent them from coming to campus for help. To ensure students continued to receive mental health help seamlessly required forethought and a seismic shift for the Center's in-person offerings to telehealth via Zoom or the phone. Working with complex standards to create new consent forms and internal counseling documents to assure compliance with legal and ethical guidelines, the Center swiftly established a telehealth system to serve students remotely through private counseling sessions. Students were informed of these new means through the website, emails, phone calls and text.

Additionally, the Center offered a variety of Zoom wellness programs to any student wishing to attend. The content ranged from adulting in the age of COVID-19, open support meetings with counselors, workshops discussing stress, healthy relationships, mindful eating, how to cope positively with anxiety and mindful grounding techniques. Last year, counselors met with 481 students and provided 2,934 hours of counseling; remote counseling continues to be offered this Fall.

# SOUNDTRACKS



## Students Share Closed-Campus Experiences

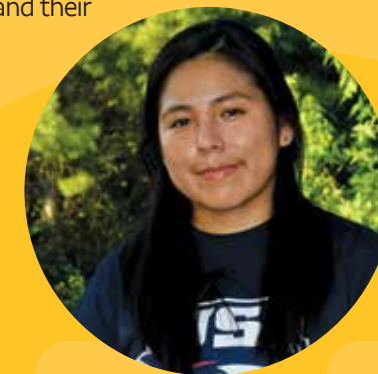
by C. L. Stambush



**W**hen the novel coronavirus shuttered USI's campus March 17, sending nearly 9,000 students home, it left 75 students—approximately 50 international and 25 domestic—residing in campus housing because they had nowhere else to live, attending class virtually and adjusting to life in a pandemic.

Living on a quiet campus, dealing with Zoom classes, project and assignment deadlines, limited dining options, no bus service and isolation, was quite a learning curve. Mara Monterrosa Morales, Fatin Yaro, Hortensia Almanza Guizado and Nohemi Chumacero Mancilla share what life, learning and their final weeks of the semester were like on a closed campus.<sup>1</sup>

Alone but never forgotten, Dr. Ronald Rochon, USI President, Heidi Gregori-Gahan, Associate Provost for International Programs and Services, and Amy Price, Director of Housing and Residence Life, along with a limited staff and a skeleton crew from Sodexo Food Services met the students' needs and cared for them like the family they are.



**Nohemi Chumacero Mancilla '21**  
Political Science  
Monteagudo, Chuquisaca, Bolivia

### WHAT WAS LIFE LIKE BEFORE AND AFTER THE CAMPUS CLOSED?

**Mara:** Before everything happened, I lived in the apartments on campus with three other roommates who had to move out, so I ended up living by myself. At the beginning it was hard because I felt lonely, plus I had to keep up with my classes. For me, classes started being a little bit harder online than in person because the workload increased significantly. I had to start being more organized and really measuring my time to meet all the deadlines.

**Fatin:** Before the University closed, I was a student worker in the Center for International Programs. In that capacity, I interacted with international students daily and took them into the Evansville community to volunteer with local nonprofit

organizations. When I wasn't in the office or volunteering in the community, I spent my time in the library working on my master's thesis or going to the Rec Center. After the University closed, I no longer had access to the office. I couldn't volunteer anymore. I couldn't spend my nights in the library or go to the Rec. That was a drastic change, but we had to cope with it to prevent the spread of the [new] coronavirus.

**Hortensia:** It was hard to go from being around all your friends to being alone. It was scary for me to even go out for a walk, and I know that other international students felt the same. Despite that, we understood that it was in our best [interest] and we got used to this new normal.

**Nohemi:** Before and after this pandemic and shutdown, my living situation was about the same, just my daily routine

changed. I live in a two-bedroom suite with a roommate from Panama, who also remained on campus. When the campus closed, I could not go to the labs, the library or the gym. I usually make my own food, so it was basically the same. I needed to adjust to a new routine, however, which took a lot of discipline. Now I cannot stay in my room without making my bed, everything needs to be neat and organized so I can focus on what I am doing. Having that type of atmosphere helps me stay productive.

### WHAT WAS SUDDENLY SWITCHING TO 100% ONLINE CLASSES LIKE?

**Mara:** It was hard at the beginning since I had many group projects to complete, and sometimes the communication between my classmates was not the best. Overall, the professors were really helpful, but it was not the same experience.



**Hortensia Almanza Guizado '23**  
Radiology and Imaging Sciences  
Santiago, Verguas, Panama

<sup>1</sup>The students' responses were edited for space and grammar.

**Fatin Yaro M'20**  
Master of Public Administration  
Dedougou, Burkina Faso



**Fatin:** I was taking only one class—research methods. In this class, we were using SPSS, a software installed on computers in the labs and in the library, to analyze research data. It's not a free software and many students do not have access to it on their personal computers. I knew it was going to be difficult for me and many other students to gain access to the software to complete our programs in a timely manner. During one of our Zoom meetings with Dr. Rochon and Heidi, I mentioned that, and they [arranged to] have the license shared with students so that we could install it on our own computers.

In terms of taking the Research Methods class online, I found it more beneficial because the teacher was very familiar with technology and he would record the classes and post them on Blackboard, so that we could go back and watch the videos and catch up on what we failed to understand during the synchronous class. During in-person classes, the professor was a little fast for me to comprehend the material. But when it moved online, it became much more accessible.

**Hortensia:** It may have been the nightmare of every college student. It was hard and stressful. I was taking an anatomy class and not being in a classroom or the lab I felt I was missing some information—all the detailed explanation that the professor gives you. However, I must say that I discovered, with effort and patience, I could succeed, even though online classes were not what I was used to.

**Nohemi:** It was a challenge, since I was used to in-person instruction. I felt limited

in all aspects. On the other hand, having my professors record their classes helped, since I could go over the recorded lectures if I did not understand something.

#### HOW DID YOUR INTERACTION WITH FACULTY CHANGE? WITH CLASSMATES?

**Mara:** Everything being fully online I had to reach out to my professors by email, or in some cases, we stayed a couple minutes after our Zoom class to clarify questions. It was harder to discuss project guidelines and there were a lot of miscommunication problems. With my classmates it was a challenge to communicate, but for the most part we managed to arrange Zoom meetings to discuss our final projects.

**Fatin:** Before the campus was closed, I used to have a meeting every other week with my academic advisor in his office to discuss my progress on my research. After campus closed, we moved to Zoom meetings. To be honest, I preferred the Zoom meetings because I was able to record them and refer to them at my convenience, in order to consider the suggestions he would make. It was completely different than sitting down, listening and taking notes.

As far as my interactions with my classmates were concerned, they were affected in the sense that we couldn't meet in the library to complete activities and assignments together anymore. We would sometimes have a short conversation on the phone about assignments since we were all practicing social distancing.

**Hortensia:** I feel it became distant. The professors were too busy trying to figure out how to make our classes work and I did not have the opportunity to keep close contact with my classmates since we did not have any projects, labs or homework together. As we moved to online, it was, for me, a job between my laptop and me, and not with my professor and classmates.

**Nohemi:** I was pushing myself to use the office hours of my professors more frequently, and I was doing great. All of a sudden, the shutdown came. I felt more limited in my interaction with them since all we could do was email and make appointments through Zoom, which I did not really feel comfortable with. At the beginning of the online classes, I was struggling with some labs and assignments and sometimes it was so hard for me to focus and get things done for that class. Dr. Trent Engbers reached out to check in with me and asked if I needed any help several times. He was able to see the potential I have and helped me.

#### HOW DID YOU FEEL WHEN YOU SAW YOUR PEERS MOVING OUT?

**Mara:** It was really sad to see my roommates and American friends moving out, and it was sadder to see how empty the campus was at that time.

**Fatin:** Seeing everybody moving off campus in the middle of the semester was unexpected. I felt isolated and lonely on an empty campus. I couldn't say goodbye, in a proper way, to some of my American friends whom I had met and



**Mara Monterrosa Morales '21**  
Business Administration  
Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico

built solid friendships with. Seeing them leave in an abrupt manner and knowing it was probably the last time for me to see them, deeply saddened me. This was my final year at USI, as well as some of my friends who left too.

**Hortensia:** I felt sad and melancholic. Suddenly the campus became the loneliest place in the world. However, it got worse for me because many of my international friends had to return home. For many of them, it was their only opportunity to fly, so even if they wanted to stay, it was an impossible situation. Students who were leaving were going to see their families, but for me it was about seeing fewer people on campus, not being able to see my family and feeling that everything was uncertain.

**Nohemi:** It was an interesting week, mostly because people were leaving campus early and all of a sudden. I was ok until I started seeing posts on social media from friends that were very affected, and I felt sorry for them and just prayed that things would work out for them. I felt sad for them but blessed that I was permitted to stay on campus.

#### HOW DID YOU COPE WITH THE CAMPUS CLOSING?

**Mara:** At the beginning we did not know what to think, we were really uncertain about our future at USI, but as the days went by, we realized we had a large support system at the University and a lot of people helped us through this transition. Knowing that, I felt more relief and just focused on finishing the semester strong.

**Fatin:** After the campus closed, I continued working on my thesis. Instead of spending

my nights in the library, I adjusted to working from my apartment. It wasn't easy because of the many distractions around. To manage stress, I sometimes jogged on off-campus trails. I stayed connected socially by talking with my family and friends back home.

**Hortensia:** I had to realize that even though I could call anybody, nobody was going to come and be with me. So, I pushed myself to change the uncertain time into the most successful one. I had classes, called my family, cooked the food I liked and I found ways to entertain myself and feel happy. For example, I bought some puzzles, got some plants and watered them every day and started to practice yoga. Trust me, there were days that I didn't have time to finish everything on my list because I was busy taking advantage of my day.

**Nohemi:** I would say that it was not such a big deal. I am a very go-with-the-flow and patient person. But it affected me in that I was not able to work. I was a bit sad that I could not use the buildings, since sometimes it gets a little boring to stay in my apartment all the time. Thank God I was able to go for short walks by the apartments and breathe fresh air.

#### HOW HAS THE UNIVERSITY SUPPORTED YOU?

**Mara:** The International Office and Dr. Rochon (we like to call him "Baba") have been such a great support for all of us. The International Office arranged buses for us to go to Walmart to buy groceries, and came up with activities to keep us occupied, such as gardening and baking.

**Fatin:** The University has supported me and many other students by allowing us to stay on campus during this difficult time. Not only did the University leadership allow us to be here but they made sure every weekend that we had food. They checked on us daily, making sure we had everything we needed. I know that this was not the case in many other universities across the United States because I have friends at different universities throughout the country. I know we were lucky to be at USI and we are grateful.

**Hortensia:** I should say USI has the best president, but also the best staff. When the University closed, the support from every department was tremendous. I remember that every night we (international students on campus) would have an online meeting with someone from a different department, for example, Public Safety, Health Center, Housing or the Counseling Center. In all those meetings, Heidi and Dr. Rochon were present. The goal of those meetings was to make sure that the students on campus were safe, and whoever needed to come to campus would be safe.

**Nohemi:** The University has been doing a great job since the first day. Dr. Rochon and Heidi Gregori-Gahan have made sure we have what we need and are always concerned about our situation.

A Quarantine Café was installed in the Townsend building, and every Saturday





Dr. Rochon and Heidi fed us and brought some groceries.

The Health Center offered help and interest in our well-being, and the Housing staff looked after us too. Having Dr. Rochon as our president made me feel at home during this time; I cannot emphasize that enough.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT THING FOR YOU?

**Mara:** The hardest for me during this time has been being away from my family. I saw how my friends were spending more time with their families during this quarantine, doing fun activities like baking, playing, watching movies, and I wished I could do the same things with mine.

**Fatin:** One of the most difficult things for me was not having access to the library. I get easily distracted in my apartment. The library was the place for me to go and focus on my schoolwork.

**Hortensia:** The most difficult thing has been being away from my family. These are times when we want to be together, and we want to feel supported. Being in the middle of a pandemic, not knowing what is going to happen next, was terrifying.

**Nohemi:** I would say, not having a job. I do not depend on my parents or family financially, rather I help my father financially. I think having that responsibility and not being able to do much has truly been difficult.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST POSITIVE THING FOR YOU?

**Mara:** One of the positive things about the campus closing was being able to connect more with all of the other international students. We really bonded with each other; going through the same process and having all their support was a big help. It was sad to see them return to their countries.

**Fatin:** The most positive thing for me was being able to complete my degree program despite the pandemic and these unforeseen circumstances. I saw the challenges as hurdles detouring me from reaching my destination. But I overcame them one at a time and completed my program as I originally set out to do. It wasn't easy, but I'm proud to say I now have a Master of Public Administration.

**Hortensia:** I learned to become positive in difficult times. I knew I was going to be alone for a long time and staying in my bed 24 hours a day was not going to be helpful. I changed my mind and challenged myself to be better.

**Nohemi:** I think the most positive thing during this time was that I made a lot of friends in the First Love church family. I have friends in Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Missouri, Minnesota, Tennessee and other states—all students studying in different universities. Also, many do not believe me, but every week I have Zoom meetings, prayer meetings, Bible studies, gatherings, not to mention that on Sundays, I am at [online] church from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., sometimes 4 p.m., which would not be possible if this situation did not happen. I have made a lot of connections

during this time, and I really appreciate and thank God for them. I indeed went through a lot of new experiences and developed new amazing skills.

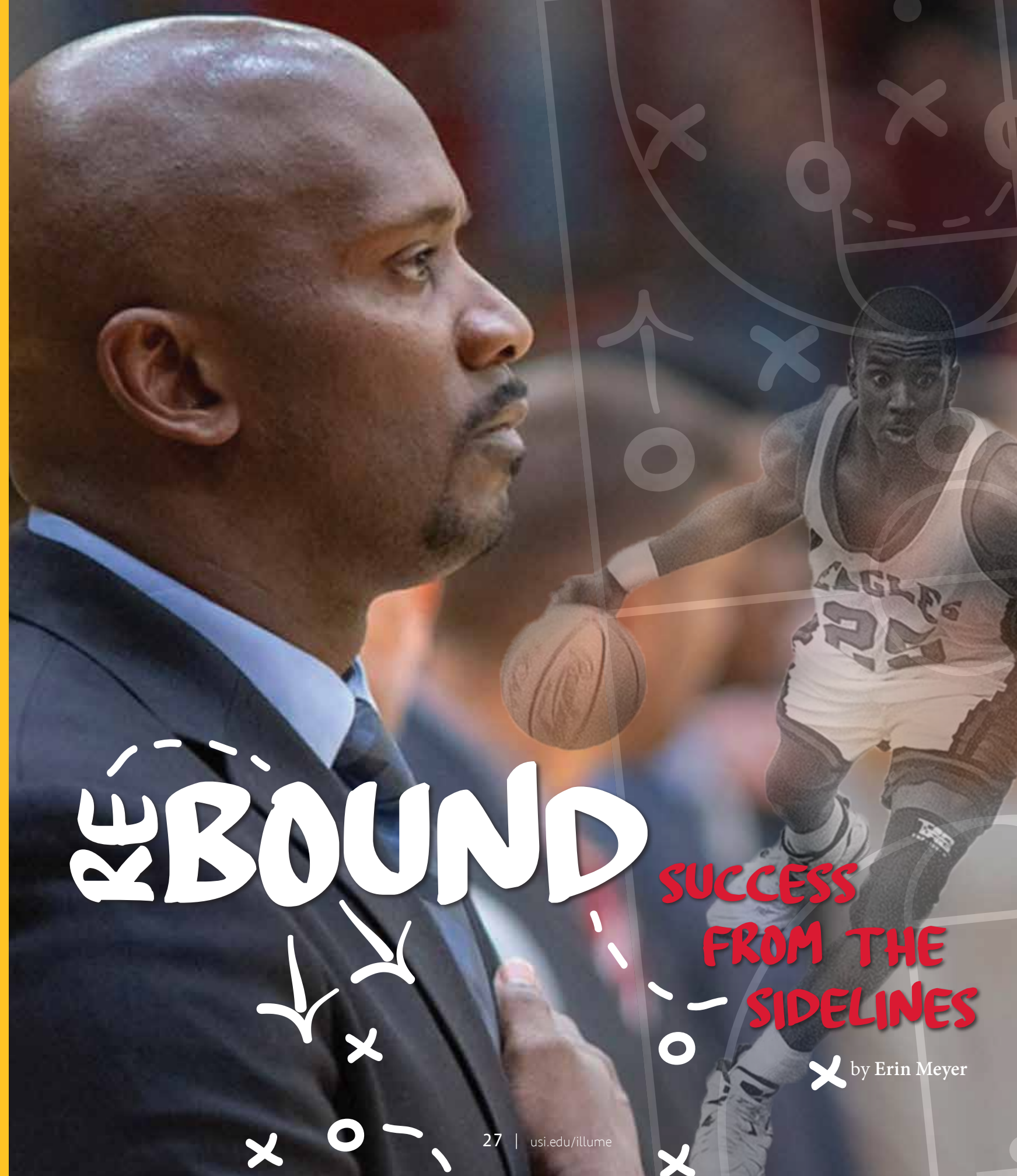
#### WHAT IS THE BIGGEST LESSON YOU LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE?

**Mara:** How uncertain the world is and how fragile we are as humans.

**Fatin:** The social skills, empathy, respect and acceptance of our differences made me grow culturally and individually. I realized that I was capable of more than I thought. Coming from a French-speaking country and being able to write a 78-page thesis in English was a great accomplishment. At times I doubted I could complete it, but by dint of perseverance I made it happen. As the saying goes, "Where there's a will, there's always a way."

**Hortensia:** There are always going to be barriers and difficulties in my studies, but it is up to me to overcome them and become a better student.

**Nohemi:** That no matter what happens I still need to continue learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills in my field. I also learned that I need to find strategies to build new skills as the world changes and enters a new normal. I came to the U.S. to study and get a good education in a field that will allow me to help society. 🐉



# REBOUND

## SUCCESS FROM THE SIDELINES

by Erin Meyer



# STAN GOUARD '99 DIDN'T EXPECT TO BE ON THE SIDELINES THAT SUMMER.

It was 2000 and he wanted distance—from basketball and its disappointment. Instead, over the next few months, in a medley of Midwest gyms, he led his first team (a group of middle schoolers from Carbondale, Illinois) to an undefeated season. A season that changed his life.

Coaching was supposed to be a backup: a career shift when his real dream ended. But it never began.

Despite dazzling fans as a two-time National Player of the Year at USI and competing professionally overseas, “Superman’s” membership to the game’s most exclusive—and elusive—club was denied. There would be no NBA.

But basketball still beckoned.

Not long after his greatest defeat, that first team provided a much-needed victory—25 of them, actually. More importantly, it ignited a new passion that quickly propelled him to, and through, the collegiate coaching ranks.

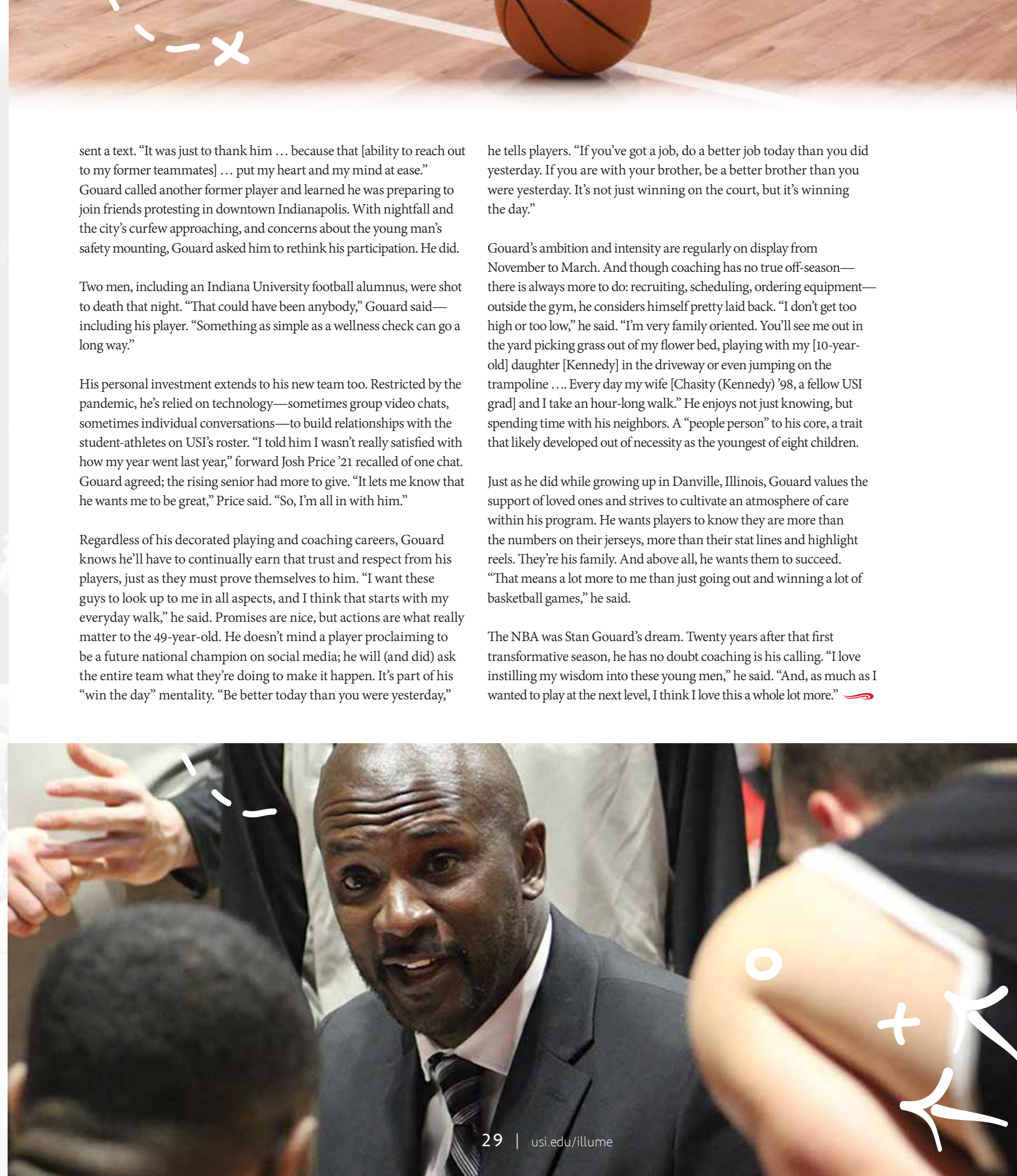
Like books judged by their covers, coaches are often judged by their records—and Gouard’s is impressive (winning 204 out of 315 games in 12 years as head coach at the University of Indianapolis before becoming USI’s Head Men’s Basketball Coach this year). But while winning is important—he longs to add another national championship trophy to USI’s case—it’s not his only priority. Nor is it his first. “I preach academics, character and basketball. ... And we will never sacrifice the academics and character for basketball,” the former GLVC Coach of the Year said.

Gouard pushes players to their limits; lack of effort will always land them on the bench before a mistake. He encourages them to embrace each moment; as COVID-19 has proven, opportunities can disappear in an instant. And, when the final buzzer sounds, he hopes he’s prepared them for life after basketball; wherever it leads, he wants to follow along.

He’s still in touch with many of the men who’ve called him “Coach” over the past two decades. When his team traveled to Kansas City, Missouri, last year, he invited former players in the area to the game. He cherishes each wedding invitation that arrives in his mailbox. If one of his guys needs help, he’s ready—which is why, hundreds of miles away, Scott Strahm picked up the phone.

The successful Florida entrepreneur and father of two wanted to know how his friend was doing. And, as a White man navigating the days following George Floyd’s death at the knee of a Minneapolis police officer, he also wanted advice. “Some of my friends—I didn’t want them to not hear from me,” Strahm said. “I just wanted his perspective on how to approach [those conversations].”

During their emotional hour-long discussion, Gouard told Strahm to keep it simple. “Just let them know you’re thinking about them, and you feel for them and what’s going on,” he said. A week later, Strahm



sent a text. “It was just to thank him ... because that [ability to reach out to my former teammates] ... put my heart and my mind at ease.”

Gouard called another former player and learned he was preparing to join friends protesting in downtown Indianapolis. With nightfall and the city’s curfew approaching, and concerns about the young man’s safety mounting, Gouard asked him to rethink his participation. He did.

Two men, including an Indiana University football alumnus, were shot to death that night. “That could have been anybody,” Gouard said—including his player. “Something as simple as a wellness check can go a long way.”

His personal investment extends to his new team too. Restricted by the pandemic, he’s relied on technology—sometimes group video chats, sometimes individual conversations—to build relationships with the student-athletes on USI’s roster. “I told him I wasn’t really satisfied with how my year went last year,” forward Josh Price ’21 recalled of one chat. Gouard agreed; the rising senior had more to give. “It lets me know that he wants me to be great,” Price said. “So, I’m all in with him.”

Regardless of his decorated playing and coaching careers, Gouard knows he’ll have to continually earn that trust and respect from his players, just as they must prove themselves to him. “I want these guys to look up to me in all aspects, and I think that starts with my everyday walk,” he said. Promises are nice, but actions are what really matter to the 49-year-old. He doesn’t mind a player proclaiming to be a future national champion on social media; he will (and did) ask the entire team what they’re doing to make it happen. It’s part of his “win the day” mentality. “Be better today than you were yesterday,”

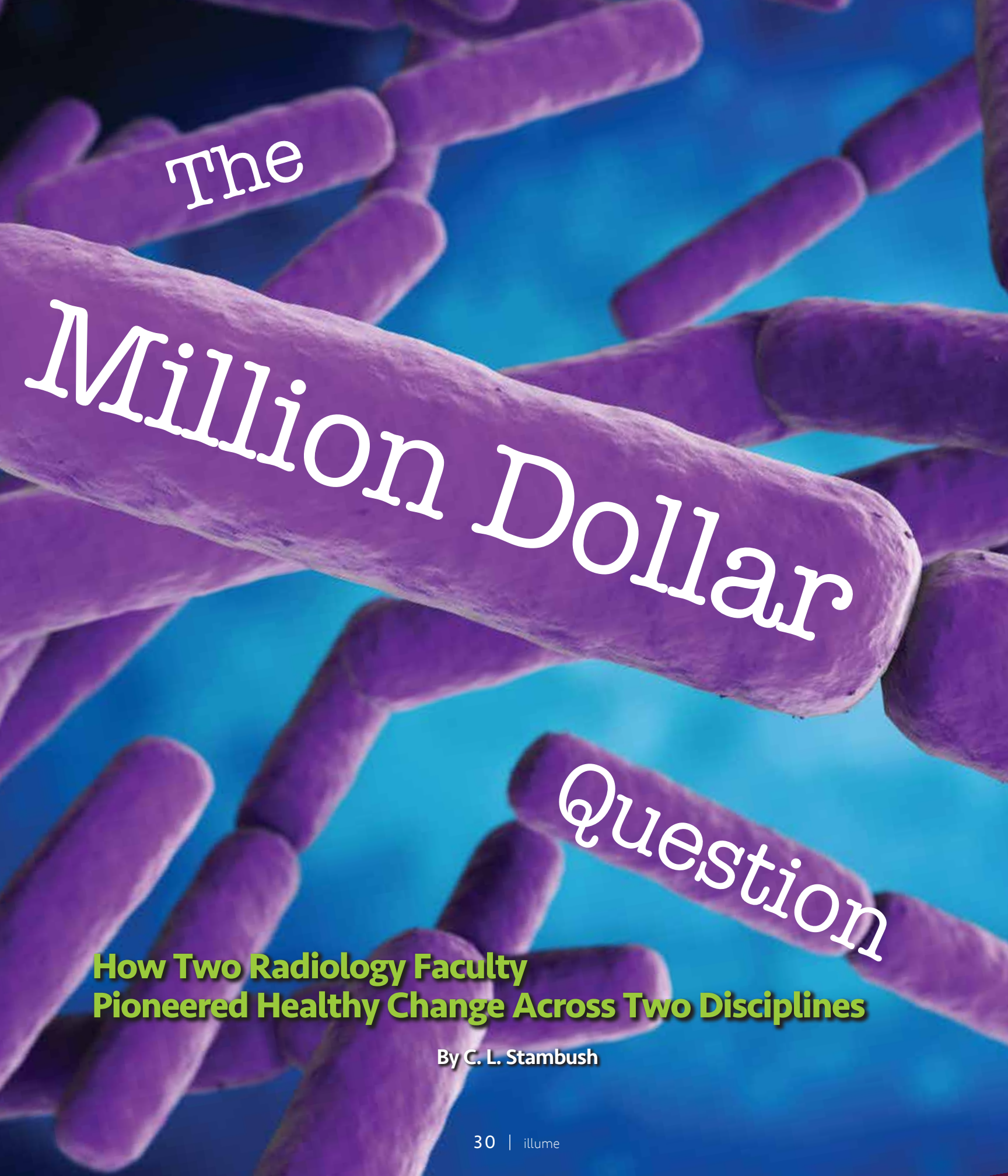
he tells players. “If you’ve got a job, do a better job today than you did yesterday. If you are with your brother, be a better brother than you were yesterday. It’s not just winning on the court, but it’s winning the day.”

Gouard’s ambition and intensity are regularly on display from November to March. And though coaching has no true off-season—there is always more to do: recruiting, scheduling, ordering equipment—outside the gym, he considers himself pretty laid back. “I don’t get too high or too low,” he said. “I’m very family oriented. You’ll see me out in the yard picking grass out of my flower bed, playing with my [10-year-old] daughter [Kennedy] in the driveway or even jumping on the trampoline .... Every day my wife [Chasity (Kennedy) ’98, a fellow USI grad] and I take an hour-long walk.” He enjoys not just knowing, but spending time with his neighbors. A “people person” to his core, a trait that likely developed out of necessity as the youngest of eight children.

Just as he did while growing up in Danville, Illinois, Gouard values the support of loved ones and strives to cultivate an atmosphere of care within his program. He wants players to know they are more than the numbers on their jerseys, more than their stat lines and highlight reels. They’re his family. And above all, he wants them to succeed. “That means a lot more to me than just going out and winning a lot of basketball games,” he said.

The NBA was Stan Gouard’s dream. Twenty years after that first transformative season, he has no doubt coaching is his calling. “I love instilling my wisdom into these young men,” he said. “And, as much as I wanted to play at the next level, I think I love this a whole lot more.”





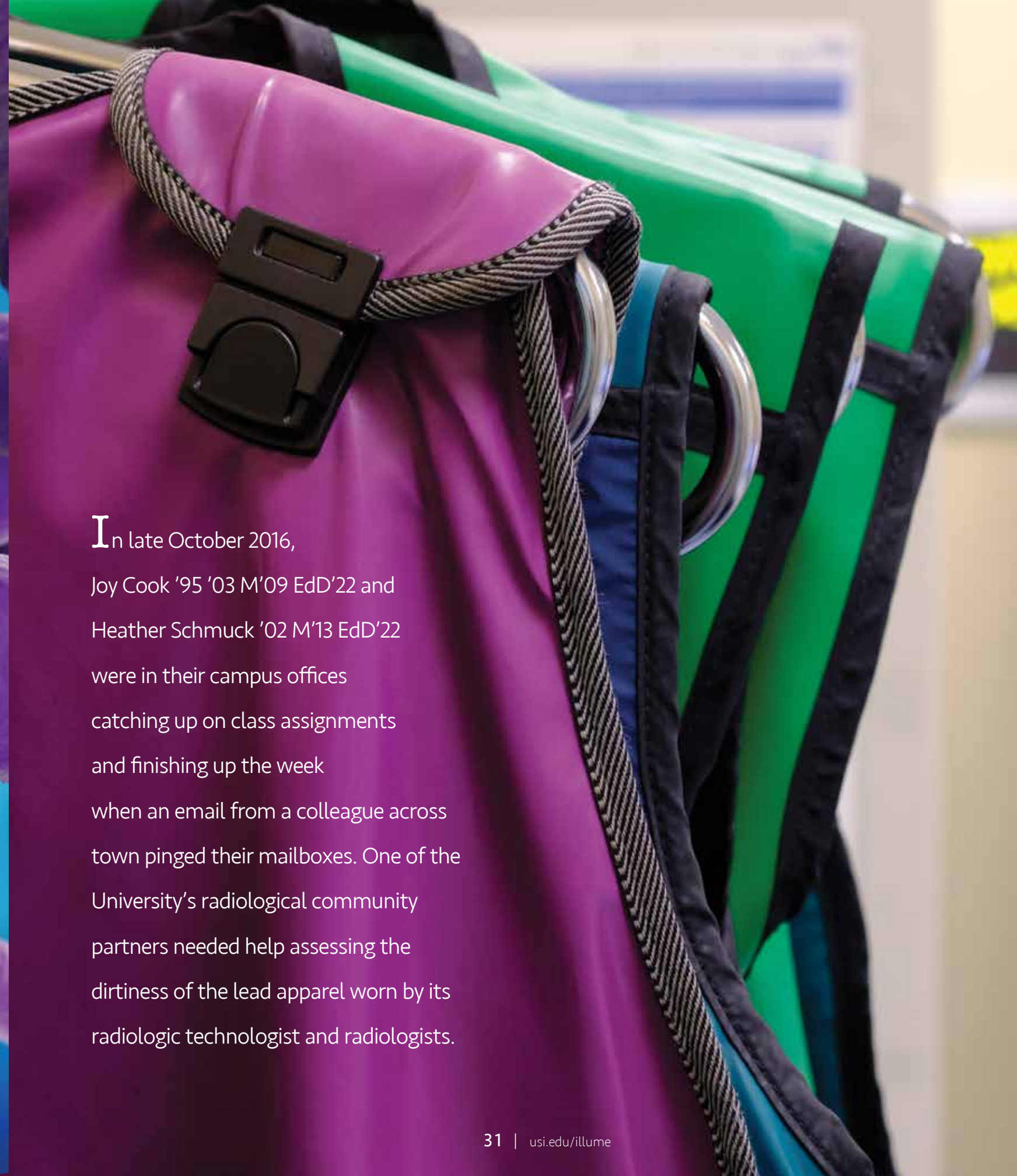
The

# Million Dollar

Question

**How Two Radiology Faculty  
Pioneered Healthy Change Across Two Disciplines**

By C. L. Stambush



In late October 2016, Joy Cook '95 '03 M'09 EdD'22 and Heather Schmuck '02 M'13 EdD'22 were in their campus offices catching up on class assignments and finishing up the week when an email from a colleague across town pinged their mailboxes. One of the University's radiological community partners needed help assessing the dirtiness of the lead apparel worn by its radiologic technologist and radiologists.



## Pandora's Box

The hospital had protocols and practices for cleaning its hundreds of weighty aprons, but when contacted by an outside service to clean the apparel for them—at a cost of a quarter of a million dollars every six months—hospital administrators were prompted to ask: how germey is the protective apparel and how effective were cleaning protocols? “Our colleague knew we had been interested in doing some research on radiology lead identification markers and their use,” said Cook, Associate Professor of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences and Chair of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences.

Every research project begins with a deep dive into literature reviews. Cook and Schmuck, Clinical Associate Professor of Radiologic and Imaging Sciences and Clinical Coordinator Radiologic and Imaging Sciences, dove into discovery mode to familiarize themselves with published research before evaluating the apparel. “One study came out that they were having a rash of ring-worm show up on the radiology professionals,” Cook said. “It turns out it was being spread through the thyroid collars on the shields people were wearing because that comes in direct contact with skin.”

Unlike food establishments that are inspected routinely by officials, and health code violations reported to the public in newspapers and online, medical institutions undergo no such rigorous oversight from an outside entity. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provide guidelines for infection control only. The Joint Commission, a nonprofit organization that inspects and accredits U.S. hospitals, has rules regarding infection prevention but doesn't measure institutional cleanliness. The hospital is only required, for accreditation purposes, to have a record of the apparel in use and an annual integrity inspection to ensure the apparel is not damaged and protecting the user.

To determine the level of bioburden on lead apparel, a handheld device called a bioluminescence meter calculates the molecular material in relative light units (RLU). There are no industry standards for acceptable levels of dirtiness, and each medical institution is expected to set its own. At this particular hospital, 50 RLUs was the threshold for lead apparel used in general patient care areas and 10 RLUs for surgery. The apparel received quarterly cleaning using several meth-

ods—a spray cleaner with a brush and wipes—but bioburden wasn't measured before, during or after cleanings.

Armed with one of USI's bioluminescence meters, Cook and Schmuck randomly tested a percentage of the hospital's wide variety of protective attire. The results were alarming: an average of 129.98 RLUs was detected.

Exacerbating the issue was the fact that the protective equipment used in the many departments rarely stayed put, roaming the hospital from department to department, in and out of surgeries collecting a cocktail of bacterium. It wasn't just lead apparel in use that teamed with germs, new products straight from manufacturers were tested by Cook and Schmuck who discovered they arrived predisposed with an average of 51 RLUs.

The hospital's sanitizing policy needed reassessing. Cook and Schmuck recommended upping the cleaning to monthly, even though it came with a cost. “Our community partner has 700 to 800 pieces of lead apparel,” Schmuck said. “When you're talking about having to individually clean each one of those, it can get very labor-intensive very quickly.”



## Boxing in Germs

They returned a year later to evaluate the effectiveness of the change. “We sampled the aprons and found that we’d gotten it down to 58 RLUs,” Cook said. “That’s a huge difference from 129, but it still wasn’t where we wanted it to be.”

Since their initial research yielded little insight into best practices for cleaning lead apparel, figuring out best practices to remain under the hospital’s bioburden threshold led to a new phase of research. “We discovered that not only has no one figured out how often apparel should be cleaned,” Schmuck said, “but also what method is best, in terms of efficiency costs.”

The hospital purchases lead apparel from different manufacturers, each arriving in a box and wrapped in plastic along with slightly different user care information. They, like instructions in general, tended to get lost in the shuffle of busy hospital care, never reaching the intended users. Cook and Schmuck realized they needed to determine what method of cleaning eliminated the most biomatter, in the most time-saving manner, to recommend the hospital implement.

Students in Cook’s class helped her research the various lead apparel manufactures’ care instructions for commonalities and presented their findings to her before she and Schmuck settled on three different methods to

test at the hospital for effectiveness and efficiency:

1. light dish detergent, water and a soft bristle brush
2. light dish detergent, water and bristle brush plus a second step using a water-based disinfectant
3. sanitizing wipes

With recommendations and a system for cleaning in place, two of the hospital’s radiologic technicians and USI alumna Angela Hollingsworth\* ’17 and Christopher Prifogle ’21, radiologic and imaging, took on the arduous task of putting the three methods into practice while Schmuck swabbed the cleaned garments for germs and Cook recorded the new data.

Soap and water were not enough, and the two-step process using disinfectant worked well but the time involved was too costly. Employees had to wait for the garments to air dry between steps. The use of sanitizing wipes proved most effective in terms of eliminating germs and efficiency. “That ended up being our most effective method, not only in terms of reducing that bioburden but also the time involved,” Schmuck said. “Now, you can literally grab the apron that you’re planning to use for the day and wipe it down at the start of your shift and you’re ready to go.”

The research sparked Schmuck to consider how germey the X-ray markers radiologists used over and over when

imaging patients were too. “With the switch to digital imaging, I’ve noticed some of my colleagues were starting to place those markers actually on the patient, which is a horrific idea,” she said. “I wanted to see how dirty they were because they were placing them on the patient and then sticking them back onto their name tag.”

Schmuck surveyed her hospital colleagues and discovered different technologists used types of reusable adhesives to adhere the markers to the imaging plates. Some of the choices were worse than others.

Cook and Schmuck presented their lead apparel and marker findings at the Indiana Society of Radiologic Technologists 2018 conference, prompting their peers to think and ask questions. They have also published their findings, along with co-authors Hollingsworth and Prifogle, in *Radiologic Technology*. The significance of shared findings benefits all. Regional and rural healthcare facilities won’t have the budget to undertake such research. “Someone from another local facility reached out to me because she needs the article as proof to take forward to her hospital administration,” Schmuck said.

## Out of the Box

Cook was sitting with her daughter in the dentist’s office when an epiphany struck her. “I watched the dental hygienist unfold this apron where she had it stacked and put it on my child,” she said. “It had never occurred to me that radiology and dental, while two separate disciplines have a commonality—we both utilize X-rays.”

Germs weren’t the issue with the dentist’s office’s lead apparel, but rather its integrity. “Every time it’s folded, it creates a stress point that could crack and then it reduces its effectiveness,” Cook said. When she pointed this out to the dentist, he was rightly concerned and wanted to know if his apparel was compromised. Unlike hospitals with large X-ray machines, dental offices have no easy way of determining if cracks or stress lines have developed unless they partner with a local hospital or university, Schmuck said.

In the next few weeks, two of Cook’s students examined and X-rayed the dentist’s six lead aprons. The students did all the analysis of the apparel, determining if and where the weak spots and cracks were and wrote a report for the dentist. The goal was to not only inform the dentist of his aprons’ integrity but to provide understanding and procedures to keep it

free of defects and patients safe. “Our intention in doing this was to make sure that appropriate care gets maintained in practice,” she said. “We can show them just because it looks okay on the outside it doesn’t mean it is on the inside. Students at USI are taught how to store the aprons appropriately, but somewhere in practice, and not at all dental offices, that got lost.”


A chance conversation at the coffee pot resulted in a larger collaboration with Amanda Reddington, Clinical Assistant Professor of Dental Hygiene/Assisting, Cook said. “I was discussing some of the things that we were doing with our students on campus and how we had this ‘aha’ moment and realization concerning the care of lead apparel in dentists’ offices, and Amanda was very interested in getting our two groups together.”

Schmuck, Cook and Reddington devised a unique interprofessional service-learning project for the divergent, healthcare career seekers to collaborate on in USI’s Dental Clinic and Radiology Lab that combined the two research projects—the dentist’s office and hospital bioburden RLUs. The trio applied for an internal grant to purchase equipment needed for the project and received \$3,000. The students were divided into four groups (the number of lead aprons in the USI

Dental Clinic) to test the apparels’ cleanliness and integrity, as well as ancillary devices used in the departments.

“The student teams swabbed, cleaned and swabbed again, checking the dirtiness level of the pieces of lead apparel before coming up to the radiology lab. Once at the radiology lab, students conducted a visual and manual inspection where they looked at and felt the lead apparel to see if they could detect any holes by touch or sight. They then moved the lead apparel into the energized lab to create an X-ray image of each quadrant of the lead apparel to determine if there were integrity issues,” Schmuck said.

“We thought it was important to get the two groups of students together—who don’t realize that they really have a lot in common—to catch these pre-professionals and share the importance of making sure things are clean before being used on ourselves and our patients,” Cook said.

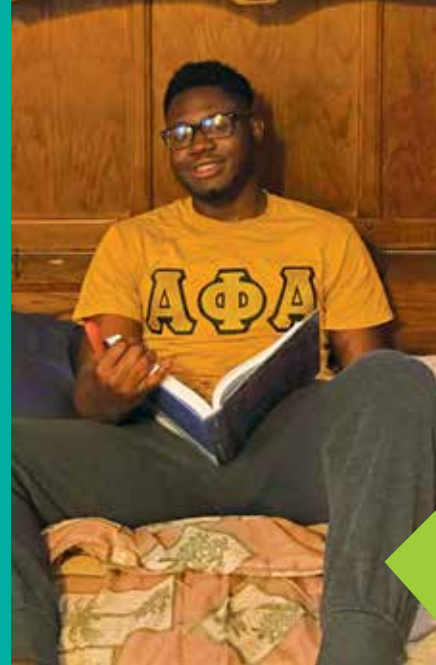
The impact of Hollingsworth’s initial email in 2016, wondering if the hospital’s lead apparel germ levels were within an acceptable range, sparked research, collaboration, interprofessional projects and most importantly, change that has increased both patient and professional’s safety. 

\* Angela Hollingsworth, class of 2017, died unexpectedly June 1, 2020, while this article was being written. She served as president for the Indiana Society for Radiologic Technologists, adjunct faculty to USI’s College of Nursing and Health Professions, and friend to the University.



When it was announced that classes were going to be held online, I felt like someone had ripped the rug out from under my feet. This abrupt change in instruction had me extremely worried about my academic performance, mostly due to my struggles with online learning in the past. As time went by, I found that by reaching out and asking for help, from not just my teachers but my academic advisors, was astronomically helpful, they helped me realize I was capable of doing anything if I put my mind to it.

– Sarah Hannonson '21  
History  
Indianapolis, Indiana



This year took a turn from what we perceived as normal when the pandemic occurred. Nonetheless, I was able to pull through the tough time and learned great lessons about academics. One of the greatest lessons I learned is there are lots of individuals that genuinely care about my education, especially those directly involved, like my professors and school faculty. They could have easily done the bare minimum, but they did their best to make sure students got the material needed to learn in the class. We also saw huge support for the class of 2020.

– Iruoghene Oruahwo '22  
Electrical Engineering  
Lagos, Nigeria

**Open Dialogue**  
COVID-19 lessons

This semester taught me to enjoy every moment because you never know when things may change. I was fortunate enough to be cast in two theatre productions with the USI Theatre Department. While juggling that, I also had my academic responsibilities as a student who was taking 20 credit hours at the time. In the blink of an eye life changed, performances were cancelled and I was taking my classes from the comfort of my couch at home. I learned to never rush the moments you will soon wish lasted forever.

– Percionna Hale '22  
Theatre  
Montgomery, Alabama



Desire is a simple word that makes us what we are and helps us to identify ourselves as leaders or followers. The greatest lesson I have learned is that nothing can stop our desire to learn something and improve our academic skills. Find ways to keep working, (e.g. use books if you do not have internet). My desire of working hard to accomplish my goals is something that goes beyond this situation, it has made me a stronger individual and has prepared me for what is next in my academic career. I'm sure that if we help each other we will get through these hard moments while improving ourselves.

– Diego Socorro '23  
Business Administration  
Maracaibo, Zulia, Venezuela



I had taken several online classes prior to the Spring 2020 Semester. But, after the surprise of the COVID-19 pandemic, my typical workload on campus turned into an unprecedented workload at home. The urge to watch Netflix or hang out with friends only grew stronger—making online learning a super difficult task. The numerous wi-fi disconnections made online exams, recorded presentations and Zoom calls even more challenging. But, a lesson of strong resilience and concentration allowed me to get through it all. One step at a time, I took on each assignment, quiz and exam with an open mind, and I was able to finish the semester successfully.

– Brandon Turner '22  
Biology (Pre-Dentistry)  
Vincennes, Indiana



The COVID-19 pandemic forces us to live in a new reality no one was prepared for. However, because of this, I learned how to conquer academic and life challenges I thought I never could. I found out where my weak spots were in my work ethic and how to improve them, and I recognized how hard USI's faculty and staff will work for students and our individual successes. After this semester, I am truly proud to be a Screagle and will continue to wear the name confidently. When we all return, everything will be a little more special than it was before.

– Grace Toth '23  
Public Relations and Advertising  
Indianapolis, Indiana



**THE SCIENCE OF**



What comes to mind when you hear the phrase **brain freeze**? For me it happens when I'm sitting in a major league ballpark, taking that first large bite of an ice cream cone. Brain freeze occurs as the cold ice cream hits the roof of the mouth and the back of the throat, leading to an almost immediate stabbing pain and headache. The headache, which is often centered around the back of the eyes, slowly subsides but comes again if more cold food or drink is consumed.

Scientists have discovered two primary reasons that interact to cause brain freeze headaches (scientifically known as sphenopalatine ganglioneuralgia).

1. First, when a cold stimulus (cold stimulus headache is in fact the medical term for brain freeze) is applied to the back of the throat and roof of the mouth, it interacts with a number of blood vessels and nerves in that area of the head.

One in particular that is affected is the anterior cerebral artery. Research shows that this artery constricts when the

cold stimulus is removed, thus reducing the headache. It is thought that the headache is due to an increased blood flow through this vessel which runs very close to the back of the eye sockets.

2. A second reason for the brain freeze is the interaction of the cold stimulus with a nerve in the neck and head called the trigeminal nerve. When the trigeminal nerve is triggered by the cold stimulus it causes a rapid increase in blood pressure, followed by a very rapid decrease.

These rapid changes in blood pressure are thought to contribute to the brain freeze sensation. Regardless of how the headache occurs, it is temporary in duration and appears to cause no lasting problems.

Many people experience brain freeze, although many are not as susceptible. Perhaps it's just nature's way of telling us to slow down and enjoy our cold treats. So, the next time you are about to take a big gulp of that icy drink or bite of ice cream, you may want to take your time and avoid the freeze!

–Dr. Brent Summers, Associate Professor of Biology



# BEHIND THE SCENE

What began as a way to bring community members to campus for a night of food, music and fun has grown into a 51-year (and going) tradition. USI's Madrigal Feaste—a reenactment of a 15th-century royal feast—was originally performed with German traditions that reflected the community's heritage. It was transformed into an Irish-themed feast after Daniel Craig, Associate Professor of

Music, arrived in 1990 and USI's Chamber Choir began traveling to Ireland for musical competitions.

Two months of rehearsals, yards of fabric and a weekend of staging goes into the event that has scripted processions and music accompanying each of the five courses that, over time, have been created to appeal to most palates.

1. Plum pudding was served as desert from 1969 to the late 1990s. Originally prepared in her own kitchen, Betty Rice, the wife of USI's first president Dr. David L. Rice, catered the entire meal for hundreds of guests. Plum pudding recipes contain no actual plums but rather raisins, the pre-Victorian word for plums.
2. An array of props is staged in Carter Hall to reflect the regal Irish manor, complete with a knight's full suit of armor, and decorated evergreen trees significant of the season's celebration fill out the set. The suit of armor was donated by a fan of the feast after she remodeled a medieval/renaissance themed space in her home.
3. In ancient times, the boar was considered the most dangerous and tastiest meat. To honor the hunter brave enough to slay it for the feast, the boar's head was decorated and displayed while the meat was cooked and plated separately. USI's boar's head is real and has been part of the celebration since its inception.
4. The feast has a cast of approximately 60 students performing roles of lords, ladies, storytellers and jesters. They roam the room, inviting patrons to dance and sing. In the early years, a skit was performed after dinner. Today, so much entertainment is happening simultaneously that each guest has a unique perception of the evening.
5. USI's Mid-American Singers, established in 1969, brought national attention to the feast when, in 1977, they performed it on air on PBS. The group reorganized into the USI Chamber Choir in 1999. USI's choir performed in New York City's Carnegie Hall in 2011 and 2019.
6. Music is the center of the feast and each song ushers in the next course of the meal, advancing the program. The choir performs between 15-20 songs in several languages: Latin, French, German, Polish, Irish, Scots Gaelic, Russian and English.



## THE IMMEASURABLE IMPACT OF "MAMA HEIDI"

Welcoming others, whether at an airport or around a table for a meal, would become the blueprint of Heidi Gregori-Gahan, Associate Provost Emerita for International Programs, when she arrived at USI in 1998 and settled into a basement cubicle. The first step would be getting to know USI's 33 international students as the University's newest office took shape. "Little by little, we grew the study abroad programs [which now encompass more than 60 countries], international enrollments [more than 200 students on average each semester] and the Intensive English Program," said Gregori-Gahan.

Each success conquered challenges—from cultural differences and language barriers to political roadblocks and funding shortages. Few triumphs happened quickly. But no matter how complex or lengthy, all involved a fundamental concept. "You've got to be genuine, because even if people don't speak your language, they're going to know," said Gregori-Gahan. "People know if you're not genuine."

Early in her career, Gregori-Gahan relished students' view of her as a trusted older sister. It was the ultimate compliment—until she morphed into the role of loving mother, complete with a nickname known across campus and continents: "Mama Heidi."

"She truly became [students'] family abroad as they navigate their experiences during their stay with us," said Dr. Emilija Zlatkowska, Director of USI's Intensive English Department and interim Executive Director for International Programs and Services. "Heidi is one of those people who approaches you with her heart and arms open, ready to welcome you, listen to you and uplift you in every possible way."

"She led with compassion and an ethic of care, pushing us all to strive for the best, ensuring that we kept up with best practices and always assessed what we did, thinking of student needs first," said Melissa Gonnerman, Assistant Director of the Center for International Programs.

Her unwavering dedication to international education prompted NAFSA: Association of International Educators to name Gregori-Gahan a recipient of the NAFSA Life Membership Award last spring, in the midst of a global pandemic that changed every aspect of the job she loved for 22 years, retiring from in June.

But her greatest honor was to be in the front-row seat students joyfully offered as they enrich their lives—and hers—both on campus and around the world. After 40 years in international education, she says the last quarter of her career has been the best.

"I learned so much from our students," she said. "I just loved hearing their stories and what their dreams and goals were, knowing USI was playing a huge role in making those dreams happen." It's hard to imagine how many dreams may have never been realized if not for a passionate advocate named "Mama Heidi."

— Erin Meyer



# Class Notes



**STAY IN TOUCH**

EMAIL us at [alumni@usi.edu](mailto:alumni@usi.edu).

UPDATE your information and send photos via the form at [usi.edu/AlumniUpdate](https://usi.edu/AlumniUpdate).

*Class notes may be edited for length or clarity. We regret that we may not be able to use all submitted photos, and reserve the right to select which ones are included.*

### 1970s

**Michelle (Swearingen) Thompson '77**, elementary education, traveled from her hometown of Sarasota, Florida, to visit former classmates in Evansville to celebrate her retirement from 38 years of teaching. [1]

### 1980s

**Rick Notter '81**, communications, vice president of individual business at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, who hasn't had a haircut in three months, is pictured with his wife Josondra, daughter Jori and son Jude. "My wife and I have both been working from home in Michigan for over three months, so lots of Zoom meetings and conference calls. We've been able to spend a lot of time with our kids and it's been great (although we are very thankful for PBS Kids and The Disney Channel to give us an occasional break!)." [2]

**Jim Thomas '84**, finance, M'02, business administration. "My wife Pam (USI clinical assistant professor of nursing) and I have been quarantined from work since early March and we have adjusted with lots of Zoom, group phone calls and screen time." [3]

**Tony Aylsworth '87**, political science, is the new president of Heritage Federal Credit Union in Newburgh, Indiana.

**Nancy (Backer) Poehlein '89**, art education K-12 at Perry Central School in Leopold, Indiana. "I've been teaching art for the past 30 years and spring of 2020 was one of the most challenging in my teaching career as we had to do all of our teaching remotely.

It forced me to get even more tech-savvy and inspired me to develop creative lessons for online learning. I have three grown daughters, one of which is a 2018 USI grad. I enjoy reading your magazine!" [4]

### 1990s

**Kurt Gutsell '90**, communications, received the Indiana High School Athletic Association's Distinguished Media Service Award for broadcasting high school games for more than 30 years. He also serves as the sports director for WJTS TV and is the fourth member of the Dubois County media to receive the award. He felt honored to count himself among a group that he feels "does it for the right reasons" when it comes to bringing the game to the fans.

**Renee (Seeger) Childress '93**, elementary education, is the new principal at Springs Valley Elementary in French Lick, Indiana.

**Ralph Langen '93**, mechanical engineering technology, started training for a mid-August triathlon—his first—in January 2020. When the "stay at home" orders closed pools and gyms in early March he cut running trails in his farm's fields, swam in his farm's pond, did virtual gym workouts in his basement and biked on the highway wearing a mask. [5]

**AmyLu (Rice) Riley '93**, communications. "For the first time in my career as an inspirational author, I was invited to speak via pre-recorded video in an online conference for women. The April 17-18 event was held during Indiana's shelter-in-place order. I shared two uplifting true stories, including one from my new book

(Faith with Wings) that had just been published on April 1. I've spoken in-person to live audiences before, but this was my first time to be invited to present via video in a live Zoom event." [6]

**Jennifer (Keller) McLeod '96**, respiratory therapy. "As a registered respiratory therapist at Middlesex Hospital and Chesire House Nursing and Rehab, my education at USI prepared me to be an essential employee. The world now understands our worth." [7]

**Bryan Harper '96**, communications, and **Brian Chattin '96**, business administration, reconnected when Harper was in Miami working the 2020 Super Bowl. "We've both progressed up the ladder at the team level in the NFL and MLB, respectively. Brian is assistant general manager at the Miami Marlins, and I'm vice president of content and production at the Minnesota Vikings. This photo shows that relationships built while students at USI can be impactful deep into careers." [8]

**Karen (Hardiman) Ragland '96**, elementary education, retired teacher and Chair of the EVSC School Board Trustees. "Pre-COVID-19 I had flown to Utah—where my son is an assistant coach for Utah State University—and could not travel back to Indiana. As a retired teacher, my goal was to assist and tutor my grandchildren." [9]

### 2000s

**Matt Kimmick '01**, economics and finance, became the new chief financial officer of Lucas Oil Products. He will oversee the accounting and financial reporting functions at Lucas Oil in Corona, California.



**Cory Brunson '03**, physical education (teaching), became head football coach at J. F. Reitz High School. "It was a goal growing up to play for Reitz, coach at Reitz and hopefully one day become the head coach. It's definitely a great opportunity."

**John Raisor '03**, interpersonal/organizational communications. "Kindergarten orientation was a little different this year, but you can see a lot of smiling faces. My son, Coen, and I are the top, second from left." [10]

**Andrea (Nevins) Halley M'04**, business administration, is the new executive director of The Christian Village (TCV). She serves the aging community "because of the relationship with my own grandparents, most notably with my grandfather."

**Mandy (Turner) Hogan '06**, health services. "During COVID-19 I started a new position, in a different state that had me working from home, so the typical interaction you get starting a new job and being introduced to people face to face didn't happen. I can count on one hand how many times I've been to the office." [11]

**Andrew McGuire '08**, accounting and professional services, and five USI alumni spruced up **Bob Wolfley's '10**, public relations and advertising, aunt and uncle's yard as part of the LiveLikeLou the Foundation's "Great Outdoor Clean-Up," a program that matches ALS families with volunteers. The alumni are members of Phi Delta Theta, whose fraternity brother, **Chad Smith '99**, social science (teaching), died of ALS. (Left to right: **Brandon Harshman '09**, accounting and professional services, Torrey Becker, Tim McGuire, **Andrew McGuire '08**, accounting and professional services, **Nathan Steinacher '09**, accounting and professional services, **Kris Miller '98**, communications, and **Ashley Rostanzo '09**, communications; front: Wolfley's aunt Shirley.) [12]

**Adam Roth '08**, business administration, is an associate financial advisor at the Evansville Teachers Federal Credit Union. He is licensed through CUNA (Credit Union National Association) Brokerage Services.

**Amy Queret-Mitchell '09**, general studies, director of culinary programs at Ozarka College in Melbourne, Arkansas, had to

shift programs online. "We had to make the decision on how to move a culinary arts program online. This was not an easy task." [13]

## 2010s

**Tyler Choate '10**, physical education (teaching), **M'13**, public administration, is North High School's new athletics director. He was previously the assistant athletics director and wants to continue coaching basketball in addition to his new role.

**Daniel King '10**, nursing, is a certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) in Boston, Massachusetts. "CRNAs routinely provide advanced airway and ventilatory management, place invasive lines and monitors and provide emergency interventions for critically ill patients in distress. We have been successful in overcoming the initial surge, through which innovation and effective team leading have been essential skills. I am thankful to USI nursing instructors for instilling such skills at a foundational level." [14]

**Abby (Williams) Zeedyk '10**, kinesiology, is a project manager and estimator with Merritt Contracting, Inc. in Lebanon, Indiana.

**Carolyn (Oliphant) Suniga M'11**, social work, is a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and works for the Greene County General Hospital in Perinatal and Counseling Services in Green County, Indiana. She is also a member of the National Association of Social Workers and National Association of Perinatal Social Workers.

**Craig Weinzapfel M'11**, business administration, is owner/partner of Prokuma in Evansville.

**Hyeryun (Ryoo) Park '12**, studio art, looking out at the Meditation Garden in the Buddhist center where she works in Berkeley, California. "We planned this garden renovation last year and started just before COVID-19 outbreak. This picture is a perfect portrayal of my fellow beings' and my situation. We lose many things down to bare and nothing, however, we will make something out of it. We will live on!" [15]

**Melissa (Garrett) Walden '12**, radio and television, and **Kent Walden '05**, accounting and professional services. "Since the COVID-19 outbreak, we have both been working from home with our three children (Tyler, Mila 3, Kole 1). It has been a challenging time, but very rewarding as well. The amount of time we have been able to invest in each other and our children will be cherished for years to come." [16]

**Lauren Smith '13**, Spanish studies and psychology, **M'20**, public administration, is the assistant director of Alumni Relations and Volunteer USI.

**Nicole Biggs '15**, business administration, travels the United States and Canada training Cintas Corporation employees on the company's new computer system, SAP. She was recently promoted from lead SAP trainer to strategic training specialist. [17]

**Portia Steele M'15**, nursing, CEO Wake Forest Ambulatory Ventures. "Leading a team of 30+ people has been challenging in so many ways. I've chosen to lead from a place of humanness and empathy, and we're overcoming the obstacles COVID-19 has brought with resilience and hope. I'm

confident this team will be stronger on the other side of this thing!"

**Marisa (Attaban) Bean '16**, engineering, is a T&E engineer, playing an important role in a defense system's development and acquisition by reducing or managing the risks involved in a complete lifecycle, from defining a system to fielding and supporting it.

**Brooke Stemen '16**, public relations and advertising, is a senior engineering recruiter for the Manpower Group of Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Leslie (Sargent) Cooper '17**, biology. "When COVID-19 hit hard, I was completing my clinical year of PA school. I was pulled from my rotations from March until June of this year, which meant I missed out on a whole lot of patient interaction. In August I will be graduating with my Master of Medical Science in Physician Assistant Studies. As our 'graduation' inches closer, I am finding that the job market is dead—something I never thought would happen in this line of work. Hopefully, with time things will open. Until then, PLEASE wear your masks and take this seriously." [18]

**Drew Deas '18**, business administration, is an undergraduate admissions counselor at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota. "I guess you could say the novel coronavirus has increased my creativity levels! I've had to think outside the box in order to keep myself from going stir-crazy while working from home." [19]

**Sarah Koester '18**, biochemistry. "Thankfully, my job as a research technician has largely been spared by the COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from a month or so of research being shut down, we have been able to continue making progress on our research. The next step in my life is a little more uncertain. Beginning this fall, I am starting a PhD program at Washington University in St. Louis, studying molecular cell biology. How rotations and classes are going to unfold is a little uncertain, but I have had the opportunity to meet a few of my classmates over several Zoom happy hours." [20]

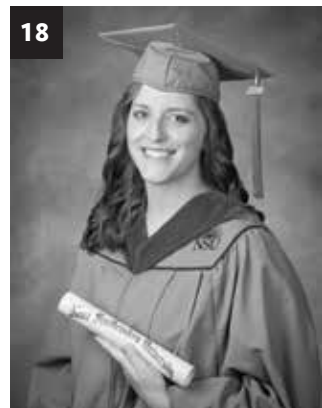
**Haley Raven Rheinlander '18**, photography. "I am the owner of Haley Raven Photography and specialize in wedding/lifestyle photography. When COVID-19 took its course, most weddings were postponed or canceled. I started offering Front Porch Sessions

to safely interact with the community and my clients. It was also a great way to commemorate these strange times." [21]

**Alonzo O'Shane Ross M'18**, business administration. "As a student services professional at Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis, I went from providing face-to-face student services on campus to virtual meetings from my kitchen table overnight. Initially, I found it challenging to manage servicing students virtually and snack-time for my 2-year-old, but after a few days of trial and error, I developed a schedule that works." [22]

**Kelsey Bruner '19**, food and nutrition. "I began working as a front-line worker during the COVID-19 pandemic at Deaconess Hospital as a Registered Dietitian on the Clinical Nutrition Support Team." [23]

**Hope (Peckenpugh) Cesnulevicius '17 M'19**, health administration and **Rokas Cesnulevicius M'19**, health administration. "On March 20, 2020, we arrived in Thailand for a two-week vacation. Due to the pandemic, Thailand closed its border and



airports. We were stuck in Thailand for three months." [24]

**Emma Kathryn Fitzgerald '19**, public relations and advertising, is the Owensboro Convention Center and Owensboro Sportscenter event coordinator.

**Cole Madison '19**, English (teaching), teaches English grade six through eight at Vincennes Rivet Middle School/High School in Vincennes, Indiana.

**Zoe Meuth '19**, global studies and German. "I found a job quickly after I graduated and started working for a great organization in February. I was the only one out of my friends who didn't have to go on unemployment because of COVID-19, and I know pure luck played a huge role in my situation." [25]

**Josephine Wanner '19**, psychology, opened The Happiness Coach, a health coaching practice in Indianapolis, Indiana. "It's my mission to help others expel their self-limiting beliefs and strive towards optimal mental and physical health in order to pursue their dreams."

## Marriages

**Kevin Axsom '96**, communications, and **James Dickerson M'07**, social work, married October 5, 2018. The couple resides in Evansville.

**Grace Anne-Marie (Fulton) Martin '18**, nursing, and John Martin married May 2, 2020. [26]

**Emily (Wigginton) Taylor '15**, health services, and Chris Taylor married April 18, 2020. [27]

**Chelsey (Hedrick) Robling '16**, criminal justice, and **Dylan Robling '15**, business administration, married June 27, 2020. He is an alumnus of Sigma Pi Fraternity and she is an alumna of Alpha Sigma Alpha. [28]

**Hollie (Zieles) Strohl '16 M'17**, social work, and **Lynn Strohl II '14 M'17**, business administration, married June 22, 2019. [29]

**Kaitlin Marie (King) Smith '18**, health administration, and Ricky Smith Jr. married June 20, 2020. [30]

**Hannah (Johnson) Forsy '19 M'20**, social work, and Dylan Forsy married May 30, 2020. "I got married and started my new position as an anti-human trafficking clinical specialist in Cincinnati, Ohio." [31]

## Births

**Katherine (Defries) Kote '04**, nursing, and Hasabu Kote, of New Harmony, Indiana, welcomed Eliab on June 6, 2019.

**Brandon Whobrey '09**, marketing, and Jacquelyn (Mink) Whobrey welcomed Everett Jaxtin Hiram on February 12, 2020.

**Carrie (Osborne) Gresham '10**, nursing, and **Stephen Gresham '12**, English (teaching) welcomed Reece Alan on April 15, 2020.

**Craig Weinzapfel M'11**, business administration, and **Mackenzie (Parkinson) Weinzapfel '13**, health services, of Evansville, welcomed Leo Jeffrey on January 2, 2020.

**Amanda (Allen) Crockett '12**, communication

studies, and her husband Blake, welcomed Carson on February 21, 2020. [32]

**Nickolas John '10 M'12**, management and innovation management, his wife Katie and their son and daughter Sila and Josie, welcomed three more to their family, Scarlett Noell, Lilah Rose and Eliana Joy, on April 23, 2020. [33]

**Sarah (Stover) Vaught '13**, history, and Christopher Vaught, of Enfield, Illinois, welcomed Vivian on January 15, 2020.

**Nikela (Klinghagen) Schultz '18**, German, and Zachary Schultz, welcomed Leon on February 2, 2020. [34]

**Calvin Williams '18**, professional studies, and **Shawn (Carter) Williams '18**, professional studies, welcomed Dawn Oakley on March 17, 2020. [35]

## In Memoriam

**Robert (Bob) Roeder '71**, management, of Evansville, died March 21, 2020. He was the

founder of the Student Union Board (aka Student Activities Committee) and served as president for three years. He also was a member of Student Government, Alpha Kappa Psi and co-chair of the Student Drive for Books for the Dr. David L. Rice Library. Over the years of his dedication to USI, Bob received a number of recognition awards: Outstanding Student Achievement Award, USI Distinguished Alumni Award, President's Associates Perpetual Members Award, Suzanne A. Nicholson Leadership Award, In Gratitude Award, Planning Committee & Cabinet Member *Campaign USI: Elevating Excellence* Award and USI Spirit of the Eagle Award. In 2010, Bob was a commencement speaker and received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from USI's Board of Trustees. Traditions Lounge is named in his honor.

**Lois Ann (Hammonds) Van Meter '71**, elementary education, of Wabash, Indiana, died February 26, 2020. She enjoyed traveling and quilting and served as chairman of the Wabash Quilt of Honor Quilters in Wabash County, Indiana.

**Louis Swank Jr. '72**, social science, of Avon, Indiana, died January 28, 2020. He enlisted in the Army in 1966 and after being discharged, he attended ISUE and graduated with a history degree. In his 32 years of teaching, he taught his students the importance of how previous history relates to current history. Several students sent cards telling about his positive influence on them.

**Donald McCormick '73**, management, of Henderson, Kentucky, died February 23, 2020. He was a maintenance supervisor at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church and a member.

**Marion Shuler '74**, business administration, of Mount Vernon, Indiana, died February 8, 2020. He was a season basketball ticket holder at USI for over 30 years, and an avid University of Georgia football and New York Yankees fan.

**Anita Conapinski '75**, elementary education, of Newburgh, Indiana, died January 21, 2020. She lived to teach and adored the students and staff that she taught and worked with.

Her other passion was her grandchildren. She was never too busy to help and always put them above anything else.

**Henry Clifford Preher '75**, accounting and finance, of Evansville, died April 17, 2020. He was a self-employed CPA, attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church and loved animals.

**Julie Nell (Fisher) Williams '75**, elementary education, of Haubstadt, Indiana, died July 9, 2020. She was a social butterfly and loved hanging out with her friends and going out to eat with them. She enjoyed sitting out on the porch in a rocking chair with her family and a cup of coffee. Julie was a wonderful singer and enjoyed collecting pig figurines.

**Earl Dempsey Jr. '76**, political science, of Evansville, died June 30, 2020. He was a member of St. James Catholic Church in Haubstadt, Indiana, and worked for the *Evansville Courier and Press* for over 30 years, retiring as the district circulation manager. Sam loved spending time with his grandchildren and family, enjoyed

horse racing and was a fan of the Louisville Cardinals basketball team.

**William Mathew Harp II '77**, English, of Mount Vernon, Indiana, died January 31, 2020. During his life, he held a variety of jobs—reporter, reviewer and columnist—for *The Elkhart Truth*. He was also a recruiter for the National Guard, a factory worker, landscape artist and garbage collector.

**Suzanne (Beshear) Hammelman '79**, elementary education, of The Villages, Florida, died February 1, 2020. Her love of travel, painting and cooking were cultivated while serving as a military spouse. A multi-faceted individual, she enjoyed golfing, downhill skiing, playing the piano, being a member of the Order of the Eastern Star Tercera Chapter and bridge clubs.

**David Durkee '81**, sociology, of Evansville, died March 30, 2020. He built a career and life fighting for workers' rights and was an advocate for every union member. David loved the outdoors and spent his leisure time

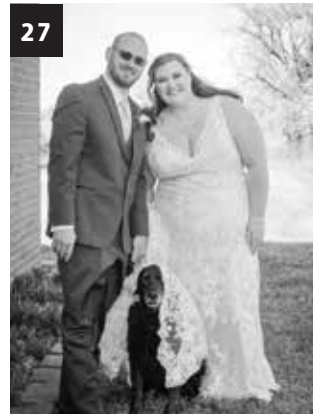




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camping, working in the yard, taking long walks, fishing, boating and swimming.

**Paul Wilmes '81**, accounting, of Jasper, Indiana, died January 26, 2020. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, rock and roll music, and cooking with his beloved wife Terry. He was an avid St. Louis Cardinals and Indianapolis Colts fan. Paul enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren.

**Ronald Cox '82**, sociology, of Newburgh, Indiana, died March 1, 2020. He was an Army veteran and retired from Ireland Home Based Services in 2019. He enjoyed the St. Louis Cardinals, IU basketball and scenic drives. Ronald loved his grandchildren unconditionally. They were his life.

**Anthony (Tony) Schmitt '82**, respiratory therapy, died May 13, 2020. He was a respiratory therapist for 32 years working at many midwest hospitals and a retired instructor from USI's Respiratory Therapy Program. He loved fishing and spending time with family and friends at Lake Barkley. Tony loved nothing more than being with his grandchildren and just being their "Opa."

**Donald Jack Horstketter '83**, accounting, of Evansville, died January 31, 2020. He enjoyed riding his Harley for many years.

**Lowell Woosley '83**, social work, died May 16, 2020. Over a period of 16 years, he and his wife provided a caring home for more than 100 children, helping them in difficult times. He was a retired social worker from Deaconess Hospital, and an avid fan of sports, especially USI's men's and women's basketball.

**Patricia "Patti" Anne Grannan '85**, psychology and social sciences, of Evansville, died April 8, 2020. She was a talented seamstress, avid gardener and enjoyed reading. She worked for many years as a counselor at the Chrysalis Home for Women with Addictions and founded the CASH (Christian Adults Staying Healthy) exercise group for senior citizens.

**Roberta Ann Waninger '85**, elementary education, of Evansville, died July 9, 2020. She dedicated 35 years of service to the Catholic Diocese as an elementary teacher at six different schools. Her devotion to her

students left an indelible mark, and she will be remembered as a beloved teacher, colleague, leader and friend.

**Tamara (Deal) Lingafelter '87**, computer information systems and management, of Wadesville, Indiana, died April 10, 2020. She enjoyed her family, being outside and spending time at Lake Barkley with her Schroeder family. During her 32-year career at OneMain Financial, Tammy contributed to the development of various financial applications.

**Karen Poormokhtar '88**, biology, of Newburgh, Indiana, died March 3, 2020.

**Alan Apfelstadt '92**, accounting, of Evansville, died March 22, 2020. He was a devout Christian, an active member of Christian Fellowship Church and served with Tres Dias.

**Beth Newman-Diekmann '92**, psychology and sociology, of Chandler, Indiana, died January 31, 2020. She enjoyed traveling to national parks, Disney, crossword puzzles and spending time with her family, especially her beloved son, Blake.

**Alice Nunn '93**, elementary education, of Evansville, died May 12, 2020. She lived a life completely devoted to helping others, especially those who needed it most.

**Dean Michael Geer '94**, business administration, of Newburgh, Indiana, died January 19, 2020. His love for his son was his highest priority in life. He enjoyed being outdoors, exercising, many genres of music, hiking and traveling, most recently to Switzerland with his fiancée.

**Thomas Jackson '95**, social science, of Evansville, died January 22, 2020. He was inducted into the Who's Who in American Teachers and the Who's Who Among Respiratory Therapists, but his biggest accomplishments were his commitment to the Lord and his family.

**Amy (Roll) Wallis '96**, psychology, of Evansville, died April 8, 2020. She earned USI's first All-American in Cross Country and later participated in two relay events in Japan. Amy will be greatly missed by all who knew her free spirit, passion for helping others and creativity, especially with crafts.

**Todd Mazzier '97**, communications, of Evansville, died July 1, 2020. He was fiercely loyal and protective of those he loved, protecting and supporting those in need. Todd loved hanging out with family and friends by the pool, sharing stories and throwing back a cold one (or three)! He was co-owner of T&S Financial Services, a company he and his partner, Sam Garau, founded in 2012.

**Sherry (Arnold) Boggeman '00**, nursing, of Newburgh, Indiana, died May 4, 2020. Her vibrant personality shined with her many interests. She enjoyed finding a good shopping bargain, baking, music, watching Christmas movies, dancing, weddings, crocheting scarves, vacationing, the beach and especially being a faithful follower of the St. Louis Cardinals.

**Kimberly (Stone) Tice '00**, business administration, of Owensville, Indiana, died May 14, 2020. Kim dearly loved her family and caring for her cats.

**Robert Rhodes '02**, elementary education, of Otwell, Indiana, died June 13, 2020. He retired as a Colonel from the Air Force after

25 years of successful supervisory duties at all levels of operations and training management and flew 16 different types of planes. He was a master at motivating individuals and groups to produce more and better efforts. He received numerous medals and commendations, including six Oak Leaf Clusters during his military career.

**Richard Loomis '06**, individualized studies, of Evansville, died May 8, 2020. He loved photography, history, antique motorcycles and woodworking.

**Daniel Garrison '07**, electronic business, of Newburgh, Indiana, died June 21, 2020. He founded Stratus Networks, enjoyed music and playing his guitar. He was interested in cooking and learning about foreign traditional meals. Daniel also enjoyed spending time with family, whom he deeply loved. He made friends easily and was always willing to lend a helping hand.

**Heather (Donaldson) Peak '10**, social work, of Pierceton, Indiana, died July 5, 2020. She is remembered as witty, funny and full of life, and is dearly missed by her family that she leaves behind.

**Grisel Barajas Espinoza '11**, social work, Spanish studies, M'15, communications, died June 14, 2020. Her contagious smile and jokes uplifted all who knew her. She was the *la Grande* 105.1 radio station program director and host of Telemundo Indy TV Network.

**Jason Brown '14**, finance, of Newburgh, Indiana, died March 21, 2020. He was a current student at the University of Southern Indiana. Jason enjoyed helping others in need, playing paintball and doing motocross with his friend Broc Sims #561.

**Travis Durham '17**, geology, died June 2, 2020. He was a friend to anyone who knew him and an avid paleontologist with all intentions on becoming Dr. Durham if he had not passed so soon. His degree will be awarded posthumously from the East Tennessee State University.

**Michelle (Jones) Faulkner '18**, individualized studies, Nine Mile Falls, Washington, died May 17, 2020. She loved to dance, talk and spend time in nature and had a passion for camping and hiking in the mountains of the American West.

## USI FAMILY Retiring

### COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

**John Casey Harison**, Professor of History and Director of Center for Communal Studies  
29 years

**Paul Raymond**, Associate Professor of Political Science  
28 years

### COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

**Mary Kay Arvin**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Occupational Health  
11 years

### POTT COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND ENGINEERING

**Joyce Gulley**, Professor of Education  
27 years

### ROMAIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

**Marie Bussing**, Contract Assistant Professor of Economics  
11 years

### ADMINISTRATION

**Michael Adcock**, Library Computer Services  
29 years

**Debra Clark**, Circulation Manager  
44 years

**Mary Drury**, Network Manager  
34 years

**Dianne Crayson**, Contract Associate Professor of Library Science  
33 years

**Rodney Watson**, Men's Varsity Basketball Coach  
11 years

## In Memoriam

**Larry Arp**, Professor Emeritus of Business Education (28 years), died June 29, 2020.

**Darrel Bigham**, Professor Emeritus of History (38 years), died June 6, 2020.

Was a nightclub DJ in his 20s and considered being a record producer—even completed a certification course—but turned toward higher education instead.

**D**r. Steven Williams, Associate Professor of Sociology, has a handful of passions, but none are more driving than his dedication to educating USI's students. Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, and educated at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, he considered several career choices—including hopeful rock star—before finding his niche as a sociologist and educator.

What began as a one-year contract with USI, within hours of handing in his dissertation, turned into a 19-year relationship that Williams is still jazzed about. The University's thrumming energy, physical expansions and surging stream of curious young minds form the rhythm of his love for higher education.

Williams' early research investigated how mass media responded, particularly Hollywood, to the need for new villains after the Cold War ended. Today, he seeks to understand the odd relationship between the destructive and the aesthetic, how those things which are most harmful are so often beautiful, from the snappiness of a military uniform to the gloss of consumer packaging.

**What interests you most about the science of sociology?**

I love delving into the social construction of reality. I respect and appreciate all disciplines of knowledge, but I think of sociology as the ultimate meta-science. Biology can demonstrate we're all one species and share a common African origin, but sociology traces the social construction of the concept of "race" and shows how a biologically trivial thing



A lifelong hockey player who plays on two leagues, sometimes alongside his USI students.

Owens an extensive Marvel comic collection—2,200. Needless to say, he's a "Marvel guy" and not a "DC guy."

can be socially, politically, economically and historically overwhelming.

Until about 200 years ago there was no sociology, though we've always lived in societies. The world has changed so much we now need a whole new science to explain ourselves to ourselves. Everyone's an amateur sociologist and can tell you all about what's wrong with America or the world, but these stories aren't usually grounded in actual theory and methodology. We've finally gotten to the place where we know no more about society by simply living in it than we know about biology by simply possessing bodies.

**Why are you a passionate advocate for public education?**

I'm not sure anything is more important. An educated, informed, aware citizenry is profoundly dangerous to any absolute system of power, whether a feudal monarchy or modern totalitarian regime. And it is just as profoundly necessary for a functioning democracy.

I am especially fond of universities, those beautiful bastions of research and debate and passionate free speech. There is nothing else in our society quite like a university.

**What challenges do young people face today as they navigate the world?**

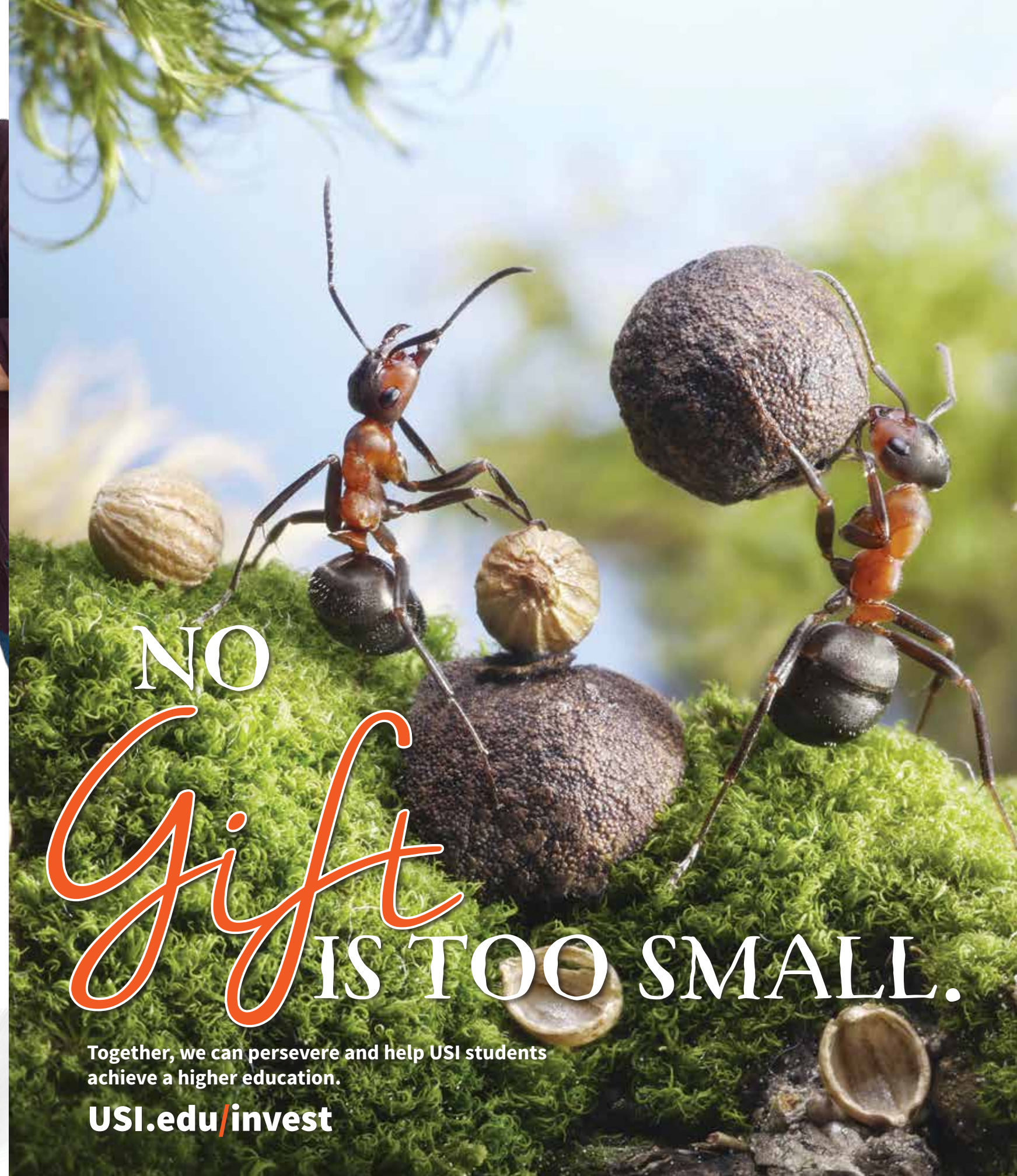
How long have we got? I have no patience for people who want to tell me "kids these days" have it so much

easier than they did. The price of higher education is escalating far too quickly with no guarantee of anything other than a big chunk of debt when it's completed. More students are being pushed into a transactional, mercenary kind of relationship with education—credentialism—where the degree becomes more important than the knowledge it supposedly represents.

**How are peoples' divisive political positions harming or helping society?**

We have so much more information at our fingertips now but I'm not sure we have any more truth. It requires a serious and uncomfortable degree of self-reflection to avoid falling into the "bubble" of media messaging that simply reinforces our preexisting view of politics or the world. This process is insidiously and relentlessly operating on us every day, and we can expect our social and political arguments to get more polarized in the foreseeable future. It's pretty scary, actually.

**What one word describes you?** Believe it or not: optimistic.



**NO**  
*Gift*  
**IS TOO SMALL.**

Together, we can persevere and help USI students achieve a higher education.

[USI.edu/invest](http://USI.edu/invest)

*Spirit and Heart of USI*



**When third-shift Public Safety Officer Matthew Crum was stationed at the temporary security check-in point during USI's COVID-19 closure, he found himself with some time on his hands, which he decided to use to practice his alto saxophone. The quiet, empty campus lent itself as the "perfect opportunity to play it without bothering anyone," he said. "I like tooting around on it but I'm just a beginner."**

*Visit [USI.edu/spiritheart](https://www.usi.edu/spiritheart) for student submission guidelines.*