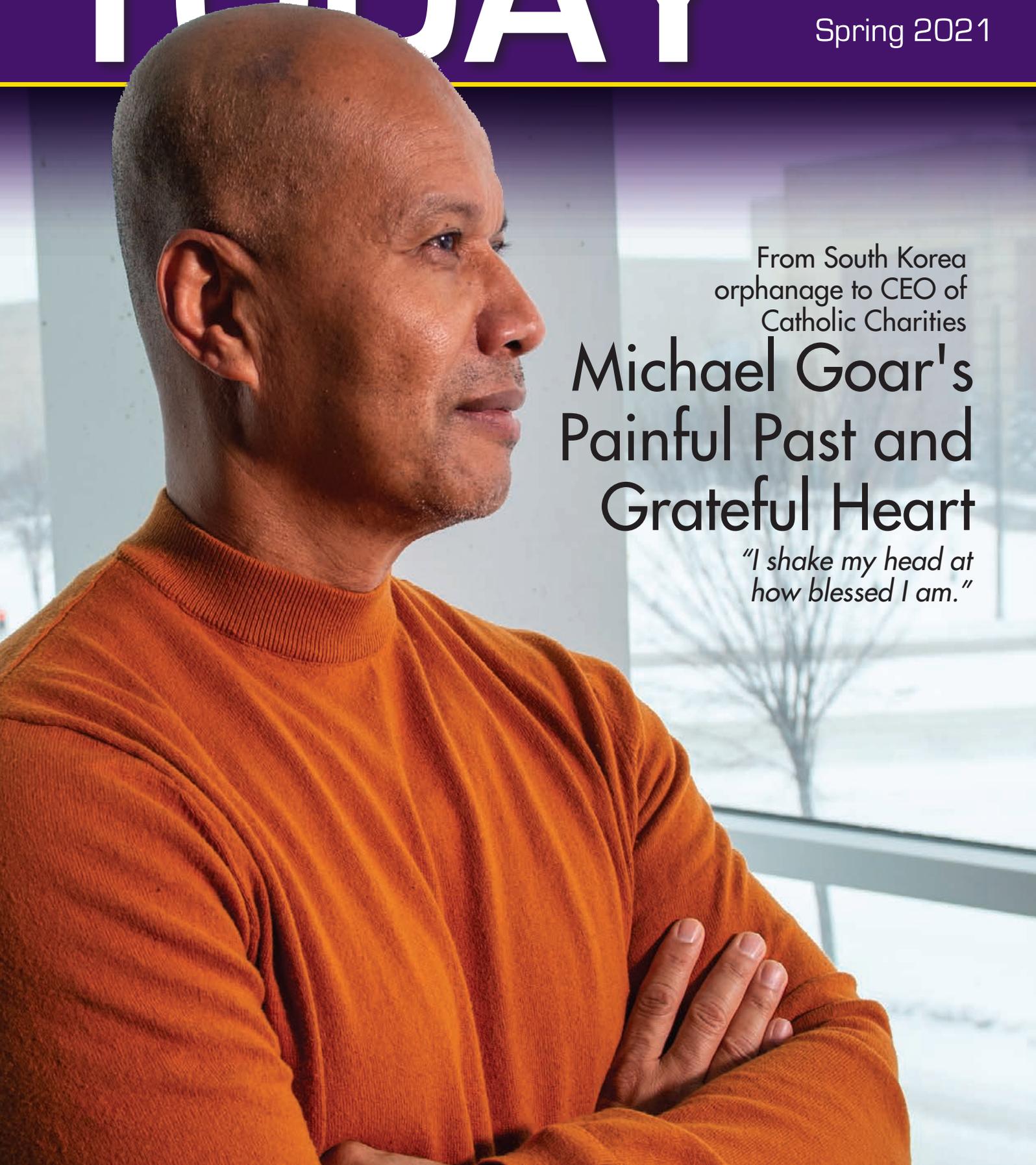


TODAY

Spring 2021



From South Korea
orphanage to CEO of
Catholic Charities

Michael Goar's Painful Past and Grateful Heart

*"I shake my head at
how blessed I am."*

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TODAY

- SPRING 2021** **VOLUME 22 ISSUE 1**
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TODAY is published two times per year by the Division of University Advancement. TODAY is distributed to more than 100,000 alumni and friends.

The mission of TODAY is to entertain, to inform and to connect the reader to the campus. TODAY welcomes story ideas supporting this mission. Full manuscripts are not accepted. TODAY is not responsible for unsolicited material.

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LETTERS: Send letters intended for publication to TODAY, Minnesota State University, Mankato, 232 Alumni Foundation Center, Mankato, MN 56001, e-mail to today@mnsu.edu or fax to 507-389-2069. TODAY reserves the right to edit letters for space and clarity. Include name, address, graduation year and daytime telephone number. Unsigned letters are not considered for publication. All letters become property of TODAY. Submission of your letter constitutes your permission to publish it.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

CONTINUING TO SHOW HOW IT'S DONE

The past year has been among the most challenging times this University has faced in its 150-plus years as the pandemic changed lives here and everywhere. Yet we didn't skip a beat in providing the best education possible while striving to keep everyone safe.

By summer's end we addressed the remote technical necessities of nearly all campus students and employees; kept in touch with existing and incoming students to address their needs; graduated an entire class virtually; raised emergency funds and modified rules to allow international students to live here in better peace of mind.

And we grew enrollment. By doing all we could as well as we did, we demonstrated a caring and commitment that did not go unnoticed by students and their families. Indeed, while other institutions struggle, we are breaking retention records and working toward managing enrollment increases.

Among those who were so instrumental in successfully commandeering the campus through the pandemic was Matt Cecil, who had been brought on board to serve as interim provost just weeks before the crisis hit, before we needed to make decisions about extending spring break, closing campus and transferring classrooms to a remote system.

It was a time of endless questions, and Matt was an energetic, accessible and ongoing source of the vital information needed across campus. Our success in the pandemic response owes much to him, and it is with pride that I wish Matt the very best as he takes on the role of Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at Northern Kentucky University, effective July 1, 2021.

That's also the day I become "former" President Richard Davenport. My days as president are ending as they began: With exciting, interesting challenges and unwavering affection for this University. I'll never be at a loss for stories to tell.

There are so many that illustrate why we're the most popular state university in the Midwest: The exciting "college town" environment; the Maverick spirit that bonds us in good times and bad; a vibrant landscape; a diverse student population; and faculty who relish their roles as mentors, often maintaining contact with their students long after graduation.

Whether you need a reminder or an introduction, I encourage alum, family and friends to visit us and see the Big Ideas and Real-World Thinking in action. You'll see an environment where students are prioritized and cared for from their first steps on campus to their days, decades later, as members of the worldwide Maverick family.

These alumni are proud and grateful for their time at Minnesota State Mankato.

And believe me, I know how they feel.

FOUNTAIN FODDER

- **Matt Cecil**, Minnesota State University, Mankato's interim provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, has been named provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Northern Kentucky University, located in Highland Heights, Kentucky, effective July 1. Cecil served as dean of Minnesota State Mankato's College of Arts and Humanities from July 1, 2016 until January 2020, when he was appointed to interim provost.
- The University's **Center for Communication Sciences & Disorders** has been awarded a "Speak Out & Loud Crowd" grant by the Parkinson Voice Project, the national nonprofit supporting speech therapy, follow-up support, research, education and community awareness for individuals with Parkinson's and related neurological disorders. The grant will allow the Center to increase local access to quality speech treatment and serve the local Parkinson's community through individual speech therapy and ongoing group therapy.
- The University has launched a **varsity esports team** that began play this spring as part of Minnesota State Mankato's IT Solutions division. A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place in October in the team's training facility in Wissink Hall. The team is a member of the National Association of Collegiate Esports (NACE), a nonprofit membership association organized by and on behalf of its member institutions.
- Seven members from Minnesota State University, Mankato's **Maverick Machine Athletic Band** were selected to participate in a virtual performance that was broadcast during the College Football Playoff National Championship game in Miami, Florida, on Monday, Jan. 11. The students were among 1,000 band members from schools across the country who performed.
- **Brian Zins** '02, '08, was named director of the University's Alumni Relations. Zins had been director of development in University Advancement since May 2019, and worked for the University's Department of Intercollegiate Athletics in athletic, compliance and communications from 2001 to 2011.
- Philosophy professor **Joshua Preiss'** podcast, "Pandemic Ethics," is available on Spotify, Soundcloud and other platforms. The podcast discusses the defining ethical challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with experts in ethics, health, law, economics, public policy and beyond.
- Minnesota State University, Mankato has moved up two spots to a **No. 12 national ranking in international student population** among master's institutions, according to an annual "Open Doors Report" recently released by the Institute of International Education. The rankings, which reflect data from the 2019-20 academic year, list Minnesota State Mankato as having 1,554 international students over the course of that year. It's the second time in three years Minnesota State Mankato has ranked 12th nationally.
- **The Maverick Food Pantry** opened its new campus location in Carkoski Commons. The Pantry is open to distribute food to students three days per week, with each student invited to pick up food once per week.
- **TODAY magazine** received a Bronze award from District V of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for its fall 2020 cover, "Return of the Masked Mavericks." CASE's District V encompasses Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin and has more than 400 member institutions.



ALUMNI FOR TODAY

An ongoing spotlight on some of the alumni contributors who help bring you TODAY magazine.

Robb Murray '95, is a freelance writer who lives in North Mankato. While a student at the University he worked for three years at The Reporter, the campus' student newspaper. After that he spent 25 years covering every beat imaginable for The Free Press of Mankato. He's currently the editorial director for Enterprise Minnesota, a consulting organization for the state's manufacturing industry. In his spare time he enjoys University of Wisconsin Badger football, Maverick hockey, craft beer and beagles.

Nick Healy '93, '05, After receiving a BS in Mass Communications from Minnesota State Mankato in 1993, Nick Healy reported for newspapers in Michigan and Iowa before returning to his hometown of St. Paul to work as a writer and editor for Session Weekly, a nonpartisan newsmagazine covering the Minnesota Legislature. In 2005, he completed an MFA in Creative Writing at the University, and he went on to spend 15 years with Capstone, a Mankato-based children's publisher, where he served in several roles before becoming editorial director.



Steven Jensen, at piano, and his Phi Delta Theta fraternity brothers in song. Jensen won approval for a local chapter in 1964.

SCHOLARSHIPS ON THE HOUSE

Alumni create an endowment for their beloved Phi Delta Theta

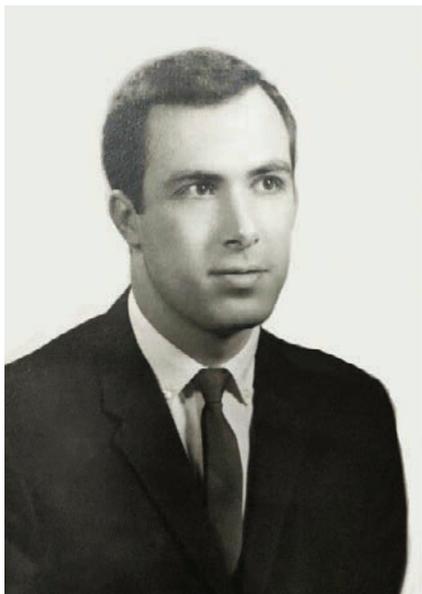
By Joe Tougas '86

The Vietnam War remained a raw source of tension on college campuses throughout the late 1970s, and fraternities such as Phi Delta Theta at Minnesota State Mankato were largely viewed as aligned with the suits on college campuses. Few wanted to be part of it, Randy Reichert recalled.

Membership at Phi Delta Theta in Mankato dropped down to about six or eight, said Reichert '79, who at one point served as the fraternity's vice president. Money was tight, especially in winter, when a month's heating bill for the fraternity house cost more than an academic quarter's tuition.

"Lots of fraternities closed their doors. We hung on," Reichert said recently. "We had a very strong alumni association, a lot of strong alumni from Mankato that helped us keep the doors open."

Look who's returning the favor.



Steven C. Jensen was the first official member of the Phi Delta Theta fraternity on campus. Alumni of the fraternity rallied for an endowment in his name.

It's in that same spirit that Reichert, a retired businessman and president of the University's Alumni Board, spearheaded a drive that created an endowment to provide annual scholarships for the local chapter of his old fraternity.

In spring of 2020, Reichert and fellow Phi Theta alums set upon raising \$50,000—the amount needed to establish an endowment and, as a result, provide annual scholarships to a student in the fraternity.

The endowment is named for the fraternity's first official member: Steven C. Jensen, who in 1964 successfully applied to the Phi Theta national office for official chapter status in

Mankato. After school, Jensen served two years in the Army, returning to the University for his master's degree in European history. He went on to teach at Shattuck-St. Mary's in Faribault, Minn. In 1976 Jensen and his family moved to Mankato where he spent the next 25 years as a stockbroker in the city. He died in 2007 at age 64.

The drive for the endowment was launched March 1, 2020. Around 700 Phi Theta alumni from across the country were contacted, thanks to combining forces with the fraternity and the University. By December the drive reached \$51,000.

"Now we'll be able to give out a scholarship annually forever," Reichert said.

The first recipient, Patrick Norris, is a four-year member of the fraternity graduating this spring with a geography degree. His Phi Delta scholarship helped him pay tuition for his final semester.

He'll be returning to school for graduate studies.

"It was a rush of happiness," Norris said, adding he was surprised to be selected among his fellow fraternity members. His experiences in fundraising likely helped. Norris had participated in several fundraisers for causes such as ALS and served as fundraising chairman of the fraternity. He also served as enforcement officer—warden, in the fraternity terminology—of the fraternity's code of conduct.

Today, the local chapter has 26 members, and Norris is one of eight who lives in the fraternity house off campus. His four years have provided him, he said, with great contacts in the business world by way of fraternity alumni, confidence in public speaking and social contacts for a good long while.

"I'll have a lot of these friends for life," he said. 🍀



The Jensen endowment's first scholarship winner, Patrick Norris.

From Combat to Class

Justin Kent '17 is honored for his support of fellow vets and students.

Justin Kent recently received the 2020 Student Leader award from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences' advisory board. Among his winning credentials were a history of extra-mile work in college and parlaying his two years in Iraq toward helping student veterans.

"In a very veteran sense of the word, I just put my nose to the grindstone and did as best as I could," said Kent, who joined the service in 2003 and served as a medic in Iraq for two of his four years of service.

In addition to the stress of working in combat patrols, IED [improvised explosive device] hunting and nabbing "blacklisted" enemies, Kent's area of operation became known as EFP alley, EFP being an explosively performed projectile, an anti-tank roadside weapon. "We dealt a lot with injuries related to that," he said.

Kent applied to the University while in Iraq, and started classes two weeks after returning. It was too soon. His emotional health wasn't steady enough and he dropped out in 2012.

"I needed to take the time to figure out where I was, to figure out the pulse of my mental health than just trying to bury myself in work. Which is what a lot of veterans do, is bury themselves in work so they don't think about or worry about the emotional injury of things."

Following therapy, he returned to campus in 2016 and became a 4.0 student. He finished up his undergraduate work and was accepted into the graduate program. He also became a familiar face at the Veterans Resource Center and an active member and officer of the Vets Club on campus.

"There's all kinds of education benefits that veterans get that they don't necessarily know about," he said. "Some loopholes, some potholes that I helped the veterans out with. There's also some emotional stuff. When I started, there were a lot of combat vets coming through, so there was a lot of one-on-one, informal therapy."

The Student Leader award noted his workload as an undergraduate whose interning with faculty enhanced his own skills as an instructor, all while providing extra student support for other undergraduates. As a master's candidate researching neuro-anthropology, Kent has served as a teaching assistant for six different courses while contributing to curriculum redesign.

He was gratified for the award.

"After coming back from my own emotional problems and figuring out what my key to success was, I was really passionate about trying to help other people find their key to success, within the veteran community and also among my fellow grad students," he said.

He continues to help in his full-time job working for the Iowa Workforce Development helping disabled veterans find employment.

— Joe Tougas '86



A Popular Fellow

Geography professor Don Friend spent a year in international development for the U.S.

Geography professor Don Friend spent the bulk of 2020 as a Jefferson Science Fellow, a role that had him advising a government agency on how to implement climate change science into development efforts overseas.

“I got to put to use knowledge from every class I ever took in college,” Friend said. “Civics classes, government classes, political economy classes, public policy pricing of natural gas...to put it together with science and policy. I was living geography.”

The Jefferson Science Fellowship was created in 2003 by Secretary of State Colin Powell as a way to rally academic, medical, technology and engineering luminaries to provide research and expertise toward overseas development and foreign policy. It is administered by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and is supported by the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

As one of only eight Jefferson Fellows in the U.S. for that year—and the first from a Minnesota university—Friend worked in USAID’s office of Global Climate Change. Its director, Kathryn Stratos, reached out to him saying the office had development plans underway in every mission abroad and needed to integrate climate risk management in each one.

Friend spent two weeks each in Indonesia and Kenya before COVID hit and he was summoned back to Washington D.C., where he pivoted away from travel to become an advisor—remotely—to overseas development efforts.

“Our climate risk management team was deluged with requests for help. So, we were very lucky to have Dr. Friend with us during this critical year,” said Stratos in introducing a talk by Friend.

Initially thinking he would be working in his familiar areas of mountains and water supply, Friend found his role as varied as any landscape, working with not only geographical issues but with gender roles and safety.

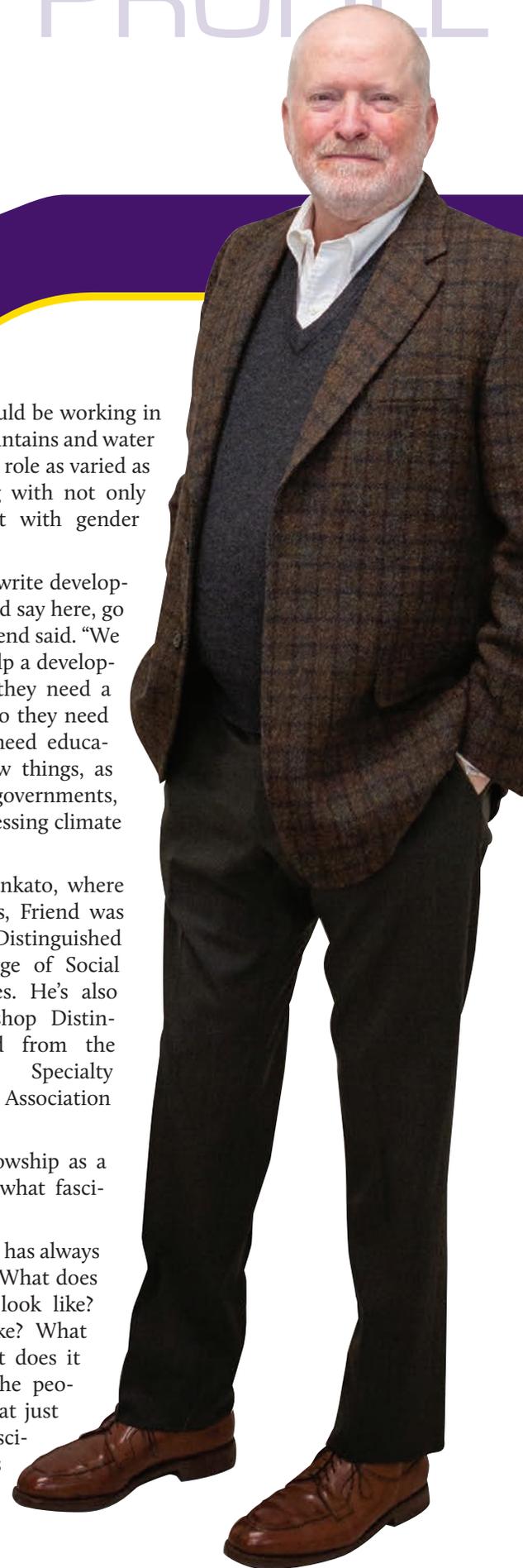
“We [USAID] don’t just write developing countries a check and say here, go improve yourselves,” Friend said. “We work on how to best help a developing country grow. Do they need a better voting system? Do they need clean water? Do they need education? As they build new things, as they stand up their governments, how to do it while addressing climate change?”

At Minnesota State Mankato, where he’s taught for 24 years, Friend was recently honored as Distinguished Professor by the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. He’s also received the Barry Bishop Distinguished Career Award from the Mountain Geography Specialty Group of the American Association of Geographers.

He sought out the fellowship as a way to keep taking in what fascinates him.

“The international thing has always been interesting to me. What does the rest of the world look like? What does it smell like? What does it taste like? What does it sound like? What do the people believe in? All of that just inherently has been fascinating to me. Hence, it’s what I study.”

— Joe Tougas '86



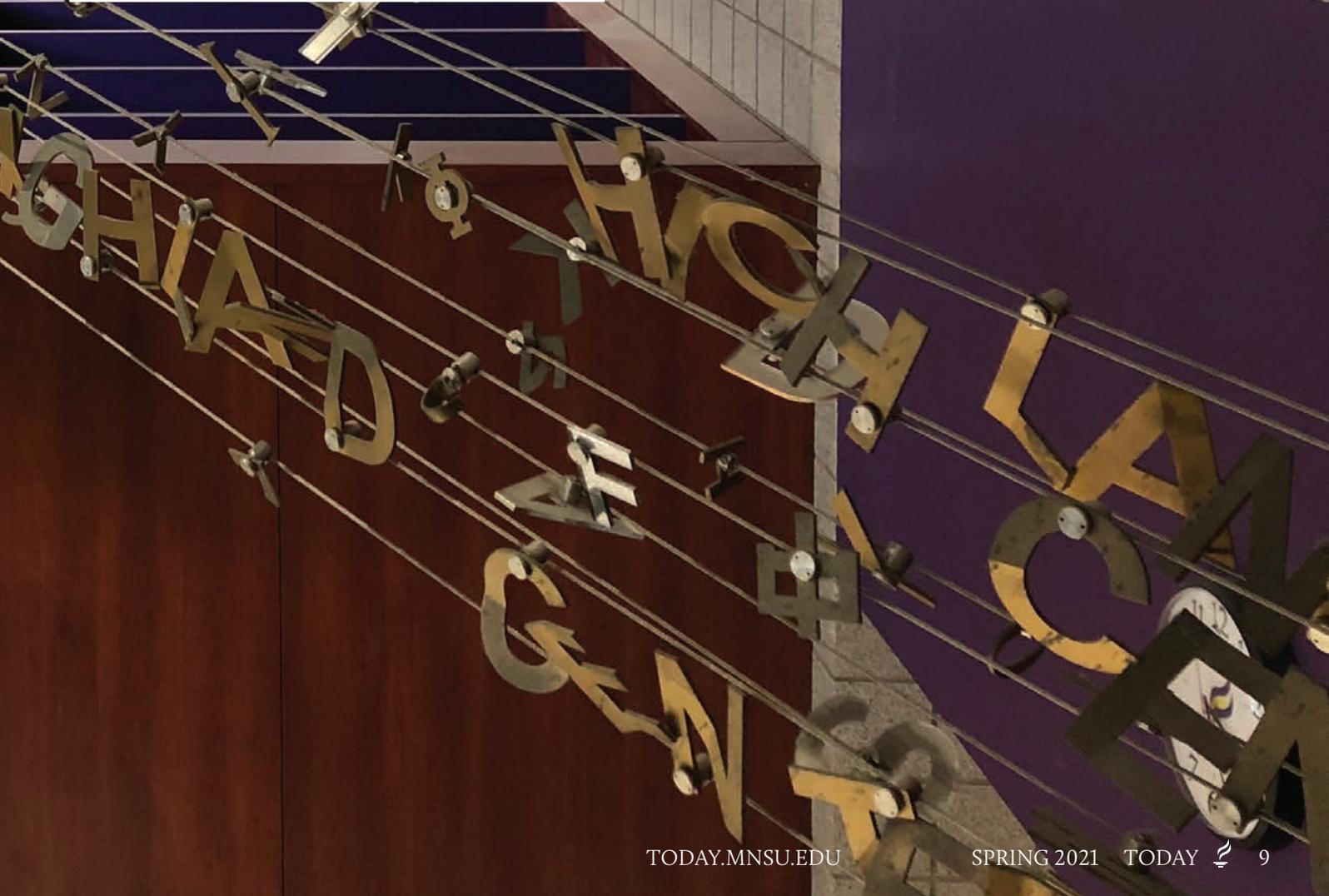
OUR SPACES



Cascading Languages

“Letterdance” is a sculpture of brass, bronze, stainless steel and plastic hovering above the Highland Center commons area. Created by Belarus-born sculptor and architect Alexander Tylevich, the work was installed in 2003. Inspired by the Minnesota State Mankato’s international population, the work involves cables holding an array of small objects including letters of different alphabets of the languages spoken at the University.

*Photo by Joe Tougas '86
Inset Photo by Steve Voit*





AKAI G
MICHAEL BROW
TYISHA MILL
ERIC GARNER
SANDRA L
TAMAR

ANDC
JAMES · FR
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BR

POLICE

KIAM CAS

ALTON STE
KORRYN
KUKYN

I CAN BREATHE



THE BIG PICTURE

Minnesota State Mankato is thinking bigger about how its law enforcement program prepares future officers

By Robb Murray '95

After George Floyd died under the knee of a Minneapolis Police officer, Pat Nelson was worried about her students.

The Floyd incident happened on May 25, and within weeks Nelson, chair of Minnesota State University, Mankato's law enforcement program, reached out to her students.

"She said, 'I understand this is a really hard time and many of you might be questioning if this is something you want to continue with,'" says Emma Wax, a senior in law enforcement. "She reassured us, made us feel confident that we are good people, and that the people who graduate from this program are going to be out there making a change."

Nelson's email to law enforcement students was sent at a pivotal time. Not only did faculty wish to reassure students that the program cared about them, but the program itself was about to undergo the kind of self-assessment few programs ever attempt.

President Richard Davenport, Interim Provost Matt Cecil and Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Henry Morris formed a work group to conduct a review of the law enforcement, corrections and criminal justice programs "in response to the police violence and community reactions that occurred in Minneapolis and across the nation," their report read. The unique part: The review was to include public input and feedback. The overall understanding: Rising to the moment here will require more than mere window dressing.



Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion Henry Morris

The results

The final document contained a wide range of changes coming to the program. Morris says two of the most important recommendations are: 1) exposing students to diverse communities, and 2) teaching them that the history of policing varies widely depending on who you are.

“Many of the students who go into our program come from homogeneous communities,” Morris says. “And then we ask them to police in multicultural communities. Sometimes that’s a stretch. A lot of times the first interaction they may have with somebody different may be in a policing situation. So how do we give them that opportunity to interact with communities and hopefully see the people there as real people, not somebody to be afraid of?”

A key component of holistic education for future law enforcement officers, Morris says, is understanding that everyone’s story—especially as it pertains to law enforcement—is different. People from predominantly white communities have no concept of what it feels like for people of color during dealings with law enforcement. The program’s goal will be to help everyone understand there are multiple perspectives.

“White supremacy means your story is the only story,” Morris says. “We want students in the program to know there are other stories out there. Your story is true for you. But it may not be true for everybody.”

Law enforcement professor Carl Lafata agrees, and says he’s seen glimpses of this phenomenon in his classes. Lafata, a military veteran, served as a police officer for more than 15 years with the Michigan State Police and the Pacific Grove, Calif., police department.

“When everyone in your little sphere has the exact same background, it’s very easy for us to coalesce into ‘us,’” he says. “The purpose of a program like ours should be to broaden those horizons, get them out of their comfort zones and hear voices that are different than their own.”

Morris says the goal is to give students additional history education on policing in diverse communities. The program will be amended to include internships that include interactions with communities of color.

“So it isn’t just interning with a police department, it is interning with some group that predominantly deals with multicultural communities,” Morris says.

Critical thinking

A key distinction must be made in law enforcement between education and training. Training is what happens after a student graduates with a degree. Before they can go to work for a law enforcement agency they must complete an eight-week “skills” program, where they’re taught things like shooting firearms, tactical driving, how to arrest people, and more.

“There’s a huge difference between training and education. Huge difference. And the problem we run into in law enforcement is we equate the two, we conflate the two,” Lafata says. “Law enforcement tends to like easy answers, but much of what law enforcement deals with on a daily basis defies easy answers.”

During their time at Minnesota State Mankato, by contrast, students learn on a macro scale. And during the last few years faculty have modified the program to make it more cerebral.

“So even before the George Floyd incident, we’ve been making some smaller changes,” Nelson says. “We really wanted to make sure they were getting more critical thinking instead of just teaching them how to be a cop. We’ve expanded to give them more theory courses, more courses that involved in-depth thinking.”

During the public listening sessions from the post-George Floyd review, they got a lot of good questions from the public—and some venting about police brutality. But the sessions also gave faculty a chance to educate the public about how progressive the program already is.

“We got a lot of ‘You should teach people how to communicate with people with mental

“The purpose of a program like ours should be to broaden those horizons, get them out of their comfort zones and hear voices that are different than their own.”

— Law Enforcement Professor Carl Lafata



Assistant Professor Carl Lafata today and as a Michigan State Police officer in 1999.

illness,' 'You should teach people the history of policing in the United States,' 'You should be teaching people how to interact with people who have experienced trauma.' And many times when that started coming up, we'd say, 'We do that in this course and this course,'" Nelson says. "It showed us we need to do different descriptions on some of the courses."

Lafata has recently authored a textbook for use in his Law Enforcement and Human Behavior course that addresses topics such as de-escalation, stress and serving those living with mental illness and suffering from trauma.

Some things are beyond a university law enforcement program's control, such as the varying degrees of training required to work as a licensed peace officer. Minnesota requires a two or four-year degree plus the eight-week skills training. (Minnesota State Mankato contracts with Hibbing Community College to offer the state-mandated skills training course to its law enforcement program students.) Some states, such as California and Michigan, have similar education requirements but more stringent training standards. Others, such as Arkansas, require very little education and training.

Bright futures

Law enforcement occasionally attracts people who shouldn't be there. And it's nearly impossible to weed out all of the people with temperaments ill-suited to enforcing laws and carrying guns.

Both Lafata and Nelson said the vast majority of students in the law enforcement program have bright futures. But law

enforcement in general still has a problem in that it attracts a certain element that enjoys the "warrior" aspects of the job. There is, in fact, a popular training model called "Warrior Training," which emphasizes personal safety over community safety and trains officers to treat every call as a potentially deadly encounter.

Modern policing, Lafata says, requires a much more nuanced and highly trained individual.

"The challenge becomes: How do we get officers to see the job as the profession they want it to be, and a job that requires a true Renaissance person that has the emotional maturity to flip on the switch and be a warrior one minute, a counselor the next, turn the dial and be a caretaker, turn the dial and take care of the little old lady who might have been financially abused by her family. If the job is just about using force, then you're not going to take those other types of calls seriously."

While not a cure-all, the new changes should help. And the quick action to respond to the George Floyd killing has students glad they chose Minnesota State Mankato.

"It definitely made me proud of my decision," says Wax. "For our program to realize there's an issue and publicly come out and say they're willing to change and wanting to change, it made me really happy with my decision."

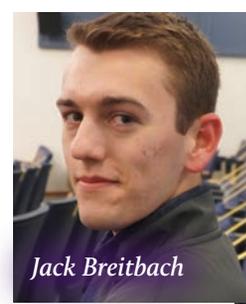
Student Jack Breitbach agreed.

"It's reassuring that I chose a school that takes pride in its students and cares about what they're learning on campus, but also about leading them into a great career," Breitbach said. "It's reassuring that my professors are looking out for us."

At the state university system level, Floyd's death prompted Minnesota State Chancellor Davinder Malhotra to launch a task force examining possible reforms and changes to law enforcement education. State universities educate approximately 86 percent of students who become Minnesota police officers.

In March, the task force presented to the Minnesota State Board of Trustees recommendations that mirrored much of the University's approach.

"While education alone is not the entire solution to police reform," their report states, "it is a piece of the puzzle, and Minnesota State is seeking to make the needed changes in its law enforcement and criminal justice programming to develop and prepare our graduates for the important work ahead." ✍



Jack Breitbach



Emma Wax



Law Enforcement Department
Chair Pat Nelson



*Timothy Berry, creator of **Overcoming by Word of Our Testimonies: Black Male Wounded Healers***

Blown Away

A work by alum and former instructor Tim Berry, '92, '13, fills some gaps in Black history

By Joe Tougas '86

Timothy Berry didn't know what he had on his hands.

What he thought he had was a colorful research project: An hour-long music and spoken-word performance piece to support the idea of how black male bodies physically carry the effects of racism. To criminally summarize his thesis: From slavery on, the trauma of the Black experience in the U.S. has physical, neurological effects that range from anxiety to diabetes to shorter life spans.

The coping mechanism, he posits, has historically been creativity—and music a large part of it.

So Berry's 2019 faculty-grant-funded stage project covered Black history through monologues and original music befitting certain time periods, from spirituals to Kendrick Lamar. Its title: "Overcoming by Word of Our Testimonies: Black Male Wounded Healers."

None of which sounds like a stage program that would be devastating. Or exhausting. Or infuriating. Or leave audiences stunned, as it does.

"It just moves you to tears at times, moves you to anger," said Bukata Hayes, executive director of the Greater Mankato Diversity Council, one of its first audiences. "Most of all, it moves you to kind of understand why things are the way they are."

Similarly, members of a University audience of education majors in December 2019 wondered aloud as to why they'd never heard of the 1921 Tulsa race massacre, or 20th century lynchings. By this point the piece had already traveled to New Orleans and Wisconsin. At each stop, Berry said, he was told the performance had to travel further.

"These are not my friends, these are people I don't know," Berry laughed. "They're coming up to me, people from several universities wanting to see what it would

take to bring this piece in, people from New York, Chicago, Denver. And then COVID happened.”

During which George Floyd died at the hands —and knee—of Minneapolis police and the response was televised around the world. It was as though Berry, in his play, provided the historical backdrop that would make Floyd’s death be seen not as an anomaly, but an inevitability.

“When George Floyd happened, I thought ‘we cannot stop. We’ve got to figure out a way.’” Berry said. “Because I’ve had people coming up to me asking and anticipating how we’re going to do the next version.”

Viewing the piece as always under construction, he modified it to include the death not only of George Floyd, but Breonna Taylor, the Louisville woman shot by plainclothes police in a raid on her apartment in March 2020 and Ahmaud Arbery, the Georgia jogger whose shooting death after being chased by men in pickup trucks was filmed by one of them. Berry likened it to a safari hunt.

“Those guys were in pickup trucks and they had shotguns and he was running,” Berry said.

“I thought, oh my god, this looks like they’re hunting.”

The modified work has been filmed for sharing online with its production values in place—Berry’s performance of the



Actor Michael Berry, left, and Timothy Berry

music, his nephew Michael Berry doing the riveting monologues and the set design by Josiah Berry, Timothy’s son, providing intense atmosphere—blue and red lights, for instance, combining for a feel of “spectacle and blood.”

Berry’s varied musical background lends itself to the anchor of the work. He majored in vocal music at Minnesota State Mankato in 1992, performed for years in ensembles ranging from jazz groups to Minnesota opera, and he taught K-12 music for years. He returned to the University for his 2013 doctorate in education.

At the University, Berry taught in the area of educational leadership from 2013 to 2017, at which point he became Director of The Center for Educator Partnerships and Student Support in the College of Education, which he held until taking the job of Interim Dean for the School of Urban Studies at Metropolitan State University in 2020.

Creativity has been a key part of his life. And while there have been awards, accolades and compliments for other original works, nothing has had the response resulting in this work.

“I’ve not had a piece that people are saying ‘This is changing my entire outlook’” he said. “I’m blown away because I didn’t expect that.”



Berry and crew in a post-performance discussion with a group of education students in January 2020



Michael Goar is the first director of color in Catholic Charities' long history.

A large window in the background shows a snowy outdoor scene with a building and trees. The window frame is visible, and a person's arm in an orange sleeve is partially visible on the left side.

Guiding Charity

**Michael Goar's painful
past and grateful heart**

By Nick Healy '93, '05

Michael Goar '89, recently named president and CEO of Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, has a personal background that in some ways sounds fairly typical for an alumnus of Minnesota State Mankato. In other ways, though, his story includes hurdles and hardships faced by few of his peers.



Michael Goar with supervisor Mike DeJong in the dining area.

A graduate of Washburn High School in Minneapolis, Goar received his bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls before pursuing a master's in public administration at Minnesota State Mankato in the late 1980s. While not insignificant, those details on this resumé belie the struggles he dealt with in childhood.

Until age 12, Goar lived a life marked by hardship in South Korea, where he experienced homelessness and poverty while in the care of his birth mother and, later, while living in an orphanage. As a biracial child—he was born to a Korean mother and a Black father—Goar faced discrimination that compounded the everyday challenges of poverty. Eventually he went to live in an orphanage that housed only biracial children and children with disabilities.

“One of the things that I learned really young, being in the orphanage setting and being in that environment where you're never welcome, you really have to persevere and also be adaptable to your circumstances,” Goar said during a recent interview.

Those early years, he explained, had a great deal to do with the direction of his adult life, which includes a 30-year career largely focused on improving the lives of children and supporting people in need.

“It created my foundation for future work and studies, because I was faced with a lot while growing up in that environment as a biracial child,” he said. “Whether it was with schooling or housing or constantly being bullied because I looked different, those issues were ever-present in my life.”

His personal history now informs his approach as CEO at Catholic Charities, one of the state's largest nonprofit organizations and, with a history covering 150 years, one of its oldest. When he officially took over in early January, Goar became the first person of color to lead Catholic Charities, which, through the work of hundreds of employees and even more volunteers, provides housing and food assistance to about 25,000 people each year.

“I have a debt to repay, and I will never be able to fully repay it. But I am going to try and do my best to provide what I think is what I owe to my parents and to our community in a very impactful way,” he said. “I truly believe in public service and being able to provide options to our community members who are faced with housing challenges, food insecurities and other challenges in their lives.”

Goar's career began with a job offer while he was still in graduate school at Minnesota State Mankato. Im-

mediately after graduation, he went to work for the state, where he served for a decade in labor relations for the Minnesota Department of Employee Relations and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities before moving to the Minneapolis Public Schools in 1999 as the district's executive director of labor relations.

While with the Minneapolis district, Goar worked alongside Dr. Carol Johnson, who gained a national reputation as a leader of large urban school districts and who would become an important mentor to him. When Johnson took the top job in the Memphis City Schools, Goar followed and served as chief operating officer for the district, and four years later, he joined the Boston Public Schools as COO when Johnson took over as superintendent there.

After five years in Boston, Goar felt the pull of home and returned to Minneapolis. In 2013, he was named interim superintendent of the Minneapolis Public Schools. He led the district for three years before leaving public education for a job in the non-profit sector, taking over as CEO at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities. In nearly five years with that organization, Goar oversaw significant growth in the number of young people paired with mentors—from about 2,500 to 4,000—and the graduation rate among those students reached 89 percent. That success helped him emerge from a huge field of candidates to lead Catholic Charities.

Neither the arc of Goar's career nor his commitment to work that serves the greater good have come as a surprise to people who encountered him during his days as a grad student. Michael Fagin, professor emeritus in the Department of Ethnic Studies, has known Goar since the two met at a Twin Cities event in the 1980s. It was Fagin, in fact, who suggested that Goar take a look at Mankato as he considered his post-graduate options.

"I have a debt to repay, and I will never be able to fully repay it. But I am going to try and do my best."

Michael Goar

"I saw leadership qualities in him from the time I was recruiting him to become a Maverick here in graduate school and extending to him a graduate assistantship," Fagin said. "Michael has excellent interpersonal skills and he accepts people with a positive regard for who they are."

Goar recalls his years in Mankato fondly, and he is quick to express gratitude to the University, which provided him a graduate assistantship that included a tuition waiver and a monthly stipend to help with living expenses. He counts his experience in Mankato among the ways he has benefitted from a community that supports people as they raise themselves up.

"Sometimes I sit back and I reflect on my childhood, where I grew up—from an orphanage in South Korea to here, now that I am in this position with Catholic Charities. It's amazing, you know?" he said. "I shake my head at how blessed I am, and, by the grace of God, I'm here." ✨



Preparing meals for the day with Catholic Charities cook and custodian Vanny Ouch.

He put Mankato on the literary map, ushering in a creative writing master's program and national author series. This year, he's closing that chapter.

THE RETIREMENT OF RICK ROBBINS



By Nick Healy '93, '05

In charting the growth and success of creative writing at Minnesota State Mankato, the open-mic series known as Writers Bloc is hardly the first thing that comes to mind. But to explain the ethos of the person who has guided that growth and success, it isn't a bad place to start.

Over the years, Writers Bloc has been held in basements, bars and backrooms, and has been run by a succession of graduate students whose approach can be summed up this way: come one, come all. Anyone and everyone can read their poetry or prose at Writers Bloc. All they have to do is sign up for a slot.

Professor Richard Robbins, who has taught at the University since 1984 and was the founding director of its Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program, proved to be a Writers Bloc regular. Over time, other stalwarts took note that he showed up not to seize attention on the stage but to support his students, colleagues and friends—to hear their work and applaud their successes.

"He always read last, which I thought was gracious and which taught me something about wanting to be involved and finding ways to be involved without making it about you," said Tyler Barton, a former Writers Bloc organizer who completed the MFA program in 2018. "That's just one of the ways he did that, and he did it really well."

Robbins will retire from the University in May 2021, and his impending departure has current and former colleagues and students taking stock of how his approach—a mix of ambition, modesty and persistence—helped define Mankato's literary scene and shape the writers who studied at the University.

"There was a community there," said poet Jenny Yang Cropp, a 2008 graduate of the MFA program and now an assistant professor at Southeast Missouri State University. "The thing I learned from that program and from Rick was the importance of having that community—of being a part of it and also giving to it."

Two years after his arrival at Minnesota State Mankato, Robbins was handed the reins of the Good Thunder Reading Series, which had been created by English faculty in the early 1980s. It was a shoestring operation in those days, with no dedicated budget, but Robbins set about lining up funding sources while booking an impressive array of writers to deliv-



Robbins hosted "Voices in Transit" on KSMU interviewing visiting and resident writers. Pictured here are Rachel Hanel, left, and Swati Avasthi

"I remember as a young writer how hearing writers in person perform their work could blow your mind."

— Rick Robbins

er readings and lectures on craft and to meet with students, sometimes for one-on-one manuscript conferences.

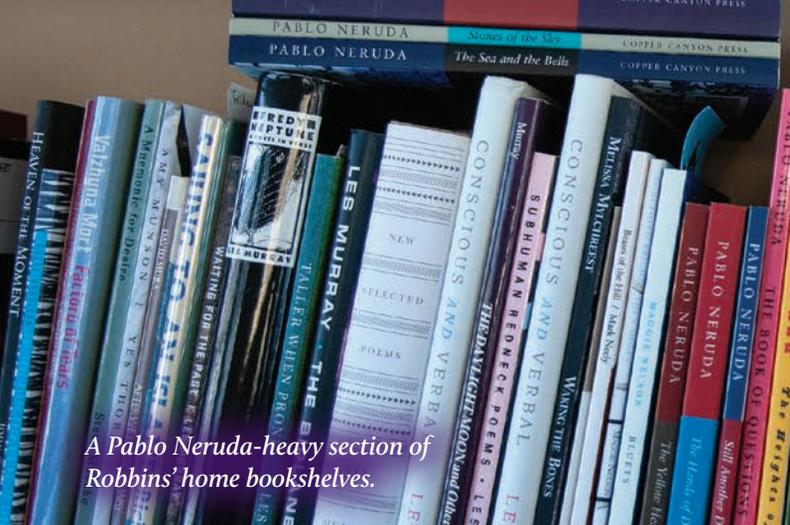
Good Thunder became an important fixture in the region and attracted readers from the community to hear authors of regional, national and international renown. This list of literary stars Robbins brought to campus is eye-popping: Jane Smiley, Tim O'Brien, Jesmyn Ward, Carolyn Forché, Richard Ford, Li-Young Lee, Marlon James, Ted Kooser, Sharon Olds, Edwidge Danticat, George Saunders and on and on. Nothing else quite like the series exists in Minnesota, and few things like it exist outside of major cities nationwide.

Robbins credits English faculty members who preceded him, including Ronald Gower, Eddice Barber and Robert Wright, saying they "hatched a really good idea." He also recalls his own days as an undergraduate and the importance of attending on-campus readings by well-known authors.

"I remember as a young writer how hearing writers in person perform their work could blow your mind—just seeing that they were real people and how they produced this work that you first came across in print and how sometimes writers stumble towards quality in the revising process," he said.

In nearly two decades of running the series, he usually scheduled eight Good Thunder events each year, sometimes with two or three readers sharing the stage. That way, the series could expand its appeal and draw a broader audience.

"Ideally, there's enough going on so that there's somebody there for everybody. There are multiple genres represented—with young writers, old writers, near writers, far writers," he said. "People who would go to all eight readings in a certain



A Pablo Neruda-heavy section of Robbins' home bookshelves.

year wouldn't necessarily connect with all the writers in the same way, but they'd learn a lot from the variety and at least one or two people they'd really get excited about."

While running the reading series, Robbins played a lead role in formulating the MFA program, which the English Department launched in 1994. (MFA students complete a three-year program to earn a terminal degree, making them eligible for tenure-track teaching positions in higher education.) At its inception, Minnesota State Mankato's program was one of about 65 nationwide. Today that number is more than 220, although only four are in Minnesota.

Terry Flaherty, professor emeritus and former chair of the English Department, considered the creation of an MFA program an important step forward for Minnesota State Mankato.

"It really bolstered the prestige of the University," he said. "It also served a legitimate need, not just for our service area but for the whole state, and indeed I'd say it was a regional program. We got a lot of people from around the country."

After roughly 25 years, the Minnesota State Mankato's program has produced dozens of prose writers and poets with an ever-growing stack of books to their credit. Many of its

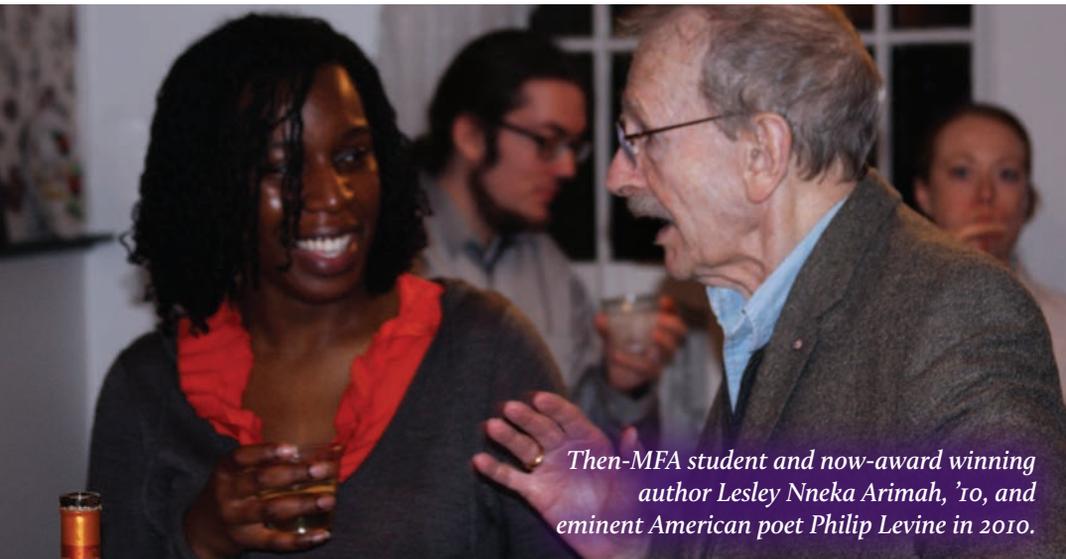


Robbins and Pulitzer Prize winner Tracy Kidder at a 2013 Good Thunder Reading Series event.

graduates teach at colleges and universities around the country, while others work in publishing, marketing, and various related fields.

Through the years, Robbins, who has six books of poems to his credit, continued to write and give readings of his work around the country, and of course, he taught thousands of Minnesota State Mankato grad students and undergrads. He and his wife, Candace Black, a poet and essayist as well as a professor in the English Department, have contributed to the University's literary scene in many ways large and small. Black will also retire from the University this spring.

"Rick and Candace were very generous with younger faculty, teaching assistants and graduate students. That was always appreciated," Flaherty said. "Also, they hosted pretty good parties at their place after the Good Thunder readings." ☞



Then-MFA student and now-award winning author Lesley Nneka Arimah, '10, and eminent American poet Philip Levine in 2010.



*Rick Robbins and Candace Black
in 1986 with family in Mankato.*

Praise for Rick Robbins

“What he taught us is what I see in his work. It’s that poetry is about observation of the world around us. He’s such a close observer of nature, of human behavior, of the inner world. All of those things come through in his work.”

*—Jenny Yang Cropp '08, MFA graduate and author of 2015’s *String Theory*, a debut collection of poems. Now instructor at Southeast Missouri State University.*

“His example taught me how to approach my career overall—how to get your writing done in the midst of a busy life, how to balance your commitments to your students, your discipline and your institution, and to your own family and yourself.”

—Cathy Day, novelist and English professor at Ball State University in Indiana. Taught at Minnesota State Mankato from 1997 to 2000.

“It’s hard to imagine Creative Writing without Rick and Candace. They’ve been at the center of the University’s programs, its publications, the reading series. We wouldn’t be known as a creative writing town without them. These are strange days for us.”

—English Department Chair Geoff Herbach, author of nine novels and a picture book.

“I loved his work ethic. It was kind of a joke among faculty that if you went in late on a Friday afternoon you could always count on Rick being there—and virtually no one else.

—Terry Flaherty, professor emeritus.

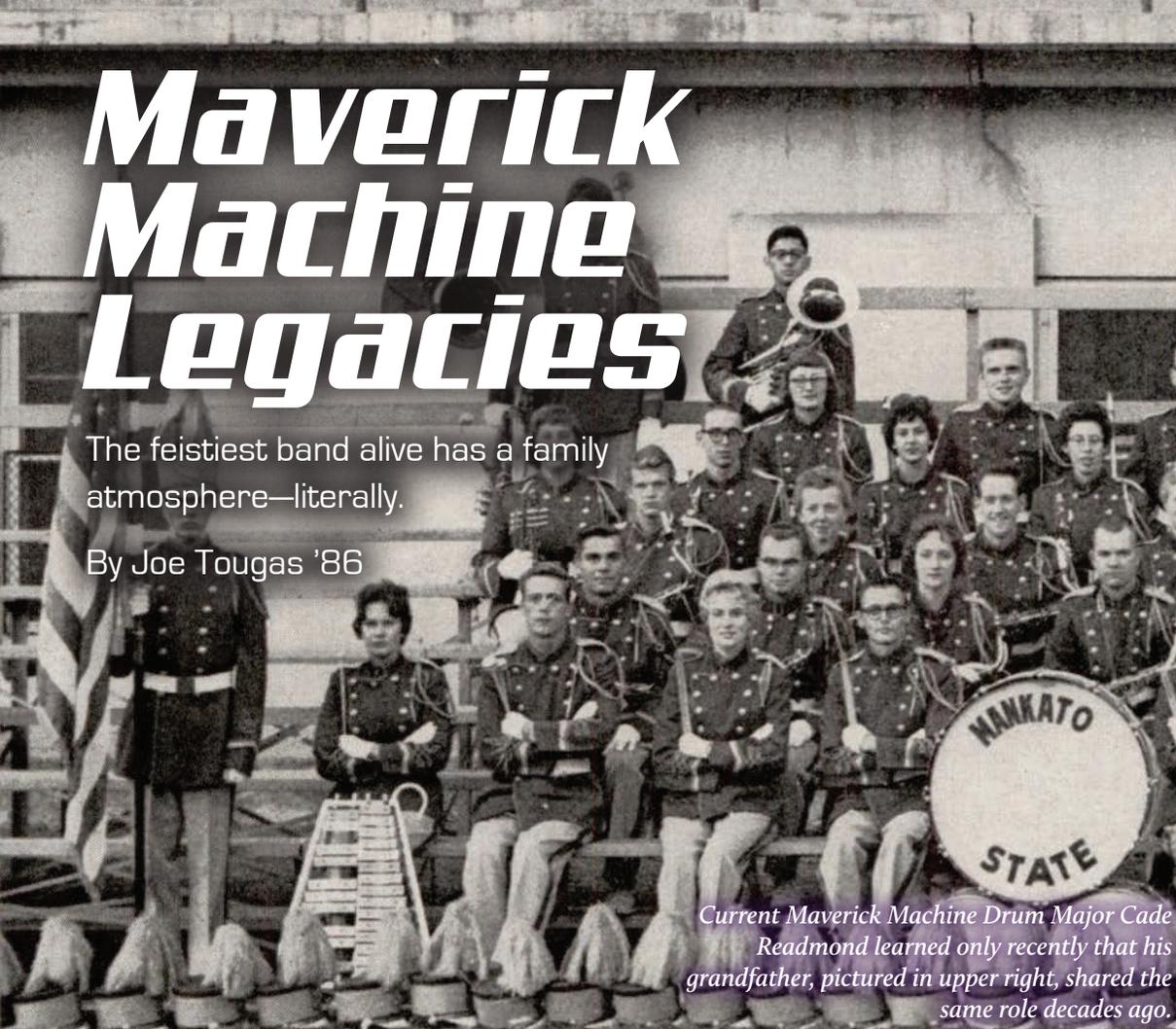
“I know that Rick was a mentor for the kind of people like me, who were at every event and were wanting to start new things, but he was also a close confidante for people in the program who were the opposite of me, who really wanted to work on their craft and not necessarily have a hand in everything. He would meet you where you were and then provide you what you needed.”

*—Tyler Barton '18 MFA graduate and program coordinator for the Pennsylvania College of Art & Design. Author of upcoming story collection *Eternal Night at the Nature Museum*, which will be published by Sarabande Books in the fall.*

Maverick Machine Legacies

The feistiest band alive has a family atmosphere—literally.

By Joe Tougas '86



Current Maverick Machine Drum Major Cade Readmond learned only recently that his grandfather, pictured in upper right, shared the same role decades ago.



At first blush, there might not seem much beyond blood that would connect recent University graduate Cullen Mitchell '20, and his late grandmother Arlys Bonderman '71.

Bonderman, her grandson said, was a small-town teacher, reserved in manner and devoutly religious.

Nathaniel Fox and his father, Shane, performed together when band alumni joined current members at the 2018 sesquicentennial parade.



His life is considerably louder. Recently graduated after four years with the notoriously rambunctious Maverick Machine, he's hoping to find a career in music where he's discovering bands working for or with venues such as First Avenue, the premiere rock club in the Twin Cities.

Yet it's the Machine in which they both share a bond: Bonderman was a coronet player for the Mankato Teacher's College band in 1947.

Same goes for Cade Readmond. And Nathan Fox. The three are current or recent members of the wildly colorful Machine with family members from black-and-white days who took the same path during their time at the University.

And family is precisely what director Michael Thursby wants the Machine experience to have.

"One of our most important values is family, which describes the culture that we have," Thursby said, "where students form connections and bonds that are almost family like. To find the legacy members just adds another layer to that."

"We only realized she was part of this band back just a few months ago," Mitchell said of his grandmother. "My mom had the photo of her holding the trumpet, but we thought it was a picture from her high school time. But she found the yearbook that matched that same outfit she was wearing. That's when we realized it was from college."

Senior Cade Readmond, drum major for the Machine, learned that his maternal grandfather, Gerald Middledsted,



Trumpet player Arlys Bonderman '71 (left) and her grandson Cullen Mitchell '20 (below).



was a drum major for the band as well. Readmond hadn't known about this until he was appointed drum major at the band's end-of-the-year banquet one year ago. That same day, his mom mentioned to him that her father, Middlested, had the same role at the University many years earlier.

"I just kind of have that inner connection with me," said Readmond, who was able to continue as drum major through the next academic year. "To just think about a person in my family being in this role too, back in the day...even though I didn't get to know him I think he'd be pretty proud."

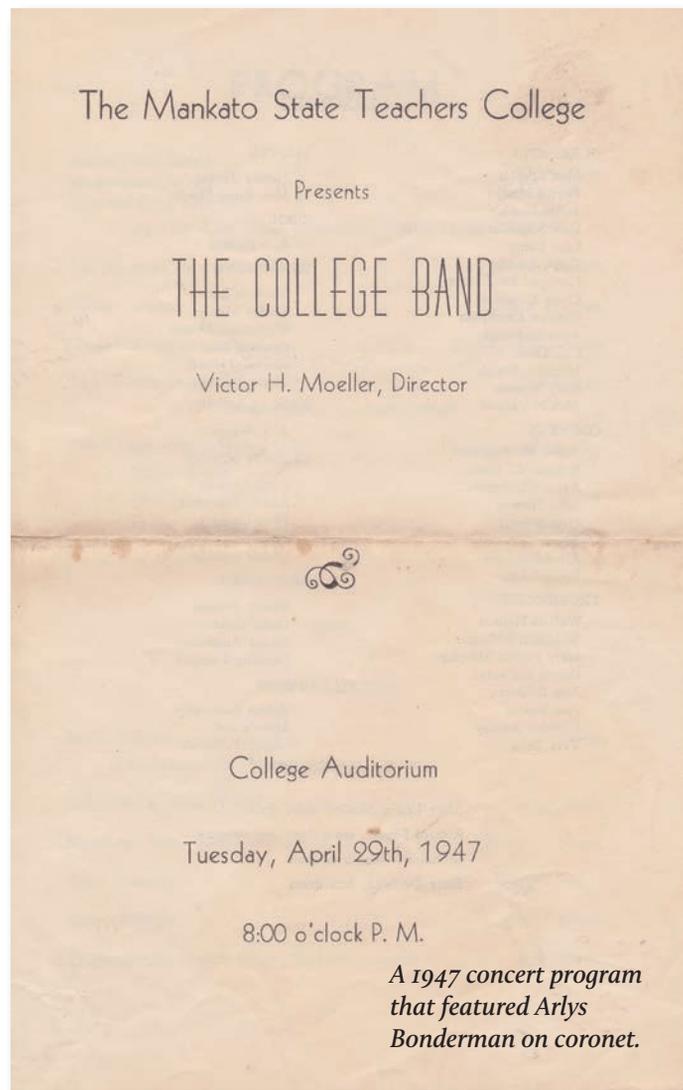
Third-year student Nathaniel Fox knew that both of his parents—Shane and Jody—had been in the Maverick marching band during their time at the University in the late 80s and early 90s. Raised in Chatfield, Nathaniel chose Minnesota State Mankato in 2018 for its law enforcement program more than music.

"I didn't think about marching band until orientation when I saw the marching band table at the CSU," he said. "Right when I saw that table it was, yep, I'll do it."

He's been doing it since, he said, "and having nothing but fun."

When the band prepared to march in the University's big 2018 homecoming parade celebrating its 150th year, Thursby invited all band alumni to participate. Among those attending was Fox's dad, Shane, who played

The Maverick Machine and alumni at the University's 2018 homecoming and sesquicentennial parade



alongside Nathaniel in both the parade and the stands during the homecoming game.

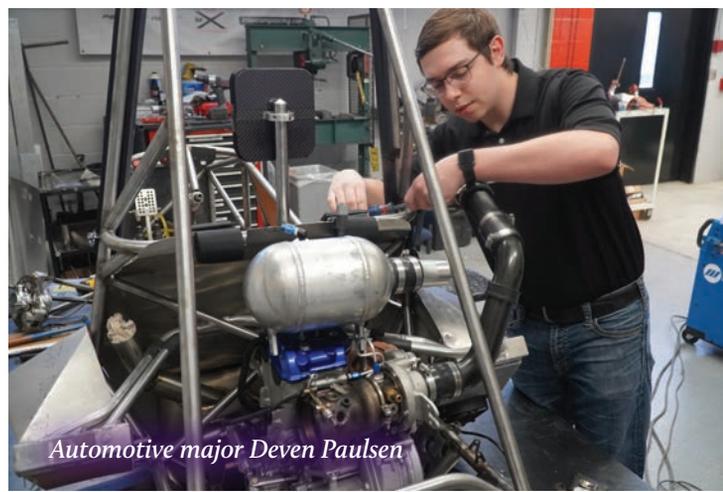
Cullen remembers being thrilled when the alumni came to town and the recent graduate is eager to continue that tradition.

"That made it feel so much like a family. That the alumni still want to come back and play with us," he said. "Of course, next school year, if we're allowed to have in-person events, I'm definitely going to be planning on trying to make a few of those." ♪

INDEPENDENT STUDY

Undergraduate research culminates each spring, but the work has staying power

By Joe Tougas '86



Automotive major Deven Paulsen



Psychology major
Taiylor Hoeft

One of Minnesota State Mankato's signature events is its Undergraduate Research Symposium, where students across disciplines gather each spring and unveil the results of their semester-plus of study.

The pandemic has sent this year's April conference, like so much else, into the virtual realm. But the lack of an in-person conference had little effect on the research or the ongoing support it receives.

In fact, the pandemic was the backdrop for a project undertaken by seniors Taiylor Hoeft and Kaylee Engle. The two psychology students sought to track the pandemic's effect on the social, scholastic and home lives of a sampling of Minnesota State Mankato students.

"So we're looking at how it impacted their experiences and if there's anything universities can do to kind of help students along with that," Engle said. The surveys asked for a chronology of feelings from the time the pandemic took hold to the survey's end in early February. Early indications showed attitudes improved as time went on in areas such as comfort with hybrid learning, graduation plans and feelings of isolation.

Senior Deven Paulsen, an automotive engineering major, is looking forward to hitting the open air with the 2021 formula SAE competition, in which universities build cars and compete in a number of categories, including endurance and other timed events.

To level the playing field, the SAE rules require teams to use what's called a restrictor on all engines' air intakes, thus allowing a 700 cc engine to compete with a 400 cc engine. Paulsen is using this opportunity as a research project to study the restriction's effect on the engine and how to maximize its efficiency with this handicap.

"Will we still be able to make a higher boost or are we just stuck where we're at?" Paulsen said.

His grant money is going toward sensors, a power supply for them as well as other testing equipment.

Hoeft, Engle and Paulsen are just a few of dozens of undergraduate researchers this year, and their financial support

comes from both the Undergraduate Research Center and the Minnesota State Mankato Foundation board, the latter of which provides \$1,000 toward equipment and \$1,000 for stipends. The symposium will feature presentations from across campus, not solely those funded through the URC or Foundation.

This is the first independent research project for both Hoeft and Engle, who had been research assistants with psychology professor and department chair Chip Panahon.

"I'm planning to go on to graduate school and hopefully go into the career of school psychology," Engle said. "So getting more research experience was something that was really important to me and something that I wanted to know more about."

Hoeft, who plans on going into occupational therapy, says the undergraduate research experience goes beyond classroom work for psychology majors.

"We take research methods and design and you do a research project as a class," she said. "But this is a whole different ballgame, where we're now working more independently but we're able to collaborate and then have more personal responsibilities and actually seeing research firsthand."



Psychology major
Kaylee Engle

Professor Patrick Tebbe is in his 17th year as an engineering faculty member and his first as head of the URC. What undergraduate research provides its participants varies with each major, he said, but there are some common outcomes.

"Sometimes it's helping them get that first job because it's building on experience that's similar to what they'd get in an internship," Tebbe said. "We have some that are pursuing Ph.D. programs in different fields around the country that came out of our research projects."

"It's like any other practice, like internship or the job experience," Tebbe said. "It's building up those skills and those applications of what they're learning outside the classroom." 

April 2021 will be the first Research Month at Minnesota State Mankato. Visit research.mnsu.edu/research-month.

CLASS NOTES



Twistin' The Night Away, Freshman Week Dance 1962. Photo: University Archives.

1940s

ORA OHLENKAMP '45 '56 '66, Mankato, MN, is a retired elementary teacher.

MARY (HAWES) MOELLER '48, Richfield, MN, retired after teaching school in Southwestern Minnesota. She knits mittens and scarves, which she donates. She also continues to enjoy playing the piano and snare drum.

1950s

GARNAT MALLERY '52, Phoenix, AZ, retired after teaching in the private and college sectors. He continues to perform.

DELORES (SMITH) PETERS '55 '57, Mountain Lake, MN, taught kindergarten in Mountain Lake for 38 years. She also worked in the Early Childhood Family Education program and was a Grand Reader for first grade. She enjoys walking daily and maintaining her home.

MARY LEE (ACKERMAN) AMBERG '58, Blue Earth, MN, is a retired educator who worked with her husband for NYAC Gold Mining in Anchorage, AK, from 1982 – 1996. The couple have three sons.

1960s

WARREN SCHMIDT '62, Alexandria, MN, served as a teacher, principal and school superintendent prior to his retirement.

ELAINE (CLUEYEN) JOHNSON '65, Pelican Rapids, MN, retired after working as an English as a Second Language teacher with the Pelican Rapids Schools.

CURTIS NELSON '66, Duluth, MN, met his wife, **ETHEL (WILCOX) NELSON '69** on a blind date and the pair has been together since, relocating their residence a few times before landing in Duluth.

PAUL CARLSON '67, Ransom Canyon, TX, is retired.

STEPHEN FOWLS '67, GLEN ROCK, NJ, is retired after being the co-owner of a medical supply company for nuclear medicine. He and his wife enjoy traveling in their motor home for three months out of the year discovering the western half of the United States.

STEVE WEISSER '67, Chandler, AZ, lives in Chandler.

DR. JOHN EGGERS '68 '71, Bemidji, MN, is the founder of the community project, Project Graduate, which aims for a 100-percent high school graduation rate. Eggers touts that it's the only county in the United States with such a goal.

ART ORTMAN '69, Boise, ID, owned his own business as a registered investment advisor for 28 years. He enjoys staying active and has won a number of awards, including some first, second and third place prizes in the Idaho Senior Games.

STEVEN SCHLAKE '69, Pullman, WA, is retired. Prior to this he was a captain in the U.S. Navy for 24 years and a computer engineer with Motorola for 20 years.

THOMAS WEINZEL '69, Charleston, SC, is a retired U.S. Air Force and World Airways Pilot who is enjoying the South Carolina low country with his wife.

1970s

ALTON LOERGER '70, Las Cruces, NM, is a retired high school teacher and principal. His book, "The First Recruit," a narrative about the Cold War, recently was published.

JOHN DUPONTS '71, Excelsior, MN, is a retired manufacturers' representative.

JAMES THOMPSON '73, Junction City, WI, is a retired business owner who has worked to raise money for Honor Flight, an organization that flies World War II Veterans to Washington D.C., free of charge, to visit the WWII Memorial. In 2010 under the name of Never Forgotten Honor Flight, he helped 103 veterans and 61 guardians take part in the trip.

1980s

RONALD LINDBERG '80, Fairmont, MN, is retired.

PAUL BOND '83, Bloomington, MN, is a client relationship specialist with US Bank.

TAMARA THAYER '85, Rochester, MN, is a self-employed author, public speaker and American Sign Language Interpreter.

MIKE FOSSUM '89 '97, Laramie, WY, is a retired Minneapolis police officer who is now a woodland fire fighter in Wyoming.

LILLIAN (SMITH) LOPEZ '88, White Bear Lake, MN, retired from her position in human resources with 3M.

1990s

MARY ELLEN FILZEN GROSSMANN '91, Minneapolis, MN, retired from 3M after working in several positions.

2000s

ASHLEY (DAVIS) KERBER '07, Chaska, MN, lives with her husband Matthew in Chaska.

ANDREA (THORKELSON) MOEN '08, Otsego, MN, works at Target Corporation in Human Resources Planning and Delivery. She will be featured in the 100 Years of Volunteers book by Hands On Twin Cities for her continued volunteer work in Minneapolis.

MADELINE (BROWN) KROELLS '09, La Crosse, WI, is the vice president of clinical operations with Driftless Recovery Services.

2010s

ARCHANA HUXLEY '10, Verona, WI, is a career pathways coordinator with UW Hospital and Clinics in Madison, WI. Prior to this she taught English for four months in South Korea.

ADAM YANKOWY '16, Des Moines, IA, is an assistant professor of theatre at Drake University.

KILEY LASSAHN '17, Ellendale, MN, is a second-grade teacher at her childhood elementary school. She is working toward her master's degree at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

KATIE RUBITSCHUNG '19, Coppell, TX, is a lab technician with the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas, TX.

IN MEMORIAM

1930S

Carla Eleanor (Peterson) Miller '35
Mary Ann (Tondl) Smith '37
Muriel Katherine (Roth) Moon '39, '68

1940S

Lila Blanche Anderson '41, '65
Irene Ivy (Coyer) Hageman '41
Melvin Walter Dickie '42
Marjorie Hazel (Peterson) Francis '43
Julia Jane (Kelley) Taylor '43
Marian Jean (Olson) Helling '45
Alice Leona (Gruber) Langer '45, '77
Luella C. (Annexstad) Monke '45
Melba Faye (Brass) Pack '45
Doris Geneve (Holcomb) Klein '46, '73
Betty Lou (Philipson) Morphew '46
Mae Jean (Boomgaard) Oehlerts '46
Harriett Alice (Iverson) Groth '47
Joan Lucille (Kroehler) Heinz '48, '68
Sylvia Mae (Lawrence) Lawrence '48
Colleen Ann (Kienitz) Potts '48, '74
Shirley Marie (Heins) Biddle '49
Malina Corrine (Hodnefeld) Edwards '49
Betty Caroline (Marpe) Hodgkins '49, '53
Norma Ruth (Danks) Paulson '49
Richard Francis Rondeau '49

1950S

Mary Marcella (Kubat) Berg '50, '77
Dennis Dale Marienau '50
Jean Marie (Schmidt) Miller '50, '65
Beverly Loree (Waller) Olander '50
Beverly Mae (Kinney) Peterson '50
Clem Z. Coverston '51
Sylvia Ann (Fasnacht) Schneider '51
Berneil Millicent (Flohers) Wenner '51
Audrey Laurine (Cam) Busse '52, '66
Charles Herman Dunn '52
Helen Orbell (Nielsen) Ensey '52, '59
William Leo Erpenbach '52, '56, '60
Helen Joyce (Bitker) Goryance '52
Lela Jean (Wright) Gould '52, '68
Barbara Jean (Tripp) Hagen '52
John Henry Leach '52
MaryAnn (Dietrich) Swanson '52
Thora Julane (Wilson) Coyer '53, '62
Isabel C. (Rathman) Kading '53
Irma Joyce (Wohlford) Lohrenz '53, '64
Jean Lenore (Hammer) Schultz '53
William Garry Kiffe '54
Russel Milton Lee '54
Delores Carol Whitlock '54
Ruth Arlene (Lund) Williams '54
Joan Edla (Larson) Kinney '55, '61
Harold Joseph Peper '55
Georgia Mae (Stoll) Rettmer '55
Karl William Sassenberg '55
Marie Antoinette (Wilder) Clark '56, '61
Clifford George DeNeui '56
Virginia Ann (Lucier) Hoyt '56
John Martin Solensten '56, '61
Jack Max Bengtson '57, '69
JoAnn M. (Hudson) Hoffman '57
Norman Carl Jepsen '57
Lloyd Raymond Mans '57
Richard Wayne O'Brien '57
Ruth Elaine (Young) Royer '57
AL FFS Bradley Jule Schwieger '57
Pauline Mary (Witte) Shouts '57, '66

Thomas Jerome Gorman '58
Gerald Francis Neunsinger '58, '61
Charlotte Gibbs Peterson '58
Patricia Joy Potzler '58
Marilyn Irene (Theede) Reimer '58, '59
Irene Marie (Norberg) Sturm '58
Jane Irene (Schwanke) Anderson '59
Joan Carol (Krueger) Burzlaff '59
Myron Edward Busse '59
Jane Bausman (Soucy) Curran '59
Wayne Allyn Ganzel '59
Edna May (Larsen) Hansen '59
Everett William James '59
Joseph Myron Pellish '59
David Edward Root '59
Marjorie Clarissa (Thofson) Schoeppler '59
Duane Ray Steiner '59
Sharon Rose (Schmokol) Wermedahl '59, '70
Henry Joseph Winzenburg '59
Warren Ralph Wolf '59

1960S

Norma Jean Brown '60, '95
Jerry E. Demaray '60, '63
Margaret Amelia (Griffin) Niedermayr '60, '87
Michael E. Schwaegerl '60
Irene Adelaide (Haasken) Steinbrueck '60
John Joseph Gannon '61
Robert Andrew Hoppe '61, '66, '77
Gordon Phillip Kolstad '61
Virginia Ruth (Miner) Larson '61
Robert Thomas Lembke '61, '63
John Kent Mallaro '61
Gerald Vincent O'Meara '61
Ralph Arthur Olinger '61
Arthur J. Schulz '61, '67
Ralph Vernon Smith '61
Robert Lee Tenney '61
Gwendolyn Rae (Kuehl) Anderson '62
Alfred DeLeon '62, '69
Judith Ann (Hrkal) Groth '62
Bernard Charles Hesse '62
Lester Leo Koster '62
John Forrest Krall '62
Arlene Mavis (Schmidt) Peterson '62
Roger William Schmidt '62
Melvin Edward Schuldt '62
John Edwin Shoemaker '62, '70
John Edwin Smith '62
Ward Raymond Tenney '62
Lois Jean (Beyer) Waldowski '62
Lawrence Edwin Argerter '63
Dianne Faye Erdman '63
Robert Bruce Hershey '63
Floyd Raymond Hunking '63
Sally Leeann (Dahse) Kolb '63
William Mathew LeFor '63
Susan Ione (Qualset) Strunka '63
Franklin Anderson Vincent '63, '74, '76
Dorrene Rose (Duwenhoegger) Walker '63
Carol Paula (Parenteau) Whitcome '63
Jerilynn Audrey (Miller) Wilking '63
Clyde William Wobeck '63
Gerald P. Bailey '64
Edward James Day '64
Mary Margaret Eskeldson '64
Mildred Gladys (Hofstad) Ingebo '64
Sheldon Eugene Kreisel '64
Dawn Dorothy (Doring) Melcher '64
Gordon Lee Minshall '64, '70
Betty Lou (Johnson) Thurston '64
Mary Louise (Bunn) Wangen '64
Mary Lou (Tveidt) Adams '65
Pamela Ann (Johnson) Castner '65
Mary Agnes (Reak) Dorzinski '65
Gary Karl Formhals '65
James Russell Heisler '65
Larry G. Howard '65
Daniel Richard Jerpbak '65
David Richard Maxner '65
Barbara Ann (Fisher) Opheim '65
Dennis Ernest Schroeder '65
LaRoy Leonard Wiebold '65, '76
Edward Charles Davidge '66
Alan Herbert Feldman '66
Robert Alexander Gottschald '66
James L. Harrison '66
Wesley R. Holman '66
Allan Howard Meyer '66
Allen Dale Scheef '66
Thomas Henry Siebold '66
Linley Allen Barnes '67
Julie Kathryn (Alsbury) Beimer '67
David Sears Clark '67
Herbert Richard DeRoma '67
George Edward Frederickson '67
Carolyn Louise (Moses) Heiden '67
John William Hild '67
Dorothy Anna Clara (Myran) Jaspersen '67
Margaret Ann (Beckman) Kajala '67
Daniel John Knuth '67
Dale Dean Lindell '67
James Louis Nitchals '67
Mary Claire (Grubish) Rooney '67
John Howard Schwen '67
Rosemary L. (Landherr) Shephard '67
David James Skoog '67
Mark Edward Slama '67
James Bernard Spangler '67
Phyllis Ann (Odegard) Thompson '67
Janis Margaret (Roemhildt) Abbe '68
Robert Norman Anderson '68
Carol Sue (Peterson) Berg '68, '70
Robert L. Good '68
Sara Jane (Thomas) Hanson '68
Richard Chester Jahns '68
Thomas Chester Jahns '68
Duane Marion Jergenson '68
Frederick Marvin Kinney '68
Gary William Meschke '68
William Alexander Micus '68
Morris Edward Naumann '68
Steve Clair Rubis '68
Darwin Allen Sorenson '68
Susan Marie Strand '68
Kenneth Ray Zylstra '68, '75
Larry Steven Ahrens '69
Margaret Ann (Valentin) Anderson '69
Thomas Roy Anderson '69
Karon Kay (Weispfenning) Christenson '69
Grace Lucille (Fischer) Lueck '69
Irving Jon Peterson '69, '86, '87
Beverly Jean (Piere) Sather '69, '95
LuAnn Emily (Reetz) Schmidt '69
Dianne Marie (Kietzer) Weingartz '69
Howard Lee Wolf '69

1970S

Katherine Ann (Arnoldt) George '70
DeEtte Dell (Wunder) Graettinger '70
Steven Michael Guckeen '70
Judy Rae (Hopperstad) Hamilton '70
John Iver Hanson '70
Kathleen Rhae (Farah) Hendrickson '70
Keith Allan Hollatz '70
Marcia Irene (Eggland) Jacobson '70

Sally Avis (Krueger) Lamont '70
 Janet Elaine (Aul) McKimm '70
 Edward V. Mikulich '70
 Bernie Emil Moucha '70
 Kenneth Leroy Truebenbach '70
 Phyllis D. (Hauan) Underdahl '70
 Eldor Fred Vollbrecht '70
 Donald E. West '70
 John Phillip Youngdahl '70
 Lawrence Zambino '70
 Lael Owen Bahn '71
 Vickie Rae (Zitzmann) Becker '71
 Gary Lee Blahosky '71
 Jane Ann (Vlasak) Brezina '71
 Eldon Harry Fain '71
 David Alvin Harmon '71
 Kuhn Hong Lee '71
 Samuel Will Rankin '71
 Terry Rachele (Johnson) Seedorf '71
 Averil Delores (Johnson) Voth '71
 Rose Ann (McNary) Zgoda '71, '76
 Lois Jean Anderson '72
 Robert Joseph Awe '72
 Everine Elaine (Reid) Bradshaw '72
 Bonnie Jean (Bauer) Dresch '72
 Curtis Frank Hatfield '72, '74
 Linda Marie (Anderson) Hoyt '72
 Colleen Theresa (Ahrens) Mueller '72
 Dennis Dean Noding '72
 Sonja Marie (Johnson) Olmanson '72
 Pamela Therese (Douglas) Paul '72
 Donna Joan (Kieffer) Peterson '72
 Lee Alan Plummer '72
 Frank Gonzales Ramos '72
 Mark Arthur Spleiss '72
 Robert Dewain Thompson '72
 Dennis LeRoy Frodermann '73
 Richard Lee Graff '73
 Joanne Marie (Schrul) Haroldson '73
 John Pelham Hereford '73
 Kenneth Joseph Hoxmeier '73
 Grace Ellen (Miltenberger) Meyers '73
 Bentley R. Odom '73
 Frederick Cletus Roufs '73
 Michael Scott Stewart '73, '77
 Jill Ann (Fangman) Svoboda '73
 Kenneth Arthur Ulbrich '73
 Danial Hu Ripperger '74
 Karen Marie (Herrmann) Bahl '75
 John Wayne Braski '75
 Linn Alan Ford '75, '88
 Mark Anthony Greenig '75, '79
 Jacob Henry Nawrocki '75
 Marvin Nels Shannon '75
 Paul Richard Walsh '75
 Curtis Richard Frisk '76
 Charles Elwyn Fuhrmann '76
 James A. Galazen '76
 Albert Allen Gangl '76
 Helen Irene (Root) Jeddelloh '76
 Terry Lee Mills '76
 Deeann Lavon (DeZotell) Siegrist '76
 Ardell Leroy Simonson '76
 Sheryl Lynn (Muir) Bertsch '77
 Mildred Freeouf (Freeouf) Brodt '77
 Marilyn Diane (Wickman) Chicos '77
 Bruce William Erickson '77
 Steven John Proehl '77
 Anna V. (Fardal) Carlberg '78
 Brian Allen Espe '78
 James LeRoy Gettler '78, '88
 Robert Lee Gildy '78
 Gregory Lee Johnson '78
 James David Moenke '78

Beverly Ruth (Streich) Colombo '79
 Steven Michael Dalle '79
 Braden Ralph Flowers '79
 Joan Clara (Pagenkopf) Haas '79
 Douglas Richard Langerud '79
 Michael Gerard Moore '79
 Carol Marie (Bogema) O'Malley '79
 James Brian Schuetzle '79
 James John Schweiss '79

1980s

Judith A. (Rautio) McGregor '80
 Joseph Nnanna Njoku '80
 Lori Ann (Loeschke) O'Brien '80
 Timothy Erwin Wieben '80
 Stephen Robert Gerlach '81
 Theodore Fred Wunderlich '81
 John Joseph Bernhagen '82
 Norma Erna (Kleist) Deuser '82
 Keith Kenneth Hammann '82
 Scott Allan Kelly '82
 Don David Taylor '82
 Shirley Rae (Oltmans) Bishop '83
 Thomas Alan Clausen '83
 Thea Annette Ellingson '83
 Polly Eugenia Browne '84
 Craig Steven Danes '84
 Phillip Edward Fuchs '84
 David Arnold Jacobson '84
 Rhona Marie Ruud '84
 Scott Lawrence Weinzetl '84
 Patricia Kay (Johnson) Fogal '86
 Jackie Lea (Shaffer) Baumgard '87
 Orrin Navarro Bergan '88
 Robin Rae (Westrum) Gunning '88, '95
 Shari Lee (Paskewitz) Kottke '89
 Gregory James Marquette '89
 Rita Faye (Paatela) Onraet '89
 Paul David Rasmussen '89, '92
 Kirk Carl Rickert '89
 Brian Jay Tohal '89, '93

1990s

Ruthe Marie (Tollfeson) Enstad '90
 Ellen Andrea (Berg) Hanson '90
 Patricia Ann (Smith) Higgins '90, '93
 Lynn Kathleen (Jungers) Kelley '90, '91
 Lisa Fey Linares '90
 Neil Patrick Baker '91
 Eugene Edward Flanagan '91
 Patricia Ann (Pool) Merrill '91
 George Daniel O'Clock '91
 Brian Woodrow Savage '91
 Wolfgang Markus Schmidt '91, '94
 Bruce Albert Williams '91
 Paula Jean (Peterson) Meissner '92
 Gregory Johnathon Ashland '94
 Gordon Monroe Barnes '94
 Drew Duane Kamrath '94
 Gary Jay Davison '95
 Tami Theresa Gilbert '95
 Jamie Dean Phillips '95
 Sharon Lee (Buness) Unander-Miller '95
 Mark Shannon Murphy '96
 Edward Ray Biniek '99
 Jon Arthur Nygard '99

2000s

Steven E. Johnson '03
 Amie Joanne Coughlin '04
 Gina Elizabeth (Geurs) Sandbo '04

Jessica Zakariasen (Lawson) Zaback '04
 Ryan Patrick McGillen '06
 William Boyd Bessire '08
 John Richard Crane '09
 Daniel Finn Sherrill '11
 Bruce Alan Traxler '11
 Alexa Rose (Hokeness) Schnack '15
 Lucas James Knight '20

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 Dolores Arlene (Frick) Warren

Generational Generosity

An endowment donor's first recipient had a familiar story: Her own.

By Joe Tougas '86

When 75-year-old Susan Clayton '67 looked into the Zoom screen and met the first beneficiary of a new scholarship in her name, she recognized a certain look, a look she carried decades ago.

And the more they learned of each other in the talk, the more the student, 35-year-old Jennifer James '20, seemed straight out of Clayton's own past. James is divorced and raising three kids, just as Clayton had been decades earlier.

"I could see in her eyes what I had been feeling," Clayton said after their meeting, which was arranged so she could see her scholarship's first recipient face-to-face.

James is the first to receive a scholarship from the endowment established by Clayton, now retired after a career of teaching special education in Colorado. She enrolled at Minnesota State Mankato in the mid-1960s, and received a scholarship during her final year.

The pride she felt as a result remained throughout her long and rewarding career in special education—from teaching a full classroom of special needs kids to one-on-one teaching in later years. Upon retirement, she felt compelled to give back to the University by providing funds to those studying special education.

James was living in Lakeville when she and her husband split in 2014. She had been working retail till 10 p.m. and tried to continue over the next two years, but it was incompatible with kids. ("There's no childcare that goes until 10 o'clock at night," she said.)



Jennifer James and family.

She became a tutor in Reading Corps, a literacy program of Americorps that gave her a view of special education in action as well as experience with kids who needed extra help.

"That changed my life, and is why I am where I am," James said. The program didn't pay much, but it covered childcare. Her work there led to interest and studies in special education, which she started with University partner Normandale Community College.

In spring of 2020, she received word that she was the recipient of Clayton's scholarship.

That news meant fewer worries over basic needs.

"I knew I could concentrate on school, concentrate on my education and concentrate on my relationship with my kids as well," she said.

She graduated in December, met Clayton online in early January and a week later was offered a job with Prior Lakes middle schools.

She hopes her journey can result in giving back the same way as Clayton, perhaps to another struggling mom wanting an education and a career.

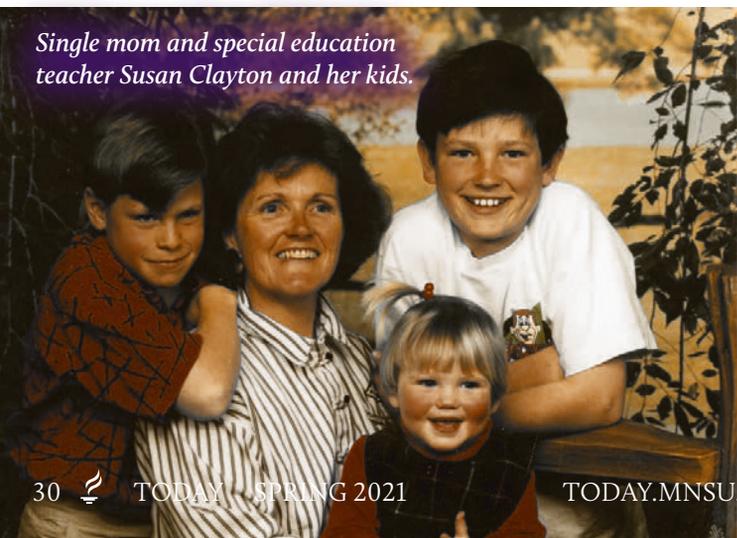
"I want to do that," James said. "I want to know how to do that so I can get to that point and plan that and help single moms get back to school and not having to worry about the basic needs for yourself and your kids. When you're in that space, it's not fun. ... You're in survival mode...I'm not in that survival space anymore."

The meeting was an emotional one, and remains a profound moment for both.

"It was so cool to see somebody who's gone through it before," James said. "And to see—oh, I might cry—to see where she's at. It seems like she's doing great, she talks about living in Colorado and loves it. She has so much experience and has touched so many lives. That's what I hope to be."

"It was an amazing amount of symmetry there," Clayton said. "I told her how proud I am of her, because she needs to know this is the start of it. I was very proud of her." ✨

Single mom and special education teacher Susan Clayton and her kids.



ALUMNI UPDATE

Please list any career changes, awards, honors, marriages, births or memorial information you'd like to see in TODAY in an email to today@mnsu.edu or msuupdates@mnsu.edu. Due to publication schedules, your news may not appear in the next issue. Class Notes may be edited for length and clarity.

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University Archives is having a sale on books and film chronicling the University and its colorful history.

From Normal School to University: Celebrating 150 Years

This postcard book features historic Minnesota State University, Mankato black and white photos reproduced from University Archives images.

\$10.00 plus \$2.00 shipping & handling per book.

Minnesota State University, Mankato, 1868-2018: A Sesquicentennial History

This book covers the development of academic programs, the physical campus, University leadership and faculty, as well as student life on campus.

\$39.99 plus \$5.00 shipping & handling per book.

Out of Chaos: Reflections of a University President and his Contemporaries on Vietnam-era Unrest in Mankato and its Relevance Today

"Out of Chaos" is a collection of personal reminiscences that provide a glimpse into what Mankato was like during the '60s and '70s.

The original text was created by former University president Dr. James F. Nickerson with input from a variety of graduates, faculty, administrators and citizens who were witnesses to these local events.

\$13.00 plus \$2.00 shipping & handling per book.

Two Weeks in May

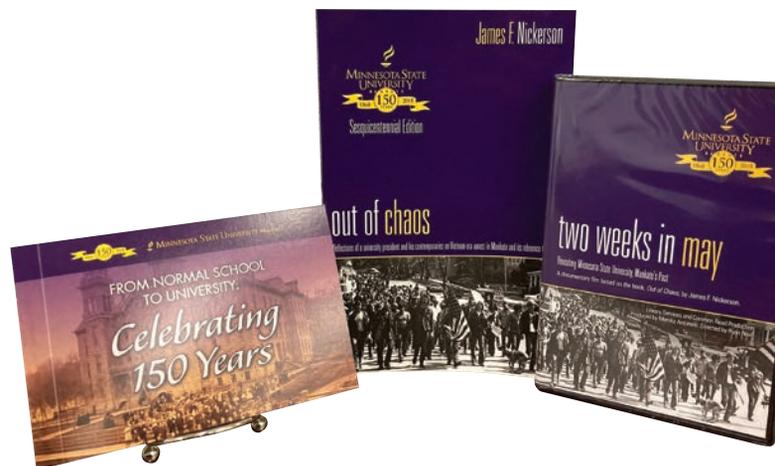
Created by University film studies students, this documentary uses historic photos, documents, newspapers, film footage and recorded interviews to bring the story of the 1972 Vietnam War student protests at Mankato State College to life. It is based on the book *Out of Chaos* by James F. Nickerson.

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From The Inside A close-up of stories inside this issue of Today



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