

TODAY

Fall 2021

THE BIG MOVE

A New Season
A New President
A Lot to Unpack



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Cover photo of President Edward Inch by Steve Voit.



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TODAY

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MINNESOTA STATE

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

MOVING INTO A NEW HOME

Earlier this month, I experienced my first Move-in Days here at Minnesota State University, Mankato. It was great to see all the activity and excitement of students returning to campus and settling in the residence halls again. Even while lugging their belongings up to their rooms, it was apparent that they are as excited to be here as I am.

I have also had my own Move-in Days this summer, as I moved into my new house in Mankato during June. I already feel at home here at the University and in the Mankato community. The campus and community have been wonderful—thank you to everyone who has given me such a warm welcome!

By now, I'm sure most of our students have settled in their rooms, apartments and rental houses. I, however, still have a lot to unpack. And I'm not just talking about the boxes stacked in the garage. Being new here, I have a great deal to learn about Minnesota State Mankato and our communities. With each passing day, and each person I meet, I learn more about the tremendous history of this institution, the people who have helped make it what it is, and the opportunities for growth and change as we look toward our future.

It's exciting to think about the next chapter in Minnesota State Mankato's story. I'm honored to be here, working with all of you to develop plans to help us get to where we need to go. I have ideas—some just might be big ideas—that I'm eager to share with you over the next several months. More importantly, I want to hear your big ideas and your stories. I hope to engage all of you—alumni, friends, faculty, staff and students—in conversations about the future of our great university over the next year.

The best place to start may be this magazine, in which you'll find out more about who I am, where I came from and how I think. I appreciate the opportunity to share some of my stories with you along with all the other compelling stories you'll find here. We have alumni and students who are doing great things, and I hope you'll enjoy reading about them in this issue.

In the meantime, I will continue to unpack and learn. I am excited to be here.

Go Mavs!

Edward Inch
President

FOUNTAIN FODDER

- Minnesota State University, Mankato and South Central College formed a **nursing partnership program** linking SCC's associate's degree in nursing and the University's online RN baccalaureate completion degree. In the program, students will work directly with both institutions' advising teams for a seamless transition between the two degrees.
- Undergraduate students **Emmah Mardaus, Megan Schmidt and Morgan Rud** each received the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship allowing them to study or intern abroad for a year. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the scholarship was awarded to more than 1,500 U.S. students from 467 colleges and universities. Mardaus, Schmidt and Rud will study in, respectively, Korea, Sweden and Thailand.
- **Brian Martensen** was appointed as interim provost and senior vice president for academic affairs by President Edward Inch. Martensen has served since January 2020 as the University's interim associate provost and senior associate vice president for academic affairs. Martensen previously held various leadership roles, including dean, in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology. The new appointment took effect July 1.
- The University's Clinical Sciences Building was awarded a "**Best of B3 Indoor Environment Quality**" award from the State of Minnesota Buildings Benchmarks and Beyond (B3) energy and sustainability program. These awards are given to state organizations and projects that have shown leadership in improving their sustainability.
- **Dotson Iron Castings** donated its company archival records to the Southern Minnesota Historical Center at the University, which is the largest single donation of its kind to the center in the past 20 years. The donation includes oral histories with the two past presidents of the company and family records. The Mankato company began in 1876.
- Two clients of the **Central Region Small Businesses Development Center**, which is part of the University's Strategic Partnerships Center, were selected to receive Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants. The awards went to two Waseca County companies: Gomigo, a software company, and Vortex, a manufacturing firm. Launch Minnesota Innovation Grants are targeted to promising innovation technology businesses in Minnesota.
- Maverick men's hockey coach **Mike Hastings** was awarded the 2021 Spencer Penrose Award as Division I Men's Ice Hockey Coach of the year. Hastings, who led the team into the 2021 Frozen Four NCAA tournament, has a career record of 236-89-24.

ALUMNI FOR TODAY

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



Brandt

GRACE BRANDT '13 Grace is a wandering reporter whose home base is in Mankato. She graduated from Minnesota State Mankato in 2013 with dual degrees in mass media and Spanish. Throughout her career, she has written for more than two dozen publications.



Healy

HELEN HEALY '92 Helen is a program manager with Scholarship America in St. Peter. She has worked for North American Fisherman magazine, the Houghton Daily Mining Gazette and the Merrill Corporation. Her freelance career has included proofreading cookbooks for TadWare, Inc., children's books for Capstone Publishing, The Creative Company and various publications for Minnesota State Mankato.

A Historic Donation

By Grace Brandt '13



Denny Dotson and his company's archives.

When Denny Dotson approached Minnesota State University, Mankato, asking about making a donation to the Southern Minnesota Historical Center, University administration was excited to help preserve local history—but they had no idea what was coming.

The Dotson Iron Castings donation is the largest single donation of its kind to the Southern Minnesota Historical Center in the past 20 years, with more than 65 linear feet of company archives. The donation includes company papers, correspondence, contracts, financial records, ledgers, engineering drawings, photographs and more, spanning Dotson Iron's 140-year history. There are also oral histories with two past company presidents, family records and more, with other artifacts being discussed as possible donations.

"We were excited about getting the collection for multiple reasons," explained Daardi Sizemore Mixon, archivist and special collections librarian at the University. "It's unusual to get a collection that's that complete of a business history going back as far as this does. It really shows the evolution of a business."

Dotson, the company's former CEO and chairman, said he's wanted to make a donation of Dotson Iron's impressive historical collection for several years. He considered several potential organizations, such as the Blue Earth County Historical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society, but eventually settled on the University's Southern Minnesota History Center for one reason: the students.

"One of the main reasons to go to Minnesota State Mankato was the ability to let [the collection] work with the different departments as research projects," he said. "Records, if they aren't used, are just there. Getting student involvement is what really tipped the scale that it should go to the University."

When Mixon received the collection, it was already organized and preserved to meet archival standards, thanks to Dotson's hiring of professional historian and archivist Brian Fors. Fors has worked for the past several years to

arrange and categorize Dotson Iron's documents down to the correct type of archival boxes needed, meaning that the Southern Minnesota Historical Center has very little work yet to do—mostly updating its online catalogue to reflect the new items.

"Denny really invested a lot of time and money into this collection before we got it," Mixon said.

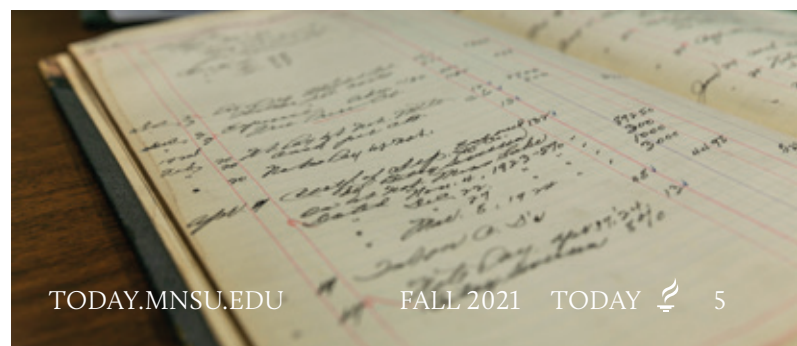
"We've never gotten a collection that was basically done, in archive-appropriate boxes and folders [and] a full guide to the collection. If we'd received it all ourselves, it would take several years to get to a point to even tell people what we have. We're that much farther ahead with the opportunity to tell people about it and start to use it for research."

Besides making Mixon's job easier, this also means that University students can start using the collection right away for research projects. For Mixon, this is the most exciting part of all, especially because there are so many possibilities for student work.

"What's really exciting is trying to think more broadly," she said. "With archives, we think history, but one of our goals is to try to expand our usage to students outside of social sciences. We're excited to see what might be possible with some of our College of Business colleagues. There's so much potential."



University archivist Daardi Mixon



STUDENT PROFILE

A Special Addition

Simale Kadir is the chapter president of the National Association of Black Accountants.



Simale Kadir joined the University's National Association of Black Accountants chapter mostly because it was another club to join—not because of any overriding passion for accounting, which she saw as a white man's occupation, not a Muslim woman's. But joining the NABA chapter resulted in her interest soaring.

"Not even a semester into it I was like, yeah, I want to do accounting," said Kadir, who today is president of the University's NABA chapter. "I don't know how to describe it, because it wasn't like I felt out of place. I've always been that person who blends into any situation I go in. But for some reason when I joined NABA it was like the holy grail. I found the thing that makes me feel like me."

Kadir is a Kenyan native whose family moved to the United States—Eden Prairie, Minnesota, specifically—when she was in fifth grade. It was during high school that she did homework in addition to home work—both of which made an easy transition to college.

"My parents gave me responsibilities," she said. "One of those was the bills that came to the house: gas, water, electric. ... I didn't have to worry about the money, but I had to make sure I stayed on top of the deadlines."

Her father had started a small trucking company, and while helping him with bills she became curious about tax law—something she said many in the immigrant community find too intimidating and thus miss various deductions, etc.

"I took business classes in high school," she said, "and one of the classes was money management, so I came home and said: 'I can do your taxes from now on.' I started getting interested, watching YouTube videos about how taxes work. I wanted to know more."

Enrolling at Minnesota State Mankato in 2019, she found the transition to business classes a smooth one and took advantage of every opportunity to get involved in various clubs. It was NABA, she said, where she met others with comparable stories, ambitions and strategies.

"Coming into NABA and seeing people like me, black students, doing something that I'd been looking into but didn't think was possible for me," she said. "Learning more about their journey. They're telling me about their internships and the jobs they're going to have. I picked their minds about everything."

Already aligned with an internship with Deloitte, the nation's top accounting firm, Kadir as president wants to open up the club to all disciplines while easing any apprehension.

"I've talked to a lot of people who in high school were scared to go to college because they felt like they didn't belong or they wouldn't find their spot," she said. "I want them to feel like there is somewhere they can belong to."

She hopes to provide to students what NABA provided her—friends who can help.

"It's not hard to find the resources on campus, because you can just look it up," she said. "But when a friend is telling you from their own experiences, it's a very different connection you make."

-Joe Tougas '86

Beyond 'Brains'

Robin Becker's next writing adventure is a road memoir

Author and English professor Robin Becker is hitting the road this fall, returning to a route she took in the mid-1980s as a punk rock vagabond traveling the West Coast in a Volkswagen microbus.

That Reagan-era ride was significant enough in Becker's life to revisit physically and philosophically, to find out more about exactly who that was busking on street corners, absorbing French existentialists a little too much and smirking at hair bands on the Sunset Strip.

"That was a time," Becker said of pre-internet days, "that if you wanted to find things, you had to go into the world and seek them. You had to have failures and experiences to try to find cool things. And you could get lost. And we wanted to do that ... we wanted to live."

The upcoming trip will not only revisit a key time, but help construct a memoir tentatively titled "Road Kill." The title is a reference to photographing smushed animals along the way as a complement to heavy conversations (see: French existentialists) she had with her traveling companion. At the time, Becker was a few years out of her Hackensack, N.J., high school and eager to travel (she would go on later to backpack in Africa and Europe.) The memoir will be both a chronicle of the trip as well as reflections on it all through the present-day lens of an LGBTQ ally and writer who's been teaching at the University since 2014.

A fan of both genre fiction and horror movies, Becker's first published novel was "Brains: A Zombie Memoir." In it, she offers a first-person account of a college English professor infected during a zombie outbreak but retaining his mind and will to survive.

"I kind of wrote it for fun. Because most of my writing before that had been literary fiction. I just had a good time with it and just decided I was going to push the envelope with every-

thing and then, you know, it was a funky book."

Her angle as an instructor has been equally eclectic and focused. In her writing courses, she prefers creative interaction over grading, having students respond to a course with works of their own—not necessarily written.

"Part of my job is to help people be creative and look at the world as artists and writers and not really as academics," she said, noting that students have submitted original songs, photos, paintings and lyrical essays in lieu of traditional term papers or reports.

A longtime musician and songwriter, Becker fronts the Mankato pop punk band Goal Area 51, which includes other University faculty: Tyler Vaughan on drums and criminology; Ed Ávila on bass and English and Jameel Haque on trumpet and history. Becker shares vocal duties with a younger singer named Echo, who is roughly the same age as Becker when she took to the road.

Since arriving at Minnesota State Mankato in 2014, Becker's restlessness and creativity have found a welcome home at the University, a place where she takes pride in helping students on their own journeys.

"I'll be here till I retire or die," she laughed. "Whichever comes first."

-Joe Tougas '86



OUR SPACES

A Roundabout Way

Minnesota State Mankato's Ceramic Arts studio is open not only to art students, but all interested in giving ceramics a spin. Much of the equipment predates the move of the University from lower campus to the hilltop area, and equipment repairs and renovations continue. Art department chair Gina Wenger and crew are eagerly awaiting the October arrival of a new clay mixer as well as hoped-for expansion of the center. "It would be wonderful to expand and update this area as it is so very popular with students," Wenger said.

Photos by Joe Tougas '86





MAVERICK SCENE

OUTGOING

After 19 years as president, Richard Davenport was feted at several farewell events on and off campus.

Right: A boutonniere adjustment at Chankaska Creek Ranch and Winery June 2.

Below: President and Mary Davenport along with Stomper at a campus farewell celebration in June.

Middle left: Seated between Richard Davenport and former president Richard Rush, Mary Davenport receives a round of applause.

Middle right: Sharing a look through TODAY at a June 12 celebration hosted by Greater Mankato Growth.

Bottom: The departing president receives waves of support from cabinet members as he leaves campus.



INCOMING

On the morning of July 1, the campus community was invited to meet its new president, Dr. Edward S. Inch, at an informal reception at the Centennial Student Union.

Below: Wrestling coach Jim Makovsky adds his message to the welcome banner that was signed and later hung above the Wigley Administration Building on President Inch's first day (bottom, right.) Below center: Inch greeting well-wishers. Below, right: Inch in a moment of video prep with Richard Crispo, the visual content strategies director.



MEANWHILE

Throughout the summer, student workers managed to return more than 4,000 pieces of classroom and hallway furniture that had been removed to make room for social distancing in classes.



EDUCATION AND LIBERATION

In an interview with TODAY, President Edward Inch discusses the influences and ideas that led him to presidency of Minnesota State Mankato.

By JOE TOUGAS '86



The war stories Edward Inch heard as a child, at least the ones that influenced him most, dealt less with battles and more with children in prison camps being educated in secret.

These first-hand accounts gave Inch, the new president of Minnesota State University, Mankato, a perception of education as a force so potent that schoolbooks were deemed a threat to at least one world power. Education, he learned early on, “was the thing that liberated people.”

That perception remained as he grew older and carved an academic path as student, advisor, coach, provost and, ultimately, the president he is today.

The war stories came from his family friend and godfather, Vincent Herbert Gowen, who had been captured by the Japanese in 1942 and imprisoned in a camp in the Philippines until 1945. Gowen told Inch and his younger brother fascinating, suspenseful stories of teaching history to children in the camp and how girls hid books under their long dresses when guards walked by.

Gowen, an Episcopalian priest, took care of Inch and his younger brother while their parents worked or attended college. Both Canadians, his parents moved to Washington when Inch’s father, Lester, took a job teaching middle school math. His wife, Elizabeth, would eventually attend college and become a kindergarten teacher. The family lived on a few acres on Bainbridge Island, a half-hour ferry ride from Seattle. Twelve miles long, three miles wide and at the time a largely rural area, the island provided Inch a memorable childhood: Riding bikes and playing with friends until sundown. His parents made do on a teacher’s income. Meals were made from crops grown on their few acres. They traded with neighbors, had a goat for milk and packed meat away from fall hunting trips.

Socially, schools were centers for everything. Sports events, theater productions, dances ... all took place on the island’s few schools. The young Edward Inch saw how even the facilities of a school brought people together. It all influenced his career path as he grew older, and played a role in seeking the presidency of Minnesota State Mankato.

“I think about growing up and knowing everybody in the community and being a part of something, something more than an individual,” Inch said a few weeks into his role as president. “You think about where you have the greatest potential to make a difference, to do meaningful things, to be part of something bigger than yourself.”



Inch tuning up a bicycle in the garage of his Mankato home.

Coming to Minnesota State Mankato from his role as provost of California State University East Bay, Inch was provided plenty of warnings and kidding about moving to Minnesota. Yes, he’d tell friends and family, he’d read of the folksier pace of the Midwest. Yes, he’d read that Minnesota has 10,000 lakes. That it gets cold.

“But physical location is simply a thing,” he said. “Being connected is a bigger thing.”

East to Minnesota

Among the strengths Inch brings to his office is a career-long openness to ideas that contrast his own. It’s a skill set developed through years of debate as both a student and coach: Listen and learn from the other side. It’s a skill in short supply during any divisive times, but it’s even more rare today in a political and social landscape fed by relentless social media and 24-hour news cycles bent on polarization over consensus. The key for students and citizens is knowing good sources, Inch said.

“When you don’t select your source material well, it’s easy to get spiraled into a mindset that doesn’t have space for other points of view,” he said. “The current climate is one that is not very tolerant of middle space. I think part of our task as a university is to find ways to allow conversation to occur. You don’t have to agree with everything. But we ought to have the possibilities of conversation. Because if you don’t have that, then conflicts escalate, we stop talking to one another. Creating the relationships that allow us to talk I think becomes terribly important right now.”

Inch isn’t just citing old coursework.

In the early 2000s he worked with the Nansen Dialogue Center based out of Lillehammer, Norway. The group aims to build connections and resolve conflicts across ethnic and political divides, and Inch made several trips to the former Yugoslavia working with young politicians on conflict resolution and other bridge-building efforts aimed at peace.

“Yugoslavia had dissolved, and what the government at the time had done was design messages to be very polarizing, so

that you either were for the government or you were against it. I was doing some work with the Macedonian daily newspapers, and the articles bore no relationship to one another. And what so many of the people had done is they all had private dish antennas so they could try to get some signal of outside news so they could get more perspectives than what they could find.”

The multiple-lenses approach is vital to any university, as is the understanding that single, simple solutions—or people—aren’t likely the answers to complex issues.

“No one person studying any one discipline is going to solve the great issues our world faces,” Inch said. “Those are going to be done in community, in concert, in collaboration with people from other points of view, other disciplines, other walks of life. But they help imagine the future we want to build.”

Among those communities: Arts. Inch served as Dean of Arts and Letters at California State Sacramento, and before that, while at Pacific Lutheran University, he annually brought students abroad for varied art experiences in the hopes of showing how art transcends political divides.

“Because I believed then and I believe now that creating common experiences is a big deal,” he said. “The thing about going to a concert or going to a gallery opening or sporting event... you can bring people together from different communities. They might speak different languages and all these different things. But what you’ve done is you now have this place where people from many different walks of life have had a common experience, and that common experience can serve as the first step toward creating conversation. Even around people who are polarized. They can talk about things that they share.”



“The current climate is one that is not very tolerant of middle space. I think part of our task as a university is to find ways to allow conversation to occur.”

A new U

Inch came to Minnesota State Mankato from the San Francisco Bay area, where he served for five years as provost and vice president for academic affairs at California State University, East Bay with 14,500 students. From 2011 to 2016, he served California State University, Sacramento as dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

“The best bit of advice I had walking in is: ‘Think about everything you’ve learned to this point and know that none of that will serve you as a president. Because the role is so different.’”

Throughout his first year, Inch said, he will rely often on cabinet members who served under retired president Richard Davenport, who left a university in good shape considering the battering that could have occurred with the COVID pandemic. Inch is not in a position to have to perform emergency surgery.

“This campus is doing remarkably well by any measure,” he said. “I think, wow, how did I get so lucky to go to a place where there are opportunities to build and it’s not a turnaround. It’s not a campus that I think needs to be redesigned.”

Early on, he’s eager to explore and expand experiential aspects of learning at the University. He wants to ensure an emphasis on student health and well-being; he’s eager to address enrollment and why some students leave before completing degrees. The list goes on and will continue to grow, and he nods at the prospect of these heavyweight issues now being part of his everyday job.

“There’s a lot of responsibility,” he said. “This campus does important work. Its people are important to this community. So in the back of your head you’re saying: ‘Alright, don’t screw up.’ But I’m confident in my experiences and ability. I’m confident in the experiences I’ve had working in difficult situations, about how you approach things to understand, to respect. Even if I disagree with the point of view. Everything that is here has been built here over a 150-plus year history. It exists for a reason.”

With influences, information and guidance arriving in any number of ways, Inch said his priorities will be centered on students.

“To me, the first and fundamental focus of this place is its students,” he said. “At the end of the day, whatever decisions we make, it’s going to be: ‘And this benefits students because....’ Everything we do gets aligned there.”



LEADERS ACROSS TIME

A chronology of University presidents and key developments under their watch.

George M. Gage

1867-1872

First principal of the Mankato Normal School and lead teacher. Increased student population but struggled to keep faculty. Resigned to be superintendent of St. Paul Schools.



Julia A. Sears

1872-1873

Named by Mankato Prudential Committee to succeed Gage after one year teaching in Mankato. After a change in authority granted to a state Normal School Board, declined "first assistant" role the next year. Julia A. Sears Residence Community is named for her.



David C. John

1873-1880

Dealt with state calls to close normal schools over high costs. Tightened admission requirements and oversaw expansion to a three-year academic program. Resigned to become president of Hamline College.



Edward Searing

1880-1898

First "president." Received funding for first building expansion, nearly doubling its size.



Charles H. Cooper

1898-1930

First president of State Teachers College (1921). Strove to increase academics as the school added a four-year program. Construction projects included a gymnasium and the first women's dormitory, Daniel Buck Hall. As younger students enrolled, the school sought a gender balance.



Frank D. McElroy

1930-1946

Held office during the Great Depression and WWII, during which faculty size grew. Oversaw construction of a valley athletic field and fieldhouse as inter-collegiate athletics began. Academics improved through acceptance into the North Central Association.



Clarence L. Crawford

1946-1965

Oversaw construction of the first men's dormitory, Searing Center, as Cooper and Buck Halls expanded. Nichols Hall's first phase and Lincoln Library completed. As upper campus began taking shape, school's name changed to Mankato State College.



James Nickerson

1966-1973

Created positions of vice president and assistant vice president for academic affairs and administrative affairs. Mall, fountain, Memorial Library, Centennial Student Union and Trafton Science Center added to upper campus. Steadily handled Vietnam War protests in May 1970 and 1972.



Douglas Moore

1973-1978

Oversaw name change to Mankato State University and required the reorganization of academic units into colleges. Changed school mascot to Mavericks (replacing Indians) as campus consolidation continued.



Margaret Preska

1979-1992

Served as enrollment rebounded and construction produced more classroom space including a library addition, the Alumni Foundation Building, the Ostrander Bell Tower and two observatories.



Richard R. Rush

1992-2001

Oversaw construction of Andreas Theatre and completion of the Taylor Center. Served as the quarter system was replaced by semesters and the school's name changed to Minnesota State University, Mankato.



Richard Davenport

2002-2021

Prioritized technology upgrades and campus renovation including Centennial Student Union, Highland Center and Otto Recreation Center. Gage Towers demolished as modern residence halls were constructed. Ushered in doctoral degree programs and led celebrations of the University's sesquicentennial. Initiated the "Big ideas. Real-World thinking" tagline.



Interim presidents

Melvin G. Scarlett, Sept. 1965-July 1966

Kent G. Alm, July 1973-March 1974

Edward R. McMahon, August 1978-January 1979

John B. Davis, 1992

Karen A. Boubel, 2001-2002

—Mike Lagerquist



Heather Mueller '97 with students at Otter Lake Elementary in White Bear Lake. Left, on the Minnesota State Mankato campus.



Minnesota's top education official might not have ended up in the state at all if she hadn't been the sort of person to dig in and do her homework when it came time to choose a college.

Heather Mueller '97, who was appointed Education Commissioner by Gov. Tim Walz earlier this year, holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Minnesota State Mankato, where she also earned her specialist and K-12 administrative license. And she has a doctorate in educational leadership from St. Mary's University.

The journey to her leadership role today might be traced back to the mid-1990s, when she was living in her hometown of Yuma, Arizona, where she had completed a two-year degree at a community college, and looking for a place to continue her studies. Intent on becoming an educator, Mueller began researching teachers colleges, and in the pages of a guidebook found at the library, she discovered the school then known as Mankato State University. Soon she was heading north.

Having landed at the Twin Cities airport with Birkenstocks on her feet and without a winter jacket, she felt "stunned" by the reality of winter weather, but she endured, moving into McElroy Hall and beginning classes in January 1995. At the University, she felt at home in the College of Education, where the student-centered philosophy aligned with her own ideas and values.

Willing to Try

By Nick Healy '93, '05

Below: Mueller, front, and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan at a school in White Bear Lake.



*Right and below,
Mueller on a May,
2021 school visit to
Otter Lake Elementary
School with Gov. Tim
Walz '12 and Lieu-
tenant Governor Peggy
Flanagan.*

"I loved my time at Minnesota State Mankato," Mueller said in a recent interview. "I deeply appreciate having roots in a place that allowed me to grow into my profession."

After receiving her bachelor's degree in 1997, Mueller spent a decade teaching U.S. history at Mankato West High School, where Walz was a fellow faculty member. She later worked as a continuous improvement coach and as professional development coordinator for the Mankato district before becoming its director of teaching and learning. After Walz was elected, she joined the Minnesota Department of Education, serving first as assistant commissioner in the Office of Teaching and Learning and, beginning in January 2020, as deputy commissioner.

In response to the arrival of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, Mueller was tasked with leading the governor's education and child care work group as part of an administration-wide response to the crisis. When she became commissioner in the spring of 2021, her department and schools across Minnesota were still dealing with many challenges posed by the pandemic.

Looking back, Mueller sees important lessons in the way state and local officials, teachers and others in education moved quickly to decide how they could do their work differently while maintaining high-quality instruction and doing the many other things that schools do on a daily basis, including feeding students and supporting their mental and physical health. Looking forward, she sees a reframed conversation around innovation and change in education.

"What we've often thought as educators—and I think it's what people think across the board—is that innovation has to be big and it has to take time," she said. "What we learned is that innovation can happen much faster than we thought and small innovations can have huge impacts."

When Mueller arrived at Minnesota State Mankato more than 25 years ago, she could, of course, never have imagined where her career would



send her. One lesson she takes from her experiences in the classroom and in leadership at the district and state levels is the value of "openness and the willingness to try." That's something she would like to encourage in all students, including people following in her footsteps at the University.

"In the end, it's not about training you for what you're doing in the moment or in the next five years," she said. "It's prepping you for what you don't even think you might be able to do." ✨



Leading the Charge

Josh Tavel '01 is driving GM into the future

By Drew Lyon '12



When he enrolled in Minnesota State Mankato's Department of Automotive and Manufacturing Engineering Technology in the 1990s, Josh Tavel never dreamed one day he'd help steer an electric vehicle (EV) revolution.

"No way," said Tavel, General Motors' chief engineer for EVs, "because at the time they were slow and just for science projects."

Times have changed. Tavel, a self-described "gearhead," now sits in the driver's seat of a dramatic transformation in automotive engineering. Nearly 25 years after he graduated from the University, Tavel spoke to TODAY magazine while behind the wheel of GMC's 1,000-horsepower Hummer EV, the world's first all-electric supertruck, a project he's spearheading. When GM wanted to show the world that EVs are built to last, an electrified Hummer fit the bill. GM is also pledging to offer dozens of electric-powered cars by 2025, equating to about 40% of the company's U.S. fleet. The Hummer can even move diagonally when set in CrabWalk mode.

"This is a science project for gearheads," Tavel said of the Hummer. "It's insane, and beyond anything I could've imagined."

Tavel's team is charged with an ambitious goal, and they're leaning into the task ahead.

"We leave our meetings going, 'Go change the world,' and that's been our mission," he said.

Bruce Jones, a longtime University professor and former AMET department chair, recognized the leadership attributes in his student, even though the department didn't

work with EVs until after Tavel graduated. The kid was simply born to work with cars.

"You could definitely tell Josh was a leader," Jones said. "He's a focused individual, and was a student that really liked to learn. ... I'm really proud of him."

Tavel moved eight times by the time he entered eighth grade. He followed his own wanderlust path after college, pursuing engineering jobs in Brazil, Korea and Janesville, Wisconsin. He's now settled into a dream job at General Motors' Michigan headquarters with a commitment toward improving emissions and safety. Not even working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic slowed GM's progress.

"It's been a cool journey," Tavel said. "It's a full-court press on EVs. We're committed to this, our 'zero-zero-zero future.' That's not just some tag line. Every decision we make is about how to make zero emissions and zero crashes. That's the road we're heading down."

'All about cars'

Tavel attended Minnesota State after graduating from Eden Prairie High School. By then, automobiles were already his life's passion; Tavel's parents remember their three-year old son sleeping under the family Trans Am. The University's renowned AMET program seemed right up his alley.

"I chose Mankato because of the (program)," he said. "I was always a racer, a car guy. It was all about cars."

During his time at the University, Tavel led the first group of students to participate in the prestigious Formula Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) program. Tavel was the team's

principal technician, helping to build a single-seat prototype race car to compete in a national competition.

"You could see the leadership ability right there," Jones said. "Organized, strong technically, but also from the leadership standpoint, too."

Tavel remembers many late nights on campus working alongside his peers, staying off sleep to build the prototype. The stakes were high, but the payoff and prestige even greater: Tavel now says he'll hire anyone on the spot who's competed in the Formula SAE.

"We'd sleep in the lab. I remember the shop teacher came in and we'd be asleep on the shop bench," he said. "It's a big-deal competition."

Tavel credits the AMET program with setting him on the road to success, starting with his first post-college job (through Jones' recommendation) at an assembly plant in Janesville.

"You've got to work your butt off, but the bottom line is (Minnesota State Mankato) set me up to be capable in any circumstances," Tavel said. "(The University) put me in a great spot to be successful right out of the chute."

The program's diversity is one of its strongest attributes, Tavel said. The automotive world is filled with specialized technicians. At Minnesota State Mankato, students learn all aspects of a vehicle, which benefited Tavel as his engineering career progressed.

"We got to know the whole vehicle – how to fix it, how to design," he said. "I was able to have this foundation that the AMET program built for me. They connected the real world with the mathematical world and the physics world, and allowed me to transcend any place I needed to be."

After college, Tavel thought he'd worked as a race car engineer, and briefly joined a Trans Am team before deciding the chaotic "traveling circus" life of the race car circuit wasn't for him. He moved around with his wife and fellow University alum, Meggan. Tavel designed steering systems in Michigan and oversaw an engineering group in Brazil before returning to the state, where he's been the chief on every GM electrified program since debuting the Chevy Bolt in 2016. His Minnesota State Mankato education served him well each step of the way.

"I'm super happy. AMET makes you an incredibly well-rounded person," he said. "The spectrum of people who come out of that program is pretty cool, and I had every opportunity to apply real-world knowledge."

Driving the Message

Tavel is well aware of the concerns from EV skeptics. There aren't enough charging stations. They're too costly. How will EVs work in cold climates like Minnesota? Reality tells a more nuanced story, Tavel said.

"The problem we're solving—and GM is doing it—is how to connect cities," he said.

Ninety-five percent of car trips are less than 40 miles. Tavel's Chevy Bolt EV boasts a range of about 240 miles, and he can easily go a week without a charge. GM's upcoming line of electric trucks will feature more than 400 miles of range. By 2025, GM's Ultium battery packs are projected to cost 60% less than today's pack, with twice the energy density.

"How often do you go over 400 miles? For most of us, not often," he said. "For the vast majority of people, if you plug in at home, you're good."

Tavel, who vacations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula with his wife, children and dogs, says the charging time—about 100 miles in 10 minutes—is hardly an inconvenience.

"God help me if we have a stop shorter than 10 minutes. I can't get the kids out of the car that fast," he said, laughing. "That's fine, it's not going to add much time to a trip."

The Hummer EV was developed over 26 months and can speed from zero to 60 mph in about three seconds.

"If you can make a supertruck that beats other trucks, it becomes a really easy sell job," Tavel said.

Buckle up and turn the key. Under Tavel's guidance, GM's electric future has arrived.

"GM is killing it now making EVs a reality, so we're really excited," he said.

Making a Difference

Josh Tavel had one request before he departed his Hummer EV and headed into his Warren, Michigan, office.

"I hope Dr. Jones comes across amazing in this article," he said, "because he's made a difference in so many people's lives."

The two remain close, reconnecting whenever Jones is in the Michigan area for Formula SAE competitions. Jones, whose past students have worked for automotive giants ranging from Tesla to Harley Davidson, returns from sabbatical in time for the fall 2021 semester. Tavel said the AMET program is synonymous with Jones, describing him, along with retired professor Kirk Ready, as an inquisitive instructor with a keen interest in educational development.

"He's one of the smartest guys I know," said Tavel, who's watched the University campus evolve over the years via occasional Google Map searches. "You can't help but learn more things from Dr. Jones. He was always there for us, no matter what, for anyone who wanted to make something work."

The admiration is mutual.

"Josh works extremely hard and really tries to excel in everything he does," Jones said. "He's always been hungry for knowledge and learning. He's just a good person. And he loves cars." 🚗



A WARRIOR FOR WARRIORS

Ryan Haugen '02 is a fierce advocate for helping veterans avoid suicide

By Robb Murray '95

Ryan Haugen knows what gun oil tastes like. He knows this because he also knows what it feels like to hold the barrel of a pistol in his mouth, and what goes through your mind when you're nearly ready to pull the trigger.

He'd just been fired from a series of jobs. He'd spent years struggling with the emotional trauma of a sexual assault suffered while serving in the military. The fallout from post-traumatic stress—re-living the nightmare—was chipping away at his marriage.

A Shawn Mullins song, "Twin Rocks Oregon," played in the background:

I came here to watch the sun disappear into the ocean ...

"I was crying and screaming, and I could feel my eyes bulging out of my head," he says. "I was terrified I was actually going to go through with it. But I was also terrified of not going through with it."

After an hour of finger-on-the-trigger contemplation, he put the gun away.

And he'd never be the same.

"It's like I died and was reborn as a different person," he says, "without pulling the trigger."

Today, Haugen is the driving force behind The Silent Warrior Project, a meditation- and mindfulness-based suicide-prevention program helping veterans find peace and avoid the scenario in which he found himself.

His advocacy couldn't have come at a better time. A Brown University study published in June found that veterans are 1.5 times more likely to attempt suicide than non-veterans.

It's a problem. All Haugen wants to do now is help fix it.

Navy Man

Hoping to find adventure and money for college, Haugen enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He found both, and spent four years seeing the world from the deck of a Navy ship. But his most impactful military experience had nothing to do with basic training or missions. One night, while blackout drunk, Haugen endured a sexual assault that would have a catastrophic impact on his life. No suspects, no one charged.

"I self-medicated with booze and promiscuity to recover from that," he says. "And that resulted in a lot of consequences like losing rank and restriction to the ship. Then my commanding officer said, 'Get sober or get out of the military.' And then I landed in treatment for two months."

After an honorable discharge, Haugen attended Minnesota State University, Mankato, graduating in 2002 with a degree in marketing. He bounced around to a series of jobs and struggled to find stability and sobriety. After a few relapses, Haugen bested that foe for good in April 2007.

His other demon, however—nightmares, anxiety and depression stemming from his sexual assault—proved more vexing. That battle came to a head in his bedroom that day with the gun.

Silent Warrior

Not long after that day, a new 12-step program sponsor introduced Haugen to something called "centering prayer," a type of meditation developed by monks in which practitioners use silence to connect to a higher power. Around the same time, the VA suggested he try mindfulness-based stress reduction, another type of meditation used to treat anxiety, depression, stress, chronic pain and other afflictions. It is the combination of those two things, Haugen says, that truly set him on a

path to healing in a way that other therapy or healing modalities could not.

Within weeks, under the mentorship of a new sponsor, he began inviting people from his 12-step program to north woods retreats. And after one such retreat in Webster, Wisconsin, he knew what he needed to do.

"In my opinion, the Silent Warrior Project was really kind of born that weekend," he says. "And since that day, we have been working with veterans of post-traumatic stress and taking them on the same retreats. Veterans who have been in combat or veterans that have experienced military sexual trauma will say the same thing: (Other modalities) have gotten us a little bit but they don't get us the whole way better. And I think it's because the other modalities are medical, which is great, but they're not spiritual, and they don't address moral injury."

Moral injury refers to the cognitive and emotional response an individual experiences after a traumatic event. If someone is forced to do something - or if something is forced upon them - that they are morally opposed to, it can cause deep psychological damage.

To date, Haugen says he's taken about 50 veterans or public safety professionals on retreats. One of them is John Tracy, who served many years on the Minneapolis Police Depart-

ment. Tracy says he eschewed offers to debrief or get counseling after traumatic events, choosing instead to tough it out. He says he knows now that was a mistake. He quit the force when his mental health started deteriorating.

"I realized I couldn't do this job anymore because I was either going to kill myself or have to hate everybody for the rest of my life," he says. "So I left. But my problems stayed with me."

He says he never considered that he'd been suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. But after attending one of Haugen's retreats, his attitude changed.

"I realized I had some problems, and I needed some help," he says. "I felt so differently here than I ever had before. ... It gave me a sense of hope that I might be okay, just be a regular guy and live my life."

Retreats are built around mindfulness-based stress reduction, but they also offer an array of other activities including equine therapy, reiki, massage, fishing outings and more. And there is no cost to attendees; the program operates with grants and donations and will never charge for admission.

All retreats take place at Shire in the Woods Retreat Center in McGrath, Minnesota, and the Silent Warrior Project books the entire facility to ensure privacy. Attendees can participate as much or as little as they'd like. ♻️

Haugen with his service dog, Abbott. Dogs and horses play a role in the program's mission to facilitate healing for vets.





INFORMATION GENERATIONS

Paul and Sean
Allan's sports
information work
crossed paths at
a peak event

By Joe Tougas '86

*Paul Allan '02 and his son Sean Allan '19.
The elder Allen is Minnesota State
Mankato's Associate Director of Athletics
Communications.*

Since at least his Mankato high school days, Sean Allan '19 knew he wanted a job like his dad's: Immersed in sports, traveling around the country and working behind the scenes with the teams and with sports media.

And it seemed no matter where Sean traveled over the years, he'd hear a common line: "I know your dad."

"I always thought it was pretty cool he was meeting all these people that were big in sports," said Sean, who recently served a two-year stint as athletic communications coordinator for the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

His father is Paul Allan '02, longtime sports information contact and associate director of athletics for Minnesota State Mankato. Not only has Sean followed his dad's footsteps into a sports information career, he did so for a rival in the 2021 NCAA Frozen Four hockey tournament. Sean worked for his team in its fourth consecutive trip to the NCAA tournament. It was the Mavericks' first.

Ultimately, neither team emerged the winner; both were knocked out in the semifinals (the Mavericks against St. Cloud and Duluth versus UMass). But prior to the fallouts, both schools were in the national sports media spotlight, and both Allans were working nonstop keeping up. Paul Allan enjoyed the perspective.

"In college hockey, Minnesota Duluth is one of the most high-profile programs," Paul said during Frozen Four week. "So I'm really proud of the job he has done in that situation. For a young guy with not a whole lot of experience, he has, by all accounts, done a really good job there. I'm really proud of the work he's done."

Sean took up with Duluth after graduating Minnesota State Mankato in 2019 with a communications degree. His



*Sean with parents
Lori and Paul.*

father received his master's degree in sport management from the University in 2002 after transferring in 1985 from Northern Arizona and joining the Mavericks athletic staff. He served as press officer for the U.S. Olympic Committee at two U.S. Olympic Festivals and the Winter Olympic Games in the 1990s. He was also venue press chief for hockey at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City. Paul was named Associate Athletic Director in 2009.

And he's been through plenty of rapid-fire times when national or world media descends, and he has no doubt Sean's managing these days well.

"Sean is a calm kid, and in this kind of work, we have to grind for nine months," Paul said. "It's 24 hours a day, seven days a week for nine months. Because your games are not just hockey but all sports. And Sean has more responsibility other than hockey. So I know what he's going through right now."

The press coordination for the Frozen Four gave Paul a nice glimpse into the inroads his son is making in the market. As soon as the Mavericks won the March 29 game that put them into the tournament, he called an East Coast photographer who he'd worked with previously.

"He works a lot of these NCAA championship events," Paul said. "I called him right away because he's really good and I think a lot of people would try to get him."

In the call, Paul recalled with a chuckle, the photographer noted: "I've already talked with Sean at Minnesota Duluth." ❧

*Sean Allen on the job for
the Bulldogs of Duluth.*



$$1. a^3 - 7a^6 + 4 - 4a$$

$$2. x + 5x^2 - 4$$

$$3. 5z^2 - 10 + 4z$$

$$b^2 + 2b^4 - 2b$$

$$+ 5$$



Closing the Gaps

A look at programs aimed to improve success in school for students of color.

By Grace Brandt '13

Students Guiding Students

Every week, a dozen students at Minnesota State University, Mankato meet to learn about Anthropology 102. Michael Downes is waiting for them, armed with a comprehensive lesson plan, study materials and more. For the next hour, he'll guide them as they tackle tricky concepts and confusing homework problems.

The students would all agree that Downes is a great teacher—but he is not part of the University faculty. Actually, Downes is a student, too—an exercise science major in his junior year of studies, to be specific. But for this hour, he's a student leader in the MavPASS Program.

Downes has been working as a MavPASS student leader since fall of 2020, the same year that the program itself was implemented at the University.

The program grew out of an initiative led by Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, Henry Morris, who wanted to find ways to support students in courses that had high DFW rates (calculated by the number of students who received Ds, Fs or withdrew from the course) and/or high opportunity gaps, defined as marked differences in performance between students of color and white students due to a systemic lack of opportunity in the educational system. Courses are usually those with high failure or withdrawal rates, especially if they are considered "gateway" courses into a certain major.

A different way of helping

Director Laura Jacobi said the MavPASS program takes a different approach than traditional tutoring. MavPASS student leaders have not only taken the specific course they're tutoring, but they also sit in on it again while they act as a MavPASS leader.

"The focus is on the student struggling with the material, rather than the leader teaching something," Jacobi explained. "So student leaders learn how to use these facilitation skills to draw things out of the students to get the students to do the work. They use different activities to really engage students and get them to problem solve and practice with one another."

"We want to avoid the idea of you either do MavPASS or you do tutoring," added MavPASS Coordinator Madeline Wildeson. "What MavPASS offers that's unique is that group

experience and building community around a group of students who are in a similar situation in that they're all taking this class together."

For Downes, this means attending all the classes for Anthropology 102 alongside his MavPASS attendees, to ensure that he knows the professor's teaching style and can tailor his sessions to it. This fall, Downes will be taking the course for the fourth time.

"I can tell that my strengths and leading MavPASS sessions has improved throughout each semester that I've done it," he said. "I've had better success with attendance, and it's been cool to watch my personal growth as well as the growth of the program."

Encouraging numbers

The program started with five courses and 17 undergraduate student leaders, growing every semester. For spring 2021, there were 18 courses and 41 student leaders. The attendance rate has also continued to rise. For the inaugural semester, classes saw about 23.5 percent attendance among students, but that grew to 35 percent on average by last semester.

Data is showing that students boost their course grade by an average of one full letter grade by attending sessions. In addition, the DFW drops to zero when students attend 10 or more sessions, compared to the 25-30 percent DFW rate these classes have on average otherwise.

Going into the fall semester of 2021-2022, Jacobi said there will be 27 courses that offer MavPASS opportunities, with more than 60 student leaders. She said the main goal is to just continue getting word out on the program so that more students can benefit from it—no matter what grade they currently have in a class.

"It's open for everyone," she said. "It's not meant to target certain groups of people, and I think that takes away the stigma of it. We have students from all different levels who come to MavPASS, and it helps more students to succeed, lowers DFW rates, and closes the opportunity gap while supporting all students who wish to come." 🦋

Madeline Wildeson,
MavPASS Coordinator.



Teaching Leaders to Lead

When alum Candace Raskin '86 returned to the University to lead its Center for Engaged Leadership, she brought decades of experience from her time as a leader in secondary education. Her biggest goal, however, was not to simply equip upcoming principals and superintendents with tools and techniques to lead their school systems but rather teach them something greater: how to look through the lens of educational equality.

"[I was] interested in creating a different type of principal and superintendent, one with racial consciousness," Raskin explained. "I could see very clearly that we have systemic racism, and it's really infused in our system. How do we help sitting superintendents and principals to make that change?"

Working with her colleague, Dr. Melissa Krull, Raskin developed the Institute for Creative Leadership, which is run out of the Center. The Institute offers professional development for P-12 Minnesota principals and superintendents, working in partnership with the Minnesota Equity Education Partnership (MnEEP). It offers two programs: the two-year Institute for Courageous School and District Leadership program and the one-year Teacher Leadership Institute program.

According to Raskin, the Institute has worked with more than 700 school leaders across Minnesota in the past nine years, partnering with 17 school districts. She explained that the first year of the program is focused on interior development, helping school leaders realize their own biases and messages they've been taught about race through their lives. The second year is focused on giving them tools and resources to affect positive change in their schools and ensure all students have access to learning and opportunities.

"[When I was in college], I was taught the technical skills, like how to make a schedule, but never through the lens of how it affects our brown and black children," Raskin said. "Our country is browning. Our kids are browning. We look different, and we are not educating our black and brown kids. The only way we're going to overcome that is look at what are the practices and policies that we have put into systems."

In addition to the leadership programs, Krull spent the past several months compiling the Institute's two-year curriculum into a book, which was published in April. Raskin and Krull



Candace Raskin of the Center for Engaged Leadership.

have also been working to launch a national institute that is available online, after seeing how successfully they were able to offer their program virtually during COVID-19 shutdowns. The goal is to launch the national institute next January and only continue offering hybrid classes in Minnesota moving forward.

The Center has also had an impact on the University itself, according to Dr. Jean Haar, dean of the College of Education, which works in collaboration with the Center.

"The work that the Center has initiated has really prompted the College of Education to take a closer look and think about, 'Are we doing the right things?'" she said. "We're trying to look at those things more carefully to understand what has to change in order to make sure people feel welcomed and have the opportunity to advance their professions and lives. We really [want to] nurture and encourage individuals of color to feel welcome and be successful in getting prepared for whatever degree or career they're pursuing. That's only going to help benefit the profession, their communities and our society."

While the Institute's first cohort had only 21 participants when it was first offered nine years ago, Raskin said they're now full to capacity every year, capping the number around 60 people. It's an encouraging sign to her that school leaders want to learn what the Institute is teaching.

"When our folks leave, they're conscious," Raskin said. "We're helping people see what they didn't see before, so that they can do better. I just want to build an army of leaders who have the courage and the skills and the ability to see things, to change what's happening for kids." ✨

CLASS NOTES

1950s

LLOYD PETERSON, '59, Vincennes, IN, retired as executive director of a vocational school that he helped start. Prior to that he worked with the United Nations, teaching AC to mechanics around the world after 21 years teaching auto mechanics. He continues to work on his antique cars in retirement.

1960s

DARLENE (MAYER) DIBBLE, '60, Houston, TX, retired after an 18-year career as a librarian with the Houston Public Library. Since retiring she and her husband have enjoyed extensive traveling.

DR. ROGER GOETTSCH, '61, Moorhead, MN, is on his third career illustrating and writing poetry. Prior to that he was a painter and illustrator for children's books.

DAVID GREER, '65, Coppell, TX, is retired.

WILLIAM DEVINE, '67, Cartersville, GA, is retired.

PAUL WASHA, '69, Bonita Springs, FL, lives in Florida.

HOWARD ROSS, '68, Elk River, MN, retired after 40 years of working in the medical device field.

ROGER WOLFF, '69, Laona, WI, spent his career teaching young people. He is now retired.

1970s

NORMA (HEINEN) POWERS, '70, Carey, NC, works at St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church.

ROBERT ESSE, '70, '73, Little Falls, MN, is a retired teacher and alternative school director.

RUSS BARLOW, '70, Ankeny, IA, was a self-employed food broker in Iowa for 25 years before retiring. He spent 17 years entertaining at nursing homes and care centers by playing music. He enjoys walking and biking and has two grandchildren.

LINDA KROHN, '71, Williamsburg, VA, is a property manager with Newport Pacific where she manages two mobile home communities. Prior to that she managed a 175-unit mobile home park in McKinney, TX.

DONALD ORESCANIN, '72, Fairfield, CA, lives in Fairfield, CA.

BILL STRUSINSKI, '72, Scandia, MN, recently published his memoir, "Care Under Fire" about his life and times as a medic in the First Infantry Division during the Vietnam War.

WAYNE SERVAIS, '72, Rochester, MN, was a library/media specialist with the Rochester Public Schools. He retired in 2006.

BOYD SCHULER, '73, Charleston, SC, is a retired teacher who continues teaching the low country history as a licensed tour guide. He and his wife are enjoying the southern hospitality.

ANGIE KLIDZEJS, '73, St. Paul, MN, retired in September 2020 after 43 years of employment at the University of Minnesota.

TIMOTHY BALFE, '74, '76, '95, Highlands Ranch, CO, retired after 19 years working at his alma mater the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf where he was a supervising teacher and social studies teacher at the middle school level. Prior to that he taught for 17 years in the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind.

JAY PETERSEN, '74, Tucson, AZ, is a retired social worker who recently published his book, "A Comprehensive Guide to Inter-sex" with Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

LOREN ECKHART, '75, Blue Earth, MN, retired after working with the Faribault County Sheriff's Department.

JIM BRACKETT, '75, Omaha, NE, retired after 43 years in various positions in the insurance industry, working in claims. He is considering moving to Overland Park, KS to be near his two adult children.

KAREN (LA DUKE) HELGESEN, '75, Farmington, MN, is a substitute teacher with the Farmington Public Schools.

BRAD HANSON, '76, is a retired information technology professional. He and his husband, John, enjoy bicycling, hiking, swimming, and photography. He is looking forward to traveling to see family and friends.

RUTH GRANDE, '77, Goleta, CA, is an executive director with Senior Resource Group.

BRAD DAVIS, '77, Carrollton, TX, is retired along with his wife, JUDY DAVIS, '77.

CLAYTON BAETHKE, '79, Creedmoor, NC, is an IT third-party risk management consultant with MetLife.

SCOTT FRISBY, '79, Duluth, MN, has retired. He was self-employed at Live Well Consulting LLC.

MARY JANE (BAYNES) (BURG) KENDALL, '79, '89, '99, Garden City, MN, is a retired English teacher and counselor.

1980s

VICTORIA NOBLE, '80, Lake Forest, IL, is a corporate intellectual property paralegal with Signode who fosters golden retrievers with her husband. The couple are planning to travel as they are able and to retire in five years.

FRITZ DAHMUS, '80, Houston, MN, is a software developer for the State of Minnesota.

JAMES GRANNIS, '80, Winnebago, MN, is a retired software engineer and adjunct instructor.

PAUL CLARK, '81, Poplar Gove, IL, is retired.

MICHAEL QUARANTA, '81, New Castle, DE, is the president of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

MARK BENDICKSON, '82, Maple Grove, MN, is the principle and designer with Mark Bendickson Design.

LINDA (FLOM) RASCHKE, '82, Hermantown, MN, is retired along with her husband, **LOWELL RASCHKE, '82**.

MICHAEL BELISLE, '83, Burnsville, MN, is a semi-retired IT consultant with MJ Belisle IT Consulting, LLC.

NANCY (GULLICKSON-GEORGE) LYNCH, '83, Bluffton, SC, is a retired superintendent from the Reed Union School District.

BENETTE (LYLES SPEERS) BROWN, '83, Fridley, MN, is a human resources compliance analyst with Ameriprise Financial.

DR. R. MIEBI AKAH, '83, '84, Upper Arlington, OH, has retired after more than 30 years in the IT field including some time as an adjunct teacher for several universities and working as a consultant. He and his wife, **JACQUELINE KROLL, '84**, plan to do some traveling.

MARTY SMITH, '83, Faribault, MN, is a rental licensing administrator with the City of Faribault.

JEFFREY MEISTER, '85, Lorton, VA, is a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Disabled VET.

ALEXANDER SANTOS, '88, Long Valley, NJ, works for MedPro Systems.

BRAD THOMPSON, '89, Scottsdale, AZ, lives in Arizona.

DAVID KELLER, '89, Lakeville, MN, is a professor of cybersecurity at St Cloud State University. Prior to this he taught enterprise computing at Century College.

1990s

SHANON KNUDTSON, '90, Frisco, TX, is an industry consultant with Allstate Business Insurance.

DAVEN KIRUBAKEREN, '92, Shoreview, MN, is the founder and president of Gistel Advisors in Roseville, MN. Prior to this he had been a financial advisor for 25 years.

GUSTAVO PLATA, '93, Panama, Panama, is a director at Promedia.

GREG BOE, '96, '14, Chanhassen, MN, has been re-elected to a second term in the Minnesota State House of Representatives, representing Carver County. He also is an environmental services department manager with Carver County.

CHAD DALBERG, '98, Ypsilanti, MI, is an engineer with Stellantis.

JAMES WINEBARGER, '98, Gold River, CA, is a director at Moving image Technologies.

JENNIFER SAXTON, '98, Edinburg, TX, is an associate professor in costume design at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Theatre Department.

2000s

KYLE HUBERT, '01, Lamberton, MN, is a patrol officer with the City of Westbrook.

RYAN HAUGEN, '02, Burnsville, MN, is the founder and board president of Silent Warrior Project.

RON LINNEMAN, '03, Lino Lakes, MN, is an employee benefits consultant with WA Group.

BILLY SABIN, '04, Mesa, AZ, is a security officer with Allied Universal Security Service.

STACEY BALES, '05, Dubuque, IA, transferred to Loras College in Dubuque, IA, as an academic counselor and faculty member in the disability services department. Prior to this she worked at Arizona State University for eight years.

DAVE RAUSCHENFELS, '05, Duluth, MN, is a field service technician with Retail Data Systems.

LECIA SIMS, '06, '08, Carl Junction, MO, is the director of TRIO: Student Support Services at Crowder College after earning a doctorate of education in 2020 from Maryville University.

COLIN LAUGHLIN '07, Denver, CO, was promoted to deputy office director of Colorado Medicaid's Long Term Services and Support Office with the State of Colorado, Department of Health Care Policy and Financing.



*Students at a Halloween Party on Oct. 31, 1960.
Image courtesy of the University Archives*

JACOB SPOTT, '07, Trussville, AL, and his wife, Natalie welcomed their baby girl, Allie Katherine in 2019. He is the director of golf at the Hoover Country Club.

JESSICA (DONOVAN) MATHESON, '09, Chanhassen, MN, was named the 2020 MNShape Health Teacher of the Year. She is a health and physical education teacher with the Rockford Area Schools. Jessica and her husband, **KYLE MATHESON, '09**, have three kids.

2010s

SARAH (RICKERT) POPPLER, '11, Eden Prairie, MN, is a senior analyst with Boston Scientific in Maple Grove, MN.

EUNICE ZEPHIER, '13, Wagner, SD, is a college access liaison with Ithanktonwan Community College.

DEBORAH (HALLE) HENDERSON, '14, North Wilkesboro, NC, is a quality and learning manager with Samantan's Purse.

TODD JOHNSON, '14, Pensacola, MN, is attending graduate school in St. Petersburg Russia.

ANNA TORRES MALLMA, '16, Naperville, IL, lives in Naperville, IL.

QUINTAN EATWELL, '15, St. James, MN, is a soil conservationist with the UDSA/NRCS. He received a bachelor's degree in Agronomy from Iowa State in 2020.

ERIKA WINTER, '17, Plymouth, MN, is a broker agent senior service analyst with United Healthcare.

JUSTIN NOVAK, '19, New Prague, MN, is a software developer with ImageTrend.

2020s

SYED MOHAMMAD ABUZAR IQBAL, '20, Mankato, MN, is enrolled in the master's program at Georgetown University studying public relations and corporate communications, and is very proud of being a Maverick alumnus.

ARCYDALIA GARCIA, '20, Le Sueur, MN, is a direct support professional with Harry Meyering Center who is looking forward to working with children.

ZIHENG SUN, '21, Montreal, Quebec, is a student and teaching assistant at Concordia University in Canada.

GABRIELLE KEERAN, '21, Prior Lake, MN, is a media coordinator with Media Minefield.

YOUNGUEN KIM, '21, Changwon-si, Gyeongsangnam-do, South Korea, lives in South Korea.

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Irma LaVerne (Burket) Henderson '41
Doris Margaret (Brandt) Wigand '44, '70
Marjorie Anne (Heins) Barnard '45
Doris Lorraine (Holtze) Sutherland '45
Shirley Grace (Fleming) Chryst '48
Lila Marie (Tiller) Knippel '48
Phyllis Irene (Jacobsen) Lewer '48
Lila Mae (Wilson) Lynne '48
Henry Charles Lewer '49

1950s

Shirley Mae (Sather) Brown '50, '76
Carl Harold Gates '50
Darwin Allen Kelley '51, '63
Darlene Mae (Langlois) Palmer '51
Charles Henry Wiggins '51
Sandra June (Prange) Blackley '52, '57
Betty Lou (Stoll) Hauser '52
William James Hines '52
Patricia Ruth (Antonson) Panzram '52
Joan Elizabeth Schmitz '52, '71
William Eugene Sievers '52
Neil Vincent Melvin Anderson '53
Rita Mae (Daub) Seifert Holmes '53
Donald Jerome Anderson '54
Merlin Roy Bauer '54, '66
Orin Cletus Blegen '55
Zita Marie (Furr) Mittelstaedt '55, '65
Lynn Ellis Pierce '55, '58
Allan Percy Sorenson '55
Maryanne R. (Geddes) Swanson '55
Dean Luverne Hahn '56
John Walter Kent '56
Paul J. King '56, '59
Harold LeRoy Ling '56, '62
Allan Luther Lundberg '56, '67
Lyle Vernon Madsen '56, '62
Marjorie A. (Milton) Pearson '56, '63
Stella Helena (Black) Roepke '56, '64
Ramona Ann (Jaeger) Steele '56
Mary Kathryn (Leivermann) Theis '56, '59
William L. Duncan '57
Robert Lee Emary '57, '63
Leo Charles Fitzpatrick '57, '63
Daryl John Kramer '57, '66
Robert Francis Lanoue '57
Lawrence Joseph McCoy '57, '67
Latta Frank Nelson '57
Marilynn Steeg (Koenig) Steeg '57
Joan Lois (Buchan) Hartke '58, '60
Robert William McGrew '58
Russell K. Amling '59, '79
Kenneth Mathew Bauler '59
Lola Jean Burgess-Thurston '59, '65
Joan Elaine (Erickson) Eichers '59
Mary Ellen (Foltz) Petersen '59, '61
Joan June (Jensen) Wede '59

1960s

Mary Ann (Stuedemann) Buck '60
John Thomas Jette '60
Harlan Gene Koch '60
Charles Paul Koppi '60
Derald Dewayne Maxwell '60
Donald Emanuel Nelson '60
Mark E. Benda '61, '66
Richard Russell Maas '61, '71, '80
Delbert Duane Matheson '61
Jerome F. Payne '61
Patricia M. (Sellner) Reynolds '61
William Edmond Steidler '61
Dean Howard Wick '61
Judith Irene (Heitman) Griebenow '62
Clifford Gordon Hinderman '62
Helen Louise (Larson) Klinsing '62
Ruth Alice Ruege '62
Lynette Y. Russ '62, '84
Sharon Lee (Okland) Taragos '62, '72
Francis Edward Wade '62
Nancy Leora (Adolphson) Baker '63
William Ross Wangen Eriksen '63
Dwayne Charles Grewe '63
Larry B. Koenck '63
Harold Eugene Lang '63
Eldon Lee Linscheid '63
David Peter Michels '63
Rolf Edward Middleton '63
LaVera Luleen (Dallman) Roemhildt '63, '68
David H. Snyder '63
Donald Lloyd Weber '63
William Paul Flies '64
Jacqueline Vivian (Mattson) Geisler '64
Julian Richard Grev '64
Frances L. (Charter) Hanson '64
Sharon Mae Kruger '64
Ivan Russell Winger '64, '66
Edward Hite Bargfield '65
Carolyn Ann (Huinker) Dickey '65
Marianne Louise (Einck) Diekmann '65
Robert Lee Doering '65, '74
Susan Kay (Andresen) Erickson '65, '75
Judith Ann (Schleusner) Hoppe '65, '82
Lance Paul Johnson '65, '85
Loretta Joanne (Vierboom) Kaderlik '65
Leo J. Loosbrock '65
Carol Verlan (Davids) Malmberg '65
Winston Churchill Naylor '65
Cecil Lee Nelson '65
Rochelle Louise (Baker) Sorem '65
Elizabeth Ann (Benes) Sticha '65
Robert Wayne Vogt '65
Deborah A. (Harmer) Brown '66
James Douglas Donohue '66
Barbara Joy Heinonen '66
Dolores Beatrice (Johnson) Hemingway '66
Brent David Herbert '66
Sharon Lee (Wermerskirchen) Morlock '66
David Warner Nelson '66, '72
David L. Raak '66
Doris Elaine (Lindblad) Storlien '66
Gerald Charles Anderson '67
Thomas J. Bricker '67
James Fredrick Lehmkuhl '67, '71
Judith A. (Jurries) Matsui '67
John Terrence McCoy '67
Keith A. Tretinyak '67
Steven Lee Washechek '67
Donald Robert Bell '68
Kenneth Elmer Ebeling '68
Thomas Russell Hanson '68
Thomas J. Jeffrey '68, '71
Carla Ann (Just) Roth '68
Thomas William Witty '68, '78
Susan Joy (Shockley) Zollar '68
Kenneth D. Anderson '69
Timothy John Dwyer '69
John Howard Esbjornson '69
Donna Lucille (Northridge) Hanson-Bergh '69
Keith Alvin Krueger '69
Terrance F. Larson '69
Wayne D. Laschinger '69, '76
Harry Wright Musser '69
Linda Lorine (Werlinger) Opp '69, '86
Warren Ray Stefanski '69
John Emil Volz '69

1970s

Arthur Carl Blomquist '70
Daniel Joseph Culhane '70
Howard Charles Davis '70
Dennis Irving Hansen '70
Leslie Oren Henson '70
David Mark Jetzke '70
Thomas J. Lannon '70
Gregg Robert Martin '70
Lynda Diane (Hanson) Nygard '70
Dennis Lawrence Rasmussen '70
Gerald Allen Wall '70
Michael D. Wetherbee '70
Julia Jane (Forkey) Atkins '71
Stephanie Sue (Frick) Block '71
Paul D. Bruss '71
Dennis Charles Bucek '71
Thomas M. Delaney '71
Sister Yvonne Elskamp '71
Charles Gordon Kloster '71
Joseph P. Kremer '71
Victoria Louise Olson '71, '88
Arleen LaVonne (Zingg) Sorenson '71, '78
Keith Frank Bentley '72
Elaine May (Ness) Bergan '72
Ronald George Brand '72, '88, '91
Ruth Ann (Berg) Carlson '72, '77
Eugene P. DiMarco '72
Marcene Rachael (Krueger) Kluender '72, '79, '89
Richard Frederick Lybeck '72
Dale G. McMahon '72, '77
Lester James Neeb '72
Mark L. Pederson '72
Phillip T. Severtson '72
Willard Stanley Storlie '72, '78
Linda Jean Tysk '72
Robert Charles Weinholzer '72
Helen Marie (Baer) Buerkle '73
Clifford J. Drenttel '73
Robert C. Fixsen '73
Ralph Herman Hilgendorf '73
Barbara Mae (Johnson) Johnson '73
Erma Hildegard (Miller) Knutson '73
Dan G. Korthuis '73
Richard Van Laws '73
Lorraine Ruth (Arend) Olsen '73
Jeanne Karen (Seeger) Volz '73
Richard Lynn Waldron '73
Joan Marie (Walker) Brownstein '74
Charles Robert Burns '74
Gary Reuben Dahlberg '74
Sonia Ann (Buerkle) Grasmon '74
Connie (Isle) Christiansen Isle '74
Douglas Gordon Keith '74
Carole Elaine (Tuttle) Petersen '74, '79
Edward Henry Schmidtke '74, '77
William Wayne Stone '74
Michael Stephen Wittern '73, '74
Jerrold Ray Dalke '75
Janice Ann Fiola '75
John Peter Mueller '75
Lynda Marie Overson '75
Delwin Lee Peterson '76
Grant Emanuel Peterson '76
Thomas Lawrence Volk '76
Paul F. Von Drasek '76
Patricia McBride Dunn '77
Joseph Arthur Mason '77
Donald Myron Ness '77
Cheryl Lynn (Utter) Page '77
Eldor George Schnobrich '77
Deane Melvin Antoine '78
Donald Frederick Gerk '78

Susan Mary (Hoft) Goecke '78, '96
Paul Arthur Lemke '78
Carol M. Matteson '78
Dennis Eugene Owen '78
Suzanne Marie (Bielen) Carr '79
Victor Edwin Denny '79
David Joseph Diercks '79
Melvin Noel Goede '79
Thomas Charles McMonagle '79, '81
Edwin Otto Trapp '79

1980s

Joyce Marie (Meyer) Brown '80
Judith Ann (Stafford) DeBlicke '80
Duane Rudolph Haataja '80
Dirk William Hoogenboom '80
Ronald Dean Koval '80
M. Romelia (Grant) Siebels '80
Harold Eugene Motter '81
David Burt Weaver '81
Eunice Carrie (Paulson) Amos '82
Heidi Marie (Berquist) Broberg '82
Mary Kathleen (Sullivan) Bushard '82
James Jay McDowell '82, '85
AL RE Donna Rae (Martin) Webb '82, '86
Donald William Rickard '83
Lori Lee (Clauson) Dather '84
Kyle Arthur Matting '84, '90
Gwen Lee (Hammersland) McDonald '84
Patrice Maurine (Evenson) Parsons '84
Gary Lynn Schultz '84
Byron Todd Lindell '85, '87
Gerald Michael Anderson '86
Rodney Marvin Dirth '86
Ross Logan Jacobson '86
Stanley Dean Poole '86
Lorene Iva (Michael) Anderson '87
Angelia Sue (Pilling) Degenaar '88
Thomas Richard Klipfel '88
Daniel Joseph Guimont '89
Susette Marie (Fair) Townsend '89

1990s

Consuela Marie (Shelstad) Klein '90
Colleen J. (Johnson) Jackson '91
Susan Louise (Vik) Johnson '91
Michael Paul Opela '91
Angela Kay (Burch) Schultz '91
Suzanne Mae (Wilson) Bruning '92, '00
Julie Marie (Steinbach) Lowe '92
Ty Trenton Bartz '93
Gail Ann (Blilie/Lillo) Blilie '93
Reta Marie (Hauch) Casper '93, '96
Gary Allen Heller '93
Tracy Laurine (Ekstrand) Lee '93
Charlotte Ann (Gfeller) Clark '94
Mitchell Lee Croes '94
Eric James Dale '94
Lawrence Lee Stanley '94
Virginia Ann Gulbrandson '95
John Ramsey McLagan '95
Benjamin R. Price '95
Megan Genae (Johnson) Stadler '95
Scott A. Pawelko '96
Jeffrey Gerald Zerwas '96
Jeanne Marie (Jacobson) Brustuen '97
Brandon Donahue Wise '97
Robert Wayne Amundson '98, '00
Dale Thomas Brown '98
Christopher John Syltie '98

2000s

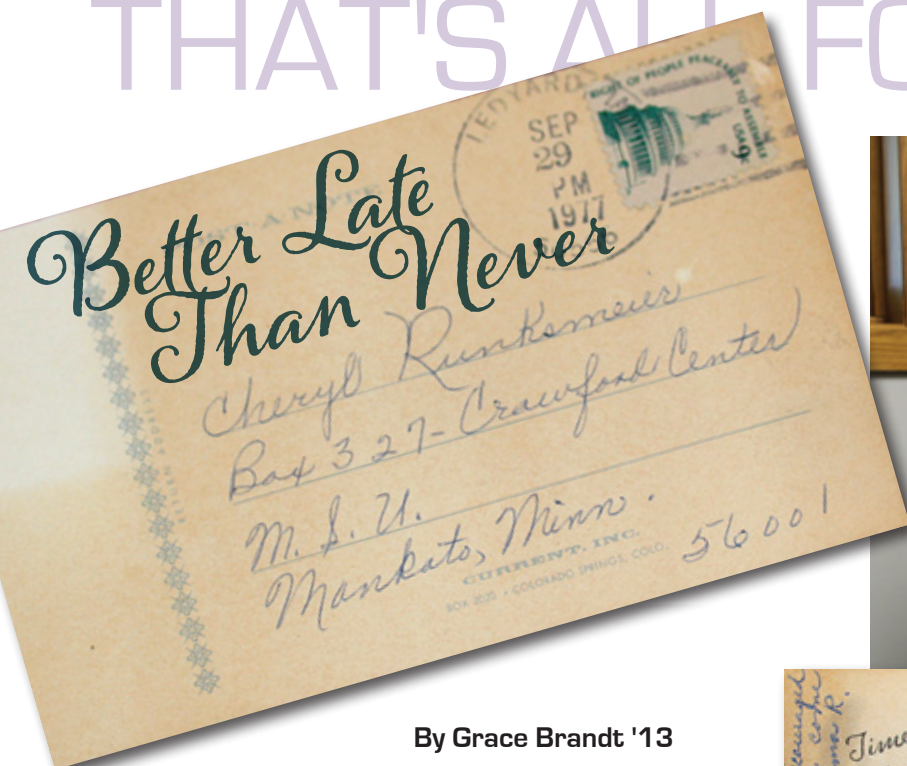
Thor Albert Olmanson '00
Jessica Antoinette Fronk '01
Nathan Dean Heimdal '02
Mark Willard Johnson '02
Heather Joy (Shultz) Miller '02
Jeffrey John Almsted '03
Laurie Louise (Jensen) Bickett '03
Jason Bernard Quinn '03
Daniel David Beil '05
Rebecca Sue (Butler) Gilbertson '05
Braedan Robert Weiss '08
Charles Gerald Otto '10
Scott Lee Elliott '12
Evan Mark Koger '12
Kathryn Marie Berg '13
David Robert Hendrickson '13
Ryan Niu Colakovic '16
Valentina Alekseyevna (Gerasimova) Mejia '17
Karen Jean (Carr) Rosell '17, '19
Whitney Marie (Grangroth) Nelson '19

FACULTY & STAFF

David Winslow Allan
Russell K. Amling
William Harvey Benson
John E. Bernthal
Nancy Ann (Nitzkowski) Burger
Ann Louise Burhop
David Edward Carlstrom
Hyung "John" Tae Choe
Barbara Kay (Charbonneau) Dahlen
John Raymond Gimbel
Donna Lucille (Northridge) Hanson-Bergh
Dorothy Rene (Gilbert) Hersrud
Joe Hogan
Christopher Paul Holm
Richard Henry Kakekdey
Cecil Sidney Keen
Jason J. Kesler
Gene A. Klimstra
Byron Todd Lindell
Harold LeRoy Ling
William Ralph McNamara
Edith Joan (Wilson) Miller
Donald Emanuel Nelson
Thomas Michael Peischl
Carole Elaine (Tuttle) Petersen
Mary Ellen (Goettl) Probst
Leroy Schiller
Mahbubur R. Syed
Karen R. (Kniffen) Taylor
Narciso "Norge" P. Tenorio
Marilyn A. (Toner) Underhill
Robert William Wallace
Evelyn Mae (Davey) Wilder
Reinhard Wittke
Richard George Young

FRIENDS

Rita Lavon (Wright) Halstead
Brian Pacian Moore
Arthur Joseph Petrie
Arthur William Reese
Paul Robert Stollard



By Grace Brandt '13

When Minnesota State University, Mankato's Department of Residential Life began renovating the mailboxes at the Crawford Residence Community dorms this May, workers found quite a surprise: a postcard, wedged between two boxes, and dated Sept. 29, 1977.

The postcard was from Iowa and addressed to Cheryl Runkmeier, a student in her first semester at the University. It had been written by Runkmeier's grandmother. Beyond that, there was no other information about her.

"This postcard had gotten dropped into a void between the mailboxes by accident," explained Brian Zins, Director of Alumni Relations. "[Residential Life] contacted us and said, 'We found this thing... We have this student's maiden name, [and] we know roughly where she lived. We don't know her name now or if she graduated.'"

But Zins was determined to find her—and after some digging, he did. Her name is now Cheryl Hamp, and she had indeed graduated from the University, eventually settling down in Fairmont.

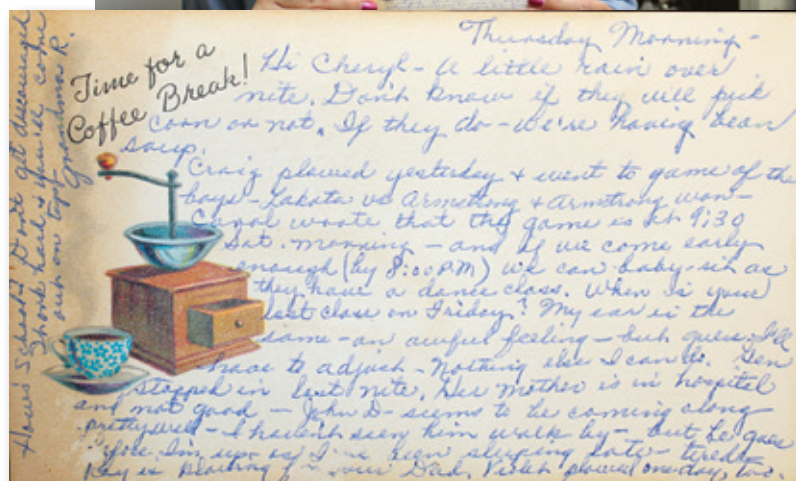
Zins reached out to Hamp, who was hesitant but agreed to meet him in Fairmont. He said he wanted to meet with her personally instead of just mailing the postcard because he felt it was the "right thing" to do.

"I wish it had been delivered on the day it was received, but we were past that," Zins said. "But to me, it was really neat to get it into the hands of the person it should have gotten into 44 years ago. I couldn't just send it or throw it away. This is one of the things we try to do—to create that connection. This was an easy one. I think this was our duty. Whether it's 1977 or 2021, to me, that was our job."

According to Hamp, she was surprised but very grateful when she discovered what Zins had for her. This grandmother had not written very much, but the two were very close, so close that Hamp had named her daughter after her. The grand-



Cheryl Runkmeier '81 with the recently unearthed postcard sent to her at the University in 1977.



mother had passed away several years ago, so receiving the postcard now was even more special.

"I was excited about the whole thing, just to have something that my grandma wrote," Hamp said. "What surprises me the most is how precious that postcard is to me, and it's so mundane what she talks about. It wasn't any earthshaking news that she sent; she told me they were ploughing, she told me what the weather was, she told me her ear still hurt. I could have predicted that was what she said, but it's still so special to have this letter from her. I just keep it in my little planner and look and it and smile."

Hamp has fond memories of her time at the University, especially about living in the Crawford Community Residence Hall. In fact, it was because of her Crawford roommate that she ended up choosing her major—teaching—and embarking on a 35-year career in that field.

"I studied journalism and ended up in elementary education," Hamp explained. "My roommate made it look so fun, so I switched. I'm surprised that everything turned out as great as it did. It was really good days back then; it was a very special time. I have no regrets about my time there and picking Mankato and picking elementary education. It's served me so well in so many ways." 🍀

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.

MAIL: Editor, *TODAY*

232 Alumni Foundation Center

Mankato, MN 56001

FAX: 507-389-2069 E-MAIL: today@mnsu.edu

ONLINE: today.mnsu.edu

Update your contact information online: mnsu.edu/alumni/update

ABOUT YOU

Name (including maiden) _____

Nickname _____

Graduation year(s) _____

Major(s) _____

Degree(s) _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home phone _____

Preferred email _____

Professional title or position _____

Employer _____

Work phone _____

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ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE / PARTNER

Name (including maiden) _____

Spouse/partner _____

Graduation year (if Minnesota State Mankato graduate) _____

Professional title or position _____

Employer _____

Employer's address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work phone _____

Notes _____

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARDS

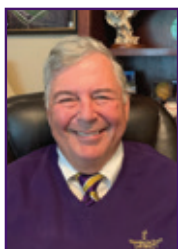
Meet the recipients of this year's Distinguished Alumni Awards, given to alums in three categories: The Harold J. Fitterer Service Award; the Achievement Award and the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

The three will be celebrated at the Distinguished Alumni Awards presentation Saturday, Oct. 23.

HAROLD J. FITTERER SERVICE AWARD

Dale Wolpers
'75, '83

A career educator who has also coached and directed theater, Wolpers' passion and dedication has been recognized in teacher of the year awards as well as three National School of Excellence awards. He spent 20 years with the Hastings schools before taking on leadership roles in the South Washington County Schools, in the process earning an "Educator of the Year" award in 2009.



ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Deb Schoneman
'90

Deb Schoneman is president of Minneapolis-based investment banking firm Piper Sandler, which she joined in 1990. From her initial role in the firm's accounting department, Schoneman went on to hold several senior management positions, including global head of equities, chief financial officer, finance director and treasurer. She received Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal's "CFO of the Year" award in 2014.



OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD

Michael Jordan '16

Jordan is founder and CEO of UNRL, an athletic apparel brand based in St. Paul with its roots in Jordan's days at Minnesota State Mankato.

UNRL began in Mankato with \$400. In 2017, UNRL cleared \$2 million in sales and enjoyed clients that included NHL teams Minnesota Wild and St. Louis Blues. UNRL sponsors the wildly popular Red Bull Crashed Ice competition and is a major presence in events such as Hockey Day in Minnesota and the Super Bowl Live festivities in downtown Minneapolis.



Alumni Magazine

TODAY

Minnesota State University, Mankato
232 Alumni Foundation Center
Mankato, MN 56001

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Now everybody knows

Minnesota State University, Mankato took the top spot for colleges and universities in the Star Tribune's "Minnesota's Best" readers' choice poll.