

CELEBRATING THE INAUGURATION OF GRACELAND UNIVERSITY'S 19<sup>th</sup> PRESIDENT ▶ P6

FALL 2024/WINTER 2025 VOL. 40, NO. 1

# HORIZONS



*President*  
**Joel Shrock**  
*Gilded Age to Green Day*

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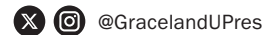
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## Strongly Rooted & Still Growing

**W**hen I arrived in 2022 as the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty, I was extremely excited to join the Graceland community. I found that my own belief system aligned extremely well with the values and mission of the university. During my tenure as VPAA, we launched Transformational Leadership, Graceland's innovative approach to making general education hyper-relevant for our students, who – along with their parents – are understandably focused on ensuring the investment they make in their education will carry them into a strong career.

My career in higher education has taken me from the classroom into administration, leading me to be named as Graceland's 19th President in September of 2024. I have been working toward a post like this for my entire career, and it is an honor the Board of Trustees has faith in me to continue to further Graceland's mission of creating learning communities where students develop their potential for meaningful and productive lives.

Graceland's mission is an important one because it calls upon our students not to just go and get jobs and make money, but to make a meaningful impact on their communities. I see our students leaning into these efforts every day in the classroom. I've met countless alumni who are creating positive change in their places of work, their houses of worship, and in their neighborhoods.

Higher education is facing a difficult road ahead, but as a historian, I can tell you that the industry has seen disruption and change before. I know that Graceland has, too. I believe that we have the tools and the abilities to thrive even amidst the challenging headwinds we are facing. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as President and I look forward to continuing to build our future together.

**Joel Shrock, PhD**  
*President*



☺ Celebrating Graceland's 19th President, Joel D. Shrock, PhD, a lifelong Gilded Age academic with a love for punk rock.



# The Buzz

BY JENNIFER SMITH

DPT student Sarah Taplin '25 smiles proudly after receiving her white coat from clinical professors Jamie Dyson (left) and Darla Cathcart (right).



## Oath of Excellence

At Graceland's Independence campus, Program Director Leigh Murray, PhD, her fellow faculty, and the entire support team of Graceland's Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) program were overjoyed and immensely proud to lead the very first DPT cohort to the **INAUGURAL PROFESSIONALISM CEREMONY** in December 2024.

The heartfelt presentation of the white coats followed by an Oath of Professionalism symbolized the 22 graduates' transition from classroom learning to real patient care – and their promise of commitment to professionalism, compassion, and ethical conduct.

“Professionalism is not a destination, but a continuous journey,” Murray underlines. “This ceremony marks not only a recognition of the students' dedication to their studies, but also a commitment to the values that define our program and the profession. Physical therapy is a calling to serve others with empathy, integrity, and expertise. As our students participate in this ceremony, they reflect on the tremendous responsibility, trust, and respect that society places in their hands as physical therapists.”



## Tee Time for Graceland

The **2024 GRACELAND GOLF CLASSIC**, held at the WinterStone Golf Course in Independence, MO, was more than just a round of golf – it was a celebration of connection and purpose. Each year, Graceland alumni gather for a friendly competition, and funds from the Golf Classic are thoughtfully allocated to projects that best support Graceland students. This year, the four-player scramble brought together more than 25 teams and raised nearly \$20,000 toward the Henson Strength and Conditioning Center project, a vital initiative to enhance the student experience. With opportunities to sponsor the event, individual holes, giveaways, and more, the Golf Classic offered something for everyone. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just looking to enjoy a fun day on the course, this annual tradition is the perfect way to reconnect with fellow Gracelanders while making a meaningful impact on current and future Yellowjackets.



## Already Legendary

Reception Leader, Yardage King, Touchdown Machine – Senior Gerald Monroe '25 finished the season not only as an accomplished Yellowjacket wide receiver, but with regional and national recognition: as **OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR** in the NAIA Heart of America Athletic Conference (North), and with NAIA Coaches' **FIRST-TEAM ALL-AMERICA** honors from the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA). In his record-setting 2024 campaign, the Glenn Heights, TX, native solidified his position as a premier player in NAIA football, leading the nation in every major receiving category with one of the greatest individual performances in program history. Monroe's efforts propelled the Yellowjackets to rank among the most productive offenses in the Heart of America Athletic Conference (North). His ability to dominate defensive matchups and deliver in key moments was pivotal to Graceland's success. Monroe's impact extends beyond impressive statistics. He has left an indelible mark on the Graceland football program, elevating its standard of excellence and inspiring his teammates for years to come.

**“This is a great honor for Gerald and our football program. He has proven over the last three years to be one of the best players in the country – I’m glad his hard work and dedication paid off. In my 20-plus years of coaching, G is one of the best I’ve ever had, and that list includes several guys who have gone on to play in the NFL. Gerald’s football career is long from over, so it will be fun to watch it continue to blossom.”**

**PATRICK ROSS**  
*Head Football Coach*





# An Honored Fellow

In recognition of his outstanding service in honors education from local to national level, Brian White, PhD, '92, Professor of English and Director of Graceland's Honors Program, was chosen for the **2024 CLASS OF FELLOWS** of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC). Fellows are selected in a rigorous peer-review process. The award was presented at a ceremony during the NCHC's Annual Conference in Kansas City (Oct. 30-Nov. 3, 2024).



Under the theme *Harmonizing Heritage: Elevating Honors Education through Culture, Capital, and Community Engagement*, the conference explored history, diversity, and creativity in honors pedagogy to empower students to become informed, engaged, and impactful contributors to the ever-changing world. Graceland Honors classes bring students with diverse experiences into conversation with one another – to nurture their individual gifts and skills and develop the interdisciplinary thinking they need to lead their communities through the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.

Q Scan to view Brian White's 2024 NCHC Fellow profile and learn more about his dedication to honors education ► [nchchonors.org](http://nchchonors.org)



# Joint Exercise

Propped up in hospital beds, Health and Movement Science (HMS) students from Lamoni put their lives into the hands of their fellow Graceland students in Nursing and Physical Therapy, convincingly – though not always with a straight face – playing their parts as patients. School of Nursing (SON), Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT) and HMS faculty gathered everyone on the Independence campus for an **INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE (IPE)** that put collaboration and communication between the disciplines at the center of a day filled with learning and application. At various stations and in hands-on simulations, the students teamed up for discussion, data collection, and demonstration – with the mutual goal of the best patient outcome.

“Collaboration is crucial in health care,” assistant clinical professor Jenna Segraves, DPT, explains the motivation behind organizing this first IPE. “A patient can’t succeed in remobilization and recovery if not all team members work together to combine their expertise and skill sets.” The IPE offered a unique on-site opportunity for the students to learn from each other in a safe environment of peers with immediate feedback from their professors. The positive feedback on the day attested all-round success: the interdisciplinary exercise provided ideal training grounds that all sides benefited from, preparing faculty for future events and students for professional settings or grad school.



☺ Pictured, top to bottom: Members of the Lysinger family teamed up for the annual Graceland Golf Classic. Top honors awarded to Brian White. The collaborative simulation created a variety of hands-on learning opportunities for HMS, SON, & DPT students – valuable training they can draw from in the field. 2024 School of Nursing graduate Sabriah Hasam.







# *Presidential* Inauguration

BY SHANE ADAMS '99

## *Gilded Age to Green Day*

On a beautiful autumn day on Lamoni's campus, Graceland Board of Trustees Chair Mike Wiley, PhD, described the 19th president of the University as "Absolutely the right person at the right time for Graceland."



**PRUDENS FUTURI**

Community of Christ Presiding Bishop Ron Harmon Jr. '86 and Graceland Board of Trustees Chair Mike Wiley '83 formally invested President Shrock with the emblem of office, the presidential medallion. Forged in gold with the University seal, the pendant includes an image of the iconic Higdon Administration Building and the Latin phrase "Prudens Futuri" — wisdom for the future.

**J**oel D. Shrock, PhD, joined the University in the summer of 2022 as the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty and was appointed President based on the recommendation from a committee that consisted of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and alumni, who each did extensive interviews with many members of the Graceland community.

Shrock chose Graceland originally because of its unique profile, its multiple campuses, and its mission.

Graceland has a unique spirit that captured my attention," said Shrock. "The university's diverse student body, commitment to innovation, and dedication to fostering a community where all students feel they belong made Graceland a clear choice for me back when I joined the University in 2022. I am excited to lead an institution so closely aligned with my values and aspirations for higher education."

Black Student Union President and Senior Jy Smith '25 said, "When I first met him, he was so open to hearing my ideas, and we discussed inclusivity and bringing students together. Dr. Shrock just brings an incredible energy to the campus."

When he was announced as president, Shrock quickly distinguished himself as perhaps one of the first University presidents to extol the virtues of punk rock in his acceptance of the job.

"Dr. Shrock just brings an incredible energy to the campus."

JY SMITH '25

President, Black Student Union

## About "Doc Shrock"™

A cultural historian who is just as comfortable in a bow tie as he is at a punk show.

Scan to watch this video or visit our YouTube channel (search "Gilded Age to Green Day" on the homepage): [youtube.com/gracelanduniversity](https://youtube.com/gracelanduniversity)



Illustration & video production by Chad Godfrey '97

**NAME**

Joel D. Shrock

**SPOUSE**

Kelly Kirby Shrock

**CHILDREN**

Owen, JD, Brenton

**EDUCATION**

BS, History, Ball State University Honors College, *magna cum laude*

MA, U.S. Political History, Ball State University

PhD, U.S. History (1877-Present), Miami University

**AREA OF EXPERTISE**

Gilded Age Popular Culture

**FAVORITE BANDS**

Dead Kennedys, Bad Religion, Sex Pistols, Green Day

**FAVORITE BOOKS**

Anything by Jim Butcher, *The Lord of the Rings*

**FAVORITE TEAM**

Indianapolis Colts

**PREVIOUS POSITION**

Vice President for Academic Affairs & Dean of Faculty, Graceland University

**CURRENT POSITION**

19<sup>th</sup> PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY





“The university’s diverse student body, commitment to innovation, and dedication to fostering a community where all students feel they belong made Graceland a clear choice for me... I am excited to lead an institution so closely aligned with my values and aspirations for higher education.”

PRESIDENT JOEL SHROCK, PhD

## Lessons from Punk Rock

Upon meeting him for the first time, punk rock probably wouldn’t be the first place you would expect to find common ground with him, but he is anything but predictable. Shrock stepped to the microphone in September looking every bit the part of a lifelong academic and Gilded Age historian – complete with a bow tie. Then, his acceptance speech celebrated the spirit of punk, saying, “It is a challenge to convention. It challenges the status quo.”

Shrock went on to describe how universities could learn from punk rock by challenging ideas, embracing dissatisfaction, dissent, and debate, not to be nihilistic or disruptive or intolerant, but instead to engage with people who disagree, to challenge ideas. “Our passions must not divide us,” he said. “A university is a place where differences of opinion are necessary and good. They must unify us.”

Those who have worked with Dr. Shrock during his time at Graceland as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of Faculty regularly bring up the dissonance of his buttoned-up, academic demeanor with his love of bands like the Dead Kennedys, Bad Religion, and Green Day.

“The word that comes to mind when I think of Joel is contradiction,” said Community of Christ President-Prophet Designate Stassi Cramm, PhD, ’03, who served on Graceland’s Board of Trustees when Dr. Shrock was hired. “You have a historian who wears bow ties but loves punk rock – it’s a wonderful contradiction.”

Even though many might find his choice of music unapproachable, Shrock himself is anything but that. “He’s really supportive and values every conversation I’ve had with him,” said Sehwan Kim, PhD, Assistant Professor of Sport Management. “He takes time to listen and connect with me and those around him. He’s very approachable and easy to talk to.”

Graceland Student Government (GSG) President Ishbel Wilson ’25 uses a word to describe Dr. Shrock that very few people associate with punk rock. “I would describe Dr. Shrock’s personality as bubbly. Everything he does just has a different energy to it. He just seems so joyous and happy about everything he does.”

Shrock joined Graceland in the post-pandemic era after spending nearly 30 years at other institutions. He completed both his undergraduate and master’s studies in history at Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., before completing his PhD in U.S. History at Miami University in Ohio. History always sparked his interest, and his main area of focus is the Gilded Age, the period in American history from the late 1870s to the late 1890s, between the Reconstruction and Progressive Eras. “I chose to study the Gilded Age because Modern America was born out of the era,” he said. “Mass consumerism emerged, which is a precondition for true popular culture.”

Shrock wrote a book about the era in 2004, published through Greenwood’s *American Popular Culture Through History* series. Publishing a book is an impressive accomplishment for anyone, but Shrock did it when he and his wife’s oldest son was four, and their twins were newborn preemies. “Writing my book during that period was easily one of the hardest things I did in my career.”



## Do Good for Graceland

As part of President Joel Shrock's inauguration, the Graceland University Advancement team launched the Do Good for Graceland campaign, an initiative to support the President's Fund for Excellence. This ambitious campaign aimed to raise \$1 million to enable President Shrock to make immediate and impactful changes that enhance the student experience.

The campaign received a significant boost thanks to a generous lead pledge of \$200,000 from Tee Ness '75 and Deborah "Debbie" Hawthorne '75 Ness. Their remarkable support set the tone for this initiative, inspiring others to join in strengthening Graceland's future. But doing good for Graceland extends far beyond financial contributions. This campaign challenges alumni and friends of the university to contribute in meaningful ways that build community and create opportunity. Whether it's referring prospective students to Graceland, mentoring current students, offering career advice through the GU4U network, or serving on the Alumni Board, these acts of service empower Gracelanders to thrive on campus and beyond. Additionally, the campaign highlights opportunities for alumni to reconnect with campus life. Whether guest lecturing, supporting athletic teams, or participating in events, these efforts create stronger bonds between the past and present generations of Gracelanders, ensuring the university continues to thrive. The Do Good for Graceland campaign reminds us that Graceland's strength lies in its people. The roots of connection between alumni, friends, and the university create the foundation for new opportunities to take shape. By coming together, we not only honor the traditions that have defined Graceland but also ensure its growth for generations to come. It is this enduring network of support that keeps Graceland moving forward with purpose and possibility.

Learn more about how you can contribute: [graceland.edu/Good4GU](http://graceland.edu/Good4GU)

## A Lifelong Academic

"I don't remember a time when I was not interested in history," Shrock said. "I was that kid. Walt Disney historical movies like *Johnny Tremain* got me interested as a kid. By the time I was in fifth grade, I was an avid reader of Civil War and World War II history. I loved the storytelling and how the past provided so many clues about how we are today. I loved knowing the details and the data."

Shrock excelled throughout school and qualified for a good scholarship and entry into the Honors College at Ball State. He still remembers the only D he ever received – Third Grade Handwriting. "True story," he laughs.

He continued to perform well throughout his studies and had several accomplishments throughout his early academic career. "I think my undergraduate honors thesis on the Vietnam Antiwar Movement is good and based on solid research," Shrock said. That project led to the publishing of his first article with one of his professors. His dissertation went on to win the top award in his PhD program. In 2009, Shrock won a Malone Fellowship to study Middle Eastern history in Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

"I didn't know I wanted a career in higher education until I was a senior in college," Shrock said. "My professors [Dr. Richard Aquila and Dr. Tony Edmonds] convinced me to apply for a graduate assistant position in the History Department, and when I was selected, they really started talking to me about being a history professor. I'd never considered that as a career option. I grew up in a small town with no college. I knew no professors. The very idea of that as a job was weird to me."

And yet, when you begin to discuss higher education, curriculum, or teaching with him, he lights up, and it is difficult to think he ever considered another career path. He was heavily influenced by mentors along the way, particularly the late Drew Cayton, PhD. Shrock said of Cayton, "I took two classes from him as an undergraduate and then he moved to Miami University where I went for my PhD. I worked for him as a Teaching Assistant. He was a brilliant lecturer, dynamic, funny, charismatic, compelling. When he lectured, students often just listened and forgot to take

notes. He wrote brilliant books, helped to create the field of Midwestern history, published prolifically, and was more humble than most in our profession. He was kind, decent, and generous. I wanted to be him. My mannerisms in public speaking are a direct imitation of Dr. Cayton. He had the ability to simplify very complex concepts for any audience."

After graduating with his doctorate from Miami, Shrock worked at several different universities before landing at Anderson University in Indiana. There, he taught for 17 years before being granted Emeriti status when he joined Graceland. He also got his first experience as an administrator, becoming an academic dean in 2014. "It was then that I first realized I wanted to be a president," he said. "When I was involved in decision-making and planning, I began to realize that my instincts and training had prepared me to be a president. From there, it was a process of exposing myself to the training and learning I felt I needed to be successful." One opportunity was winning one of 30 fellowship spots in the Council of Independent Colleges' Senior Leadership Academy. [cont.](#) ☺

## Shrock's Likes & Dislikes

**LOVES** good sense of humor, sarcasm, college basketball, punk and post-punk rock, history, teaching college students, working at a university, barbecue, fishing, donuts, literature, the novels of Jim Butcher, *The Lord of the Rings*, spending time with friends, Euchre

**DISLIKES** liver, tofu, shellfish, black licorice, cauliflower, most country music except Shaboozey, pretentious novels, the late 1980s Pistons except Isaiah Thomas, *The Office*, boxing movies, the New England Patriots (all of them), historical TV shows, *Game of Thrones*, gossip, hugs (unless you're a Shrock), zealots

**NO OPINION ON** curtains, bedspreads, and pillows





## The History of the Historian

Shrock grew up surrounded by family and friends in Albion, Indiana, a rural town similar to Lamoni in the northeastern part of the state. His maternal grandparents lived five miles away on a farm where he learned to help in many different ways – from helping with their massive garden to clearing ditches with a chainsaw.

He recalls being given a lot of responsibility at a young age. “My grandparents gave us tasks, and we went about them largely unsupervised,” he said. “It taught me that hard, physical tasks are best accomplished slow and steady. It also taught me there is nothing romantic about repetitive physical labor. Much of it is just tough – slogging through. Farm work taught me that effort and hard work can do incredible things. I learned I could pick five acres of asparagus in four hours by myself. I realized early on that my work ethic and dedication to task completion was an advantage that translated well in higher education.”

His parents taught him many lessons throughout his life. Shrock’s father was superintendent of the local school district and taught him the importance of supporting the entrepreneurial spirit of young kids, always buying the various things they would sell on their rounds trying to raise funds. Shrock took his father’s advice to heart: “If we don’t support our community, who will? What [my father] did was not about buying wrapping paper, candles, or cookie dough, it was about supporting those kids, their families, our schools, and our community,” Shrock recalled in his inauguration speech.

Shrock’s mother taught him the value of empathy and diversity through lessons learned during the civil rights era. “When my mother was in design school in the early 1960’s, her roommate was African American, and as a historian, I know this was the height of a contentious period of the Civil Rights Movement – sit-ins, Freedom Rides, beatings,” Shrock recalled during his inauguration speech. “My mother helped show me how people can transcend the currents of history if they embrace openness, empathy, and kindness.”

© Left: Dr. Mary Kupiec Cayton, noted to be profoundly influential in President Shrock’s pursuit of academia and becoming a university president, spoke about “The Skills That Matter” at the inauguration. Right: The Shrock family – Joel, wife Kelly, and twin sons JD and Brenton (missing oldest son Owen) – were all smiles as they gathered with extended family and the Graceland community in the Shaw Center Lobby after the ceremony.

He grew up with three siblings: an older brother, Jason, a younger brother, James, and his sister, Judy. Together, they learned a great deal of lessons growing up on the farm in Albion, especially from

**“SHROCKING IT”**  
To work on a task diligently until it is done, regardless of the length of the task.

their maternal grandparents. “We have a tendency in my family to dig into a job and not stop until it is done, no matter how long or how hard,” Shrock described. “Kelly has termed this ‘Shrocking it.’”

The Shrock siblings learned many other lessons during their time growing up:

- Life is not fair. Get over it. Sometimes one kid gets something and the other doesn’t.
- Get to your dessert quickly. If cookies run out, too bad.
- There is no such thing as ‘me time’ but you can usually avoid being bothered by reading a book.
- Compromise is not a virtue but a necessity, especially in a large family when fighting over the TV.

“Family is a vital support network,” Shrock said. His inauguration ceremony was a marked example of this as relatives traveled from far away to support him in his new role. Both Jason and James contributed to the program through the invocation and introduction, respectively.

He met Kelly at Ball State when the two were both on a university trip to the United Kingdom. He sat next to her on the bus because he wanted to meet her and talk to her. She promptly fell asleep.

When she awoke, he was still there, smiling at her, and they struck up a conversation that has kept going for 33 years. They have three boys: Owen, who is currently teaching English in Spain, and twins JD and Brenton, who are both nearing the end of their own undergraduate experiences at University of Findlay and Bellarmine University, respectively. Shrock’s countenance changes to pride when asked about his family. “I look up to my sons for being good, decent people who are so good at things I am not,” Shrock beamed. “And I look up to my spouse for being the most consummate professional I have ever seen and someone who provides me with so much support.”



“What I know is that Graceland’s historical commitment to liberal arts, values of openness, and radical belonging will see us through whatever changes are on the horizon.”

PRESIDENT JOEL SHROCK, PhD

## A Vision for Graceland

Since being hired as VPAA, Shrock’s impact on Graceland has been significant. He was tasked with implementing Graceland’s bold model for liberal arts – a second major for all undergraduates called Transformational Leadership. He also immediately worked on building bridges with faculty and hiring several new professors – 32 during his time in the role.

Shrock did his homework when he chose Graceland back in 2022 and his reasons for choosing Graceland then are the same reasons he pursued the position as President. “I chose this institution because of what it is and what it stands for,” he said in September when he accepted the role. “I chose Graceland because of who I am and what I stand for.”

Entering into his presidential leadership role, Shrock’s plan is to be laser-focused on three things:

- Create a strong student experience,
- Make Graceland a great place to work, and
- Drive revenue to the institution.

“None of these goals will be accomplished without some pain,” he said. “None will be accomplished without some transformation. To prosper into this century, Graceland will move forward boldly.”

Ishbel Wilson sees Shrock’s leadership carrying Graceland forward, saying, “He understands Graceland and the uniqueness of what that means – the housing system or the individual relationships people have with their professors. He really values what Graceland values.”

Shrock’s confidence is felt throughout the campus. His commitment to mission is clear: “We must remember what we are doing is worthwhile. We live in a world of large language models, artificial intelligence, misinformation, political polarization. The world needs universities. The world needs higher education. The world needs the liberal arts. The world needs this university.”

As the University looks to the future, his message to alumni is clear: “Graceland is alive and well. The University is embracing the historical values of Graceland while preparing for a new century,” he said. “We will continue to focus on providing the best experience we can for students, improving our facilities, and making the University a great place to work.”

That does not mean remaining stagnant, especially in the face of a higher education landscape that is becoming increasingly more challenging. Shrock believes the University cannot be afraid to change or to try new things or even perhaps to go back to older things. In his inauguration speech, Shrock said, “What I know is that Graceland’s historical commitment to liberal arts, values of openness, and radical belonging will see us through whatever changes are on the horizon.” ■

## Inauguration Week Events

### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

#### Presidential Bingo Night

Inauguration week kicked off with a student event in Newcom Student Union as nearly 300 students gathered to win President Shrock-themed prizes, including two pairs of custom Nike Dunks (Shrock has his own pair of blue and gold ones).

### TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29

#### Faculty Event: *Carrying Radical Belonging Forward*

Graceland faculty gathered to share academic work, engaging in an academic discussion about the future of education at the University. Held in the Shaw Center Atrium, the event included music, presentations from students and faculty, the creation of a community mosaic, and an alumni presentation from nonprofit HealthEd Connect.

### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30

#### Independence Program & Reception

To celebrate Graceland’s multi-campus presence, faculty, staff, and alumni gathered at Graceland’s Independence campus to share their support for President Shrock. The evening featured statements from alumni and academic leaders and musical performances from 21 Steele Strings, a group of Graceland alumni.

### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31

#### Trick-or-Treating at Carmichael House

On Halloween night, President Shrock and his wife Kelly hosted students and community members who wanted to trick-or-treat. They offered tours of the president’s house and plenty of sweets.

### FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1

#### Inauguration Celebration

The night before the inauguration, students, faculty, and staff on the Lamoni campus celebrated with an award-winning cover band, Mike Moody and the Outlaws, performing in the Shaw Center Atrium and were treated to snacks from Sodexo. Following the band’s performance, fireworks lit the sky over the Shaw Center, timed to a music playlist specifically highlighting some of President Shrock’s favorite tunes.



One of the most coveted prizes from Presidential Bingo Night was going on the “Doc Shrock Presidential Walkabout” where Joel walks the campus taking Instagram photos for his @gracelandupres account.





# C.H. SANDAGE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

# A Strong Asset

BY JENNIFER SMITH

*At the C.H. Sandage School of Business, **STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE** learn through experience – through reflection on doing.*



**M**id-December marks an in-between time on campus – between first Christmas decorations and last deadlines for projects, papers, or presentations; between tense nerves ahead of final exams and joyous anticipation of the well-earned holiday break. In Briggs Hall, students huddle for finals week pep talks, professors reach into a colleague’s candy jar as they rush by their office, administration wraps up for 2024, and planning ties up for 2025.

In the show-down to an internal competition, three students are facing off, delivering their sales pitches toward a hypothetical audience of high school students – convincing them why Graceland University is the best choice for their future. Their presentations showcase very unique approaches to selling the Graceland Experience. After a brief deliberation, the jury consisting of professors Sehwan Kim, PhD, Robert Poulton, PhD, and Jeffery McElroy, EdD, '84 return to provide individual feedback and announce the winning pitch. “You’re all winners,” Kim wraps up the year’s final pitch, commending the enthusiasm, thought, and creativity that the three contestants had put into the challenge to successfully close the deal with potential buyers on Graceland as a place to belong, learn, and grow.

Experiential learning through friendly competition is the School’s value proposition: in its classrooms, start-up ideas are incubated, business-related clubs convene, and field trips into industry settings are planned – and there’s always an occasion to gather Accounting and Finance, Management and Marketing, Sport Management and Agricultural Business students, faculty and staff for a mixer event. Briggs Hall is constantly buzzing with opportunity. Right now, everyone is excited for the MBA program that will be launched in the fall!

**Experiential learning through friendly competition is the School’s value proposition: in its classrooms, start-up ideas are incubated, business-related clubs convene, and field trips into industry settings are planned – and there’s always an occasion to gather Accounting and Finance, Management and Marketing, Sport Management and Agricultural Business students, faculty and staff for a mixer event.**



© Secretary Naig (pictured with School of Business professor Max Pitt '86, left, and President Shrock, right) stopped by the Lamoni campus for the annual event and met with students, University staff and leadership, area FFA advisors, and other agribusiness partners.

## AN INCREDIBLE EVENT TAKES FLIGHT

You had to be careful not to get hit by the pointy noses of aircraft soaring through the lobby of the Shaw Center: the unusual high air traffic density was caused by young aspiring entrepreneurs quality-testing their products – colorful paper planes – as they prepared to pitch their aviation company ideas to an expert jury of Graceland students – technical engineering, logo design, marketing plan, and all.

The sales competition was part of the action-packed **AGRICULTURAL BUSINESS/FFA/SCHOOL OF BUSINESS DAY** that took place in November. To its 12th edition, the entire Business School team that had been on their organizing feet for weeks proudly welcomed over 300 south-central Iowa and northern Missouri high school students enrolled in FFA chapters and Business courses and their accompanying teachers to Graceland, along with always happily returning exhibitors and speakers from partnering organizations. The business simulation, educational stations, games and activities, presentations and demonstrations took the young visitors and their chaperones across campus and Lamoni to learn about agricultural topics and business management, community service and leadership.

Another regular visitor also gladly followed the invitation to this flagship event: Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig, who summarized the successful day: “Graceland University’s Ag Business Day was incredibly successful at bringing together students, alumni, and high school FFA members to interact with and learn from faculty, area businesses, community leaders, and many other ag industry partners. From conservation, water quality, and crop production to livestock, renewable energy, and rural economic development, this full day of learning and networking was able to provide students with a chance to ask questions, explore, and experience the many possibilities available to them in Iowa agriculture. Graceland’s ag curriculum and hands-on programs are a stellar example of the innovative and collaborative workforce initiatives that exist across Iowa for students who want to engage with agriculture.”



## A LAB FOR INCUBATING IDEAS

Justin Kaminski '15 (majors: Economics, Accounting, Business Administration) recognizes a good investment opportunity when he sees it, and for him and his wife, Alumni Board member Allie Krabbenhoft '16 Kaminski (majors: Education, Math), giving back to their alma mater was such an opportunity. On his homecoming weekend visit to attend the School of Business Advisory Board meeting, Justin took a look at the good deal that he and Allie, Jeffrey Morgan '00 from Institutional Advancement, and the Business School faculty had worked out – a classroom upgrade to Room 106 as the new **FINANCE LAB**.

The Kaminskis' motivation was the many positives in their lives that they attribute to Graceland – including finding each other. Justin explains per video call from his personal and professional headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas: “Graceland made it possible for me to successfully complete my education, moved me out of California for a better environment, and moved me into some of the businesses I later started. I got prepared for my career and met my future wife there.” He wanted to pay it forward to the next Yellowjacket generations.

Professor of Economics Robert Poulton, PhD, expresses just how many students benefit from the new space: “We are extremely grateful for the generosity of Justin and Allie. Their gift helped transform a generic Briggs classroom into a state-of-the-art Finance Lab that will serve as a collaborative space for the Graceland Investment Club and as a resource for courses in our rapidly-growing new Finance major. In addition to their financial support for the room, they have founded a new investment fund that the club will manage and grow. The support for these experiential learning opportunities will significantly impact current and future students. Thank you, Justin and Allie!”

Since managing the Graceland University call center as a student, Kaminski's work ethic turned into many business opportunities and connections – some were the right ones, and some weren't. His corporate career path led him to the finance departments of

Walmart, Sam's Club, and finally Walton Enterprises. He is just as much intrapreneur as entrepreneur, always on the go running his own companies, including a new financial advisory firm, and supporting startups.

He hopes that the new Finance Lab provides a safe space for students, under the guidance of their professors, to learn the basics of money and understand the value creation it offers, but also train in the implications of financial decisions. This includes experiencing emotionally what it means to lose money and developing the ability to objectively identify why it was lost so they can later help themselves grow their own wealth.

## AN INTERCONTINENTAL PROFESSOR

Even when you meet “Soso” in a hallway of Briggs on U.S. Central Time, you don't know which time zone he might currently be thinking or operating in. Assistant Professor of Business Ioseb Gabelaia, who recently added an EdD to his PhD, may have just – physically or virtually – presented on circular economy at a conference in Lithuania or design thinking in Croatia, met with a research group in Latvia, brought together scholars with industry professionals and policymakers on AI topics in Poland, represented Graceland at a higher education taskforce in Georgia, chaired an academic association supervisory session in Spain, or shared his business management insight with audiences in Romania, the Netherlands, or Vietnam.

A Master Black Belt in Six Sigma, he pursues all aspects of academic work with equally athletic ambition: teaching, presenting, fundraising for research grants and networking for research partnerships, contributing articles and reviews to journals or chapters to books, serving on committees, consulting at the global intersections of academia and business, and publishing at highest index levels.

Still, he always makes time for a chat. As proud as he is of his index scores as metrics for the quantity and quality of scholarly publications, what motivates Gabelaia are

© Left: In Briggs 106, a stock ticker display flashes on the wall: the day they installed it, Kaminski remembers with a grin, the U.S. stock market had closed strong. Right: Once a student in the very classrooms he now teaches in, “Soso” is a favorite professor among students.





**“The support for these experiential learning opportunities will significantly impact current and future students.”**

ROBERT POULTON, PhD

Professor of Economics,  
Finance Program Coordinator

the people he works with – his Graceland students, PhD students in other countries who cite him in their dissertations and can't believe it when they happen to meet him – “*THE Gabelaia??*” – in person, his fellow scholars and business colleagues. He wants his work to be impactful, and to connect the disciplines as well as the people who study and apply them around the globe.

He may be traversing several time zones within a given day, but his days, too, only have 24 hours, so Gabelaia maximizes every minute, brain and data set – with disciplined prioritization and powerful collaboration. He and his co-authors efficiently divide up sections and segments to complete in parallel, and effectively create opportunities to widely position and share their applied sciences research wherever it is relevant. His international mentees learn how to become prolific high-quality authors, and research-ambitious students in Lamoni benefit from his project Students in Scientific Research (SiSR) with international-level experience and exposure.

Vivian Tracy '25 and Joseph Boyce '25 are such students: they each collaborated with Gabelaia on a study that underscores the transformative potential of interdisciplinary research and its application to real-world challenges. Tracy examined conditional psychology in marketing, and Boyce explored the integration of sustainable practices in the luxury real estate sector. Both studies were accepted for presentation at a conference in Spain, and for publication in high-impact journals.

At the end of a day at the C.H. Sandage School of Business, Gabelaia and a colleague head out the doors of Briggs Hall – the colleague looking forward to dinner, and Gabelaia, having just returned from a different international time zone, to a quick nap. ■



## A Portal to Wondrous Encounters

BY JENNIFER SMITH

### The Frederick M. Smith Library

It's a place where creativity and discovery come alive, where students meet the tools to write that first word, find answers to complex questions, and explore new ideas. Beyond its shelves, Graceland's library connects students with valuable resources like the Writing Center, Student Employment, and Financial Services. It's also a welcoming space for athletic team study tables, making it a hub for both academic success and collaboration.

Entering the building, you are greeted by a lineup of books on current affairs – thoughtfully compiled by **LIBRARIES DIRECTOR GABRIEL CHRISMAN, MLIS**. Although he commutes daily between the Victorian era and contemporary times, he positioned Graceland's campus libraries as a modern service provider for all research and study or plain reading pleasure needs. The library doors are open to the community beyond campus: Chrisman invites everyone to take advantage of the available databases, interlibrary loan platforms and his personal bibliophile network to source that special book or publication. Whenever a fascinating topic lends itself, a diverse audience gathers for a lecture series by a guest presenter or Chrisman himself – with a timelessly refreshing sense of humor and his passion for all things Victorian, from mechanical features to mythological creatures.



Like Chrisman, **DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC SUPPORT LABS AND TUTORING JIM REDMOND, PhD**, wants the library to serve multiple purposes: create a welcoming space with its designated tutoring rooms for scheduled sessions and emergency walk-ins, but also be wherever its services are needed to “help students survive, strive, and thrive.” Redmond's tutoring team reaches out across campus to meet students where they're at, both in terms of location – from the classrooms to Newcom Student Union to the residence halls – and their academics. Throughout the semester, he organizes events where students can receive individual guidance with subject learning or writing and composition in a relaxed communal atmosphere – and with thoughtfully presented snacks and drinks for the just as vital soul food, especially during crunch times. ■







flickr •• View all Homecoming event photos here:  
[flickr.com/gracelanduniversity](https://www.flickr.com/photos/gracelanduniversity/)

# STRONGLY ROOTED & STILL GROWING

BY GEORGIA SEAGRAVES, MS, '21

*Homecoming 2024 was a weekend filled with love, laughter, and cherished memories as Gracelanders came together on “the Hill.”*

**T**his year's theme, Strongly Rooted & Still Growing, celebrated Graceland's deep history while embracing the exciting changes shaping its future, creating a beautiful bridge between alumni and current students.

Friday evening set the tone with a celebration honoring Graceland's outstanding awardees. Alumni gathered to reflect on the generations of hard work and generosity that have made Graceland so special. The night continued with the much-loved Air Band competition, where house pairings brought movies like *Shrek* and *The Lion King* to life through vibrant costumes, music, and choreography. The Morden Center echoed with cheers and hugs as alumni and students shared in the joy of this spirited tradition.



# Alumni Awards

Read about the awards:  
[graceland.edu/Homecoming](https://graceland.edu/Homecoming)

Saturday welcomed a new event, “Fun on the Quad,” where students hosted activities like face painting, bracelet-making, and games for alumni and their families. Laughter filled the air as alumni reconnected with friends and shared stories of their time at Graceland. Food trucks, Spikeball games, and the football game brought everyone together, while honor classes gathered in the evening to reminisce over desserts and yearbooks, swapping stories that felt like they had just happened yesterday.

As the sun set on a day filled with joy and connection, the campus came alive once more for Saturday night’s LEGACY: A Celebration of the Performing Arts, a heartfelt tribute to Graceland’s rich creative traditions. The event brought together Graceland’s Music and Theatre programs for an unforgettable evening honoring the past, present, and future of the performing arts. Alumni, students, and music ensembles shared the stage, filling the room with talent, passion, and nostalgia. From moving solos to vibrant group performances, the show was a testament to Graceland’s rich artistic heritage and its bright future. It was a celebration of creativity, fellowship, and the enduring spirit of the arts at Graceland.

One of the weekend’s most nostalgic moments was the return of a tradition dating back to 1941: roller skating. In the Newcom Student Union Great Room, alumni and students donned skates to relive a cherished part of Graceland’s past. Watching former Alumni Board President Holly Phillips ’81 Caskey glide effortlessly around the room, her hair blowing in the breeze and a smile lighting up her face, was like watching time fold in on itself. In that moment, Holly was both a student and an alumna, reminding us all of the timeless essence of Graceland.

The weekend ended with the Sunday Worship Service in Shaw Center’s Family Auditorium. Presiding Bishop Ron Harmon ’86 of Community of Christ offered a heartfelt blessing, filling the room with gratitude and love. As alumni departed, the warmth and connection they experienced lingered, a reminder of the deep bonds that make Graceland “home.”

Homecoming 2024 was a celebration of where we’ve been and where we’re going, leaving everyone inspired and grateful to be part of such a remarkable community. ■

SAVE THE DATE 📅  
Mark your  
calendars and  
join us next time!

October 3-5  
**2025**

## Distinguished Service Award



**Carmen Fisher '22** has built a remarkable career dedicated to humanitarian service, as a United States Public Health Officer and FDA Federal Agent. She has led critical efforts in global public health crises – serving as a frontline nurse during the Joplin, Mo. tornado, responding to major hurricanes, and commanding teams during the West African Ebola outbreak. During COVID-19, she played a key role in launching global testing sites. Beyond disaster response, Carmen oversees investigations at clinical trial sites and tobacco regulations. Graceland proudly honored her with this award for her transformational service and leadership.

## Graceland Award of Recognition



**Jerry '52 & Helen Russell '52 Hampton and Team Hampton** represent dedication, service, and an enduring love for Graceland. For over 60 years, Jerry '52 and Helen Russell '52 Hampton have profoundly impacted the university and its community. Jerry devoted 50 years as a coach and professor, shaping generations of students with

his education-first approach and leading legendary, championship-winning teams. Helen, a passionate educator, taught aquatics and synchronized swimming while also managing the popular Lamoni gift shop, Country Plus. Together, they built a legacy beyond campus by establishing the Pizza Shack as a cherished local gathering place. Their family, affectionately known as “Team Hampton,” continues their tradition of service through involvement with Graceland’s boards and staff. In recognition of their remarkable contributions and unwavering commitment, Graceland proudly honored Team Hampton with the Graceland Award of Recognition, celebrating a legacy of resilience, love, and impact that will inspire generations to come.

## Honorary Alumni Award



**Pat Hoffman** received this award in recognition of her remarkable service and unwavering dedication to Graceland. Over her career, Pat has impacted generations of students, guiding countless individuals to graduation through her exceptional advising. Many alumni fondly credit her with helping them succeed when success felt out of reach. Beyond academics, Pat enriched campus life by advising Intramurals, fostering friendships through recreation, and shaping student leaders with training in teamwork and productivity. Her commitment to students, especially transfer students, and her support for athletics have left a lasting legacy at Graceland.

## Yellowjackets Hall of Fame



**Emmalee McCoy '03 Forth's** journey as a Yellowjacket is woven with athletic prowess, academic excellence, and an enduring passion for volleyball. A four-year varsity player and three-year starter, Emmalee's dominance on the court was undeniable, earning numerous Heart conference and NAIA honors. In her senior year, Emmalee was named the Heart WVB Player of the Year, an NAIA All-America Second Team selection, and an NAIA Academic All-American. She guided

her team as a captain to a 5th-place finish at the National Tournament. After graduation, Emmalee served as an assistant coach for Graceland's men's and women's varsity teams and coached freshman and JV teams at Marion High School. In 2007, she married Andrew Forth, and together they are raising twin daughters, Carsen and Emersen, and son, Guss.

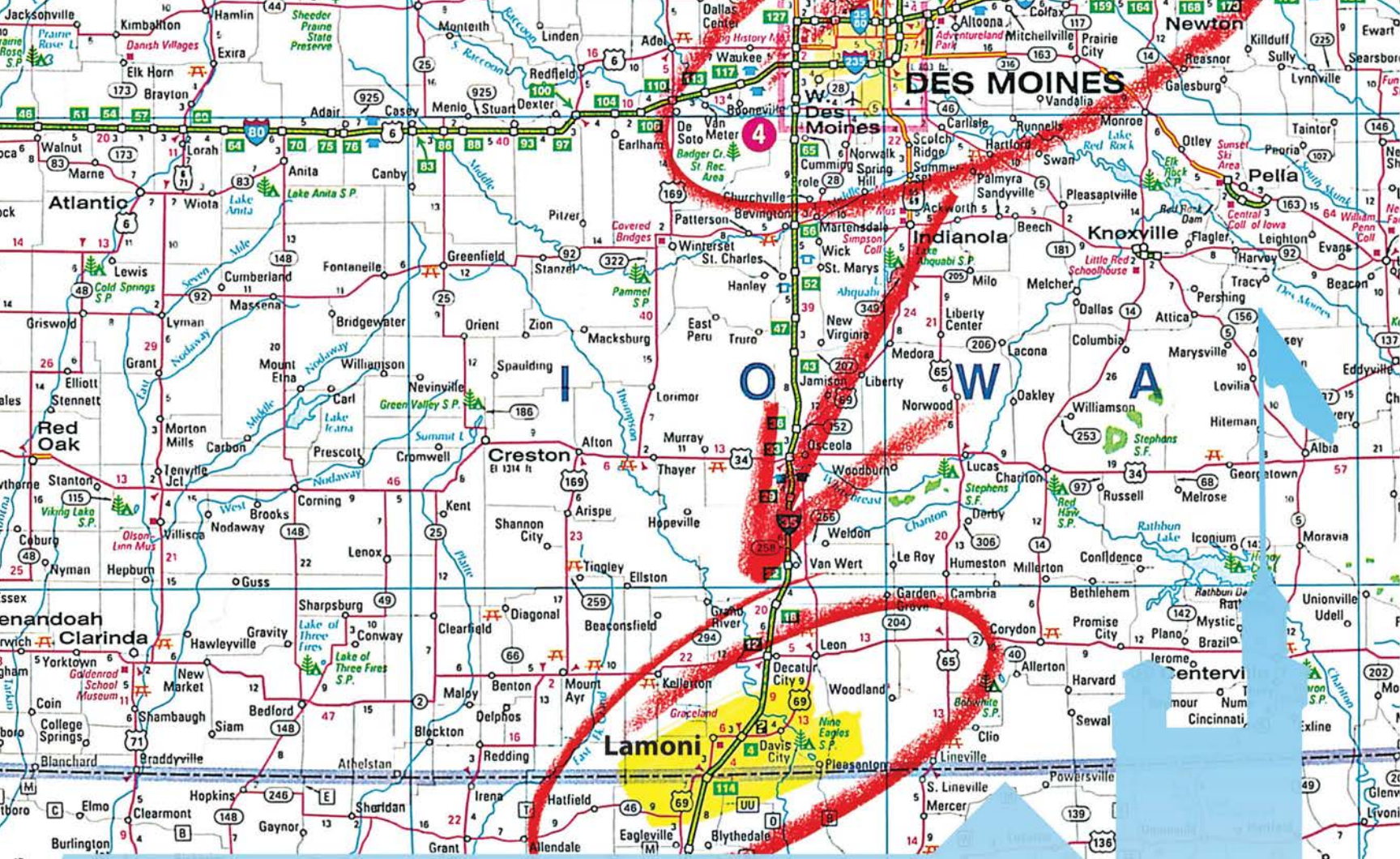
## Athletics Distinguished Service Award



**Stuart Johnson** has been the “Voice of Yellowjacket Athletics” for over 36 years, beginning with his first Graceland football broadcast in 1988. Inducted into the Missouri Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2024, he has called more than 3,500 sporting events across the Midwest, including over 350 Graceland football games. A career highlight was narrating the Yellowjackets' historic 2018 NAIA Men's Basketball National Championship run. A native of Dover, Kansas,

and a Rockhurst University graduate, Johnson has covered men's and women's basketball, soccer, volleyball, and wrestling with unparalleled dedication.





University admissions is a continuously changing landscape of FAFSA applications, communication flows, applications, scholarships, and so much more. The global coronavirus pandemic accelerated many challenges the higher education industry was expecting to see in 2026 and beyond.

# RECRUITING NEW STUDENTS to the Stingdom

BY SHANE ADAMS '99





**G**raceland announced changes to its approach to admissions in the fall of 2024, particularly on the Lamoni campus, leading to a team of invigorated recruiters ready to bring the next class of Gracelanders to campus. First amongst those changes was the appointment of Kristi Hettrick '96 as Interim Vice President for Admissions. While this is a temporary addition to her role as Vice President for Institutional Advancement, her experience aligns with the type of team that needed to be built and the skills necessary to ensure an efficient, funnel-based approach that embraces technology while honoring the relationship-building required. Shortly after she was appointed as VP, Hettrick and President Shrock hired Zack Mullins as Executive Director of Lamoni Admissions.

When Mullins first started at Graceland ten years ago, he spent time in admissions as he reinvigorated the men's wrestling program. "Zack excels as a team-builder and has created an incredible culture for his national championship-winning wrestling team," said Hettrick. "His tenacity and strategic thinking gave us all the confidence that he will lead this team to achieve their goals."

With Hettrick and Mullins in place, they began the process of rebuilding a team to "win the I-35 corridor" – the stretch of interstate reaching from Kansas City up to Des Moines and all the towns in between. "This is our best area of opportunity," said Mullins. "Every student within 200 miles of our campus should know Graceland. We will place a significant emphasis on ensuring counselors, choir and band directors, coaches, and most importantly, students know Graceland is a unique and remarkable opportunity for personal growth, support for the whole self, and experiences that will last a lifetime."

Mullins hired a team of passionate Gracelanders, including several graduates, who began the onboarding process just before Thanksgiving and quickly hosted their first Visit Friday on December 6. "The team we've assembled brings a variety of skills only surpassed by their passion for Graceland," said Mullins. "I cannot wait for prospective students to meet them – they're going to love getting to know them." ■

## Help Graceland Bring the Sting!

Not only does Graceland have the lowest tuition of any private university in Iowa, our undergraduates get a second major in Transformational Leadership.

**Know a student who would  
be perfect for Graceland?  
Reach out to Admissions:**

✉ [admissions@graceland.edu](mailto:admissions@graceland.edu)  
🌐 [graceland.edu/refer](https://graceland.edu/refer)



## New Lamoni Admissions Team Members

The new team members join Admissions Advisor Twong Wells '97 and Director of Admissions Engagement and Events Eva Roberts '16 Yelle, rounding out Lamoni admissions. Wells brings more than seven years of experience recruiting students from around the globe. Yelle manages admissions events from Visit Days and the State Fair to Community of Christ-focused events like World Conference and the summer camp program to ensure alignment and connection with our prospective legacy students.



**KEVIN GROVER** recently retired after over 30 years as an educator and administrator in the Blue Springs School District. In the fall of 2024, he ran for public office and helped with the largest turnout in his district in a decade. The third of his three children, Caitlyn, is currently enrolled at Graceland like her brothers before her. "I've gotten to understand the value of Graceland through their experiences, which have all been unique and rewarding to them," said Grover.



**JESSICA KELSEY '23** previously worked part-time for Graceland in Institutional Advancement while she completed her degree, graduating in 2023. Before that, she had worked in elementary and secondary education as well as with the Community Services League. Her Graceland

experience began in 2008 before she took a break to focus on her family. When she returned, she found that her experience showed her firsthand how Graceland meets students where they are and helps them achieve their goals, no matter their path. "I want people to know that Graceland isn't just a university, it's a community where students are supported academically, socially, and emotionally, and where lifelong friendships are formed."



**JILLIAN KILLPACK '21** worked in the mental health field in Maryland before recently relocating back to Missouri. Jillian was a house president, and her family has deep roots at Graceland — her grandmother is residence life legend Marian Killpack. "I learned so much about myself at Graceland: how to be a leader, and most importantly that at the root of it all, building relationships is the key."



**JACK MAIN '24** spent the summer interning with the McClain group in Independence. He also finished the demo for the video game he began as a senior at Graceland, entitled "The Tenebris Chronicles." Main is excited to share his passion for the Graceland Experience, which saw him as a House President of Tiona as well as the founder of the Board Game Club that initially focused on *Dungeons & Dragons* but expanded to include other board games this year. "I want to make sure

as many people as possible know how Graceland helps people become the best versions of themselves that they can be."



**DOUG ROBERTS '02** returns to the admissions team, having spent time working to recruit nursing students in Independence. While he has spent most of the last 13 years as a stay-at-home dad, he has served on Graceland's Alumni Board of Directors and been the co-director of Spectacular for the past 10 years. Roberts played basketball for the Yellowjackets while attending Graceland. "Graceland offers students a lot of what they are looking for even if they don't know it – things like belonging, a welcoming community, a place where they have the opportunities to learn and grow in a safe yet challenging environment."



**MARIA METCALF** is a seasoned professional when it comes to coordinating international students, having spent five years in that role at several community colleges in Ohio. She relocated to Lamoni and joined Graceland as the Director of International Recruiting in late January. She has a passion for helping orient international students into a campus community and life in the United States. Maria is completing her second master's degree in global affairs and holds an MEd in Teacher Leadership. She is an avid reader and quilter and is excited to bring international students to Iowa for the full Graceland Experience.





# New Faces on the Board

BY GEORGIA SEAGRAVES, MS, '21

## Graceland's Board of Trustees welcomed **THREE NEW MEMBERS** at its August 2024 meeting.

**T**hese new trustees, selected through collaboration between the corporate body of Community of Christ and Graceland's administration, bring diverse expertise from various industries. What unites them is their shared passion for Graceland and its students. The *Horizons* team reached out to these new trustees to learn more about their motivations for joining the board and what excites them most about Graceland's future.



**STEPHANIE WINTERS McCONNELL, MS, '95**

Winters McConnell is a third-generation Graceland graduate and a lifelong member of the Community of Christ.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Graceland in 1995, she earned her master's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Emporia State University in 1997. She is a Marketing and Communications Managing Director for Accenture, leading a global team responsible for pursuit and reputation marketing.

"I am honored and humbled to join the Graceland Board of Trustees. Graceland played a significant role in my formative years, laying the foundation for my professional development and, more importantly, my leadership style and personal growth. The opportunities afforded to me as a student leader were instrumental in shaping me into who I am today and are a significant part of the Graceland Experience. I believe in Graceland's mission, and as a board member, I look forward to helping Graceland thrive."



**JOHN R. WHITEHURST '72**

Tempered by the chilly winds of Des Moines and shaped by a loving family and the encouragement of

his Community of Christ congregation, Whitehurst began a two-year life-changing Graceland Experience as an art major. Later, accepting a scholarship to Drake University, Whitehurst began wearing many hats: artist, newspaper owner, pastor, sailor, investor, landlord, rancher, world traveler, and now Trustee of Graceland University.

"I am very honored to be asked to serve on the Board of Graceland University. I was an art major at Graceland. My life has been lived from the point of view of an

artist. At some point in my early years, I realized that every act we do is, or at least can be, artistic. By that, I mean we can be creative in every endeavor. When we live life like that, we come up with new ways and ideas about everything in which we are involved. As creators, we can change literally everything, from the smallest acts to changing the world. I believe there is nothing more rewarding than inspiring another person to become whatever they choose to become, so that is why I chose to serve on the Board for Graceland University."



**JAMES "JAY" COOK III, MBA, '79**

Cook attended Graceland University for two years before earning a Bachelor of Science in Social Planning

from Cornell and an MBA in Finance and Accounting from the University of Chicago. A seasoned finance executive, he has held leadership roles at Quaker, Sears, AutoZone, Lowe's, and Belk. Jay serves as Bishop and CFO for the Community of Christ Mission Center in North Carolina and chairs the Onset Campground Board of Trustees.

"I am honored to join the Graceland University Board of Trustees and look forward to giving back to the university that has meant so much to me. My time



at Graceland was transformative, and I am excited to contribute to its continued growth and success.”

The addition of these three accomplished individuals to Graceland’s Board of Trustees marks an exciting and pivotal moment for the university. Winters McConnell, Whitehurst, and Cook bring diverse expertise, innovative leadership, and a shared passion for Graceland’s mission and students. Each trustee’s unique perspective and personal connection to Graceland reflect their deep commitment to supporting the university’s growth and long-term success. Their contributions will help shape a promising future for Graceland, fostering new opportunities for students and the broader community.

Since joining the board, they have been busy – hiring new president Dr. Shrock, approving the new Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) and Women’s Wrestling programs, and helping improve Graceland’s processes using their career experience and love for the institution as a guide. The Alumni Board of Directors got a similar infusion of energy with the election of John Godfrey, MA, ’06 as its new president (see story at right). Together, the Board of Trustees and Alumni Board play an important role in Graceland’s success and we warmly welcome their contributions and the invaluable impact they will offer. ■

**“Our new trustees joined an already gifted board and immediately began making substantive contributions that are positively impacting Graceland’s operations as a university. I am thrilled to welcome Stephanie, John, and Jay to the board because I know their passion for our mission and energy for our student experience will help us continue to advance our culture of radical belonging in all parts of our community.”**

MICHAEL R. WILEY, PhD, ’83  
Chair, Graceland University Board of Trustees

## A Letter from the Alumni Board President



**“Together, we can ensure future generations of students have the chance to create their own transformative Graceland experiences.”**

**I**t is a privilege to serve as your Alumni Board President and connect with you through this letter. As I reflect on my time at Graceland, I am filled with gratitude for the profound impact it has had on my personal and professional journey. Serving as Agape House President and as GSG President were pivotal experiences that shaped my path to fulfilling my 18-year career in higher education. Today, in my role as Alumni Board President, I am honored to give back to the institution that has given me so much.

Graceland continues to stand out in the ever-changing landscape of higher education. Innovative programs, such as the transformational leadership major, are equipping students with vital skills in communication, teamwork, and adaptability – qualities I developed during my time at Graceland and that are now being intentionally nurtured in today’s students.

As alumni, we have a vital role in supporting Graceland’s mission. Programs like the alumni-endowed scholarship and GU4U, which provide students with career readiness resources, are just a few of the ways we can make a meaningful impact. I encourage you to stay connected and involved. Whether it’s mentoring a student, sharing Graceland with prospective students, or strengthening regional alumni networks, your contributions are invaluable. If you’d like to get involved, please reach out to us at [alumni@graceland.edu](mailto:alumni@graceland.edu) – we’d love to connect you with opportunities to support our Graceland community.

While higher education continues to evolve, Graceland’s unique and supportive community remains its cornerstone. Together, we can ensure future generations of students have the chance to create their own transformative Graceland experiences. Thank you for your unwavering passion and dedication to this remarkable institution.

JOHN GODFREY, MA, ’06  
President, Graceland Alumni Board of Directors

### Support Graceland Through Service

Your voice and leadership can help shape the future of our alumni community. One meaningful way to make an impact is serving on the Alumni Board of Directors. I encourage you to learn more and apply here:

[graceland.edu/AlumniBoard](http://graceland.edu/AlumniBoard)





# THE Yellow JACKETS

BY GEORGIA SEAGRAVES, MS, '21

© On behalf of the Yellow Jackets, members Ginelle Sakima Roberts '01, Deb Knotts '85 Skinner, and Kelly Shrock presented a check to the dance team in early December.



At Graceland, women have long been the **DRIVING FORCE** behind transformative change, empowerment, and a profound sense of belonging.

**F**rom Marietta Walker’s foundational gift of land to establish the university, to Betty Welch’s efforts in pioneering women’s varsity athletics, and Margaret McKevit’s leadership in creating the nation’s first accredited distance-learning RN to BSN program, Graceland women have shaped a legacy of progress and purpose.

During Homecoming 2023, eight remarkable women gathered in the Higdon Administration Building to embark on a new journey of empowerment. With hearts united by a shared mission to uplift and inspire, they laid the foundation for a movement that would amplify the voices of women across Graceland’s campuses: The Yellow Jackets Women’s Philanthropy Circle.

This newly established, vibrant, women-led initiative is dedicated to supporting female students, faculty, and programs. More than a philanthropy circle, it is a community of graduates and friends who are committed to building opportunities for connection, collaboration, and meaningful change. Through their efforts, these women aim to make a lasting impact, not only at Graceland but beyond.

In the fall of 2024, The Yellow Jackets received their first four funding requests, each a testament to the power of community and shared purpose. The House President Supplies initiative helped house leaders foster meaningful connections and support women’s mental health through encouraging messages and creative expression. Dance Team Program Support addressed financial challenges, empowering the team to continue their nationally celebrated performances. A One-time Guest Speaker event featured alumna Kara Vojcsik '04, whose workshops inspired confidence and empowerment among attendees. Finally, the Women’s Empowerment Monthly Speaker Series established a consistent space for critical conversations on equity, inclusion, and self-discovery, building a stronger sense of community. Together, these projects advanced mental health, representation, and achievement.

When the Yellow Jackets convened again at Homecoming 2024, nearly 20 women came together, donning their yellow jackets and carrying with them the same passion and determination that ignited this initiative a year earlier. With hearts full of hope and purpose, they voted to approve all four funding requests, signaling their belief in the transformative power of collective giving.

The Yellow Jackets Women’s Philanthropy Leadership Circle continues to grow, seeking individuals who are ready to join in this mission of change. Together, the circle aims to provide at least \$15,000 annually for female-centered initiatives.

“We’re so excited to connect with alumni through this initiative – it’s a new way to give back, but it also honors the traditions of the incredible women who have always supported Graceland,” shared Senior Director of Major Gifts Ginelle Sakima Roberts '01. “From groups like the Crescents to individual donors, these women have shown up at just the right times to make a difference. Our hope is that alumni who feel the same passion will join us in lifting up today’s women, just as they were once supported during their time at Graceland.”

Through The Yellow Jackets, Graceland’s alumnae and friends are crafting a legacy of empowerment, bonded by the belief that the world needs more Graceland graduates. If you feel called to be part of this inspiring movement, visit Yellow Jackets Women’s Philanthropy Circle at the link below to learn more. Together, we are changing lives and building a brighter future. ■

## A Legacy of Progress & Purpose

**Membership requires a gift of \$1,000 annually,\*** enabling the circle to review and vote on funding proposals for programs that recruit, retain, and support female students. \*Alumnae aged 35 and under can spread their contribution over three years (or a monthly contribution of approximately \$27), making meaningful participation accessible to younger members.

**JOIN THE CIRCLE**  
[graceland.edu/Yellow-Jackets](http://graceland.edu/Yellow-Jackets)





## Gift for Men's Wrestling Makes Lasting Impression

After a season that was pretty rough on the teeth of our wrestlers, Head Coach Zack Mullins, MA, sprang into action. He reached out to Senior Director of Major Gifts Ginelle Sakima Roberts, DDS, '01, who with her own professional dentistry background quickly identified the right course of treatment. She turned to **AN ALUMNI COUPLE THAT CARES DEEPLY** about the health and wellness of Graceland students – Robert “Bob” Fry, DDS, '70 and Mary Stowell Fry '72 – whose son Jeremy Fry, DDS, now manages the family practice Fry Orthodontics with several locations in Missouri and Kansas.

**B**ob and Jeremy readily took up the challenge to equip Graceland's wrestlers with a small but significant safety feature – and more than that, they offered to gift the entire men's wrestling team and their coaches – *40 upper and lower arches!* – with custom mouthguards.

Mouthguards are not an obvious aspect of wrestling mat safety: they provide a protective cushion from trauma to the jaws and teeth, consequently ensuring long-term oral health. Beyond injury prevention and general well-being, they give athletes the confidence to focus solely on their next move without fear of injury. Plus, they simply make them look and feel cool!

At one of the Fry Orthodontics locations in the greater Kansas City area, Brianna Thompson, DDS, was getting all set, preparing an assembly line and her team for the Graceland delegation. All coach Mullins had to do was gather his Yellowjackets for a fun day out in KC, for which we'll just let the photos in the online gallery speak.

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**“If there's time on the clock, there's time to wrestle.”**  
– *And put those mouthguards to work!*

The day left lasting impressions on both the practice and wrestling team. “With all our hands on deck, everything went smoothly. We were very happy to make it work for the Graceland wrestlers,” Thompson says.

For Mullins, the outing turned into an unexpected team bonding activity – everyone enjoyed getting out of the regular campus routine for a day, taking silly pictures during the molding and fitting procedures, and sharing a good restaurant meal.



**ALL SMILES** Senior Ryan Anderson '25 donned a fitting accessory for the occasion. An enthusiastic thumbs up!

**flickr** • Scan to view the photo album (or search Wrestling Team Mouthguard Fitting): [flickr.com/gracelanduniversity](https://www.flickr.com/gracelanduniversity)



As Fry Orthodontics can complete the entire process in-house with their dedicated technicians, it was highly efficient and the turnaround expedient – the team was fitted on a Monday, and on Friday, Sakima Roberts personally picked up the mouthguards and delivered them to Lamoni. The mouthguards turned out perfectly, are so well-fitted and comfortable that they did not take much getting used to. “The guys love them and wear them all the time,” Mullins reports. Yellowjacket teeth saved! – **BY JENNIFER SMITH**

### Extra! Extra! New Sport Alert

We are excited to announce the addition of **women's wrestling** to our athletic programs in the fall of 2025. The new Yellowjacket team will compete in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), which officially recognized women's wrestling as a championship sport in 2022. The new program creates opportunities for student-athletes to compete at a high level and continue their educational and athletic journeys. Women's wrestling is one of the fastest-growing sports in the country. By introducing this program, Graceland is excited to play a role in supporting the sport's growth and providing female athletes with new paths to success.



# CLASS NOTES

## SEND US YOUR NEWS

Completed a degree program? Published a written work? Received that awesome promotion? Earned a prestigious honor? If so, we want to hear about it.

Submissions are included as space permits and may be edited for length or clarity. Send high quality digital photos – 300 dpi and/or minimum of 1,200 pixels on the image's shortest side.

Share your memories and milestones with us here: [graceland.edu/classnotes](http://graceland.edu/classnotes)



Class notes submitted between April 19, 2024, and Nov. 22, 2024, are included in this issue.

**81 Joseph Madaffari**, Norwalk, Connecticut, inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association on June 25, 2024. He has headed up the Brien McMahon High School's athletic program for 23 years but has coached and taught for 37 years.

**97 Christian Skoorsmith**, Seattle, Washington, published the book, *Trance-Gender, Working with Transgender Clients in a Professional Hypnosis Practice*. He also received the prestigious "Hypnosis Hallmark Award" in August 2024 at the

National Guild of Hypnotist Education Convention. While at the convention, he was promoted to President of the Clergy Special Interest Group after serving as Vice President for two years.

**99 Jennifer Braun**, Monmouth, Illinois, received Monmouth College's Hatch Teaching Award for Distinguished Service. The Hatch Award recognizes faculty members for outstanding teaching, assistance to students outside of class, mentoring, guiding students with individual projects, and/or advising extracurricular activities. 📍 **1**

**05 Frank McGraw Munroe**, formed and founded Educate Theatre Camp (ETC), an educational nonprofit business that partners with schools, theaters, and educational groups to help teach inclusive and adaptive theatre to children with disabilities and neurotypical children. 📍 **2**

## MARRIAGES

**19** Caleb and **Haley Lysinger Kammerer**, Kansas City, Missouri, Oct. 21, 2023. 📍 **3**

## BIRTHS

**15** **Whitney West Siefkas**, Truro, Iowa, son Luke Siefkas, born April 23, 2020.

## ANNIVERSARIES

**55** **Elvin and Elaine Cruickshank '63** **Mauzey**, Denver, Colorado, 60 years, March 22, 2024.

**62** **William Cleveland and Carolyn Robbins Cleveland**, Dripping Springs, Texas, 60 years, Sept. 14, 2023.



## DEATHS

**39** **Elsie Adams Craig**, Santa Clara, California, Oct. 29, 2012. **Glenn Scott**, Independence, Missouri, Jan. 24, 2024.

**40** **Juanita Campbell Downs**, Blue Springs, Missouri, April 28, 2009.

**41** **Doddie Mercer Williams**, Spokane, Washington, June 7, 2024.

**43** **Katherine Hawkins McArthur**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 5, 2023. **Imogene "Jean" Petentler Pement**, Independence, Missouri, March 30, 2023. **Harold Short**, Yorba Linda, California, April 6, 2023.

**44** **Shirley McFarlane Brizendine**, Dana Point, California, June 18, 2024. **Jessie Kinnaman Craven**, Odessa, Missouri, Oct. 20, 2023. **Norma Padovani Webb**, Columbus, Ohio, June 29, 2024.

**45** **Harvey "Cliff" Carlson**, Lee's Summit, Missouri, Oct. 3, 2023. **Elinor Browne Stewart**, Sierra Vista, Arizona, May 5, 2022. **Mary Kimpel Wisner**, Merriam, Kansas, Dec. 16, 2023.

**46** **Elbert Carpenter**, Olathe, Kansas, Dec. 21, 2022. **Alta Swall Stucker**, Springfield, Missouri, May 3, 2023. **Carla Wood Lassiter**, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, July 2, 2023.

**47** **Virginia Young Testerman**, Faucett, Missouri, Oct. 28, 2022. **Wallace Van Eaton**, Yakima, Washington, Dec. 27, 2022. **Dale Zimmerman**, Port Charlotte, Florida, Oct. 8, 2024.

**48** **Marilyn Benton Bowbeer**, Laguna Woods, California, Aug. 25, 2019. **Kathleen Fuller Costlow**, Independence, Missouri, Nov. 8, 2012. **Muriel Anderson Cross**, Bella Vista, Arkansas, Aug. 10, 2022. **Mary Watts Jowett**, Independence, Missouri, Jan. 17, 2024. **Marion Davis Kleinau**, Carbondale, Illinois, March 7, 2024. **Marvin "Max" Raveill**, Bellevue, Nebraska, Aug. 6, 2024. **Robert Rose**, Waterloo, Iowa, Aug. 8, 2022. **Ramona Lew Yim**, Zionsville, Indiana, Nov. 7, 2023.

**49** **Beatrice Mahi Barboza**, Kahului, Hawaii, Feb. 25, 2024. **Hazel Haynes Davenport**, Lee's Summit, Missouri, March

29, 2024. **Kathryn Counts Koewing-Heaviland**, Alton, Illinois, Aug. 1, 2022. **Juanita Nelson Murrill**, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Sept. 14, 2022. **Hilda Nortonen Piedimonte**, Spring Branch, Texas, Nov. 10, 2023. **Bonnie Brown Rose**, Waterloo, Iowa, Sept. 15, 2022. **Cleora Williams Sargeant**, Bow, Washington, Oct. 14, 2023. **Joan Fenn Slaughter**, Blue Springs, Missouri, June 4, 2024. **Louise Steckel Smith**, Independence, Missouri, Aug. 4, 2023.

**50** **Woodbridge "Woody" Brown**, East Moline, Illinois, Aug. 21, 2022. **Elsie Carter Burton**, Tallahassee, Florida, Oct. 26, 2024. **Vernes Collins**, Arizona City, Arizona, March 24, 2015. **R. Mark Hampton**, Leesburg, Virginia, July 1, 2024. **Raymond Kekoa**, Kenmore, Washington, July 28, 2022. **Jimmy Dale Mark**, Colusa, California, Jan. 14, 2023. **Beverley "Gay" Westwood Pickens**, Rialto, California, Sept. 27, 2022. **Florence Shoemaker Ruoff**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Sept. 24, 2024. **Juanita Towner Short**, Delta, Colorado, June 12, 2024. **Martha Brewer Thurtchley**, Pleasant Hill, Missouri, Jan. 26, 2024.

**51** **Jack Bronson**, Mukwonago, Wisconsin, May 13, 2010. **Lorraine Gernhart Brooks**, Sioux City, Iowa, Feb. 3, 2018. **Barent Eliason**, Sandusky, Michigan, March 19, 2024. **Mona Edwards Goddard**, Independence, Missouri, Dec. 8, 2022. **Richard Lancaster**, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 15, 2024. **LeRoy McKeage**, Lake Jackson, Texas, Oct. 3, 2023. **Ardyce Robinson Mills**, Des Moines, Iowa, April 30, 2024. **Alberta "Spike" Wyatt Musselman**, Granger, Indiana, June 14, 2023. **Cheryl Tripp Nelson**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 1, 2023. **Robert Slasor**, Xenia, Ohio, Jan. 2024.

**52** **Elizabeth "Lib" Vickrey Barbour**, Mobile, Alabama, April 2, 2024. **Loretta Krause Coon**, Battle Creek, Michigan, April 29, 2024. **Mary Hathaway**, Apex, North Carolina, Oct. 15, 2024. **Pebble Phelps Murray**, Oak Grove, Missouri, Aug. 27, 2024. **Shirley Hunter Rawson**, Northfield, Minnesota, Aug. 10, 2024. **Emil Rupprecht**, Tucson, Arizona, March 1, 2024. **Ronald Spence**, Council Bluffs, Iowa,

## IN REMEMBRANCE

### Howard Booth '60: A Legacy of Compassion, Curiosity, and Community

Dr. Howard Booth '60, one of Graceland's most beloved faculty members and alumni, passed away on September 9, 2024, surrounded by his loving wife of 61 years, Bonita, and their children, Gevin and Darin. Known for his sharp wit, deep compassion, and unflagging dedication to education, his influence rippled far beyond the classroom.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, Booth felt the call to faith early, ordained into the RLDS (now Community of Christ) priesthood at just 16 years old. After earning his bachelor's degree in religion at Graceland, he began his career as a staff assistant at the church's World Headquarters. Driven by his passion for theology and education, he earned his master's in counseling from UMKC and his PhD in religion from the University of Iowa, becoming a trailblazer in both faith and academia.

Booth joined Graceland's faculty in 1969, embarking on a 31-year career that reshaped the university's academic landscape. He played a central role in the creation of groundbreaking programs such as Winter Term, liberal studies, the experimental curriculum, and the peace studies minor. Beyond these initiatives, he led the Religion and Philosophy Department and later served as the inaugural chair of the Humanities Division. His scholarship extended to his church, where he wrote extensively on religion and theology, including a landmark biography of Edwin Diller Starbuck.

But Booth wasn't just known for his academic achievements; he was the embodiment of community and joy. Ray Adams '69 recalls Howard's turn as the bass in the staff quartet "The Unpredictables." Despite being better suited to sing baritone, Howard cheerfully gave his best to the role, but the pitch adjustments made their arrangements too high for their tenor, Jerry Hampton. "Howard, being the empathetic soul that he was," Adams remembers, "understood the difficulty for Jerry, and suggested it might be better if he returned to the role of fan and that the group look for another bass." It was a quintessential Howard moment: always game to try something new and deeply empathetic to those around him.

Booth's warmth extended far beyond performances or lectures. He was a storyteller, a mentor, and a global traveler, exploring over 65 countries with Bonita and often bringing students along to witness the world's beauty. Known for his laugh and his legendary spaghetti sauce, he brought energy and humor to every setting.

While his passing marks the end of an era, his legacy remains alive in the hearts and minds of all who knew him. The programs he helped create, the students he inspired, and the friendships he cherished will continue to honor the life of a man who truly made Graceland a better place.

Graceland sends heartfelt condolences to Bonita, Gevin, Darin, and the extended Booth family. We will carry his light forward, with gratitude for the profound ways he shaped our community.







ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

# The Colorado Swarm: Celebrating Graceland Connections

While Homecoming brings Gracelanders back to “the Hill,” not everyone can make the journey to Lamoni. Thankfully, the connections forged at Graceland extend far beyond campus boundaries, thriving in the communities where Yellowjackets gather. One such community is the Colorado Swarm, **A CHERISHED TRADITION** that brings the Graceland family together in meaningful ways.

**T**he Colorado Swarm has taken place in both Fort Collins and Denver, each gathering offering its own unique qualities while embodying the same spirit of connection and belonging.

In Fort Collins, alumni like Richard “Rick” Bunch ’62 and Kay Burtch ’64 Bunch, along with Gilbert “Gil” Pagat ’65 and Merly Pagat, helped create a warm and welcoming event filled with friendship, the sharing of memories, and even a bit of ice cream. These gatherings

have become more than just reunions – they’re celebrations of the shared values and experiences that define Graceland. Whether it’s reminiscing about time spent on campus, discovering shared connections, or building new friendships, the Fort Collins Swarm reflects the deep sense of belonging Graceland alumni hold close.

In Denver, passionate alumni like Dan Whittemore ’61, Beth Whittemore, Kay Wall ’72 Adams, William “Bill” Mogg ’74,

© Gracelanders gathered together in Denver, 2023 (top) and Fort Collins, 2022 (bottom).

and Patricia “Pat” Tabor ’73 Mogg brought the Swarm to life with the same dedication and love for Graceland. They were joined by Jennings “Jay” Newcom ’64 and Cherry Phelps ’65 Newcom, Kirk Bell ’72 and Vicki Davies ’72 Bell, David “Hutch” Hutchinson ’58, and many others to reminisce, sing the *Alma Mater*, reconnect with their Graceland family, and catch up on Graceland’s latest news. The Denver Swarm has become a meaningful gathering, bringing alumni together to celebrate their shared connection to Graceland and strengthen their ties to one another.

Across the globe, Gracelanders find ways to connect, creating communities that echo the warmth and fellowship from their time at Graceland. In big cities, small towns, and everywhere in between, these gatherings serve as reminders that the Graceland Experience doesn’t end at graduation – it carries forward, uniting generations through a shared sense of purpose and pride in their alma mater.

– BY ANGELA SLOSARSKI



Jan. 24, 2024. **Vera Andes Zink**, Independence, Missouri, March 22, 2024.

**53 Leonard Adkins**, Independence, Missouri, May 2, 2015. **Sharyl Berridge Martens**, Lynnwood, Washington, April 29, 2024. **Meredith York McKee**, Columbia, South Carolina, Feb. 9, 2023. **William Muldoon**, Portland, Oregon, May 9, 2024. **Janet Cady Ramsey**, Springfield, Missouri, Sept. 27, 2024. **David Yahnig**, Drexel, Missouri, Aug. 1, 2024.

**54 Edgar "Jack" Austin**, Paw Paw, Michigan, July 17, 2024. **Glen Campbell**, Wichita, Kansas, April 21, 2024. **Vernon Darling**, Oak Grove, Missouri, 2022. **Doris "Elaine" Shupe Elefson**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 5, 2024. **Loren Harris**, Lamoni, Iowa, Dec. 13, 2015. **Byron Hershey**, Mesa, Arizona, Nov. 1, 2019. **Claire Patton Knight**, Auburn Hills, Michigan, June 20, 2024. **Harriet Schutzwohl-Kolias**, Grants Pass, Oregon, May 2, 2014. **Iris Miller Logeman**, Kansas City, Missouri, Oct. 8, 2024. **Neta Minthorn Nelsen**, Clackamas, Oregon, Aug. 12, 2024. **Phillip Salzman**, Alviso, California. **Lloyd Tripp**, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, April 26, 2023.

**55 David Atkins**, Higginsville, Missouri, Jan. 15, 2024. **Mavis Kohler Ault**, Hopkins, Minnesota, June 3, 2024. **Richard Booth**, Monroe, Michigan, Dec. 11, 2023. **Gretchen Berg Booz**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Sept. 16, 2024. **Theodore Bourlard**, Union City, California, Feb. 5, 2013. **Gilbert Fox**, East Jordan, Michigan, May 26, 2024. **Leamon Johnson**, Richmond, Missouri, Aug. 27, 2024. **Larry Salter**, Irondale, Alabama, June 3, 2024. **Shirley Arnold Smith**, Kalamazoo, Michigan, Feb. 2, 2024.

**56 Margaret Davis Athey**, Loveland, Colorado, Oct. 2, 2024. **David Chapman**, Bradenton, Florida, Oct. 1, 2024. **Ruth Hayes Covelli**, Binghamton, New York, Jan. 16, 2024. **Janet Noftsgger Jannings**, Mount Pleasant, Iowa, March 28, 2024. **Robert Lynch**, Billings, Montana, Sept. 27, 2018. **Phyllis McGuire Peltier**, Oxford, Michigan, Feb. 28, 2008. **Mable Kueck Thomas**, Independence, Missouri, Oct. 9, 2024. **Arthur Volskay**, Holden, Missouri, Nov. 18, 2023.

**57 Ruth Stansell Carson**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Feb. 24, 2013. **Jayne Campbell Dickson**, Bainbridge, Georgia, Dec. 24, 2022. **Joe Donald**, Lee's Summit, Missouri, March 11, 2024. **Hobart Graeff**, Independence, Missouri, May 4, 2024. **Edward Kuenzi**, Norfolk, Nebraska, Dec. 24, 2013. **Darwin Reedy**, Pinellas Park, Florida, July 11, 2017.

**58 Charles Dodds Jr.**, Chandler, Arizona, July 16, 2024. **Kenneth Grover**, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Feb. 24, 2024. **Arthur Lloyd**, Pocatello, Idaho, June 23, 2024. **Carol Norris Vincent**, Independence, Missouri, June 22, 2024.

**59 Murphy Mathews**, Brewton, Alabama, May 26, 2024.

**60 Howard Booth**, Lamoni, Iowa, Sept. 9, 2024. **Kirk Cross**, Hilliard Ohio, April 30, 2024. **Delmar Gouldsmith**, Odessa, Missouri, April 12, 2024. **Beverly Strick Wilson**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 5, 2024. **Mary Sue Carter Young**, Lee's Summit, Missouri, April 27, 2024.

**61 John Loeding**, Lapeer, Michigan, April 9, 2024. **Karen Liston Nissen**, Kansas City, Missouri, Oct. 22, 2024. **Bonnie League Pomeroy**, Renton, Washington, Oct. 15, 2022.

**62 Carolyn Robbins Cleveland**, Dripping Springs, Texas, April 23, 2024. **Bernard Nash**, Indianola, Iowa, Dec. 21, 2023.

**63 Carolyn Wright Guay**, Perry, Iowa, June 30, 2024. **Gerald Hancock**, Jasper, Georgia, May 2, 2024. **Lyle Smith**, Grain Valley, Missouri, July 19, 2024.

**64 Ron Hobbs**, San Francisco, California, Aug. 2, 2022. **Glenda Johnson**, Pahoa, Hawaii, Jan. 26, 2022. **Ronald Whiting**, Kansas City, Missouri, Feb. 11, 2001.

**67 Deborah Cash Coulthard**, Janesville, Wisconsin, Nov. 15, 2024. **Margaret Parker Filer**, Grand Blac, Michigan, Sept. 23, 2020. **Alice Hayes**, Webster City, Iowa, May 22, 2024. **Jack Surbrook**, Zephyrhills, Florida, Nov. 19, 2018.

**69 William "Bill" Piedimonte**, Independence, Missouri, April 12, 2024. **Lyle Sherer**, Pisgah, Iowa, April 21, 2024. **Michael VunCannon Sr.**, Columbus, Nebraska, April 26, 2024.

**70 Dorothy Fox Wurster**, Decorah, Iowa, Jan. 24, 2018.

**73 Jane Robinson Clark**, Norwalk, Iowa, 2016. **DeAnne McCracken Dunsdon**, Ankeny, Iowa, July 18, 2022. **Susan Dunlap Tucker Boer**, Snohomish, Washington, April 17, 2024.

**74 Sharon Becker**, Osceola, Iowa, Jan. 21, 2019. **Debra Gardner**, Hamburg, Iowa, May 2, 2010. **Loriece Pannemann Liljegren**, Lexington, South Carolina, Oct. 22, 2020. **Beverly Grube Persall**, Vestaburg, Michigan, Feb. 2, 2021.

**75 Rick Deal**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 26, 2023.

**77 Billie Colvin Gilkerson**, Knoxville, Iowa, March 15, 2023.

**78 Sarah "Sally" Stecher**, Spokane, Washington, Sept. 1, 2024.

**80 Pamela Waxman Garcia**, Independence, Missouri, Sept. 9, 2024. **Mark Johnson**, Richmond, Missouri, Oct. 8, 2024. **Robert Sherseth**, Hastings, Minnesota, Sept. 2, 2024.

**82 Larry Scofield**, Blue Springs, Missouri, Oct. 28, 2024.

**83 Larry Conrad**, Des Moines, Iowa, June 14, 2024. **Linda Woods Rose**, Mesquite, Texas, Aug. 9, 2024.

**86 Sharon Erickson Hanna**, Omaha, Nebraska, May 4, 2024. **Brian Nelson**, Independence, Missouri, June 24, 2022.

**89 Shelia Leach Littrell**, Richmond, Missouri, June 3, 2024.

**91 Douglas Dobkins**, Kent, Washington, June 15, 2024.

**92 Charles "Chuck" Metternich**, Saint Louis City, Missouri, Nov. 8, 2023. **Frances Strand**, Kalamazoo, June 5, 2016.

**93 Carolyn Barrett Carlton**, Grandview, Missouri, April 12, 2023.

**94 Marjorie Webb Otto**, Saint Joseph, Missouri, Jan. 9, 2023. **Anna Mieczkowski Perrino**, Plainville, Massachusetts, Sept. 17, 2016.

**95 Helen Miller**, Toms River, New Jersey, Oct. 20, 2024.

**99 Ellen Clark Enzler Meyer**, Rochester, Minnesota, June 15, 2024.

**01 Stephanie Hiatt Dickson**, Chariton, Iowa, May 31, 2024.

**02 Linda Koenig**, Waukee, Iowa, July 2, 2024.

**04 Melissa Galbreath**, Lineville, Iowa, June 30, 2013. **Tammy Sobotka-Booth**, Kansas City, Missouri, Jan. 23, 2023. **Florence McGuire**, Lamoni, Iowa, Aug. 18, 2024. **Orval Spence**, Ankeny, Iowa, Aug. 7, 2018.

**09 Michael Wedemeyer**, Converse, Texas, Aug. 3, 2024.

**11 Stephanie Cox Joint**, Braymer, Missouri, April 29, 2024. **Jeffrey Rider**, McKenzie, Alabama, March 8, 2024.

**19 Riley "Ryan" Nilsen**, Portland, Oregon, Aug. 8, 2023.

**SPIRIT SHOP**

**NEW DROP!**  
**VINTAGE TEE**  
**COLLECTION**  
**IN STORE & ONLINE**

Class of 2008 graduate Josh Shipley worked with Graceland's Marketing team to develop several new vintage-style graphic T-shirts for the online and Lamoni spirit store. His designs display his creative talent and love for our home on "the Hill."

[spiritshop.graceland.edu](https://spiritshop.graceland.edu)







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TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL

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## CARRY IT FORWARD

# Alumni Endowed Scholarship

This scholarship fund provides financial assistance to direct descendants of Graceland University alumni. ⓘ

The Alumni Board Fundraising & Awards Committee works with Graceland Admissions to determine each year's recipients. Deciding criteria includes academic, community and church work, extracurricular activities, and a strong desire to attend the University.

Each year, Graceland accepts applications for this scholarship, starting on January 1 with a final **submission deadline of March 1.**

**Know someone who would be a great candidate?** Don't hesitate to share the application with them!

### SIMPLE APPLICATION PROCESS

[graceland.edu/AlumniEndowedScholarship](http://graceland.edu/AlumniEndowedScholarship)  
or call Alumni Programs at 866.GU4.EVER



“

My home is Graceland, and has been ever since I can remember. I grew up in Lamoni and have alumni family members going back several generations. They have all expressed the love they have for this university and how it changed their lives. I want to stay involved in the community as well as Graceland activities.

ⓘ

Anyone who completes 12 semester hours of coursework at Graceland is considered alumni.



**2024-25 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT**

**EMALEIGH PIERSCHBACHER '28**

Hometown: Lamoni, Iowa / Major: Elementary Education  
Involvements: Aponivi House, Softball, Gadets Dance Team