In our everyday endeavors, how can we participate in God’s redemptive work in the world?

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Mission work

BY SHELLY NGO

“I grew up in Southern California near a medical school, with multiple hospitals located a short distance from my home. I also attended a Christian denominational K–12 school that encouraged its young people to become doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals so they could serve the world as medical missionaries. It was easy to think one needed to be either a doctor or a pastor to be doing the Lord’s work.

With an emphasis toward careers in science and medicine, my high school offered advanced classes in biology, chemistry, anatomy and physiology — none of which were my thing. At my first biology class dissection, I sliced my worm entirely in half instead of using my scalpel to gently cut through each layer of skin.

Fortunately, my dad isn’t a stereotypical Asian father who might have pushed his kids to become doctors. He had already broken ranks to study business while his two brothers graduated from medical school.

I grew up watching my father enthusiastically help people as a financial consultant and planner.

Widows came to his office bereaved and stressed over how to deal with finances following the death of a spouse. My father advised them on tax considerations and pension distributions.

Young couples met with him to figure out how to strategically pay down student loans or buy a house. He provided financial advice so that people could educate their children and care for aging parents. My father’s financial counsel was his mission work, and by his example, I learned that we can all participate in God’s redemptive work through our endeavors.

The late theologian and writer Frederick Buechner, who passed away in August, once wrote, “Your vocation in life is where your greatest joy meets the world’s greatest need.”

I frequently thought of that quote while working on this issue of Response. Vocation was something Zelda Tiemann ‘22 never thought about through her turbulent childhood. She ended up serving time in a women’s prison before a mentor introduced her to God and helped turn her life around. This year, she graduated from SPU with a 3.6 GPA and now helps other women through her job at Union Gospel Mission’s Hope Place in Seattle.

Skip Li ’66 founded the nonprofit Agros to help impoverished people in Latin America achieve the rare dream of becoming landowners.

You’ll want to read about Eric and Keri Stumberg, whom SPU recognized this year with the President’s Award for Philanthropy. And Steve Bell, founder of Bellmont Cabinets, was honored this fall with the Frank Haas Integrity in Business award from SPU’s Center for Faithful Business.

It’s inspiring to read about these industry leaders. It’s also amazing to encounter altruistic alumni such as Bobby McLaughlin ’89, who not only donated a kidney to a stranger but also helped organize a climb of Mount Kilimanjaro by living kidney donors to help raise awareness of what you can still accomplish with just one kidney.

I hope these stories encourage you to reflect on how God is calling you, as Buechner would say, to the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”
Faith and work

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How much do you know about SPU?

From 1967 to 1971, she won the International Cross Country Championships five times in a row. She is a two-time Olympian (1968 and 1972). And before Title IX passed, she was named Seattle’s 1971 “Man of the Year in Sports.”

Who is this legendary alumna distance runner and SPU coach?

Email your answer to Response@spu.edu by Jan. 30, 2023, to be entered into a drawing to win an SPU sweatshirt.

LAST ISSUE’S ANSWERS

Congratulations to Michelle Sams Allen ’04 who won an SPU sweatshirt for correctly identifying Camp Casey as the former U.S. Army fort SPU purchased in 1955.

Camp Casey, or Fort Casey, which covers 155 acres on nearby Whidbey Island, is a seaside campus for field study and outdoor education as well as for retreats and conferences.

Response readers not only answered the quiz correctly, but you flooded us with memories of when your children attended soccer camps at Camp Casey and of kids who were baptized at the pool.

Richard Capp ’65 shared that in the summer of 1960, he, along with three other incoming freshmen, Roger Keller ’65, Gerald Buckley ’65, and Jim Jeffery ’64, helped build the swimming pool bathhouse, painted the barracks, and did maintenance work at the camp.

“We had a great time exploring the adjacent grounds of Fort Casey,” Capp wrote.

Gail Stark Lundquist ’65 remembered a weekend band camp she attended on the island during her fall term.

Bob Mason ’72 recalled a weekend he and his wife, Georgene, spent at Camp Casey just before their daughter, Brenda Mason ’97, was born.

Lynn VanderLey Brown ’92 and her husband started going to Camp Casey every year with their church. As their family expanded with children, they continued to visit the camp almost every summer for 25 years. “We returned [to Camp Casey] with just our four kids the past two summers,” Brown wrote. “Our kids have so many wonderful memories from Camp Casey! It is a happy place for our family!”

And David Schreffler ’71 shared that Fort Casey was the first place he kissed his (now) wife, at a retreat in 1970.

David Denton EdD ’10, associate professor in the School of Education, and his daughter, Greta Denton, SPU class of 2026, not only sent in the correct answer, they submitted this photo of them holding an issue of Response magazine at Camp Casey.
Kenneth Colpitts ’80
Denver, Colorado

I’ve been receiving your magazine for years, but this last one was the best yet (Spring/Summer ’22). I’m a Marine who served in Afghanistan. Marines are extremely prepared for any situation, but there was a time when we were over there when moms were handing us their babies. They wanted their infants to be safe with us. It was extremely heartrending. Even when we think we’re prepared for everything, we are not.

I’m a pretty strong person, but when I saw the story with the photo of the soldier holding a little baby in Afghanistan (“Tears for a beloved country”), it made me cry. Women and girls are suffering so much since the Taliban has taken over. Please continue to write more stories like that one.

Annabelle Schertzinger
Arlington, Washington

I just received my Spring/Summer Response and saw the photo to identify on page 2. That would be Fort Casey!

Although I am not an alum of SPU, I’m a big fan of the school. In fact, one of your alums attended because my husband and I recommended it to her.

When we first moved to Seattle in 1988, our church spent a wonderful week every summer at Camp Casey’s campground. Those summer experiences are part of our children’s DNA, and our daughter was even baptized in the swimming pool there.

Thank you for maintaining such a wonderful facility that has ministered to the hearts and lives of probably thousands of people over the years.

Blessings for the future of SPU!
Seattle Pacific University was once again ranked a "Best National University" by U.S. News & World Report. This marked the seventh year in a row we received this designation. Our more than 3,400 undergraduate and graduate students are being equipped daily to anticipate and shape the future in a world-class city.

The Seattle Pacific Foundation endowment experienced exponential growth of nearly 400% in the last decade, lowering the cost of attendance for 96% of our undergraduate students who receive scholarships and financial aid each year.

We launched a variety of new programs to meet the evolving needs of students. These include a master of science in research psychology and a master of arts in Christian ministry. Additionally, an undergraduate degree in early childhood education and a certificate in worship studies are now being offered. New programs under development include a master of science in nutrition and certificates in creative writing and UX/UI (user experience and user interface) design.

Seattle Pacific University’s Center for Faithful Business launched Serving the World, the fourth season of the Faith & Co. film series, exploring how business can be a powerful instrument in solving social and environmental problems around the world.

Our School of Health Sciences partnered with King County’s Public Health Department to link nursing students with public health opportunities. The partnership introduces eight nursing student fellows to opportunities to serve in the public health sector.

All of these endeavors make me hopeful about what God is doing at SPU. We have great work to do, and I humbly pray God continues to bless and provide his ongoing favor, providence, and protection on Seattle Pacific University.
Student visual communication design

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY of Seattle Pacific’s degree in visual communication design, which has graduated a diverse group of designers, illustrators, photographers, and artists. SPU visual communication graduates have gone on to work for such corporations as Microsoft, Nordstrom, Google, Meta, Netflix, Zoom, Amazon, and Disney.

“Design is a technical field, and many professionals work fully remote, so we simulated a professional workspace [during the pandemic],” said Karen Gutowsky-Zimmerman, chair and program director of SPU’s Art Department and professor of visual communication design. “They honestly did not miss a beat. The students were able to produce apps, motion graphics, data information design, packaging design, and websites.”

Turn the page to view some visual communication design work from the Class of 2022.
VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN WORK FROM THE CLASS OF 2022

MOME conference
Ivy Nguyen
Nguyen’s task was to create a conference poster, banners, a mobile app, and marketing products for a three-day motion-design conference.

Minimum wage
Caitlyn Olexer
Olexer created an infographic for a “wicked problem,” defined as a social or cultural issue that is deeply complex and difficult to solve. Her topic was living on a minimum wage.

Bevida Coffee
Lily Morgan, project lead
Brand identity design for SPU’s Social Venture Plan Competition in 2021. Proposed venture Bevida Coffee provides training, employment, and access to permanent housing for those living in homeless shelters.

Bison Vintage
Blake Peterson
Peterson worked on this logo design project using a Bison logo-icon created from a single geometric shape and informed by an exploration of vintage clothing culture.

Mental health disparities in racial minorities
Theresa Nguyen
Nguyen’s infographic uses visuals to illustrate how racial minorities receive unequal access to mental health care.
Erickson Conference celebrates 20 years of undergraduate research

IN MAY, 72 TEAMS and 165 students participated in the 20th Annual Erickson Conference, showcasing the research and design contributions of SPU undergraduates.

Named for Joyce Erickson, dean emerita of the College of Arts and Sciences, the conference now includes all CAS-STEM departments (Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Engineering, Mathematics, Physics, and Sociology), and Health and Human Performance (School of Health Sciences).

“Our students and faculty are doing truly innovative work,” said Jenny Tenlen, chair of the Erickson Organizing Committee and co-chair of SPU’s Biology Department. “In addition to presenting their work, students witness firsthand how our nationally recognized keynote speakers integrate their faith with their scientific vocation.”

This year’s speaker, Grace Wolf-Chase, senior scientist and senior education and communication specialist at the Planetary Science Institute, shared her journey as a woman in astronomy. Wolf-Chase’s research led to the discovery of previously unidentified stellar nurseries where new stars form.

Student presentations ranged from classroom-based original research projects to multiyear independent research programs and engineering design projects. Six oral presentations and five poster presentations won awards this year. The top research projects ranged from women in aerospace to research in cancer, cardiovascular medicine, DNA extraction, and the microbiome.

“One of the highlights of Erickson is seeing how animated student presenters are during the poster sessions,” Tenlen said. “These students are outstanding role models for younger students who may be considering a research career.”

SEATTLE PACIFIC FILES LAWSUIT IN SUPPORT OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

BY TRACY NORLEN

Earlier this year, SPU’s Board of Trustees voted to retain SPU’s current employee lifestyle expectations regarding sexual conduct, which adhere to the teachings of the Free Methodist Church.

The board decision led to a two-month student protest, with students staging a sit-in in front of the president’s office in Demaray Hall. Students and their supporters demanded the board change the University’s hiring policy to allow Christians in same-sex marriages to work at SPU. The students and other advocates also began a social media campaign against the board’s decision.

In response, the Washington State Attorney General’s office notified SPU it was beginning an investigation of SPU’s hiring policies and requested copies of confidential information related to SPU’s employees and University policies.

Seattle Pacific has asked a federal district court to protect its constitutional freedom to choose employees on the basis of religious beliefs, free from interference or intimidation from the government.

“The state is going after a 130-year-old Christian university and violating our country’s long-standing principle of the separation of church and state,” said Lori Windham, senior counsel at Becket Law, who is representing SPU. “We will defend Seattle Pacific’s right to operate its school in accordance with its faith.”
A SPRING ROLL REUNION

When Ali Wollen Broom ’06, Julie Bodine Washburn ’06, Mattie Mauseth Campbell ’07, Brittany Stahl Haun ’07, Lauren Hale Tava ’07, and Kristi Knudsen Sovacool met on the first floor of Emerson Hall in 2003, they didn’t imagine they’d be back nearly two decades later with 15 kids in tow.

As freshmen, the six young women dubbed themselves “The Spring Roll” while out to dinner at Tawon Thai, their favorite Thai restaurant in Fremont (which is no longer in business).

And after they graduated, they stayed in touch even as group members moved out of state. “Our passionate personalities, as well as our shared desire for fun, has kept us close over the years since we all left SPU,” Washburn said. “We’ve done many trips together, and all of our husbands have grown to love each other, too.”

In July, the women planned a week-long reunion in Seattle and contacted SPU’s alumni office to ask if their kids could take a tour of Emerson Hall to see where their moms lived in college. The alumni office was happy to help facilitate their campus visit.

“Our kids were all absolutely thrilled to see our old college dorm rooms. They were squealing through the halls and thought it was the coolest thing ever to see where we lived when we first moved out of our parents’ homes,” Washburn said.

Friends since they met freshman year in Emerson Hall, six SPU alums brought their children back to campus for a reunion.

In Death and Persistence (Cambridge University Press, 2022), Rebekah L. H. Rice explores some metaphysical puzzles that arise from the idea that physical death may not mark the end of an individual’s existence. In this contribution to Cambridge Elements in Philosophy of Religion series, Rice considers whether we might exist and have experiences beyond the time of our death, adding to the growing field of materialist accounts of resurrection.

Rice is professor and chair of philosophy and associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences.
For Jason M. Thornberry ’17, writing is no less than liberation, a conviction he shared when presented with the “No Limits, No Boundaries” award in April. The award was given to Thornberry at a biannual celebration hosted by SPU’s Disability Support Services to recognize differences and diversity by spotlighting artistic expression and community work around access, inclusion, and reconciliation.

“Writing gives me autonomy,” Thornberry said, “and that was especially true when I was recovering from my injury.”

In 1999, Thornberry was a musician in a band. The day before the release of his band’s debut album, he was severely assaulted by a stranger. Thornberry spent four months in the hospital, another year in a wheelchair, and had to learn to speak and walk again while navigating a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic epilepsy.

Now, Thornberry teaches writing at SPU and has had more than 60 pieces published over the past two years. He is working on a novel that traces five critical days in the life of a disabled, single mother struggling to survive on the streets of Southern California. It’s a novel that reflects his longtime interest in exploring family dynamics, as well as his commitment to the daily work of writing. (He wrote the first draft by hand on a road trip to Oregon with his wife.)

Centering a character with a disability feels natural for Thornberry, but he’s also aware of how often characters with disabilities are just part of the background, individuals whose wants and goals aren’t explored.

Thornberry’s writing not only draws on personal experiences but on years of advocacy as well. As an undergrad, he co-founded Abilities Advocacy, a committee which promoted universal design and other educational strategies and examined campus-accessibility issues. As a School of Education staff member, he and Julie Antilla-Garza, associate professor of educational leadership, co-authored “Neurodiversity SPU,” an SPU innovation grant focused on inclusion for those on the autism spectrum.

Whether it’s on a written page or in the classroom, Thornberry wants people to include disabilities when they consider diversity: “Disability is diversity.”

“Writing gives me autonomy.”
— Jason M. Thornberry
Kim Sawers, new vice president for business and finance

With a master’s degree in business administration from Seattle Pacific and a PhD from the University of Washington, Sawers taught most of the accounting courses offered at SPU, with a focus on managerial accounting at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Her faculty research dealt with decision-making within a managerial accounting context, drawing on theories from accounting, economics, psychology, and organizational behavior. She has also been a reviewer for multiple academic journals and served as the editor for *Issues in Accounting Education*.

As SPU’s newest vice president and chief business and financial officer, Sawers will oversee campus functions of finance, budget, facilities, administrative technology, human resources, risk management, legal affairs, and endowment investments.

“My 29 years at SPU have also given me a deep appreciation for the people who serve at SPU and their commitment to our students. It’s an honor to serve alongside them and contribute in new ways.”

— Kim Sawers
PERFECT SCORE ON EXCEL EXAM

SPU SOPHOMORE Julia Lats thought her residential advisor was weird when the RA announced that she loved Excel spreadsheets.

“It was the very first fact she told us about herself,” Lats laughed. But after taking a required Microsoft Excel course for SPU economic and business majors, Lats admits she gets it now.

In fact, Lats really gets it. She achieved a rare perfect score of 1000/1000 on the MOS Excel test, a timed certification exam that measures a person’s competency in creating spreadsheets, tables, and applying functions and formulas.

It takes a score of 700 or higher to pass the online test. “We’ve had about 15 to 20 students score in the 900s over the past year,” said Sharon Hathaway Forrest, an adjunct professor who teaches the Excel course.

THE ONLY CHRISTIAN WORK IS GOOD WORK WELL DONE.”
— DOROTHY SAYERS

SPU CONSOLIDATES HEALTH SERVICES AND COUNSELING CENTER

MULTIPLE STUDIES demonstrate a connection between physical health and mental well-being. A study in the United Kingdom found that nearly one in three people with sustained health issues also struggle with mental health problems, most often anxiety or depression.

And longitudinal studies of the impact of COVID-19 on the daily life of young adults show the pandemic dramatically affected physical activity, sleep, and mental health, further highlighting the link between mental and physical well-being. With this in mind, Seattle Pacific consolidated Health Services and the University’s Counseling Center into a single department now called the Student Health and Counseling Center.

Kristen Jones ’01, MSN ’09 is the director of student medical services.

“We are excited to bring two departments together to more collaboratively support students’ mental and physical health care needs,” said Sharon Barr-Jeffrey, director of the Student Health and Counseling Center.

Over the summer, the wall that separated Health Services and the Counseling Center literally came down, and construction crews added a door to connect the offices.

“Additionally, we look forward to expanding campuswide programs which address multiple dimensions of student wellness,” Barr-Jeffrey said.
I was 47 when I was sentenced to the Washington Correction Center for Women (WCCW). I had reached the lowest point in my life, and I had nothing to do but reflect on what brought me there.

One afternoon, an older woman named Peg walked into the unit where I was housed and asked if anyone wanted to go to the correctional center’s chapel to do arts and crafts. I immediately raised my hand just for the chance to get outside. While she handed out art supplies, Peg began to tell everyone the story of Jesus, a person I hadn’t heard about before. I pretended not to listen until she started talking about forgiveness. I told Peg I wanted to know more about forgiveness, and she became my spiritual mentor and advisor.

Peg visited once a week and took me under her wing. She helped me study the Bible, and she showed me Scripture verses where God said I could become a new creation and have a second chance at life:

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17-18, NRSV)

I was at a crossroads. I could take the victim’s path and blame everyone who had wronged me. I could wallow in self-pity and continue down the path of self-destruction. I resorted to shoplifting for food and clothes and breaking into apartment laundry rooms for a place to sleep when I was homeless.

I never thought about pursuing a vocation. My early years were marked by chaos, and no one talked to me about getting an education or finding my life’s purpose. The notion of one’s life calling grows out of so many things: a family legacy, spiritual influences, the needs of the world around them, or even the trauma someone experiences.

If I had followed in my mother’s footsteps, I would have become a field worker. My mother was an undocumented migrant worker who was ineligible for social services. In desperation, she turned to men for assistance. Growing up, I witnessed my mother being physically beaten, and I was molested by one of her boyfriends.

Children of single parents are more apt to experience poverty and violence, according to social science research. They are more likely to be physically, emotionally, and sexually abused. Those placed in foster care have higher dropout rates, incarceration rates, incidences of mental illness, problems with addiction, and struggles maintaining relationships and employment.

Unfortunately, all of these things describe my childhood and experiences in my young adult life. By the time I was 15, I fled from home, believing my very survival depended on leaving. Without an education, I headed down the road of self-destruction. I resorted to shoplifting for food and clothes and breaking into apartment laundry rooms for a place to sleep when I was homeless.
path of further self-destruction by holding on to the belief that I was “damaged goods.” Or, I could choose the path of survivor and follow God and his promises to redeem me.

I chose to take a chance for a better life. Stepping out in faith was like being a skydiver in a free fall, believing your parachute will open.

Peg suggested I sign up for a GED certificate since I had not earned a high school diploma. Once I completed the online GED exams, I requested to take college courses. The custody counselor told me only 300 slots were available for the 1,500 women at the WCCW.

Peg and I prayed for a spot for me. Two weeks later, I received notice that I could start my college courses. I was scared because I wasn’t sure I would measure up since I had dropped out in the ninth grade. When I finished my first courses in web design and interactive media, my professor informed me I had completed them with a 4.0 GPA.

I asked him what that meant.

“That is a perfect score, Ms. Tiemann,” he told me. “I encourage you to pursue a college career when you are released.”

I walked back to my unit feeling like this was a turning point. I was intelligent and worthy of an education. I could do something and maybe even make a difference in the world. When Peg took the time to guide me and “speak life” into me, a new identity began to emerge.

I had the opportunity to be a contributing member of society, with the purpose of my life to glorify God. Peg helped me see the trauma I had experienced could be a tool to reach others who have suffered similar things.

In 2014, I was released from the WCCW and accepted into Hope Place for Women, Seattle’s Union Gospel Mission’s facility that specializes in a 12-month transition and reentry program for women starting over after homelessness, domestic violence, addiction, and incarceration.

Hope Place provided each of us with a caseworker to help us with legal identification, health benefits, job searches, transportation, mental health services, and transitional housing. We also took classes to help us heal from past traumas and gain skills to help us recognize and avoid bad influences.

Leaders at Hope Place told me I exhibited leadership skills and encouraged me to lead small

“For most students, college is a four-year journey. For Yaant Best ’22, it took a bit longer — 52 years longer, in fact.

Hers was a meandering, on-and-off journey through seven institutions of higher learning that began in 1966 and culminated in June 2022 with a triumphant walk across the stage to shake the hand of SPU’s Interim President Pete Menjares — to the tune of a standing ovation and thunderous foot stomping. “I was kind of shocked,” she said. “Everyone stood up and started pounding their feet. It was an inspiring afternoon.”

The smile on her face tells the story.

What did Best do in those intervening years before finishing her degree? She learned German, French, and, most
groups and share my story in churches, jails, and prisons. One speech turned into ten speeches. Soon, I was speaking at symposiums in front of lawmakers, and I was invited to serve on a “Building Bridges from Prison to College” committee for Washington Governor Jay Inslee.

I was on the path to becoming a professional public speaker, but I needed to learn more and establish my credentials. I dreamed of attending Seattle Pacific University where I could take public speaking classes and earn a bachelor’s degree in communication, but I initially was too intimidated to apply.

When I finally applied and was accepted with academic scholarships, I knew God had made a way. The communication classes built my confidence, but I was surprised by how much I gained from a course, “Foundations for Educational Ministry.” I began to think my calling was to reach people in transition by sharing my victories and by inspiring them to believe in a better life for themselves. God once again made a way for me with a job offer from Seattle’s Union Gospel Mission where I work today.

The global pandemic put many public speaking events on hold, so I had to pivot. I spent time creating a workbook detailing the steps I took to transition my own life into something with purpose and meaning.

“I consider it an honor and a privilege to have had the opportunity to attend Seattle Pacific, a prestigious, private university that offered me the education I sought. And every day, God reminds me he made a way for me when I believed there was none.”

— Zelda Tiemann

recently, Swedish. She and her husband took the time to travel to Europe more than 20 times to hike in the fall and ski in the winter with ski patrol friends. (She is making plans now to hike in Scotland.)

No academic slouch, Best usually enrolled in one college class each year throughout most of her adult life. Her epic educational journey took her through several majors, including chemistry, biochemistry, organizational behavior, and, ultimately, general studies.

By the time she came back to SPU for the last time in the spring of 2022, she had amassed almost enough credits to graduate, but her transcripts bespoke a confused jumble of courses that would have confounded most academic advisors.

Instead, Academic Counselor Annette Rendahl said, “No problem. Let’s just get you into a basic humanities class and finish off your bachelor of arts degree.” Speaking of Rendahl, Best said, “She was very positive. She’s just such a great person. I want to continue our friendship.”

Best still can’t quite believe she finally did it. “Every day I say to myself, ‘I’ve completed my degree. I’m really done.’”

Now in her 70s, Best is setting her sights on graduate school. “I’m thinking maybe something to do with teaching.”

Her final class, “Exploring Music,” provided an overview of music from Gregorian chants to soul, taught by Adjunct Instructor of Voice Julie Kae Sigars. “The age difference was more noticeable this time,” Best said. “It was a 200-level class, and most of the students were barely sophomores.”

According to Sigars, Best was a shining light in the class despite being the oldest by decades. “Walking with Yaant through this last class was a delight. I loved being instrumental in reviving in her the joy of learning for its own sake and assuring her that ‘all shall be well.’”

Best still can’t quite believe she finally did it. “Every day I say to myself, ‘I’ve completed my degree. I’m really done.’”

Best has advice for older students: “It’s so important to persevere, to have the determination to finish. When I’m doing something hard, I hold onto a mental picture of, ‘Believe. Achieve.’”
SPU hosts NCAA Championships Festival

BY MARK MOSCHETTI

THIS YEAR, SEATTLE PACIFIC hosted some 900 athletes representing 88 teams for the NCAA’s Fall Championships Festival held the first weekend in December. SPU was the first West Coast city to host these competitions.

“It was a true honor to host the DII Fall Festival,” said Jackson Stava, athletic director. “To have the entire DII community in Seattle was exciting, as this event had never been west of the Rockies. We are thrilled with the distinct Seattle experience that was provided to the student-athletes, coaches, and fans.”

The festival concept, unique to Division II, was developed by the NCAA to create an experience similar to the Olympics, with multiple events in the same city or geographic area over multiple days.
Stockton lands dream job with Hoopfest

BY MARK MOSCHETTI

GROWING UP IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, Riley Stockton '15 always played in that city’s widely known Hoopfest, the largest 3-on-3 street basketball tournament in the world.

Now that he’s all grown up, he’s running the tournament as its executive director.

“When I was 15 years old in health class, I wrote that it was my dream job [to work at Hoopfest],” said Stockton, who is the nephew of NBA Hall of Famer John Stockton.

The tournament shut down in 2020 and 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but Riley Stockton was hired in 2021 as the organization was planning ahead for when the games could resume.

Stockton became an intimate part of that planning from his first day on the job.

“I was just trying to wrap my head around everything,” he said. “I’ve been in the events world with the Special Olympics USA Games [in 2018]. So, I have a good feel of events, but not all sides of it. There was a little bit of a learning curve. I felt like I was drinking out of a firehose.”

Although he’s played in 14 prior Hoopfests, he didn’t compete this year when the 31st annual tournament resumed June 25-26.

“We knew there were going to be challenges throughout the day but seeing all of your hard work, and all of your staff’s hard work, come together, it was just excitement,” Stockton said.

This year, more than 3,500 teams and 14,000 athletes competed at Hoopfest.

“It’s such an important event for our city,” Stockton said. “One of my big goals was making it feel like a Spokane event again and getting all of those volunteers back who are so important to us.”

During his four years at Seattle Pacific, Stockton starred on the court and in the classroom. His 4,054 minutes of men’s basketball action at SPU was the most by any player in school history.

He was a two-time Great Northwest Athletic Conference Defensive Player of the Year. And the business administration major also earned numerous scholar-athlete awards with a 3.84 grade-point average.

Stockton credits Grant Leep, now SPU’s men’s head basketball coach, with sharing valuable knowledge that helped him reach his dream job with Hoopfest.

“So many lessons I learned leadership-wise in basketball, I took from Coach Leep,” Stockton said. “Some of the stuff he taught me in my first conversations with him — like how to be a good leader and how to be authentic to yourself — definitely came into play.”

During his four years at SPU, Riley Stockton was a star on the basketball court and in the classroom.
Mother runner

VANESSA ANITEYE IS PARENTING A TODDLER WHILE ALSO SETTING TRACK RECORDS

BY MARK MOSCHETTI

ATHLETE. STUDENT. WIFE. MOM. It’s a lot to keep in balance, but Seattle Pacific track star Vanessa Aniteye is thankful for every moment of it.

“It’s definitely not easy. I have a lot on my plate,” said Aniteye (pronounced ANN-ih-tay). “But I have a great support system that reminds me of all the things I’m doing.”

Aniteye never plays all of her roles at the same time, but by cherishing each role, she has found a way to balance being a loving mother and wife, a successful student, and one of the speediest track runners in the country.

“There’s always people who ask, ‘How can you do this? I don’t know how you do it.’ Same thing for my coaches. They are aware that I’m not just a student-athlete.”

“It’s kind of outdoing yourself and seeing what you can do,” Aniteye added. “We’re moms, but we’re more than that.”

Aniteye proved that on the outdoor oval last spring, not just once or twice. She broke the school record in the 400-meter dash three times. The last record was on May 28 when she clocked 53.64 seconds to take sixth place and earn an All-American award at the NCAA Division II outdoor championships in Allendale, Michigan.

That made her the first-ever Falcon woman to beat 54 seconds.

Just two weeks earlier, she won her fourth straight Great Northwest Athletic Conference crown in the 400-meter.

That same day across the Cascade Mountains in Ellensburg, she also ran the 4-by-100 relay that set a school record, an overall GNAC record, and a GNAC meet record.

All of this came two years after the birth of her son, Josiah, in May 2020. Prior to her pregnancy, Aniteye competed at University of Alaska Anchorage from 2017 to 2019.

“In the year after I had Josiah, I was practicing on my own. Going back into college sports where I practice every single day has really helped me to just be consistent and kind of get back to myself,” Aniteye said. “My body has done it before, it can do it again. Maybe, even more.”

Aniteye, who met husband Brandon Nicholson while both were competing at Alaska Anchorage, joined the Falcons in the fall of 2021, with one season of outdoor eligibility and one season of indoor eligibility remaining. She ran cross country for the first time this fall, and she’ll compete indoors starting in January.

“She told me that track had done a lot for her in her life, and she wasn’t ready to be done with it,” said Karl Lerum, SPU’s head coach and running program director. “I’m always excited to have diverse perspectives on our team, and she brings many different perspectives that I value. She’s a mom. She grew up in Germany and has international experience. And she has been an exceptional runner for a long time.”

“It’s exciting to get to work with an athlete of her caliber,” he said.

Running is important to her, but Josiah and Brandon are her biggest blessings.

“I feel like I have a deeper purpose than I used to before,” Aniteye said. “I love track. It’s one of the main things I care about.”

“But,” she added, “at the end of the day, Josiah is my number one priority. I care about him the most, and coming home [after school or practice] kind of reminds me of that.”
What is Christ’s call on our lives? These business leaders live out their faith through their work.
In the early aughts, Seattle Pacific launched the Center for Faithful Business, a think tank focused on the integration of faith and business. The Center seeks to be a prophetic voice, calling business leaders to approach work differently as followers of Christ.

The CFB hosts national conferences on how industries can impact the world for good. It brings scholars to SPU as Bill Pollard Faith and Business Research Fellows. And through the Faith Integration Fellows program, SPU faculty can take, tuition-free, graduate-level seminary classes to explore how theology integrates with their own specific academic disciplines.

One of the Center’s most significant endeavors is Faith & Co, a series of documentary films and online courses that explore how people approach their work as service to God and the common good. The films look at how faith can shape the way organizations manage employees as well as how they serve their customers.

Now, in its fourth season, Faith & Co is focusing on how businesses can solve social and environmental problems, serve their local communities, and be stewards of God’s creation.

We invite you to meet business leaders in the United States and abroad who are participating in God’s redemptive work in the world.
IN AUGUST 2021, JOANN FLETT became the executive director of SPU’s Center for Faithful Business, a leading think tank that calls business leaders to integrate their faith with their work.

Flett is an organizational consultant and adviser who has served on the boards of numerous nonprofit organizations. She was a 2019-20 Fulbright teaching scholar in Trinidad and Tobago.

Q. What brought you to this career at the intersection of faith and business?
A. I have long been interested in the idea that business has a lot of power and influence in the world. I initially left Trinidad and Tobago to study at a Bible college because I wanted to be a missionary, but I also did not want to be a supported missionary — not that there’s anything wrong with being a supported missionary.

I just felt I would have a better means of communicating the Gospel if I could go to a country and live and work alongside folks who could get to know me and build relationships with me. When we go to work, we develop friendships with co-workers and with so many people we encounter through the medium of business. We can care for them, walk alongside them, get to know them as they’re getting to know us and our Christian identity. That’s always been appealing, looking at business as an opportunity to get to know people and love them into the kingdom.

I worked in an office here in the Pacific Northwest while I was going to seminary. People would stop by my desk to talk about everything from a car accident to a marriage going wrong. I was their safe place, and I would think of that song called You’re the Only Jesus, with the lyrics: “You’re the only Jesus some will ever see... / You’re the only words of life some will ever read, / So let them see in you the One in whom is all they’ll ever need...”

Q. Tell us about your Fulbright appointment. What does a Fulbright teaching scholar do?
A. The Fulbright Program frequently gives awards to faculty to go overseas and do research. There are also a few awards for you to teach, so you’re introducing new courses into a curriculum and working directly with students.

I had been teaching social entrepreneurship for about eight to 10 years and discovered they hadn’t introduced an upper-division social entrepreneurship course at the University of the West Indies. I thought it would be great if I could help structure that curriculum offering, so I wrote a Fulbright application and was fortunate to be granted a one-term Fulbright to work at the graduate school there — the Arthur Lok Jack Global School of Business.
Q. Describe what social entrepreneurship is.
A. Social entrepreneurship sits along a spectrum of everything from nonprofits to for-profits, but the basic element is that these businesses create value for society. They use entrepreneurship and innovation, not just for profitability, but to serve people and the planet as well.

The father of social entrepreneurship on the academic side is Gregory Dees. He was at Duke University and located social entrepreneurship within the nonprofit sector.

Q. Why do businesses that do good have to be nonprofits? Why can’t you make a good living and do good with your work?
A. This is what the whole B-Corp movement* is doing, right? Using business as a force for good. You needn’t look at it as a trade-off where you’re going to create as much money as you can here, and then you’re going to create the nonprofit that gives away money.

Michael Porter, a Harvard strategist, had this beautiful graphic that showed three sectors producing revenue: the nonprofit sector, the government sector, and the corporate sector.

On the graph, it shows the nonprofit sector is producing roughly $2.1 trillion. The government sector is about $3.1 trillion; and corporations are $20.1 trillion. (These were 2013 figures.)

The takeaway is that the biggest revenue-generating engine in the world — and the only wealth-producing engine in the world — is business. For-profit businesses.

So many people see business as the problem. This is an invitation for businesses to be part of the solution in how they innovate; how they care for customers; how they care for employees; and how they care for their communities.

Q. Describe what social entrepreneurship is.
A. Business on purpose: An verified accountability and performance.

impact, and meets a high standard of operations, its environmental and social

Q. How does this align with the goals of the Center for Faithful Business?
A. This work has been going since the early 2000s through many directors who have come before me, and it is my work to continue to steward the excellent resources that have been created in the past decade or so.

We have resources around the Faith & Co. film series that churches can use to drive conversation around business and society. The Center is also creating products for students to think about who they can be in the world of business. We are inviting students into another way of doing business.

We have the Pollard Scholars Fellowship where we bring academics from other institutions to SPU for two weeks, and we help equip these leaders to serve society and nurture human flourishing.

We are listening. We are convening. And we are collaborating with a number of different organizations and institutions to awaken businesses to a prophetic imagination and to increase moral courage. That’s the current work and mandate of the Center.

Q. Tell us about the Faith & Co. film series.
A. We have four seasons of these freely available films: Business on Purpose; Business Serving Employees; Business Serving Customers; and Business Serving the World. Some have said it’s like a 10-minute visual devotional. And the films have been conversation starters in faith communities and in classrooms.

There are so many folks in business who attend churches, and they need to know the work they are doing — the 40 hours or the 50 hours a week — significantly contributes to building the kingdom. At the Center for Faithful Business, we have created conversation tools to help that conversation between a pastor and the congregant who’s working to figure out what it means to show up at work and bring your faith and bring your whole self and do so in a way that’s contributing to building relationships with your co-workers, your employees, your suppliers, and your community.

Young people want purpose in work. They want meaningful work, and they want purposeful work. They also want organizations that are aligned with those two elements. Think how amazing it would be if organizations were looking for and attracting young people who would bring their full selves to work, with all their creativity, in every field in which they entered.

JoAnn Flett has worked with numerous institutions and nonprofits including Oxford University’s Values-Based Leadership for International Development, The Accord Network, the Ormond Center at Duke University, and the Coalition for Christian Social Innovation. She served as board chair of Capital for Good – Geneva Global, and Broad Street Ministry in Philadelphia. Flett earned a bachelor’s degree from Prairie College, and an MBA and PhD from Eastern University.

*Certified B Corporations demonstrate that a business is transparent about its operations, its environmental and social impact, and meets a high standard of verified accountability and performance.
ERIC STUMBERG remembers the moment his perspective on business shifted for him. It was in 2013. He was at a retreat center for business leaders at Laity Lodge in San Antonio, Texas. Former SPU Provost Jeff Van Duzer, then dean of the School of Business, Government, and Economics, was speaking on the important role business plays in God’s plan for the world.

That realization lit a fire in Stumberg that hasn’t stopped burning. CEO and co-founder of commercial internet provider TengoInternet, Stumberg was no stranger to the ins and outs of the business world. His father, grandfathers, and uncles were entrepreneurs, starting and running businesses in several industries. As early as 10 years old, Stumberg worked for his grandfather’s cement business.

He studied business in college, worked for an uncle’s business, and went on to earn his master’s of business administration and work for Dell Technologies. After a few years, unsure of what to do next in his life, Stumberg took a six-week solo trip to Mexico. With no phone, he spent a considerable amount of time at internet cafes.

In the early 2000s, the internet was on the rapid rise. Stumberg became fascinated with Wi-Fi and its ability to connect travelers with the places they were visiting, their homes, and the entire world. He decided to start an internet provider service specializing in travel-based clients like campgrounds and hotels.

In 2001, TengoInternet was born. Over the next decade, the company became an industry leader among outdoor Wi-Fi providers, serving RV resorts, campgrounds, state parks, marinas, and other venues.

Stumberg had founded a successful company. As an entrepreneur, he had made it.

But there, in that small room at Laity Lodge, he questioned whether he had, in fact, “made it.” Or if the important work was just beginning.

“I had never heard anything like that before,” said Stumberg of Van Duzer’s message that all work — even business — matters to God. Stumberg had grown up in a Christian home and served in his local church, but those experiences remained separate from his work in the business world. “I had the mindset that you should work hard and be ethical and generous, but if you wanted to be part of God’s really important work on earth, you had to either be a missionary or a pastor, or donate the money you made to a missionary or a pastor.”

When Stumberg realized his work in the business world could and should be a way to directly live out his faith, it changed everything. According to Stumberg, if God cares about businesspeople and businesses, then suddenly, everything matters: the company’s mission, the work culture, organizational structure, customer relations. “Every business decision becomes a theological decision,” said Stumberg. “It meant I had to rethink everything I was doing.”

Today, TengoInternet has 48 employees. But Stumberg refers to the people under his care as “117 souls,” counting the spouses and children of his employees as those he has a responsibility to serve. “The most important commandment after ‘Love God’ is ‘Love thy neighbor,’” he said. “Jesus announced his ministry as good news to the poor, healing for the broken, and release for the captives. I want Tengo to be a safe place where my employees and their families experience healing, freedom, blessing; where people are better for having worked here.”

Stumberg reevaluated the wages he paid to ensure each employee made a livable wage and established full health care benefits for TengoInternet employees. In 2019, TengoInternet went a step further and began the process of becoming an employee-owned company. “You want your employees to work as if they’re owners of the work they do,” said Stumberg. “I wanted them to reap the full benefits.”

TengoInternet has now installed internet access at more than 3,000 RV parks and resorts, campgrounds, hotels, and marinas in 48 states, Canada, and Mexico. But while profits are important to the life of a business, Stumberg is quick to say this is not how he defines success.

In fact, he says, sometimes success can look like failure.

In 2018, Stumberg faced one of his greatest challenges as CEO. He got a phone call that a data breach had occurred: Tengo’s system had been hacked, releasing customer information. “I knew

“My scoreboard as a Christian is based on whether I was faithful to God, not successful.”
-ERIC STUMBERG
two things,” he said. “I had at least disap-
pointed everybody that I’d ever served. And I might lose the company.” When he
 got home that night, he was so anxious he could barely stand.

He went to say goodnight to his 7-year-old son, Ericson, who laid next to him as he told him about the hack. Ericson listened quietly, and when his dad was finished, he looked his dad in the eyes and said, “It’s OK, Dad. You did your best.”

“I held him and wept,” said Stumberg. “My son reminded me we can only do our best and still something like this could happen. And it pointed me to the truth that my scoreboard as a Christian is based on whether I was faithful to God, not successful. The failure of my efforts and how I respond could be my faithful offering to the Lord.”

Tengo Internet addressed the breach and recovered well, but Stumberg came away with a new realization: “It’s not actually my company; it’s not my work. It’s God’s work that he has given me to do. When you accept that, you have peace and can rest no matter what happens.”

According to the market research firm Barna Group, 56% of Christians consider their faith private, and only 41% strongly agree that their church helps them understand how to live out their faith in the workplace. Stumberg believes the message that work matters to God is key to addressing these statistics.

In 2018, Stumberg and his wife, Keri, together with SPU’s Center for Integrity in Business, founded Faith & Co., an initiative to help people connect their work with their faith through powerful storytelling in films. 

Faith & Co. offers its films and online courses to everyone. Each film tells the story of a different Christian businessperson and how their faith informs their work. Faith & Co. materials have been used in workplaces, churches, and nonprofits worldwide.

The Stumbergs believe this message speaks not just to businesspeople, but to everyone — children, young adults, parents, and people working in every industry and in every position.

Keri Stumberg has worked in several roles as the minister of counseling at a local church. She’s been a counselor serving couples and young women, a full-time mom, and now a Christian spiritual director.

“I struggled for many years thinking that I wasn’t doing enough for God because my gifts and callings are usually behind the scenes and one-on-one,” she said. “I wasn’t the activist or mobilizer who could point to outward ways I was building God’s kingdom by leaps and bounds. But I’m learning that what’s best for God’s kingdom is whatever work he calls me to.

“Sometimes the work is a direction session. Sometimes it is resting, praying alone, or spending time with my husband and son. It all matters to God, and I can rest knowing I have nothing to prove. Also, faithfulness leads me to a deeper intimacy with God, and that is the reward!” she said. 

Looking to the future, the Stumbergs are setting their sights on a new mission: discipling the next generation to take up the mantle of living out God’s calling. The Stumbergs funded a new initiative at SPU to equip faculty (and, through them, students) to discover God’s purpose in their work lives. Faculty across all disciplines can now join small cohorts and take 10 graduate-level seminary classes from the School of Theology, free of tuition. At the end of the course series, they complete a capstone project that integrates theology with their own academic discipline.

In 2022, Eric and Keri received the President’s Award for Philanthropy from Seattle Pacific University, celebrating their ongoing commitment to students and to God’s work in the world.

“There isn’t any wasted time in the kingdom of God,” said Stumberg, when asked what advice he would give to students and graduates starting their careers. “It’s tempting to think that if you get to a certain level, you can make an impact. But what you’re doing right now in being faithful, is as important as what you could be doing in 10 years in whatever position you’re in.

“My son is now 11 years old. What he’s doing now for the kingdom of God — being a faithful son, student, soccer player — is as important as what he will do 20 years from now. It’s as valuable as what I’m doing now.

“Finally, live with integrity. Be the person God’s called you to be in all places. That person — you — is actually enough. The Lord delights over you and is pleased with you.”

Eric, Ericson, and Keri Stumberg
SHOBHA WORKS as a housekeeper in Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore), the largest city in southern India. She rides the family’s motorbike down crowded roads on her way to work, weaving past cars, bikes, and the many colorful vendors that line the streets of this city of 8 million people.

Housekeepers in India earn about $2,250 a year. Shobha’s husband works cleaning tiles, but this doesn’t always guarantee a steady income, so she bears most of the responsibility of caring for their family. There is food to buy. Rent. Clothing. And there are medical expenses to cover. Shobha wants to be sure her son and daughter can complete their schooling, but education in India is different from the United States, where public school education is free. Depending on the school, annual fees in India can cost anywhere from $1,250 to $1,500 USD. It’s a steep sum for an Indian worker who earns somewhere between $2,000 to $4,500 a year.

Faced with overwhelming financial burdens, Shobha borrowed money from a predatory lender without understanding the terms of the loan.

Collin Timms, founder of Bengaluru’s Guardian Bank, has seen situations like Shobha’s many times before.

“The lender tells them, ‘All you have to do is pay me back the interest,’” Timms said. “The interest is quoted as a percentage point per week or per month. Very often the borrower is not able to do the math to realize what this translates into.”

When borrowers are only paying interest payments, they aren’t making any progress toward repaying the principal of the loan. And with compound interest, the loans quickly exceed what a borrower is able to pay. Throughout India, many customers like Shobha cannot read or write, and they do not understand the terms of their debts.

In addition, the distressing circumstances that prompted them to seek a loan can cloud their judgment. Many end up borrowing at incredibly high interest rates, which puts them on the hook to repay significantly more than they originally borrowed.

“At best, it inflicts a huge penalty for being poor,” Timms says. “At worst, you will become the slave of the lender forever.”

With this in mind, Timms founded Guardian Bank in India in 1998.

Timms was the son of a factory worker. His family lived in factory quarters on a campus of 1,500 people, with only a few Christian families around them. While his lower-middle class family struggled, Timms watched some friends enjoy luxuries like cars, refrigerators, or televisions that his family could not afford.

Timms says his childhood deeply impacted his work ethic, drive, and how his career unfolded. Although he earned an engineering degree, his real passion was business. He started businesses in the fields of financial services, software, health care, and education. By the time Timms reached age 30, he was a highly successful entrepreneur, but instead of collecting luxury cars or accumulating even more wealth, Timms started to think about how he might help others.

“I began to feel that I’m blessed, and I don’t deserve all these blessings,” Timms said. At first, Timms got involved with the Bridge Foundation, which is one of the oldest and largest organizations in India that gives small loans to help people out of poverty. Soon, he realized that microenterprise organizations like the Bridge Foundation needed banks to fund them.

Timms went from church to church to gather the funds and support to start Guardian Bank. Unlike commercial banks, Guardian is a cooperative bank, owned by its members and not established to focus solely on maximizing profits.

“Normally, in other banks ... you bring your income statement. You bring certain documents. Unless you have a certain salary, you are not able to avail credit from a bank,” said Guardian Bank CEO Sharon Joseph. But this bank is different.

Timms wanted to create a bank where finance and credit would be available for low-income customers who wouldn’t otherwise qualify. “We want to take a more humane view and see how we could help them,” Joseph said.

“I can tell you examples of people who have medical problems and many of them didn’t have even medical insurance. Then you have families where they wanted...
“In any community, there will always be those who have and those who don’t. As a bank, you are a bridge between the two.”

— COLLIN TIMMS

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WHEN CHI-DOOH “SKIP” LI ’66, stepped off the plane in Guatemala in 1982, he was no stranger to the country. Li lived there for three years as a young boy before moving to the United States and eventually becoming a lawyer in Seattle, Washington.

Li flew to the Western Highlands of Guatemala’s Ixil Triangle to determine the feasibility of a new idea: Could rural families work their way out of poverty and begin to accumulate generational wealth if they were given the opportunity to own land?

Two years later, Li founded his faith-based nonprofit, Agros International, to help break the cycle of poverty in Latin America. With the help of donors, Agros purchases large tracts of land to create a village. Families then build their own agricultural businesses, work toward land ownership, and jointly manage the community.

When Agros began in 1984, Guatemala was in the middle of a civil war between government forces and Marxist rebel groups. “The indigenous people I met had fled the violence,” Li remembered.

María de la Cruz de Pérez experienced it firsthand. “In 1982, I said goodbye to my family and left with the people who went to the mountains,” she said. “They killed women, men, little girls, pregnant women, old men, and old women. Whatever kind of person they came across, they killed,” she said. “They arrived at 6 in the morning. They burned people in their houses, and my mom was shot and killed.”

De Pérez and her husband eventually settled in a distant village. Their daughter Feliciana Raymundo remembered, “My dad didn’t have a job. He didn’t have enough land to plant crops to harvest.” Although the civil war was devastating for Guatemalans, the challenges they faced went much deeper.

“This poverty [went] back hundreds of years to the time when the Spanish Conquistadors came in and took land — vast, vast swathes of land — away from the indigenous peoples. That kind of poverty creates a sense of despair that is unspoken, but always present. We had to defeat that despair in people,” Li explained.

In Guatemala, the gap between the wealthy and the poor is particularly stark. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development, nearly two-thirds of Guatemala’s agricultural land belongs to just 2.5% of farms. Land ownership feels impossible for...
FALL/WINTER 2022

### Agros by the numbers (2020)

<table>
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<th>Parameters</th>
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<td>Families Served</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land Titles Granted to Villagers</td>
<td>758</td>
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the indigenous and rural poor. They don’t earn enough to purchase farmland, and banks are unwilling to lend them money.

That’s where Agros comes in. Agros helped establish 45 villages in Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico, equipping 7,300 farmers to own land for the first time.

“With the help of Agros, my mom and dad bought land,” Raymundo said.

In 2020, Agros villagers received 758 land titles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Agros provided personal protective equipment to 2,060 people and emergency food supplies to 2,419 people.

“Poverty is complex,” said Agros President Alberto Solano. “It’s multidimensional. Therefore, we need to provide a solution that can see a family holistically.”

Agros educates villagers about farming, business practices, health, and hygiene, and it supports families with maternity care, well-child checks, and small loans for women’s enterprises.

“We help them build their homes,” Solano says. “We build schools, and they establish their own agricultural businesses. Over seven or eight years, with the profit from their businesses, they can pay back the land and become owners.”

Agros helps farmers produce the best quality crops that will command top prices in the market. It isn’t subsistence farming. The goal is to help them sell not only to local markets, but eventually to regional, national, and international markets, where growers can earn significantly more for their crops.

“Our model takes time, but it’s holistic and comprehensive, which means we can provide a long-lasting solution,” Solano said.

The idea for Agros began when Li was a young Seattle lawyer. Sitting in church one Saturday night, he heard a guest preacher, Juan Carlos Ortiz, speak about

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“Over seven or eight years, with the profit from their businesses, they can pay back the land and become owners.”

— Agros President Alberto Solano
IT TAKES 15 YEARS to be an overnight success, the saying goes. For Steve Bell, it took a little longer, and the road to success was marked by setbacks and moments that tested his faith.

Bell is the founder of Bellmont Cabinet Co., a family-owned cabinet manufacturer located in Sumner, Washington.

At 28, Bell was doing tenant improvement work when he got a call from his attorney, who told him to pick up a copy of that day’s Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Two of the men he was contracting for had been arrested in an FBI sting operation for possession of illegal substances, drug smuggling, and connections to organized crime. They owed Steve and his partners more than $100,000, which Steve, in turn, owed to suppliers, subcontractors, and employees.

“We just lost it all,” he said.

Bell remembers going home to his children and telling his pregnant wife he wasn’t sure how they would make the house payment, how they’d eat that month. He remembers Carolyn putting her arms around him and saying, “I believe in you, and God will provide.”

Although he wasn’t sure how, Bell was determined to pay back what he owed. His attorneys advised against it, warning him that within a month he’d have dozens of lawsuits filed against him and bill collectors harassing his family.

“I said, ‘Maybe you’re right. Maybe that is what I’ll have to do, but first I’m gonna try it my way.’”

Bell wrote a letter to every person he owed money to explaining what had happened. He then followed up with a phone call and told them all he had to offer was his good name, but if they could trust him, he would pay them back every dime, with interest.

At the time, Bell had been learning about a novelty in the world of manufacturing and woodworking — frameless cabinets. The design looked simple and efficient, and in 1986 he switched his business model completely and began building frameless cabinets.

It took Bell six and half years, but he paid off every bill.

For Bell’s insistence on integrity and for his significant contributions to his community, SPU awarded him the Frank Hass Integrity in Business Award this year. The award is given to a businessperson who exhibits characteristics similar to Haas, a leader who sought to integrate faith into every aspect of his life and who was instrumental in the founding of the Center for Faithful Business at Seattle Pacific University.

Al Erisman, emeritus executive-in-residence at SPU, knew Haas and said Bell represents everything both Haas and the School of Business, Government, and Economics strive to be.

“Steve is a businessperson I greatly admire,” Erisman said, “one who stands for integrity.”

Erisman particularly admires how each time Bell was hit with an obstacle, Bell recalibrated his business.

From the mid-’80s to the early 2000s, Bellmont Cabinet Co. grew from 20 employees to more than 200. They were hit hard by the Great Recession, but they recovered and slowly grew 10 times over. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the business was deemed essential, enabling production to continue, but Bell and his team had to make adjustments — changing vendors and sourcing, pulling out of certain markets, and trying to remain flexible with a changing workforce.

Though he jokes that “hope is not a strategy,” Bell takes confidence from the fact that even as they continue to struggle with supply chain disruptions and overseas competition, the company runs in excess of $100 million a year and is on the verge of releasing a new product perfectly suited to a time when customers want high quality work at a lower price point.

His sons, Casey Bell ’02 and Tyler Bell ’04, now run the business as CEO of operations and CEO of sales and marketing, respectively, but Steve is still active in the family’s foundation, which his daughter, Loreen, manages.

Bellmont has been a family business from the beginning. Bell was working for his father-in-law’s construction business when he and Carolyn were looking for a way for Carolyn to stay home after the birth of their daughter. With great determination and little more than ninth grade woodshop experience, Bell began working evenings and weekends in a garage converted to a woodshop, building cabinets for the homes his father-in-law’s company was building.

The Bellmont Family Support Fund provides employees with financial and ministerial help during times of crisis.
Bell was a quick learner in the trade, but he says it didn’t need to be cabinets; it could have been anything. It was the art of business he loved.

Yet, even for Bell, it has never been about business alone.

“We’re not building this for our own glory and our own financial empire,” he said of his family’s life’s work. “We’re building this for the kingdom.”

For the Bells, kingdom work includes tithing on their annual pre-tax net income and putting it into the family’s foundation, which focuses on humanitarian relief, education, and churches or mission work. Bellmont Cabinet Co. also includes unusual perks for a family-run business — the Bellmont Family Support Fund, which employees can draw on in times of crisis, and on-site ministry from chaplains.

Whether for profit or for philanthropy, SPU’s School of Business, Government, and Education Dean Ross Stewart notes one consistency in Bell’s career — a desire to see business, as Bell would say, as “a conduit of God’s grace.”

Even as Bell steps away from the day-to-day running of his business, he continues to carry this grace into the community, working with local nonprofits and offering pro bono mentoring for small businesses.

“We aren’t just put here on earth to live and save souls and then get a fire escape and get out of here,” he says. “We’re living in God’s kingdom right now, and everything we do should be done with the intention of making the world a better place.”

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SPU houses largest work and faith library
By Jennifer Hunt

It’s hard to know when a day like any other will suddenly change your life. For Al Erisman, life changed while he was driving home from work some 30 years ago.

Erisman, who worked at Boeing for 32 years, was listening to a radio interview of R.C. Sproul, author of the book, Stronger Than Steel: The Wayne Alderson Story.

The book was about a coal miner’s son who became a successful executive by integrating Christian thought with business practices. Inspired, Erisman bought the book that day and finished it in one sitting. The book launched Erisman’s second career, focused on work and faith.

In 2007, Pete Hammond planned to retire as vice president at large for InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and sought to donate his extensive book collection.

“He wanted his books to go to a place where they would be used,” said Erisman, then director of SPU’s Center for Integrity in Business (now the Center for Faithful Business). Erisman convinced Hammond to donate his nearly 2,000 books to SPU.

Now called The Work and Faith Collection, the library focuses on topics beyond the business world. “Some books are geared toward the tech community. Some toward medicine, politics, or life in the academy,” Erisman said. “There are documents that are deeply connected to Scripture or theology of work commentary, that delve into what every book in the Bible has to say about our daily work.”

The library, the largest of its kind, continues to grow thanks to a committee that meets quarterly to discuss new materials to add.

“The collection comprises the best literature within the broader faith and work movement. But more importantly, it shows through its collected works by Pete and others, the evolution of the faith and work movement over several decades — mainly the 1970s through the early 2020s,” said John Terrill, former director of SPU’s Center for Integrity in Business, who has helped grow the collection by securing funding for new material.

Much of the collection has been digitized and is available at digitalcommons.spu.edu.
It is Christmas Eve 2021, and here I am, a descendant of enslaved Africans, leading my predominantly white Presbyterian congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, in singing the Black spiritual, “Go Tell It on the Mountain.” The song is not being presented to the congregation as a performance concert piece. Instead, I’ve prepared an arrangement that allows it to be what it was always meant to be: a relational, transformative, communal act of worship that joins us together.

My great-grandfather six generations removed, Michael, who was enslaved less than 100 miles from here in Jones County, Georgia, would never have imagined such a picture. I am deeply moved and thankful for this moment in time and how far we have come. Three years before I arrived at this church, I visited the Jones County archives to research my ancestry. I found the graves of the Newby family, the white landowners in the area. I stood in front of a Newby tombstone, fists clenched and heart grieved, imagining all that my ancestors had suffered at this man’s hands. The sun was shining brightly. Even the mosquitoes were quiet. At that moment God spoke into my heart and said, “Be reconciled.”

Black spirituals aren’t just for Black churches. They should be sung by everyone.

By Stephen Michael Newby Illustration by Thiago Limón
I had already spent three decades trying to bridge divides by bringing different genres of music into conversation. But now this call to live out reconciliation with others would lead me to share my people's music with predominantly white congregations throughout the United States and particularly here in the South. Whatever our personal histories, I can think of no better way to express our shared longing for liberation from the bonds of racism than the spirituals.

The spirituals, rich with historical, theological, and social nuance, come down to us from enslaved Africans. Many will have heard that the enslaved used spirituals to communicate messages to one another that their oppressors would not recognize. Biblical stories and theological themes often masked an underlying message: the song “Go Down, Moses” was not just about the biblical figure but was sung to signal people to prepare themselves to flee north toward freedom.

Another song, “Follow the Drinking Gourd,” literally gave directions for how to navigate northward by following the North Star. When spirituals referred to Satan, that could be code for the slave master. Songs about Jesus’ crucifixion were also about the lynchings happening within their own communities. Only those in the community would be able to recognize these encoded messages, sung right under the noses of the slave owners.

But there’s more to it than that. While the hardships of slavery, and the enslaved people’s expectations of freedom, are evident all over the spirituals, they carry significance for us as well. These are universal songs about heaven and hell, and about our spiritual captivity and liberation, that ring true far beyond their specific historical context.

The spirituals endure to this day because they are creatively and beautifully crafted songs with undeniably powerful melodies and semantics. Though now they are often sung in a minor key, historical studies suggest that while most spirituals incorporated minor chords, they consisted primarily of major chords.

Their originality is evident not just in the way the music is structured, but in the way it affects listeners. The rhythm is off the typical beat, in a way that naturally gives rise to bodily movement, inviting people to be involved in more than just a song. Perhaps this more than anything separates Black music from the hymns that white Christians were singing in church.

In his 2004 history of Black gospel music, *People Get Ready*, Robert Darden writes that when the enslaved were taken from their homelands and communities in Africa, there was something that the slave owners could not strip from them. They may have been language-impoverished because they were deprived of literacy, but they could pass on their stories through work songs, spirituals, and dance.

Darden points out another fascinating aspect of the spirituals: There seems in them to be no sense of historical time lapse. It is as if the singers have such a deeply personal relationship with the biblical characters that they sing directly to them.

Standing at the Newby grave, I could not escape this calling to bring people together in radical racial reconciliation through singing. I had been conducting multiethnic musical groups for 30 years, musically and spiritually sojourning, discovering the beauty of diversity as one of God’s gifts to creation.

Gathering to sing under the auspices of unity brings all those involved into a space I describe as a “mutuality of grace.” When we sing in harmony, we become more aware of the grace that holds all creation together. We engage holistically, connecting with everyone in the room as we focus on blending our sound, adding to the collective voice.

Although I didn’t know where it would lead at the time, I stumbled upon racial reconciliation through singing as a graduate student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1986. For my master’s thesis, I composed a multiethnic, intergenerational oratorio entitled, “Be Still and Know.”

I was interested in blending gospel music and jazz in the context of theatre. I grew up in a strict Missionary Baptist tradition where playing jazz was not supported in the context of church.
I was unfamiliar with the sacred services commissioned by the Episcopal Archdiocese of San Francisco from Duke Ellington in 1965. But deep within my consciousness I knew there was a connection between jazz and Gospel and the spirituals. I knew that fusing diverse musical elements creates something new and positive, not only in our music, but in our humanity. And I knew my ancestors had practiced fusing cultures as a means of surviving and thriving.

Already at this early stage in my musical-spiritual formation, I dreamed about bringing together people from what I might call contrapuntal musical narratives. I asked myself what would happen if, among all the racial division in Detroit and its suburbs, we could get white folks and Black folks to sing together.

I decided to pursue the idea by holding gospel music workshops with churches from inner-city Detroit, the surrounding suburbs, and Ann Arbor. For more than 10 years, we had 10 to 15 churches coming together to practice racial reconciliation through singing. We visited each other’s churches. We broke bread together. We fellowshipped and built friendships that have held strong to this day.

In The Spirituals and the Blues, James H. Cone describes the spirituals as “community music.” Singing community music, we find ourselves living in community.

I believe singing spirituals allows us to transcend cultures of vitriol and racism and ascend toward citizenship in God’s kingdom. As the spiritual suggests, “all God’s children got shoes” — we are all equal in essence even if we have different roles.

When we sing our part in the great symphony of the spirituals, we transcend negativity and live together in harmony in a way that envisions God’s kingdom. Singing spirituals takes us to the mountaintop. They help us realize that all of us have been born into an oppressed state of sinfulness and that Jesus Christ lifts us up to receive the liberation God offers to all humanity.

Singing “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” on Christmas Eve reminded me of Psalm 133, the “song of ascents” that begins, “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity!” Speaking of this psalm, Walter Brueggemann writes, “The poem anticipates the solidarity and harmony of all humanity as it lives without defensiveness in a creation benevolent enough to care for all.”

In the same way, “Go Tell It on the Mountain,” reflecting the heart-language of the enslaved, invites us to join in solidarity with all creation as we live out God’s liberating kingdom here on earth. The gates of hell shall not prevail against God’s kingdom when, singing these songs of liberation and unity under the power of God’s spirit, we make a decision to ascend with Christ and to rise above cultures of disunity.

Scripture commands us to teach and admonish one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col. 3:16). Whatever our hermeneutics, theological constructs, or biblical interpretations might be, we can glory God through these songs. Whether we’re Black, white, Hispanic, Asian — whatever our ethnicity or identity — when we sing the songs of those who have been enslaved, we join them in looking for liberation from being enslaved by racism.

I believe we all bleed red, and that’s the color of reconciliation. Christ shed his blood on Calvary to reconcile all creation to our Heavenly Father. When God’s people sing Black spirituals together, we identify with our deep sense of humanity, and we will want to live our lives in ways that help eradicate racism. We sing a song of ascent. We rise above our proclivities and sit in heavenly places, becoming aware that our citizenship is heaven-bound and that we must “sing and bring down” heaven to earth.

Stephen Michael Newby is a professor of music and director of composition at SPU. He is also the director of the Center for Worship.

One kidney climb

A group of living kidney donors climbed Mount Kilimanjaro to raise awareness for kidney donations.

BY JULIA SIEMENS

FOR TWO YEARS, BOBBY MCLAUGHLIN ’89 planned and prepared to scale Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. McLaughlin, who donated a kidney in 2019, dreamed of summiting the tallest mountain on the African continent with a group of organ donors to show the world what a living kidney donor can still do.

Just hours away from the final peak, however, McLaughlin had a difficult decision to make. It was 3:30 a.m. on March 10, 2022: World Kidney Day. Twenty-one living kidney donors had ascended to 18,000 feet. The final climb would take them to the top: 19,341 feet above sea level. But McLaughlin had come down with a high fever.

He pulled aside his friend and fellow climber, Coloradan Jay Irwin. “Jay, I know my body. I can’t make it any further,” McLaughlin told him through tears. “I will jeopardize the rest of the group if I continue and create an emergency situation. I’m going to turn around and head back down.”

Irwin protested at first, offering to piggyback McLaughlin to the top of the world’s highest, free-standing mountain. Instead, he honored McLaughlin’s request for Irwin to lead the group to the summit.

“That was certainly tough to watch him call it and walk back down,” said Irwin, who donated a kidney to a friend three years ago. “I don’t think Kilimanjaro would have happened without Bobby.”
A SENSE OF CALLING
For McLaughlin, the journey toward becoming a kidney donor began with a bicycle accident in 2016. After surgery, he awoke to a doctor explaining his wrist had been reconstructed with donor tissue and bone.

“It really grabbed my attention that I had a part of somebody else in my wrist,” McLaughlin said. “I love playing golf and catch with my son. I was super grateful.”

Later, he met a kidney donor recipient. She recounted how the transplant allowed her to live her life again and how that positively affected her family and friends.

“That was the clincher,” said McLaughlin, whose daughter and son are adults. “I’m blessed with health and fitness, and this was something I could do. I can’t really explain it to people, but I felt called to give this body part away.”

CONNECTING WITH OTHER DONOR ATHLETES
In the late ’80s, McLaughlin played soccer at Seattle Pacific University. Upon graduation, SPU hired him to be the men’s assistant soccer coach, a position he held for 10 years. SPU’s coaches inspired him with a fit-for-life mentality. After leaving soccer, he took up hiking, trail running, and mountain climbing.

The Seattle native climbs weekly and has summited Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens, and many of Colorado’s 14ers — mountains with elevations of at least 14,000 feet.

Prior to donating his kidney, McLaughlin discovered the organization Kidney Donor Athletes. The organization was founded by Tracey Hulick in 2018 to help athletic donors find community and encouragement.

Hulick, who donated a kidney in 2017, is an ultramarathoner. As an athlete, she struggled to find stories of what to expect after donating a kidney. Her organization invites donors to share stories on KDA’s website of why they donated their organs and how they stay active after giving away a kidney.

On New Year’s Day 2019, Hulick and four other kidney donor friends were in Denver together watching the movie Zoolander.

“Bobby donates tomorrow. We should call him,” said Hulick, who had met McLaughlin over Zoom. Bobby was touched that a group of living donors who hadn’t met him in person took the time to call him before his surgery. “Little did we know, it was the very beginning of an awesome friendship,” Hulick said.

‘THE RIPPLES CONTINUE’
While some living donors give an organ to a specific recipient, McLaughlin was a non-directed donor. His kidney went to Devon, a 27-year-old father who was on dialysis three times a week. The men met a year later.

“He was able to be the husband and father he wanted to be again,” McLaughlin said.
“It’s really cool to give this body part away. When we give one kidney up, the remaining one grows to compensate. Why do we have two? Maybe we have two so we can give one away,” McLaughlin said.

Three years after Devon received McLaughlin’s kidney, he died from COVID-19. Organ recipients take immunosuppressants to lower the body’s ability to reject a new organ, leaving Devon more susceptible to the coronavirus.

Although the death was heartbreaking, McLaughlin said Devon chose to donate as much of his body as possible to save other lives.

“These ripples continue,” McLaughlin said. “COVID struck him, but knowing he chose to help others has given the family a little bit of peace.”

FROM YAHTZEE TO KILIMANJARO

McLaughlin grew more involved in KDA over time, participating in an online Yahtzee tournament and other virtual get-togethers during the early days of the pandemic. During a post-tournament virtual gathering, six KDA members started talking about summiting Kilimanjaro together.

“Bobby took it on,” Irwin said. “He created an application and got a sponsor packet ready. Of course, other people helped, but Bobby was the cornerstone for making this trip happen.”

Twenty-two living kidney donors signed up to climb Kilimanjaro with the goal of summiting the mountain on World Kidney Day to garner media attention and raise awareness for kidney donations.

Some climbers hiked together in Colorado beforehand, but most met in person for the first time in Tanzania.

The group planned to take eight days to hike the 42 miles to the peak along the Lemosho route, summiting on day six and then beginning the descent. Fitness levels and acclimation to high altitudes varied among the participants. Some climbers, like Irwin from Colorado, live at 9,000 feet and climb 14ers regularly. There was no need for them to dramatically increase training for the climb. Others who live at sea level prepared rigorously.

KDA hired 109 Tanzanians to help carry belongings, set up camp, and cook along the way. The trek went through five ecological climate zones on the way to the summit.

In the mornings, the support crew would dance and sing, “Kilimanjaro” in Swahili. The song offers advice for the journey and repeats the Disney-made-famous Swahili phrase, *Hakuna Matata*, which means, “no troubles despite hardships.”

After the singing and dancing, the support crew prayed in Swahili for a safe and successful journey to the top.

On the first night, Irwin used his ice axe to dig holes to make a 15-by-25-yard Mancala board in the dirt. Another night, he and McLaughlin gathered rocks throughout the campsite and invited everyone to play the African board game Bao.

During another break, Irwin and McLaughlin jumped from one boulder to another yelling “Parkour! Parkour!” in reference to the television show, *The Office*. 
On the third day, McLaughlin spiked a fever that vanished 12 hours later, so he soldiered on. On the fifth night, McLaughlin’s fever returned. The group set up camp at 15,200 feet, and one of the 22 climbers decided to remain at the camp instead of attempting the final ascent. McLaughlin felt so sick he barely said a word at dinner.

“We knew he wasn’t going to make it,” Hulick said. “But he sure as hell was going to try.”

‘JOY FOR A SUNRISE’
Clad in as many as six layers, the group began the final ascent at midnight under an open, starry sky. Trekking poles tapped rhythmically along the path as the hikers’ breaths swirled visibly in their headlamp lights.

Each year, an estimated 35,000 people attempt to summit Kilimanjaro, but one-third to one-half of these climbers do not reach the peak. Weather conditions, health issues, and extreme altitude sickness can scuttle a summit attempt.

Altitude sickness is particularly common on the final ascent as climbers have approximately 49% of the oxygen they would have at sea level and may experience severe headaches, nausea, and dizziness as they move above 16,000 feet to reach the Summit Zone.

At 18,000 feet, McLaughlin knew that with his fever, he could not continue with the group. He informed Irwin of his painful decision to turn back and deputized him to take the group on without him.

The remaining 20 climbers fought to stay positive amid the last, grueling ascent.

“It got really, really cold, so many of us were waiting for the first hint of pink,” Hulick said. “We wanted to see the first glimpse of sunrise.”

Around 5:30 a.m. climber Chris Sullivan called out, “There it is!”

Everyone started to shout at the sight of first light. The cheers sent a cascade of whoops into the morning air from other groups farther down the mountain.

From that moment on, the remaining climbers knew they would make it. “The mountain erupted with joy for a sunrise, which is something that happens every day. But you don’t feel that connection to it every day like you do up there,” Hulick said.

About an hour and a half later, the group reached the Uhuru Peak signpost at the summit.
Team members made an archway out of their poles to welcome the climbers from farther down the line. “There were so many tears in people’s eyes as they got to the top and said, ‘This is the hardest thing I’ve ever done,’” Irwin said.

The support crew and the KDA climbers sang “Kilimanjaro” together, repeating Hakuna Matata over and over again into the early morning fog.

**PLANNING THE NEXT ADVENTURE**

Awareness for kidney donations and KDA skyrocketed following the climb.

The membership of the group’s private Facebook page doubled to more than 1,000 members. Hulick opened Instagram one day to find a photo of a dentist in Rome, Italy, wearing a KDA shirt under his lab coat.

“I never expected people to feel such a strong sense of belonging,” she said. “Some people wear KDA gear almost exclusively.”

The 22 donor-climbers, representing 18 different media markets across North America were featured on Good Morning America and in The Washington Post and more than 70 other media outlets.

More than 30 million people worldwide learned about the climb, and hundreds started the process to become living kidney donors.

The climb earned the organization more than $100,000, which will launch programs and initiatives for KDA over the next several years.

Independently, McLaughlin is planning two more climbs for kidney donors, recipients, and transplant staff next year. He’ll make another attempt to summit Kilimanjaro on World Kidney Day 2023. Then, roughly 10 days later, he’s planning a trek to Everest’s South Base Camp at 17,598 feet in Nepal.

Although McLaughlin hopes to see the Kilimanjaro signpost in person, he knows last year’s trip was a success even at 18,000 feet.

“The story is way bigger than any one person. It’s the collective experiences we had that allowed us to reach 30 million people,” he said.

The goals remain the same as the last climb: Show others what a living kidney donor can do and inspire others to become donors.

“If the story can impact more lives, that’s what it’s all about. Otherwise, it’s just a bunch of us on a hike,” McLaughlin said. “All of us hear about donations through somebody’s story. I heard a story one day and that influenced one of the best decisions of my life. It’s had a ripple effect on so many lives in so many ways.”

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**KIDNEY DONATION FACTS**

37 M I L L I O N adults — almost 15% of the adult population — have chronic kidney disease in the United States.

MORE THAN 100,000 people are waiting for their turn on the kidney transplant list.

13 PEOPLE DIE WAITING EACH DAY.

22,817 AMERICANS received a kidney transplant in 2020.

About one-third of these transplants came from living donors.

While living donors need to be over the age of 18, NO ONE IS TOO OLD TO DONATE.

2022 data from the National Kidney Foundation.
EVERY TIME the Mayo Clinic called Annie Peshut with news of a potential kidney donor, she hoped the search was over. Then, a few days later, the phone would ring again, and she’d discover it wasn’t going to work after all.

In 2019, Annie was in stage five chronic kidney disease — the end stage of renal failure. She felt completely drained of energy, appetite, and often, hope.

“I got to the point where I told the Mayo Clinic I couldn’t mentally take those calls,” Annie said. Her husband, Mike, became the main point of contact.

He wasn’t a match for Annie, but he planned to donate one of his kidneys as part of a chain in a paired exchange program to locate a match for Annie.

In a kidney donor chain, Mike would donate his kidney to a matched stranger. The person who received Mike’s kidney would have a friend or relative who would also make a nondirected donation to someone waiting for a kidney, opening up a whole chain of potentially compatible donors.

In 2019, a national search yielded a kidney donor for Annie. On Feb. 19, Mike and Annie walked into the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, prepared for their surgeries. Then another call came. Annie’s surgery was canceled without an explanation. She was devastated.

“How much longer can I wait without dialysis?” she wondered.

A few days later, she learned her donor had had influenza, and her surgery would take place only one week later than originally planned.

In the end, Mike believes the delay allowed Annie time to learn what to expect. “Annie’s a gregarious person. She knew every one of the doctors and nurses a week in advance of her surgery,” Mike said.

The minute she opened her eyes after receiving the donated kidney, she felt better. “It wasn’t until after my transplant that I realized how horrible I had been feeling,” Annie said.

Mike and Annie know firsthand how different the experience is for donors versus recipients. Mike recovered quickly and climbed Kilimanjaro with Kidney Donor Athletes in March 2022. Annie returned to the hospital several times over the next few years for serious infections. At her one-year and two-year checkups, her body was in organ failure. Finally, last February, her health stabilized, thanks to new medication.

“If I didn’t have this transplant, either I wouldn’t be here or I’d be sitting in dialysis day in and day out,” said Annie, who exercises and eats a healthy diet to take care of her new kidney. “I’ve been given this gift, and the least I can do is give 100%. I feel responsible to house my donor’s kidney in the best environment I can.”
WHILE SARAH JEAN BARTON ’09 was a doctoral student at Duke Divinity School, she also worked as an occupational therapist. In that role, she encountered stories of church exclusion and discrimination against those with disabilities. The stories inspired a research project which culminated in Barton’s first book, Becoming the Baptized Body: Disability and the Practice of Christian Community (Baylor University Press, 2022).

Although one-quarter of Americans live with disabilities, it took the pandemic to push businesses, health care providers, and schools to embrace inclusive practices, Barton said.

Today, Barton is an assistant professor of occupational therapy and theological ethics at Duke. She credits an SPU professor, the late Cynthia Fitch-Steenson, for helping her envision a bivocational career.

At SPU, Barton took an interdisciplinary approach, balancing advanced courses in the sciences with theology and biblical studies.

“There’s no reason you can’t pursue both fields you are passionate about and bring them together,” Barton said.
News

1950s

LARY NOEL ’57 is living at University House, a community in Issaquah, Washington, with strong partnerships with the University of Washington.

1970s

MARK R. TALBOT ’72 published Give Me Understanding That I May Live: Situating Our Suffering Within God’s Redemptive Plan (Crossway, 2022), the second volume in his four-volume series on suffering and Christian life. His work is also featured in a new podcast, *When the Stars Disappear*, hosted by The Christian Scholars’ Fund, which has supported Mark’s research. Mark is associate professor of philosophy at Illinois’ Wheaton College.

DWAYNE SMITH ’78 recently retired after 34 years as a college admissions enrollment consultant at NRCCUA/Encoura. He previously worked as a newspaper sports editor and college relations director. Dwayne and his wife, Suzanne, live in Kansas City, Kansas. They enjoy spending time with their two sons and grandson.

1980s

ANDY EKBLAD ’84 is the founder and director of Beautiful Gate Ministries, which provides training to pastors and leaders in developing nations, principally in Africa. Andy received much of his training in the school of life, serving as a pastor for 30 years and raising a daughter with profound disabilities until her death in 2013.

CATHI NELSON ’88 joined the North Central Educational Service District’s board of directors after 26 years of service in the Waterville School District in Wenatchee, Washington, as an elementary teacher, principal, and superintendent. Cathi started in the Monroe School District as a paraprofessional, but encouraged by her school’s principal, she earned her teaching certification at SPU while raising two young boys and doing a work-study job in the district.

1990s

TAMI HAMILTON, MS ’94 was promoted to chief people officer of Pacific Whale Foundation, a nonprofit ocean conservation organization in Maui, Hawaii. In her new role, Tami acts as principal human resources advisor for the executive leadership team and oversees the organization’s talent strategy and corporate-culture initiatives.

2000s

MARNI ANN WHITEHEAD ’01 graduated in 2022 with a doctor of education degree from Walden University Online with honors and a 4.0 GPA.

JUSTIN WEATHERFORD ’02 has been named Musculoskeletal

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BRUCE BAKER WAS that rare “quadruple-threat” professor. He came to Seattle Pacific University with career titles that included tech entrepreneur, corporate executive, ordained minister, and scholar. Before he retired in June 2022 as an associate professor of business, his teaching and writing explored the intersection of technology, culture, business, and ethics — all through a theological lens.

Both undergraduate and graduate students benefited, including CHARLES HOOPER ’18, MBA ’21.

“Dr. Baker masterfully connected how we can serve and be of service in our faith and careers,” said Hooper, who is now the chief operating officer of Birch Aquarium in San Diego, California. “My growth as a leader, and how I serve in my current role, has been profoundly shaped by his teaching, faith, and lived experiences.”

Baker served two tours of duty in the School of Business, Government, and Economics — before and after earning his doctorate in theology at University of St. Andrews in Scotland.

He taught a range of management, ethics, spirituality, and theology courses, and he contributed to the ongoing theological conversation around faith and entrepreneurship.

Baker was active in organizing and catalyzing conversations among practitioners and theologians on cutting-edge issues in finance and technology. His research focused on ethical and spiritual issues related to artificial intelligence.

Baker was a founding board member of AI* & Faith. He also serves on the boards of ScholarLeaders International and Reconciliation Ministries, which supports Palestinian-Israeli peacemaking efforts.

“SPU was a gift to me,” said Baker. “I’ve worked at a lot of different places, but I’d never worked at a place where there was such a shared sense of mission.”

Baker is spending more time with family and writing. He is also enjoying his retirement by hiking and biking around the Pacific Northwest.

*Artificial Intelligence*
PHOTO COURTESY OF BRUCE BAKER

Service Line Director for St. Alphonsus Health System in Boise, Idaho. Justin, who earned a doctorate in physical therapy, has more than 15 years of experience in health care, including roles at the Physical Rehabilitation Network in Meridian, Idaho, and the Ambulatory Rehab Division at Providence Health and Services in Oregon. Justin is also certified in quality management with a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt.

JOEL HENG HARTSE ’03 published Dancing About Architecture Is a Reasonable Thing to Do: Musings about Music, Meaning, and the Ineffable (Cascade Books, 2022). The collection unpacks rock critic Richard Meltzer’s claim that writing about music and making music should be parallel artistic efforts and ultimately argues that both impulses are inherent to the human desire to make meaning.

RACHEL KAPLAN ’03 has been named president of Equitas Partners, where she oversees the Evergreen Fund, recently named by Hedge Fund Managers as the top hedge fund under $1 billion. Rachel earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration with a double concentration in finance and information systems from SPU.

JONATHAN LIPKO ’05, MBA ’09 is chief operating officer at Valor, an asset management and professional services company specializing in oil and gas mineral rights which has seen its staffing and revenue double in the past year. Jonathan’s previous roles include lead operations manager at Amazon’s distribution facility in Park City, Kansas, where he oversaw a 300-person team that

OBITUARY

Korner led innovations in campus dining and University Services

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

JAMES KORNER served as the executive director of University Services from 1992 to 2001. He was instrumental in helping to design and renovate Gwinn Commons, which opened in 1999. He also oversaw the planning and building of Emerson Hall.

Through 40 years of active involvement in the National Association of College and University Food Services, Korner initiated innovations in the campus dining industry. He won multiple awards, served as president for two different regions of the association, and was elected national president for 1999–2000. He prioritized relationships among nearly 1,000 campus and industry members and championed volunteer opportunities.

“Jim was one of the most positive, uplifting people you could know,” said Jean Flewelling, who worked for Korner at SPU for eight years. “He’d walk into the office singing with his arm up as if he was leading a choir. When anything went awry, he’d remind us that God was still on the throne.

“I have continued to refer to him as the boss who encouraged me to risk, and if I failed, we were in it together and would just figure out how to do it differently next time,” Flewelling said.

Born in Ohio, Korner earned a degree in music education at Ohio University. During his college years, he worked in the school’s dining halls and nurtured his love for cooking. When he finished his degree, he joined the famous restaurant company, Bob Evans, at the original farm restaurant, and became a favorite of the founder. In 1972, Korner returned to his alma mater and became part of Ohio University’s dining services management team.

Korner’s path of promotions, awards, and increasing responsibility evolved throughout his career as his portfolio expanded beyond dining into student and business services at Ohio University; the University of Missouri; Seattle Pacific University; VA Hospital Brain Rehabilitation Research Center (Gainesville, Florida); and Penn State University.

In each instance, Korner’s visionary leadership, combined with his extraordinary ability to assess challenges, communicate effectively, and establish positive relationships with others, led to continuous advancement.

Korner passed away from pneumonia on Sept. 6, 2021, at the age of 72. He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Barbara Oliver Korner, who is a former associate professor of theatre at SPU. Among his final words were, “God is still on the throne. His grace is sufficient. God will give me strength.”
managed $250 billion in revenue, as well as leadership roles with multiple aerospace companies, including Boeing and Raytheon.

**NEIL SHUPE '06** was named District Teacher of the Year at the St. Vrain Valley Schools Education Foundation’s annual Tribute to Teachers celebration. Neil works in the Career Development Center in Longmont, Colorado, teaching technical skills for manufacturing and how to use machining equipment. He is considering earning a master’s degree with award’s $4,000 cash prize.

**ADAM JACKSON '07** is a vice president and commercial banker at RiverBank in Spokane, Washington. Adam has 14 years of experience in commercial banking, private banking, and financial advising.

**PETER ORR '07** is the author and publisher of *Living God’s Way* (2022), an illustrated children’s book which translates seven of Jesus’ Kingdom-descriptive parables into modern, relatable stories. Peter was inspired to write the book while gardening with his wife — as his thoughts drifted from the description in Genesis of Adam and Eve caring for a garden to the agricultural references in Jesus’ parables, he realized that without the act of gardening, he would have missed out on the richness of those parables. The book is available for purchase at livinggodswaybook.wordpress.com.


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**OBITUARY**

**V.O. “Bud” McDole served his alma mater for decades**

**BY HOPE MCPHERSON**

**V.O. “BUD” MCDOLE ’52** had deep Falcon roots. His mother graduated from Seattle Pacific College in 1923. After Bud’s father died, she married Burton Beegle, a longtime SPC professor of mathematics and dean of the college.

As an SPC student, Bud double majored in communication and business. He was also staff announcer for the *Light & Life Hour*, a worldwide radio program of the Free Methodist Church. After graduating, he was hired by SPC President C. Hoyt Watson as the school’s first admissions counselor.

Bud also met R. LUCILLE “LUCY” CAPP MCDOLE ’50 at SPC. Married for 59 years, they raised five children.

Following a stint in the U.S. Army, Bud began a 32-year career at IBM as a sales executive. He was also the president of the SPU Alumni Association, co-founder and president of the Falcon Club athletic boosters, and a guest lecturer in SPU business classes. He served for 23 years on the Board of Trustees, including 13 years as chair.

For his longtime service to SPU, Bud was granted the status of emeritus trustee in 1995. He received an honorary doctor of humane letters in 1996; a Medallion Award in 2002; and was awarded the Falcons Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007.

After Lucy’s death in 2010, Bud married MARY BELLE MCMULLEN TIMM ’55. They relocated to Warm Beach Senior Community, where he sang in the Beachwood Boys men’s choir, assisted with the “Lights of Christmas,” and served as a member of the Warm Beach Residents Council and on the board of directors for the Stanwood, Washington, senior community. Bud also wrote several articles for *The Everett Herald* on migratory snow geese and trumpeter swans. Bud died April 19, 2022, at the age of 92.

Predeceased by Lucy and daughter HEATHER MCDOLE VIZINA ’79, Bud is survived by Mary Belle; children KEVYN MCDOLE VINSON ’84, TAMI MCDOLE WHITNEY ’81, GREGORY MCDOLE ’83, and RANDALL MCDOLE ’84; stepchildren SHARON TIMM BILBRO ’77, SHARLEEN TIMM LARSON ’80, STEVE TIMM ’82, and SHELLY TIMM CASALE ’87; 10 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.
Brooklyn the Brave as she sets off on a quest to discover if aliens share her love of toast. While at SPU, Kacie studied communications and was both an Ames Scholar and a student leader in Intercultural Programs. Kacie is also the author of The Squirrel Who Homeschooled. Both books are available at the Seattle Public Library and through kaciewashington.com.

LAUREL GOETZ DONKervoet ’08 is a visual artist whose work was featured in the West Seattle Art Walk from December 2021 to June 2022. Laurel is a Washington native, born and raised in Puyallup. She moved to Seattle to study apparel design at Seattle Pacific. Laurel lives in West Seattle with her husband and three children and currently works in acrylic and watercolor.

BJ Myers ’08 became Woodinville’s police chief in July 2021. BJ spent 12 years at the King County Sheriff’s Office before moving to the police department in Woodinville, Washington. As police chief, he is interested in using environmental design to deter crime, establish block watches to safeguard businesses, and increase officers’ involvement in community activities.

LAUREN PATTIE ’09 serves Seattle Pacific as a content manager for Pivot NW, a team that works with Seattle-area faith communities to better understand the experiences of young adults and work with them to design, launch, and evaluate new ministries.

2010s

CATHY WARNER MFA ’11 edited and published Poemographs: an Anthology, in which more than a dozen poets respond to images that appeared in their inbox each day of National Poetry Month in April 2021.

KATIE G. ROSE-BORCHERDING ’12 has completed residency training at the University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita Family Medicine Residency Program at Ascension Via Christi. She will be practicing osteopathic medicine with Delta Health West Elk Clinic in Hotchkiss, Colorado.

CLARA J. ROBERTS MS ’15, PhD ’18, a neuropsychologist and licensed clinical psychologist, has joined Lovelace Medical Group Neurology in Albuquerque, New Mexico, as a practitioner with a focus on dementia, stroke, neurodevelopmental disorders, traumatic brain injury, and epilepsy.

ESTHER CHOE PENZAR ’13, MA ’16, PhD ’19 presented at the 2022 Annual Washington School Counselor Association State Conference with Professor of Counselor Education Cher Edwards Seattle-area faith communities to better understand the experiences of young adults and work with them to design, launch, and evaluate new ministries.

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Have an update you want to share with the SPU community? Email us at response@spu.edu.

PAUL HARVEY, PhD ’20 co-authored an article, “The Effects and Implications of Using Open Educational Resources in Secondary Schools,” with Professor of Educational Leadership JOHN BOND ’03. It was published in the journal International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning and contributes to the growing scholarship of OER for primary and secondary education.

DAN KING, PhD ’21 was selected as the director of business and finance for North Mason School District in Belfair, Washington. Dan has been with the district for seven years as principal of Belfair Elementary. He completed the superintendent program and the principal certification program with the School of Education.

Marriages

NATE ANSELMI ’19 to Kate Johnson on Aug. 27, 2022, at Hope Island Beach Club in La Conner, Washington. The couple live in Bothell.

Walhout retires from the classroom to focus on research and writing

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

IN 1987, after a Midwestern education—a bachelor’s degree from Wheaton College and a master’s and doctorate from Northwestern University—Mark Walhout brought his expertise in American literature and literary criticism to Seattle Pacific’s English and Cultural Studies Department. He served as the chair of the English Department for more than 20 years and offered steady encouragement and support for students, even occasionally welcoming students into his and his wife’s Queen Anne Hill home for gatherings.

“I don’t think students know just how ambitious Mark’s hopes and dreams have been for them,” said JEFFREY OVERSTREET ’94, assistant professor of English. “I don’t think they know how pleased he is when they succeed; how excited he is when doors open for them with the keys that he gave them.”

In 2000, Walhout also helped bring Image journal to campus, a faith community’s literary and arts journal. He also laid the groundwork for SPU’s well-respected master of fine arts in creative writing program.


“I look forward to shifting my career slightly from teaching to full-time research and writing,” said Walhout of his retirement pursuits. One of his first projects will be a return to his dissertation exploring how American culture was influenced by the Bible, the U.S. Constitution, and Shakespeare—and he’ll also be taking a long-awaited trip to Europe with his wife.
OBITUARY

Frederick led alumni office, then Medical Teams International

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

RICHARD (DICK) FREDERICK ’63 was born on Nov. 19, 1940, in Churchville, New York. In 1951, his family moved to Seattle where Dick eventually attended Lincoln High School and met his wife-to-be, Dixie Noe.

Dick graduated from Seattle Pacific College in 1963. He taught math and physical education and coached wrestling at Edmonds Elementary School and Edmonds Junior High School in Edmonds, Washington.

Dick and his wife raised four daughters. As a father, Dick encouraged his kids to be physically active and set a great example by running two marathons and playing in numerous team sports. Generous with his time, he was always ready for a game of chess or pingpong or to help with a 5 a.m. newspaper route. He also obtained his pilot’s license and took his young daughters for rides over Puget Sound.

In the ’70s, Dick worked at the Cardio and Pulmonary Research Institute (CAPRI), directing the rehabilitation program for heart patients.

In the mid-1980s, he returned to his alma mater, serving as SPU’s Mailing Services supervisor before joining SPU’s Alumni Office as the associate director and director from 1985 to 1996.

Dick’s ability to connect with and inspire people culminated in his work as executive director for Medical Teams International. Dick led fundraising efforts, established mobile dental clinics, and accompanied donors and volunteers on worldwide relief missions to countries such as Uganda, Romania, and Mali.

Dick died on May 13, 2022, at the age of 81.

He was preceded in death by Dixie, his wife of nearly 60 years, and brother WILLIAM FREDERICK ’58. Dick is survived by his daughters, Kim Frederick, Wendy Smith, BRIGETTE FREDERICK HENDRIX ’88, and Brenda Toberman; his brother ROBERT FREDERICK ’60; sister, Mary Sanborn; five grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

PHOTO FROM THE FREDERICK FAMILY

In Memoriam

ESTHER BENNETT ’55 died June 4, 2022, at the age of 90.
ESTHER SORBY BENNETT ’53 died May 27, 2022, at the age of 91.
DONNA BLOSSER ’74 died March 3, 2022, at the age of 70.
VIRGINIA LOCKARD BONO ’74 died Feb. 15, 2022, at the age of 75.
ELLIS CASSON ’62 died June 7, 2022, at the age of 90.
RUTH KRISTERSON CHRISTENSEN ’47 died Sept. 18, 2021, at the age of 96.

PHILIP CLEMENT ’54 died May 30, 2022, at the age of 94.
KIMBERLY CONRAD ’78 died March 22, 2022, at the age of 65.
J. EARL COWLEY died July 9, 2022, at the age of 90.
LEONARD ENSIGN ’51 died July 5, 2022, at age of 93.
RICHARD “DICK” FREDERICK ’63 died May 13, 2022, at the age of 81.
DONALD “DON” GOERTZEN ’53 died July 9, 2022, at the age of 91.
DAVID GRANT ’67 died Feb. 25, 2022, at the age of 78.
JAMES HEDGES ’60 died July 25, 2022, at the age of 82.
DAVID “DAVE” HULLIN ’67 died July 26, 2022, at the age of 80.
KENNETH JONES ’51 died Feb. 27, 2022, at the age of 95.
GERALD “GERRY” KERN MA ’72 died Aug. 15, 2022, at the age of 88.
FRED LAWRENCE ’49 died Feb. 16, 2022, at the age of 100.
V.O. “BUD” MCDOLE ’52 died April 20, 2022, at the age of 92.
ROBERT MCKEOWN ’64 died Nov. 11, 2021, at the age of 79.
ESTHER WESTBY MELCHER ’64 died May 1, 2022, at the age of 80.
LOIS MOGREN ’67 died May 10, 2022, at the age of 98.
ALMA OSTRANDER NEWSOME ’60 died March 24, 2022, at the age of 86.
VIRGINIA “GINNY” NYGARD WORTMAN ’68 died May 4, 2022, at the age of 76.

Births

To JOEL H. PAGET ’67 and Helen Paget, a girl, Liberty, in May 2022. “As attorneys, we believe in justice and liberty,” said Joel. “Thus, we named our daughters Justice and Liberty.”

To CALEB PARKER ’13 and SYDNEY GATES PARKER ’13, a boy, Caden Allen, in June 2022.

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To CALEB PARKER ’13 and SYDNEY GATES PARKER ’13, a boy, Caden Allen, in June 2022.

FALL/WINTER 2022
Amorose trades serving students for serving the environment

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

Growing up near Ohio’s Scioto River, Tom Amorose often felt like Mark Twain’s character Huckleberry Finn. It seems apt for someone who dedicated 26 years to helping Seattle Pacific students navigate not the mighty Mississippi River, but the challenges of young adulthood. Yet, SPU wasn’t his first stop as a professor.

Amorose served for 20 years in the State University of New York at Potsdam in upstate New York, first as an English professor and then as an assistant to the president. But he and his wife missed the Pacific Northwest. He earned his doctorate in 1978 from the University of Washington, and they had purchased a small cottage on Vashon Island.

Amorose and his wife returned to Washington in 1988, and, after teaching in a variety of small writing programs, Amorose joined SPU’s faculty in 1996 as the first director of Campus Writing, a role he kept for 16 years. His publications in the areas of writing-program administration at small colleges and universities have been anthologized and used as the basis for at least one national conference.

Amorose spent 20 years teaching in SPU’s honors program, often walking alongside students from their freshman to senior years. “Students taught me a lot of humility,” he said. “I was always surprised at how strong they are, and I aspire to their strength in meeting challenges.”

Amorose’s first love, early English literature, was the constant throughout his career. His senior-level course on Shakespeare helped many graduating English majors use the Bard of Avon’s plays as a lens to look back on their college experiences and forward into their post-graduate lives. He also took part in several iterations of SPU’s general education program design and served on many faculty task forces and committees.

Upon retirement this year, Amorose continues his research into the rhetoric of public lands in the American West. A longtime resident of Vashon Island, he is the Stewardship Committee chair of the Vashon-Maury Island Trust. And he may also start a nonprofit consultancy to help private forest landowners institute best practices for their forest holdings.

O’Leary retires from the classroom after 32 years

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

Robbin O’Leary has deep roots in the STEM fields. Her father taught high school physics, and her mother taught high school chemistry. Not long after earning a doctorate from the University of Texas in 1990, she joined Seattle Pacific’s Mathematics Department faculty. For the next 32 years, she made an impact on campus, retiring in June 2022.

Students considered her both demanding and fair in the classroom, and O’Leary demonstrated genuine care for her students, not only as learners but also as people.

“Dr. O’Leary is a kind-hearted math enthusiast,” said Emily Bogle ’22. “She finds ways to connect with students across all levels of math.”

Sometimes that meant explaining calculus using Jell-O. And O’Leary considered honeydew melons perfect for “explaining spherical geometry.”

She was a three-time chair of the Mathematics Department and served on the Faculty Status Committee, the Faculty Budget and Stewardship Committee, and the Faculty Affairs Committee.

O’Leary played the cello and sang for multiple community events, including several concerts with the SPU Symphony Orchestra.

After teaching more than 20 different courses — many of which she developed — O’Leary is now enjoying her retirement with her husband. She is involved with the Seattle Mennonite Church, playing her cello on her own schedule and planning visits to the Midwest to visit her two sons and their families.

“I’d been on an academic schedule since kindergarten,” she said. “Now we’re able to choose to do things based on what works for us, rather than what fits into our schedule, which is freeing.”
Ferreiro made history come alive in the classroom

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

UNTIL HE RETIRED in June 2022, Alberto Ferreiro was a fixture at the front of SPU’s history classes for 36 years. Ferreiro is an internationally renowned expert on ancient and Medieval history, church history, and European history, and has been published in multiple languages.

His interest in the distant past developed as a child when his grandmother, a history teacher, shared countless stories with him, and one of his grandfathers helped make history by fighting alongside the legendary Pancho Villa and Zapata Salazar during the Mexican Revolution in the early 20th century.

Ferreiro joined SPU in 1986, and steadily became one of the University’s most prolific scholars. In addition to participating in conferences throughout the world, he wrote more than a dozen books, including a contribution to InterVarsity Press’ Ancient Christian Commentary: Vol. 14: The Twelve Prophets.

In addition to his native Spanish, Ferreiro is fluent in English and can converse in Italian, Portuguese, French, and Catalan. He reads Latin and, “like all, suffers through German” he noted, with his characteristic dry humor.

In 1989, he founded a study abroad program called the University of Salamanca (Spain) Summer Language and Culture Program. During the program’s 30-year tenure, 900 students participated.

Ferreiro continues to organize and lead two-week Carmelite Pilgrimages to Spain and teach adult learners in Seattle-area Catholic parishes as they prepare to join the church. Soon after he retired in June 2022, Ferreiro gave a lecture at NOVA University in Lisbon, Portugal, to inaugurate a section of the library at its Institute of Medieval Studies, which was named after him.

Ferreiro may teach an occasional course at SPU, but he intends to spend his retirement with his family and with travels to Spain, Germany, and England for upcoming conferences.

Building eternity with hammer and nails

BY PATRICIA DOYLE

AFTER PASTORING SEVERAL CHURCHES in Washington, Joseph Earl Cowley worked as a carpenter and Plant Services manager at SPU from 1982 to 1999. People often heard him whistling songs outside Tiffany Hall, so he quickly became known as the carpenter who whistled while he worked.

Cowley was an accomplished finish carpenter, and he oversaw the remodeling of the president’s home on campus. He also worked with the Plant Services crew to implement high quality repairs that didn’t have to be redone, saving the University thousands of dollars every year.

In 1986, Cowley received two awards, “Classified Staff Person of the Year,” and the “Oral V. Henry Award.”

“In life and in work, Earl wasn’t concerned about building a résumé. His bigger priority — his eternal priority — was showing God’s love and kindness to the people around him,” said his daughter, PATRICIA DOYLE ’87. “Over the years, as I told people that my dad worked at SPU, they often assumed my dad was a professor. They’d ask me what subject he taught. I would reply that my dad was a carpenter who made a big impact. During my years as a student, although I made many friends, I was proud to be better known as ‘Earl’s daughter.””

At SPU, Cowley was especially devoted to mentoring his fellow carpenters and the work-study students in Plant Services. He believed people should be able to work with their hands in some capacity, and he invested in everyone he worked with.

“If you happened to know Earl, even outside of Plant Services, then you knew he cared about you. It wasn’t just talk with him either. It was action. He freely gave his time and his labor to others,” Doyle said.

Cowley went home to be with the Lord on July 9, 2022, at the age of 90.
A light that engulfs the darkness

BY BRIAN LUGIOYO

JOHN THE BAPTIST is a central figure during Advent, and, in this 17th century Russian Orthodox icon, he has wings. He’s angelic. He is a messenger.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 3:2, NRSV)

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance.” (Luke 3:7b-8a, NRSV)

It might come as no surprise to you that John’s Advent message isn’t sung much. There is no “Brood of Vipers” Christmas carol. There’s quite a distance from, “Repent! Bear fruit worthy of repentance!” to “All I Want for Christmas ... ”

I love Christmas songs. All of them. And yet, ironically, they tend to obscure the truth of Christmas. They are overindulgent and mushy. Consequently, our energetic commitment to Christmas sentimentality makes listening to John strange.

“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.” (John 1:6-9, NRSV)

No matter how many Christmas songs we sing or Christmas lights we put up, the world we live in is dark. This year’s litany of darkness is exhausting: war in Ukraine; mass shootings across the nation; the continuation of COVID-19; fractured political discourse; racial unrest; growing homelessness; deep anxiousness; and countless failing relationships.

It is no surprise that we desperately grasp on to that familiar sentimentality to dull the pain. We might truly need cute Nativity plays and silly Santa songs.

Or might we need more than that?

John knows we need something more. He doesn’t mince words. He turns us to the light. He testifies to Jesus, who has and is coming into the darkness that engulfs us. John’s message ensures us that the darkness will not engulf us because we are not alone in the dark. Rejoice!

If you are exhausted this year by the amount of effort put into fabricating some form of innocent joy to dull the pain: Repent! Let go of that and learn true joy. And rejoice! For the light has come into the world and shines in our darkness. Let the light show you that you are God’s child, “not born of the will of man, but of the will of God.”

John the Baptist is embarrassingly strange to Christians, yet he is one of the central figures of Advent sent to prepare us for Christmas. Which is why Donald Heinz, a Lutheran minister and author, says, “Getting Christmas right improves the chances of getting ourselves right.”

And I imagine that getting Christmas right, especially for most of us this season, might mean listening to John’s angelic words: Repent! Bear fruit worthy of repentance! Rejoice! The Light has come and is coming. Rejoice!

The Rev. Dr. Brian Lugioyo is dean of the School of Theology and Seattle Pacific Seminary. He is also a professor of theology and ethics.
Every year, SPU holds a pep rally for first year students before they leave campus and “March to the Match” at Interbay Stadium to watch their first soccer game as new Falcons.
PARENTS: Is this magazine addressed to an SPU graduate who has moved elsewhere? Help us update our records at spu.edu/response.

Every Falcon leaves a legacy

What will yours be?

“We value the Christian education we received at SPU and want SPU students to benefit from the same opportunities we received.”

The legacy of Don Bilderback ’69 and Becky Belcher Bilderback ’68 is composed of multiple gifts planned for Seattle Pacific University, including a scholarship endowment for Christian students from Free Methodist backgrounds; a testamentary endowment to fund Free Methodist faculty housing; an income-producing charitable remainder trust they established with appreciated stock in which the charitable remainder will go entirely to their endowments; and an IRA they are leaving to their endowments.

Read the Bilderbacks’ story online at spu.edu/significance

Please contact the Office of Endowments and Gift Planning with any questions about charitable estate gifts or endowment funds at 206-281-2072, giftplanning@spu.edu or legacy.spu.edu.