

SOUND OF SUCCESS
Jazzman tops charts

CAREER CALLING
Audiologist's journey

Ever
Onward
A momentous
campaign begins (page 10)

kansasalumni

ISSUE 4 | FALL 2023 | \$7



Our Feathered Friend

At last, a definitive history



THE JAYHAWK
THE STORY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS'S
BELOVED MASCOT

REBECCA OZIER SCHULTE



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Talk and squawk in the news



COURTESY LIED CENTER



“That’s going down in history, whereas most of the stuff I do, people won’t remember.”

—Comedian Nikki Glaser, c’06, on being a clue in The New York Times Sunday crossword puzzle, in an October interview with The Kansas City Star. Glaser returned to KU with “The Good Girl Tour” Oct. 29 at the Lied Center.

ALAMY



“This wasn’t a TV movie—it was the Super Bowl.”

—Emmy magazine in September reflecting on the legacy of ABC’s “The Day After” 40 years after its release. Filmed largely in Lawrence, “The Day After” premiered Nov. 20, 1983, to an audience of over 100 million and remains the most watched TV movie in U.S. history.

KANSAS ATHLETICS



“What a day at The Booth. Rock Chalk! Keep going.”

“It’s not an upset until you’ve thrown goalposts in a lake.”

—Social media posts from KU football coach Lance Leipold (top quote) and Chris Vannini, senior writer for The Athletic, following KU’s 38-33 victory over No. 6 Oklahoma on Oct. 28. The win was the Jayhawks’ first against the Sooners since 1997 and first against a top 10 opponent at home since 1984.

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“I had no direction until cheese.”

—Cheese aficionado Rachael Lucas, c’04, on finding her calling in the curd, in a May interview with cheeseprofessor.com. As “The Cheese Lady,” Lucas crafts cheese platters, perfects cheese and wine pairings, and hosts cheese events and classes in northwest Washington state.



COURTESY RACHAEL LUCAS



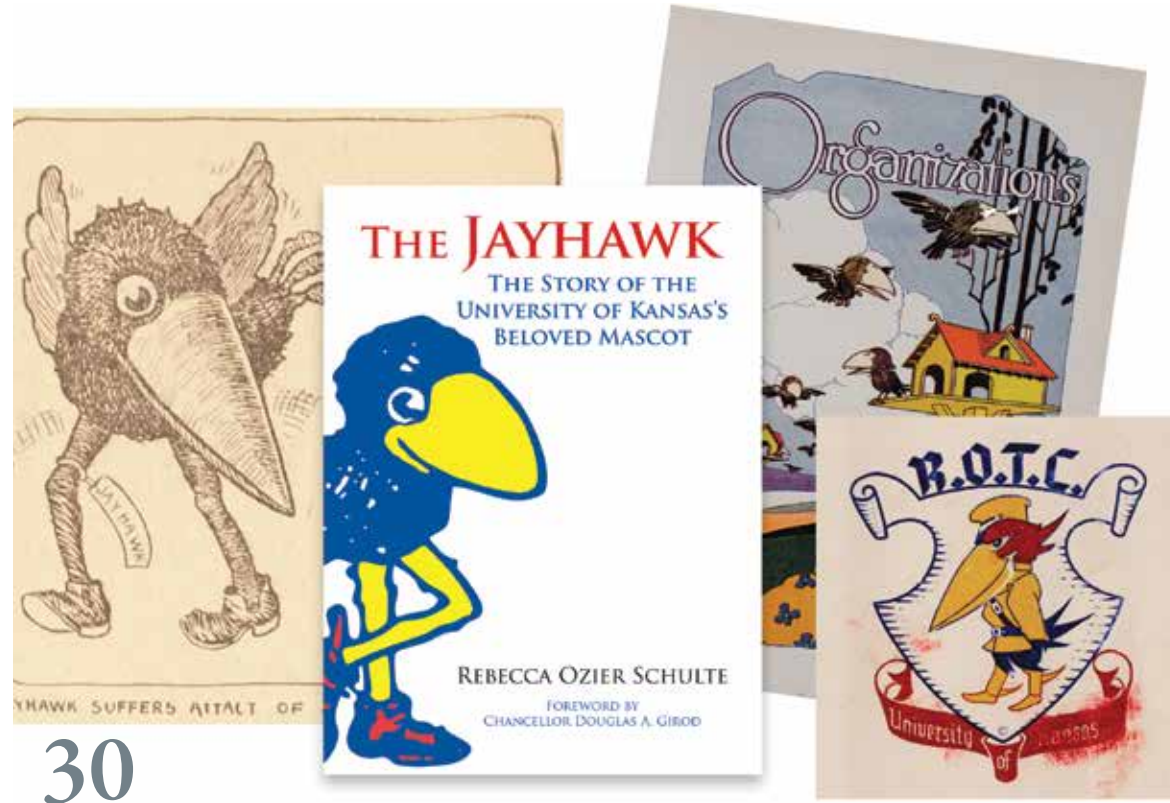
COVER STORY

At Long Last

A comprehensive look at the Jayhawk considers the cherished bird's place in our hearts and in the history of Kansas and KU.

by *Chris Lazzarino*

Cover photo illustration
by *Susan Younger*



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Beat of a Different Drum

Brandon Sanders arrived on the jazz scene much like he plays: in his own sweet time.

by *Steven Hill*



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Life, Amplified

An audiologist's own experience with hearing loss enables her to offer patients compassion along with care.

by *Megan Hirt*



FALL 2023

Publisher

Heath Peterson, d'04, g'09

Editor

Jennifer Jackson Sanner, j'81

Creative Director

Susan Younger, f'91

Associate Editors

Chris Lazzarino, j'86
Steven Hill

Assistant Editor

Megan Hirt, c'08, j'08

Photographers

Steve Puppe, j'98
Dan Storey

Graphic Designers

Toni Brou, f'91
Chris Millspaugh, f'97

Digital Team

Mary Padilla, j'88
Ryan Camenzind, j'17
Noelle Husmann
Kate Neuner

Advertising Sales

Teri Harris
Brett Leonard, d'09

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Chasing her Olympic goal, a Team USA athlete gets a kick out of proving doubters wrong.

by *Chris Lazzarino*

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Digital Feature

KU Alumni Association Annual Report
kualumni.org/annual-report

Jayhawks Belong

Watch episode three, "Fuel the Future," in the Association's "Together We Rise" video series at kualumni.org/jayhawks-belong.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Kansas Alumni welcomes letters to the editor. Our address is *Kansas Alumni* magazine, 1266 Oread Avenue, Lawrence, KS 66045-3100. Email responses may be sent to the Alumni Association, kualumni@kualumni.org. Please limit your comments to 350 words. Letters appearing in the magazine may be edited for space and clarity.

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Jennifer Jackson Sanner, Editor September 15, 2023



Taylor-made

COULD THIS have been a more timely cover? No. No, it could not.

—Michelle Betts Strickland, j'93
Lenexa

Here's to summer

KUDOS TO EVERYONE involved in the summer issue of *Kansas Alumni*. Jennifer Jackson Sanner and her magazine team are at the top of their game.

When you can put together an issue that features Bob Dole, the Tan Man, Taylor Swift, KU's fourth astronaut, and so much more, you've found a way to make me feel even prouder to be a Jayhawk.

Each issue is a cornucopia of incredible photography, diverse and insightful stories, and plenty of exciting updates about what's happening in the 66045. Most KU alumni don't get to see the alumni publications of other universities. Trust me, *Kansas Alumni* is in a class of its own.

Finally, a huge shoutout to this year's recipients of the Alumni Association's Fred Ellsworth Medallion. No one

better embodies service to KU than David Mucci and Dale Seuferling. Their combined 64 years of dedication leave an impressive and lasting legacy in the lives of all the thousands of students they helped achieve their dreams.

—David Adkins, c'83, l'86
Lexington, Kentucky

Rural refuge

THANK YOU for the story on Wilson in the latest issue of *Kansas Alumni* ["Rural Renewal," issue No. 3].

My family and I stayed at the Midland Hotel in Wilson in the early 1970s, seeking shelter from a ferocious rainstorm replete with tornado warnings while driving back to San Francisco from St. Louis. I figured this substantial limestone edifice would give us great protection, and I loved the opportunity to visit the "Czech Capital of Kansas."

The Midland was a charming throwback. It had no air conditioning, but cross breezes were facilitated in each room by a pair of swinging hallway doors, just like a tavern

entrance, with a hook-and-eye latch for security. A funky bar downstairs served the usual 3.2% beer.

We got an education on storm preparedness while listening to our car radio, as lightning and thunder surrounded us. We heard ads for storm insurance, storm damage repair and ... funeral homes!

I am so glad the Midland has survived, revived and reopened.

—Michael S. McGill, b'65
Alexandria, Virginia

Progress perspective

IN 1976 I MARRIED a young Black woman who grew up in the 1950s to 1970s on the east side of the Troost Wall, the daughter of a single mother who worked at some of the famous Kansas City barbecue restaurants.

She experienced prejudice growing up (including not being allowed to visit J.C. Nichols' Country Club Plaza) and during her time attending the University of Missouri-Kansas City, but as a couple we often frequented the Plaza, with just one unpleasant

experience. As a young family, we also enjoyed Loose Park and the 1850s outdoor museum near Lee's Summit.

However, we chose to leave in the early 1980s, partly due to the rigid segregation of the city.

"KC and its QB" [Rock Chalk Review, issue No. 3] discusses strides the book *Kingdom Quarterback* argues have been made to address segregation and prejudice in the city, but it does not address two profound areas of progress regarding race in the U.S. that are very relevant to the story: the radical change in acceptance, over recent years, of interracial families and relationships, which includes Mahomes' own biological family, and the gradual move away from the Jim Crow-era one-drop rule that forced anyone with any African heritage to identify as Black.

I am not sure why the authors of the article and/or the book omit these two critically important areas of racial progress. Maybe Kansas City has not made all the strides the authors claim?

—Francis Wardle, PhD'83
Denver



Midland Railroad Hotel, Wilson

Editor's note: An article in issue No. 3 ["Made in the shade," Rock Chalk Review] misidentified the School of Architecture & Design students who completed a project at Clinton Lake Marina. They are in the architecture program, not industrial design.



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CHRIS LAZZARINO



FOR MANY JAYHAWKS, the voices of favorite KU teachers echo often. We instantly conjure images of them in the classroom, imparting lessons that still guide us.

My long list of Mount Oread muses includes cherished professors of journalism, English, political science and history whose courses I eagerly sought. But the KU voice I hear most belongs to Dan Reeder, j'71, g'74, whose class I did not want. In fact, I considered it a lame consolation prize when I drew a short straw on the first day of school in August 1980.

On that sweaty day in Flint Hall (two years before it became Stauffer-Flint), too many seniors had signed up for a required design course taught by Professor Lee Young, g'68, the saintly sage of the "magazine sequence" in the School of Journalism. Young decided that the fairest solution was to draw straws. Students who pulled short straws would be banished to a class taught by some character named Dan Reeder, editor of some magazine I'd never heard of, *Kansas Alumni*, published by an organization that was a mystery.

As I grudgingly trudged to the *other* class, I could never have dreamed that he would become a trusted teacher. Class was a blast, and I learned a lot.

In 1984, he also became my wise and generous mentor, guiding me into a surprising career that I relish to this day.

Sadly, I also relish the memory of my mentor. Dan died Sept. 20, of lung cancer, at his home in Texas. His son, Tim, '03, emailed me the awful news.

Tributes from scores of friends and family members attest that Dan was indeed quite a character. I am one of many who owe their careers to him.

Four years after taking his class, I was searching for a new job as a young graduate. I had spent two years with a struggling magazine, then tried a corporate communications gig that was not the right fit. I wrote to Dan.

He kindly replied, explaining that *Kansas Alumni* had no openings. I wrote back, thanking him for the nicest rejection letter I had ever received. After more back-and-forth, he finally relented and hired me as a staff writer.

My first clue that he would be a spectacular boss came the weekend before my first day of work, when Dan and his delightful wife, Janet, invited my husband, Bob, and me to their home for a party with lots of KU staff members. (Who invites the new kid before she's even on the job?) I arrived a nervous wreck, but by the end of the

night, I had found my people.

So began a magical year with Dan and his merry band of exquisitely talented pranksters: Karen Goodell, '01; Chuck Marsh, c'77, g'80, PhD'85; Christina Jepsen, '82; and Earl Richardson, j'83, l'08. Together they had already put *Kansas Alumni* on the national map, winning a slew of top awards as the rare alumni periodical that told vivid stories with honesty and humor. Dan had an uncanny knack for knowing when to be reverent and when to be silly, always striving to remind Jayhawks of their home and the alma mater he adored. We all had a blast, and I learned a lot.

In 1985, after nine years as *Kansas Alumni* editor, Dan left the Alumni Association to start his own advertising, design and consulting agency, Reeder & Co., where he parlayed his formidable talents into even more success, advising universities and a vast range of other clients near and far.

One of the firm's first big projects was Campaign Kansas, KU Endowment's fundraising drive that publicly launched in 1988. Dan also designed Endowment's logo, which endures.

After Campaign Kansas roared to success, Endowment in 1996 again called on Reeder & Co. to provide creative force for the next campaign, KU First.

It is fitting that this issue of *Kansas Alumni* features the launch of Endowment's current campaign, Ever Onward, on page 10. Our final page hails the far-reaching impact of Elizabeth Miller Watkins, one of KU's earliest and most important benefactors. She began the tradition of extraordinary loyalty and philanthropy that has helped lift KU to prominence.

Along the way, many thousands of Jayhawks have carried on her legacy in countless ways, both large and small. I will always be grateful for the opportunity to know a few of them—all because of the lucky day when a short straw led me to Dan Reeder.

—JENNIFER JACKSON SANNER

WITH STADIUM renovations commencing immediately following the season, the Oct. 28 Homecoming game—a memorable upset of Oklahoma by coach Lance Leipold’s fighting Jayhawks—was one of a dwindling few opportunities for photographers to capture the Marching Jayhawks’ pregame pomp from press box perches.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
STEVE PUPPE





Chancellor Doug Girod led a toast to the monumental campaign and its goal of raising \$2.5 billion "to make our world better together."



STEVE POPPE (4)

KU COMMUNITY

Enormous endeavor

Historic campaign aims to propel KU Ever Onward

ON A GLORIOUS FALL EVENING, nearly 700 Jayhawks gathered Oct. 19 to launch the University's largest, most comprehensive campaign in its history: Ever Onward, which seeks to raise \$2.5 billion to transform KU, The University of Kansas Health System and Kansas Athletics and help solve some of the world's most daunting challenges.

In a fitting testament to the power of philanthropy, KU Endowment hosted the celebration in the Jayhawk Welcome Center and renovated Adams Alumni Center, the newest of many KU structures—more than 60% of all buildings—funded by donors' private gifts.

Like most memorable Jayhawk occasions, the evening emphasized camaraderie and school spirit. Guests visited displays touting the work of numerous KU entities included in the campaign, and at 7 p.m. all eyes turned to video screens throughout the building—especially the 34-foot behemoth in the lobby—to view the soul-stirring anthem video, which combined powerful words; vivid images of people, places and memories; and rousing renditions of a revered melody to reveal the campaign theme. Following the three-minute clarion call, a second video featured campaign leaders and their heartfelt messages.

To further outline the massive scope of Ever Onward, KU Endowment on Oct. 20 unveiled kueveronward.org, a dynamic website that features the videos, details the campaign's goals, and reports

impressive progress: Since 2018, during the "quiet phase," donors already have contributed \$1.4 billion in gifts and pledges.

The website will continue to highlight campaign news through 2028, when, as Chancellor Doug Girod declared, "We intend to celebrate having raised \$2.5 billion to save lives, to change lives, to improve lives, and to make our world better together. We invite you to march ever onward with us."

The theme, of course, echoes the alma mater, but more important, it signifies the collective energy and optimism fueled by recent successes, including:

- The University of Kansas Cancer Center's ascension to comprehensive National Cancer Institute designation; it is one of only 54 comprehensive centers in the nation;
- Five consecutive years of growth in KU's overall research expenditures;
- The largest freshman class in history this fall;
- A resurgent athletics program, led by Kansas football.

As campaign co-chair Howard Cohen described, "The momentum of our university has never been greater. University leadership are united in their vision. This is our time."

Cohen, b'79, leads the historic venture with his wife, Debra, assoc.; David, b'73, and Dee Ehling Dillon, d'72; and Greg and Deanna Graves. The steering committee includes 16 diverse alumni leaders. "We are so excited about this campaign,



and it gives us a chance to pay forward what KU did for us," Cohen continued. "This is our chance to be part of that positive change, to be architects of a brighter future and to leave a legacy for generations to come."

Dan Martin, Endowment president, urged fellow alumni to consider KU's impact in their own lives. "The influence is undeniable," said Martin, l'93, g'93, EdD'98. "I see it through my degrees that both prepared me and propelled me on my life's career path, as well as through the leading clinical trials and world-class care provided to my father, who had Alzheimer's, and my sister, who had cancer."

The continuing quest to conquer dreaded diseases is among the driving forces of Ever Onward, said Bob Page, Health System CEO, who vowed that KU will become a leader in cellular therapy—the future of cancer treatment—and the destination for the most advanced research and treatment in brain health.

Girod, who began his KU career in 1994 as a head-and-neck surgeon and led the Medical Center as executive vice chancellor before becoming chancellor in 2017, invoked the spirit of early Kansans as he rallied the faithful: "Together, we forge new ideas, cures, and prepare young adults for meaningful lives. We build character and discipline. We take responsibility, and we inspire action, just as Kansans have done in the very beginning."

Tammy Mauck Peterman, n'81, g'97, president of the Health System's Kansas City division, succinctly captured the essence of Ever Onward in true Kansas style:

"We are always proud, but never satisfied. We still have more work to do."

—JENNIFER JACKSON SANNER

EVER ONWARD

TOWARD INFINITE POSSIBILITY

Passion and purpose

Ever Onward's priorities align with KU's Jayhawks Rising strategic plan: Student Access & Success, Healthy & Vibrant Communities, and Research & Discovery. Leaders have identified five overarching goals; for descriptions of all goals for academic units and other entities, visit kueveronward.org.



The next-generation KU Cancer Center

Having achieved NCI comprehensive designation in 2022, the Cancer Center will next build a new headquarters on the Kansas City campus to unite clinical and research programs scattered throughout the metro area. The new building will provide an ideal setting for patients and their families as well as the scientists and clinicians who join forces to provide the most advanced clinical trials and treatment.

The Gateway District

Renovations of David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium will anchor a new campus entrance and multi-use complex at 11th and Mississippi streets. The development will begin with a conference center on the north end of the stadium, and future additions on the east side could include retail, entertainment and other commerce. The district will attract year-round activity and drive new revenue to fund academic and student-success programs as well as economic development for Lawrence and the entire state.



Student access and success

Scholarships funded by private donors provide life-changing opportunities for students. Each year more than 8,100 KU students benefit from scholarships, and additional funds are available to help students cope with emergencies so they can remain in school and complete their degrees.

Research recruitment

As one of 38 public research universities in the prestigious Association of American Universities, KU must continue to attract and retain the most talented researchers, whose discoveries improve lives throughout Kansas and far beyond. KU's Innovation Park and other initiatives provide environments where researchers can thrive.

Research collaboration

Although external grants fund numerous projects, researchers also rely on the University's vital administrative and financial support for infrastructure and operations. These funds are especially important to advance collaborations that unite scholars from multiple disciplines to tackle the most complex challenges.

—J.J.S.

“People comment that they weren’t expecting handwritten postcards from their admissions representative or from the ambassador on their campus tour. I think that personalization is impressive and makes them feel like we want them here—which is exactly what it’s intended to do.”

—Lisa Pinamonti Kress



STEVE PUPPE

STUDENTS

‘Banner year’

Enrollment numbers rise by every metric, including largest freshman class in KU history

CHANCELLOR DOUG GIROD on Sept. 27 announced the “incredible news” that KU had welcomed 5,259 new Jayhawks in the fall 2023 freshman class, setting an all-time record that represents “a whopping 18% year-over-year from last year, which was the *second*-largest class in history.”

Girod credited several factors for the surge: marketing and recruitment strategies; realigned financial aid packages, plus additional need-based financial aid provided by the state; a vibrant national profile, thanks in part to KU’s stature as a research university and its successful athletics programs; and the lustrous new Jayhawk Welcome Center at the Adams Alumni Center.

This year’s freshman class arrived with an average GPA of 3.65, just .01 less than the records set in 2021 and 2022.

Officials also described this year’s freshmen as “the most diverse class” in history, with growth of 14.8% in minority students. Overall, 25.7% of all KU students are from underrepresented groups—the highest percentage on record and an overall increase of 9.4% from last year.

Total enrollment across all classes and campuses is 29,355, a jump of 6.2% and the largest enrollment since 2010.

“Without question,” Girod said, “this is a banner year for KU.”

Nick Stevens, b’06, vice provost for enrollment management, noted that international undergraduate enrollment was flat, adding that enrollment and admissions teams will work closely with international affairs colleagues to boost that category for 2024. Otherwise, Stevens, like the chancellor, offered nothing but good news.

“The main surprise,” Stevens said, “is that every type of student and market segment was up by every metric. That was definitely a surprise for us. Some days it honestly made it difficult what to focus on for that last push, but it’s a good problem to have.”

Lisa Pinamonti Kress, g’98, director of admissions, cited KU’s switch to awarding merit scholarships based only on GPA as a contributing factor to bigger and better numbers. She also praised the combined influences of student ambassadors and the Jayhawk Welcome Center on the campus visit program.

“We work hard to personalize our recruitment efforts, which I feel is somewhat of a surprise being at a large public university,” Kress said. “People comment that they weren’t expecting handwritten postcards from their admissions representative or from the ambassador on their campus tour. I think that personalization is impressive and makes them

feel like we want them here—which is exactly what it’s intended to do.”

After Kress praised the Jayhawk Welcome Center’s “wow factor,” the chancellor credited the Alumni Association fundraising that made the project possible. “What an asset it’s been,” he said.

“Just last week,” Kress said Oct. 10, “someone said, ‘We’ve been to five places, and this visit was the best out of all of them,’ and the student on Friday convinced her parents to stay the night so they could go to the game on Saturday. She sent me an email and said she plans to be a Jayhawk, so that makes all the difference.”

Amid the well-deserved celebrations, Girod also reminded the University community of its responsibility to help ensure that the new Jayhawks enjoy successful academic careers and advance steadily toward their walk down the Hill at Commencement. Although the six-year graduation rate this year reached 68.7%—what Stevens described as a “significant bump” of 1.4%, in a category where even 1% growth is difficult to achieve—work remains.

“It’s great that we’re at all-time highs, particularly in the graduation rate category, by far the best in the state,” Girod said, “but it’s certainly not where we want it to be.”

Noting the Dec. 1 scholarship application deadline, Girod in his Sept. 27 message to campus urged all Jayhawks to “remain focused on our efforts to recruit and retain students and create a university they want to attend. Higher education is facing strong headwinds, and enrollments nationally are expected to drop in the coming years. That’s why we must continue to improve our university through our strategic priorities, which align with the Kansas Board of Regents’ strategic plan, the needs of Kansas businesses and communities, and our aspirations as one of the nation’s leading research institutions.”

For those interested in detailed breakdowns of enrollment numbers, links to data pages can be found at bit.ly/KUFreshmanClass.

—CHRIS LAZZARINO



Largest freshman class ever

- **5,259** new Jayhawks (+18% from 2022)
- **3.65** average high school GPA
- **1,457** minority freshmen (+14.8% and the largest freshman total in history)
- **In-state freshmen: +13.8%**
- **Out-of-state freshmen: +24%**
- **Architecture, Business, Education, Engineering and Journalism** set new freshman enrollment records.

Overall enrollment

- **29,355** students (+6.2%, the highest total since 2010)
- **Lawrence/Edwards: +6.7%**
- **KU Medical Center: +3.2%**
- **25.7%** Overall minority enrollment (+9.4% to **7,547** students, the largest in history)
- **1,924** active-duty, veteran, military-connected students (+28%, highest total on record)

Freshman retention

- **85.1%** of fall 2022 first-year, full-time students returned (higher than the previous two years’ percentages of **84.7%** each)

Full-time freshman graduation

- **55.5%** of the fall 2019 class graduated in **4 years** (highest on record)
- **66.1%** of the fall 2018 class graduated in **5 years** (highest on record)
- **68.7%** of the fall 2017 class graduated in **6 years** (highest on record)



COURTESY HANNAH SCHIFMAN (3)

ALUMNI

Bread maven

In challah, alumna finds cultural connection and creativity

IN THE DEPTHS of the pandemic, when social distancing and a flood of free time inspired a sourdough surge nationwide that produced droves of loaves, one burgeoning baker took a different approach to the home-baking renaissance. Hannah Schifman, c'18, returned to a quest she had begun while a KU student: perfecting her own recipe for challah, the braided bread that is central to Jewish culture and faith.

What started as a way for Schifman to maintain connections with the Jewish community during a time of isolation has since evolved into something bigger. Challah by Hannah, the pop-up bakery she runs in New York City, where she works at the International Center of Photography, has a loyal customer base for the “challah drops” she announces periodically in her email newsletter.

The “Kansas girl in a tiny Brooklyn apartment kitchen,” as she brands herself on Instagram, is harnessing social media and a willingness to experiment to expand her reach, but it’s her mastery of the traditional loaf that has gained the most



Schifman

attention. The online dining guide Eater New York recently praised her bread as “the holy grail of challah.”

Schifman spent much of her childhood in places with little or no Jewish presence before moving to Topeka in middle school. The sense of community she discovered in the city grew stronger when she came to KU and began to take advantage of the social and leadership opportunities offered by KU Hillel. “That became my core social bubble,” she says. “Having that opportunity to be involved and connected in that way at KU really strengthened my Jewish identity.”

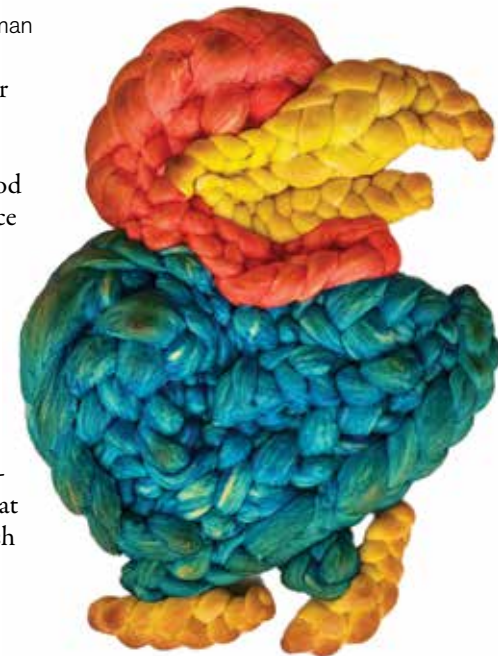
A pivotal moment in her KU experience came while attending the Kansas Women’s Leadership Institute. Part of the Women’s Global Leadership Consortium funded by the U.S. Department of State, the annual summer institute brings together women from Kansas and countries around the world. A highlight is a communal meal where each participant makes a dish that represents their culture.

“It was a little challenging for us folks from Kansas,” Schifman recalls. “Some made casseroles. I was like, ‘Let’s try to make challah. Let’s bring in my Jewish identity.’ I had not really made it before.”

By 2020, she had earned a bachelor’s in art history from KU and a master’s from Marist University and was serving an internship at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City when COVID-19 brought everything to a halt. She returned to Topeka, where she had access to her mother’s three-oven kitchen. Looking for something to do and craving connection, she began baking enough challah to share with other members of the Jewish community.

“Not being able to go to services and be physically connected—that was something I did not want to lose,” she says. “It was mostly the same group of people every week, and they would be so happy when I came by to deliver to them.”

Challah is a yeast-leavened bread enriched with eggs that is traditionally



served on the Sabbath and many Jewish holidays. It’s typically braided, and the number of strands—which can symbolize love, truth, peace, justice and various other tenets of the Jewish faith—can vary based on the baker’s preference.

Not satisfied with the commercial loaves she tasted, Schifman worked to recreate the challah she experienced at temple, “when a grandma or someone in the community” would make the bread for Shabbat.

Long after the lockdowns ended, Schifman kept honing her recipe, perfecting a loaf that melds a slightly sweet honey flavor with a light crust and a soft interior that easily pulls apart. Eater New York noted, “The golden crust has just the right sheen, nothing dull or taut going on there, and the interior is pillowy and moist, but sturdy. A superior challah like that isn’t so easy to come by.”

After mastering the traditional loaf, Schifman began innovating. She added herbs from her mother’s garden, and incorporated “everything” seasoning to create a bagel-adjacent challah. She made one sweet loaf featuring her favorite dark chocolate and another inspired by cinnamon rolls. She branched out from the traditional braid design, fashioning an arrowhead-shaped challah she delivered to “Saturday Night Live” cast member Heidi Gardner, ’06, when Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce hosted the show last spring. And she perfectly captured the iconic shape—and colors—of the KU mascot with a Jayhawk challah during March Madness.

Working out of a small kitchen limits her baking—“I can barely shuffle out 20 loaves, and even that’s a bit much,” she says—but Schifman can imagine a day when she may want to grow. For now, she’s happy to build on challah tradition with new flavors and shapes while maintaining her Jewish and Jayhawk roots, the latter nurtured by siblings currently on the Hill.

“The different years of Jayhawks, with the progression from the 1912 mascot,” muses Schifman, “that’d be really fun.”

—STEVEN HILL

BOOKS

Rock Chalk raconteur

Devoted Jayhawk dishes on his favorite topics

CURTIS MARSH readily admits he fell hard for KU and Lawrence.

As a student in the late 1980s and early ’90s, he soaked up Mount Oread traditions and, with his cadre of quirky kindred spirits, helped create a few.

In his career of 30-plus years on the Hill, Marsh, j’92, has become known as an ambassador of KU culture and lore. For 15 years, he directed KU Info, where he and his student proteges prided themselves on answering questions both essential and trivial. He then became the first director of the DeBruce Center, home of Dr. James Naismith’s original “Rules of Basketball.” Both roles were tailor-made for a raconteur who is always eager to spin tales of memorable Jayhawk exploits.

Now an associate director of development for KU Endowment, Marsh in October published some of his favorite stories in *KU-phoria*, a collection of personal anecdotes and explorations of notable people, places and episodes from Jayhawk history and traditions, especially basketball.

In 2020, as Marsh contemplated his passion project, he drew inspiration from reading *Sports Stories*, the final book published by legendary KU basketball coach Forrest C. “Phog” Allen, who shared seemingly random anecdotes that Marsh found compelling. “It almost felt like he was giving me permission to do the same,” Marsh writes in his *KU-phoria* introduction, explaining that he has assembled his stories in “Rock Chalkological” order.

Marsh recounts the history of campus landmarks—the original Snow Hall, Hoch Auditorium’s resurrection as Budig Hall, and favorite monuments and statues—

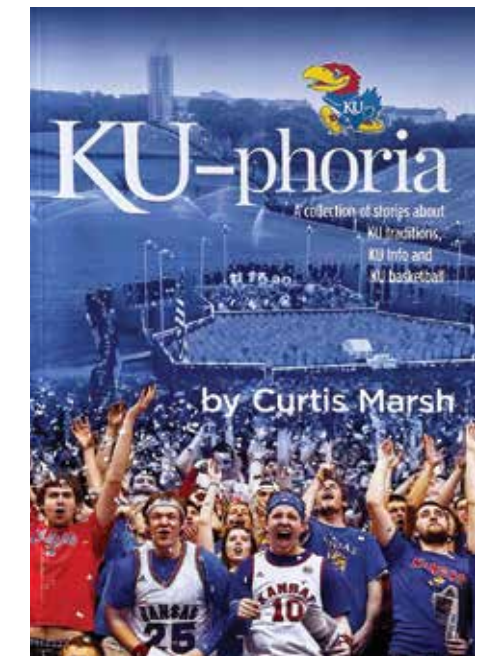
along with lessons in leadership that he has shared with students through the years.

On the lighter side, he pays tribute to little-known, beloved characters such as The Candy Lady, and he traces the origins of fans’ distinctive rituals, including the complicated clap to “I’m a Jayhawk” and old-school student camping outside Allen Field House—two tales he has shared in recent years with readers of *Kansas Alumni* and the Alumni Association’s blog.

Sprinkled among the pages are brief interludes from KU Info, highlighting some of the more popular and obscure questions Marsh and his students fielded through the years.

The result is a charming homage, told with humor and affection, as if the author were chatting with the reader over coffee or a beer in a favorite Lawrence hangout. Like so many fellow Jayhawks, Curtis Marsh is still captivated by KU.

—JENNIFER JACKSON SANNER



KU-phoria
by Curtis Marsh
KU Libraries, \$24.99



Jayhawk Spirit

in Every Gift



BOOKS

Accidents happen

Journalist's reporting traces troubling history of biolab leaks

As COVID-19 began spreading throughout China and the rest of the planet in early 2020, public health officials searched for an explanation of the growing contagion's origins. Although early investigations focused on live animal markets in Wuhan, a city of 8 million, an alternative theory soon emerged.

Wuhan is home to China's first biosafety level 4 laboratory, a facility with strict, high-containment safety protocols that allow scientists to conduct research on dangerous pathogens such as SARS-like coronaviruses from bats. Was it possible that the coronavirus spreading across the globe came not from live bats in a public market, but from a lab leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology?

As investigative journalist Alison Young writes in *Pandora's Gamble: Lab Leaks, Pandemics, and a World at Risk*, the backlash to this idea was swift, not only from the Chinese government, but also from leading scientists around the world, including the United States. "An extraordinary effort" was made to shut down any investigation of a lab accident in China, Young writes, and the theory was "derided by many scientists and journalists who publicly branded it a conspiracy theory." The issue was complicated by President Donald Trump's China-bashing rhetoric and America's deep political divisions, but at the heart of the argument against the lab-leak hypothesis was the conviction that in these multimillion-dollar facilities, where the latest high-tech safety equipment is operated under strict research standards, accidents are extremely rare.

Yet, as Young, j'88, writes in her exhaustively researched, deeply troubling history of biosafety failures, "This wasn't the stuff of crazy, politically driven conspiracy theories."

In fact, lab accidents are not rare. Nor are they totally unpublicized, despite efforts by a wide range of



Young

players to hide them or downplay their significance.

Young has brought many of these accidents to light as a reporter and editor for USA Today, the Detroit Free Press and the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, and as an independent investigative journalist focusing on health, environmental and consumer issues. Her reporting details appalling breaches of safety protocols at labs widely considered among the top biological research facilities in the world. Two of her more alarming tales are:

- The 2018 overflow of wastewater at a U.S. Army biolab that may have spilled anthrax and the Ebola virus through downtown Frederick, Virginia; and
- The 2014 discovery of forgotten vials of smallpox virus in a National Institutes of Health storeroom in Bethesda, Maryland. (A lab employee subsequently carried the vials in a cardboard box across the urban campus.)

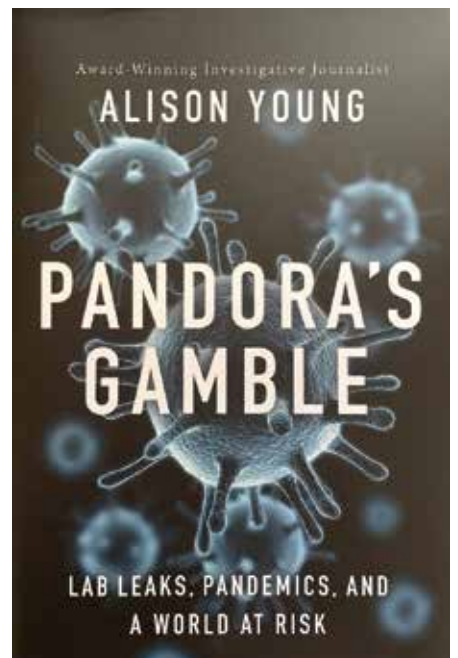
There are others, including a 1978 outbreak at a British lab that led to the world's last smallpox death, and the shocking observation by Young in 2008, at a state-of-the-art, \$214 million Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) building, of a lab door sealed with duct tape.

The equipment failures and safety corner-cutting that *Pandora's Gamble* documents are deeply concerning. More troubling is the tendency of lab operators to overestimate their ability to anticipate potential trouble spots—also amply cited in Young's stellar reporting.

Most galling of all, though, is the energy devoted by those charged with overseeing the safety of this important research to keeping their own failings out of the news.

Young, since 2019 the Curtis B. Hurley Chair in Public Affairs Reporting at the University of Missouri School of Journalism, has received many honors for her work, including three National Press Club Journalism Awards and an Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Award. Among her

Pandora's Gamble: Lab Leaks, Pandemics, and a World at Risk by Alison Young Center Street, \$29



CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

For more information, visit the websites below.

KU Endowment

Feb. 15 One Day, One KU.

onedayoneku.org

KU Alumni Association

April 27 Rock Chalk Forever

rockchalkforever.org

Lied Center

Dec. 17 Ashley Davis: Winter Solstice Celebration

Jan. 13 "The Steps of a Good Man"

Jan. 27 Ira Glass

Jan. 31 "Mean Girls"

Feb. 3 Prairie Winds Festival with The Westerlies

Feb. 9 Voices of Service

Feb. 26 Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra

March 1 Leo Kottke

March 12 Shane Hennessy

March 19 Lawrence Brownlee

March 25 Juilliard String Quartet

March 27 KU Jazz Ensemble I

April 1 Mandy Patinkin

April 5 "Tetris" by Arch8

lied.ku.edu

Continued on p. 20

book's valuable details are the frequent references she makes to her reporting techniques and tools, including Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, that journalism students will find valuable, and—because they document the lengths to which government agencies go to delay fulfilling these lawful requests—general readers will find infuriating.

Under FOIA rules, information can be withheld from the public only for specific reasons, Young notes, and avoiding negative publicity is not one of them. But she learns through sources and internal records that the CDC submitted documents that she requested to "public relations risk assessments" through an office tasked with identifying "emerging threats to the agency's reputation" and implementing strategies "to promote and protect the agency's brand." Her sardonic assessment of this public service ethos: "Your tax dollars at work."

We will probably never know for certain whether the coronavirus that has killed 7 million people originated in a research lab, Young concludes, but that's partly because of decisions made early in the pandemic to resist investigating the question, not because the possibility of an accidental release of dangerous pathogens is unlikely. "What I had come

to learn through more than a decade of reporting on these failures," she writes, "was that the only thing rare about lab accidents was the public finding out about them."

Biosafety originated in the 1950s with the U.S. decision to develop defensive and offensive weapons of biowarfare. Since President Richard Nixon discontinued the offensive program in 1969, efforts have focused on defending against bioweapon attacks from other countries. Yet, *Pandora's Gamble* suggests, the greatest danger loosed on the world by the opening of this particular box of troubles has so far come not from biowarfare, but from the safety lapses of the labs dedicated to neutralizing these threats and the lax oversight of the government agencies tasked with regulating them. Failure to investigate the lab-leak hypothesis as a possible cause of the pandemic was a missed opportunity to strengthen that protection regime, Young argues. Given the high number of near misses and close calls outlined in her book, that could prove to be a costly oversight.

We have met the enemy, her eye-opening history seems to say, and he is us.

—STEVEN HILL

Gone but not forgotten

A touchstone of intellectual growth for many, culturally skewed to others, and assuredly challenging for generations of students, KU's once-vaunted Western Civ program this fall was memorialized with a plaque on the third floor of Bailey Hall. Described by Professor Emeritus Jim Woelfel, assoc., as "a widely known and distinctive KU tradition," Western Civilization was launched in 1945, followed two years later by the rigorous, and relatively small, Humanities interdisciplinary degree program. Western Civ and Humanities merged in the late 1980s, then dissolved in 2022 during cutbacks driven by enrollment trends. Two Western Civ courses and an Introduction to Humanities course survive, now housed in the classics department. Woelfel, program director for 25 years, created and funded the reflective memorial "so that the existence of these programs will not be simply erased from KU's institutional memory."

—CHRIS LAZZARINO



Begum Colpan, who teaches Turkish courses as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, strolls past the new Bailey Hall plaque commemorating KU's legendary Western Civ program.

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CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

For more information, visit the websites below.

Spencer Museum of Art

“Black Writing” through Jan. 7

“Reading the World” through Jan. 7

spencerart.ku.edu

University Theatre

Feb. 16-21 “Sweeney Todd”

March 22-28 “Sweat”

kutheatre.com

KU Common Book

April 25 An Evening with N.K. Jemisin

commonbook.ku.edu

Academic calendar

Dec. 7 Last day of fall classes

Dec. 11-15 Finals

Jan. 16 First day of spring classes



STEVE POPPE (2)

DISCOVERIES

No time like the present

Long-delayed tribute to BGL still rings true

NEVER ONE FOR FANFARE or frivolity, Chancellor Emerita Bernadette Gray-Little at first frowned on the notion of formally dedicating the Integrated Science Building in the Central District in her honor five years after its doors opened.

But after many pleas and reminders from her former colleagues, led by Chancellor Doug Girod and Joe Monaco, g’06, associate vice chancellor for public affairs, Gray-Little relented and returned to the Hill with her husband, Shade Keys Little, from their home in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to celebrate with fellow Jayhawks on Oct. 26, during Homecoming week.

Originally scheduled for April 2020, the celebration of Gray-Little Hall was among the first major University events postponed by the pandemic and the last to finally take place. But even a 42-month delay could not diminish the gratitude of Jayhawks who jubilantly reunited with KU’s 17th chancellor.

After confessing that she first thought the celebration would be “redundant,” Gray-Little told the crowd that she realized the day could offer a prime opportunity for her to affirm the importance of science and thank KU leaders, the Kansas Board of

Regents and all those who helped transform a vision and years of dreaming and planning into a reality.

“I want to acknowledge the efforts of many members of the KU community who have been instrumental in making this happen. And from everything that I see, their effort has been well worth it,” Gray-Little said. “I’m awed by the teaching and discovery of the faculty, staff and students who call this building their workplace. That work goes on here every day and night, and it has already begun to make a difference to address the challenges that face the world.”

She cited examples of promising research projects in clean energy, manufacturing, electronics and computing, and drug discovery and therapeutics, especially related to Alzheimer’s disease, cancer and infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Gray-Little also spoke frankly about the misinformation and politics that marred the nation’s response to the pandemic. “Even when outstanding science is being done, public skepticism about science can hinder the potential benefits,” she said. “I think you can all easily recall the rhetoric about the COVID vaccine. If you trust statistical analysis



Hundreds of Jayhawks, including Don and Kay Brada, welcomed Gray-Little back to the Hill for the Oct. 26 celebration.

changed in the last several years? The most important question may be, how can we increase the American public’s, and especially our students’, basic knowledge of science and their ability to see the distinction between fact and opinion? Science is about facts. It is also about uncertainties. Can we achieve more effective and honest science communication?

“Facts matter, knowledge matters, objective measures of reality matter. And that is why I’m honored to be associated with a place that will emphasize discovery, facts, knowledge, and perhaps even truth, while producing new products and therapies to benefit humanity.”

In closing, the chancellor emerita repeated her gratitude to all who played a role in completing the hall, adding, “The University of Kansas and the society that we serve are better for your efforts. And it is my great honor to share this special day with you.”

—JENNIFER JACKSON SANNER

at all, there’s strong evidence that vaccine refusal caused excess death. Moreover, the refusal and death rate varied by political ideology.”

Gray-Little posed questions to which she hopes fellow scholars and society will seek answers: “Why was the polio vaccine so eagerly received in the 1950s, and we had so much resistance about the COVID vaccine?” she asked. “Why has respect for science and universities in general

Proof of concept

Steven Soper, Foundation Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Mechanical Engineering and one of 12 Foundation Professors recruited to KU during Gray-Little’s tenure from 2009 to 2017, offered data to affirm that the hall that bears her name has lived

up to its billing as a hub for advanced, interdisciplinary research and teaching:

- **The 330,000-square-foot structure includes four collaborative classrooms, 21 teaching labs and 41 research labs.**
- **Gray-Little Hall hosts teaching and research that involves 4,514**

undergraduate students and 151 graduate students in chemistry, medicinal chemistry, physics, molecular biosciences and related fields.

- **In 2022, 28 research groups in the building secured \$24,823,941 in research funding.**



Taejoon Kim, associate professor of electrical engineering & computer science, is the principal investigator on a \$5 million grant from the National Science Foundation to strengthen the security of 5G wireless networks for use by the U.S. armed forces. Kim will lead a team dubbed “Zero Trust X” that includes researchers from KU, six other universities, defense contractor Raytheon, and the Air Force Research Laboratory. Their goal is to develop software and a communication infrastructure to give military personnel a secure way to communicate using the same wireless networks that consumers use. “By disguising duty traffic as ordinary 5G traffic, we reduce the likelihood of suspicion,” Kim says. “The goal is to prevent adversaries from recognizing any suspicious packets or patterns in the data. Our approach is rooted in maintaining security without raising suspicions.”



Maggie Swenson won a \$10,000 Dwight D. Eisenhower/Clifford Roberts Graduate Fellowship, which will support the doctoral candidate in the School of Public Affairs & Administration as she completes her dissertation in 2024. The award from the Eisenhower Institute at Gettysburg College goes to doctoral students at select institutions who are studying topics related to the role of government in a free society, public service, public policy, and an improved understanding of world affairs. Swenson's dissertation, "Collaboration Toward Health Equity: Exploring the Drivers, Success, and Strategies of Cross-sector Collaborations on the Social Determinants of Health," is informed by the health disparities based on race and socioeconomic status that she observed while working in health-focused nonprofit organizations.



STEVE PUPPE

MASS STREET + MORE
A cook's nook

BEFORE SHE WORKED as a chef in San Francisco, owned a bakery or ran a catering company, Carolyn Hubinger Kumpe first nurtured her passion for the culinary arts in the kitchens of Lawrence restaurants while she attended KU. She recently returned to Lawrence, and to the role she considers her favorite: cooking instructor.

In August, Kumpe, c'85, opened COOKshop on 8th, 745 New Hampshire St., where she leads small-group, hands-on classes that illuminate how to prepare a variety of fare, from fresh pastas to pastries, paella to pizza, to a plethora of seasonal eats. "To me, the most joyous thing in life is eating good food," Kumpe says. "And teaching is fun for me, because I'm getting to learn too."

Her KU studies in sociology sparked her interest in different cultures' cuisines, she says, so her shop offers classes on making French, German, Indian, Japanese and Spanish dishes.

COOKshop on 8th welcomes all skill levels, and its website, cookshopon8th.com, lists the full lineup of classes, including sessions for kids. Attendees must register in advance. "There's a sense of commu-



COURTESY CAROLYN KUMPE

nity," Kumpe says of the atmosphere. "You're gathering, learning and sharing, and with cooking, you're getting to use all of your senses. It's a great break from technology and the hustle and bustle."

—MEGAN HIRT

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FACULTY

Hooray for teacher

New celebration highlights excellence in the classroom

EACH YEAR IN APRIL, top researchers from the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses are recognized at the University Research Awards. This fall, the top teachers got their turn in the spotlight, Nov. 7 at the inaugural University Teaching Awards, an event organized by the chancellor's office to begin a new tradition of convening all the winners of KU's annual teaching awards to be recognized at a single yearly celebration.

"As we think about the vision and mission of the University, we know the academic learning experience here at KU is top of the line," says Mary Banwart, c'90, an associate vice provost in the Office of Faculty Affairs, which coordinates the nomination and selection process for the teaching awards. "Celebrating and elevating in a very public way the instructional excellence that we have at KU is very much a part of what we're doing with this new event."

Thirteen professors from Lawrence and KU Medical Center were recognized for excellence in teaching with six awards, including one that marks the return of an old favorite.

The KU Medical Center awards and recipients are:

Chancellors Club Teaching Professorship

- Jeff Radel, associate professor of occupational therapy education; associate dean for academic and student affairs

Chancellor's Distinguished Teaching Awards

- Dorothy Hughes, g'09, PhD'19, assistant professor of population health; assistant dean of student affairs, Salina campus



Heffner-Hayes and Chancellor Girod

- Stephen Jernigan, d'98, g'01, PhD'11, associate professor of physical therapy, rehabilitation science and athletic training
- Albert Buddy Poje, professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences
- Jo Wick, professor of biostatistics and data science

The Lawrence campus awards and recipients are:

Bob & Kathie Taylor Excellence in Teaching Award

- Trevor Rivers, assistant teaching professor of ecology & evolutionary biology

Chancellors Club Career Teaching Award

- Kent Spreckelmeyer, a'73, professor of architecture

Ned Fleming Trust Award for Excellence in Teaching

- Ann Rowland, associate professor of English

William T. Kemper Fellowships for Teaching Excellence

- Ali Brox, c'02, j'02, PhD'14, assistant teaching professor of environmental studies

- Michelle Heffner-Hayes, f'91, professor of theatre & dance
- Sheyda Jahanbani, associate professor of history
- Joshua Miner, associate professor of film & media studies
- Jeremy Shellhorn, f'99, professor of architecture & design

The Kemper Fellowships, which are sponsored by Commerce Bank, were originally awarded from 1996 to 2011 at KU, and their delivery is done with flair: The "Prize Patrol," an entourage headed by the chancellor, provost, deans and other campus VIPs, pops by the instructor's classroom unannounced to break the good news, which comes with a \$7,500 award.

"It was a big surprise to have the chancellor walk into your classroom in front of all of your students, to celebrate you as an outstanding instructor at KU," says Banwart, who was among the merry band bearing happy news when the winners were announced last May. "One of our favorite moments was after the provost had delivered the award, our group left the classroom and then we heard the students give the instructor another round of applause and cheers. So there's something really special about those."

—STEVEN HILL



“I’m happy and probably pulling for Jason in ways that I don’t always do, because he’s been unselfish. ... He just keeps fighting, and that’s all we can ask.”

—Lance Leipold



FOOTBALL

The quiet man

Bean’s personal redemption fuels football’s furious midseason run

FOR ALL THE FANTASTIC fireworks that lit up football this memorable season, a case could be made that the most revealing—perhaps even the most important—event happened inside the KU locker room shortly after the team’s defining victory two and a half seasons into the Lance Leipold era, a 38-33 Homecoming triumph Oct. 28 over Oklahoma.

The guys were still in uniform, still riding the adrenaline of a nationally televised upset victory, when quarterback Jason Bean made his most surprising play of the day: He asked to speak to his teammates.

Describing Bean as a lead-by-example quarterback would sell his silence short. He is quiet in the deep-woods sense, soft-spoken, and, by all reports, always more comfortable listening rather than speaking. But now his moment was at hand, and his teammates took reverent knees before him.

“I just want to say thank you,” Bean began, speaking softly before his hushed audience. “Thank you for allowing me to come back. Thank you for allowing me to be with this team. Y’all know what this means to me. Thank you.”



Bean offers thanks after the OU win and celebrates with teammates during the Sept. 23 BYU game.

Cheers ricocheted through the team’s newly renovated clubhouse, players leapt to their feet, and the victory celebration became one for the ages.

Following KU’s triple-overtime Liberty Bowl loss to Arkansas last season, Bean was so distraught that he saw no way to return for his super-senior season. It wasn’t long, however, before he had a change of heart. He returned to Leipold’s squad, knowing that he’d be the backup to junior Jalon Daniels, KU’s first Big 12 Preseason Offensive Player of the Year and the flashy star who last year led KU to an improbable 5-0 start that lured ESPN College GameDay to Hill.

Daniels missed four games after the hot start to a shoulder injury, but in the Memphis bowl game, he set KU passing records by completing 37 of 55 attempts for 544 yards. On the game’s final play, however, coaches dialed up a reverse to Bean; rather than using his sprinter’s speed to dash for the goal line, Bean instead sailed a pass out of the end zone.

Inconsolable afterward, Bean within a month spurned the transfer portal and rejoined his teammates. Offensive coordinator Andy Kotelnicki remarked before the season began that he had what could be the country’s best 1-2 QB combo, which proved prescient: Daniels missed training camp and the season opener with a mysterious back injury; returned for victories over Illinois, Nevada and BYU; then, shortly before KU’s showdown at Texas, was again derailed by tightness in his back.

Although Leipold has repeatedly affirmed that Daniels will still be the starter should he return, Bean, as of *Kansas Alumni* press time, had been KU’s starter ever since, leading KU to victories over Central Florida, Oklahoma and, perhaps most crucially, Nov. 4 at Iowa State, after which the Jayhawks rose to No. 19 in the Associated Press Top 25.

“I don’t say things like this a lot, because sometimes when you step out of your role as a coach, you let your emotions get to you a little bit,” Leipold said after the Oklahoma victory, during which Bean rebounded from two late interceptions to complete a 37-yard fourth-down pass to Lawrence Arnold that set up Devin Neal’s game-winning 9-yard touchdown run. “But, as disappointed and bad as I feel for Jalon not being able to play at this particular time, I’m happy and probably pulling for Jason in ways that I don’t always do, because he’s been unselfish. He could have left, like a lot of guys do today in college football. The things he’s been through, the ups and downs, and he just keeps coming back.

“He just keeps fighting, and that’s all we can ask.

To see him make some plays like he did today, I thought that was really special. He had some down moments and he found a way to keep battling. He’s thankful for the team, and they’re proud and happy for him. It’s a pretty neat situation.”

Also a pretty neat situation: KU was 7-2 heading to its Nov. 11 game against Texas Tech, potentially setting up the Nov. 18 home contest against Kansas State as a rivalry game with implications for the Big 12 championship race.

During the Fox Sports Big Noon Kickoff pregame show broadcast from the Hill before the OU game, commentator Urban Meyer, a three-time national champion coach, noted that with the looming departures of Oklahoma and Texas, KU could contend for future Big 12 titles. A few hours later, the Jayhawks made it clear they never intended to wait that long.

Title contention starts now.

MEN’S BASKETBALL

A new day

Cleared of NCAA cloud, hoops leaps into title trek

WHEN THE NCAA ON Oct. 11 finally announced a conclusion to its six-year investigation into the men’s basketball program—launched amid a broad FBI probe into college basketball—athletics director Travis Goff and coach Bill Self assembled for a news conference to discuss the ruling, which cleared KU of the most serious charges.

“We do things the right way at the University of Kansas,” said Goff, c’03, j’03, “and that will continue to be a hallmark as we move ahead.”

Added Self: “I’m very, very proud to be the head basketball coach here. As Travis said, today is a good day for Kansas basketball. ... And, at the same time, I don’t feel in celebration mode, because this is exactly what we thought the end result would be, years ago, and it’s taken such a long time to get here. But, I am pleased with the findings because the findings are accurate.”

The collective sighs of relief reverberating across Allen Field House were shared by nearly everyone associated with Kansas Athletics—with one 7-foot-2 exception: senior center Hunter Dickinson, the Big 12’s Preseason Player of the Year in his first season at KU and likely his last in college basketball.

When asked at media day Oct. 25 whether the



“We do things the right way at the University of Kansas, and that will continue to be a hallmark as we move ahead.”

—Travis Goff



Dickinson

long shadow of the NCAA's investigation had given him pause when considering KU as his transfer destination from Michigan, Dickinson grinned and replied, "I didn't even know it was still going on. I thought it was over."

Thanks to Dickinson's imposing presence in the post, Self can finally return to his preferred high-low offensive style, as displayed in the first play of the first exhibition game, when senior point guard Dajuan Harris Jr. immediately fed the ball to Dickinson for a dunk.

While Harris can count on plenty of easy assists to his new big man, he also says opponents might be surprised at the other skills Dickinson will bring.

"Anyone who decides to double-team him is going to find out that he's an excellent passer," Harris said, "so that makes it easy. He's always going to find the right person [for an outlet pass], and we've been working on that at practice."

While Self still has plenty of moving parts to get his offense in sync—including making the most of the immense talents

of super-senior guard Kevin McCullar Jr., the unquestioned team leader, and junior forward KJ Adams Jr.—he concedes that larger questions loom on defense.

"I don't think we've totally decided how we want to play," Self said of his defense, adding that he'll first need to see how opposing teams decide to navigate against a 7-footer in the post.

Regardless of tactics, though, the strategy remains unchanged: conference and NCAA titles. When asked whether his new teammates are shy about vocalizing national championship goals, Dickinson said that it would depend on the person who's asked. As for himself: "That's what I came here for. It classifies you as a winner at the highest level in college basketball, and, speaking to the Kansas community, I think that is what they expect."

After recuperating from the heart procedure that kept him out of KU's short tournament run last season, Self in April said renewed focus on diet and exercise had revitalized his energy and enthusiasm.

"Basketball is a way of life at Kansas," Self said, "and my goal is to take this place to a whole different level that we've never seen before. And we've been to a really high level."

UPDATE

Junior golfer **Jordan Rothman** on Oct. 8 won the Denver University tournament with a final-round 66, for a 54-hole school record of



Rothman

11-under 205 and women's golf's first individual title in three years. The 'Hawks set a 54-hole team record at 14-under 850, and, two weeks earlier in New Mexico, set the school 18-hole record at 14-under 274. ...

With 14 kills and nine digs, junior **Caroline Bien** on Nov. 4 helped the 14th-ranked volleyball team close out a weekend sweep of KSU and run a late-season win streak to six. ... Super-senior **Taiyanna Jackson** was a unanimous choice for the coaches' Preseason All-Big 12 women's



Jackson

basketball team. She was also named to the national player of the year watchlist. ...

Senior **Cecil Belisle** opened the fall golf season with a one-shot victory at Michigan State. Sophomore **Will King** on Sept. 11 won at Minnesota, also

by a single stroke. Men's golf this fall named its practice facilities in honor of 2019 U.S. Open winner **Gary Woodland**, c'07. The popular PGA star spent the fall recuperating from Sept. 18 brain surgery. ...

With a career record of 262-200-49 and a pair of Big 12 titles, 25th-year soccer coach **Mark Francis** on Oct. 24 announced his retirement. ... Following his two-second 8K victory at Notre Dame, senior **Chandler Gibbens** on Oct. 2 was named cross-country's national athlete of the week.



BILL SELF, who enters his 21st season at KU with a new lifetime contract that makes him college basketball's highest-paid coach, will rely on leadership from super-senior Kevin McCullar Jr., who returned for a final college season after participating in the NBA draft combine last May: "To be able to play in front of the best fans in the country, to play for the best coach in the nation, I truly believe we have the pieces to hang another banner in the Phog."

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE PUPPE



At Long Last

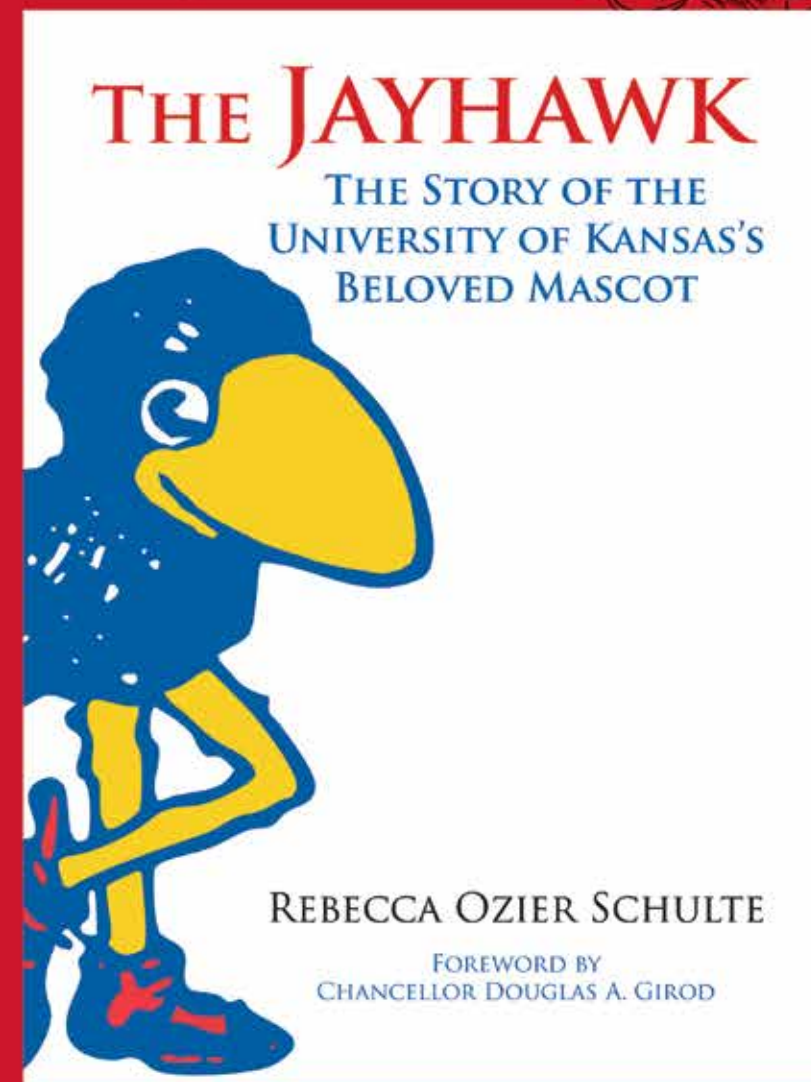
The Jayhawk preserves and presents mascot history and so much more near and dear to the KU story

Good news and bad news, Jayhawks:

You have homework, but your fun and fascinating reading assignment is the first comprehensive history of our jaunty bird, published in September by University Press of Kansas. So, just to test our Jayhawk knowledge, let's start with a pop quiz.

The term "Jayhawk" was created and first used by:

- a) Free-state fighters, known for their bravado and signature red leggings, who patrolled Kansas Territory's border counties
- b) Chancellor Francis Snow, who joined KU's first faculty as professor of mathematics and natural sciences
- c) Irish immigrant Patrick Devlin
- d) Texas immigrant Don Fambrough



by Chris Lazzarino





Those of you already aware of our University and state's early days might understandably have chosen a), the border fighters, legendary figures prominent in the pride we take in proto-Kansans fighting the good fight. Some of you deep readers might have circled c), free-state Jayhawk Pat Devlin, “arguably the most important person in the history of the term,” as he’s described by author Rebecca Ozier Schulte in her magnificent new book, *The Jayhawk: The Story of the University of Kansas’s Beloved Mascot*. b) Chancellor Snow and d) Coach Fam are good guesses in most KU history quizzes, but not this one.

With apologies for the trickier, the correct answer is: e) none of the above.

As Schulte, c’76, tells us at the outset of *The Jayhawk*, “Documented references trace the first use of the term ‘jayhawk’ to the California gold rush of 1848.” Citing *The Jayhawkers’ Oath and Other Sketches*, by William Lewis Manly, Schulte writes that “jayhawk” appears to have originated among fortune-seekers whom Manly joined on the trek from Illinois to California. As the company of men

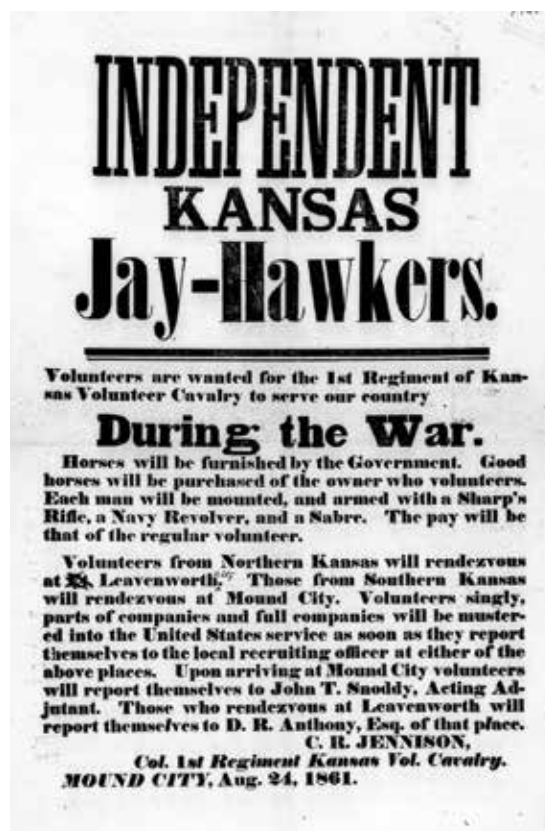
crossed the Missouri River near current-day Omaha, Nebraska, and navigated the vast Great Plains via the Platte Valley, “it occurred to them that their caravan should have a name, and then and there they dubbed themselves the ‘Jayhawkers,’” Manly wrote, as shared by Schulte.

So it seems we can be fairly certain about the who, when and where of the birth of “Jayhawk.” And yet, Schulte says, “It doesn’t explain *why* they decided to call themselves ‘Jayhawkers.’”

Such are the mysterious voids of history left undocumented while still fresh, the gaps Schulte sought to bridge in her quest to uncover true stories of our mythical bird. Alas, no chancellor ever issued a decree stating, “As of today and forevermore, the Jayhawk is our University mascot!” No 19th-century marketing committee pronounced, “And this is how our new mascot shall look!” And of the countless Jayhawks drawn by spirited artists over the decades, how did a select lineup of six, beginning in 1912, somehow become the officially sanctioned Jayhawk roster?

And yet the haziness, it turns out, is the good stuff. As with all things crimson and blue, the reward is in the long path of discovery that leads to knowledge, appreciation and delight, while also proving endlessly entertaining.

“I tried to have representation of the different decades,” Schulte says of her bold, beautiful book. “It really does take you though the history of the University, and I think people will find that interesting on a lot of different levels. And even for children, it’s very colorful, there are a lot of cartoons, and there’s a little bit of history mixed in here and there. You know, kids might think that’s cool.”



STEVE PUPPE

Becky Schulte says she combed physical and online archives to confirm legends before including them in her book. Two that she could not track down were tales that U.S. athletes at the 1920 Olympics offered up the Rock Chalk Chant when the king of Belgium asked to hear a typical college cheer, and that Texas lawmen—presumably the Rangers—once self-identified as Jayhawkers. “It was frustrating at times,” she says, “but I was very careful not to say I found something that I didn’t find.”

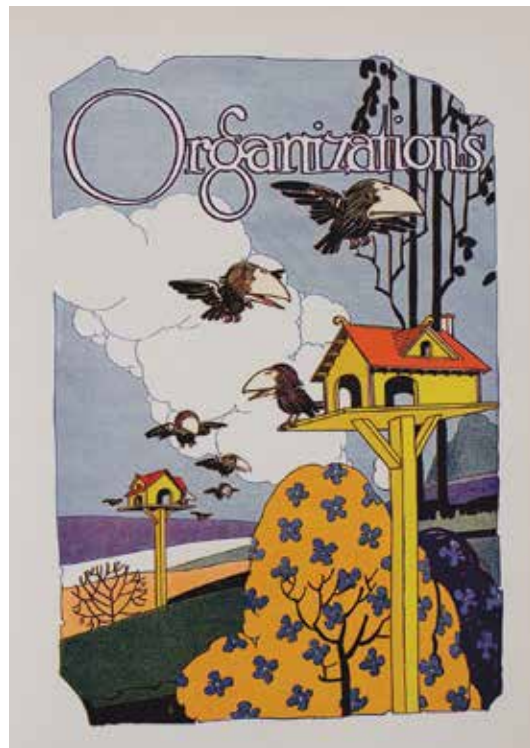
It seems somewhere in the neighborhood of accurate that every journalist, artist, designer, photographer, marketer, songwriter, librarian, blogging historian or public-facing phone-call-and-email answerer in the past century of KU’s existence has dealt, in one way or another, with Jayhawk history and lore.

Those of us who have long sweated the details and yearned that someone might one day do the heavy lifting required to preserve, protect and defend the history of such a critical element of our collective heritage should all be thankful that the task fell to Becky Schulte, KU’s third University Archivist, who also happens to be the niece of KU’s first University Archivist, John Nugent, her late uncle and brief landlord.

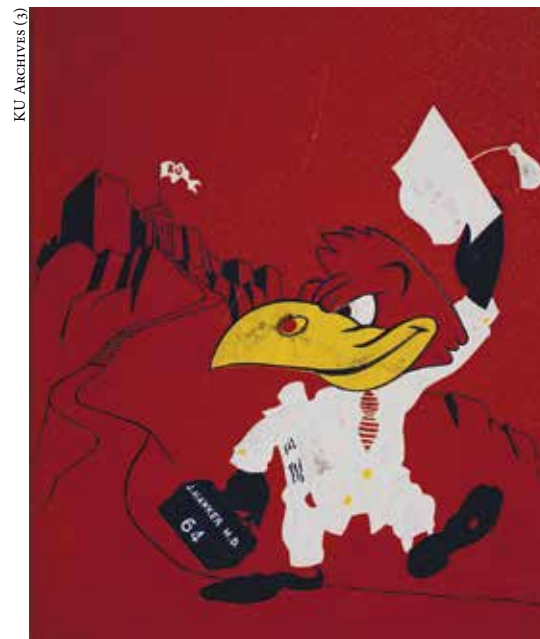
After beginning her higher education at Labette Community College, in her hometown of Parsons, Schulte transferred to KU as a 19-year-old junior. She was the eldest of nine children, and her family had no money for frills—“We were *very* poor,” Schulte recalls. “I wasn’t going to be living in a sorority”—so she roomed her first year in Lawrence with Uncle John and his family.

“I tried to have representation of the different decades. It really does take you though the history of the University, and I think people will find that interesting on a lot of different levels.”





KU ARCHIVES (5)



KU ARCHIVES (3)



Perhaps following his lead but certainly with no eye toward a career path, Schulte worked as a student assistant in Watson Library's reserve room while majoring in Renaissance humanities. Mutual friends introduced her in December 1974 to fellow student Dan Schulte, c'76, g'84, and they married the following June.

As was typical of the culture of the times, Schulte immersed herself in her studies while giving no thought to her career prospects. "A big blank," she says. "Zero." After her 1976 graduation, Dan was already in graduate school, so Schulte applied for a KU Libraries job as clerk typist II, which, at the time, required taking the state's civil service exam and a typing test—only one of which she passed. "I think I can type only 32 words a minute, with mistakes." Schulte instead applied for a clerk II job—sans typing—and began her full-time career with KU Libraries.

Schulte realized within a few years that she wanted to be an actual librarian, so, driving north with a friend who was studying for a doctorate in Madison, she visited the library sciences school at the University of Wisconsin. Schulte and her young family—including their 18-month-old daughter, Emily—in 1981 moved to Madison. After she earned her master's in library science, they returned to Kansas, where Schulte found work at the Kansas

State Historical Society in Topeka.

With Dan working in Kansas City, the family struggled to afford day care for Emily and her younger sister, Lizzie, so Schulte in November 1985 returned to KU Libraries to manage a \$250,000 U.S. Department of Education grant to catalog the Wilcox Collection of Contemporary Political Movements, an important holding of the Spencer Research Library. When Spencer Librarian William J. Crowe in 2000 reorganized the research library,



he named Schulte the first head of public services, and in 2003 Crowe promoted Schulte to University Archivist.

Six years later, the Alumni Association and KU Libraries hit upon the idea of delivering history-related content at nationwide alumni gatherings. Alumni leaders hoped to generate interest and boost attendance, while KU Libraries—which has long bemoaned the fact that while everybody uses the library, nobody graduates *from* the library—was eager to spark within alumni fond memories of, and appreciation for, KU Libraries' crucial role in their education.

Schulte recalls that it was Rebecca Smith, then director of communications and advancement at KU Libraries, who suggested she prepare a presentation on the history of the Jayhawk.

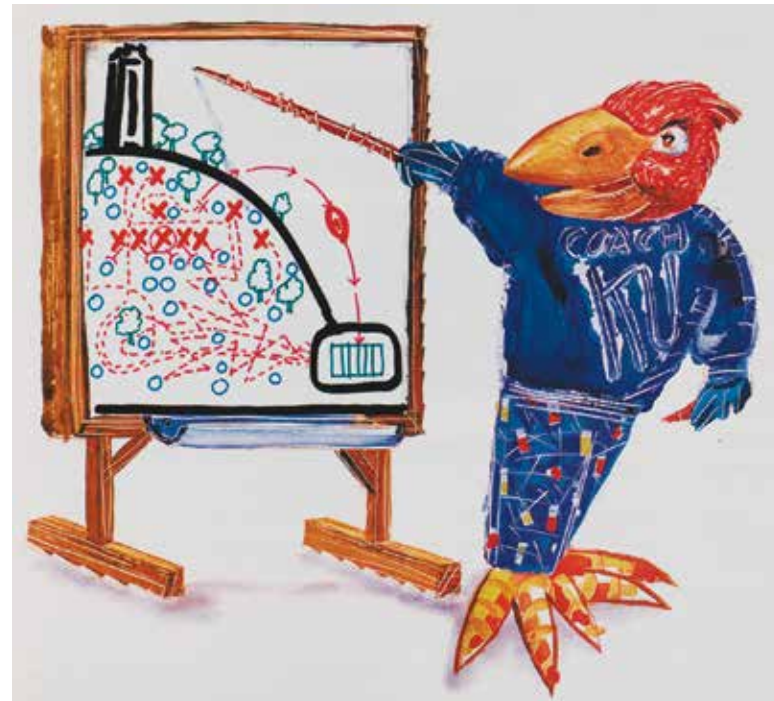
"I knew that we had hundreds of photos, tons of journal articles and little bits and pieces of this and that, and the yearbooks are, of course, full of Jayhawks," Schulte says. "And so it seemed very doable. I created my first PowerPoint and we took it on the road. It was our way of showing that the libraries had content—*interesting* content—and not only books. People think the library is just a building with books in it, and an archive is even further away from that."

In the basement of a Chicago bar where the Association regularly hosted alumni events, an alumna pulled Schulte aside and suggested she write a book.

As told in *The Jayhawk*, KU's first unofficial mascot was—for reasons unknown—a bulldog. The Jayhawk gradually took hold thanks to the Rock Chalk Chant, but both were accepted for a time, as seen in the photo at bottom left, depicting the bulldog and an ungainly Jayhawk on the field together at the 1917 KU-Kansas State Agricultural College football game in Manhattan.



ELIZABETH SCHULTE ESPARZA



KU ARCHIVES (5)



Schulte applied for a research sabbatical, and in 2020 stepped down as University Archivist to work part time as curator of the Wilcox Collection while writing her book. She fully retired at the end of June, 50 years after first arriving at KU as a student, and soon held in her hands a beautiful career capstone—which included thrilling surprises (to Schulte) of a foreword from Chancellor Doug Girod and endorsements from notable Jayhawks of the highest order.



While the author relied on academic rigor to present unbiased Jayhawk history, we here at *Kansas Alumni* have no such qualms: Our favorite Jayhawks will always be those created for this magazine by illustrators Charlie Podrebarac, j'81, (top left) and Larry Leroy Pearson (top right).

“I remember thinking, ‘Yeah, the last thing I need is to write a book, for heaven’s sake. I have so much to do!’ But, I guess, maybe, you know, a seed was planted.”

As part of her required faculty research duties, Schulte secured small grants to visit archives at Kansas State, Nebraska and Missouri, where she hoped to learn how other schools portrayed the Jayhawk. (It was in Manhattan where Schulte first came across documentation confirming that, for a time in the state’s early history, all Kansans, even those fiercely loyal to K-State, considered themselves “Jayhawks.”) Along the way, Schulte sensed a book project taking hold.

“I was getting closer and closer to retirement,” Schulte says, “and I think I just felt like I needed to get some of this cumulative knowledge that has come down through the generations compiled in a format that people would enjoy.”

In 2014 she pitched her idea to University Press of Kansas. And UPK declined, reasoning, understandably, that the audience for such an undertaking would be too localized to justify its expense. Schulte recalls that it was probably 2017 when Joyce Harrison, UPK’s then-new editor in chief, visited KU Libraries to deliver a presentation on how to get published.

“So I made an appointment to talk to her,” Schulte says, “and when I read her my idea, she said, ‘That sounds wonderful!’ She was really excited.”

“The Jayhawk has been my companion and my protector during my whole life,” wrote Juan Manuel Santos, c’73, former president of Colombia and winner of the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize. “This book is a great reminder of what makes the Jayhawk special!”

And what of this Patrick Devlin, perhaps the person most often commonly identified as the earliest Jayhawk?

Thanks to that first-person account that Schulte uncovered in Watson Library’s stacks, her research identifies an 1848 band of gold prospectors as the first to self-identify—for reasons unknown—as Jayhawkers. And within the archives of the Kansas State Historical Society, she also found an account by John B. Colton, a member of Manly’s expedition, who offers the first, and now familiar, description of a “jayhawk” as a fictional bird of prey that sails along on the hunt for its next meal, until an “audience of jays and other small but jealous and vicious birds sail in and jab him,” and the irritated hawk “slides out of trouble in the lower earth.”

By 1856, however, “Jayhawk” had arrived in Kansas—as a verb—thanks to Devlin. Citing accounts uncovered in her research from the border counties Miami, Linn and Bourbon, Schulte writes that as Devlin returned to Osawatimie one morning with a heavily loaded mule in tow, a neighbor asked what he’d been up to. “Jayhawking,” Devlin said of his foraging and harassing across the Missouri border. Devlin further explained that back in Ireland, a bird called the jayhawk “worried its prey before devouring it.”

The Jayhawk, it is clear from the outset, is about far more than a mascot held so dear by all who love the University far above the golden valley. It is about the history of a state that found its footing in times of the country’s greatest upheavals, and subsequent generations of students, faculty, staff and alumni who dedicated themselves to grand ideals of teaching, learning, research, service and school spirit.

Thanks to Schulte’s gifted narration, the path through her book, through the story of the Jayhawk, can be navigated at the reader’s pleasure—typically, she says, first by flipping through pages to sample the more than 300 images. Most have long been locked away in such treasure chests as student scrapbooks, boxes of ephemera dutifully preserved and cataloged in University Archives, collections of



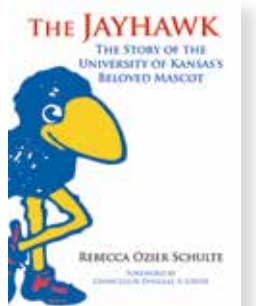
“I remember thinking, ‘Yeah, the last thing I need is to write a book, for heaven’s sake. I have so much to do!’ But, I guess, maybe, you know, a seed was planted.”

Jayhawker yearbooks, and the Alumni Association’s *Graduate Magazine* and *Kansas Alumni* magazine.

Then comes a pause to glance through captions, which ignites an interest in the nearby text, which in turn spurs a reader to turn back a few pages and start putting the unfolding story in order.

“You just go back and back and back and back,” Schulte says, “and then you get to the beginning and it’s like, ‘OK, well, maybe I’ll just sit down and read this.’”

See? We promised the homework would be fun.



The Jayhawk: The Story of the University of Kansas’s Beloved Mascot by Rebecca Ozier Schulte, with a foreword by Chancellor Douglas A. Girod University Press of Kansas, \$34.95

BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUM

FOLLOWING HIS OWN
PATH, A JAZZMAN FINDS
A MIDLIFE MUSICAL
DEBUT IS WORTHWHILE—
IF YOU CAN SWING IT

BY STEVEN HILL

PORTRAITS BY EVA KAPANADZE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS MILLSPAUGH



The opening bars of “Compton’s Finest,” the debut album from Kansas City-born jazz musician Brandon Sanders, sends a message borne on a triumphant drumbeat its creator calls Latinesque.

The rhythm is syncopated, the tempo snappy. A cymbal bell rings steady as rain, punctuated by a clap of the snare rim and a thunder roll on the small and floor toms. For 10 seconds Sanders’ beat stands alone, before his bandmates on tenor sax, piano, bass and vibraphone jump in for a swinging take on the jazz classic “Softly, as in a Morning Sunrise.” The intro is an eight-bar mission statement, a declaration of intent in 4/4 time: This is a drummer’s record.

“That rhythm is letting you know, ‘OK, here comes something,’” says Sanders, c’94, g’98, who at 52 has released his first recording after spending three decades learning to play the drums, which he picked up at the relatively late age of 25. “You’re letting people know that you’re a drummer,” he says, “without taking a crazy solo.”

Released by Savant Records on Aug. 25, “Compton’s Finest” presents two original tunes (the blues-inflected title cut and the hard bop “SJB”) and six covers, including jazz standards “Body and Soul,” “Monk’s Dream” and “In a Sentimental Mood,” along with “I Can’t Help It,” a pop tune written by Stevie Wonder and popularized by Michael Jackson. Produced by jazz drummer Willie Jones III and featuring Grammy-nominated vocalist Jazzmeia Horn on two numbers, the record is steadily gaining airplay on radio stations and streaming platforms. On Oct. 9, “Compton’s Finest” broke into JazzWeek’s top 50 at No. 14. By Oct. 30, the recording reached No. 1 and had been streamed on Spotify 684,000 times.

Music has always been part of Sanders’ life, seemingly embedded in his family DNA: His mother, father and stepfather all played instruments, and a great-aunt was an opera singer. But the path to his long-awaited debut, a journey that ran through Los Angeles, Boston and his current home base of New York City, has been marked by many twists and turns—perhaps none as fateful as the one that brought him back to Kansas and KU in the early 1990s.



Sanders spent his early childhood in Kansas City, where his grandmother, Ernestine Parker, owned a jazz club on the Kansas side called Casablanca. When he was 22 months old, he and his mother moved to Los Angeles, eventually settling in Compton, where he attended high school during the late 1980s, a time of intense gang violence. Even for a young man who wasn't in a gang, just walking the streets could be a harrowing experience.

"I've been shot at twice," Sanders says. "Not because I was looking for trouble, but trying to get to school as a kid. So I can talk about the negatives of Compton."

"But I can also talk about people like Mr. Broadus, who was a choir director; or Mr. Anderson, who was my math teacher and basketball coach. These are people in the community who said, 'Hey, get your life together. Go to class. Tie your shoes. Make sure that you look a person in the eye. Be a gentleman. Speak clearly.' Compton was a community of Black people doing positive things during that time—despite what you hear about."

These role models and mentors inspired Sanders to write the song "Compton's Finest" and make it the title of his album.

One of the most important positive people in Sanders' life was a social worker named Mrs. Jones, who worked at the Boys & Girls Club, where he escaped the streets to play basketball and participate in gang prevention and job readiness programs. Interview prep, college essays and how to knot a necktie are among the lessons he recalls. "I always said that if I got to college, I would want to do the same thing that she did," Sanders says.

A stint at Mt. San Antonio College, where he played for the basketball team, didn't take. "I was still trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life," he recalls. "Even though I was in school, I wasn't really *in* school, you know what I mean? I was hanging out with the wrong crowd. And those guys, that crowd,



"It's a lesson in believing in yourself," Brandon Sanders says of "Compton's Finest" hitting No. 1 on JazzWeek magazine's Jazz Chart. "I take it as a responsibility to make music that uplifts. It makes me want to devote myself to the music even more."

could have been destructive to my life if I would've continued."

Throughout childhood, he had returned to Kansas City to spend summers with his grandmother. Sensing his drift at 19, she urged him to move back to attend college.

"She said, 'I already spent two hours in the admissions line filling out all the paperwork for you to come to KU. But I'm telling you, if you come, you've got to set your priorities straight.'"

"And I'm thinking to myself, 'I don't want to go to Kansas. It's boring there,'" Sanders says, laughing. "And she said, 'Maybe you could try out for Kansas basketball.'"

He did come and he did try out, earning a spot on the Jayhawks' practice squad. That experience—along with a class on jazz he took his first year on the Hill—helped ease what was turning out to be a tough transition for a young man used to bright lights, big city.

Sanders' mother studied classical violin in high school, and his biological father was a trumpet player. His stepfather, a Vietnam veteran, played trombone in the Army and collected jazz albums. Thanks

to him and Sanders' grandmother (who shared with young Brandon records, photographs and stories of Jimmy Smith, Grant Green, Lou Donaldson and other musicians who'd played at her club), jazz was the soundtrack of his youth. But his understanding of the genre got a major boost when he signed up for a history of jazz class taught by KU professor and renowned music expert Dick Wright.

Wright, f'53, g'56, was host of the long-running KANU radio show "The Jazz Scene" and curator of the KU jazz archives, eventually donating some 20,000 records from his personal collection to a trove now considered one of the most complete of its kind in the Midwest. His Murphy Hall office stuffed with records and a pair of turntables exerted a powerful tug on Sanders.

"I was so fascinated with Mr. Wright's record collection that I would sleep on the floor outside his office in the morning to be the first one in when he started office hours at 8:30," he recalls. "You know how students sleep in Allen Field House before a game? That was me waiting for Mr. Wright."

They formed a friendship that lasted until Wright died in 1999. Sanders took every class Wright taught and a few more they invented; he spent hours pulling records from shelves, spurring long talks the student often extended by walking the professor across campus to his next class or appointment. He drove Wright and his wife, Maxine, to Kansas City when Wright interviewed visiting musicians onstage as part of the Folly Theater Jazz Series. And Wright made cassettes and CDs for Sanders that helped deepen his acolyte's appreciation for the music.

"My stepfather gave me a taste, but Mr. Wright got me into studying and listening to records every day," Sanders says. "When I came home to LA, (my stepfather) was surprised, because now I was educating him on jazz. I was listening to heavy stuff like Eric Dolphy and Charlie Mingus and Lee Morgan and Dexter Gordon. He's like, 'Wow, where did you hear all this?' And I'd tease him: 'Man, you got to get hip to Dick Wright!'"

Coming to Kansas was a rebirth ("My story is about resurrecting my life," Sanders says) and a reset. He earned a bachelor's in communications and a master's in the School of Social Welfare. He worked at the Boys & Girls Club in Lawrence and Kansas City, launching a career in social work that continues today at The Masters School in Dobbs Ferry, north of New York City, where he's a mental health counselor and tennis and basketball coach. And he picked up the drums, starting the long road to mastery that led him to Berklee College of Music in Boston in the early 2000s, a thriving performance career as a leader and sideman in New York City, and the February recording of "Compton's Finest" at The Bunker Studio in Brooklyn.

Sanders says he plays music because of two people: his grandmother, who bought him his first drum kit and was his biggest fan until her death in 2013, and Dick Wright.

He still grieves for both.

"My life was touched so much by Mr. Wright. If it wasn't for people like him and my grandmother ..." Sanders says, his voice breaking. "The music that he poured into me, it changed my life."



From the Latinesque drum intro of the first track to the bouncy, vibes-and-sax propelled melody of the final cut, "Compton's Finest" ticks a box that's extremely important to the bandleader: It swings.

"I like jazz that's swinging," Sanders says. "My grandmother always told me that is the main goal of a jazz band, to swing. That you know you've got a good band when people are dancing instead of sitting."

"Brandon has a great feel, the way he swings," says producer Willie Jones III. Experienced at leading a band from behind a kit, Jones says it's not about how many solos you take—an approach Sanders, who calls himself a "humble" musician, agrees with. "He doesn't have preconceived notions about how much he should solo," Jones notes. "He just swings, just plays the

"MY GRANDMOTHER ALWAYS TOLD ME THAT IS THE MAIN GOAL OF A JAZZ BAND, TO SWING."

music. And if you do that, people want to play with you. It speaks volumes that the musicians on his record were like, 'Yeah, we would love to record with you.' Because they love the way he makes the music feel."

Echoing his professional role as a social worker, Sanders also brings to his music a desire to inspire.

"It's about trying to lift people's spirits," he says of his goal as a musician. "It's the same thing I try to do as a social worker. It's about making sure that people leave feeling different than when they came in."

The lively final cut—jazz great Lewis Nash in his liner notes praises it as "feel good music ... with a danceable groove"—Sanders wrote for a friend who inspired him to persevere through hard times. Much like the title track, a minor blues that acknowledges the stress he experienced running a gauntlet of rival gang territories as a kid, "SJB" celebrates resilience.

Resilience is essential to making it as a jazz musician, especially following the "definitely unusual" route Sanders took.

"To start playing drums at 25 and be where he is now?" Jones says. "And I don't mean he started playing in high school, then got serious when he was 25. He literally started from square one. And oh, by the way, he's a counselor; he's working a 9-to-5 and raising a family. But he loves music so much that from the time he was 25, he's been working to better himself, developing himself as a drummer. He collects all the records, listens all the time, goes to gigs checking out all the different drummers. So, yeah, at 52, to make his debut record, it's nothing short of incredible. And now he's working; he's getting gigs. He's making up for lost time."

Sanders' mother told him that his grandmother would be "tickled pink" to know he had a jazz album to his name. He'd like to think Dick Wright would be, too.

"They got me into this," he says. "When I came to Kansas City, I didn't know what I was going to do. My grandmother paved the way, and I met people like Mr. Wright, and he introduced the music."

Teaching a class on mindfulness at The Masters School, Sanders played a recording of the Kenny Barron composition "Voyage." Only after the lesson was done did he reveal the recording was from "Compton's Finest." Now with students (and a massive record collection) of his own, he's passing along something he learned long ago, something he reaffirms each time he picks up his sticks and prepares to "leave the shoreline," as James Baldwin wrote of the jazz improviser's imperative, "and strike out for the deep water."

"I believe music is a healing force," Sanders says. "I believe music is a beautiful thing, because it changed my life."



"Compton's Finest" Savant Records, \$17

Brandon Sanders—drums
Chris Lewis—tenor saxophone
Keith Brown—piano
Warren Wolf—vibraphone
Eric Wheeler—bass
Jazzmeia Horn—vocals



LIFE, AMPLIFIED

Affected by hearing loss at a young age, a KU-trained audiologist now provides help and hope to those facing hearing challenges of their own

Jessica Whitfill Johnson suspected she was missing out. Although the sociable 24-year-old was frequently in the company of friends, classmates and co-workers, sharing in the spontaneous magic of conversation often proved elusive. The world seemed muffled by an invisible barrier that kept genuine connection and all of its joys just out of reach.

“I would try to be a part of conversations, but I was bluffing,” recalls Johnson, c’17, AUD’21, now 28. “I’d laugh along when other people were laughing, but I didn’t know what the joke was. I’d completely missed the joke because I couldn’t hear it.”

The feeling was, unfortunately, familiar. Born with an atypical right ear, Johnson had first experienced hearing loss even earlier in her life. She began using a hearing aid at 14, and while the technology saw her through high school and her undergraduate years at KU, by the time she was a student in the University’s

doctor of audiology program, it was no longer powerful enough to overcome her hearing deficit.

“My hearing loss had progressed, and for a long time I had quite a bit of social anxiety,” she says. “I think a lot of it stemmed from being fearful of saying the wrong thing or laughing at the wrong time or responding inappropriately to a question because I couldn’t hear it. It was very isolating.”

Today, thanks to a hearing implant, Johnson has a full range of hearing, and equipped with her KU degrees, she is often a first refuge for others struggling with hearing difficulties. Her own experience allows her to offer both care and compassion.

“I understand what they’re going through on a personal level, and I think a lot of patients appreciate that,” says Johnson, who practices at American Hearing + Audiology in Tulsa, Oklahoma. “Being able to spend my career helping people hear better when that’s what I needed myself—it makes me feel so fulfilled.”



Johnson was born with microtia, a condition that caused her right ear to be small and malformed. “With microtia, I was essentially born without an ear canal, and then the tiny little bones in the middle ear, called the ossicles, weren’t structured properly,” Johnson says. Microtia commonly results in conductive hear-

BY MEGAN HIRT

PORTRAITS BY CHARLIE NEUENSCHWANDER

ing loss, which occurs when sound can't be effectively transmitted into the cochlea, the hearing-sense organ in the inner ear.

Doctors informed Johnson's parents, Charles and Kindra Whitfill, that her right ear's inner components functioned well, and that a series of surgeries—best started at age 6—to open up her ear canal and restructure the middle ear bones could counter the hearing loss.

As Johnson grew from an easygoing baby to a thoughtful young girl, the Whitfills weighed the decision and worked to instill in their daughter confidence around communication. "Raising her, we made it a priority to make sure she understood conversations, and we taught her to ask, 'Can you repeat that?' if there was something she didn't hear," says her mom, Kindra. "We worried that her hearing loss would have social effects, but for Jessica it never did. She was always very active, always trying new things."

Still, the Whitfills wanted to take every step to ensure Johnson's hearing loss wouldn't hold her back as she got older. They opted to move forward with surgery, and from age 6 to 9, Johnson underwent nine procedures to restructure her outer and middle right ear.

Johnson didn't detect any trouble with her hearing during her younger years, but by the time she was in high school—in Wichita, after growing up throughout the Midwest as her dad completed his training as a physician—she'd begun to notice gaps in her perception. "When I was little, I think I just kind of got by. I probably



"Connecting with patients on shared experiences we have from living with hearing loss can be very validating," says Johnson. Below: At age 6 after her first ear surgery, with her mom. Bottom right: A series of illustrations in Johnson's office depicts the hearing process.

wasn't paying much attention to it," Johnson recalls. "But in middle school and high school, the auditory environments we're in get much more complex. I have this distinct memory of being in high school and my friends telling me they would yell my name down the hallway, and I just flat out couldn't hear them. I'd have no idea they were trying to get my attention."

A hearing test at 14 confirmed Johnson's hearing in her right ear wasn't at full capacity. Her audiologist presented two courses of action: more surgery or a hearing aid. Johnson chose the hearing aid, and the device's immediate impact left an impression.

"I remember it was fall, and I could hear the leaves rustling the first day I got my hearing aid," she says. "I wasn't sure what the sound was, and I remember having to ask my mom." It's a memory she shares frequently today when fitting patients with their first hearing aids, to prepare them for the minute sounds that may suddenly surface. "Most hearing loss typically comes on so gradually that people don't notice it's gone until they get tested, someone tells them it's gone, and they get fitted with a hearing aid," Johnson says. "My patients

will say things like, 'I had no idea the turn signal in my car made a noise.'"

Johnson's enhanced hearing transformed her time in high school. "Participating and following along in class became so much easier," she says. "I could hear the conversation at the lunch table. I could hear what was going on when we broke into groups in class. I could hear my friends whisper to me." Singing in choir, a favorite activity, was no longer an exercise in guesswork. "It was a little bit easier when I could hear my cue to come in," she jokes. "I did a lot better in choir after that."

A diligent student, Johnson set her sights on college and ultimately decided to follow in the footsteps of her big sister, Madelyn, d'15, and attend KU. Her next chapter would bring a rewarding career path into focus and an old obstacle back to the forefront.

When she arrived on Mount Oread in fall 2013, Johnson was undecided on her major. One day, casually discussing her options on the phone with her mom, the conversation turned to audiology.

"I remember my mom saying, 'What about audiology? You know what it's like to have hearing loss.' And my first thought was, 'Why would I do *that*, Mom?'" Johnson laughs. The suggestion stuck, however, and the following semester, Johnson took the introductory course in the department of speech-language-hearing, part of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. The class, particularly the section about the ear, intrigued her.

"Ears and hearing aren't things we think about a whole lot," Johnson says. "For me, I think my fascination with the ear probably came from the fact that I didn't grow up having two normal ears. In a sense, I understood that I was born with microtia and that I had hearing loss, but I didn't know how the whole system worked, where the breakdown was exactly. So learning about this very complex organ that has a very fine-tuned way of working was so fascinating to me. I declared my major after I took that class."

She earned her bachelor's degree in speech-language-hearing and started her graduate work in August 2017. In KU's doctor of audiology program, her affinity for ears and their functioning broadened into a passion for working with patients. "I remember coming home after my first couple of days of clinical rotations and being so excited," she says. "I loved every moment of it, and I remember thinking, 'This is how I know I'm supposed to be doing this.'"

When Johnson was about midway through the four-year program, she began to suspect her hearing ability had regressed. Keeping up with conversations had become increasingly difficult, and everyday sounds had slowly dulled. She asked a classmate to test her hearing, and discovered that even with her hearing aid, her hearing was again not at full capacity. Her unique external ear structure from her surgeries limited her options for hearing aids.

In a serendipitous turn, Johnson was taking the class on hearing implants around the time her hearing loss re-

"I remember it was fall, and I could hear the leaves rustling the first day I got my hearing aid. I wasn't sure what the sound was, and I remember having to ask my mom."

—Jessica Johnson

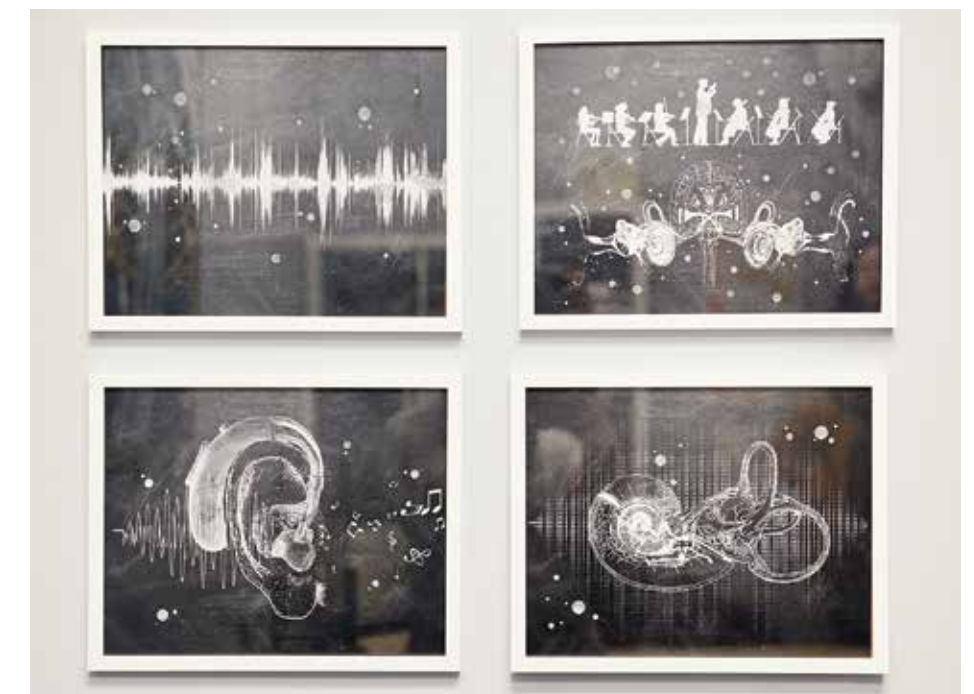
emerged. She learned about a system made by the brand Cochlear called the Osia. It consists of two parts, an implant and an external sound processor. The implant is positioned behind the ear, just under the skin. The sound processor, held to the implant via magnetic connection, converts sound to a digital signal, which the implant uses to generate mechanical vibrations. To Johnson, it seemed the perfect solution. "The implant sends vibrations to the inner ear, the cochlea, and I've got normal hearing there," she says. "All my hearing loss is in the middle and outer ear structures. So the implant bypasses everything that doesn't work properly."

Her professor pointed her toward specialists in the Kansas City area, and in September 2020, Johnson had her hearing implant placed. When her doctor

activated the sound processor a month later, the difference surprised her.

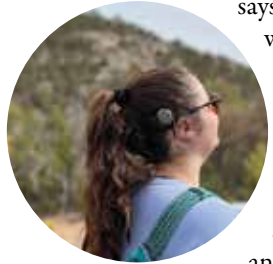
"The first couple of weeks, I was amazed and somewhat baffled at how much better I could hear," she says. "I was working full time in my residency, and I remember people calling my name down the hall in the clinic, and I could *hear* them. That was a bizarre experience for me. Going out to restaurants and group gatherings in general, I didn't have to struggle and stress and strain to hear what people were saying. I could finally be a part of the conversation again."

She graduated with her doctor of audiology degree in spring 2021 and began working at an ear, nose and throat practice in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She joined the American Hearing + Audiology clinic in Tulsa in March 2022.



Johnson evaluates patients for hearing loss, tinnitus—a ringing in the ear—and a condition called auditory processing disorder, which relates to the brain’s interpretation of sounds. She also sees patients for hearing aid fittings and checks. Empathy and problem-solving are at the heart of her practice.

“One of my biggest goals is to make sure that every patient feels like they’ve been heard and that they’ve gotten answers to what they came in asking,” she says. “In the medical



world, sometimes we can feel like we’re just another number, just another patient getting pushed through the system, so it’s important to me that patients

know I’m always going to do my best to get them hearing better, to get them more relief from their tinnitus, to give them the right recommendations for their auditory processing disorder.”

Empowerment around hearing is another emphasis for Johnson. “You have every right to advocate for yourself and let your friends and family and those around you know what you need from them in order to be able to communicate,” she says. “That’s one of the takeaways I hope my patients get: that it’s OK to ask somebody to repeat themselves. You don’t have to fake your way through a conversation just so you don’t make the other person uncomfortable—because they’ll get over it,” she laughs.

She hopes, too, for a shift in attitudes toward hearing loss and assistive technology. “When people have unclear vision, they go get their eyes checked and get glasses, and it’s not a big deal,” Johnson says. “My hope is that people who struggle with their hearing go to the audiologist and get hearing aids, and it’s not seen as a big deal.”

Since getting her hearing implant, Johnson has volunteered as a resource for others considering the Cochlear Osia system. She meets with prospective users virtually to talk with them about the process and answer their questions. “I feel

like I get to, in a way, calm their fears, give them a better picture of what surgery looks like, what recovery looked like for me, and what it’s like to hear through an implant, which is kind of an abstract thing to try to explain to people,” she says.

She lives in Tulsa with her husband, Luke, and their dogs, Lucky, Lando and Lily. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, crafting and live music, and delights in the little pleasures her better hearing affords her: listening to birds chirping, the breeze through the trees, wind chimes dancing.

For Johnson, her path epitomizes a lighthearted lesson—“Sometimes mom

is right!”—and is a testament to the satisfaction that comes from heeding one’s calling. “The saying, ‘If you find something you love, you’ll never work a day in your life’—that’s how audiology has been for me,” she says.

Equally evident in her story are themes of resilience and purpose. “You can persevere through anything,” Johnson says. “Even if you go through something difficult or feel very different from other people, you can learn and grow from that experience, and can even build a career and a whole life out of it. It doesn’t have to be something that shapes you negatively.”

A DISTINGUISHED PROGRAM

The audiology profession, which focuses on the evaluation and treatment of hearing and balance disorders, is relatively young, having emerged in the 1940s when soldiers returned home from World War II with hearing loss. KU’s audiology program began at KU Medical Center in the late 1940s and was among the first in the nation.

“When the disciplines of audiology and speech pathology were established enough that there was a credentialing body, KU was the very first program to be accredited in both,” says Tiffany Johnson, associate professor of audiology and chair of the department of hearing and speech at KU Medical Center. “So our accreditation number is 1.”

Today, KU’s doctor of audiology degree is part of the intercampus program in communicative disorders, which comprises audiology and speech pathology and brings together faculty from the Lawrence campus and KU Medical Center to teach in the graduate programs. Students on the four-year audiology track complete rotations in a network of 36 clinics in the Greater Kansas City area. “We want students to get exposure across the scope of the profession,

because they often don’t really know what they’re going to enjoy doing,” Johnson says. “So it’s to their benefit to try all of it out.”

Lauren Mann, AUD’11, PhD’21, clinical associate professor of audiology and director of the neuroaudiology clinic in The University of Kansas Health System, says such variety gives students valuable insight into audiology’s wealth of professional possibilities. “An audiologist might work in a school, in a hospital, a private practice, a VA system, a research setting,” Mann says. “A lot of people won’t have the same job throughout their career, and it’s cool to see when students graduate, all the different shapes their careers take over time.”

U.S. News & World Report consistently ranks KU’s audiology program in the top 10 at public universities, and Johnson credits alumni for adding to the distinction. “We have a lot of students who stay in the area, but we also have people who go around the country and around the world to work, teach and research. I think people interact with them and see how well prepared they are, and that contributes to the rankings—the quality of the students who graduate from this program.”

—M.H.

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Leaders and Innovators

*Black Alumni Network honors
11 Jayhawk trailblazers*

ALUMNI WHO HAVE excelled in their careers and service shared the spotlight Oct. 26-28 during the KU Black Alumni Network's biennial Homecoming reunion.

Eleven Jayhawks were recognized as Mike and Joyce Shinn Leaders and Innovators during a dinner Oct. 26 at the Jayhawk Welcome Center. The network began the tradition in 2007, and in 2015 the Leaders and Innovators were renamed to honor one of the Black Alumni Network's founding members, the late Mike Shinn, e'66, and his wife, Joyce. She returned to Lawrence to attend the Oct. 26 celebration.

The 2023 honorees are:

- Maj. Gen. Kevin Admiral
- Val Brown Jr.
- J. Erik Dickinson
- Jarius Jones
- Ngondi Kamatuka
- Jerrihlyn Miller McGee
- Col. Robin Montgomery
- Milt Newton
- Loleta Robinson
- Reuben Shelton
- Brenda Marzett Vann

Admiral, c'94, commands the U.S. Army's largest and most modern armored division, the historic 1st Cavalry Division, with over 21,000 soldiers stationed at Fort Cavazos, Texas. He previously served in the Pentagon as the Army's director of force management.

He has earned many military honors, including the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service

Medal, four Bronze Star Medals, the Purple Heart, seven Meritorious Service Medals, an Army Commendation Medal, and four Army Achievement Medals.

Admiral earned his KU degree in cellular biology and commissioned from the Army ROTC program as an active-duty armor officer. He holds a master's degree from the National Defense University's Joint Advanced Warfighting School, and he is a graduate of the Royal College of Defence Studies in London.

Brown, c'75, m'79, a third-generation Wichita physician, was one of the first two African American students to graduate from the KU School of Medicine's Wichita campus. Although he retired from his private internal medicine practice in 2016, he continued to work in emergency rooms. He also served for 18 years as volunteer medical director for the EC Tyree Health and Dental Clinic at St. Mark United Methodist Church.

He has served on the boards of Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Urban League, and the city and county health departments. He also mentored numerous students. For his community service, he received the Golden Eagle Award from Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, the NAACP Community Service Award, and the Urban News Best Doctor and Best Health Care Provider awards.

Dickinson, c'91, is president of the Urban Ranger Corps,



Admiral



Brown



Dickinson



Jones



Kamatuka



McGee



Montgomery

a youth development agency founded in 2003. He previously served as director of the Boy Scouts of America: Heart of America Council and executive director of the Cleaver Family/Linwood Centers YMCA of Greater Kansas City.

His community involvement includes the Kansas City-Plaza Rotary Club, which he led as president in 2020. He was appointed to the Public Improvements Advisory Committee and the Housing Trust Fund advisory board of Kansas City, Missouri. He is currently president of the Kansas City, Missouri, alumni chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. He attended Kansas City, Kansas, public schools and earned his KU degree in personnel administration.

Jones, d'99, EdD'19, directs classified human resources for the Shawnee Mission School District. He previously served as principal of Center Middle School and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Kansas City, Missouri, where he also was vice principal of

Jones is a board member of the Start a Smile Foundation, the Pentecostal Church of God in Christ and The Good Work. He previously served on the

Northeast High School. In 2001, he was among the first Kansas City Teaching Fellows, which led to his seven-year tenure as a teacher at Wyandotte High School in his native Kansas City, Kansas. A graduate of Schlagle High School, he was inducted into the school district's Reasons to Believe Alumni Honor Roll.



Newton

Kansas National Education Association board and on several Kansas State Department of Education committees. In 2017, the Friends of Yates named him a Black Man of Distinction.

Kamatuka, g'83, PhD'87, is the assistant dean for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in the KU School of Education & Human Sciences, where he has taught for 15 years. He also directs KU's Achievement & Assessment Institute's Center for Educational Opportunity



Robinson

Programs. He earned his bachelor's degree in education from Tabor College in Hillsboro, Kansas, before completing his KU graduate degrees in higher education administration.

He served as president of the Mid-America Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel and chair of the Council for Opportunity in Education. Through the University of Liverpool, he advised the European Commission's Science in Society Catalyst project at universities



Shelton

in Austria, Germany and Slovakia. His KU honors include Unclassified Employee of the Year, the School of Education & Human Sciences Achievement Award for Professional Staff, and the Phi Delta Kappa chapter's Outstanding Educator Award. He also received the Council for Opportunity in Education's Walter O. Mason Award.

McGee, n'02, g'05, DNP'14, is a nurse and clinical associate professor in the KU School of Nursing. She also is the



Vann

inaugural vice chancellor for diversity, equity and inclusion and the chief diversity officer for KU Medical Center's three campuses in Kansas City, Salina and Wichita. Before earning her three KU degrees, she earned a bachelor's degree from Xavier University in New Orleans.

Her scholarly work has focused on civility, healthy work environment, cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, underrepresented students' perceptions of nursing as a



career, perceptions of health in urban settings, health and educational equity, and professional development. She facilitates seminars, webinars and workshops in Kansas City as well as nationally and internationally. She co-authored the 2019 State of Black Kansas City report and has published numerous other peer-reviewed journal articles.

Montgomery, g'10, is chief of strategic plans and policy for the U.S. Central Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. He also has served the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon and the Allied joint headquarters of NATO in Naples, Italy. He has played a pivotal role in shaping contemporary military force dynamics and foreign policy frameworks.

He earned his bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Washington before completing his KU master's degree in public administration. He graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and the U.S. Army War College, where he served as a national security fellow at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Newton, d'89, g'93, is assistant general manager of the NBA's Milwaukee Bucks

and previously served as an executive for the Minnesota Timberwolves and the Washington Wizards. He also helped establish the NBA Developmental League and was assistant director for the USA Basketball Men's National Team. As a Jayhawk, he was a starter on KU's 1988 NCAA national championship team and captain of the 1989 team.

He was a member of the NBA's "Basketball Without Borders" delegation that held clinics in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Dakar, Senegal. In Washington, D.C., he volunteered as a mentor for adolescents through the National Center for Children and Families, and he serves on a committee that provides college scholarships for students at his alma mater, Calvin Coolidge Sr. High School. Newton grew up in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where he helped create the Emerald Gems Foundation Inc. to benefit teenagers. The government renamed the playground of his youth as the Milton M. Newton Recreational Park.

Robinson, c'93, m'99, is president and CEO of Fortis Industries, providing investment insights and strategic guidance to venture capital firms. She formerly held leadership positions at Thermo Electron Corp. and MedImmune Vaccines, and she served

as an entrepreneur in residence at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska and the National Institutes of Health. While at the NIH, she supported the development of rapid COVID tests. As a co-founder and chief medical officer at Syan Biosciences, she helped develop a new point-of-care diagnostic test for underserved populations.

In addition to her KU degrees, she holds a master's in business and health administration from the University of Colorado Denver and a certificate in venture capital finance from the University of California-Berkeley School of Law. She has served on advisory boards for the KU School of Medicine, the University of North Carolina department of digital health, the Springboard Enterprises Life Sciences Council and several startup companies.

Shelton, j'78, earned a law degree from St. Louis University and a master's in business administration from Washington University in St. Louis. He retired as lead litigation counsel for Monsanto Co. Before Monsanto, he was special chief counsel in the Office for the Missouri Attorney General, where he co-led the state's lawsuit against the tobacco industry, which resulted in a \$6.7 billion settlement for Missouri, the largest in state history.

Shelton recently concluded his term as the international president of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. after serving on the board for 16 years. He also has served on the boards of the Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, the NAACP and the Fathers and Families Support

Center, as well as the St. Louis Children's Hospital Development Board and the St. Louis University Board of Regents. His numerous awards include St. Louis University Law School's Order of the Fleur de Lis Hall of Fame, the highest honor the school bestows.

Vann, d'71, g'72, is a retired speech-language pathologist and educator. She began her career at KU as assistant director of Supportive Educational Services (SES) and director of Urban Affairs, now known as the Office of Multicultural Affairs. As SES director, she helped obtain the first federal grant for the program. She later became coordinator of speech, occupational and physical therapy for the Kansas City Public Schools in Missouri and a faculty member at Rockhurst University and the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

She received the American Cancer Society's Outstanding Volunteer Award and the Terese Lasser Award, the highest honor for service to the Reach for Recovery Program. As a longtime volunteer for the KU Black Alumni Network and the KU Alumni Association, she served on the Association's national board of directors from 2010 to 2015. She received the Association's Mildred Clodfelter Alumni Award in 2009 and the Black Alumni Network's Distinguished Service Award in 2015. She continues to advocate for KU as a member of the Association's Jayhawks for Higher Education, and she co-chairs KU Endowment's Women Philanthropists for KU.

MEMBER EXCLUSIVE

Wrap up the year



Members of the KU Alumni Association build a stronger KU!

It was another incredible year for the University of Kansas! As we wrap it up, let's celebrate some of the high points:

- ❑ KU welcomed the largest freshman class in its history.
- ❑ The new Jayhawk Welcome Center and renovated Adams Alumni Center opened in conjunction with the Association's 140th anniversary.
- ❑ The University of Kansas Health System celebrated its 25th anniversary as an independent hospital authority.
- ❑ The Sunderland Foundation invested \$100 million in The University of Kansas Cancer Center.



- ❑ An anonymous donor contributed \$50 million to the School of Business.
- ❑ The men's basketball team won its 21st Big 12 regular season and an NCAA-record 64th conference championship.
- ❑ The women's basketball team won the 2023 WNIT championship.
- ❑ KU and Kansas Athletics, in partnership with the City of Lawrence, Douglas County and the State of Kansas, have begun a monumental campaign to reimagine the corner of 11th and Mississippi streets and renovate David



Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium as the new Gateway District. The district will include a convention center and other multipurpose facilities to drive year-round commerce and

economic development and support academic success and student recruitment.

- ❑ KU Endowment and the University launched Ever Onward, a comprehensive, historic fundraising campaign to benefit all of KU and The University of Kansas Health System.



Celebrate our incredible year with one of our member-exclusive Jayhawk scarves. Made of exceptionally soft acrylic knit material, these scarves fight the winter chill while highlighting your KU pride and tradition. The luxurious colors, soft texture and elegant design make this scarf perfect for a night on the town, a trip to the Booth or Field House, and everything in between. Renew, upgrade your membership or make a year-end gift of at least **\$35** by **Dec. 15** to wrap up 2023 with one of these unique scarves inspired by vintage KU garments.



Scarf is vintage red on one side and vintage blue on the other.



Homecoming highlights



KU's 111th celebration honored student leaders, including senior Thanh Tan Nguyen (left, with Paige Freeman, the Association's director of student programs). He was one of two recipients, along with fellow senior Libby Frost, of Ex.C.E.L. Awards. Rainy days didn't dampen the spirits of student groups who competed in the annual Chalk 'n' Rock and Jayhawk Jingles contests.

Emerging Leaders

Young alumni earn recognition from the Black Alumni Network

SEVEN JAYHAWKS who have made impressive strides early in their careers also were honored Oct. 26 by the KU Black Alumni Network. This is the second group to be recognized as Emerging Leaders, following the inaugural class in 2021.

This year's honorees are:

- Steven Johnson Jr.
- Olivia Jones
- Chanté Martin
- Whitney Morgan
- Stanton Parker II
- Keon Stowers
- Derrick Williams

Johnson, EdD'22, currently serves as the interim director of KU's Student Involvement & Leadership Center and the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life, roles he has added to his responsibilities in the School of Business, where he is assistant dean of diversity, equity,

inclusion and belonging. He's also involved in the American College Personnel Association as past chair of the Pan African Network.

He earned his bachelor's degree in industrial and manufacturing systems engineering at Iowa State University and his

master's in student affairs administration at Michigan State University before completing his KU doctorate in educational leadership and policy.

Jones, c'22, a second-year doctoral student in KU's counseling psychology program, works as a graduate research

assistant for the Juniper Gardens Children's Project in Kansas City. As an undergraduate, she was a Ronald F. McNair Scholar, and she received an Undergraduate Research Award for her work titled "Cross-Cultural Code-Switching: Its Relationship to Black Americans' Adaptability and Identity." She earned her bachelor's degree in psychology and applied behavioral science. As a member of the Applied Masculinities and Positive Psychology lab, she hopes to pursue research that uses positive psychology principles to create a more inclusive and accessible therapy culture for marginalized people, specifically for Black men.

Martin, g'18, directs strategic partnerships for Polco, a company focused on elevating the voice of community members in government decision-making. She grew up in Topeka and rural Arizona and now lives in Phoenix. She earned her bachelor's degree in communications from Washburn University before completing her KU master's in

public administration. She is the incoming president of the Kansas University City Managers and Trainees Alumni Organization, and she previously worked in local governments in Minnesota and Texas.

Morgan, a'11, g'13, works for the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, where he is the civil rights program manager and the liaison to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program. He previously served as a transportation planner at the Mid-America Regional Council. He is the immediate past president of the Kansas City chapter of the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials, and he received the 2020 Rev. Jerry Moore President's Leadership Award. He earned his bachelor's degree in architecture and his master's degree in urban planning.

Parker, b'12, is a certified information systems auditor and director of internal audit for MacroSource. In addition to his full-time role, he provides accounting services to entrepreneurs and other busi-

ness owners. A Kansas City, Kansas, native, he is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. and served in leadership roles for the organization as a student and an alumnus, including undergraduate grand board member and undergraduate chapter adviser.

Stowers, c'15, is an associate development director for KU Endowment, where he assists the KU Alumni Association in cultivating major gifts, including the commitments that funded the \$29.5 million Jayhawk Welcome Center and Adams Alumni Center renovation. He previously worked for the Association as assistant director of student programs, helping the Student Alumni Network become the largest organization of its kind in the Big 12. He began his career with KU Admissions, recruiting first-generation students and those from underrepresented groups. As a student-athlete, he led the Kansas football team as captain during the 2013 and '14 seasons before completing his sociology degree. He serves on the board

for K-Club and is the finance and fundraising chair for the Black Alumni Network. In addition, he is a board member of Special Olympics Kansas and the American Red Cross Lawrence chapter.

Williams, b'17, is a wealth manager and financial planner for Creative Planning in New Orleans. He recently obtained his certified financial planner designation; only 1.9% of these professionals are Black. As a KU student, he was a Multicultural Scholar, and he tutored student-athletes. After earning his business degree in marketing and finance, he began his career at Renaissance Financial before moving to Morgan Stanley and U.S. Bank. He now offers guidance on various financial topics through a monthly broadcast segment on WWL-TV in New Orleans, and he is involved in Pathway Education, providing financial education for underrepresented communities. He is treasurer of the Black Sports Professionals New Orleans chapter.



Johnson



Jones



Martin



Morgan



Parker



Stowers



Williams



ASSOCIATION

'Origin Stories' collection

ELEVEN NEW PAINTINGS by artist Megh McClain Knappenberger—depicting the natural origins of Mount Oread, the Jayhawk and KU's distinctive Rock Chalk chant—now hang in the renovated Adams Alumni Center. Knappenberger, f'04, and Association President Heath Peterson, d'04, g'09, unveiled the new works Oct. 28 during the Homecoming tailgate.

The Kansas City artist, who is known for her vibrant, colorful images, says, "I'm a bit of a nerd for history and research and detail, so I like my work to have multiple layers." She met with faculty and explored collections in the Spencer Research Library to understand the geological formations beneath Mount Oread, the native plants that flourished during the 1860s, and varieties of hawks and the blue jay common to the region. She shares her findings in detailed descriptions that accompany the paintings on the first and second floors of the Adams Center.

Peterson also honored Knappenberger as this year's recipient of the Rich and Judy Billings Spirit of 1912 Award, an annual Homecoming honor that recognizes those who help preserve KU's history and traditions.



Knappenberger's artwork features geological formations and native wildflowers, grasses and birds of Kansas.



ASSOCIATION

Jayhawks Belong

"FUEL THE FUTURE," the third and final installment in the Association's "Together We Rise" video series, is now available at kualumni.org/jayhawks-belong. The series highlights the unique and diverse voices of students and alumni who represent the strength of the global KU community.

Jayhawk Profiles

MERYL SWIDLER

Undimmed fire fuels Team USA kickboxer in her championship quest

by CHRIS LAZZARINO

Not long after she qualified for the U.S. national kickboxing team, thanks to taking gold in her division at the 2023 national tournament in Nashville, Tennessee, Meryl Swidler found herself thinking back to the origin of her martial arts career: a classmate's snotty snub when she was only 5 years old.

"I was already in ballet and tap, and I was super into learning how to dance and do gymnastics, things like that," Swidler, d'19, recalls from her home in the Chicago suburb of Gilberts, Illinois. "Even then, I loved being in the athletic world."

When she happened to give voice to the stray thought that she might like to try karate, a boy pushed exactly the right button to motivate Swidler to take the first steps toward becoming a national champion.

"That boy told me I couldn't do karate because I'm a girl," Swidler says with equal parts glee and pride. "So I came home and told my parents about it, and they're like, 'Do you even know what karate is?' I said, 'It's when you punch and kick bad people,' and they were like, 'All right, that's a good enough response for a 5-year-old.'"

Swidler discovered in martial arts a hierarchical, goal-oriented combat sport that provided appealing rewards to keep sweating and striving for improvement.

"Karate, at such a young age, builds a strong-minded person," she says. "It builds confidence, it teaches so much self-discipline, and you have to learn how to really focus. With the belt testing, where you work your way up the system, it gives you something to work toward every couple of months, and I learned from the time that I was 5, all the way through my childhood and into my adult years, that I have a very high goal-oriented drive."

Swidler has trained in the same gym since she began in karate, studying what she describes as a street-fighting variation on the Shotokan style of karate. The aggressive training led her toward kickboxing, which Swidler took up when she was 14.

Although she continued to work her way through karate, earning her third-degree black belt at 21, Swidler grew tired of the performative side of martial arts. She preferred kickboxing's clear rules for

scoring and winning: "I didn't want any more participation trophies for showing up. I wanted to be a dominant winner."

The Chicagoland native made her way to KU thanks to her father, Scott, f'91. While away from her home gym, she trained with Lawrence coach Daniel Barajas at Animal Kingdom Boxing; Swidler says her kickboxing coach, Rob Zbilski, president of the World Association of Kickboxing Organizations' Team USA, was continually impressed with her improved boxing skills when she returned during breaks in the school year.

Swidler taught self-defense classes at her sorority—"I'm a big supporter of making



Swidler's victory last May at the national tournament in Nashville (below) qualified her for the world championships, a dream derailed by a serious knee injury, and she is realistic about how much longer she can put her body through the rigors of world-class combat sports: "I always want to be able to keep myself healthy and active—in some way, shape or form—no matter where I'm at in life."



COURTESY MERYL SWIDLER (2)

Jayhawk Profiles

sure that women know how to protect themselves, even if it's just a little bit of knowledge that hopefully they never have to use"—and graduated from the School of Education & Human Sciences with a degree in athletic training.

She now works with a St. Charles, Illinois, chiropractor who specializes in orthopedic and sports medicine injuries, and this fall found herself rehabilitating her own injury: She tore a knee ligament while training with Team USA, which kept her off the U.S. squad for the late-November world championships in Portugal.

Swidler reported in mid-October that knee surgery was a success and that she was eager to get back into training, with an eye toward the 2024 Pan American Games and, should kickboxing gain admittance, perhaps even the 2028 Olympics.

"My coach believes in me, my parents believe in me, and I believe in myself that I'm able to hang at this level," Swidler says, "and, hopefully, who knows, maybe I am a potential Olympic athlete."

Swidler concedes that no matter when her kickboxing career comes to a close, she will be grateful for the work ethic and self-confidence she has gained,

along with the joy of overcoming doubters.

"This all started because a boy told me I couldn't do karate, so I had to prove him wrong," Swidler says with a laugh. "And here we are, 21 years later, and it's kind of cool. It all came full circle, and now I get to be a badass woman representing our country and traveling around the world."

MARK ROBISON

Jayhawk operates sanctuary for vulnerable animals

by RYAN CAMENZIND

In an isolated canyon about an hour north of Reno, Nevada, Mark Robison, j'88, and his wife, Dianne, have for 17 years run CockadoodleMoo Farm Animal Sanctuary, an all-volunteer facility dedicated to providing a lifetime home for abused and rescued farm animals.

CockadoodleMoo's mission emerged from a gap in the animal rescue landscape:



farm animals overlooked or discarded because of profit-driven motives. Farm animals seized in abuse cases or found abandoned and sent to auction often attract zero bids, resulting in euthanasia. CockadoodleMoo is a last refuge for these animals no one else will take. "We saw this niche, these animals that would just be put down, so we decided we'll take in as many as we can," Robison says.

The plan didn't begin with dozens of animals in mind, but was instead sparked by just one: the couple's dog, whose barking habit prompted them to move to where the sanctuary stands today. "We didn't know she was constantly barking at first because she didn't do it while we were home," says Robison. "After we got animal control called on us a few times by the neighbors, we looked into ways to keep her from barking, and they were generally all horrific. So rather than stop her from barking, we decided to move to a place where she could bark as much as she wanted."

Once settled in the remote location, the couple realized they had ample land to aid animals in need. CockadoodleMoo now hosts over 50 critters at a time, with chickens, turkeys, rabbits, goats, pigs, donkeys and tortoises all calling the sanctuary home.

The challenges are as diverse as the animals themselves. Roosters fight, pigs of different breeds need separate pens, and injured creatures demand special care. The presence of predators such as bobcats and coyotes necessitates fully enclosed shelters. Adaptability is essential. A chicken suddenly unable to walk meant the Robisons had a new housemate until they could make a separate safe space. Two pigs who arrived from an Arizona sanctuary had a tough time with summer's extreme heat.

Supporting so many animals may sound like full-time work, but both Mark and Dianne manage the sanctuary while working elsewhere. Mark is the local government reporter and community engagement director at the Reno Gazette-Journal, and Dianne works part time.

"You don't get to take vacations when you run an animal sanctuary," Robison says. "It's not like you can have somebody come dog-sit for you, because everyone has medications, special needs, and some of them are dangerous. So you need to know what you're getting into if you're going to start an animal sanctuary. But you know, we wouldn't do anything else. It's something we absolutely love doing."

Volunteers are welcome at CockadoodleMoo, though the pandemic drastically reduced their numbers. Less help means some projects take longer, but current residents' welfare is never compromised. Robison says one of their guiding principles from the beginning was never to take in more animals than just the two of them can care for. "We have to say no sometimes, because the animals in our care get top priority, and we won't diminish anybody's quality of life because we've taken in more than we can handle."

In the 17 years of running CockadoodleMoo, Robison has seen both the sanctuary and himself evolve. He is no longer squeamish about the harsh realities of animal care. "Anything to do with poop, injured or dead animals, things that people might shrink from, have become second nature," he says. "Instead of turning away from pain and suffering, I can turn toward it because I realized that I can help."

Robison finds gratification in the process and in the transformations he's able to witness. "Seeing the animals from when they were in a difficult situation, scared and cowering in a corner, to blossoming and becoming the individual that you know they always were—it's great to see," Robison says. "The reward is they're able to have a good life. The reward is really just helping when help is needed and letting that be the reward in and of itself."

Jayhawks interested in supporting CockadoodleMoo can donate through the sanctuary's website, cockadoodlemoo.org. When asked how individuals might incorporate the mission of CockadoodleMoo into their own lives, Robison pauses. "I would say, think about the animals in

your life and what they need to be happy, and try to provide that for them," he says. "Rather than thinking how to fit them into your life, look at it from the other direction of how you can give them the fullest life they can have with the most freedom and enrichment in their lives."



NEIL VITALE

Toy restorer commands largest public display of iconic G.I. Joes

by STEVEN HILL

In 1964, when G.I. Joe first stormed toy store shelves, Neil Vitale was 9 years old, right in the demographic sweet spot Hasbro envisioned when it decided to risk marketing the world's first "action figure," a term the company invented to avoid any association with the term "doll."

Boys don't play with dolls—or so went the conventional thinking of the time. But a posable soldier ("America's movable fighting man" was the slogan emblazoned on every box) with miniature weapons, military service manuals, and authentic uniforms from all branches of the U.S. armed forces might be a different matter. The gamble paid off, generating nearly \$17 million in sales the first year and more than \$36 million the second, as G.I. Joe became one of the most popular, iconic toys of the next decade.

In New Rochelle, New York, Vitale toted around two of the figures and their gear in a case his father built.



Robison and a volunteer bring treats to donkeys Willow (left) and Tolstoy. Among the residents of CockadoodleMoo Farm Animal Sanctuary are (from top) Ricky the goat, pigs Aretha and Ella, and Rocky the tortoise.



COURTESY NEIL VITALE (2)

Vitale enjoys greeting museum visitors young and young at heart. “We get a lot of kids whose parents bring them because the kids like to play with G.I. Joes and want to collect them,” Vitale says. “Those are kind of my favorite, because they are the people who are going to be moving the hobby forward.”

“G.I. Joe was massive. All the kids in the neighborhood had them,” he recalls. “My cousin, who lived a block away, had even more than I did. But pretty soon we moved on to other things like Boy Scouts and sports.”

When he went to college in Oklahoma City, Vitale left his Joes with another cousin. Decades later, he got a phone call: The cousin was cleaning out his attic and had found the action figures. Did he want them back?

“I had forgotten all about them,” says Vitale, m’85, by then a pediatrician practicing in Connecticut. “But I told him, ‘Sure.’” Vitale soon received a box with two battle-wary figures missing parts and accessories.

Their disrepair made all the difference. “If they were complete, I would’ve closed the box and put it on the shelf,” he says. “But they weren’t complete. So I said, ‘Well, I’m going to fix them up.’”

So began a deep dive down a rabbit hole of 1960s nostalgia, eBay auctions and DIY repair hacks that led to Vitale becoming a leading expert on the reconstruction of vintage G.I. Joes and the founder and chief tour guide at what he believes to be the

largest permanent public display of the toys in America, the G.I. Joe Museum and Repair Shop in Lone Wolf, Oklahoma.

Housed in a pair of buildings on Main Street between the fire station and post office, the museum has more G.I. Joes (594) than Lone Wolf has people (around 400). The attraction draws 200 visitors a year, half of whom come during the town’s Independence Day celebration, which Vitale also oversees. A vintage Willys jeep out front lures people in. Dioramas (with backdrops painted by Vitale’s daughter Rosie) create dramatic context: The showstopper is a D-Day beach landing with 50 G.I. Joes and their World War II equipment. Shelves display the iterations Hasbro developed as it expanded the toy’s profile to other military and, eventually, nonmilitary roles, such as combat engineer, medic, nurse, state trooper, Canadian Mountie, sea explorer and astronaut.

Vitale’s wife, Renee Weber Vitale, g’83, grew up in Lone Wolf, and the couple relocated there in 2014. The move allowed Neil to liberate his collection from the basement and expand his repair work, which by now, he estimates, has rehabilitated hundreds of Joes.

It also allowed him to focus his medical practice exclusively on developmental and behavioral pediatrics, with a specialty in the diagnosis and treatment of children who have ADHD, autism and behavioral issues. He sees patients three days a week, with plans to retire this fall, though he will likely continue evaluations one day a week because of high demand for his specialty in an area of the state where the nearest medical center is a two-hour drive.

Vitale’s is the rare museum that allows—nay, encourages—patrons to put their paws on the permanent collection. Though he has a few valuable pieces stored beyond the reach of young hands, he likes it when children visit on school trips or with their parents and he gets to correct adults who caution their charges, “Look, don’t touch.”

“That’s the whole idea,” Vitale says of the hands-on ethos. “They’re durable toys. I mean, when kids played with G.I. Joes, they were brutal. You can just tell by the Joes that come in here with ice pick stab wounds and burn marks. Gosh only knows what kids did to them in the ’60s.”

And if they do break something, so what? He knows a crackerjack repairman.



New Life Members

The Association thanks these Jayhawks, who began their Life memberships Aug. 1 through Oct. 31. For information, visit kualumni.org or call 800-584-2957.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Hadley Abbas | Elizabeth E. Larson |
| Kelly Seele Anderson | Allison A. Manning |
| Jeffrey A. Babcock | JuliAnn & Keith D. Mazachek |
| Janet Blair | Scott A. & Jennifer Rocha McMillan |
| Barbara Roskens Blount | Deborah A. Merrill |
| Mary Bunting | Joe J. & Diane Cary Milanese |
| Alison K. Bush | Phil P. & Shelly Minton |
| Craig D. Caldwell & Cristen J. Smith | James J. Moody |
| Chelney N. Cameron | Daniel M. Olson |
| Timothy L. Cooper | Mary D. Padilla |
| Martin J. & Jenae Cornejo | Ryan A. Peters |
| Marco P. D’Orazi | Keeton C. & Talisha Mitchell Powell |
| Kim Doze-Lohmann | Peyton E. Renzi |
| Laura Swanson Eilts | Preston C. Rook |
| Melissa R. Flasschoen | William E. Roskens |
| Brenna J. Flucke | Preston Sauers |
| Brooke S. Flucke | Scott R. & Julie Smith Schillings |
| Jeff Gaona | Kari Camp Schultz |
| Jeff N. & Polly How Gentry | Kenneth A. Selzer |
| Lawrence M. Gibbs | John R. Soldner |
| Robert L. & Sherry Gering Greenwood | Mathew N. Stava |
| Matthew G. & Shelly McConnell Griffiths | Judy Stewart |
| Weston D. Hack | Stephen B. & Lisa Olson Stump |
| Alexander J. Haden | Diana C. & Miltiadis N. Theologou |
| Steve & Abigail C. Haden | Quoc V. Truong |
| Trey M. Haden | Angela Firner Tyroler |
| Susan Mary Heitmann | Marco Villa |
| Jennifer Kusek Hill | Richard J. Welton |
| Julia Howard | Megan D. Wood |
| Gwendolyn Johnson | Brad J. & Debra Roth Ziegler |
| Camieo & John H. Johnson Jr. | |
| Jesse H. & Cymbol Sutton Kibort | |
| Eileen M. Klein-Burns | |
| Deborah S. Kuhn | |
| Uday Anant Kumthekar | |

ASSOCIATION

Power of connection

Kyou Networking Week unites alumni around career focus



Tulsa Jayhawks

THE FIFTH ANNUAL Kyou Networking Week was the biggest yet, with over 300 alumni nationwide gathering in their local networks.

The week featured 18 career-focused events in 16 cities, with Jayhawks of all ages invited to gather for career conversations.

“I think what stands out to me the most about Denver’s event was the wide range of ages who attended,” says Lindsay Barnett, j’07. “We had folks in every state of their career—new jobs, old jobs, recently laid off and looking, and retired. I exchanged either phone numbers or LinkedIn accounts with at least five new people. Not only was the happy hour fun, but it definitely served a purpose.”

Kyou Networking Week is one of many programs of the Jayhawk Career Network, which gives students and alumni access to career resources, jobs, events, programming and connections at all career stages.

The week also helped attract eight new network volunteers, including Laura Clark, j’05, who organized an event in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

“We had a group of about a dozen Jayhawks ranging from the Class of 1970 to the Class of 2022 get together for our happy hour,” Clark says. “We chatted about where we lived during undergrad, which watering holes we frequented, and bonded over working on campus, graduating from the same schools, and countless fun stories from the Hill. There was so much warmth in our connections, both personal and professional, and we’re already looking forward to our

next meetup, a watch party.”

Network volunteer Lucas Snyder, d’19, shared how the Chicago Network brings alumni together.

“The Chicago event at Theory was a testament to how tightknit our Chicago Jayhawks group is,” Snyder says. “Kyou Networking Week provided alums an opportunity to reflect on each other’s time on the Hill, as well as how KU has impacted their journeys to where they are today. I enjoyed hearing how current and past work experiences overlap across industries and seeing fellow Jayhawks encourage each other to achieve their goals.”

“Kyou Networking Week is a great opportunity to showcase how the KU Alumni Association and our networks across the country can help you,” says Nick Kallail, d’04, l’07, the Association’s assistant vice president of volunteer engagement & networks. “By partnering with our volunteers to host 18 events in 16 networks, Jayhawks everywhere were able to see the power of the Jayhawk Network at work. So many KU alumni have a great personal story of how a KU connection helped move their life forward in some way. These events are designed to provide an opportunity for every Jayhawk to ignite a life-changing connection.”

If you are interested in seeing more alumni events in your area, visit kualumni.org/volunteers to learn how to volunteer.

—RYAN CAMENZIND



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by MEGAN HIRT

1947 Shirley Otter Ambrose, f'47, celebrated her 98th birthday Oct. 5 at her home in St. Augustine, Florida. Shirley owned an interior design firm for many years before her retirement.

1959 Marlan Carlson, d'59, f'59, retired in June as professor of music at Oregon State University, where he taught for 54 years and conducted the university's symphony for 35 years.

Married:

John, f'59, and **Ruby Sterlin Shade Martin**, d'59, Nov. 17, 2022, Overland Park. John is an artist who has painted portraits and murals for the University, Kansas Athletics and the Alumni Association, and Ruby is a retired trip and event planner. They live in Overland Park.

1963 Arthur Traugott, c'63, m'67, retired in September after 51 years as a psychiatrist at Carle Health in Champaign, Illinois.

1967 Rickey Utermohlen, b'67, a pilot, flight instructor and retired naval aviator, received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award from the Federal Aviation Administration. He lives in Grass Valley, California.

1969 David Grove, PhD'69, retired as a consulting psychologist. He and his wife, Sharon, live in Sherwood, Oregon.

1971 Phyllis Stevens Chase, d'71, EdD'87, was appointed to the University of Central Missouri board of governors by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson. She is a professor of education and coordinator of the PK-12 education doctoral program at Baker University.

1972 Diana Bartelli Carlin, d'72, g'74, former dean of the graduate school and international programs at KU and professor emerita of communication at St. Louis University, co-wrote the college textbook *U.S. First Ladies: Making History and Leaving Legacies*. She lives in Lawrence.

Maureen Poulin, d'72, is a spiritual care counselor at Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo in Buffalo, New York.

1973 Jim Grigsby, c'73, is a professor and researcher in the department of psychology at the University of Colorado Denver.

Sandi Plummer, c'73, PhD'76, is a semiretired psychologist and has been in private practice for 40 years. She lives in Canberra, Australia.

1974 Ellen Boddington Baumler, c'74, g'83, PhD'86, in August received the Heritage Keeper Award from the Montana Historical Society, where she worked as a historian for 26 years before her retirement in 2018. She has written more than 20 books about Montana.

Fernando Diaz, g'74, is a neurosurgeon with the Michigan Head and Spine Institute.

Lexie Nebergall Engleman, d'74, one of the first female firefighters with Lawrence-Douglas County Fire Medical, in July was honored with a training room dedicated to her at Station 1 in Lawrence. Lexie retired as a captain in 2010 after nearly three decades with the fire department.

1975 Bill Farmer, j'75, is a voice actor who has been the official voice of the Disney character Goofy since 1987. Among his other credits are Disney's Pluto and Horace Horsecollar. His work can be heard in numerous movies and TV shows.

1976 Tim Cahill, a'76, is chief design officer and national architecture practice leader at HNTB.

John Guenther, a'76, a'77, wrote the book *The Gateway Arch: An Illustrated Timeline*, published in May. He is an

architect and president of the St. Louis chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians.

Rex Niswander, c'76, of counsel at Morrison & Foerster in the law firm's New York City office, was honored by the Lawyers Alliance for New York with its Cornerstone Award, which recognizes outstanding pro bono legal services for nonprofits.

1977 Dan Dean, j'77, retired from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where he was an audiovisual and graphics team leader. He and his wife, Monica, live in Darnestown, Maryland.

1978 Michael Martens, j'78, is managing partner at First Staff Benefits in Knoxville, Tennessee.

1979 Carl Luer, PhD'79, is senior scientist and program manager at Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium in Sarasota, Florida.

Jeff Russell, b'79, a business consultant and retired executive at Reser's Fine Foods, was named a 2024 Topeka Business Hall of Fame laureate.

1980 Laura Ice, d'80, was elected president of the Kansas Bar Association for 2023-'24. She retired in October as senior vice president and general

School codes

- a School of Architecture & Design
- b School of Business
- c College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
- d School of Education & Human Sciences
- e School of Engineering
- f School of Fine Arts

g Master's degree

- h School of Health Professions
- j School of Journalism
- l School of Law
- m School of Medicine
- n School of Nursing
- p School of Pharmacy
- PharmD School of Pharmacy
- s School of Social Welfare

u School of Music

- AUD Doctor of Audiology
- DE Doctor of Engineering
- DMA Doctor of Musical Arts
- DNAP Doctor of Nursing Anesthesia Practice
- DNP Doctor of Nursing Practice
- DPT Doctor of Physical Therapy
- EdD Doctor of Education
- OTD Doctor of Occupational Therapy

PhD Doctor of Philosophy

- SJD Doctor of Juridical Science
- (no letter) Former student
- assoc. Associate member of the Alumni Association



counsel at Textron Financial Corp., where she worked for over 25 years. She lives in Wichita.

Tim, c'80, l'83, and **Melinda Cadle O'Brien**, c'80, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in June. Tim is a retired attorney, and Melinda is a retired IBM systems engineer. They live in Overland Park.

1981 Diane Schroeder Mendenhall, d'81, a former KU volleyball player, in July was named president of Nebraska Pro Volleyball.

1982 Bradley Keller, PhD'82, is president and CEO of Accuronix Therapeutics and vice president of preclinical development at i-Cordis, both biopharmaceutical companies. He and his

wife, Annette, live in Chesterfield, Missouri.

Donald Kirkpatrick, '82, is an associate in paleontology at the Horry County Museum in Conway, South Carolina.

Steve Pierce, c'82, a former KU cross-country athlete, wrote *Running Douglas County*, a memoir that includes nearly 200 photos from his runs throughout the county. He lives in Baldwin City.

1984 Gayle Copeland, g'84, PhD'98, is dean of the college of education and health professions at Park University in Parkville, Missouri.

John E. Hayes III, b'84, l'91, retired as senior vice president and general counsel at Dick's Sporting Goods. He and his wife, Donna, live in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Thomas Krueger, '84, is a retired Wyandotte County firefighter.

Susan Stanley, j'84, is lead counsel for connectivity, commercial and industrial at Black & Veatch in Overland Park.

1985 Ted Breidenthal, j'85, is commissioner of the Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference.

1986 Kim Wheeler Bruns, s'86, g'03, is a program coordinator for the School of Journalism.

Martin Weishaar, c'86, l'89, in September was named chief legal officer at Hawthorn Bank in Missouri.

1987 Neal Barnes, j'87, is director of product marketing at Clearspan Communications.

Tim Farha, b'87, is a national account manager at Ferrara Candy Co.

Caryne Finlay Mount, f'87, is a textile artist and sewing instructor.

Dana Wreath, e'87, executive vice president of Berexco, an oil and gas company headquartered in Wichita, in August was named board chair of the Kansas Independent Oil & Gas Association. He has four sons, **Eric**, e'14; **Alex**, b'16; **Stuart**, e'19; and **Colin**, e'22.

1988 Brandon Eakes, '88, is a key account manager at the apparel company Shoes For Crews.

Mark Hudson, c'88, g'90, is executive director of Tudor Place Historic House & Garden in Washington, D.C.

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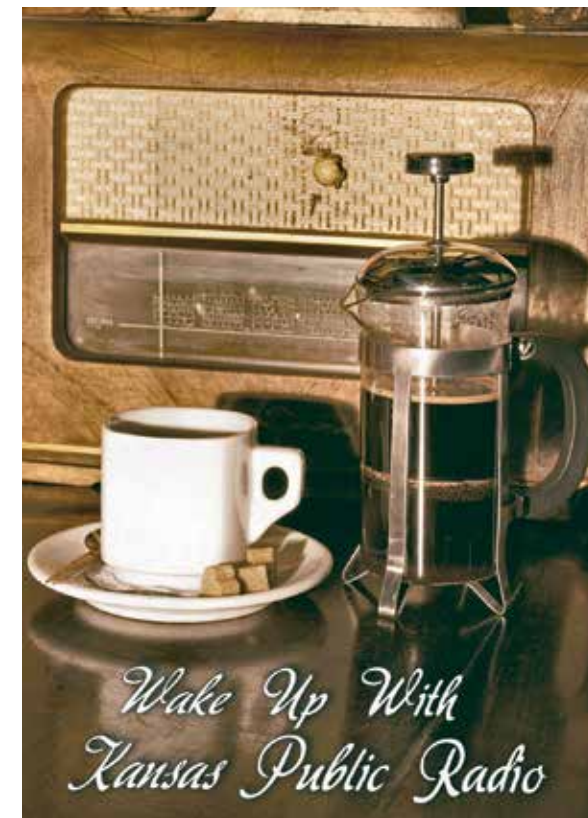
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1989 Claudine Cygan Barnhart, d'89, g'92, teaches eighth grade science at Glenn Westlake Middle School in Lombard, Illinois.

1990 Kevin Brouillette, b'90, is president of The Sola Co., a food and beverage company.

Nancy Hoffelmeyer Percich, f'90, is a graphic designer at CREW Network in Lawrence.

Daniel Schmit, e'90, is president and chief operating officer at the packaging company John-Pac. He and his wife, Wendy, live in Lafayette, Louisiana.

1991 Kerry Cheung, a'91, is a health care architect and planner at RDG Planning & Design. She works in the firm's St. Louis office.

Scott Coons, e'91, in October was appointed to the board of directors of the software company Softdocs. He co-founded Perceptive Software and was its CEO as well as president of Lexmark Enterprise Software until his retirement in 2015.

Sara Nelson McKittrick, j'91, is vice president of business solutions at Leading Real Estate Companies of the World in Chicago.

Mindi Love Pendergraft, c'91, is executive director of the Amelia Earhart Hangar Museum in Atchison.

1992 Greg Hughes, c'92, is president and CEO of the premium spirits company Beam Suntory.

Nancy Scott Jackson, c'92, g'01, is senior vice president

and chief development officer at KU Endowment.

Immer Ravallo, c'92, retired in July as a middle school principal in the Clark County School District in Nevada. She worked in the district for 25 years.

Sally Roberts, j'92, c'93, is head of U.S. media relations at Marsh, an insurance broker and risk adviser.

1993 Jeannene Glenn, c'93, is regional director of sales and marketing at Valor Hospitality. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Eric White, c'93, is president of Comply, a technology and consulting company serving the financial industry.

Staci Yesner, c'93, is a real estate agent with Compass in Chicago.

1994 Jason Haden, b'94, is a partner with Kramer Eakin automotive dealerships in Texas.

1995 Trina Zagar-Brown, j'95, is vice president of business services at Holy Cross Energy, an electric utility in Glenwood Springs, Colorado.

1996 Yvette Fevurly, f'96, joined the Chicago studio of the design firm Perkins&Will as managing principal of its branded environments practice.

Hrisa Gatzoulis, c'96, in September was named head of sustainability at Rudin, a real estate management and development firm in New York City.

Chris Hane, d'96, g'99, is president of Assisted Transportation, which serves schools and government agencies in the Kansas City area.

Robert Rodriguez, g'96, PhD'06, is professor of political science at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

1997 Brad Lacey, f'97, is vice president of design for lifestyle footwear at New Balance.

Dan Scheid, c'97, is a geographic information systems director at S&P Global. He and his wife, Julie, live in Centennial, Colorado.

Jennifer Sherwood, c'97, is senior proposal strategist for environmental services at Burns & McDonnell. She lives in Overland Park.

Ryan Sparks, c'97, in September was appointed chief information officer at Eversana, a commercial services company. He served over 15 years in the



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U.S. Marine Corps, where he was awarded the Silver Star, two Purple Hearts and the Leftwich Trophy.

Anna Ortiz Spencer, j'97, g'22, g'22, a website designer and social media marketer, owns Anna Spencer Creative Media & Design.

1998 Clint Kinney, g'98, is Snowmass Village, Colorado, town manager.

Scott Price, b'98, is director of commercial finance at Dynata, a research and data company. He and his wife, Carin, live in Prosper, Texas.

Sean Slattery, a'98, joined the Kansas City-based architecture firm Odimo as partner and design director. His wife, **Amy Stillwell Slattery**, a'01,

is the firm's founder and managing partner.

1999 Cathleen Carothers, l'99, is a foreign service officer for the U.S. Department of State.

Bettina Lewis Parks, h'99, is a respiratory therapist at Children's Hospital Colorado in Aurora. She has two children, Jerome and Eva.

Shane Schaffer, PharmD'99, is chairman and CEO of the biopharmaceutical company Cingulate.

Charisse Sparks, m'99, in July was named chief medical officer at Inspire Medical Systems.

2000 Dan Kulmala, PhD'00, is assistant vice

president for international programs and global engagement at Millersville University in Pennsylvania.

Steve Lautz, l'00, in September was named executive associate athletics director for compliance at Louisiana State University.

Seth Wagoner, c'00, is CEO and chief financial officer at AIM Strategies, a private equity firm based in Topeka.

2001 Eric Beightel, c'01, in June was appointed by President Joe Biden as executive director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council.

Carrie Lamm Clark, c'01, in August was appointed associate circuit court judge for

Grundy County, Missouri, by Missouri Gov. Mike Parson.

Mark Peterson, c'01, is a software test engineer II at MTM, a transportation services company.

Richard Rams, g'01, is vice president of student services at Citrus College in Glendora, California.

Curtis Sample, c'01, l'04, is a Johnson County District Court magistrate judge in Olathe.

Frank Sciara, b'01, is managing director of capital markets at Walker & Dunlop. He lives in Kansas City.

Nathan Willis, j'01, was promoted to assistant editor in The New York Times' Washington, D.C., bureau.

New from the University Press of Kansas

THE JAYHAWK

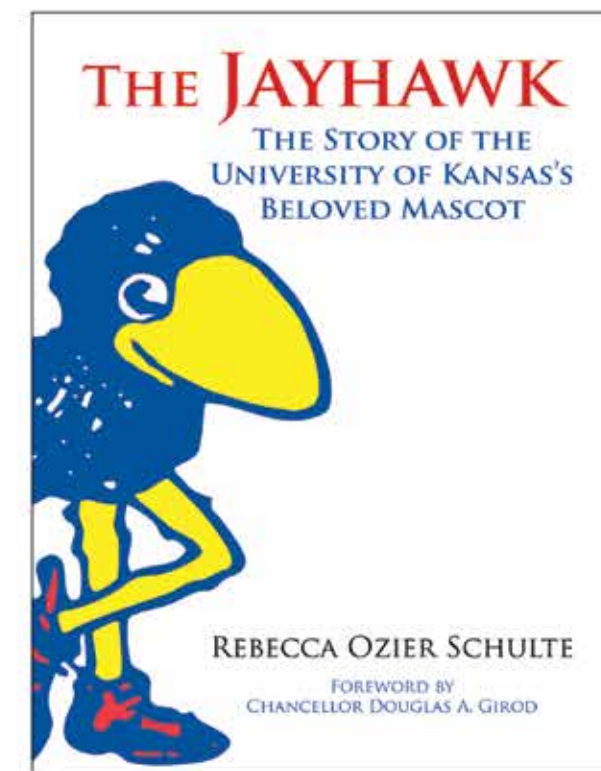
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REBECCA OZIER SCHULTE

FOREWORD BY CHANCELLOR DOUGLAS A. GIROD

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2002 Thad Allender, j'02, and **Brad Johnsmeyer**, c'03, co-founded Ecohome.co, a home renovation app.

Jack Brooks, c'02, l'05, a retired major in the U.S. Air Force, is the continuous improvement and innovation program manager for the Air Force's 944th Fighter Wing. He and his wife, Jennifer, live in Waddell, Arizona, and have three children, Jacob, Jarrett and Jaelyn.

Sara Hocker, c'02, m'06, is neurology division chief at St. Luke's Health System in Kansas City and medical director of St. Luke's Marion Bloch Neuroscience Institute.

Dulcinea King Rakestraw, s'02, g'18, is an assistant professor in the department of family and community medicine in

the School of Medicine in Wichita.

2003 Brooke Bennett Aziere, l'03, is a partner at Foulston Siefkin and leads the law firm's health care practice group.

Katherine Hollar Barnard, j'03, g'06, CEO and managing partner at the Kansas City-based marketing agency Firesign, was honored by PR Daily as one of its 2023 Top Women in Marketing.

Eric Chandler, b'03, is a partner at the law firm Chandler Conway in Omaha, Nebraska.

Doug Donahoo, j'03, is communications director for the city of Shawnee.

Leah Evans, f'03, is a tex-

tile artist whose quilted wall hangings depict maps and geographic features. Her work has appeared at juried art shows across the country, including the Smithsonian Craft Show in Washington, D.C. She lives in Madison, Wisconsin.

Will Fox, c'03, is president of Bank of Blue Valley in Kansas City.

Jennifer Fugett Goetz, f'03, is strategy and creative director at Compass Marketing + Advertising Partners in Topeka.

Joshua Johnson, a'03, g'05, is director of development services for the city of Lee's Summit, Missouri.

Susan Shumaker Klusmeier, g'03, is chief of staff at the Ewing Marion

Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City.

Matt McClasky, c'03, g'08, is senior vice president of business development at Elara Caring, a provider of in-home health care. He lives in Kansas City.

Tim Reeder, '03, is a senior broker at Geodis, a transportation and logistics company. He and his wife, Jamie, live in Richardson, Texas.

Mark Rotherth, g'03, is East Moline, Illinois, city administrator.

2004 Dawn Manning Downing, c'04, is deputy board clerk for Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools.

Amir Khosrowpour, f'04, is a pianist based in Ossining,

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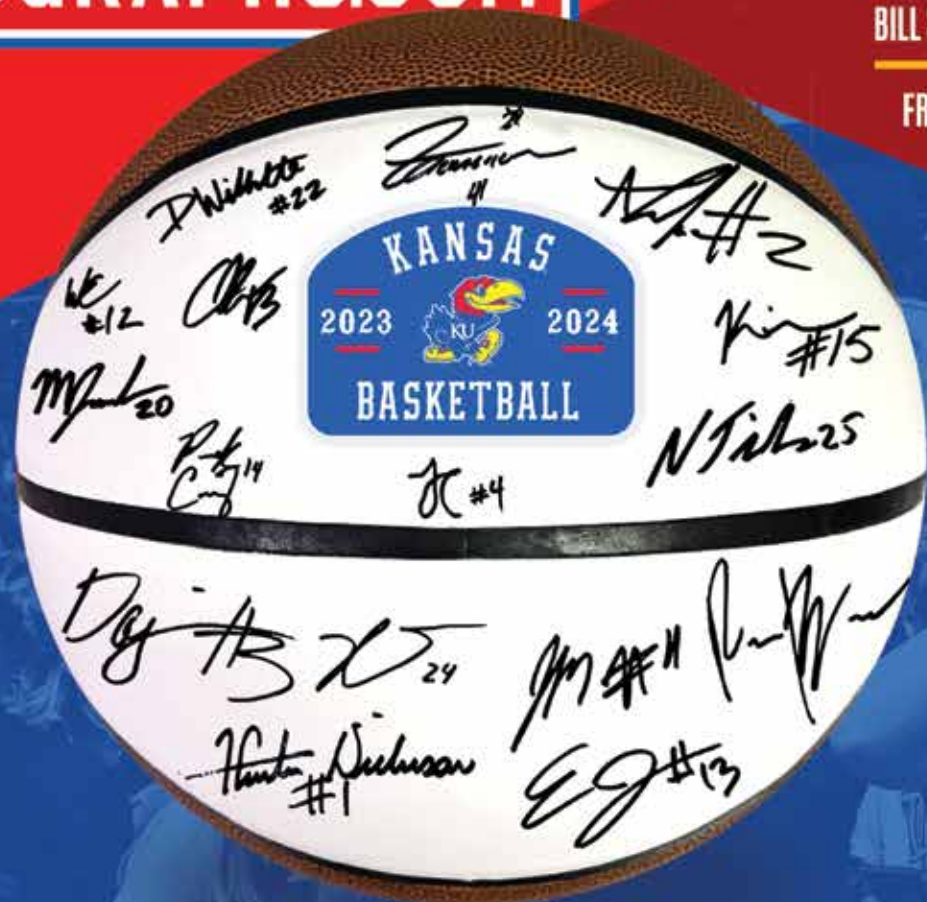
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New York, in September released the album "Treatise on Improvisation, Vol. II." He was a featured performer at the Beacon Bonfire Music + Art Festival in Beacon, New York, in early November.

Julie Bunn Pine, c'04, l'07, in October was appointed chief legal officer at Carson Group, a financial services firm. She lives in Leawood.

Jared Poplin, c'04, is a dentist at Poplin Pediatric Dentistry in Austin, Texas.

Shelby Gigous Uhernik, b'04, is CEO of SurgOne, a surgical group in Colorado.

Cody Wamsley, b'04, l'08, joined the law firm Sterlington as a partner in its cybersecurity, data privacy and intellectual property practices. He lives in Austin, Texas.

2005 Stephanie Wiebe Gallina, b'05, is head of corporate legal at DoorDash. She lives in San Francisco.

Scott Gerber, g'05, joined the Institute for Defense Analyses in Alexandria, Virginia, as an adjunct research staff member.

Elaina Fisher Hoyle, c'05, is an attorney with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services in Houston.

Hien Pham, e'05, is an IT specialist for the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

Chrissy Hill Rogers, a'05, is a principal at Arcturis in St. Louis.

Anthony Treu, a'05, is a principal at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and leads the design

firm's health care practice. He lives in New York City.

Megan Wood, b'05, is chief strategy officer at DigitalOcean, a cloud services provider.

2006 Arjun Bhat, a'06, an architect and designer at CannonDesign in the firm's St. Louis office, was honored as a 2023 Rising Star by Healthcare Design magazine.

Julie Jobe, g'06, is senior accounts payable analyst at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park.

2007 Jeff Bremer, PhD'07, associate professor of history at Iowa State University, wrote the book *A New History of Iowa*, published in September by University Press of Kansas.

Jahnavi Shah Darji, PharmD'07, a client formulary director at CVS Health, joined the Minnesota Academy of Science board of directors.

Renee Goodin Elliott, g'07, was promoted to chief human resources officer at Essense of Australia, a bridal design company.

Crystal Kemp, c'07, a former KU women's basketball player, in June was inducted into the Topeka/Shawnee County Sports Hall of Fame. She is an assistant principal in the Richardson Independent School District in Texas.

2008 Erin Grabe Christy, f'08, director of wealth management at the financial services firm Choreo, was named one of Corridor Business



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Journal's 2023 "Forty Under 40" honorees. The program recognizes top young professionals in the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City, Iowa, area. Erin and her husband, Jason, have a son, Owen.

Blake Cripps, j'08, is operations manager at Emporia's Radio Stations and the radio play-by-play "Voice of the Hornets" for Emporia State University, covering football, basketball, baseball and softball.

Topher Enneking, c'08, and a team of fellow Lawrence entrepreneurs launched STATSDraft, a sports gaming app. **Dustin Brown**, c'04, is the startup's chief technology officer, and **Melody Alexander**, g'20, is chief marketing officer.

Libby Harmon, c'08, f'11, a former track and field athlete

at KU, is an attorney at Nevius Legal, a firm that represents college and high school athletes. She lives in Indianapolis.

2009 Aislinn Addington, g'09, PhD'16, directs the Student Advocacy Resource Center at the University of Montana.

Abby Otte Bowen, g'09, was promoted to human resources director for the Manhattan-Ogden Unified School District.

Kevin Campbell, c'09, m'15, is a pediatric oncologist at Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City.

Laura Lane, f'09, is a lobbyist with Platinum Advisors. She lives in San Francisco.

Peter Meier, d'09, m'20, practices family medicine at

Ottawa County Health Center in Minneapolis.

Sam Wilkerson, f'09, is an attorney with McAfee & Taft in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

2010 Ashley Bare, c'10, is a chef and the owner of Hemma Hemma, an eatery, coffee shop and bodega in Kansas City.

Rebecca May Bassett, g'10, a professional organizer, owns Revelation Organizing in Austin, Texas. She and her husband, Brent, have two children, Avery and Rhett.

Jaran Moten, c'10, is a partner at the law firm Phillips Lytle in Chicago.

2011 Tyler Cini, g'11, is associate principal at the architecture firm Design Balance in Rockwall, Texas.

Alex Earles, c'11, is associate director of philanthropy for the nonprofit organization GLSEN, which works to create LGBTQ-inclusive schools. He lives in New York City.

Austin Falley, j'11, g'16, lives in Washington, D.C., where he is a senior communications consultant at QinetiQ US, a defense technology company.

Mark Harbaugh, n'11, is a supervisor for the Colorado Judicial Branch.

Sarah Kelly, j'11, is deputy sports editor at The Denver Post.

Born to:

Samantha Collins-Payne, j'11, and **Jarett Payne**, d'12, g'14, g'18, daughter, Quinn, April 25. They live in Olathe.



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2012 Mark Kirtland, g'12, is a product director at Ford Motor Co. He lives in Morgan Hill, California, with his wife, Autumn, and children, Nolan, Alex and Audrey.

Ryan Peters, b'12, is a vice president and wealth planner at U.S. Bank in Kansas City

Kortney Friess Traylor, h'12, g'14, is an occupational therapist at Clara Barton Medical Center in Great Bend. She and her husband, Chris, have a daughter, Emma.

Derek Yarmer, m'12, is the emergency department medical director at Pawnee Valley Community Hospital in Larned.

2013 Luke Barnard, c'13, m'19, is an ophthalmology instructor in the Yale School of Medicine.

Lacey Luense, PhD'13, is assistant professor of epigenetics at Texas A&M University.

Jenna Carrier Mauer, a'13, is senior associate and senior project interior designer at HOK, a design, architecture and engineering firm. She lives in Chicago.

Pat Strathman, j'13, is station manager at ESPN Wichita 92.3 FM.

Lia Uribe, DMA'13, is associate professor and chair of the department of music at the University of Arkansas and principal bassoonist of the Arkansas Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ashley Woolsey Zeller, c'13, is a senior mortgage banker at Bell Bank Mortgage in Lawrence.

2014 Emily Beran, c'14, is a research and instruction librarian at Cornell University Library in its division of rare and manuscript collections.

Taylor Bussinger, d'14, g'19, a social studies teacher at Prairie Trail Middle School in Olathe, was named the 2024 Kansas Teacher of the Year by the Kansas State Department of Education. Taylor and his wife, Jill, have two children, Tinsley and Beckett.

Jake Ediger, b'14, l'17, is an associate at the law firm Stradling Yocca Carlson & Rauth in Denver.

Ross Laughlin, c'14, is a vice president and senior branch manager at Commerce Bank. He lives in Overland Park.

Henry Lennon, g'14, lives in Portland, Oregon, where he is a designer at LEVER Architecture.

Sean Powers, j'14, is an account executive at Hub-

Spot. He lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Charlie Sloan, d'14, directs philanthropy for FOCUS Mission Foundation.

Jessica Voss, j'14, is a corporate affairs communications specialist for Kroger.

2015 Seth Amott, b'15, g'16, is cyber audit and risk manager at Trane Technologies. He lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

David Hammack, c'15, l'18, is a trial attorney in the civil division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Ashley Hrabe, b'15, is a management consulting manager at Accenture in Chicago.

Joe Stephens, b'15, g'18, g'18, in September was named CEO of American Packing &

Gasket. He and his wife, Toni, live in Birmingham, Michigan, and have four children. Their oldest son, **Jacob**, c'19, j'19, is also a Jayhawk.

Roberta Wells, c'15, is a technical project monitor for Boston Government Services.

2016 Alexander Hermesch, c'16, m'20, is a family physician at Seneca Family Practice in Seneca.

Jason Kane, b'16, is a wealth manager and director of financial planning and trading at Kane Company Wealth Management in Johnston, Iowa.

2017 Abi Bartlow Case, c'17, is an employer outreach specialist and career coach at the University of Iowa.

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Angie Storey: angiestorey@kualumni.org
Keon Stowers: kstowers@kuendowment.org



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Martin Koch, g'17, is an emergency management specialist in FEMA's Region 7 office in Kansas City.

Lexie Lanphere, c'17, is a controlled substance analyst in the Wisconsin State Crime Lab's Milwaukee office.

Tyler Reese, l'17, is corporate counsel at the financial services company CBIZ. He and his wife, **Allison Putman Reese**, d'13, live in Lenexa and have a daughter, Harlowe.

2018 Lisa Waller Ayala, m'18, practices family medicine at the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas in Pittsburg. She and her husband, Sergio, have a 3-year-old son, Armando.

Ryan Miller, j'18, g'23, is communications manager for

the Washington State Department of Ecology's nuclear waste program. He and his wife, Anja, live in Pasco, Washington.

Hanna Ritland, j'18, is an advertising solutions architect at Google.

Kandy Salter, OTD'18, in August was named director of the doctor of occupational therapy program at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

2019 Brooke Ackerman, d'19, teaches social studies at Cristo Rey Kansas City High School.

Dylan Barnett, c'19, is a customer service adviser at Herff Jones Yearbook.

Tiffany Broughton, c'19,

is a hearing care provider at HearingLife in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. She has two children, Amelia and Jericho.

Nathan Hillegas, a'19, is a packaging designer for Rengo Packaging in Kapolei, Hawaii.

Tracy LaVigne, g'19, is controller at Associated Equipment Sales.

Mallory McKee, b'19, is an IT risk consultant at Ernst & Young. She lives in Prairie Village.

Andre Womack, u'19, teaches saxophone and clarinet at Desert Hills Community School of Music in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Born to:

Lauren Lanz Farrar, j'19, and her husband, Jakob, son,

Jameson, July 21. They live in Aubrey, Texas.

2020 Robert Flournoy, b'20, lives in Yuma, Arizona, where he is operations manager at Northend Auto Parts.

Tina Lai, g'20, is a medical social worker with Midland Care PACE in Lawrence.

Megan Sullivan Malone, c'20, is a legal assistant at Payne & Jones law firm in Overland Park.

Jocelyn Pratt, c'20, is a senior account manager at Lockton Companies. She lives in Olathe.

Tugba Turnaoğlu, PhD'20, is a chemical engineer and researcher at the U.S. Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

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■ Ireland Golf Trip May 26-June 2

Enjoy the Emerald Isle on this visit to southwest Ireland, regarded as one of the world's great golfing regions. This tour includes five rounds of golf at some of Ireland's best, history-rich courses and offers a balance of golf and evenings at leisure to take advantage of the local area.

■ Kenya Safari June 26-July 6

This 11-day journey features Kenya's national parks, reserves and conservancies. Along with the guidance of an Orbridge expedition leader and remarkable accommodations, this adventure provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the spectacular array of wildlife present in this part of the world.

■ Croatia and Cruising the Dalmatian Coast June 7-18

Discover Croatia's wonders on this 10-night journey, which includes a seven-night Adriatic cruise. Board your yacht in medieval Dubrovnik and sail to sunny islands, ancient cities and serene ports of call. You'll visit Plitvice National Park and wrap up your trip in Zagreb.

■ Great European Journey June 30-July 11

Travel through the Netherlands, Germany, France and Switzerland, cruising the Moselle and Rhine rivers on this program, which includes four nights in the Swiss Alps. Ride three railways—the Gornergrat Bahn, Glacier Express and Pilatus Railway—and enjoy a scenic cruise on Lake Lucerne.

■ Easy Company: England to the Eagle's Nest June 17-29

HBO's "Band of Brothers" tells the story of Easy Company, the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne. Follow in their footsteps from England through the hedgerows of Normandy, down Hell's Highway, through Bastogne, all the way to the Eagle's Nest in Germany. Hear incredible stories of heroism and triumph.

■ Normandy, 80th Anniversary of D-Day September 13-21

Normandy's history and culture come alive on a seven-night journey to this coastal region. Visit Omaha Beach, Utah Beach and other famed D-Day sites, admire Mont-Saint-Michel towering over the tidal waters, and enjoy a wine tasting and lunch in a 10th-century castle.



■ Ireland Golf Trip
May 26-June 2

■ Kenya Safari
June 26-July 6



■ Croatia and Cruising
the Dalmatian Coast
June 7-18

■ Great European Journey
June 30-July 11



■ Easy Company:
England to the Eagle's Nest
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■ Normandy,
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Megh Knappenberger

Jennifer Alderdice Award

Yash Prajapati

■ Student Homecoming competition winners

Jayhawk Jingles

1st: Alpha Delta Pi and Zeta Beta Tau

2nd: Pi Kappa Alpha and Alpha Chi Omega

3rd: Delta Delta Delta and Alpha Tau Omega

Judges: Haley Berger, Caitlyn Gastfield and Mackenzie Chinn

Chalk 'n' Rock

1st: Delta Delta Delta and Alpha Tau Omega

2nd: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Gamma Phi Beta and Phi Kappa Tau

3rd: Alpha Delta Pi and Zeta Beta Tau

Judges: Susan Younger, Kate Neuner, Elizabeth Langdon, Jenny McKee and Heidi Garcia

Sign Competition

1st: Sigma Kappa, Delta Tau Delta and Triangle

2nd: Pi Kappa Alpha and Alpha Chi Omega

3rd: Sigma Alpha Epsilon, Gamma Phi Beta and Phi Kappa Tau

Judges: Susan Younger, Domenic Mularo and Cierra Roberson

Overall competition winners

1st: Pi Kappa Alpha and Alpha Chi Omega

2nd: Sigma Kappa, Delta Tau Delta and Triangle

3rd: Delta Delta Delta and Alpha Tau Omega

■ Thank you to:

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2021 Shane Creason, c'21, l'23, is a term judicial law clerk for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in the western district of Washington.

Monica Curiel, c'21, is an artist and designer based in Denver. Her sculptural paintings, furniture and decorative objects are often influenced by her experiences as a first-generation Mexican American.

Michael Garitz, p'21, PharmD'23, is a U.S. Army pharmacist. He lives in Parkville, Missouri.

Ryan Gordon, l'21, joined the St. Louis office of the law firm Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale as an associate.

Dani Kolker, g'21, is a health care planner at Page, a design, architecture and engineering firm.

Paula Lopez, c'21, l'23, is a prosecutor in the Sedgwick County District Attorney's Office.

Kalé Searcy, c'21, j'21, is a reporter and anchor at KETV in Omaha, Nebraska.

Ava Stapp, j'21, manages receivership services and marketing at Trigild, a hospital-ity, real estate and fiduciary services firm.

Denita Victor, j'21, is a content producer and host for the St. Louis Blues.

2022 Dan Chmill, PhD'22, is a park ranger and historian at Hot Springs National Park in Arkansas. He is currently managing a project to uncover the histories of Black employees who worked in the area's bathhouses.

Carly Johnson, j'22, is a producer at KMBC TV-9 in Kansas City.

Michael Tuttle, l'22, is an attorney at Paycom. He lives in Oklahoma City.

2023 Kristen Andrews, l'23, is an attorney in the sports law practice at Kennyhertz Perry in Kansas City.

Renz Breen, c'23, is a junior environmental research analyst at Toeroek Associates.

Margaret Hand, c'23, is a derivatives data analyst at Security Benefit. She lives in Lawrence.

Carter Hicks, c'23, is a human resources coordinator at LMH Health in Lawrence.

Mackenzie Marco, e'23, is an assistant mechanical global engineer in the energy global

practice at Burns & McDonnell in St. Louis.

Adam Mensendiek, b'23, is an account specialist at Fastenal, an industrial supplies company. He lives in Olathe.

Angelique Roberts, g'23, is a special education teacher in the Mount Diablo Unified School District in Concord, California.

Katie Smithson, g'23, g'23, is a project coordinator at The Beck Group, an architecture and construction firm. She lives in Dallas.

Lawson Stroble, b'23, is a financial adviser with Equitable Advisors in Overland Park.

ASSOCIATES

Beth Kelley, assoc., is an administrative assistant in the School of Law.

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Special thanks to our KU Homecoming Sponsors:



1940s Barbara Johnson Bishop, c'46, c'48, Longview, Washington, 98, March 15.

Barbara was a physical therapist and cookbook author. She was preceded in death by her husband, Fred.

Robert Dalton, e'49, Overland Park, 96, April 19. Bob, a U.S. Army veteran, was an electrical engineer and worked for Bendix Corp. for 43 years. His wife, Marty, preceded him in death.

William Myers, c'49, g'55, PhD'58, Bel Air, Maryland, 99, June 8. Bill, a U.S. Army Air Corps veteran, taught microbiology and was a researcher at the University of Maryland for over 35 years. He is survived by his wife, Barbara Johnson Myers, c'49.

Phyllis Struble, c'43, Glasco, 100, Aug. 19. Phyllis taught high school biology in Beloit for 40 years.

1950s Robert Blincoe, b'50, Lodi, California, 95, Feb. 4, 2023. Robert worked for the William Volker Co., a home furnishings company. His wife, Marilyn Gibson Blincoe, '51, preceded him in death.

James Davidson, '52, Overland Park, 92, May 9. Jim, a U.S. Navy veteran, was a Trans World Airlines captain and flight instructor. He was preceded in death by his wife, Emelie Trickett Davidson, '52.

Fredrica "Freddie" Voiland Everett, d'56, Manhattan, 88, May 5. Freddie taught music in the Manhattan school district for 25 years.

Shirley Holmes, c'54, Pearland, Texas, 90, Nov. 28, 2022. Shirley practiced law in Houston.

Albert Jackson Jr., b'50, Austin, Texas, 98, May 2. Albert, a U.S. Navy veteran,

founded Consumers Sand Co. He is survived by his wife, Vivian.

Edward Jones, c'57, m'61, Great Bend, 88, June 6. Edward served in the U.S. Coast Guard. He was a pathologist at Central Kansas Medical Center in Great Bend for over 45 years. His first wife, Barbara Blount Jones, f'56, preceded him in death. He is survived by his second wife, Debbie.

Mary Ann Woods Lancaster, c'52, Springfield, Virginia, 93, July 14. Her husband, Robert, preceded her in death.

Joseph Lastelic, j'52, Alexandria, Virginia, 93, Aug. 27. Joseph was a longtime political reporter for The Kansas City Star. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve for 30 years. He was preceded in death by his wife, Carroll.

John "Jack" Leatherman, d'59, Lawrence, 89, May 2. Jack was store director at Falley's/Food 4 Less in Lawrence and later director of operations for over 40 stores. He is survived by his wife, Lois.

Arlene Lutz Levin, d'55, Sun City, Arizona, 91, June 3. Arlene was a teacher and school librarian. She was preceded in death by her husband, Henry.

Janice Howden Lutz, c'59, d'60, Lawrence, 85, May 24. Janice was a high school English teacher. She is survived by her husband, Fred, e'59, e'60.

Marilyn Riffer McKenzie, f'51, Chanhassen, Minnesota, 92, June 18. Marilyn taught elementary school. Her husband, Richard, preceded her in death.

Arthur Nease Jr., b'54, Abilene, 91, July 3. Art, a U.S. Navy veteran, was president of State Exchange Bank in Barnes for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn Sorem Nease, d'56.

Alice Sellers Ochs, c'52, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 92, April 6. Alice was a physical therapist and sculptor. She is survived by her husband, Harlan, b'50.

Lewis Phillips, e'55, Lawrence, 89, May 5. Throughout his career, Lew worked for Ethyl Corp., U.S. Borax, Southwest Forest Industries, United Vintners and Georgia-Pacific. His wife, Carolyn Husted Phillips, d'55, preceded him in death.

Joseph Sparks, PhD'56, Fort Bragg, California, 96, Nov. 26, 2022. Joe, a U.S. Army veteran, was a physicist and, with his wife, Ruth, founded a travel agency.

Charles "Ken" Spencer, c'58, Fairway, 86, April 23. Ken served in the U.S. Marine Corps and later owned a stock brokerage firm. He is survived by his wife, Jeanette Hallman Spencer, d'59.

Grayce Wycoff Spencer, d'52, Iola, 92, Feb. 23, 2023. Her husband, Ivan, preceded her in death.

Sue Grosjean Wilcox, c'53, g'56, Paradise Valley, Arizona, 89, May 26.

Richard Wilson, j'53, St. James, Missouri, 91, Nov. 11, 2022. Richard was a newspaper owner and business manager. He is survived by his wife, Margaret Boydston Wilson, n'53.

Joseph Wolfe, c'53, Prairie Village, 93, April 29. Joe worked in sales for Sheffield Steel and later New York Life. He is survived by his wife, Char.

1960s Nancy Meyer Barber, d'62, Leawood, 82, June 28. Nancy owned The Daffodil, a women's clothing store in Kirksville, Missouri, for over 20 years.

Robert Cherner, c'69, Phoe-

nix, 75, May 31. Bob and his wife, Linda Westphal Cherner, c'72, c'72, owned Silver & Cherner, a health care association management company, for over 20 years.

George Coleman II, g'60, Waterville, Maine, 89, April 1. George was the registrar at Colby College in Waterville for 40 years.

Herbert Cooper, c'60, m'64, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 85, June 17. Herb, a U.S. Air Force veteran, was a professor and researcher in the school of medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is survived by his wife, Karen Groe Cooper, d'61.

Donald Davis, d'67, Olathe, 78, Aug. 7. Don, a former KU football player, was a high school teacher and football coach for over 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Pam.

Ronald "Bill" Hatfield, p'63, Dodge City, 83, April 27. Bill co-owned The Prescription Center & Gift Gallery in Dodge City. He is survived by his wife, Connie Ogden Hatfield, '63.

Judy Woods Marshall, d'65, Fort Scott, 85, July 14; and **Bob Marshall**, e'60, Fort Scott, 85, Sept. 20. Judy was an author of short stories and books. Bob, a four-sport athlete at KU, was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran and commercial pilot. He later served in the Kansas Senate.

Marilyn Martin, c'66, Rockville, Maryland, 79, July 5. Marilyn worked for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for over 35 years.

David McDonald, c'69, North Chesterfield, Virginia, 75, Dec. 12, 2022. David served in the U.S. Army and was later a technical services librarian at a law firm.

John Mitchell III, c'62, m'66, Rochester, Minnesota, 83, May 19. John, a U.S. Air Force veteran, worked in internal medicine and nephrology at the Mayo Clinic for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Ann Bell Mitchell, d'61.

Dale Rings, b'62, Sun Lakes, Arizona, 82, April 9. Dale was a health care administrator and worked for the Mayo Clinic for 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Penny.

Bill Smith, d'60, Seattle, 84, March 4. Bill was a pastor in the United Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Goering Smith, c'67.

Wanda Peltier Stapleton, g'65, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 90, July 26. Wanda was an activist and served in the Oklahoma House of Representatives for 10 years. Her husband, Robert, preceded her in death.

Jane Tusten, d'65, Lawrence, 79, April 11. Jane was an elementary school teacher.

Paul Walter, PhD'60, Savannah, Georgia, 88, June 25. Paul was professor emeritus of chemistry at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York. He is survived by his wife, Grace Carpenter Walter, c'57.

Gayle Ward, d'60, Overland Park, 86, June 17. Gayle was a secretary for General Foods Corp. for over 20 years.

1970s Lynn Souza Beckers, d'75, g'82, Visalia, California, 74, April 26. Lynn was a journalist and later an attorney. She is survived by her husband, Gerry.

Joyce Haun Ferris, '76, Shawnee, 68, July 31. Joyce worked in the travel industry and later for the Shawnee Mission School District. She is survived by her husband, Ron.

Perrin Hannah Jr., c'70,

Keller, Texas, 74, Oct. 27, 2022.

Gene Land, j'76, Greenwood, Missouri, 69, May 4. Gene founded HSC Industrial Coatings and was a youth baseball coach. He is survived by his wife, Michelle.

Janet Epperson Nichols, '72, Lenexa, 79, May 8. Janet taught junior high and high school and was a school counselor. She is survived by her husband, Charles, g'70, EdD'79.

Dan Reeder, j'71, g'74, Weatherford, Texas, 74, Sept. 20. Dan was editor of *Kansas Alumni* magazine and later owned Reeder & Co., an advertising, design and consulting firm in Lawrence. He is survived by his wife, Janet Pringle Reeder, d'72.

Aurora McCormick Ripley, c'77, Aurora, Colorado, 93, Sept. 15.

1980s Betty Baron, '88, Lawrence, 80, April 28. Betty served in the Peace Corps and taught English as a second language. She was later a Peace Corps campus recruiter at KU. She is survived by her husband, Frank.

Mary Beaven Komosa, n'84, Lenexa, 62, Aug. 3. Mary was a nurse in The University of Kansas Health System. She is survived by her husband, James, c'92.

Susan Daicoff Mango, c'86, Lawrence, 60, Sept. 22. Susan was an event director in the hospitality industry and later director of development at the Lied Center. She is survived by her husband, Joe.

John Weaver, j'83, Steilacoom, Washington, 62, June 25. John served 23 years on active duty in the U.S. Army as an infantry officer and later as

a Green Beret. He is survived by his wife, Becky.

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

John Boulton, PhD'74, Lawrence, 87, Sept. 25. John was professor emeritus of flute and taught at KU for 40 years. His wife, Carole Carstens Boulton, '73, preceded him in death.

Carl Burkhead, g'64, PhD'66, Lawrence, 88, Sept. 7. Carl was professor emeritus in the School of Engineering, where he taught for over 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Joyce.

R. Steve Dick, j'82, Perry, 76, July 6. Steve, a U.S. Army veteran, was a photojournalist at KU for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Margaret Bergin Dick, '80.

Marc Fey, Overland Park, 71, Sept. 12. Marc was professor emeritus in the department of hearing and speech at KU Medical Center. His wife, Sandy, preceded him in death.

Robert Giles, Traverse City, Michigan, 90, Aug. 7. Bob, a prominent newspaper editor and publisher, taught as a professional-in-residence in the School of Journalism. His wife, Nancy, preceded him in death.

Norma Henley, '79, Lawrence, 80, July 4. Norma worked in admissions for the University for many years. She is survived by her husband, Jerry.

Ruth Hillers, c'86, Stover, Missouri, 83, Dec. 22, 2022. Ruth worked with graduate students in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences for nearly 30 years.

Randy Kern, '87, Berryton, 68, July 27. Randy worked for the KU police department for

30 years. He is survived by his wife, Tracy.

Leo Langlois, '76, Lawrence, 93, Oct. 7. Leo, a U.S. Air Force veteran, worked in the KU comptroller's office for over 25 years. His wife, Ramona, preceded him in death.

Wayne Osness, assoc., Lawrence, 90, Oct. 4. Wayne was professor emeritus in the department of health, sport & exercise sciences. His wife, Donna Murray Osness, d'73, g'76, EdD'80, preceded him in death.

N. Maxine Patterson, assoc., Lawrence, 87, March 30. Maxine worked at Watkins Health Center. She was preceded in death by her husband, Bob.

Lew Perkins, Lawrence, 78, July 18. Lew was athletics director at KU from 2003 to 2010. He is survived by his wife, Gwen.

James Peters, assoc., Lawrence, 71, Sept. 4. Jim was director of marketing for KU Continuing Education and later director of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. He is survived by his husband, Gary Mohrman.

Daniel Soddors, g'88, PhD'97, Lawrence, 60, July 29. Daniel was a library associate at KU Libraries, where he worked for over 25 years. He is survived by his wife, Joy.

Flora Wyatt, '82, Crozet, Virginia, 88, Sept. 25. Flora taught in the School of Education & Human Sciences for over 35 years. She is survived by her husband, Benji, p'57.

ASSOCIATES

Charles Hughes, assoc., Olathe, 71, May 16. Charlie worked in banking and was later an insurance agent. He is survived by his wife, Susie.

PHOTO FINISH

MARVIN HALL'S iconic Oread limestone blends beautifully with Jayhawk Boulevard's annual turn toward fall.

PHOTOGRAPH BY
STEVE PUPPE

A woman in full

New biography brings to life the remarkable Elizabeth Watkins

MARY DRESSER BURCHILL'S parents moved from Lansing to Lawrence in 1922, when their first child was born, because, Burchill says, "They knew that they weren't going to be able to afford to send their children off to college, so they thought, 'We'll just move to the town where the school is.'" So Mary and her siblings lived at home while attending KU, "and that was fine," she recalls.

Burchill, c'62, associate director of KU's law library from 1979 until her 1995 retirement, landed a student job that she loved in Watson Library, and, given the proximity, grew fond of the chancellor's stately residence, known as The Outlook. She also became vaguely aware of the matriarchal figure who had donated that property—along with two neighboring scholarship halls—to the University, and who had bequeathed to Lawrence what for decades served as City Hall, the former Watkins National Bank at 11th and Mass.

For Burchill, Mrs. Elizabeth Watkins was a generous if ghostly grande dame whose husband had generated enough wealth for her to live out her final years in fine style while also caring for the needs of students.

The Elizabeth Watkins who emerged after years of research, however, was a woman of far more depth, drive and determination. *The Life and Legacy of Elizabeth Miller Watkins: A Pioneering Philanthropist*, by Burchill and Norma Decker Hoagland, tells, in far greater detail than previously known, the story of a singularly remarkable woman.

"It was an amazing life," says Hoagland, c'75, a Watkins Hall alumna and author of what had been the most complete history

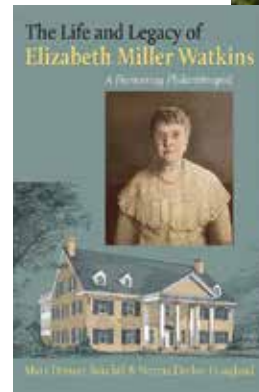
of Mrs. Watkins' legacy, 2016's *Watkins and Miller Halls*. "Her gifts are still giving to the University, especially the scholarship hall system. She started the whole thing."

With the breadth of their new biography—including particularly welcome insights into high finance of the late 19th century—Burchill and Hoagland reveal a complex, nuanced picture of Lawrence's most prominent couple.

Among other towering achievements,



Hoagland and Burchill



The Life and Legacy of Elizabeth Miller Watkins: A Pioneering Philanthropist

by Mary Dresser Burchill and Norma Decker Hoagland

University Press of Kansas, \$24.95

JB Watkins brought the rice industry to Louisiana and essentially created the city of Lake Charles. The authors tell the story of Elizabeth Miller's unlikely relationship with her employer by emphasizing the couple's accomplishments as a personal and professional team, without overly stressing what Hoagland describes as the "prurient aspects" of their lives, including JB's alcohol abuse and Elizabeth's willingness to join him on frequent and extended business trips, without a chaperone, for many years before their marriage.

Shortly after they wed in 1909, Elizabeth and JB began developing a

5-acre tract known as Robinson Farm, which Watkins had purchased more than a decade earlier. Construction on the Neoclassical Revival estate, with views of both the Wakarusa and Kansas river valleys, began in 1911, and in 1912 the couple finally had their dream home.

After JB's death, in 1921, Elizabeth inherited, according to Burchill and Hoagland, an estate estimated at \$2.4 million; at her death, in 1939, the estate, even after two decades of exceptional

generosity, was worth about \$3 million.

"She built, equipped, and furnished Watkins Hall, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, Lawrence Memorial's nurses' home, Watkins Memorial Hospital, Miller Hall, Watkins Memorial's nurses' home, and the guest cottage, not to mention additions to several of these projects," the authors write.

"There can be no doubt she was a successful businesswoman, ahead of her time. She not only survived the Great Depression of the 1930s, but came through with more money than when she started."

Hoagland, a Leavenworth rancher, notes that 2026 will mark the centennial of Mrs. Watkins' centerpiece gift, Watkins Hall, and that one University official has suggested to her that a statue could be in the works, noting that its ideal placement would not be near The Outlook and scholarship halls, but rather on Jayhawk Boulevard, where there are no public memorials to a woman.

"Wouldn't that be fun?" Hoagland exclaims. "Elizabeth's message to everyone would be to prepare yourself for life. Get your education and value it and your educators. You never know what life has in store for you—look at the turn her life took!"

—CHRIS LAZZARINO

WATSON LIBRARY: A CENTURY of STORIES

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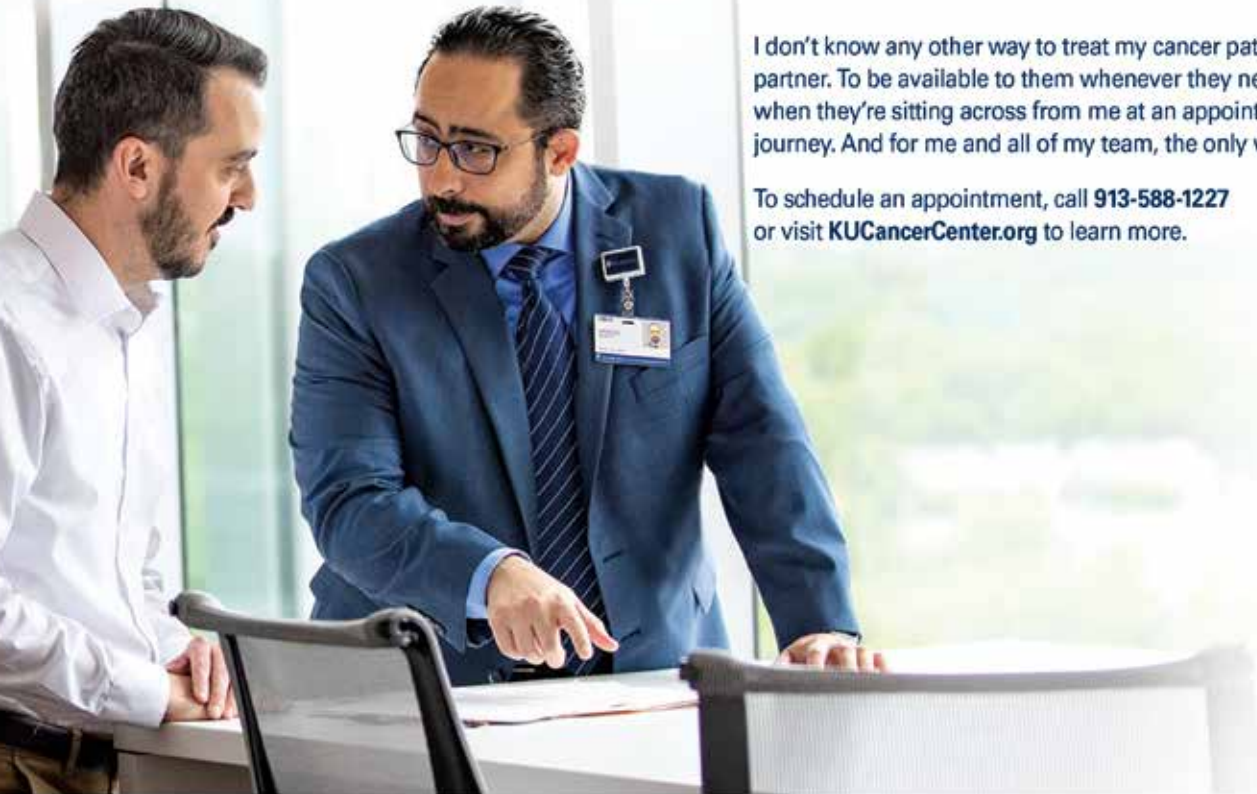
“For me, it’s not just...
‘I’m the doctor and you’re
the patient.’

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- Raed Al-Rajabi, MD
Physician
Medicine Clinical Oncology

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or visit KUCancerCenter.org to learn more.



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