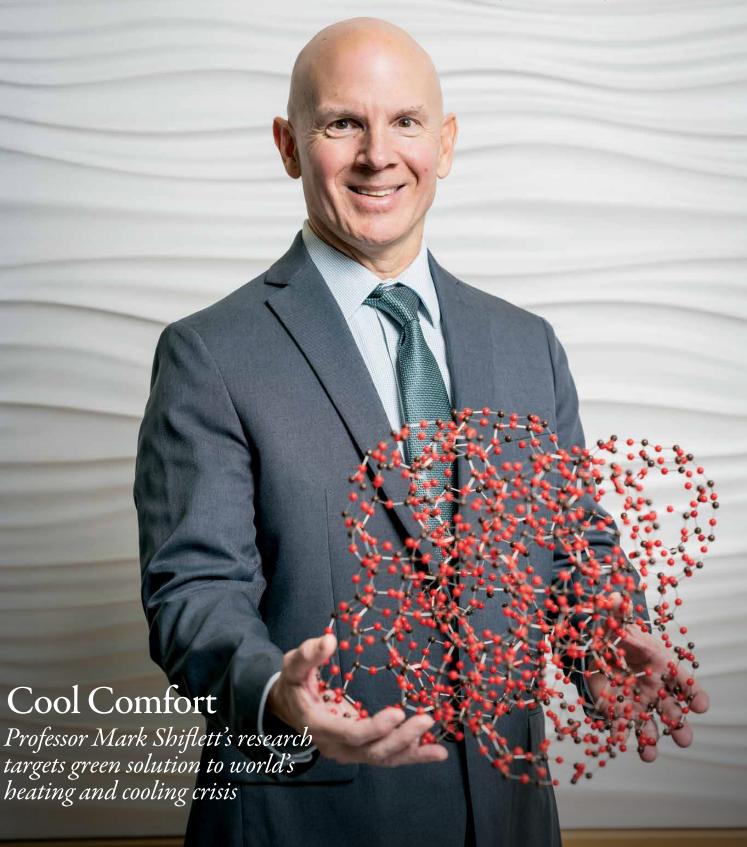
| JOYFUL MUSIC | Conductor Creston Herron

THE DIPLOMAT Ukrainian Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya

# kansasalumni



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Promotion ends 12/31/2025.

#### Talk and squawk in the news







"People would come over to my and my two roommates' apartment in college, and they were like. 'This is better than the Natural History Museum."



-Micah Woods, c'07, a Tennessee veterinarian who specializes in exotic pets, in a Nov. 4 article in the Chattanooga Times Free Press. Working at Pet World in Lawrence during his KU days, Woods acquired a collection of critters that included snakes, tarantulas and a 5-foot-long green iguana.



"Nikki Glaser is very very good at this."

-Comedian Jon Stewart in a social media post during the 2025 Golden Globe Awards, which Glaser, c'06, hosted on Jan. 5. Known for her stand-up comedy and celebrity roasts, Glaser made history as the show's first solo woman host.



"I love this university. I give everything to this university. There's been so many supporters through it all, and I can't imagine being a part of a better school."

-Senior running back Devin Neal after KU's 37-21 upset of Colorado on Senior Day. Neal, a Lawrence native, had four touchdowns in the Nov. 23 game, and earlier in the season set the record as KU's all-time leading rusher. He finished his career with 4,343 rushing yards.

Follow us on your favorite platform:









#KUalumni @KUalumni "This is some National Championship-level snow removal on campus by @KUGrounds! Thank you!!"

-Dave Byrd-Stadler, c'97, g'04, captioning the Jan. 7 photo of Jayhawk Boulevard he posted on social media, which documented the work of KU's grounds crew following the Jan. 5 blizzard that blanketed Lawrence in nearly a foot of snow.



#### IN THIS ISSUE



#### **COVER STORY**

#### Way Cool

A new federally funded center at the School of Engineering seeks to boost the Kansas economy while leading a heating and cooling revolution.

by Steven Hill

Cover photograph by Steve Puppe

Foundation Distinguished Professor Mark Shiflett holds a model of zeolite rho, a synthetic absorbent his research group is developing for recycling environmentally friendly refrigerants.





#### The Unlikeliest Jayhawk

As his country's United Nations envoy, Ukrainian diplomat Sergiy Kyslytsya relies on insights gleaned during his time on the Hill.

by Chris Lazzarino



#### Ode to Joy

Creston Herron is infusing KU orchestras with new energy—fueled by an ambitious repertoire and his own lively spirit.

by Jennifer Jackson Sanner



#### **WINTER 2025**

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#### kansasalumni magazine.org



#### Profile: Mark Gencarelli

Quest for authentic tortilla leads to James Beard Award for Yoli co-owner.

by Steven Hill



#### Always Jayhawks: Winter receptions

Alumni Association partners with KU Admissions to offer warm welcome to prospective students.

#### Lift the Chorus

Letters from our readers

#### First Glance

Frosty founder

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#### Hail to Old KU

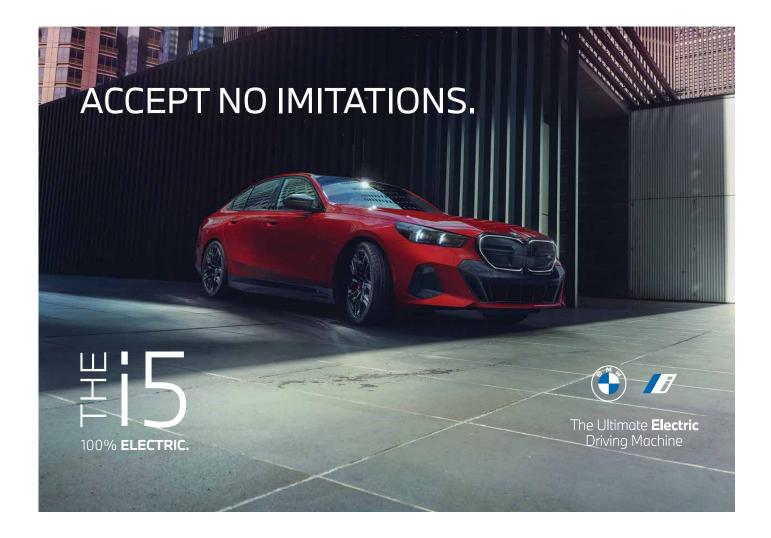
Business centennial

#### 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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#### LIFT THE CHORUS



#### True blue

I AM NOT AN ALUMNUS, but I have been around KU for a number of years in one capacity or another, and I very much admire Kansas Alumni. It surely must be the best alumni magazine in the country.

The fall 2024 issue is especially good, even by the magazine's high standards. I particularly enjoyed Chris Lazzarino's review of Macroevolutionaries and the fine essay by Rosemary Hope about her family's Christmas dinner in Garden City in 1959 with Truman Capote and Harper Lee. ("Come at 1," said Rosemary's mother; "Make it 2," Capote replied.)

Kansas Alumni always has just the right mix of updates from the administration, University events planned or completed, interesting vignettes about KU people and alumni (in the fall issue I especially liked Steven Hill's article on Dennis Garcia and his family), and athletics and other activities.

The magazine manages somehow to convey to the reader what seems to me the essence of KU, including its impressive effort to achieve and maintain high levels of academic distinction (despite an always tight budget and a Board of Regents and Legislature that sometimes seem less devoted to that goal),

and the fun of being a Jayhawk, particularly when we have good teams—as we have this year.

Thank you for what you do. Kansas Alumni always makes me wish I'd have been one!

> —David Lambertson, assoc. Lawrence

#### Brushes with fame

CHRIS LAZZARINO'S description of Truman Capote's 1966 appearance at Allen Field House ["Capote on campus," issue No. 4, 2024] was spot-on. I was there as a sophomore English class enthusiast, and was amazed such a famous writer would stop in Lawrence. When Capote spoke, at first I thought his voice was a put-on. Witnessing a great writer in person was unforgettable.

Over my four years on the Hill, there were many opportunities for interfacing with talented people from all backgrounds. It was a subtle way to expand our education, for which I will always be grateful to old KU. As a freshman, I learned early on to check flyers and bulletin boards for singular events such as Capote's reading. There was something interesting going on almost every day or night.

I also saw Robert Kennedy's visit to Allen Field House in March 1968. It was his first stop after he announced he was running for president. The Field House was packed to the rafters with enthusiastic, idealistic college students.

Kennedy was running hours late, so to fight boredom, people started throwing paper airplanes. The floor looked like it needed a snowplow by the time Kennedy and his entourage showed up. But what a loud, tumultuous reception KU gave him! His

speech was spellbinding.

Sadly, that idealistic hope for the future ended in June upon his assassination. Some say that was the source of Boomer cynicism about politics that never subsided. It sure was for me.

Thank you for keeping the alumni magazine's standards so high. It's the only magazine I read cover to cover!

> —Vic Barry, c'68 Gig Harbor, Washington

I WAS AMONG approximately 3,000 students who attended Truman Capote's 1966 lecture at KU. Though the quoted account by the Lawrence Journal-World mentions "his high, thin voice," it apparently does not mention what happened when he started talking. That high-pitched voice surprised his audience, which tittered! Apparently, most, like me, had not previously heard his distinctive voice.

After Capote read for only five minutes from his introduction to In Cold Blood, he departed for a locker room. I was one of several students admitted to obtain his autograph: "Truman Capote 20 April 1966."

Today this autograph on a small piece of paper has an equally small monetary value. For me, its greater value is as a souvenir of an interesting evening during my wonderful freshman year at KU.

> —Clyde Toland, c'69, l'75 Lawrence

#### Lasting love

The couple who met through Study Abroad [KU Voice, issue No. 4, 2024] made me think of my experience at KU, when I lived in Ellsworth

Hall from 1988 to '90 as a freshman and sophomore.

There I met my eventual wife, Alison. We began dating in February 1990, married in 1993 after graduation, and celebrated our 31st wedding anniversary last June. After serving in the Navy for 30 years, we returned "home" to Lawrence in 2023 and don't plan on leaving a second time!

What's really interesting is three other couples—who all lived and met on the fifth floor of Ellsworth during that period—are also still married!

Recently, three of the four couples gathered after a KU basketball game to appreciate just how special that time was in our lives. It's amazing to think we're all together celebrating life as KU students 30-plus years later and are still going strong. Oh, and four of the nine children these couples raised also graduated from, or are now attending, KU.

> -Sean Kentch, c'93 Lawrence





In Lawrence: (clockwise from top) Sean and Alison Kentch, Rich and Steph Bennett, and Bob and Nancy Rohr. In Virginia: the Kentches and Darrell and Lisa Williams.



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ACADEMICS

#### KU launches criminal justice degrees

Program answers growing demand for major, prioritizes career placement

"If KU didn't have this degree, I don't think I'd be here right now."

-Caleb Mitchell

POP CULTURE CAN color public perception of a profession by portraying it as dynamic or dull, prestigious or ordinary. For her purposes as director of KU's new criminal justice program, Susan Whitford welcomes the high-drama TV depictions of her discipline as a valuable recruitment tool.

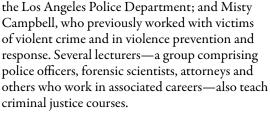
"Shows like 'CSI,' 'Criminal Minds' and 'Law & Order' introduce so many people to jobs in criminal justice and pique their interest, even though they know it's dramatized," says Whitford, who worked as a crime analyst for more than 30 years before joining KU in July 2023 to develop its two new degree offerings, a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in criminal justice. "They can see this type of work is exciting and always changing. TV gets people in the door."

Once they're in the door, Whitford thinks curious students will find a compelling, wide-ranging field that also dovetails with several other areas of study—law, social welfare, behavioral health, life sciences and more—and the program she has designed features a core curriculum taught entirely by instructors whose expertise is rooted in real-world experience.

"Something that's really unique to our program is that all criminal justice professors are professors of the practice, meaning they've all worked in law enforcement, victim advocacy, crime analysis or other sectors of the criminal justice world," Whitford says. "That's really important in a criminal justice degree for credibility with students. They don't want to hear from people who have never done these jobs, and I only have faculty teach in a subject

they've worked in."

KU's criminal justice program, part of the School of Professional Studies, has three full-time faculty members: Whitford; Stephen Bell, a 22-year veteran of law enforcement and former detective and sergeant with



Undergraduate degrees in criminal justice equip students with an understanding of the agencies and institutions within the U.S. criminal justice system and how they function. The curriculum explores law enforcement, courts and corrections and the various specialties within each. Whitford says professional paths for criminal justice majors can include roles with government agencies and careers in nonprofit and advocacy work.

Following a soft launch with only online courses in spring 2024, the program debuted in full last fall with both in-person and online classes. Students majoring in criminal justice complete their degrees either entirely in person on the Lawrence campus or entirely online. According to Whitford, at the end of the fall 2024 semester, more than 100 students had declared criminal justice as their major. "We knew it would scale fast," she says of program enrollment, "but it has exceeded all expectations."

Beginning in fall 2025, KU will offer a minor in criminal justice, and those pursuing the major will be able to choose from five additional degree concentrations, including crime scene investigation, global crime, and crime analysis and intelligence, bringing the total number of concentrations to seven. Whitford says a master's degree program is already in the works as well.

The expanding academic catalog is complemented by a robust lineup of extracurricular activities and affiliated events, among them a student club, Jayhawk Justice, and a department-hosted speaker series that's free and open to the public. Past speakers have included a Kansas Bureau of Investigation agent who worked on the infamous "BTK" serial killer case; a survivor of sexual assault; and a former gang member. In addition, students can connect with KU's Intelligence Community Center for



Whittord



Stephen Bell, professor of the practice, kicked off CRIM 115, Notorious Kansas Murders and Murderers, last fall, the first semester KU offered in-person criminal justice classes. Both sections of CRIM 115—open to criminal justice majors and nonmajors—were at capacity.

Academic Excellence, which provides scholarships, advising and other resources to students interested in careers in U.S. intelligence and national security. The center regularly hosts experts in fields such as cybersecurity as well as recruiters from the FBI, CIA and other agencies.

KU's criminal justice curriculum includes the option for an internship for course credit, and Whitford says students can complete multiple internships if they desire. She views these opportunities for students to immerse themselves in their preferred line of work before graduation as a cornerstone of the program.

"When students graduate, I don't want their résumé to just say they have a criminal justice degree," Whitford says. "I want them to be able to demonstrate practical, relevant experience so that they can be as competitive as possible to get the job they want. I want them to be undeniably the best candidate."

The prospect of a future career in criminal justice is what brought first-year student Caleb Mitchell to the Hill.

"I wanted to go to KU, but I didn't know what I'd go to KU for," says Mitchell, an Olathe native who weighed attending college against pursuing acting. "But when I saw KU was going to have a criminal justice program, that made the decision for me. I've had a big fascination with true crime shows since I was in middle school, and that got me interested in

a career in intelligence or investigative work." He adds, "If KU didn't have this degree, I don't think I'd be here right now."

The program's career focus is a highlight for Mitchell, who arrived in Lawrence last fall with enough credits that he is academically a junior. "Not a lot of first-year students have to think about what their actual job is going to be, but I only have two years until I graduate," he says. "So already having professors who work directly with you on what you're going to be doing after college and who want to help you find internships and network—it's huge."

In January, Mitchell began an internship with the Lawrence Police Department. He hopes to someday work as a detective or an FBI crime analyst or profiler.

Whitford, who says the University received numerous requests for a criminal justice degree in recent years, is thrilled the program is already contributing to KU's reputation and vitality.

"At a time when colleges and universities are struggling with enrollment, providing a degree that's known to be in high demand will strengthen and elevate KU," she says. "We want to be the go-to place for criminal justice not only regionally, but nationally through our online offerings. My goal is for KU's program to be recognized as the best in the country."

For more information on criminal justice at KU, go to sps.ku.edu/programs/criminal-justice.

-Megan Hirt

#### **CALENDAR** HIGHLIGHTS

For more information, visit the websites below.

#### Alumni Association

March 12 Mocktails & Mingle: International Careers

March 26 Mocktails & Mingle: Nonprofit and Public Service Careers

April 26 Rock Chalk Forever

#### kualumni.org

#### Lied Center

March 3 Mnozil Brass March 5 KU Symphonic and University Bands

March 11 KU Wind Ensemble

March 16 Lucy Kaplansky

March 26 Chamber Music Society of Lincoln

**April 1** KU Jazz Ensemble I with Remy Le Boeuf

**April 4** Blind Boys of Alabama and Shemekia Copeland

April 6 JIJI

**April 9** KU Symphonic Orchestra

**April 11** Digging Roots

April 14 "Hadestown"

**April 16** Paul Taylor Dance Company

April 22 KU Symphonic Band

April 23 "The Cher Show"

April 25 "The Moth Mainstage"

April 29 KU University Band and Jazz Ensembles II and III

May 6 Black Violin

May 8 KU Jazz Singers and Jazz Ensemble I

#### lied.ku.edu

Continued on p. 17

#### ARCHITECTURE

#### Sustainable showcase

New book illustrates Studio 804's proven approach to building green

STUDENTS in the School of Architecture & Design are drawn to Studio 804, KU's innovative and award-winning architecture course, because it allows them to get out of the classroom and onto the job site, where they earn valuable hands-on experience designing and building a structure from start to finish over the span of a single academic year.

Since launching the course in 1995 with a project to stabilize the Barber School, a 19th-century stone structure at Clinton Lake in Douglas County, Dan Rockhill, J.L. Constant Distinguished Professor of Architecture, has helped students in the fifth-year capstone class tackle increasingly complex projects, on campus and off. Their work has won numerous architecture prizes, and 18 of the structures have been certified as LEED Platinum, the highest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating granted by the U.S. Green Building Council. The studio's 19th LEED building is scheduled to be completed in May.

Yet demand for such energy-efficient buildings hasn't taken off with the general public, and Rockhill hopes a new book that documents Studio 804's most recent projects will help change that.

Studio 804: Detailing Sustainable Architecture, a handsome, extensively illustrated volume, uses construction drawings and more than 400 photographs to explain the painstaking process by which KU students created LEED Platinum homes in 2022 and 2023. The hope is that more people can be convinced they too can tackle a green building project.

"I think it's important to share, be it with prospective homebuyers or builders, how it is that we do what needs to be done to achieve these LEED ratings," Rockhill says. "It's not that they aren't aspiring to



LEED Platinum; I just don't think they're doing it enough."

The less-than-robust demand for highly efficient buildings was driven home for Rockhill when he set out to find a new green energy rater after the one he'd used for years retired. Raters are responsible for evaluating structures to ensure they meet strict standards for LEED certification.

Rockhill was shocked to find no one available in the Kansas City region to replace the previous rater, who was based in Springfield, Missouri.

"That was a little bit alarming to me," Rockhill says. "So I thought, 'Well, maybe I should do something about it."

The book is edited by David Sain, lecturer in the School of Architecture & Design and a longtime associate in Rockhill's private firm, Rockhill and Associates. It includes material gathered through Sain's interviews with Rockhill, and it draws heavily on documents produced by students during the class. (While Studio 804



Class of 2017 students at work on 1330 Brook St. Top: The 2022 home, at 519 Indiana.

is lauded for extensive hands-on learning on the job site, there is still plenty of paperwork involved in the process.) The book is a bit of a hybrid: Outstanding art direction by publisher Oscar Riera Ojeda and vivid color shots by photographer Corey Gaffer that illustrate the beauty of the finished buildings contribute to the hefty, slipcovered volume's elegant, coffee-table feel. At the same time, the detail

of the photos and schematics focused on the step-by-step processes makes the book a practical resource for anyone who might be thinking of tackling such a complex project.

"It sort of becomes a handbook, if you wanted to use it to that extent," Rockhill says of what he sees as the book's appeal to homebuyers, builders and architects. "I think it's important to me to understand that small firms, especially, might find it useful to have something they can point out to clients and say, 'Hey, this stuff works and here's why we're doing it."

Studio 804: Detailing Sustainable Architecture can also be a valuable tool for education. Rockhill foresees using it with his students in the future, and he often fields inquiries from administrators and students at other universities who are interested in starting similar design-build programs or who just want to learn more about specific Studio 804 projects. But there is also another audience that he hopes to enlighten: the general public.

He's already seen progress in that area, but more can be done.

"Years ago, people would drive by (the job site) and give us the finger," Rockhill muses, "but now people are actually interested. They're willing to accept the fact that houses look different simply because a lot of the materials we use are indeed different. People don't dismiss it as quickly, which is nice."

—Steven Hill



Studio 804: Detailing Sustainable Architecture Edited by David Sain Oscar Riera Ojeda Publishers, \$75

BUDGET

#### **Funds fuel growth**

Amid record enrollment, KU asks state for stable investment

THE NEW YEAR brought new faces and a new budget process to the Kansas Legislature. Although many key committee chairs remain the same, a quarter of the lawmakers in Topeka are new to their roles following the November 2024 elections. In addition, the session began with two budget proposals rather than one.

Following tradition, Gov. Laura Kelly on Jan. 16 released her Fiscal Year 2026 budget proposal, which included a slight increase to base funding for the state's higher education system. The governor's budget proposal in years past has served as the starting point for legislative debate.

This year, however, the House and Senate introduced their own budget plan in bill form for consideration, which might change the course of budget discussions as the session continues.

"We appreciate that elected officials have difficult budget choices to make each year," says Chancellor Doug Girod. "We look forward to continuing our partnership with Gov. Kelly and Kansas legislators on initiatives that position KU to serve Kansans and drive economic growth in the state."

First and foremost, KU is asking the Legislature for stable base funding to enable the University to keep tuition steady for students and parents, and to ensure students have the support services they need to succeed. This is especially important because KU's fall 2024 enrollment reached an all-time record of 30,770 students, and leaders expect a third consecutive strong class of freshmen to enroll in fall 2025. The impressive growth of the past two years results in part from the state's investment, and KU leaders hope the state's commitment to fuel operations and student support will continue.

In addition, KU requests funding to support the following initiatives:

- Expansion of the Kansas Medical Student Loan program, which provides loans to School of Medicine students who agree to practice medicine in Kansas after residency.
- Enhancements to information technology infrastructure and cybersecurity.
- Recruitment and retention of research faculty in areas that drive the Kansas economy, such as engineering, cancer and brain health.
- Construction of a new School of Architecture & Design building.

For more information on the 2025 legislative agenda and KU's far-reaching statewide impact, visit government relations.ku.edu/priorities-2025.

One of the Alumni Association's most important duties is to inform and mobilize alumni and friends as legislative advocates for KU through Jayhawks for Higher Education. Members receive emails at key points throughout the legislative session and are asked to communicate with their local lawmakers. The Association and the KU Office of Public Affairs provide talking points and facts to assist volunteers. To join JHE, visit kualumni.org/jhe.

—JENNIFER JACKSON SANNER



ARTS & CULTURE

#### 'Bold Women' thrills

Expansive exhibition explores powerful art that has much to say



Sandra Brewster, Salome Bey, 2021, Museum purchase: Helen Foresman Spencer Art Acquisition Fund, 2024.0130

As she guides her visitor through a series of images of the art to be featured in the then-upcoming "Bold Women" exhibition—varied in format, style, size, medium and message—Spencer Museum of Art curator Susan Earle gains energy with each passing slide. Her enthusiasm makes clear that "Bold Women" will likely require numerous visits for museumgoers to even begin comprehending its depth and expanse.

Pausing on a series of photographs by Canadian artist Sandra Brewster, Earle points out the "gel transfer" technique that Brewster used to imply both motion and anonymity. Brewster, Earle explains, was raised in Ontario, Canada, by her Guyanese immigrant family, and offers her art as commentary on Black migrants and the Caribbean diaspora.

"This is a whole new approach to a kind of portraiture and artists sharing their own identities or others' identities," Earle says during the winter-break interview with Kansas Alumni. "She calls the series 'Blur,' and the whole idea is to obscure people's identities so they don't feel like they're being watched. It's inspiring to see how an artist has been innovative with materials, and their whole approach to create space for people to not be subjected to the gaze of others, or the gaze of colonialism."

"Bold Women," which runs through July 6, has been years in planning and perhaps represents something of a career capstone for Earle, curator of European and American Art, who for three decades has helped the Spencer Museum evolve and mature in the art it chooses to acquire and exhibit and the thoughtful discussions it hopes to foster within a campus art museum.

With about 80 works by 40 artists—most of whom are contemporary women of color from diverse global backgrounds—"Bold Women" will grace the Spencer's three third-floor galleries and the fourth-floor Marshall Balcony. A rich calendar of spring and summer programs includes a gallery talk by South African artist-in-residence Mary Sibande—whose stunning work "Sophie-Ntombikayise," a resin and fiberglass sculpture draped in brilliant textiles—is already a highlight of the museum's permanent collection.

Large-scale pieces certain to grab visitors' attention include "Twister #2," by Lawrence resident Hong Chun Zhang. Earle describes the work as an "East meets West hair tornado, with a wonderful sense of both the landscape of Kansas but also her exploration of hair as personal identity." A floorto-ceiling work, Faye HeavyShield's "blood" speaks to the artist's connections to the land and her ancestors in Canada's Blood Tribe.



Earle



Hong Chun Zhang, *Twister #2*, 2012, Museum purchase: Peter T. Bohan Art Acquisition Fund, 2013.0189

"This has been about looking for bold visions, artists who are visionaries and who represent themes of justice in a variety of ways," Earle says. "We're trying to center on the work of women of color, because we feel they have been the innovators. They are the ones who are keeping knowledge. They are the ones who are passing down wisdom and justice, and they are trying to enact that while the patriarchy, or something, keeps crowding it out. You know, even in a museum setting, it often is still getting crowded out.

"I think the boldness of the work, the visual

strength of the work, is a mirror of its message and its power."

Earle was assisted in planning "Bold Women" by a diverse group of advisers, including Lawrence textile artist Marla Jackson, '87, whose work will be included in the show; Kansas City arts advocate Rose Bryant; Kimberli Gant, curator of modern and contemporary art at the Brooklyn Museum; and Toronto-based Anishinaabe-kwe Indigenous art curator and artist Wanda Nanibush, along with graduate interns and other KU students. Her work was also supported by numerous grants from varied organizations, including the National Endowment for the Arts and the RC Kemper Jr. Charitable Trust and Foundation.

Those planning to visit the exhibition during its extended run should take note that KU now offers free museum parking on the first level of the Mississippi Street garage, immediately to the right of the garage entrance. Take your license plate number to the museum's welcome desk to get your parking validated.

—CHRIS LAZZARINO

"Bold Women"
Feb. 18-July 6
Spencer Museum
of Art
spencerart.ku.edu

SOCIAL WELFARE

#### **Farewell, Twente**

Social Welfare relieved to share law school's Green Hall home

ON THE LAST TUESDAY of fall classes, as a cold breeze whistled across the ridge of Mount Oread, Twente Hall silently weathered one of its final days as an academic building in the heart of campus. The hall, which opened in 1932 as Watkins Memorial Hospital and in 1974 became the first home of the School of Social Welfare, warmly embraced its few final visitors with free pizza in the foyer.

The old building's shortcomings, though, were immediately apparent. Windows in the second-floor conference room were wide open, and most of the faculty and staff still roaming the halls were wearing T-shirts. Shorts, had they been workplace-appropriate, would not have been out of the question.

"The ability to adjust the temperature," says Michelle Mohr Carney, the school's dean, "doesn't exist anymore."

University Architect Mark Reiske, a'86, explains that Twente's chiller and air handler are both "end of life," as are steam traps and condensate returns. "The combination of those two things," he says, "has meant that there's only a very, very small time of year when they could control the temperature in their spaces."

Even so, the lack of proper heating and cooling seems almost

beside the point as compared to the rest of Twente's shortfalls. Designed as a hospital, the space from interior hallways to the exterior walls was suitable for patient rooms but not classrooms. Or conference rooms. Or a student lounge. Each office had its own bathroom, hospital-room style, but plumbing had long since failed, and what had been a perk—private bathrooms for all!—became awkward closets. The front entry, in fact, was the hospital's waiting room, and the free pizza was set out as enticement for faculty and staff to clear out their offices.

"The thing with this building is, it's built for isolation, for keeping sick people away from other people," says Assistant Dean Kristin Trendel, g'96. "It's not a space that was built for collaboration or interaction."

Those shortcomings are now, thankfully, history. During winter break, the School of Social Welfare moved across campus to the third floor of Green Hall, home of the School of Law. Any lingering sense of loss over leaving Twente was likely only about missing out on the springtime eruption of color by the spectacular tulip magnolia trees near the building's entrance.

Now, Social Welfare finally has classrooms. Two, in fact, as well



"You get students excited to be here, and eventually they go out and do great things. I don't believe there's any way that growing a social work program can be bad for the state of Kansas."

-Dean Michelle Carney

as a PhD seminar room. It has appropriate faculty offices, community spaces and study enclaves for students, administrative suites, and the latest and greatest in academic technology. Visiting high school students who express interest in studying social welfare are no longer steered away from the building that would be their academic home—as they have been for years.

Carney notes that it's particularly appropriate for future social workers to learn their profession under the same roof as future lawyers: Legal aid and veterans clinics, for instance, can now incorporate social welfare students, replicating the two professions' interaction in real-world settings.

"We will be good neighbors," Carney says, "and we're looking forward to good collaboration."

Current enrollment of about 615—which includes the school's presence on the Edwards Campus in Overland Park, partnership sites in Salina and Pittsburg, and online courses through Jayhawk Global—is expected to grow, meaning the school will soon be able to send more social workers into the Kansas workforce.

"It will be a game-changer for our ability to recruit undergraduates to this campus, and it's a cascading effect," Carney says. "You get students excited to be here, and eventually they go out and do great things. I don't believe there's any way that growing a social work program can be bad for the state of Kansas."

The opportunity for Social Welfare to finally find its long-sought new home was made possible when Stephen Mazza, dean of the School of Law, told campus facilities planners that his school didn't need many of the books that were housed in stacks throughout Green Hall, especially multiple copies of case reporters, all of which are now accessible online.

"There's a dean who recognized that they're not utilizing their building as well as they could, so how could the University put it to better use?" Reiske explains. "And I've got another dean who says, 'Hey, we're not in the greatest building for us, and I'm more than willing to share a building,' which is the first time this has happened. No other school at the University of Kansas shares a building. So this is a great example of the collaboration that we need, and it creates a collaborative environment for two groups that would work together anyway in the private sector.

"I think that when we look back on this 10 years from now, we'll recognize that this was a very important observation by a dean who wanted to make sure his space was properly utilized, and I hope that law and social welfare will both say, 'Gosh, why didn't we do this sooner?'"

As for Twente Hall, worry not: The beautiful old building will get in line for a "reset," meaning it will likely be gutted and fully renovated, perhaps within the next 10 years. Because its configuration will never allow for classrooms, Twente will likely be fashioned into offices for University administrators who do not need to be housed in Strong Hall.

"I think it will serve that purpose really well," Reiske says. "It just wasn't great for a school to try to exist in."

—CHRIS LAZZARINO

JOURNALISM

#### **Dateline KU**

Jayhawk journalists well represented in latest hall of fame classes

FIVE JAYHAWKS WERE AMONG the seven journalists inducted into the Kansas Newspaper Hall of Fame during a Nov. 15 ceremony in Topeka. The honor roll of journalists who have made outstanding contributions to the profession has been chosen annually by the Kansas Press Association (KPA) since 1931 and now comprises 180 standout journalists.

In addition, two alumni were part of the third class of the Kansas Photojournalism Hall of Fame, which the KPA launched in 2022 ("First Class," issue No. 4, 2022).

Together, the classes represent "a really good bird's-eye view" of Kansas journalism, says Emily Bradbury, the association's executive director.

"I think that it's a really good mix of people who have been at larger publications and those who have been in community papers, and a mixture of both photojournalism inside Kansas and photojournalism outside of the state. Some of them had worked together in the past, so it was a little bit of a family reunion for them."

The 2024 Kansas Newspaper Hall of Fame inductees with KU connections are:

- Ann Brill, assoc., longtime dean of the William Allen White School of Journalism, who was also named Administrator of the Year by the Scripps Howard Fund and the Association for Education in Journalism in October.
- Sally Streff Buzbee, j'88, whose three-year tenure as executive editor of The Washington Post produced numerous Pulitzer Prizes, including a public service Pulitzer for the paper's in-depth examination of the Jan. 6, 2021, post-election insurrection at the Capitol.
- Cynthia Desilet Haynes, p'71, who with her husband, Stephen Haynes, j'70, published community news-

- papers in Colorado and Kansas, including The Colby Free Press, The Goodland Daily News and The Norton Telegram.
- Ben Marshall, j'63, who returned to newspapers to serve as editor and publisher of The Sterling Bulletin from 1997 to 2017 after a 30-year career in marketing communications for companies, agencies and associations in consumer products and high-technology industries.
- Eric Meyer, j'75, who retired from a 26-year career as a journalism professor at the University of Illinois and came home to edit and publish The Marion County Record, a weekly newspaper his parents, Bill, j'48, and Joan Meyer, had worked at for five decades and owned for 23 years. The newspaper received the 2024 William Allen White National Citation from the KU School of Journalism, which is named for White.

Jayhawks in the 2024 Kansas Photojournalism Hall of Fame class are:

- Barbara Kinney, j'80, an awardwinning photographer whose work has appeared in Time, Newsweek and People magazines. She served as White House photographer during the Clinton administration and 2016 campaign photographer for Hillary Clinton.
- David Peterson, j'75, a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer whose career spanned three decades with The Topeka Capital-Journal and The Des Moines Register. Peterson also earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from Kansas State.

The other 2024 inductees are Eric Meyer's late mother, Joan Meyer, and Kansas City Star and Wichita Eagle newspaperman Roy Wenzl (Kansas Newspaper Hall of Fame), along with George Olson, Joel Sartore and the late W. Eugene Smith (Kansas Photojournalism Hall of Fame).

Bradbury noted that the journalism industry is facing challenges as it deals with a new revenue model, increased postal rates and anti-media rhetoric at the

highest levels of government.

"Of course that affects us, but 95% of my papers are in small communities, and so they are just doing the hard work of covering their communities every day," Bradbury says. "There's a big contingent of people who are saying, 'I'm emboldened in my role. I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing covering my communities well, while also trying to experiment a little bit.' We know that we are in an industry that's changing, and a lot of us are looking at that as an opportunity. So that's something that has also kept everyone reinvigorated.

"I always tell people, whenever I feel down or discouraged about some things that are happening in our industry, all I have to do is walk through Stauffer-Flint or talk to the student journalists that are doing the work, and I realize we're going to be okay. The kids are learning, they're interested, they're engaged. So I always tell people, if I ever feel discouraged, I just walk around KU, and I feel good again."

-Steven Hill



Photographer Barbara Kinney, one of seven journalists with KU ties honored last fall by the Kansas Press Association.

#### Jayhawks join Endowment board

Two alumni with long records of KU volunteer service are the newest members of KU Endowment's board of trustees. Lisa Howell Burch, c'92, of Lantana, Texas, and Peter Johnston, c'94, l'97, of Salina, were elected Oct. 18 during KU Endowment's annual meeting.

During Burch's nearly 25-year career with global biotechnology and life sciences companies, she most recently served as U.S. national sales director at Oxford Immunotec, a Revvity company. For KU, she is a member of KU Endowment's Women Philanthropists for KU, and she has participated in the Far Above and Ever Onward fundraising campaigns. She and her husband, F. Taylor Burch, p'88, g'90, PharmD'09, are KU Endowment Chancellors Club members and Alumni Association Life Members and Presidents Club donors.

Johnston is an attorney with the law firm of Clark, Mize & Linville. He previously served on the KU School of Law's board of governors; in June 2024, he completed his term on the national Board of Directors for the Alumni Association. He is a Javhawks for Higher Education legislative advocate and volunteered for many years with the Association's Kansas Honors Program. With his wife, Sara Peckham Johnston, c'96, m'00, he is a KU Endowment Chancellors Club member and an Alumni Association Life Member and Presidents Club donor.



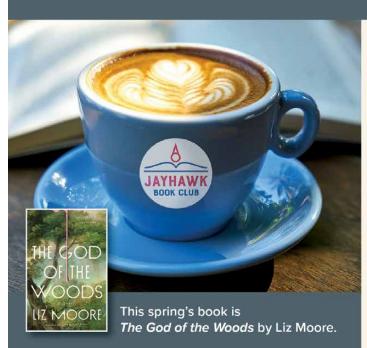
Burch



Johnston

### Have you joined the Jayhawk Book Club?

Join the Jayhawk Book Club and connect with Jayhawks around the world.





#### Here's how it works:

Each semester, KU Libraries staff select a book and create questions online in a closed Facebook group. We'll hold a discussion at the end of the reading period for each book.



- 1. Visit kualumni.org/ bookclub and fill out the form to join and receive emails.
- 2. Join the Jayhawk Book Club Facebook Group.

#### Questions?

Contact Kelsey Galle, Assistant Director of Alumni Engagement, at kelseygalle@kualumni.org, or call 785.864.4760.







#### **HOPE** prevails

Senior class bestows honor on industrial design teacher

BETSY BARNHART, associate professor and director of the industrial design program in the School of Architecture & Design, on Nov. 23 received the 2024 HOPE Award—Honor for the Outstanding Progressive Educator—during halftime of the football game between KU and Colorado.

"I am honored to have received the HOPE Award and to have been recognized by the senior student body at KU," Barnhart says. "This recognition reflects not only my passion for education, but also the transformative power of creating inclusive and supportive environments for every student. I believe that education is about more than academic success—it's about creating a sense of belonging and empowerment. When students feel supported and represented, their potential is truly limitless."

The HOPE Award was established by the Class of 1959 and is given to a faculty member who greatly affects students' lives and exemplifies Jayhawk values in the classroom through exceptional teaching strategies. Today, the award remains the only honor given to faculty by the senior class; the Student Alumni Ambassadors Board manages the award process.

"I love teaching seniors and helping them make the transition into the professional world. They are such a joy and inspire me every day in my teaching and my research," Barnhart says. "I feel so grateful that my students continue to be a part of my life after graduation." The HOPE Award is not the first teaching honor Barnhart has received. In 2020, the Industrial Designers Society of America bestowed her with the Young Educator of the Year Award.

She teaches classes in industrial design, computer-aided design and industrial design studios. In their nominations, students reflected on Barnhart's generosity in sharing her professional experiences and networks, as well as her practice of building students' confidence to pursue job and internship opportunities.

Before teaching, Barnhart was the design manager at STX, a licensee of Nike, and worked as an industrial designer at Newell Brands and at Sardi Design. An accomplished sporting goods designer, she continues her professional practice designing equipment, having received several patents for her design work.

As a researcher, Barnhart focuses on addressing inequities in industrial design—specifically, the underrepresentation of women in practice, design leadership and education. She also directs KU's Multicultural Design Scholars program.

Barnhart received a Master of Fine Arts from the Rochester Institute of Technology. Before coming to KU, she was an assistant professor at Iowa State University and taught at Towson University and the Rochester Institute of Technology.

—ERINN BARCOMB-PETERSON Barcomb-Peterson, j'01, directs KU News.



Barnhart and her son, Sam Clifford, during the HOPE ceremony in Arrowhead Stadium.

#### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

For more information, visit the websites below.

#### University Theatre

March 7-13 "John Proctor Is the Villain"

**March 28-30** Jayhawk Performance Lab

April 11-19 "Pippin" kutheatre.com

University Dance

Company Dance

**May 3-4** Spring Dance Showcase

dance.ku.edu

#### Spencer Museum of Art

May 3 Kite Festival

"Eternal Spring: Pines" through June 29

"Pold Woman" thre

"Bold Women" through July 6

spencerart.ku.edu

#### Dole Institute of Politics

**April 19** Easter Egg Roll with Dole

#### doleinstitute.org

Office of Sovereign Partnerships & Indigenous Initiatives

**April 12** KU Powwow & Indigenous Cultures Festival

sovereignpartnerships. ku.edu

Natural History Museum

March 22 "Celebrating Women in Science" biodiversity.ku.edu

Continued on p. 19



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or— if already a Life Member one year of membership in the KU Alumni Association Presidents Club! This program is offered nationwide through Andrew's vast network of real estate partners. Serving all of your real estate needs: buying, selling, and property management.

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BOOKS

## Alzheimer's tale shares insights alongside the heartbreak

A LOVED ONE'S descent into dementia is the sort of horrifying journey so maddeningly confusing that it seems impossible to tell when, exactly, the tortured trip even began.

Mom Forgot My Birthday: A Daughter's Journey Through Alzheimer's, by Kansas City author and entrepreneur Sonya Likins Jury, a'88, wields its incalculable worth even within the setup, as Jury recounts the first, frightening phone call from her mother's husband.

Walt never calls me. This can't be good.

It wasn't. Her mother, Dean, was suffering from debilitating diarrhea while also exhibiting unusual behavior, such as plunging a finger into her throat and reacting angrily to her family's concerns. Jury hopped in her VW Beetle and sped toward Pleasant Hill, Missouri, where she was forced to confront her combative mother about the urgency of getting her to the hospital.

A few days of treatment restored her mother's sodium levels, but little could be done about the new concern facing Dean, her family and doctors: dementia.

"We were all exhausted and hopeful that normalcy would return for all," Jury writes. "I was not prepared mentally, emotionally, or physically for the journey ahead."

No one is. For those fortunate enough to find the book early in a loved one's confusing transformation, *Mom Forgot My Birthday* will help with the anger, the guilt, the endless uncertainty and eventual finality.

Citing information found on the Alzheimer's Association's website, alz.org, Jury outlines behaviors that might signal early-stage Alzheimer's (including losing a valuable object, or difficulty with names, planning and organizing), then progresses through the disease's middle (forgetfulness, moodiness, withdrawn demeanor, loss of bladder and bowel control, wandering, changes in sleep) and late stages (round-the-clock care, vulnera-bility to pneumonia, difficulty communicating).

Alzheimer's education continues, gently, throughout the book. As Jury recounts with stark honesty the five exhausting years endured by her family—and, most especially, by her mother—she reflects on signs she might have missed or mistakes they might

have made, and summarizes her experiences with succinct lessons:

Lesson 1: Be conscious of tasks they love and now have no interest in. Watch for signs.

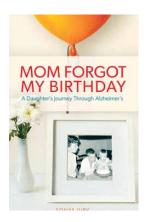
Lesson 30: Take a photo of your loved one's hand in yours. You will not regret this photo.

Particularly pragmatic is *Lesson 10: Find a notebook and use it*. Note questions for doctors and nurses that will quickly pile up; tape the many business cards you'll receive to its pages; track prescriptions; write down names and phone numbers for doctors, the pharmacy, relatives, friends, clergy. "This notebook," Jury advises, "will become your beacon of sanity, accompanying you on your journey."

Jury's mother died five years after that first frightening episode. For those who have already lost elderly parents to Alzheimer's and dementia, the raw emotions she recounts can, in places, be too overwhelming to relive, and yet a single thought recurs throughout: If only we had known this earlier.

It is a regret that stings. *Mom Forgot My Birthday*, a small book that maps a course for navigating the worst years imaginable, should be shared widely, generously and with love.

—CHRIS LAZZARINO



Mom Forgot My Birthday: A Daughter's Journey Through Alzheimer's by Sonya Jury \$17.95

#### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS

For more information, visit the websites below.

#### Center for Global & International Studies

March 2 Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies Spring Festival

**April 16** International Jayhawk Festival

#### global.ku.edu

Hall Center for the Humanities

March 10 Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, "Journey to the Edge of Space-Time"

**April 1** Peter Hessler, "Other Rivers: A Chinese Education"

**April 17** Alicia Elliott, "A Mind Spread Out on the Ground"

#### hallcenter.ku.edu

#### School of Journalism

**April 10** Lester Holt, 2025 William Allen White National Citation recipient **journalism.ku.edu** 

#### Academic calendar

March 17-23 Spring break

May 8 Last day of classes

May 18 Commencement

#### Scholarly pursuit

Student leader earns distinction as Schwarzman Scholar

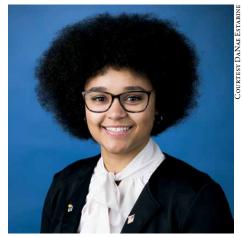
DANAE ESTABINE, an Olathe senior and KU's current student body president, is among the select students named to the 11th class of Schwarzman Scholars, an internationally competitive program that provides for a year of graduate study in China.

Schwarzman Scholars is a fully funded, one-year master's degree and leadership program at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Scholars earn a master's degree in global affairs.

Estabine is majoring in psychology with minors in business and philosophy. She was among roughly 5,000 applicants for the award.

Scholars chosen for this highly selective program will live in Beijing for a year of study and cultural immersion, attending lectures, traveling and developing a better understanding of China.

After completing the program, Estabine plans to attend law school and pursue a career as a prosecutor in Kansas.



Estabine

"One of my key interests is prison reform—a global issue that often goes unnoticed but affects every nation and its citizens," Estabine says.

The Schwarzman Scholars program, she says, will prepare her with a global perspective and the leadership skills needed to tackle complex challenges like prison reform, both in Kansas and around the world: "Through my experience in China, I hope to gain insights into their prison system and its impact, as understanding what works—along with what doesn't—is crucial to shaping effective policies."

During her KU career, Estabine has also been named a Newman Civic Fellow and a finalist for the Truman Scholarship. In March 2024, her fellow students elected her to lead the student body as president.

"It has been such a pleasure working with and getting to know DaNae over the past two years," says Erin Wolfram, g'07, g'13, director of the Center for Undergraduate Research & Fellowships. "Her passion for prison reform is inspiring, and I am certain her experience as a Schwarzman Scholar will expand her leadership skills and global knowledge, enhancing her work as a future prosecuting attorney. I look forward to seeing the impact she makes in the state of Kansas and beyond over the course of her career."

Named for Blackstone co-founder Stephen Schwarzman, the scholarship program was inspired by the Rhodes Scholarship—founded in 1902 to promote international understanding and peace—and is designed to meet the challenges of the 21st century and beyond. The Schwarzman program began in fall 2015, with the first scholars in residence in 2016. Estabine is the second Jayhawk to receive the honor. Ashlie Koehn, c'16, was among that first class of Schwarzman Scholars.

—Erinn Barcomb-Peterson

#### Recruiting duo

Singing KU's praises to prospective students is now a family affair for Delaney and Mason Rettele, who are thought to be the first siblings to fill full-time recruiting roles for KU Admissions. Mason, j'23, joined the team in Lawrence last September after watching Delaney, b'21, thrive during her three years of recruiting students in Dallas, a longtime hot spot and one of the nation's largest Jayhawk communities.

Sister and brother are Lawrence natives and third-generation Jayhawks. Delaney worked as a summer orientation assistant during her student years, and she leaped at the chance to convince

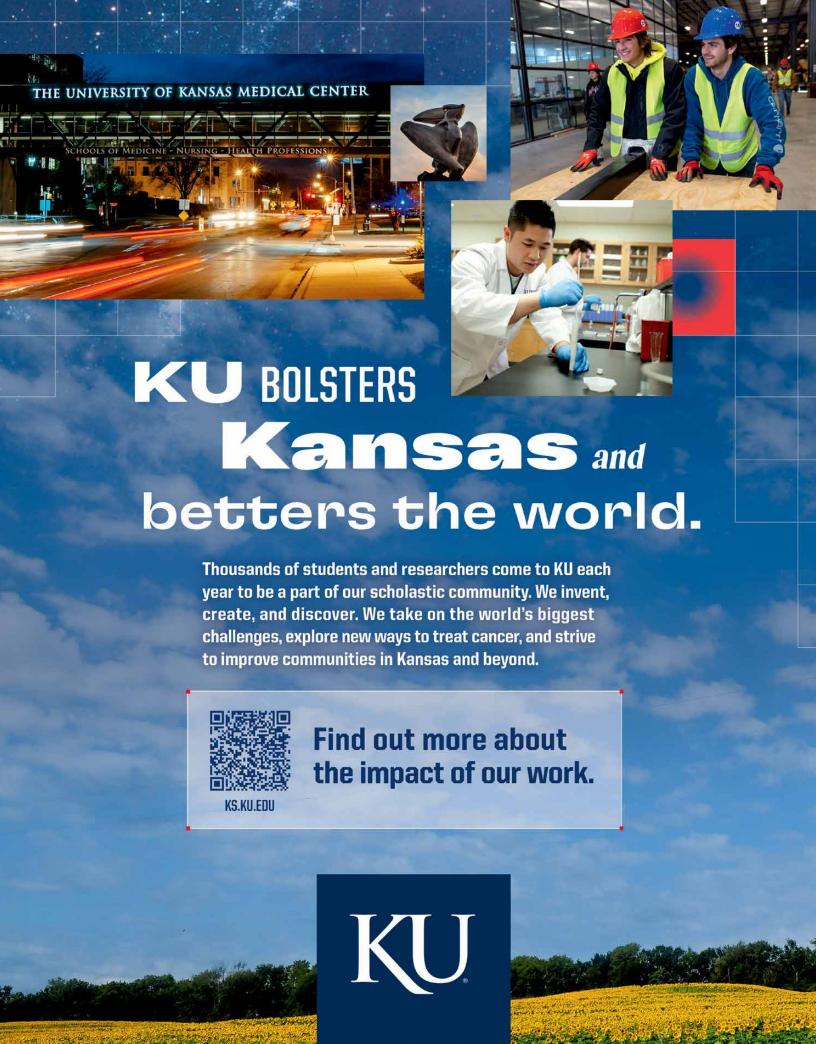
Texans to choose Kansas. "Helping students discover KU sparks joy for me,"

Mason was working remotely in digital marketing for a public relations firm and longed for face-to-face interactions, which are plentiful at the Jayhawk Welcome Center, headquarters for KU recruiting and the hub for prospective students' campus visits. "I've loved it, honestly," he says of his new role. "The atmosphere is so relaxed, and we have such a fun team. The skills I bring from my digital marketing background really transfer, because we're sending emails and texting students all the time."

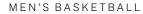
Delaney says that while much of recruiting now occurs on screens, the personal interaction of visiting high schools and representing KU at college fairs is essential, along with personal touches. "I still love to write a postcard or send a letter in the mail," she says. "I think that nostalgic touch is really nice for students."



Delaney and Mason Rettele







#### A whole new ballgame

'Hawks hope atypical lineups can spark late-season heroics



"We weren't very good in December. We were average in January, at best. But for February and March, we need to be our best."

-Coach Bill Self

WITH A TANTALIZING mix of program veterans, exciting freshmen and talented transfers, men's basketball opened the season as the country's topranked team and immediately cranked out seven victories. That included a three-point win over North Carolina and neutral-site games against Michigan State and Duke—a mix-and-match Final Four fantasy league of basketball bluebloods.

Then came a loss at Creighton, followed by a humbling nine-point loss at ... gulp ... Mizzou. After closing out their nonconference season with home wins over North Carolina State and Brown—by a combined 49 points—the 'Hawks on Dec. 31 opened the Big 12 at home against West Virginia.

"It's definitely crucial," said junior guard Rylan Griffen, a starter on Alabama's Final Four team a season ago. "We've got to start off the right way, with great momentum going into the long conference season."

Not to be. Instead, a one-point loss presaged perhaps the most atypical midseason stretch in coach Bill Self's 22 seasons at KU. The 'Hawks won by a staggering 51 at Central Florida, thumped Arizona State in Allen Field House by 19 and won yet another tough road game, at Cincinnati, by 14. A loss at Iowa State did nothing to derail KU's renewed momentum, boosted even further by a 12-point win at TCU.

Then came a double-overtime home loss to No. 7 Houston. Playing for the third consecutive game without injured senior forward K.J. Adams Jr., KU bungled inbounds passes—designed plays for which Self is widely regarded as one of the all-time great innovators—in the final seconds of both regulation and overtime. KU fell to 5-3 in the conference yet was still ranked No. 12 in the country.

"We played a complete game, except for 15 seconds, against Houston," Self said Jan. 30, ahead of the Feb. 1 game at Baylor. "We're not going to play better than that against that opponent without one of your best players. I mean, we played well; we just didn't close. And that's not an excuse. That's a fact. So I don't think we're that far off.'

Yet another wrench was thrown into the mix when graduate guard Dajuan Harris Jr. injured an ankle in practice and saw his streak of 98 consecutive starts snapped at KU's Jan. 28 home rematch with UCF. Adams came off the bench to score

12 points in 25 minutes, but without Adams and Harris in the starting lineup, the 'Hawks started only one player—freshman forward Flory Bidunga—who began his career at KU.

The rest of the starters against UCF were graduate center Hunter Dickinson (in his second season at KU after three at Michigan), graduate guard Shakeel Moore (four previous seasons at N.C. State and Mississippi State), senior guard Zeke Mayo (three seasons at South Dakota State) and Griffen (two years at Alabama).

Among transfers who arrived this season—Mayo, Moore, Griffen, senior guard David Coit (two years at Northern Illinois) and junior guard A.J. Storr (St. John's and Wisconsin)—only Mayo, a Lawrence High alumnus, was averaging more than 20 minutes (31.1) and 10 points (15.4) per game heading into the Baylor game, an 11-point loss that gave the Jayhawks a 6-4 conference record while awaiting the Feb. 3 home rematch with Iowa State.

"We want to be playing our best ball in February," Self said. "We weren't very good in December. We were average in January, at best. But for February and March, we need to be our best."

Later reflecting on one of Mayo's least-effective shooting games, 4-for-11 from the field against Duke, Self emphasized one of his favored concepts of winning basketball: A good shot isn't determined by whether the ball goes in the hoop.

"If you have to make shots to play well, you're probably not a player. You're probably just a shoot-





Bidunga (I-r, from opposite) works on two of the 19 points he scored Jan. 25 against Houston; Mayo shows his soft touch in KU's emphatic 69-52 victory Feb. 3 over lowa State; and Harris drives to the lane Jan. 18 against Kansas State. "I think this is a lot like the '08 team, from a leadership standpoint," Self says. "To be honest with you, I couldn't tell you back then who our leader was. I thought everybody just collectively, you know, pulled the rope. And I'd say this is a lot like that."

er," Self said. "Zeke Mayo looked like a real basketball player. He got his shoulders past people, he created situations, he played at pace, he defended, and he's always been a good defensive rebounder.

"I tell those guys all the time, 'You don't have to make shots for me to think that you're doing great,' and, when you approach it that way, I think that puts less pressure on guys to make shots."

#### **UPDATE**

Volleyball coach **Ray Bechard** on Dec. 27
announced his retirement
following his 27th season.
"Kansas volleyball's success is
because of Ray Bechard," said
men's basketball coach **Bill** 

**Self.** "I mean, he's a stud, and he's always done it in a manner which never called attention to himself." KU on Jan. 21 announced Bechard's replacement: **Matt Ulmer**, who led Oregon to seven NCAA Tournaments since 2017. "We have paired one of the premier



Ulmer

coaches in the game with one of the premier programs in the country," said Athletics Director **Travis Goff**, c'03, j'03. ... With Bechard's departure, Self, in his 22nd season, holds Kansas Athletics' second-longest coaching tenure, trailing only 25th-year track and field coach Stanley Redwine, who in January signed a four-year extension. ... Led by senior medalist Lily Hirst, women's golf on Jan. 27 won its fourth consecutive tournament with a three-stroke victory over Arizona State at Match in the Desert. Hirst scored her first career title with a final-round 69, and junior

Lauren Clark, freshman Ebba Nordstedt, junior Johanna Ebner, sophomore Amy **DeKock**, sophomore **Ruth** Toennessen and freshman Lyla Louderbaugh all finished in the top 20. ... Brian Schottenheimer, '96, a backup KU quarterback for one season before transferring to Florida to learn coaching under Steve Spurrier, on Jan. 24 was named head coach of the Dallas Cowboys. Schottenheimer won the 1991 Class 5A state title with Blue Valley High School while his father, Marty, coached the Kansas City Chiefs.

# Then, Today

## A Legacy of Financial Empowerment

1939: Truity Credit Union, then known as the Jane Phillips Sorority Credit Union, was founded by a group of women seeking



financial freedom—a concept that was almost unheard of at the time. In 1990, we

acquired KU Credit Union, solidifying a lasting relationship with the University of Kansas and the Lawrence community. This milestone extended our commitment to providing trusted financial services to students, faculty, and alumni. The partnership allowed Truity to carry forward its founding values of empowerment and financial well-being for its members.



In 2024, we expanded our partnership with the KU Alumni Association through a \$3.5 million investment over seven years, supporting several of their events, publications, scholarship programs, Traditions Hall, and more. Additionally, this partnership allowed us to extend credit union membership access to Jayhawks across the nation.



Truity supports the greater Lawrence community through ongoing volunteer efforts, community partnerships, sponsorships, and initiatives like Spirit Debit Cards and the Truity Education Foundation, which have collectively

raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for local schools.



All KU Alumni Members are now eligible for Truity Membership

TruityCU.org/KUAlumni

## & Tomorrow

### For KU Alumni and our Communities

**2025** and **Beyond**: Our new Campus branch at the KU Crossing in Lawrence represents Truity's commitment to serving the KU and Lawrence community for generations to come. Designed with cutting-edge technology and member convenience in mind, this location will enhance accessibility and serve as a hub for financial growth.



As Truity expands, our mission is clear: to remain at the forefront of innovation while staying true to our community roots. With advancements in digital banking and new opportunities for growth, Truity is poised to deliver the exceptional service our members deserve—today and tomorrow.

#### **JOIN TODAY**







The Official Credit Union of the KU Alumni Association



#### KU leads planet-protecting research on refrigeration and other climate control systems with \$26 million grant

s kickoff celebrations go, the launch of a research center dedicated to refrigerant technology might seem anything *but* cool. Refrigerants, the chemical compounds that keep our homes, workplaces, automobiles, medicines and food (even that ancient beer fridge in the garage) at ideal temperatures are important, no doubt. But Marching-Jayhawks-in-full-game-day-regalia important? Believe it.

As the daylong event marking the opening of KU's newest research center gets underway Nov. 7 at the Burge Union, a succession of high-profile speakers step to the microphone to laud the potential of the Environmentally Applied Refrigerant Technology Hub, a massive, six-university venture led by the KU School of Engineering. Funded by a \$26 million federal grant, EARTH will tackle a major challenge facing the planet: how to curb one of the largest contributors to global warming—namely, the greenhouse gases and energy demand produced by our climate control systems—at a time when rising temperatures are fueling ever greater need for those systems worldwide.

Leading off the speakers, Chancellor Doug Girod hails EARTH as "game-changing in so many ways," calling it nothing less than an ambitious attempt to develop a new industry that could boost the Kansas economy.

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, c'76, l'82, casts the center as a remedy to the brain drain that siphons many of Kansas' best and brightest, who often leave the state to seek jobs. "Today is one more opportunity for us to expand the opportunities for students and business and industry and increase the capabilities of our country to deal with environmental issues," Moran says. "So it's a win-win-win in my world, and I'm delighted to be a part of it."







During the Nov. 7 kickoff, NSF director Sethuraman Panchanathan and Sen. Jerry Moran extolled EARTH's promise under leader Mark Shiflett, who will draw on his industry knowledge of refrigerants such as R-410A (shown on previous page), which is being phased out due to its high global warming potential. Shiflett's research group is developing and patenting new technology to separate the binary mixture into its pure components, which can then be blended into new refrigerants or reused in other products.

Sethuraman Panchanathan, director of the National Science Foundation, which awarded the five-year grant that is among the largest in the University's history, touts the effort's "huge impact" on humanity. "This project is phenomenal," Panchanathan enthuses. "What it is going to do is to unleash scientific ideas, to unleash innovation, to unleash the technology of the future and—most importantly—the industries of the future and therefore the jobs of the future, having an impact on economic, societal as well as national security—all at the same time."

EARTH is one of only 19 Engineering Research Centers currently funded by the NSF in the fields of advanced manufacturing, energy and the environment, health, and microelectronics. The result of a highly competitive, four-year process that required a 1,000-page application, a site visit by NSF teams, and extensive collaboration among KU and its five research university partners across the country (plus multiple community and vocational colleges across the state), EARTH is headed by KU Foundation Distinguished Professor Mark Shiflett, a former DuPont researcher who joined the department of chemical and petroleum engineering in 2016 as the University's 12th and final Foundation Distinguished Professor.

Taking his turn at the microphone, Shiflett notes the multiyear whirl of activity that has led to this celebratory moment, including consultations with faculty and students from the schools joining KU on the project, as well as with stakeholders in the heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVACR) industry, dozens of whom are attending today. As the person ultimately responsible for delivering on the colossal promise of EARTH, Shiflett delivers his remarks in a more sober and measured tone than the speakers who preceded him. But his confidence—as he makes clear exactly what the stakes are—is just as high.

"We are going to help solve some of the most challenging engineering problems with transitioning this industry to more environmentally friendly and energy-efficient refrigerants," Shiflett says, speaking slowly and softly. "We named it EARTH. We, all of us—all of us—live on a planet that's called Earth, and we have to take care of it. It's our home."

Then, completing the vibe shift, he issues marching orders.

"Our University of Kansas band is going to play for you; when they finish, please follow them out into the foyer for some coffee and cake. And remember, we will reconvene in here at 10 a.m."

The implication seems clear: Celebrate. Enjoy your cake. Then let's get to work.

#### **'BIGGEST BLIND SPOT'**

The imperative driving the HVACR industry to make the transition to greener technology is the American Innovation and Manufacturing Act, a 2020 U.S. law that authorizes the Environmental Protection Agency to phase down the production and consumption of refrigerants made with hydrofluorocarbons. HFCs, as they are known, are greenhouse gases with

global warming potential (GWP) that can be hundreds or even thousands of times more damaging to the environment than carbon dioxide.

The AIM Act grants the EPA authority to phase out the production and use of HFCs, to manage these compounds and their substitutes, and to facilitate the transition to next-generation technologies.

HFCs are widespread, as Shiflett reminds the conference attendees after the break has concluded and the special guests have departed.

Think about your own home, he says.

"In my house, I have a refrigerator in the kitchen, a refrigerator in the garage, a wine cooler, a dehumidifier, two cars parked in the garage and a heat pump outside." All of them, Shiflett notes, contain refrigerants.

"How you traveled here, whether it was by car, plane, train: all air-conditioned," he continues. "This room is actually being air-conditioned—in November."

Now, think more broadly, he urges.

More than 2 billion air conditioning, refrigeration and heat pump systems are in use today, and 30% of them are in the United States, where they account for 20% to 30% of the country's electricity consumption. Globally, about 3 billion people live in some of the hottest places on the planet, and only 8% have air conditioning. So far.

"As incomes and living standards improve around the world, the number of air conditioner, refrigeration and heat pump systems will continue to increase," Shiflett says. "We expect over 6 billion units by 2050. That's five new air conditioners made every second for the next 25 years."

#### "We, all of us-all of us-live on a planet that's called Earth, and we have to take care of it. It's our home."

He pauses to let that sink in. Then he begins snapping his fingers.

"Five new air conditioners (snap). Five new air conditioners (snap). Five new air conditioners (snap)."

What happens, Shiflett asks, if the middle classes in China, India, Africa and the rest of the global south install air conditioners before we develop more environmentally friendly refrigerants? "This growing demand is the biggest blind spot in our energy debate today," he says.

Increased CO2 emissions from the added electricity needed to power these units is only part of the problem. More than 90% of refrigerants in today's air conditioners and other cooling devices eventually leak into the atmosphere, Shiflett explains. "Depending on the size of your house, your air conditioner contains about 5 to 10 pounds of refrigerant. If that leaks out, that's equivalent to the CO2 emissions caused by driving your car for one year."

Such leaks are difficult to track, too. Most homeowners notice something is wrong only when their AC stops cooling effectively, by which time the refrigerant has already escaped. HVACR technicians who lack training or who simply take shortcuts have even been known to vent a unit's remaining refrigerant into the atmosphere when making repairs, rather than taking the extra step to capture it for reclamation or destruction.

EARTH aims to address these issues by creating a circular and sustainable refrigerant economy that:

- Recycles more than 90% of refrigerants.
- Develops new refrigerants that are environmentally safe.
- · Reduces leakage to less than 1% of HVACR units, with additives that allow a system to patch itself and sensors that alert homeowners as soon as a leak starts.
- Boosts efficiency of new cooling and heating systems by 30% while reducing cost.

- Introduces refrigerators that use caloric cooling, which reduces noise, extends equipment lifespan and eliminates the need for refrigerants altogether.
- Creates 150,000 new and diverse HVACR jobs, improves training for technicians, and moves the industry away from an emphasis on fix-andrepair to preventive maintenance and energy efficiency.
- Establishes the United States as the technology and export leader of an industry that is projected to reach \$1 trillion.

"I want to see the United States remain the leader in air conditioning and refrigeration," Shiflett says during an interview in his lab at the School of Engineering's Learned Engineering Expansion Phase 2 (LEEP2) building. "I want to see us be the



#### KU leads broad partnership

The \$26 million, five-year National Science Foundation grant that funded EARTH establishes KU as the lead institution of a six-university team that also includes Lehigh University, the University of Hawai'i at

Manoa, the University of Maryland, the University of Notre Dame and the University of South Dakota. In addition, 11 community colleges, four HVACR tech schools, and four two- and four-year colleges will participate, among them Johnson County Community College, Metropolitan Community College, Peaslee Tech, Salina Tech and Seward County Community College.

The five-year project, which can be renewed for another five years if goals are met, also involves dozens of industry stakeholders, national labs, professional organizations and regulatory agencies. Contributors in attendance at the November kickoff meeting and celebration included:

- Leading manufacturers of heating, air conditioning and refrigeration systems such as Carrier, Daikin, Johnson Controls and Trane.
- · Leading refrigerant manufacturers such as Arkema and Chemours.
- · Multinational companies Microsoft, which depends heavily on cooling systems to keep its many data centers operating, and Walmart, which operates about 5,000 stores and 50 supply chain facilities in the U.S. alone and has pledged to achieve a goal of zero emissions by 2040.
- Oak Ridge National Laboratory, which supports U.S. Department of Energy efforts to help industry navigate the refrigerant transition mandated by the
- · Refrigerant reclamation companies such as American Refrigerants, Chiller Services and Hudson Technologies, which are searching for new ways to recycle and reuse outdated refrigerants.

-S.H.

leader in the technology and the leader in the exports. Too often, in my lifetime, I've seen the opposite. The solar industry left, right? Maybe it's starting to slowly trickle back, but I don't want to see that happen to air conditioning and refrigeration. I started as a 21-year-old working in this field, and obviously worked on a lot of different things in between. But now here at the end of my career, I want to see us develop something that goes beyond the technology we have today for comfort cooling. And I'd love to think that in 10 years I could be buying something that I'm installing in my home or walking into a commercial building or walking into a grocery store and be like, 'Wow. We did it."

It wouldn't be the first time.

#### SUSTAINABILITY: A COMMON THREAD

Shiflett began working part time at Du-Pont in 1987, while an undergraduate at North Carolina State University, moving to full time after earning a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering in 1989. The Montreal Protocol, an international treaty to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the use of chemicals that were leading to depletion of the stratospheric layer that protects Earth from the sun's ultraviolet rays, had just taken effect, and DuPont was developing new products to replace materials banned by the agreement, including the chemical compounds used in supermarket refrigeration. One of Shiflett's mentors, a senior engineer, was assigned the job, but he was busy developing a chemical that would be used to retrofit automobiles.

"He said, 'Hey, why don't you take a look at this?" Shiflett recalls. "I was 21. I didn't know a lot about refrigerants, didn't know a lot about supermarket refrigeration, and all of a sudden this is my job."

He invented several refrigerants, three of which DuPont commercialized. One of those, R-404A, earned the company over \$1 billion in sales and is still used in the supermarket industry worldwide. (A hydrofluorocarbon developed to replace banned chlorofluorocarbons, it is now one

of the refrigerants being phased out under the AIM Act.)

"If I go to Dillons or Hy-Vee, and I go to the frozen food case and I open the doors up and pull the packages aside, I can find a metal tag somewhere inside that unit, and on that tag it'll say the name of the refrigerant that I invented," Shiflett says.

A big grin spreads across his face. In it, there's a hint of his boyhood enthusiasm for building model trains, planes and rockets, which led Shiflett to choose a college major inspired by the space program and by Neil Armstrong's declaration that he was proud to be an engineer.

"After almost 40 years, I'm excited by that," he says of the cold-case deep dive he still indulges in from time to time—much to his wife's chagrin, he jokes. "You can't pay me enough money to get the feeling I get when I see that and know it's something I created that made a difference.

"That's the exact same thing that I'm trying to instill in every one of these young students, that you can make a difference with an idea, an invention. You can do that. And with these folks across KU and the other universities, I'm hoping to lead them through something like that, so that we can make a real difference, make a real change."

It's a message that resonates with students, says Kalin Baca, PhD'23, who came to KU specifically to study with Shiflett.

"Mark has an extremely unique perspective because he worked for DuPont for 28 years prior to coming to academia, and he had a really good understanding of how to commercialize technology and how to develop products," Baca says. "He's the inventor on many of the refrigerants that we use today. Because of that experience, he came in with a much different perspective than you oftentimes see.

"Mark is not afraid to dream big, and he works harder than anyone I've ever met," she adds. "He's also extremely passionate about not only the development of these technologies and having a positive impact on society, but he's extremely passionate about the development and growth of people. His superpower is his availability. It's that combination that makes him perfect for this role leading the center."

While at DuPont, Shiflett returned to school to earn a master's and doctorate in chemical engineering. He worked on a string of projects, from hydrogen fuel cells to environmentally friendly paint pigments to renewable tires, racking up more than 40 U.S. patents, eventually earning election to the National Academy of Inventors. Finding that he particularly enjoyed mentoring DuPont interns, he reached out to the University of Delaware and began teaching part time in 2011. In 2016 he retired from DuPont and came to KU, bringing with him millions of dollars worth of donated lab equipment from the company.

At the School of Engineering, he continued the emphasis on sustainability that had formed a common thread throughout his DuPont projects. In 2017, Shiflett read a story about The Wonderful Company, and he reached out to KU Endowment to ask whether they had any contacts at the multibillion-dollar food conglomerate. As it happened, a KU alumnus, Eric Johnson, e'89, is senior vice president for capital projects at the company.

"We had a really good meeting," Shiflett says of the introduction that followed. "We hit it off."

That initial conversation led to a gift from Wonderful that allowed Shiflett to work on refrigeration projects for the company.

"Then we started to look at what some

"Mark is not afraid to dream big, and he works harder than anyone I've ever met."

-Kalin Baca

of their byproducts were, and we realized they're the largest producer of pistachios in the world. They make about a hundred million pounds of pistachios every year, and they have this thing called 'the 3-mile pile,' which is a pile of pistachio shells that stretches 3 miles. You could fill Allen Field House with those shells—and that's every year."

Shiflett and his students set out to find a use for these discards. After a couple of false starts, they determined that the shells contain a compound called polyphenols, which can be used to improve the gut health of animals. With research studies confirming the efficacy of this approach, and a \$5 million gift from Wonderful co-founders Stewart and Lynda Resnick,



Mark Shiflett's research on pistachio shells has led to the discovery of some promising uses for the discards—and a \$5 million gift from The Wonderful Company.

#### **Homegrown innovation**

The potential impact of the new EARTH center could be comparable to the economic and public relations boost delivered by another high-profile Kansas win, the new Panasonic EV battery factory in De Soto, says U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran.

"I look at the Panasonic arrival as a role model for others," Moran, c'76, l'82, told *Kansas Alumni*. "'Panasonic came to Kansas, what did they find there? Maybe we should look and see what they saw.' Same thing here."

As the center's research developments are commercialized and present new business opportunities, "presumably that's going to develop here," Moran said. "That helps us not only educate students, but create careers and opportunities for them and their families to remain in Kansas."

An early example of just such potential is Icorium Engineering Company, a spinoff founded in 2022 by Mark Shiflett and one of his doctoral students, Kalin Baca, PhD'23.

A climate tech startup that is pursuing one of EARTH's key goals—to create a circular economy for refrigerants—lcorium uses new solvents (ionic liquids) and a process called extractive distillation to separate phased-out refrigerants into their component parts, which can then be recycled or repurposed. Headquartered at KU Innovation Park on West Campus, the company has used KU equipment and technology to establish that its process works for the top-three commercial refrigerant mixtures at lab and pilot scale. It's currently evaluating potential sites in Kansas and elsewhere for a commercial demonstration plant. Construction is projected to begin in 2025.



Icorium Engineering draws heavily on KU talent. Back row from left: Erik Blume, I'19, g'19, and Luke Wallisch, e'24. Front row from left: Michael Lundin; Abby Harders, PhD'24; Irene Xu, senior in engineering; and co-founders Mark Shiflett and Kalin Baca, PhD'23.

"We already have eight employees," Baca says, "and by putting up a commercial demonstration plant, that's a lot of jobs and talent you could be keeping here in Kansas as well." The technology has applications far beyond Kansas and the United States, she notes. "Refrigerants are used globally. I could easily see us being a 50-employee company by 2029. One plant could easily be a \$100 million net revenue potential here in the U.S. alone."

Icorium was one of five KU-affiliated startups to share in a \$570,000 investment by members of Oread Angel Investors (oreadinvestors.com), a new network of KU alumni, faculty and friends launched by KU Innovation Park. The network held its first pitch event last November; the second is scheduled for March.

Partners in Oread Angel Investors include the Kansas Department of Commerce, the University of Kansas, the KU Alumni Association and the Digital Health Co/Lab of KU Medical Center. The network is sponsored by Polsinelli, a national law firm.

-S.H.

"I've tried to instill that in my students: You will run into obstacles and barriers, but you've just got to keep trying, and there's nothing too big that you can dream that you can't possibly do."



The Wonderful Institute for Sustainable Engineering (WISE-KU) began helping transform a waste-management dilemma into a valuable food additive for the pork, aquaculture and pet food industries.

'Environmental sustainability must be one of the priorities for our planet and is a primary focus of our company's operations," Johnson said in February 2024, when the gift was announced. "Succeeding in our efforts to care for our world requires research and innovation—everything from renewable energy and responsible water usage to rethinking pistachio waste. The Wonderful Institute for Sustainable Engineering at KU has taken a novel approach towards exploring new technologies and creating cutting-edge outputs that align with Wonderful's mission to make our world a safer, healthier and better home for generations to come."

The search for "a novel approach" will be a hallmark of the EARTH Engineering Research Center, too—as demonstrated by its first spinoff company, Icorium Engineering, co-founded in 2022 by Shiflett and Baca. Headquartered at KU Innovation Park on West Campus, the startup licensed a patent from KU for its novel process for reclaiming outdated and mixed refrigerants and is now in the process of bringing the technique to market on an industrial scale. (See "Homegrown innovation.")

#### LIGHT BULB MOMENT

Shiflett has worked hard to transfer the corporate ethos of constant innovation and development to his research and teaching at KU.

"DuPont was probably one of the first companies to establish sustainability goals when sustainability wasn't something people were talking about very much, and it was the kind of company that wanted us in research to dream big," he says. "I've tried to instill that in my students: You will run into obstacles and barriers, but you've just got to keep trying, and there's nothing too big that you can dream that you can't possibly do."

America may have lost the initiative in allowing other countries to dominate the solar industry, but another past scenario offers a model for how the country might lead the way in tackling the energy transition mandated for the HVACR industry: the move to LED lighting.

As things stand now, Shiflett says, "We have the opportunity to do what happened when we went from the incandescent light bulb to fluorescents to LEDs."

Light bulbs and electronics made with light-emitting diodes use one-tenth of the electricity and produce one-tenth of the heat of an incandescent bulb for the exact same amount of light, Shiflett explains. "That has revolutionized lighting. Everything now is moving to LED because the cost has come down. It's affordable. They last for decades, and it's just incredible what we've accomplished in the last 25 years with lighting.

"When I worked at DuPont back in the late '80s, we were talking about LEDs then, and they were these tiny little things that you thought, 'How could that ever be a TV screen or be powerful enough to be used as a light bulb?' And now they're everywhere.

"That's the kind of thing we want to do for air conditioning."

Back at Burge, as the players in the KU-led EARTH initiative ponder the challenge before them, Shiflett offers some bracing straight talk.

It won't be easy, he warns.

"I can't tell you what the invention is today, but I can tell you that this group, along with our industry partners and our other stakeholders and the national labs, we are going to figure this out. We are going to make air conditioning and refrigeration sustainable and use a lot less electricity than we use today."

Even if one of the 10 EARTH projects now in development is commercialized, Shiflett tells his audience, there is the potential for hundreds of millions of dollars of revenue. Even if none of those come to fruition, stakeholders have told him, the assistance they gain with workforce and diversity training will make EARTH a success.

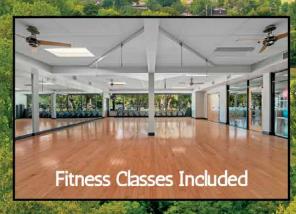
"We believe EARTH can transform the status quo into an Earth-inspired future where over 90% of refrigerants are recycled rather than ending up in the atmosphere," Shiflett says, his gaze roaming the room to make eye contact with attendees as he rallies them for the monumental task that awaits, sketching out a road map for how they might get there: Sensors and self-healing additives will reduce leakage to less than 1% of HVACR systems. Air conditioners and heat pumps will be less expensive and up to 30% more energy efficient. Refrigerators will use solid-state refrigerants that eliminate the need for gaseous refrigerants, operate silently and last longer. Over 150,000 new jobs will be created to meet the goals of the AIM Act.

"EARTH will help enable that," Shiflett says, "and the United States will remain the technology leader and the export leader as we build a trillion-dollar industry."

Believe it.









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# THE UNLIKELIEST JAYHAWK

**BY CHRIS LAZZARINO** 





man serves as Ukraine's ambassador to the United Nations, where Russia—a country waging a savage war dedicated to the destruction of his homeland—still enjoys a treasured seat on the all-powerful Security Council, a status it inherited amid the ashes of its forebear, the Soviet Union. So please let us grant that, a) Sergiy Kyslytsya shoulders one of the world's most difficult jobs, and b) is a world-class diplomat, which by definition demands absolute precision in language and word choice.

And so it was that, twice in as many days during his November visit to KU and Lawrence, we found ourselves mulling Ambassador Kyslytsya's description of our homeland as "banal." He seemingly grasped that we could take offense, because, flashing a sly, gotcha grin, he quickly expanded on his line of thought: Americans, he said, especially Kansans and other Midwesterners, "can know philosophy or ancient history better than many Europeans, but even those people would like to talk to you in a very simple way. They don't like hidden agenda. They don't really like to guess what is your position."

Rather than using "banal" to describe a lack of creativity or originality, Kyslytsya enjoys the word's implication for straightforward speech and manner, often lacking among his international colleagues. Kyslytsya embraces straight talk, and he says his heartland experience is one of his strengths when working within the diplomatic enclaves of New York, Washington, D.C., or Brussels, or the monetary and cultural strongholds of Los Angeles, San Francisco or London.

His advantage, as Kyslytsya sees it, is Kansas. Specifically, his academically rigorous sojourn on Mount Oread during the 1992-'93 school year, as an exchange student late in his college career.

"One of the things I've been telling my colleagues and my leaders, my bosses, before I became a boss myself, was that, in my opinion, American people are banal. But, that banality is a sincere ability to trust, and people in this country trust you—until you lie to them, you know?"

In other words, the ambassador explains, to know America, one must first know the Midwest—life lessons shared by few others in his circles of power. His sincere affection for Kansas and his pride in being a Jayhawk are aspects of his personal history that he does nothing to hide. They are, in fact, bragging points in life-and-death pursuits of the very highest consequences.

#### "I HAVE ALWAYS KEPT KANSAS IN MY MIND."

"I have always kept Kansas in my mind, believe me," the ambassador says during a light lunch of sandwiches and sodas in the Jayhawk Welcome Center's Joseph C. Courtright Pub. "It is not because you are from Kansas, or because I am in Kansas, that I say this, but because I was so blessed that I got this kind of vaccination, immunization, this injection of the American heartland experience at a very early age.

"Because of that, I could relate to many things, unlike many people around me who never studied in the United States, or even those who had the best education from European universities. They should all travel to Midwest."

and the Alumni Association officially view former students who successfully complete at least one full semester as alumni, regardless of degree completion—status unknown to Sergiy Kyslytsya when he left KU in a rush because he was needed back home. As Ukraine reassembled itself after shaking off the yoke of Soviet-style communism, jobs were filling fast, and, from the time he could walk and talk, Kyslytsya had only one dream.

"I knew from a very early age that I want to be a diplomat," he says, "because I like the world. I like to explore the world."

Although he found comfort in the rural, agricultural and proudly self-reliant character shared among Ukrainians and Kansans, the ambassador is quick to note that he was never a farmer.

"My parents were very urban people," he says, almost sharply, as if for emphasis. "They lived in the capital all their lives, and for generations."

Despite pervasive travel and educational restrictions placed upon citizens of Eastern Bloc countries, his parents taught him English—"I was speaking my version of English before I even started to read or write," he says—along with French and German, and he has since added Spanish. "Even during the Soviet times, with this kind of wall around the Soviet Union, there were still ways to receive information in foreign languages."



"In just a year, I had so many opportunities to see wonderful things and to meet wonderful people who represent the core of this nation," Kyslytsya says of his KU days. "I was always thinking about going back to Lawrence, Kansas, to see how it is, and now I am finally here."

His family's insistence on rigorous education served a specific purpose, as children were expected to leave home early in pursuit of both higher education and self-reliant adventure.

"In my family, it is a century-long tradition that children should be independent very early," Kyslytsya says. "I left my family when I was 16. My son left our family when he was 16. You have to get a very good education, and then you have to go, but if you go to a college, then family supports you."

Kyslytsya was in his early 20s, and the Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse, when he applied for a prestigious opportunity to attend an American university—with KU as one of the participating schools—as an exchange student. The name of the program has been lost to time, yet it was prominent enough that he had to travel to Moscow for an interview.

"In the final year or two of the Soviet Union," explains Erik Scott, John P. Black Professor of History and director of KU's Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies (CREES), "they created what was like a Soviet Fulbright program, where they had this competition across the whole country. It had high standards and was highly competitive."

As Kyslytsya later learned, it was Maria Carlson—now professor emerita of Slavic languages & literatures and director emerita of what had been known as the KU Center for Russian & East European Studies, now CREES—who warned her Russian counterparts that if Ukrainian students were not included, no Russian students would be welcomed at KU either. So it was that Sergei Olegovich Kislitsa—the Russianized spelling of his Ukrainian name, which he used at the time—arrived at Kansas in fall 1992, with 20 or so Russians and four other Ukrainians.

"I understood that in Kansas, there was a very strong department of Central and Eastern European studies," he says, "and it was a perfect match of my expectations. I knew that East Coast would always be available, especially in my profession, and the West Coast as well, so I needed to go see the heartland of the United States."

One of his first discoveries, Kyslytsya recalls, was that enrollment here is a world apart from what he had known in the European and Ukrainian models: "In Europe, you come at the beginning of the year and everything is assigned to you, while here, so much responsibility is on you. That was quite a challenge." He lived in Ellsworth Hall—"I had a crazy roommate," he says with a laugh—and traveled when he could, including a Thanksgiving in Dodge City, Greyhound bus trips during winter and spring breaks to visit a friend in North Carolina, and holiday outings to Nebraska, where he stayed with American families. Kyslytsya delights in sharing a story about returning early from one such long weekend, only to find that his fellow Ellsworthians had chosen his closet to hide a contraband keg of beer for a party to which he had not been invited. "So I click, lock the door and go to bed, and they're knock-knocking, wanting their beer."

As befitting a future diplomat, Kyslytsya closely watched human behavior, learning about American ways of life while also clarifying his existing insights into differences between Ukrainians and Russians. After their first two weeks on campus, the five Ukrainian students made no effort to interact and rarely saw one another; the Russians were rarely apart.

"I found, in many ways, how similar Ukrainians are to Americans, especially in Kansas, because Ukrainians are farmers, and Ukrainians—before the Bolsheviks took Ukraine—lived on individual farms, and we had individual ways of farming," he says. "And so those Ukrainian students who came to Kansas with limited English proficiency, because they chose to be with Americans rather than stay together, by Christmas they were quite fluent, and by Easter they were even more fluent. This illustrates the particular feature about Ukrainians, and that is individuality. We are

"I FOUND, IN MANY WAYS, HOW SIMILAR UKRAINIANS ARE TO AMERICANS, ESPECIALLY IN KANSAS."

quite selfish people, but we can unite when there is national danger, the need to protect your country.

"It was quite a pity for me to see that the Russian students were spending time together all the time. When you go to a cafeteria, they would stay together. Or if you go to a cinema theatre, they would be there together. Who am I to judge? But when you come here, you want to integrate, you want to learn, you want to have to be on your own, because it makes you learn the culture, learn the habits, learn traditions, learn languages."

Perhaps unlike most exchange students, Kyslytsya was "already quite advanced in my degree," with a major in international law. He says now that, all things being equal, he might have preferred to complete his final semester and earn his degree here; instead, he had to finish at home while interviewing to join a foreign service bureaucracy that his homeland was quickly expanding. As Kyslytsya saw it, every extra day spent in Kansas could be an opportunity lost back home.

"When Ukraine became independent, the entire foreign service was only 100 people, and that included everyone from the minister to the driver. Today we have about 1,600 abroad and more than 600 in the capital. I joined the foreign service in 1993, and, ever since, this is where I have worked."

At the end of his visit last November, Kyslytsya arrived for a farewell dinner sporting a retro '90s-style KU sweatshirt, a staple of student life that he could not afford as an exchange student. He had made time during his three days in Lawrence to search Mass Street shops for his souvenir. After returning to New York, Kyslytsya posted to Facebook before-and-after photographs that re-created his time as a KU student, posing in front of the Strong Hall Jayhawk and outside Spooner Hall—illustrating, most notably, that, from an era long before digital photographs all the way until today, Kyslytsya had saved his KU snapshots through the countless global transitions of a diplomat's career.







Kyslytsya hiked the Hill with (above, I-r) CREES student assistant Naomi Galindo and U.N. first secretary Yaroslava Sochka, and later re-created campus snapshot scenes (below) from his student days.

"I am not a particularly sentimental person, but the warmth of the reception and of my conversations at The University of Kansas was amazing," he wrote online. "Being back in Lawrence, KS, after more than three decades since I left, it revives some of the best and comfortable memories."

how is that KU, the Alumni Association and Kansas Alumni magazine had no clue that Ukraine's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations was a Jayhawk? He was hardly an unknown, after all.

Named Ukraine's U.N. ambassador in 2020, Kyslytsya had first become prominent in the international diplomatic jet set in 1998, when he was named chief of staff to Ukraine's minister for foreign affairs, from there rising to such posts as political counselor to Ukraine's U.S. embassy in Washington, D.C., and, in 2014, concurrent with Russia's invasion of Crimea, deputy foreign minister.

Although he'd become famous, his name known around the world, his connection to KU was obscured by, well, his name: The Association's alumni database had still listed him as Sergei Kislitsa—the Russianized name Sergiy was eager to shed after pledging himself to a career of international diplomacy on behalf of Ukraine—and the gap was never hurdled until a chance encounter in New York made possible by KU's advanced—and rare—high-level instruction in Ukrainian language.



"I am enjoying the healthy way of life," Kyslytsya said of his threeday visit in November. "I sleep very well, not like I sleep in New York, and that's really an achievement, trust me. People in Kansas are still blessed to live healthy life."

Among her other teaching and research duties, Associate Professor Oleksandra Wallo, director of graduate studies for the department of Slavic, German and Eurasian Studies and director of the KU Summer Language Institute in Lviv, Ukraine, teaches advanced Ukrainian. Because the course is available in a virtual format, it is popular for those in the military, government and international nonprofit organizations.

One of Wallo's students, who happened to be cradling his textbook at the time, attended a New York City event that featured Kyslytsya; the ambassador took notice and asked him where he was studying Ukrainian. When the student replied, "KU," Kyslytsya replied, "Actually, I went to KU and have very fond memories of it." The student reported back to Wallo, who of course shared the exciting news with colleagues. Once the name-change riddle had been solved and records confirmed Kyslytsya's KU experience, invitations were extended and arrangements finally made for him to give a public speech Nov. 12 at the Dole Institute of Politics.

His eagerness to return to Lawrence was evident in his travel schedule: Although his Dole Institute event was on a Tuesday evening, Kyslytsya arrived on that Sunday, Nov. 10, and on Nov. 11, Veterans Day, he joined Yaroslava Sochka, first secretary of Ukraine's U.N. mission, for a wreath-laying ceremony at the Memorial Campanile before venturing out on his first special request: a visit to the Jayhawk Welcome Center at the Adams Alumni Center.

Kyslytsya seemed genuinely amazed at the glorious new home for welcoming visitors, alumni and prospective students and their families—and particularly delighted to see his name on the massive message screen usually reserved for greeting visiting high schoolers. He described the building's creators as "heroes" and comfortably relaxed in the Adams Alumni Center's pub with his traveling party and hosts. He later visited

classes, met with faculty at downtown events, and, as the trip's finale, delivered his insistent message on behalf of Ukraine at the Dole Institute.

"I hope it is very clear to the Americans that if America wants to be great, America cannot let Putin win the war against the civilized world," he said in a press event with local reporters. "It's a very banal statement—I had a conversation with Chris yesterday about banality—and I think it's very simple. All the rest is conspiracy theories."

To describe the ambassador's speech as standing-room-only would imply standing room was available; in fact, the crowd reached into the hallway and even the exterior sidewalk, with latecomers listening through a series of open doors.

"It affirms the importance of KU as an internationally focused university based in Kansas," Erik Scott says the ambassador's visit. "It was both the international connections of KU and its strengths in Ukrainian and Eastern European studies that helped bring the ambassador here, but it's also KU's nature as a Midwestern research university that really made such an impression on the ambassador and made him want to come back. KU was a crucial step in his career."

During his leisurely conversation in the pub, Kyslytsya recalled his favorite KU classes and teachers, in particular Professor Philip Schrodt's International Conflict course. Reached at his home on the East Coast, where he is retired from a late-career stint as a consultant to U.S. intelligence agencies, Schrodt was thrilled to hear that his KU teaching and research are still paying dividends at the highest levels of global diplomacy. "I'm very proud of that class," he says. "I think students got a sophisticated view of what war really is."

Equally as important, Kyslytsya recalls, was a course on interpersonal communication in multicultural organizations. "Of course I use that *every* day," the U.N. ambassador says, smiling. And, too, there was his English teacher, name since forgotten, who told the future diplomat: Young man, please get to the point.

"'Say things in a very simple way. Do not hide between the lines what you want to say.' And that was one of the best pieces of advice I was given. My sentences were too long. When I worked in Washington, D.C., there were instances when I would come back from the NSC or State Department, prepare a cable to report my meeting to the capital, and my boss, the ambassador, would tell me, 'Why is your cable so banal?' And I said, 'Because my American counterpart was very banal. Very simple in his or her messages.'

"And that is the position. Don't read between the lines, you know?"



## Saturday, April 26, 2025 The Lex at Municipal Auditorium

## **Rock Chalk Forever is back!**

Join Jayhawks in celebrating KU traditions while supporting students and alumni.

Proceeds will benefit the KU programs, the Student Alumni Network and the Jayhawk Career Network—powered by Truity Credit Union.



Learn more, purchase tickets and get updates about the event at rockchalkforever.org











n a brisk night in Swarthout Recital Hall, the 23 musicians of KU's Prairie Fire Chamber Orchestra appear jazzed, as does their conductor, Creston Herron.

Never mind that it's Dec. 12, the Thursday before the gauntlet of final exams—or that the students and Herron began the long week by performing twice on Sunday, with the KU Symphony Orchestra, in the School of Music's 100th edition of holiday Vespers.

Tonight's concert marks the giddy debut of Prairie Fire, an ensemble that Herron founded this fall to "expand the string orchestra repertoire, focusing on new voices, underrepresented populations and varied composers," he explains to the Swarthout audience. Two of the night's selections, in fact, are world premieres of new music, commissioned especially for Prairie Fire.

But the program will begin with an "old gem," Herron says, as he introduces the "fiery and feisty" first movement of Tchaikovsky's "Souvenir de Florence."

"Fasten your seat belts, because from beginning to end, this is true Tchaikovsky at his best," Herron continues, "with wonderful flurries and excitement, beautiful melodies and dissonances that leave the listener just in awe."

"Souvenir de Florence" also hints that the night's performance is prelude to Prairie Fire's upcoming tour in Italy, the first international trip in the history of KU orchestras. From Jan. 8 through Jan. 15, the students will present concerts in Florence, Rome, Venice and Cremona, birthplace of the violin.



Allegro con spirito, the first movement of "Souvenir," also describes the lively, effusive Herron, f'08, now in his second year as the School of Music's director of orchestral activities. Witness his preconcert frenzy: Before his players assemble on stage, Herron warmly welcomes and prepares the youthful guests seated in the first two rows of the audience for the music they are about to hear. They are music students at Gardner-Edgerton High School and Kansas City's Sumner Academy, Herron's high school alma mater. He is oh-so-subtly recruiting them to KU by explaining the abundant musical opportunities they could encounter.

He then dashes out of the hall to retrieve the printed programs for the concert, quickly returning to distribute copies, row by row, greeting individual audience members. Eventually, he makes his entrance on stage to introduce Prairie Fire and the night's repertoire.

"He's an unstoppable force," says Margaret Marco, professor of oboe, associate dean for performance activities and a 26-year School of Music faculty member. She credits Herron for rejuvenating the orchestral programs, which in addition to Prairie Fire, include the KU Symphony Orchestra and the KU Philharmonic Orchestra.

Marco first encountered Herron when he was an undergraduate student in her music theory class. "I knew then he was going places," she recalls. "He was just a sponge—full of curiosity and asking insightful questions. When he applied for graduate school at Rice University, I thought, 'Yeah, this kid is going for the stars.' He was just a joy."

Last fall, for the 100th Vespers, Herron asked Marco to perform an oboe solo with the Symphony. As she entered the Lied Center stage during dress rehearsal, "the change in the atmosphere was palpable," she says. "The students responded to him with such enthusiasm, and this lush, gorgeous sound was coming out of the string section that I had not heard from the KU Symphony Orchestra for many years. I started crying."

Melanie Lysaught, Topeka sophomore and a violin performance major, praises Herron's "amazing ability to draw you in and engage you in the music." The Prairie Fire ensemble has introduced her to new music and ideas she never encountered during her years of classical music study. "It's cool to experience these pieces and know that no one has ever played them before," she says. As a conductor, Herron has helped her play better as a member of an orchestra. "He emphasizes in every rehearsal that it's so important to listen to one another and play as one breathing ensemble rather than just a bunch of individuals playing at the same time."

# "...this lush, gorgeous sound was coming out of the string section that I had not heard from the KU Symphony Orchestra for many years.

I started crying."

-Margaret Marco

Prairie Fire member Sofia Lefort, a Lawrence sophomore majoring in music and psychology, recalls meeting Herron in fall 2022, as the School of Music was beginning its search for a new director of orchestras. Herron accepted the school's invitation to lead the KU Symphony as a guest conductor. Lefort was a high school senior who had been invited by a KU faculty member to perform, but when she arrived for the concert, "they had forgotten to put out a chair for me because I wasn't on the roster," she recalls. "Professor Herron flagged people down to get me a chair, and then he took a selfie with me."

She was delighted when Herron accepted KU's offer to return as a faculty member. "I was really happy when he got the job," she says. "He has a way of managing massive ensembles while making everyone feel heard and seen. He even asks about our families."

The memory of his fall 2022 "audition" lingers with Herron, too, because it transported him back to his years as an undergraduate violin performance major. "It brought back so many wonderful memories for





Herron and the Prairie Fire musicians rehearsed and performed in Rome's magnificent Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri, designed by Michelangelo. Throughout their tour of Italy, audiences packed historic venues to hear the orchestra from Kansas.

me," he says. "I could see myself then, and I could see what the experiences here afforded me. I can support my family because of the experiences that I had here at KU. And I thought, 'This is my opportunity to give back and inspire that next generation and hopefully give them the opportunity to pursue their passions and have their own careers.'

"I felt so connected with the students, and they were so responsive. It just felt very organic."

Herron and his wife, Dawn, and their young children moved to Lawrence in 2023 after 15 years in Houston, where he served as director of fine arts for the Klein Independent School District. He also conducted the Shepherd School of Music Campanile Orchestra at Rice University, where he earned his master's degree.

In only his second year on the KU faculty, Herron has overseen impressive growth in the three orchestral ensembles, says Marco, who notes that the string sections have doubled in size. The Symphony now includes about 85 players, most of whom are majoring or minoring in music. The 40-member Philharmonic Orchestra comprises students from all majors as well as members of the faculty, staff and community; Herron renamed the group and has challenged the musicians with a more rigorous repertoire.

Marco hails the Philharmonic as a prime example of Herron's impact. Previous orchestras for non-majors and community members had been hit or miss, she says. "We had a revolving door of conductors, so the consistency and the coherency of the program wasn't there—unlike the band programs, where directors have stayed for long periods of time. The secondary orchestra was a ship without a rudder, and it needed somebody who's going to be here and have a commitment."

One of the Philharmonic's community members has an especially personal stake in Herron's success: His mother, Courtney Wells of Kansas City, plays violin, the instrument she inspired her son to take up as a child. Mother and son share not only a passion for the violin but also the same vivacious, gift-of-gab personalities. He fondly describes her as "a hoot." It takes one to know one.

Herron continues a musical tradition that cascades through several generations of his family, including his late great-uncle and fellow Jayhawk, Reginald Buckner, d'61, g'66, who founded the jazz program at the University of Minnesota and gained national attention for his TV series and lectures on jazz. Buckner is the latest graduate to be inducted into the School of Music's Nicholas L. Gerren Sr. Hall of Achievement.

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#### Legendary legacy

The School of Music established the Nicholas L. Gerren Sr. Hall of Achievement in 2020 to honor alumni, faculty and staff who overcame barriers to become renowned musicians and educators who influenced music nationally and internationally.

Located in Murphy Hall, the hall commemorates Nicholas Gerren Sr., f'34, g'34, g'48, PhD'53, who earned his KU degrees in violin and music education. He traded his performance career to become a distinguished teacher and leader in music education for more than 40 years at universities in North



Gerren Sr.

Carolina, Missouri, Texas and Ohio, where he retired from Central State University in 1977 as dean of the school of music and art. His numerous honors included the Alumni Association's Fred Ellsworth Medallion for his service to KU and the Distinguished Service Citation from KU and the Association for his contributions to humanity. He also served on the Association's

national board of directors. The KU Black Alumni Network also posthumously named Gerren, who died in 2002, among its Mike and Joyce Shinn Leaders and Innovators.

The most recent addition to the Gerren Hall of Achievement is Reginald Buckner, d'61, g'66, the great-uncle of Creston Herron, f'08, KU's new director of orchestral activities. In April 2024, Herron conducted a special performance for Buckner's extended family members to celebrate his induction, and every day Herron walks by his great-uncle's photo in Murphy Hall, along with photos of the other Gerren Hall inductees.

After leaving KU, Buckner earned his doctorate at the University of Minnesota, where he founded one of the nation's early jazz education programs and taught African American studies. An acclaimed pianist and organist, he performed often in Minneapolis and his hometown, Kansas City, and became nationally known for his innovative 1981 TV series, "Jazz: An American Classic," and his lectures throughout the nation. He died in 1989.



Buckner

Buckner joins several other Jayhawks in the Gerren Hall who helped advance and elevate jazz as a foundation of U.S. music, says Margaret Marco, professor of oboe and associate dean for performance activities in the School of Music. "We now take jazz studies for granted. Every school of music has a jazz department, but that was not the case in the 1970s, even though jazz was big and influential on the music scene," Marco says. "Dr. Buckner's TV show and lectures inspired a movement to study jazz, which is our nation's music."

Members of the Gerren Hall also have received recognition from the University and the KU Black Alumni Network, and *Kansas Alumni* magazine has published stories about them through the years. For more details on their lives and careers, visit music.ku.edu/nicholas-l-gerren-sr-hall-achievement and the archives at kansasalumnimagazine.org.

#### Gerren Hall members include:

**Walter Page,** d1921, founded Walter Page and his Blue Devils in 1925. He played bass with Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra and later became a key member of Count Basie's "All-American Rhythm Section." Many credit Page for making the bass a melodic instrument and creating the "walking bass" style that was integral to the growth of swing jazz. Page died in 1957.

Etta Moten Barnett, f'31, starred on Broadway in "Porgy and Bess" and was the first Black woman to perform at the White House, singing for President Franklin D. Roosevelt. She also appeared in two movies and later hosted a radio program, "I Remember When," in her longtime home of Chicago, where she became a civic leader. In addition, she served as an American cultural representative to African nations. Barnett died in 2004 at age 102.

**William P. Foster,** d'41, founded the Florida A&M University Marching 100, famous for a unique 360-steps-perminute marching cadence as well as intricate dances and marching formations. The Marching 100 won the Sudler Trophy as the nation's top marching band and performed in Super Bowl III, two presidential inaugural parades and the Bastille Day parade in France, along with films and TV commercials. Foster also conducted the McDonald's All-American High School Band. He died in 2010.

**Nathan Davis,** d'60, established the jazz studies program at the University of Pittsburgh and became known internationally for his mastery of the tenor and soprano saxophone, flute and clarinet. He performed with Art Blakey, Donald



COURTESY SCHOOL OF MUSIC (8)

Page

Barnett





Foster

Davis





Jones Jr.

McCurdy

Byrd, Ray Charles and Kenny Clarke. He also led jazz programs at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Jazz Aspen Snowmass and other festivals. He earned his doctorate from Wesleyan University in Connecticut and wrote more than 200 compositions. His music is featured in the 2014 film "Jayhawkers" about his friend Wilt Chamberlin, '59, which was directed by Kevin Willmott, KU professor emeritus of film & media studies, Davis died in 2018.

**Carmell Jones Jr.,** '62, became a sought-after trumpeter as a West Coast studio musician in the 1960s. He moved to Berlin in 1968 and played with the Radio Free Europe Big Band Orchestra. His many albums included "Jay Hawk Talk" by the Carmell Jones Quartet. He died in 1996.

Ron McCurdy, g'78, PhD'73, is currently a professor and former chair of jazz studies at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music. He was KU's first director of jazz studies and went on to lead the jazz program at the University of Minnesota (founded by fellow Jayhawk Reginald Buckner) and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. A trumpeter and composer, he returned to KU in 2017 with the Ron McCurdy Quartet to perform "The Langston Hughes Project," a multimedia presentation based on Hughes' epic poem "Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz."

-J.J.S.

#### "The first time I got on the podium, the energy flew through me.

It was overwhelming."

Although Herron is too young to have truly known his great-uncle, "his name was synonymous with musical excellence," Herron says. "He was a force in the field of music, and I grew up knowing there was musical excellence that came before me. It set a tone for me, where I know what the bar is: I know what the possibilities are. And so why not reach for those possibilities? I know they're attainable."

Herron clearly announced the possibilities for KU's orchestras before he returned to the Hill. "The minute he signed the contract," Marco recalls, "he said, 'We are going to have a string orchestra, and we're going to have a vibrant orchestra for non-majors and the community to play.' He's got so much vision, and those are just two tiny tentacles of his vision."

Herron clearly states his bigger plan. "In the next five years, the KU orchestral program will be one of the top 20 in the nation. That is our goal," he says. "We will be seen as the mecca for music education, especially string education, in the Midwest."

Last summer, he established the first Midwestern Music Educators Retreat, which coincided with KU's well-known Midwestern Music Camp, for decades a fertile recruiting ground for KU music students, including Herron. The new retreat attracted teachers from six states who met with faculty from KU and across the nation to discuss rehearsal techniques and classroom innovations. The retreat was a "resounding win," Herron says, and plans for this summer's retreat are well underway.

Teaching and conducting were not part of Herron's plan as an undergraduate, but on a whim, he enrolled in an elective course on conducting taught by Professor Paul Tucker, then KU's director of choral ensembles. When Tucker presciently suggested that Herron might one day trade his bow for a baton, Herron dismissed the thought: "My vision for myself was to go be a performer, playing overseas with professional groups. I thought I would be a concertmaster. Conducting just never really appealed to me."



Until it did. As a master's student in violin performance at Rice University in Houston, Herron was an Alice Pratt Brown Scholar in the Shepherd School of Music and a faculty member in the school's preparatory program for young children. "I realized that I like working with kids, helping them experience their creative side through music and seeing how they light up," he recalls.

But when he learned that a Houston public charter school was looking to hire an orchestra director, Herron resisted, at first ignoring his professor's suggestion to apply. Ultimately he relented—and discovered true joy. "The first time I got on the podium, the energy flew through me," he recalls. "It was overwhelming. I almost cried. I thought, 'Oh my gosh. I want this.' I'll never forget that experience. I was just blown away. That's when I knew."

Herron explains that his performance background feeds his role as conductor. "Your study of the score and your interpretation are enhanced," he says, "because the conductor's job is really to portray what's not on the page. What's the character? What's the color? What's the story? That's my job."

And when the conductor and musicians truly connect, every gesture speaks volumes, Herron says. "The word itself, 'conduct,' means you're a conduit of energy. It goes through you. It's not a dictatorship, but it's a collaboration. We're making the music together. That's why I like to be within the sound and see the players' eyes up, out of the score. I show them what I want, and if it's clear and concise and decisive, the musicians understand. It's organic."

In this new, allegro con spirito era of KU orchestras, all eyes are on Creston Herron and the musicians he inspires.

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#### **Hometown hospitality**

Multicity recruitment tour brings KU to prospective Jayhawks

ALUMNI AND KU STUDENTS in six key cities, along with representatives from KU Admissions and the Alumni Association, in January welcomed prospective students and their parents to winter receptions, which for more than a decade have offered students who have been admitted to KU early glimpses of life as a Jayhawk.

The events highlight the strength of the Jayhawk alumni network and offer families opportunities to ask questions of alumni and students who can share their experiences.

"The winter receptions have been an amazing collaboration. The opportunity to connect with our admitted seniors currently, and other prospective students at a time when they are in the college decision-making process, is so important in

our recruitment efforts," says Mary Ryan, j'85, associate director of campus visits and events for KU Admissions. "These intimate events hosted by alumni allow us to connect our current students and alumni in these key cities to share their KU stories and help students see themselves as future Jayhawks."

More than 80 prospective students and their families attended the following receptions:

- Colorado Springs, Colorado, hosted by Michael, l'05, and Heidi Allen.
- Austin, Texas, hosted by Mark and Lori Anderson Piening, b'92.
- Houston, hosted by Sarah Frazier, j'94, g'94.
- Milwaukee, hosted by Chris Adams, parent of two current students.

- Phoenix, hosted by Drew Hiatt, c'95, m'99.
- Seattle, hosted by Jack, c'00, g'08, and Sarah Jackson Martin, c'02.

Annie Santarelli Miller, senior director of NextGen Jayhawks and event services for the Association, returned to her home state for the event in Milwaukee. "It was incredibly special for me," says Miller, c'18. "I can share in the experience of being from Wisconsin and what it means to be a Jayhawk. I think it's helpful for families to feel like they have a familiar face down here in Lawrence who can serve as a resource for them, especially after building rapport with one another at events like our winter receptions. I love being able to represent KU and also represent where I grew up."





Winter receptions in Houston (below left), Milwaukee (above) and four additional cities featured panels of current students who took time out of their winter breaks to share their KU experiences with prospective students and families. Mimi Delrahim, c'18, a Minneapolis-based admissions rep (above), guided the discussion in Milwaukee.

#### New to the crew

THREE TEAM MEMBERS joined the Association in November, completing the integration of the KU Medical Center Alumni Association into the KU Alumni Association ("Stronger together," issue No. 4, 2024). The change will create a more unified alumni experience for graduates of all KU programs and campuses, and it aligns with Chancellor Doug Girod's "One KU" initiative to streamline and unify programs and leadership across the entire University.

Jordann Parsons Snow, c'08, is now the Association's assistant vice president of University relations for the KU Medical Center campuses in Kansas City, Salina and Wichita. She most recently served as director of the Medical Center's Office of Alumni Relations in Kansas City. She joined that office in 2013 and became director in 2018. In her new role with the Association, she will continue to build strategic relationships with the students, faculty and alumni of the Schools of Health Professions, Nursing and Medicine as the Association establishes a new strategy for fostering connections and involvement.

Micaela O'Bryan is assistant director of University relations. She joined the Office of Alumni Relations in Kansas City in January 2021 and focused on event management, working with members of the three Medical Center schools' alumni boards. She will support the Association's efforts to bridge engagement for students and alumni on the Lawrence and Kansas City campuses.

Mary Bujnak is membership coordinator. She joined the Office of Alumni Relations at KU Medical Center in June 2021 after serving in various roles at the KU Edwards Campus since 2014. She supported the Alumni Relations office as the administrative assistant before becoming the membership and data coordinator in June 2023. In her new role, she supports the Association's membership and business development teams.



O'Bryan, Snow and Bujnak



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#### **Jayhawk Profiles**



"We've learned that you've got to pick what you're good at and stick with that, versus a million things you're OK at," says Mark Gencarelli, co-founder, with his wife, Marissa, of Kansas City's Yoli Tortilleria. "So that's how we're always thinking as we're growing, to make sure that, in the end, the quality and consistency are there."

#### MARK GENCARELLI

## Fresh perspective is key to Kansas City bakery's award-winning tortillas

by Steven Hill

Ark Gencarelli was working for Timberland Forest Products in West Plains, Missouri, a four-hour commute from his Kansas City-area home, when he and his wife, Marissa Gencarelli, began a cooking experiment in their home kitchen. Their goal: Create the kind of authentic tortilla Marissa grew up eating during her childhood in the Mexican state of Sonora.

"We couldn't find in Kansas City exactly what we could find in her hometown," Mark recalls, "so we're just messing around at home, trying to learn to make tortillas, and one thing led to another. It seems crazy when I think back on it."

Crazy because the passion project that began with their unsuccessful attempts to grind corn at home—first in a tabletop grinder, then in a Vitamix blender—has grown into a thriving company, Yoli Tortilleria, that in 2023 was singled out for a prestigious James Beard Award as the nation's top bakery.

Bestowed annually by the James Beard Foundation, the awards are considered the highest honor in the United States for serious cuisine. The Outstanding Bakery category recognizes a bakery that achieves consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality and operations while contributing positively to its community.

Unable to achieve at home the fine consistency needed to turn cornmeal into masa, the dough used to create tortillas, the Gencarellis decided to get serious. They wrote a business plan, visited tortilla makers in Los Angeles, and, drawing on Mark's expertise in manufacturing, purchased equipment needed to launch a proper tortilla operation. In 2017 they started their business as a side hustle.

"We were both still working our jobs," says Mark, c'03, "and we're like, well, we can do this nights and weekends. After work, I'd go around dropping off samples." A couple months in, a Kansas City chef who liked the product asked to tour their operation. "We showed him everything, and he said, 'Can you deliver seven days a week?' So we're like, 'Of course!'"

That restaurant, the popular Kansas City eatery Port Fonda, was quickly joined by another, Chicken N Pickle, in showcasing the Gencarellis' fresh corn tortillas, which are made with only three ingredients—corn, water and mineral lime—using a traditional Mexican technique called nixtamalization.

The couple decided one of them had to quit their job. "I took the jump first," Mark says, "and we went from there."

Made with local ingredients and free of preservatives and fillers found in most mass-produced tortillas, Yoli's product was embraced by other local chefs, and by 2018 the Gencarellis were selling to home cooks via the Overland Park Farmers Market. Next they worked on getting their wares into metro-area grocery stores, including Whole Foods. By 2020, they were ready to open a retail shop, Yoli Westside, at 1668 Jefferson St. Modeled on the Mexican loncheria, the small cafe serves lunch and sells chips, salsas and other prepared foods Yoli has introduced as the Gencarellis expanded their product line. In 2022 they relocated their manufacturing operation to a larger facility, where they produce 15,000 to 20,000 corn tortillas and around 10,000 flour tortillas a day, shipping to consumers, restaurants and grocers across the country. In 2024 Whole Foods boosted the business when it upped the number of stores selling Yoli products from four to 60.

The couple also acquired Art's Molino and Market, a local family business that has been making Mexican foods since 1961, using a similar philosophy as Yoli. That operation produces about 130,000 tortillas a day. Overall, Yoli (named for an Aztec term that means "to live") employs 30 people.

Those traditional business metrics, while essential to the long-term health of a company the Gencarellis financed with their own savings, is not the full measure of success for the couple.

"Our vision is not just to be a retailer or a wholesaler," Marissa says. "Our biggest vision is how do we shift the American experience with Mexican cuisine?"

That has often meant saying no to offers that could increase sales but would require compromises—such as adding preservatives—they're unwilling to make.

Mark handles sales and operations, while Marissa (who left her job with Cerner to join Yoli full time four years after they launched) concentrates on strategy, marketing and product development. Neither had prior food industry experience, but that has turned out to be a strength.

"I think that's helped us both so much, that we have fresh eyes," Mark says. "We weren't coming in with preconceived ideas of, 'This is how you do this.' We said, 'Let's do it how we think it should be done."

#### COL. ALEX RAMTHUN

#### Marine jet pilot tapped to lead acquisitions for presidential helicopters

by Chris Lazzarino

espite its dazzling panache for vertical takeoffs and landings, the Harrier "jump jet"—a critical tool for support of infantry combat troops—will never be mistaken for a helicopter. So how is it that Col. Alex Ramthun, a veteran Harrier pilot with more than 300 combat flight hours and nearly 200 shipboard landings, now commands the Presidential Helicopters Program Office, the acquisition arm of Marine Helicopter Squadron One?

The unlikely route Ramthun, c'00, navigated to reach his prestigious post actually began in high school, in Bloomington, Minnesota, when he first pointed himself toward Mount Oread. Thanks to his father's government work, the family

had moved often around the Midwest, including Wichita, and as a boy he became fond of KU and Lawrence. When he won a national ROTC scholarship, Ramthun, hoping to become a Marine aviator, made KU—where the Navy ROTC program carries a strong reputation for developing superior Marine officers—his first choice.

"I was very interested in serving my country, and I was pulled into the Marine Corps due to their war-fighting culture," Ramthun says from his office at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland. "I wanted to be a leader at a young age."

Equally important for Ramthun was KU's vaunted economics program, where he gained insights that ultimately served the war-fighting prowess he began developing with his first assignment to a combat attack squadron, in 2005.

After earning a master's degree in organizational leadership at Gonzaga University, Ramthun deployed as the forward air controller with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, where he became friends with fellow KU Marine Ryan Sparks, c'97. The Jayhawk officers were frontline combatants in 2010's fiercely fought Operation Moshtarak—also known as the Battle of Marjah—and Sparks went on to win the Corps' prestigious Leftwich Trophy for leadership by a Marine captain ("The Few, The Proud," issue No. 1, 2017).

"We had two KU grads in the same battalion," Ramthun says, "and Ryan was probably the best leader I ever worked with, physically, mentally. I know that KU had a lot to do with preparing him."

From the intense battlefields of southern Afghanistan, Ramthun was rewarded with a posting as Navy ROTC's executive officer at the University of Nebraska, where he found time to earn a PhD in human sciences and leadership studies.

"It had a heavy statistical focus," he says, "and I learned a lot about human behavior, teamwork and team building. I use that every single day to improve my team here, to improve myself, and I use the statistical analysis to give me an edge to understanding and making sense of data to make good judgments and informed decisions."

Mike Denning, c'83, assistant vice chancellor for KU's Office of National Defense Initiatives, president of the Association's KU Veterans Alumni Network and a retired Marine colonel, says few Marine officers are given opportunities to earn doctorates, and doing so while serving as the Marine instructor of a Navy ROTC program is exceedingly rare. He also noted that Ramthun twice wrote articles published by the Marine Corps Gazette—the first following a Harrier combat deployment, and the second after his experience as the battalion air officer in Helmand Province—both of which have been incorporated into the Corps' "lessons learned" curriculum.

"The Marine Corps is incredible, we're top notch, but that's a step above," Denning says. "Every position he's had has been stressful, and he's performed at the highest level."

Ramthun acknowledges his good fortune in becoming a protégé to another Harrier pilot, Eric Austin, then a colonel and now lieutenant general and deputy commandant for Combat Development Integration, who suggested Ramthun use



Ramthun (r, with fellow KU Marine Paul Shipley, c'07) at "Landing Zone J HAWK" during a 2010 combat tour with the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.





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Ramthun with a retired presidential helicopter, which had been in service since the Ford administration, at its June induction into the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum in College Station, Texas. "When people see the 'White Top' and its capability, that's a signal of the United States, our Constitution, our freedom," Ramthun says. "It is an extension of the brand of the United States of America."

his economics and leadership training to serve Marines being sent into battle.

"He said, 'You have a degree in economics from KU, you're an excellent pilot, you're an excellent leader, and there's great opportunity in this acquisition space," Ramthun recalls. Austin convinced him that he had the skills to improve supply systems and weapons development to ultimately benefit the entire Harrier community, adding that, if he performed well, even brighter assignments awaited. "This was the best opportunity that I was being pointed to," Ramthun says, "so I went with it and made the best of it."

Thus followed a series of assignments within Pentagon acquisition offices and even an executive fellowship program at Shell Oil in Houston, all of which led to his promotion to colonel, at which point he would be expected to lead what's known as a "military program office."

Ramthun anticipated an assignment within the Marines' aviation community, but was surprised to learn what, exactly, his superiors had in mind: the Presidential Helicopters Program Office, where he would direct the launch of Marine Squadron One's Sikorsky "Patriot"—the newest in the president's famous "white top" fleet—which last August made its

long-awaited debut by carrying President Joe Biden to Chicago's Soldier Field for the Democratic National Convention.

"I don't have a rotary background," Ramthun says, "but the way we view aviation and acquisition is, do you understand the acquisition system? Do you have the ability to lead people? Do you have the ability to effectively manage cost, schedule and performance risk for these weapons systems? I have a previous record of demonstrating ability to do that, and so one day I got the call: 'Hey, we would like you to lead this strategic, no-fail outfit.'

"I wouldn't call it a culmination of my career, but I would say it's the best opportunity out there and I'm very lucky to be a part of it. The people I work with in this program are tremendous professionals, and the mission is really, really exciting."

His oversight of acquisitions for the presidential helicopter fleet further burnishes KU Navy ROTC's reputation, yet Ramthun isn't even the only member of his own household whose career is a testament to the program's strength: He married KU Navy ROTC grad Amy Zeller Ramthun, n'02, who spent four years as a Navy nurse and is now an OB-GYN nurse practitioner in southern Maryland.

Last fall the Ramthuns trekked to

family land in southeastern Kansas to hunt white-tailed deer, a trip that filled their freezer, thanks in part to their teen daughter's five-point buck. Earlier in 2024, they attended the KU-Baylor men's basketball game, with more than hoops on the agenda.

"Our daughter was really excited about the University and wanted to learn more," Ramthun says. "We're going to come back in the spring for an official campus visit and see if we can entice her to consider potentially going to school there."

#### **TUDOR MONTAGUE**

## Artisanal coffee reflects roaster's passion for fresh experiences

by Chris Lazzarino

Artisanal coffee roaster Tudor Montague, an enrolled member of the Fort Yuma Quechan Indian Tribe, grew up on his tribe's desert reservation, 45,000 acres in southern California and Arizona. Irrigation from the lower Colorado River allows for industrial-scale agriculture, yet Quechan families rarely experience the wonders of fresh, farm-grown foods.

"I come from a rural community, and we have farming, so you'd think everything is grown fresh, but it's not accessible. It's just something we grew up *around*," Montague, c'01, says from Winterhaven, California, where he owns and operates Spirit Mountain Roasting Co., as well as a new brick-and-mortar cafe created to employ members of his Quechan community. "It was Lawrence that exposed me to farmers markets, fresh produce, fresh-crafted coffee, fresh-crafted beer."

After graduating high school as class valedictorian, Montague tried college in San Diego. The state university system's tuition rates proved "absolutely prohibitive," so he was open to options when a friend told him about Haskell Indian Nations University—in a distant, mysteri-

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ous place called Kansas—where he would pay no tuition. Moving from rural desert to a Midwestern college town with relentless winters "was a huge culture shock," Montague concedes with a laugh, but he was determined to succeed.

Making friends with Native students from across the country and learning about their cultures and customs "softened the blow" of living far from his own family and culture. Montague earned his associate's degree from Haskell, then turned to the Hill, where he knew faculty from KU-Haskell exchange programs.

"There was a good partnership in place, and I had friends who were making the transition from Haskell to KU, so it was pretty much a no-brainer for me," Montague says. He joined KU's First Nations Student Association, earned his degree in environmental studies with an emphasis on public policy, and took his first job with a

hobby held his interest as he developed his career as an environmental consultant to tribes and nonprofits in the Phoenix Valley, and he saved enough to put himself through a professional brewing school. While hatching a business plan, though, he realized that the finances of startup breweries matched his California tuition bill: prohibitive.

Montague reflected on chapters he'd read on coffee roasting while studying textbooks for craft brewing. The coffee business, he reasoned, would be far more affordable while still offering the allure of "taking a raw ingredient and creating something good, something delicious. That was still there for me with coffee."

Montague again dipped into his savings to properly educate himself, this time at a roasting school in Northern California. He bought a small roaster, tested techniques and ideas by sharing his coffee with family and friends, and quickly saw that the steep learning curve of mastering craft beer translated to coffee roasting: He got good, fast, and didn't spend a fortune.

tribe in Phoenix. Inspired by the joys he found in the craft beer community at Free State Brewing Co., Montague became a home brewer. The SPIRIT MOUNTAIN

"That's it. That's what I'm all about," Montague says of coffee's seemingly magical transformation from green beans into a rich, memorable beverage.

"It was 2015 when I made the decision: OK, if I'm going to step away from the career, there's a whole new journey ahead. So, I made the decision to move back home, to the reservation," Montague says. "If I was going to make this work, I wanted to do it here. There were a lot of obstacles to overcome, it took some time, but I built out a space and scaled up my production."

Three years later, Montague took out his first small-business loan, purchased a commercial-grade roaster, built an online presence (spiritmountainroasting.com) and began developing a wholesale customer base, including tribal communities and nonprofits across the country that feature his flavorful beans at communal events.

"Everything goes back to KU, to the farmers markets in Lawrence. Everything is fresh. You get a fresh tomato—freshly grown, freshly harvested—it's going to taste 10 times better than what you get at a supermarket. The same with coffee. Everything we do is fresh. We get orders online, I'll roast it and ship it out within the next couple of days. Anytime anybody tastes it, they're going to get something that's really, really appealing."

Along with delivering a fresh product, Montague is equally passionate about sourcing his beans. He buys from Indigenous communities or women-owned cooperatives in Central and South America, scrupulously examining business portfolios before agreeing to purchases.

"One of our taglines is 'Indigenous from seed to cup," he says. "People don't think about how much time and energy it takes to find the land, grow the coffee, care for it throughout the season, to harvest it correctly and process it correctly. And then it makes that journey and gets to the roaster, and it has to be roasted correctly, and if it's being served in a cafe, it has to be prepared correctly—all for that one cup of coffee to truly shine.

"That's a disconnect from today's society, where it's all about convenience. This is not just a random cup. It's very intentional, and that's an aspect of this coffee that people appreciate. It takes a lot of work to make it right."



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To **submit a nomination,** contact the KU Alumni Association by **March 31** at 800-584-2957 or kualumni.org



#### **1954** Nancy Landon

Kassebaum, c'54, in January was honored with the Presidential Citizens Medal from President Ioe Biden in recognition of her bipartisan public service. First elected to the U.S. Senate in 1978, she was the only woman senator when she took office and the first woman to represent Kansas. Nancy served in the Senate until her retirement in 1997.

**1956** Forrest Hoglund, e'56, a former KU baseball player, in April will receive the College Baseball Foundation's George H.W. Bush Distinguished Alumnus Award. A longtime executive in the oil and gas industry, Forrest is currently chairman and CEO of SeaOne Holdings, an energy technology, infrastructure and logistics company. Among his many KU gifts is Hoglund Ballpark, home of KU baseball. Forrest and his wife, Sally Roney Hoglund, c'56, live in Dallas.

**1962** Kelly Rankin, d'62, EdD'75, a former KU track and field athlete and baseball player, in October was inducted into the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame. He served as head track and field starter for three U.S. Olympic Trials, 10 NCAA Championships and 71 NAIA Championships, and is the only American

to serve as head starter for two Olympic Games, in Los Angeles in 1984 and Atlanta in 1996. Kelly and his wife, Janice Cook Rankin, n'61. are retired and live in Vancouver, Washington.

**1965** Merlin Larson, m'65, wrote the book A Practical Guide to Portable Pupillometry, published in November by Cambridge University Press. He is a pioneer in the use of pupil evaluation in anesthesia, perioperative care and emergency medicine, and professor emeritus in the school of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco.

#### 1966 David Sivright Jr.,

b'66, l'69, in September was inducted into the Clinton County, Iowa, Walk of Fame in recognition of his professional achievements and community service. He retired in 2012 after 20 years as an Iowa district court judge.

**1972** Chris Gale, a'72, an architect who specializes in medical planning, is principal at Gale Studio in St. Louis.

**1973** John, c'73, and Nancy Fuller Kaufman, d'73, live in San Angelo, Texas, where John is the city's water utilities director. Nancy is retired as a customer service

representative for United Airlines.

**1977** Ted Beaumont, g'77, received the 2025 Michel T. Halbouty Outstanding Leadership Award from the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. He is a past president of the organization and an independent petroleum geologist based in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**David Fuston,** b'77, g'80, is a managing principal at Apps Associates. He and his wife, Michele Simmons, j'77, live in Kyle, Texas.

John Hendel, j'77, wrote The Ethical Bookie, his first novel, published in November. He previously worked for United Press International in Kansas City, Dallas and Washington, D.C. John and his wife, Caitlin Goodwin Hendel, j'80, live in Overland Park.

#### 1978 Leslie "Fritz"

Krusen, e'78, lives in Anchorage, Alaska, where he is retired as vice president of liquid natural gas at Alaska Gasline Development Corp. and was previously chief facilities engineer at ConocoPhillips.

#### **1979** LaDonna Hale

Curzon, j'79, is retired and lives on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, where she enjoys writing,

boating and fishing with her husband, Elliott.

Scott Gyllenborg, c'79, l'88, is president of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association for 2025. He is a partner at Gyllenborg & Brown, a criminal defense law firm in Overland Park. Christina Dunn Gyllenborg, b'91, l'94, is a Johnson County District Court judge. She and Scott have four children: Grace, c'23, a student in the School of Medicine; Caroline, a School of Nursing student; John Michael; and Catherine, a freshman at KU.

#### Debbie Foltz Nordling,

d'79, was honored by the Delta Lambda chapter of Beta Sigma Phi as its 2024 Woman of the Year. She has been an insurance agent in Hugoton for 33 years and is a longtime community volunteer, lending her efforts to the local food bank and the revival of Hugoton's old movie theatre, among many other initiatives. Debbie and her husband, Erick. c'79. recently celebrated their 46th wedding anniversary.

#### Diane Schmidt Parrish,

1'79, wrote Something Better, her first novel, published in October. She and her husband, Steven, live in Connecticut and have two adult children.

Jeffrey, c'79, and Anita Johnson Wesche, d'81, live in Raleigh, North Carolina.

#### School codes

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

- Master's degree
- School of Health Professions
- School of Journalism
- School of Law
- m School of Medicine
- n School of Nursing School of Pharmacy
- **PharmD** School of Pharmacy
  - s School of Social Welfare
- **AUD** Doctor of Audiology **DE** Doctor of Engineering **DMA** Doctor of Musical Arts

School of Music

- **DNAP** Doctor of Nursing Anesthesia Practice
- **DNP** Doctor of Nursing Practice
- 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



Jeffrey recently retired as director of planning and logistics at LifeNet Health, and Anita is a retired teacher.

**1980** Mark Gauert, c'80, g'82, is executive director of magazines at the South Florida Sun Sentinel. In 2024 his column and travel writing received first-place honors from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists, the Society of Professional Journalists' "Green Eyeshade" Awards and the Florida Press Club. Mark and his wife, Cecile, have two adult children.

**Allen Heinemann,** g'80, PhD'82, in November received the 2024 Gold Key Award from the American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine, the organization's highest honor. Allen is director of the Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research, part of the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab in Chicago, and a professor in the school of medicine at Northwestern University.

Rick Renfro, '80, in May will be inducted into the Lawrence Business Hall of Fame. He owns Johnny's Tavern, which has 13 locations in Kansas and Missouri, and J. Wilson's restaurant in Lawrence.

**Stan Whitaker,** d'80, in December retired as a judge for New Mexico's 2nd Judicial District Court, where he served for 18 years.

#### 1981 Patricia Macke

**Dick,** l'81, in January retired as chief judge for Kansas' 27th

Judicial District, where she served for 36 years.

#### 1982 Bruce Underwood,

g'82, a preventive care specialist, founded and owns Healthy Futures Inc. in Indian Wells, California.

**1983 Doug Amend,** b'83, is the minister at Galva Christian Church in Galva.

Mike Denning, c'83, in January was promoted to assistant vice chancellor for national defense initiatives at KU, where he leads the new Office of National Defense Initiatives. A retired U.S. Marine Corps colonel, he was previously director of the Office of Graduate Military Programs at the University and is president of the KU Veterans Alumni Network.

**Bill Raack,** j'83, is communications manager at St. Louis Community College. He and his wife, Kim, live in Kirkwood, Missouri, and have two children.

#### 1984 Leroy Armstrong

Jr., e'84, is executive director of the Clamp Center for Preaching Excellence, part of the Clamp Divinity School at Anderson University. He and his wife, Genena, live in McKinney, Texas, and have three adult children. They welcomed their first grandchild last April.

Jeff Sigler, p'84, PharmD'12, in May will be inducted into the Lawrence Business Hall of Fame. He founded and owns Sigler Pharmacy, which has two locations in Lawrence and one in Lenexa.

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in-law or step adult children. Subject to availability. Discounts cannot be combined with any other offer or discount. Further restriction may apply.

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup>A Short-Term Stay discount is only applicable to new residents of a Brookdale assisted living or memory care community admitting under an executed respite agreement. Discount applies to the daily rate.



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For the latest dates and detailed trip descriptions, go to kualumni.org/travel or call 800-584-2957. Trip dates are subject to change.



#### 1985 Sherris Hill Bellamy,

g'85, g'99, is retired as a nurse practitioner at Children's Mercy Hospitals & Clinic. She lives in Olathe.

**Gretchen Day-Bryant,** j'85, in December was named executive editor at the South Florida Sun Sentinel. She has worked at the newspaper for over 30 years. Gretchen and her husband, Steve, live in Fort Lauderdale and have two adult children.

**Devin Scillian,** j'85, in December retired from WDIV-TV in Detroit, where he anchored the evening news for 28 years.

**Scott Smith,** c'85, wrote Blue Sky Reckoning, his third Western novel, published in December. The book is the fifth in the "Corrigan Brothers" series started by his late father, acclaimed Western author Cotton Smith, j'62.

Scott and his wife, Cindy, live in Lawrence.

**1986** Bill Britain, b'86, in September was promoted to CEO of BBG Real Estate Services.

**Michael Hegarty,** l'86, in January retired after 19 years as a federal judge in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado.

**1987** Dave Bellon, b'87, in March 2024 retired from the U.S. Marine Corps as a three-star lieutenant general and commander of both the Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces South. In September he joined the private equity firm Global Frontier Capital as a partner.

**Brenda McFadden,** b'87, owner of the McFadden Group accounting firm in

Lawrence, in May will be inducted into the Lawrence Business Hall of Fame.

#### **1988** John Montgomery,

j'88, g'91, is owner and CEO of Issue Media Group, a network of digital publications. He and his wife, **Dia Noel Montgomery**, c'91, j'91, live in Valparaiso, Indiana.

#### 1990 Derek Schmidt.

j'90, SJD'16, in November was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, where he represents Kansas' 2nd Congressional District. He took office Jan. 3.

**Paul White,** c'90, wrote the book *Cooperstown's Back Door:* A History of Negro Leaguers in the Baseball Hall of Fame, published in November. He is a baseball historian and researcher and writes the news-

letter "Lost in Left Field." He is retired from a 33-year career in the insurance industry.

Joel Zeff, j'90, wrote the book Make the Right Choice: Lead with Passion, Elevate Your Team, and Unleash the Fun at Work, published in November. He is a consultant, comedian and longtime keynote speaker who has led corporate events for companies such as McDonald's, Microsoft and Walmart.

#### 1991 Kathleen Kastner,

j'91, g'96, is author of the "Karma Cats" children's book series. Her latest, *Karma Cats Kitten Adventure*, was published in November. She and her husband, Wade Mortenson, live in Encinitas, California.

**Lisa Nodar Ragan,** c'91, owns Safely Delicious, a brand of snack products that are free



of common food allergens. She founded the company in 2015.

**Michael Thacker,** e'91, g'93, is senior vice president of engineering and technology at Pratt & Whitney, an aerospace manufacturer.

#### 1992 Lisa Howell Burch,

c'92, in October was elected to KU Endowment's board of trustees. She lives in Lantana, Texas, and throughout her career has held several leadership roles at global biotechnology and life sciences companies.

**Lori Calcara,** j'92, is a pharmaceutical sales representative for Millicent Pharma and specializes in women's health.

Justin Green, PhD'92, m'94, a general surgeon and urgent care physician, in November joined Medical Associates of Northern New Mexico in Los Alamos.

**Grant Kaufman,** c'92, is vice president and chief information officer at Yarco Property Management.

**David Staker,** b'92, l'95, executive adviser to packaging manufacturer PPC Flex, in November was appointed to Academy Bank's board of directors.

**1993** Jack Epps, l'93, is a partner at Foulston Siefkin. He is based in the law firm's Kansas City office.

#### Pam Kitarogers Evans,

j'93, directs marketing and development at the Family Service & Guidance Center in Topeka.

**Jessica Folkart,** g'93, PhD'98, is professor of Spanish and chair of the department of modern and classical languages and literatures at Virginia Tech.

**Michael Foulston**, c'93, is a client solutions specialist at Integra Solutions, which develops software for the mortgage industry.

**Jerry Irvine,** e'93, g'99, in December joined the engineering firm Garver as leader of its Missouri transportation practice.

Sean Kentch, c'93, a retired U.S. Navy intelligence officer, is an assistant professor at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth and a lecturer in KU's political science department. He and his wife, Alison, live in Lawrence.

**Rod Lacy**, e'93, g'07, in November was named vice president of U.S. operations at Exodigo, a mapping technology company.

Roberta, f'93, g'09, and Julie Woodrick, assoc., retired in July 2023 from KU Libraries. Roberta was general collections conservator at the Spencer Research Library, and Julie was head of collections maintenance at Watson Library. They live in Madison, Wisconsin.

#### **1994** Peter Johnston, *c*'94,

l'97, an attorney at the law firm Clark, Mize & Linville in Salina, in October was elected to KU Endowment's board of trustees. Last June he concluded his service on the Alumni Association's Board of Directors.

#### Samantha Berg Kopek,

c'94, is a senior adviser at White Sand Wealth Management in Liberty, Missouri.

#### 1995 Megan Brackney,

c'95, l'98, a partner at the law firm Kostelanetz in New York City, is chair-elect of the American Bar Association's tax section for 2025-'26.

#### Amber Wunder Lucas,

PharmD'95, is vice president of pharmacy operations at QuVa Pharma.

Robert Martin, EdD'95, received the National Humanities Medal from President Joe Biden in recognition of his contributions to Indigenous higher education. He was honored at an October ceremony at the White House. A member of the Cherokee Nation, Robert is president of the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and was previously president of Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence.

**Dustin Newman,** c'95, is general manager at Topeka Country Club.

#### **1996** Jarrod Nichols,

b'96, is managing director for the sports and outdoors business unit at Ainstein, a Lawrence-based technology company.

**Steffen Shamburg,** m'96, is a family physician at Stormont Vail Health's Manhattan Campus.

**Tiffany Crawford Zook,** c'96, a pediatric nurse practi-

tioner, owns Holistic Home Pediatrics in Phoenix.

#### **1997** Sam Beckman, g'97,

in December was promoted to president and principal leader at ACI Boland Architects. He has worked at the firm since 2002.

**Rick Couldry,** g'97, vice president of pharmacy and health professions at The University of Kansas Health System, in January was honored by the School of Pharmacy with its 2025 Distinguished Graduate Award.

**Jodi Fakler,** d'97, teaches language arts and creative writing at Beatrice Middle School in Beatrice, Nebraska.

**Bo Ferguson,** g'97, is Durham, North Carolina, city manager.

Daniel Gedman, i'97, and Matt Smith, c'98, recently launched Highway 10, a film financing and production company that will operate in Los Angeles and Kansas City, their hometown. Daniel, a commercial and music video director and producer, and Matt, a film producer whose credits include Disney's "Maleficent," named the company as a nod to K-10, a highway connecting Greater Kansas City to Lawrence, which both traveled to attend KU. Highway 10's first film, "The Saviors," is in production.

**Pete Getz,** d'97, is director of expansion and program development at Method Schools, an online K-12 public school in



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Workgroup Printers & Scanners California. He lives in Valencia, California, with his wife, Jenni, and son, Ryan. His daughter, Taylor, is a junior at KU.

Micah Laaker, f'97, in November joined the San Francisco-based startup Across AI as head of product design. He previously worked 12 years in user experience at Google. Micah and his wife, Carrie Patton Laaker, j'99, live in Mountain View, California, and have two sons.

**Stephanie Morrell,** c'97, l'00, is a circuit judge for Missouri's 13th Judicial Circuit.

**Denise Tyler,** g'97, is a research scientist at the Scripps Gerontology Center at Miami University in Ohio.

#### 1998 Charles Barland,

DMA'98, is professor of music and university organist at the University of Dubuque in Iowa.

Tim Burnett, c'98, PhD'02, in November was named dean of the school of science and mathematics at Emporia State University, where he has been on the faculty for 22 years.

Patricia Powell Ford, c'98, is an adolescent and family therapist at Pathways Transition Programs in Decatur, Georgia.

**Jeff Francis,** c'98, in October was named vice president of sales at Orasis Pharmaceuticals.

## Michelle Johannsmeyer, e'98, is director of program management at Textron eAviation in Wichita.

Tomas Stargardter, j'98, a photojournalist, in November was named editor-in-chief of the European Pressphoto Agency, headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany.

**1999** Sylvain Bouix, g'99, is professor of software engi-

neering at École de Technologie Supérieure in Montreal.

**Ben Seep,** e'99, is vice president and senior acoustical consultant at Wave Engineering, a Colorado-based firm that specializes in acoustics and noise and vibration control.

**Rachel Smith,** g'99, l'99, is an attorney and owns Injury Law Associates in Kansas City. She founded the firm in 2005.

**Joel Welch,** *c*'99, is a deputy office director in the office of pharmaceutical quality at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. He lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

#### 2000 Ellyn Smith Lester,

j'00, g'02, is assistant dean of construction and architecture at the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

**2001** Noel Anderson, j'01, chief sustainability officer at the American Red Cross, in September was honored with the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award at Sustainability Magazine's Global Sustainability Awards in London. He has worked at the American Red Cross since 2006.

**Mike Hauswirth,** g'01, in December joined Associated Bank as senior vice president and relationship manager in the Minnesota market.

**Brad LaForge,** l'01, is a partner at Hite, Fanning & Honeyman, a litigation and business law firm in Wichita.

**Brandon Nott,** b'01, g'02, is chief product officer at IntelePeer, a communications technology company.

**Juli Scott Schultz,** s'01, g'03, is a social worker for Olathe Public Schools.

**Kevin Sprott,** PhD'01, in January was named chief

operating officer at Peptone, a biotechnology company.

**2002 Karen Bray,** e'02, in January was promoted to general manager for the south-central region at Burns & McDonnell. She has worked at the engineering, architecture and construction firm since 2002 and is based in its Houston office.

Julie Kellogg Breithaupt, j'02, is internal communications manager at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City.

**2003 Mahalley Allen**, g'03, PhD'05, is vice provost for faculty affairs and success at California State University, Chico. She and her husband, Cory, and son, Ethan, live in Chico.

**Patrick Brady,** PharmD'03, is global head of therapeutic innovation and regulatory strategy at IQVIA, a health information technology and clinical research company. He lives in the Washington, D.C., region.

**Evan Fox,** a'03, principal architect at JE Dunn Construction, in September was named president-elect of the Kansas City chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

**Chris Raine**, c'03, g'09, is an editor at Energy Intelligence News and oversees the publication's coverage of the Western Hemisphere. He lives in Houston.

Sarah Scott Warner, c'03, in November was chosen by the Kansas Supreme Court to serve as chief judge of the 14-judge Kansas Court of Appeals. She has been a Court of Appeals judge since 2019 and assumed her new role in January.

**Brett Williams,** g'03, in November was promoted to senior vice president of engineering and certification at Mid-Continent Instruments and Avionics and True Blue Power.

**2004** Tim Leopold, f'04, is a New York City-based trumpeter. He performs in several ensembles and has played in Broadway productions of "Chicago" and "Finding Neverland."

#### 2005 Aaron Cowley,

PhD'05, is chief scientific officer at ReciBioPharm.

**Lisa Lewin,** c'05, is director of prime services at BNY Pershing, a financial services company.

**Lisa Schmitz,** g'05, is a communications specialist for Iowa State University's news service.

**2006 Ty Beaver,** c'06, j'06, is a reporter at the Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business in Kennewick, Washington.

**Tom England,** c'06, is vice president of sales and marketing at Alphapointe, a nonprofit that provides employment opportunities and resources for people who are blind or visually impaired.

Miles Garrett, c'06, a nuclear propulsion officer in the U.S. Navy, wrote the book Executive Leadership: A Warfighter's Perspective, published in November. He and his wife, Leann, live in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**Meredith Hauck,** j'06, g'08, is co-founder and a partner at EverStrive Solutions, an Overland Park-based consulting firm that works with public sector organizations.

Alison Mize Hiatt, n'06, g'13, is a nurse practitioner



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at the Tammy Walker Cancer Center in Salina. In November she performed in a Salina Symphony concert as the featured dancer in the satirical ballet "The Seven Deadly Sins," which she also choreographed.

**Neil Spector,** c'06, teaches English at Carl Sandburg Middle School in Mundelein, Illinois.

**Eric Thomson,** m'06, practices family medicine at Caldwell Regional Medical Center in Caldwell.

#### **2007** Kate Eichten Cooley,

c'07, in October was named deputy director of the League of Kansas Municipalities. She has worked for the organization since 2008.

**Scott Goldstein,** b'07, is vice president of product management for the foot and ankle division of Medline Industries.

**Jacob McKee,** c'07, g'11, is national deputy director of improvement at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Theresa Mucelli,** f'07, owns Ardently, a women's clothing boutique in St. Louis.

**Kyle Olberding,** b'07, is director of purchasing at SPEC Building Materials.

**Christopher Stachura**, c'07, is a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosives officer in the U.S. Army.

**2008 Breck Besserer,** c'08, in October joined Citadel Partners, a real estate advisory firm, as a senior adviser in its Fort Worth, Texas, office.

**Dustin Bradley,** l'08, a personal injury attorney, is a partner at Bradley & Loggin in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Jason Gibson,** e'08, in January was promoted to associate principal at Apex Engineers.

**Bailey Harberg Placzek,** 

c'08, f'08, is curator of collections and a research and project manager at the Clyfford Still Museum in Denver.

#### Sonia Santos Spinks,

g'08, in December was named director of strategic campus partnerships at the University of Arkansas.

Laura Albert Wilons, d'08, g'10, in October was honored as the 2024 Tennessee Gifted Teacher of the Year by the Tennessee Association for the Gifted. She teaches at Grahamwood Elementary in Memphis.

#### 2009 Megan Connerly,

g'09, PhD'14, wrote and illustrated *Otis and His Amazing Superpower*, a children's book about neurodiversity, published in October. She is a visiting associate professor in the education department at Worcester State University in Massachusetts.

#### Hailee Jones Hamby,

c'09, j'09, is vice president of human resources at Larksfield Place Retirement Communities in Wichita.

**2010 Beth Davis**, g'10, is vice president of public relations, content and social media at Meyocks, a branding and marketing agency. She and her husband live in New Orleans.

**Abhishek Ray,** m'10, is a neurological surgeon at University Hospitals in Ohio and assistant professor of neurological surgery at Case Western Reserve University.

#### 2011 Elizabeth Stephens

Constance, m'11, is director of fertility preservation and LGBTQ+ health services at the Heartland Center for Reproductive Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska. She is

also an assistant professor at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

Mason Heilman, c'11, d'11, in October joined the materials science company Avery Dennison as senior manager of government affairs for North America. He lives in Washington, D.C.

#### Cassie Post Prilliman,

b'11, g'13, is tax and accounting manager at Kindred CPA in Lawrence.

**Greg Thorne,** I'11, is director of user education at Everlaw, which develops software for law firms.

#### 2012 Isaac Boone,

PharmD'12, is director of pharmacy at Greenwood County Hospital in Eureka and a pharmacist at Eureka Pharmacy. In November he was honored with the 2024 Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser Award from the Kansas Heartland chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Isaac and his wife, **Heidi Stever Boone**, c'11, have three children, Brylee, Asher and Emory.

**Staci Allen Chapman,** c'12, j'12, in October was promoted to director of specialty customer success at Bullhorn, which develops software for the staffing industry.

Kaylin Carter Dillon, c'12, c'13, g'15, is a financial adviser and owns Kaylin Dillon Financial Planning. She lives in Lawrence with her husband, Grayson, and their daughter.

**Dawn Munger,** g'12, is curator of collections at the Riley County Historical Museum in Manhattan.

**Brook Gorthy Plato,** d'12, is a registered nurse with PRN Healthcare. She and her husband, **Nick,** c'12, live in Over-

land Park and have four sons, Baker, Beau, Banks and Beck.

**Diana Restrepo-Osorio,** c'12, g'15, PhD'21, is a physical scientist at the U.S. Geological Survey and works in the agency's water resources mission area.

**Steve Roels,** g'12, is a conservation biologist with the American Bird Conservancy and directs the organization's Kirtland's warbler program.

**Hope Stein,** c'12, is a senior endpoint adjudication specialist at Syneos Health, a biopharmaceutical research company. She lives in Wichita.

**Caitlin Workman,** a'12, is a creative director at the advertising agency VML. She lives in New York City.

#### 2013 Alicia Johnson-

**Turner**, g'13, is chief of staff at the software development company Niantic. She lives in Lawrence with her husband, Clint, and son, Jaxon.

**Hayley Rosenberg,** c'13, is manager of development events at the Holocaust Museum Houston.

#### 2014 Katie Constant-Coup,

e'14, g'16, is associate director of aeronautics research at Crown Consulting Inc. She and her husband, Mark, live in Shawnee.

**Emma Fahrlander,** c'14, is a strategic communications specialist at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

**Kyle Lockhause,** c'14, g'19, is vice president of development and business development at Sunraycer Renewables, which leads renewable energy projects throughout the U.S. He lives in Bentonville, Arkansas, with his wife, **Julia Nehring Lockhause**,

c'14, and their son, Lawrence,



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whom the couple named after the city where they met.

Alex Muninger, d'14, teaches fourth grade at Cottonwood Point Elementary in Overland Park.

**Sean Robinson,** b'14, is private client vice president at Brush Creek Select, an insurance agency based in Prairie Village.

**Sebastian Sanchez,** c'14, g'17, is a finance analyst for The Nature Conservancy. He lives in Salt Lake City.

#### 2015 Ana Khanlari.

PhD'15, is solution marketing director for chemicals at Aspen Technology, which develops software for industrial facilities. **Cole Lindbergh,** c'15, is a senior enablement manager at ChowNow, an online ordering platform for restaurants. He is the reigning U.S. Air Guitar champion and in August placed fifth in the 2024 Air Guitar World Championships in Finland. He lives in Kansas City.

**Hugo Macias Jr.,** g'15, teaches and coaches speech and debate at Williams High School in Plano, Texas.

**Kiley Quint,** j'15, is a recruiter for the beverage company Poppi. She lives in Austin, Texas.

**2016** Clarissa Bates, c'16, lives in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where she is a speech-language pathologist at Possibilities

Northeast, a pediatric outpatient clinic, and also works for the U.S. Social Security Administration and the state conducting disability speech-language evaluations.

Audrey Danser, e'16, owns the clothes-mending business Salvage Studio, which she founded in 2021. She repairs denim, sweaters and other garments and teaches local mending workshops in San Francisco, where she lives.

**Shelby Davis,** c'16, is a personal banker at Coastal Community Bank in Everett, Washington.

**Jacob Morgan,** m'16, a cardiologist, in September joined the DeBakey Heart Institute at Hays Medical Center in Hays.

Matt Pospiech, c'16, lives in Chicago, where he co-owns Loud Mouth Kitchen, a popup restaurant, and is general manager at The Piggery.

**Kip Randall,** l'16, is a partner at Husch Blackwell. He is based in the law firm's Kansas City office.

**2017 Drew Buffkin,** a'17, lives in New York City, where he is an associate design director at Momentum Worldwide, an experiential marketing agency.

**Anna-Therese Fowler,** a'17, c'17, is lead product designer at Defense Unicorns, which develops software for national security systems.

# PROUD PARTNER OF KANSAS ATHLETICS





Wilson Hack, e'17, is head of product and customer success at Redflag AI. He and his wife, Rylee Fuerst Hack, b'17, g'18, live in the Pacific Northwest.

Kassandra Knoff, c'17, is an assistant attorney general in the Northern Mariana Islands, a U.S. commonwealth comprising 14 islands in the western Pacific Ocean.

#### **2018** Elizabeth Boeder.

j'18, manages digital partnerships and partnership strategy for the Chicago White Sox.

Jenn Edginton, g'18, in December was named director of the Illinois State Museum in Springfield.

Christina Highsmith, c'18, directs marketing and communications at Bethany College in Lindsborg.

**2019** Amanda Apato, p'19, PharmD'21, is an emergency medicine pharmacist at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

**Ethan Belshe,** c'19, g'23, g'23, is deputy chief of staff for governmental affairs for Gov. Laura Kelly.

Jackson Dodd, i'19, lives in Mission, where he is a social media copywriter and community manager at Walz Tetrick Advertising.

Shaun Goodwin, j'19, covers Boise State University athletics for the Idaho Statesman.

Dayton Hammes, d'19, i'19, is director of social media, NIL and student-athlete branding for Illinois State University Athletics.

William Jones, m'19, is a pediatrician at the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas' Iola clinic.

Rute Cartaxo Muniz, '19, teaches English in Recife, Brazil.

#### 2020 Miranda Doores.

c'20, is an artist and uses dried leaves as the canvas for her nature-inspired acrylic paintings. She sells her work through her online shop, Brushed Botany.

Kylee Gullion, c'20, is a grant analyst at the engineering firm HDR.

Brecken Petty, c'20, is an associate attorney at Akin in the law firm's environment and natural resources practice in Washington, D.C.

**2021** Josh Bahr. m'21. practices family medicine at Ellsworth County Medical Center in Ellsworth.

Brooke Flucke, b'21, l'24, in September joined Stinson as an associate attorney in the law firm's corporate finance practice. She works in the firm's Wichita office.

Sam Hilger, b'21, lives in Independence, where he is a financial adviser at Edward Jones.

James Melson, g'21, is a U.S. Army ROTC instructor at Pittsburg State University.





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**Michelle Park**, g'21, is a therapist at Live Oak Mental Health Therapy Center in Charleston, South Carolina.

Madelyn Seley, j'21, is an attorney at DeVaughn James Injury Lawyers. She works in the firm's Kansas City office.

**Tezbah Smiley,** g'21, is a senior student recruitment coordinator at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

**Kate Wilkerson,** b'21, is a marketing strategist at Burns & McDonnell in Kansas City.

**2022 Bhroovi Gupta,** a'22, is a user-experience product designer for the streaming platform Roku and freelances as a user-experience production designer for Google. She lives in New York City.

**Emily Johnson,** j'22, is an investigative reporter at WCSC-TV Live 5 News in Charleston, South Carolina.

**Haylee McGovern,** c'22, is an executive recruiter at Favorite Healthcare Staffing in Overland Park.

**Sharmine Othman,** e'22, is a reservoir engineer at ExxonMobil in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

**Brenna Phillips,** c'22, is an instructor at Heinze Dance Academy in Quincy, Illinois.

**Michael Tuttle,** l'22, is legal counsel at Dechra, a veterinary pharmaceuticals company. He lives in Kansas City.



**2023** Brian Bertoni, b'23, is a website marketer at EducationDynamics. He lives in Darien, Illinois.

Karsh Bhatt, g'23, is an assistant engineer at Turner Construction Co. and part of the company's team working on the renovation of David Booth Kansas Memorial Stadium.

**Caroline Sharp,** c'23, is health policy adviser to Gov. Laura Kelly.

**2024** Issy Bleakley, a'24, is a product designer at Simple Modern, a drinkware company. She lives in Oklahoma City.

**LaToria Campbell,** c'24, teaches English in Shanghai.

**Max Cinnamon,** b'24, is an investment assistant at SA Piggush Business & Retirement Planning in Bourbonnais, Illinois.

**Sam Crowley,** l'24, a lieutenant junior grade in the U.S. Navy, serves as a U.S. Navy judge advocate.

**Carsten Holm,** PhD'24, is director of partnerships and engagement at Rutgers University-Newark. He and his wife, **Anne Wallen,** c'03, live in Metuchen, New Jersey, with their son.

**Siena Meyrer,** d'24, teaches second grade at Merriam Park Elementary School in Merriam.

**Huyen Nguyen**, e'24, is a software development engineer at Amazon Robotics in the Boston metropolitan area.

**Jakob Richardson,** e'24, is a systems engineer at Northrop Grumman, an aerospace and defense company, at its Redondo Beach, California, location.

**Jacob Stone,** b'24, is an investment operations manager at Creative Planning, a financial advisory firm based in Overland Park.

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#### 1940s Mary Louise

**Dillenback Davis,** c'44, Topeka, 102, Aug. 27. Mary Louise worked in the travel industry and was a longtime volunteer in Topeka. Her husband, Norman, '37, preceded her in death.

Margaret Lenahan, '49, Tonganoxie, 98, Oct. 28. Margaret was head of the virology laboratory at KU Medical Center, where she worked for her entire career.

William Lowenstein, b'48, Leawood, 97, July 30. Bill, a U.S. Navy veteran, was a leader in the Kansas City Jewish community and a noted philanthropist. His wife, Barbara, survives.

#### 1950s Sondra Updike

**Alden,** d'57, Olathe, 88, Nov. 28. Sondra taught at Emporia State University and was later director of the Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum in Chanute.

**Jack Bertoglio,** '58, Jacksonville, Florida, 89, April 11, 2024. He is survived by his wife, Sandra.

Gerald Blatherwick, j'58, Vero Beach, Florida, 88, Dec. 23. Jerry, a U.S. Navy veteran, worked in telecommunications for many years, primarily at Southwestern Bell. He is survived by his wife, Anne Taylor Blatherwick, d'60.

Heywood "Woody" Davis, c'52, l'58, Prairie Village, 93, Dec. 7. Woody served in the U.S. Navy and later practiced law in Kansas City for over 50 years. His wife, Louise Swigart Davis, f'53, g'60, preceded him in death.

**Paul Dillon,** b'50, Hutchinson, 97, July 18. Paul, a U.S. Navy veteran, was secretary-treasurer of Dillons grocery stores. His wife, Ruth, assoc., preceded him in death.

**Charles Garney,** b'53, Kansas City, 92, Nov. 13. Charles, a U.S. Navy veteran, founded Garney Construction and was a property developer. He is survived by his wife, Patricia.

**Dale Griswold,** c'51, m'53, Newton, 96, May 5, 2024. Dale, a U.S. Army veteran, practiced medicine at Axtell Clinic in Newton. His first wife, Eleanor Brown Griswold, f'47, preceded him in death. He is survived by his second wife, Connie.

Jerry Hannah, c'52, l'56, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 94, Dec. 8. Jerry, a U.S. Air Force veteran, practiced law for many years and served as an assistant U.S. attorney and U.S. magistrate judge.

Lorene Roberts Hawk, '59, Gladstone, Missouri, 87, April 27, 2024. Lorene worked at Hughes Aircraft Co. and later at a community college. Her husband, Marion, e'59, preceded her in death.

**Eugene Herkins,** '50, Naples, Florida, 98, Aug. 1, 2023.

Coe Carter Kindig, '58, Overland Park, 88, June 12; and Jerry Kindig, e'56, Overland Park, 90, Aug. 27. Coe was a flight attendant and longtime community volunteer. Jerry served in the U.S. Marine Corps and founded an engineering firm in Merriam.

Ray Lawrence, b'53, Houston, 92, Dec. 27, 2023. Ray, a U.S. Air Force veteran, was an international business consultant and later worked in economic development. He is survived by his wife, Loo Einarsson.

Lynn "Mac" McDougal, c'54, El Cajon, California, 92, May 30, 2024. Mac, a U.S. military veteran, was El Cajon city attorney for 38 years. He is survived by his wife, Anne.

#### Janice Wanamaker

McKinnis, d'59, Escondido, California, 87, Dec. 11. Janice was a music educator in San Diego schools and a children's choir director. Her husband, Craig, e'60, g'61, survives.

Jappy Rau Meyer, c'52, Lenexa, 92, May 22, 2024. Her husband, Stan, survives.

Claude "Bud" Moore, c'51, Scottsdale, Arizona, 95, March 9, 2024. Bud worked at General Motors for 40 years, retiring as vice president of sales. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Smart Moore, '51.

Margaret Fisher O'Neill, d'52, Prairie Village, 93, May 18, 2024. Margie was a docent at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art for many years. Her husband, Richard, c'50, preceded her in death.

James Paddock, c'51, l'56, Lawrence, 96, Aug. 31. James, a U.S. Air Force veteran, served as a judge for Kansas' 7th Judicial District for over 20 years and was later a Kansas Court of Appeals senior judge. His wife, Ruth, preceded him in death.

Thomas Pott, a'57, Prairie Village, 89, May 9, 2024. Tom, a former KU track athlete, practiced architecture in Wichita his entire career. His wife, Kathleen Eisenbise Pott, c'57, preceded him in death.

Laurance "Bud" Price Jr., c'55, m'59, Lawrence, 90, May 28, 2024. Bud, a U.S. Army veteran, was a pathologist and hospital chief of staff. He is survived by his wife, Johanna Houlton Price, f'56.

**Ruth Palmgren Rinker,** c'59, Edina, Minnesota, 86, June 19. Ruth was a respiratory therapist. She is survived by her husband, David, e'60.

Mark Rivard, b'53, Leawood, 93, Dec. 19. Mark, a former KU men's basketball player, ran Rivard Power Lift alongside his father. His wife, Jadeen Scott Rivard, '55, preceded him in death.

**Theodore Rohde,** b'57, Fort Scott, 94, May 17, 2024. Ted, a U.S. Army veteran, played football at KU and later worked in business. He is survived by his companion, Carla Farmer.

**Stewart Shepherd,** a'58, Kansas City, 94, Jan. 5. His wife, Rosie, preceded him in death.

**Philip Shoemaker**, c'58, Raleigh, North Carolina, 87, April 8, 2024. Philip served in the U.S. Navy as a flight officer and later a dental officer. He was an oral surgeon in private practice for many years. He is survived by his wife, Cicely.

John Simons, c'54, Brainerd, Minnesota, 91, June 3. John, a plastic surgeon, was chair of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Mayo Clinic and later opened a private practice.

John Stewart III, b'58, Lawrence, 88, Dec. 6. John was CEO of Plessey Aero Precision Corp. and also worked in banking and real estate. He was a past president of the Alumni Association and former KU Endowment chair. He received the Fred Ellsworth Medallion, for service to KU, in 1978 and KU's Distinguished Service Citation, for service to humanity, in 1990. John was recently recognized by KU Endowment as the longest consecutive donor to KU, with 73 years of giving. He is survived by his wife, Linda Bliss Stewart, '60.

Charles Studt, b'59, Hutchinson, 86, Jan. 3, 2024. Charles served in the U.S. Army and later worked as a CPA for over 40 years. He is survived by his wife, Patsy. **Leroy Tobler,** e'58, Denver, 95, Dec. 30. Leroy, a U.S. military veteran, was a civil engineer. His wife, Letha, preceded him in death.

Ronald Wilson, e'59, Lee's Summit, Missouri, 90, July 28. Ron served in the U.S. National Guard. He worked at General Electric and was later president of an electric supply company. He is survived by his wife, Beryl.

Lawrence Wright, b'58, Middleburg, Virginia, 87, May 4, 2024. Larry served in the U.S. Navy for many years, primarily in intelligence, and was a senior partner at a consulting firm.

Mary Ruth Purcell Yulich, n'56, g'83, Sabetha, 91, Jan. 12. Mary Ruth was a nurse, hospital executive and president of the Kansas State Nurses Association. Her first husband, John Yulich, c'55, m'59, and second husband, Marvin Rannabargar, preceded her in death.

#### **1960s** John Armstrong II,

c'62, m'66, Bozeman, Montana, 85, July 22. John was a physician and specialized in chest and lung radiology. His wife, Lois French Armstrong, n'60, preceded him in death.

John Casterman, f'65, Redwood City, California, 82, Feb. 19, 2024. John, a decorated U.S. Army veteran, designed the well-known Blackhorse insignia of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, in which he served. He is survived by his wife, Carol.

Marshall Crowther, l'65, Lawrence, 86, June 1. Marshall served in the U.S. Army Reserve. He was an attorney and worked for the state of Kansas for over 44 years. He is survived by his wife, Sandee Garvey Crowther, d'64, g'69, EdD'77.

Dennis Daugherty, c'64,

d'65, Utica, New York, 84, May 2, 2024. Dennis worked in business administration, advertising and publishing.

Larry Dike, c'61, Santa Clara, California, 86, Oct. 17. Larry worked at Lockheed Martin for nearly 40 years. His wife, Delores Elliott Dike, d'62, preceded him in death.

Harvey Friedman, PhD'63, St. Louis, 88, July 5. Harvey was a professor at the University of Missouri-St. Louis for 40 years. His wife, Carol, preceded him in death.

Larry Friesen, c'67, League City, Texas, 77, July 28. Larry worked in the aerospace industry.

William Gradinger, b'65, Weatherby Lake, Missouri, 80, Aug. 29. Bill served in the U.S. Air Force and later worked at Golden Star Inc. for 46 years, retiring as executive vice president. He is survived by his partner, Joyce McInerney.

**David Hederstedt,** b'62, l'65, Hutchinson, 83, May 7, 2024. Dave, a U.S. Navy veteran, worked at First National Bank of Hutchinson for over 30 years, retiring as senior vice president and trust officer. He is survived by his wife, Valerie.

Vicki Whitaker Henry, d'66, Montgomery, Ohio, 80, Aug. 7. Vicki was a physical education teacher. Her husband, Bill, b'66, preceded her in death.

Joseph "J.C." Hixon, d'68, Denver, 79, Jan. 14. J.C., a former KU football player, worked in finance and property development and management. He is survived by his wife, Sherril Cooper Hixon, d'68.

Ronald Hurst, e'65, Raytown, Missouri, 81, April 23, 2024. Ronald was a financial planner and owned Hurst Financial Services.

Karen Williams Iselin, f'63, Salina, 83, March 6, 2024. Karen was an occupational therapist and served as a pilot in the Civil Air Patrol. Her husband, Bill, preceded her in death.

Judith Wood Johnson, f'64, Lawrence, 82, May 10, 2024. Judith was an artist. Her husband, Mike, c'64, preceded her in death.

John Lang, c'60, Wamego, 88, Jan. 20. During his 51 years practicing law, John served as Pottawatomie County attorney and municipal judge for the city of Wamego. He is survived by his wife, Joleen, assoc.

Mary Reeves Leber, d'64, g'65, Mercer Island, Washington, 82, May 13, 2024. Mary taught at the University of Washington and Bellevue College. Her husband, Bill, preceded her in death.

Jerry Lewis, b'61, Birmingham, Michigan, 84, July 12. Jerry, a U.S. Army veteran, worked in finance at Ford Motor Co. and later formed an investment firm. He is survived by his wife, Lassie.

**David McClellan,** b'69, Palm Desert, California, 76, March 25, 2024. David served in the U.S. Navy and later worked in computer system sales for over four decades. He is survived by his wife, Tonya.

**Michael O'Brien,** j'66, g'69, Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 79, June 27. Mike worked at Ernst & Young for many years and later established an accounting firm. His wife, Karen Ogden O'Brien, d'68, preceded him in death.

Jarrell Priess, e'63, Houston, 87, Feb. 4, 2024. Jerry served 32 years in the U.S. military and was a NASA engineer. He is survived by his wife, Vicki.

Pete Quatrochi, b'64, Boul-

der, Colorado, 82, Dec. 9. Pete played football at KU and was co-captain in 1963. He later served in the U.S. Air Force. He is survived by his wife, Dian Upton Quatrochi, j'63.

Richard Schuman, g'63, Columbia City, Indiana, 92, June 27. Richard, a U.S. Army veteran, was a geologist for an oil company and later served in the Peace Corps.

**Dennis Teter,** b'65, g'67, Buhler, 81, July 7. Dennis worked as a CPA for over 40 years. His wife, Sherry, preceded him in death.

W. Ted Tidwell, j'60, Garfield, Arkansas, 86, June 25. Ted was vice president of communications at Kansas City Life Insurance Co., where he worked for 35 years. His wife, Janet Meserve Tidwell, '60, preceded him in death.

Judith Thomas Voran, c'60, Strawberry, Arizona, 85, March 22, 2024. Judith was a school librarian and adjunct professor of library science. She is survived by her husband, Bruce, d'59.

**E. Morgan Williams,** g'62, Gainesville, Virginia, 84, June 8. Morgan led advocacy efforts for farmers and cooperatives on Capitol Hill and later worked in economic and business development in Ukraine. He is survived by his wife, Lynda Angell Williams, c'62.

#### **1970s** Kimberly Timmons

Anderson, '79, Redlands, California, 69, Dec. 13. Kimberly was an artist, teacher and librarian. She is survived by her husband, Danny, g'82, PhD'85.

Susan Larmer Brown, j'76, Overland Park, 70, June 10. Susan worked in real estate and was an avid community volunteer. She is survived by her husband, Joseph, d'76.

#### Pamela Mills Casagrande,

'79, Lawrence, 86, April 14, 2024. Pam was a teacher and served as chair of the Douglas County AIDS Project for several years. She is survived by her husband, Peter, assoc.

**Steve Glass,** '70, Lawrence, 79, July 15. Steve, a U.S. Navy veteran, was president of LRM Industries, a construction company. He is survived by his wife, Terese Gorman, e'78, g'84.

**Bill Griffin Jr.,** c'78, Tope-ka, 69, Jan. 20. Bill worked at Heartland Park and was a longtime sports broadcaster for Topeka's Majic 107.7 radio station. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Tudor Griffin, b'79.

**Robert Hines,** c'71, Overland Park, 75, June 23. Bob founded and led Osage Marketing, a food service brokerage, and was a longtime volunteer with Harvesters food bank. He is survived by his wife, Patty.

Marmaduke "Duke" Lambert, j'72, Brooklyn, New York, 82, Jan. 6. Duke was a journalist and worked many years in public relations at AT&T. He later founded a financial services firm. He is survived by his wife, Patricia Boyd-Lambert.

James McCauley, c'70, g'73, PhD'77, Lenexa, 77, Oct. 29. Jim was a geologist for the Kansas Geological Survey for 32 years. He is survived by his wife, Kelli.

**Stephen Palmer,** a'74, a'75, Lenexa, 72, June 2. Steve was an architect and served as principal at two firms throughout his 35year career. He is survived by his wife, Janelle Henderson.

**Stephanie Streck Watson,** f'74, Leawood, 72, June 15. Stephanie was an occupational therapist at several hospitals and in private practice.

#### 1980s Carlene Theden

**Anderson,** c'80, Prairie Village, 66, Dec. 7. Carlene was a paralegal. She is survived by her husband, Gary, c'80.

Robert Hart, j'89, Kansas City, 77, Jan. 14, 2024. Bob founded a marketing agency, where he worked for over 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Margee Horan Hart, j'79.

**Howard Hyten,** b'87, Houston, 59, Feb. 14, 2024.

James "Jamie" Lowe, b'88, Lawrence, 60, Nov. 10. Jamie owned Prairie Land Insurance in Lawrence for 14 years and was an avid community volunteer, including for KU's Audio-Reader Network. His wife, Bonnie, assoc., survives.

Michael Miller, g'82, Lawrence, 75, Dec. 16. Michael served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years and later worked in facility operations at KU. He was a longtime volunteer for Lawrence's youth bowling league. His wife, Barbara, survives.

**Patricia Miller,** g'80, Lawrence, 79, Jan. 5. Patricia worked at KU for many years and owned a clothing boutique in downtown Lawrence. Her husband, Douglas, c'91, preceded her in death.

Diane Brasted Stephens, g'82, Overland Park, 85, Oct. 31. Diane taught for 25 years at the Gillis Home for Children in Kansas City. She is survived by her husband, Ronald, m'65.

#### 1990s Martha Fitch

**DeMond,** c'91, g'99, Leawood, 76, March 26, 2024. Martha was a social worker. She is survived by her husband, Greg.

**Caryl Francis-Niedens,** f'93, Westwood, 56, Dec. 9. Caryl was an interior designer and facility manager. She is survived by her husband, Lyle, j'93, g'06.

Peter "PJ" Siavelis, c'92, Winnetka, Illinois, 54, Aug. 13. PJ held senior leadership positions in the health care industry. He is survived by his wife, Brandie.

Lockhart "Lock" Walker, c'94, Lenexa, 53, July 31. He is survived by his wife, Ashley Gray Walker, d'94, g'00.

**2000s** Kumar Goundan, g'08, Kansas City, 51, Feb. 2, 2024.

**2010s** Janelle Hilger, g'12, Fairway, 38, May 6, 2024. Janelle was a social worker for schools and health centers.

### UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

J. Todd Achelpohl, a'82, a'83, Kansas City, 64, Dec. 29. Todd was an architect and practiced in New York City and Kansas City. He later taught in the School of Architecture & Design. He is survived by his wife, Kathy Webb Achelpohl, a'84, a'84.

**Christopher Allen,** e'80, g'82, PhD'84, Lawrence, 66, Dec. 14. Chris was professor of electrical engineering & computer science at KU, where he worked for 30 years. He is survived by his wife, Peggy.

Arthur Dick, m'67, Hesston, 90, Oct. 20. Art, a U.S. Army veteran, was a pioneer in neurology and a professor at KU Medical Center for 50 years. His wife, Betty, '78, preceded him in death.

Stephen Grabow, assoc., Bloomington, Minnesota, 82, Jan. 19. Steve was professor emeritus of architecture at KU, where he worked for over 40 years. He assisted in designing KU's Vietnam War Memorial. **Leland Graves III,** m'85, Prairie Village, 65, Dec. 12. Leland, an endocrinologist, was a professor and director of the division of endocrinology, diabetes and clinical pharmacology at KU Medical Center. He is

Charles "Mick"
Himmelberg III, assoc.,
Lawrence, 93, Jan. 4. Mick was professor emeritus of mathematics after teaching at KU for 46 years. He is survived by his

wife, Mary Pat, '84.

survived by his wife, Beverly.

J. Theodore Johnson Jr., assoc., Lawrence, 88, Sept. 29. Ted was professor emeritus of French and taught at KU for over 30 years. He was selected by students as the HOPE Award winner in 1993 and also received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. His wife, Mary, assoc., survives.

**Daphne Johnston,** g'03, Lawrence, 73, Nov. 4. Daphne worked at KU for over 25 years, many of them in international student recruitment and admissions. She is survived by her husband, Pok Chi Lau, assoc.

Norma Jean "Jeanne" Torneden, Lawrence, 83, Dec. 2. Jeanne was an administrative specialist and worked at KU for 22 years. Her husband, Floyd, preceded her in death.

#### **ASSOCIATES**

Joseph Pacunski, assoc., Las Vegas, 86, April 22, 2024. Joe served in the U.S. Navy and later worked at construction and engineering firms. His wife, Mildred Clark Pacunski, n'57, preceded him in death.

**Betty Daugherty Pitts,** assoc., Frankfort, 95, Sept. 2, 2023. Betty was a nurse for over 50 years. Her husband, Forest, preceded her in death.

# PHOTO FINISH SLEDDERS jumped for joy after a January snowstorm dumped nearly a foot of snow on Mount Oread over winter break. ISSUE 1 | WINTER 2025 79

ACADEMICS

# 100 years in business

School commemorates a century of innovation, impact

KU'S SCHOOL OF BUSINESS may have begun with little fanfare, but the celebration of its centennial has been a yearlong affair throughout the 2024-'25 academic year.

The school, founded simply by its inclusion in the University's budget for the 1924-'25 academic year, has hosted activities and events since August to showcase its achievements and impact. In addition, a webpage (business.ku.edu/100) features a celebratory video, a timeline of milestones, information about the school's creation, and a form to collect stories and memories from alumni.

"We are excited to be celebrating a century of excellence in business education at KU," says Interim Dean Susan Scholz. "The school's dynamic history reflects the hard work and efforts of countless individuals over the past 100 years. As we celebrate our school's beginnings, we honor those contributions and look forward to what the future holds for the KU School of Business."

Festivities have included an Aug. 15 kickoff event featuring Lt. Gov. and Secretary of Commerce David Toland, c'99, g'01; a centennial-themed back-to-school barbecue for faculty, staff and students; a Kansas City networking event for local business alumni who graduated within the past 15 years; a tailgate for students during Homecoming Week; and a football watch party for alumni at Liberty Hall in downtown Lawrence.

The school also recently revived Merchants Week, an event that originated in 1914 and helped pave the way for establishing business education at KU. The 1914 edition brought 269 merchants from more than 100 Kansas towns to KU for three days of lectures about merchandising and salesmanship, according to a book titled *History of the School of Business* by

Frank Stockton, the school's first dean. Merchants Week was held annually until 1922, except in 1918 and '19, when wartime conditions interfered.

At the 1920 session of the Merchants Short Course (as it was then called), Chancellor Ernest Lindley declared his conviction of the need for a business school at KU. In his biennial report for 1919-'20, Lindley set forth his official recommendation: "Provision should also be made for the establishment of a school of commerce for the more specific training of leaders in all lines of business. There is a science underlying economic activities, the knowledge of which is as necessary to success today in modern business as the knowledge of physiology is necessary to the physician."

This semester's reimagined Merchants Week gathered students, alumni, faculty and staff Jan. 27-30 in Capitol Federal Hall for a series of "lunch-and-learn" sessions that intentionally coincided with Kansas Day, Jan. 29.

Merchants Week 2025 began with Rosa Cavazos, tourism special projects manager for the Kansas Department of Commerce, who discussed the "Love, Kansas" campaign, which highlights the state as an exceptional place to live and work. The week also featured a "Young Leaders in Business Roundtable" discussion with graduates, a Kansas and KU trivia competition, and a student venture showcase that spotlighted student entrepreneurs and their businesses.

The celebration will continue with a Big 12 Tournament pregame party in Kansas City for local alumni in March (time and date TBA) and a closing celebration on May 9 for former and current faculty and staff, Dean's Advisory Board and Deans Club members, KU leaders, and state and local officials.

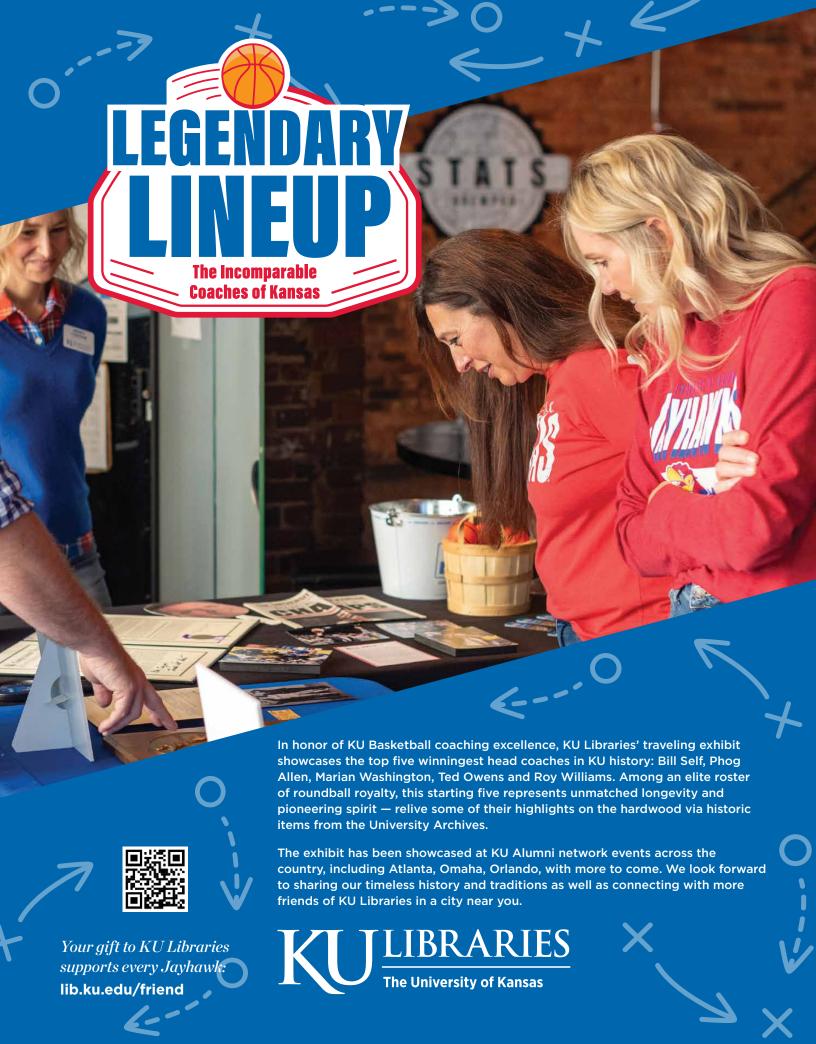
—Lauren Cunningham Cunningham, j'10, g'18, directs communications for the School of Business.







Young alumni who spoke to students during Merchants Week included (I to r): John Coler, digital product manager, Commerce Bank; Jessica Graves Beesley, managing director, Deloitte & Touche; Maren Hansen Holthus, senior business operations manager, Lattice; Isabelle Johnson, solution consultant, consumer products, Veeva Systems; and Jerry Wang, founder, Dryden Watch Co. Students in 1958 (above, I) studying in the school's former longtime home, Summerfield Hall, and the school's dazzling new home (above, r), Capitol Federal Hall.







## **Forbes Best in State 2024**

#### No. 1 Employer in Kansas and Missouri

The University of Kansas Health System is proud to be ranked the No. 1 Employer in Kansas and the No. 1 Employer in Missouri on the Forbes 2024 list of America's Best-in-State Employers. This prestigious honor underscores our unwavering commitment to our patients, employees and the communities we serve.

#### Patients first, every day

Our teams are united by a shared mission: delivering the highest level of patient care.

#### A culture that values every employee

We foster a culture of support, collaboration and teamwork that empowers employees to make a lasting difference.

#### A trusted healthcare leader

As part of an academic medical center, we deliver unmatched care and unrivaled outcomes through expert knowledge and innovation.

Discover what sets the best in the state apart. Learn more about our accolades at **KansasHealthSystem.com/Awards.** 



