

SUMMER 2018

# UNO MAGAZINE



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# SUMMER 2018

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UNO MAGAZINE is published three times a year by the University of Nebraska at Omaha, the UNO Alumni Association and the University of Nebraska Foundation.

When the state of Nebraska was founded in 1867, higher education proved to be a crucial component to ensuring the success of its burgeoning population. Less than two years later, the University of Nebraska was established to meet that need.

It was a century later that Omaha's metropolitan university, the University of Omaha, joined the University of Nebraska, on July 1, 1968, to create the University of Nebraska system and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Not only did this partnership help leverage the unique expertise of UNO faculty across the entire state, but it provided new opportunities for collaboration, and that impact is more pronounced today than ever.

I have had the extreme pleasure to travel across Nebraska, and in each of my visits I continue to find new ways that UNO has touched someone's life. Whether it's the alumnus working for the city of Scottsbluff, a student from Valentine who is earning a degree in international studies, or our faculty providing emergency response plans for hospitals in Beatrice, UNO's impact is not only clear — it is substantial.

A 2016 national study found that UNO alone contributes more than \$600 million to the statewide economy. This is a credit as well to you and other members of our network of 110,000-plus alumni, more than 61,000 of whom live in Nebraska. You are part of our Maverick family.

In this issue, you will have the opportunity to read about some truly amazing programs, research initiatives, contributions and individuals. Each plays an important part in contributing to Nebraska's 150-year success story and UNO's 110-year commitment to improving lives through access to higher education.

I hope you will enjoy reading about events hosted by UNO, like the state Geographic Bee, which welcomes 100 fourth-through-eighth graders each year from all parts of the state; our many alumni who are city managers, earning their degrees from our nationally ranked undergraduate and graduate programs; and the business-boosting efforts of the Nebraska Business Development Center.

If these stories impress you in the same way that they do me, I encourage you to stay connected with UNO and join us in the next chapter of our important story: Nebraska's story.

**Jeffrey P. Gold, M.D.**  
UNO Chancellor



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## ‘ ON SPRING 2018:

**ON 110 FACTS & FIGURES**

Just read the new issue – excellent, and definitely a keeper. My mom attended Omaha University in the '40s (where a friend of hers unsuccessfully tried to teach her to smoke!) and my family has had some kind of a connection to the university ever since. So I knew, or knew of, a lot of the people in the article. But the ones I didn't know about were fascinating.

Terry Forman, 1979  
 Omaha

**FIRST THINGS ON 'THIRD WORLD'**

I wanted to share my enthusiasm for your article on Geoffroy Napon. What an inspirational story! I appreciate your reporting and thoughtful writing. I would like, however, to offer a small correction. The article states, "In Burkina Faso, a third-world country in West Africa ..." Typically, terms like "First-World" and "Third-World" are not used in common parlance any longer, at least in the academic world. The term is often used by people who wish to denigrate Africa and its people, and while I know you meant no harm, I do want to offer some explanation of the terminology. The term "Third World" was generally used during the Cold War to indicate countries, such as those on the African continent, that did not "side" with either the Soviet Union or the United States. The usage of these postcolonial terms is complex, and is grounded in geopolitical history, particularly of NATO and certain world leaders who adopted an exceptionalist approach. At any rate, the term "developing," used to describe some countries in Africa, is a more polite way of describing these geographical locales. Please accept my explanation on behalf of Pan-Africanists across the globe.

Jennifer Harbour  
 Assistant Professor, Department of Black Studies

**GREAT GRADS, BUT NOT HIS TYPE**

Just received my copy of the UNO Magazine today and thoroughly enjoyed it. I personally knew several of the people who had bios in the 110 Years Facts and Figures section. As a 1965 graduate I'm also an old guy now whose eyes are very sore after reading the magazine. The faint type used throughout the magazine is a killer. I see it in other periodicals, so it must be fashionable, but it caused me to skip several of the articles that I might otherwise have read. Anyhow, a fine edition. Keep up the good work.

Richard Treakle, 1965  
 Los Altos, California

**SHORT AND SWEET**

Received UNO Magazine yesterday! Beautiful edition. Thanks to everyone for their great work.

Becky Schnabel, 1977  
 Omaha

Fellow Mavericks:

Typically, this is where you'd read a letter from our editor, but we're taking over his space to pay tribute to him instead.

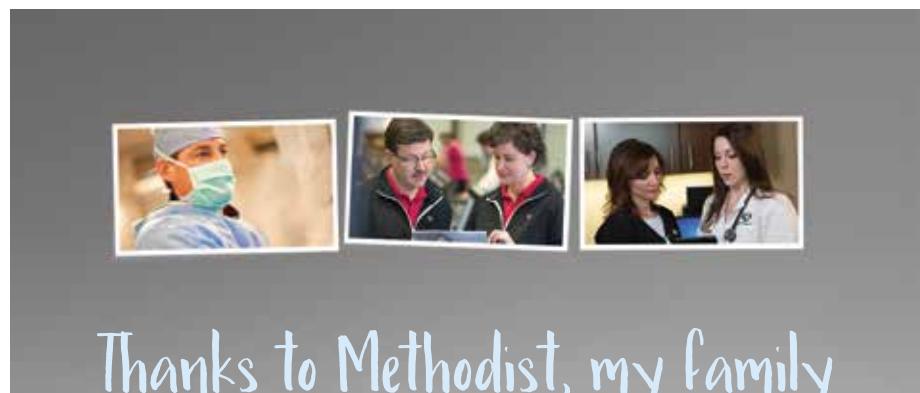
Twenty-five years ago, a young print journalist named Anthony Flott took over communication duties for the UNO Alumni Association. His main project was to write for and edit UNO's alumni newsletter. The Alumni Association did not have an email address or website at the time. It would be years before we learned terms such as Google, iPhone and Facebook. Print journalism reigned in 1993. While it remains relevant and important, today's fast-paced alumni expect to hear from UNO much more frequently via electronic media. That is why our communications program now includes monthly eNews newsletters; informative and interactive websites unoalumni.org and showtheo.com; and a continuously updated social media presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. But the alumni newsletter, now called UNO Magazine, has evolved into a high-quality, award-winning publication that Anthony continues to manage and edit.

In this era of continuous change, a milestone such as this is noteworthy enough that it deserves a brief pause and recognition. Cheers to the dedication and stability that Anthony has brought to his evolving but key role of keeping our 110,000 alumni aware of and engaged with UNO.

Please join me in wishing Anthony Flott a happy 25th anniversary with the UNO Alumni Association. He can be reached at [aflott@unoalumni.org](mailto:aflott@unoalumni.org). I know he would enjoy hearing from you.

Go Mavericks!

**Lee Denker**  
President and CEO  
UNO Alumni Association



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AT UNO'S BARBARA WEITZ COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER



STEVE SCHMITZ AND RANDY STEVENSON JOINED STUDENTS AT THE SANTA MONICA HOUSE, A HALFWAY HOUSE FOR WOMEN



KIMBERLY TALCOTT (MPA) PARTICIPATED IN A NEW RECYCLING EFFORT IN SPEARFISH, SOUTH DAKOTA,



UNO STUDENT MICHAELA MCCLELLAN SPENT TIME PICKING UP LITTER IN KARLSRUHE, GERMANY

# GRADS GO GLOBAL FOR DAY OF SERVICE

THANKS TO UNO ALUMNI, THE UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL SEVEN DAYS OF SERVICE WENT GLOBAL IN 2018.

The UNO Alumni Association partnered with UNO's Office of Civic and Social Responsibility to organize the UNO Alumni Global Day of Service on Saturday, March 24. The event offered alumni their first official opportunity to work alongside students during the annual week of service projects UNO hosts during spring break.

UNO Alumni Global Day of Service culminated the week, focused on economic sufficiency projects around Omaha, including the Open Door Mission, Stephen Center, Omaha Street School and elsewhere.

Alumni outside Omaha also were asked to be a part of the day by initiating their own projects around the country and the world. Alumni and students served in seven cities across the United States and in France and Spain.

Omaha volunteers began their day on campus at UNO's Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center then were shuttled to projects around Omaha. UNO Alumni board members Steve Schmitz and Randy Stevenson joined students at the Santa Monica House, a halfway house for women.

"The organization has a great mission and we painted an entire apartment for a new resident and their family," Schmitz says. "No doubt we helped make a difference."

Adds Stevenson: "It was also nice to get to work alongside the students — and teach them a few things about painting."

Board member Traci Harrison brought her two children to help fill plastic Easter eggs with candy for the Black Police Officers Association of Omaha.

"It sounds like an easy task, but we were exhausted by the end and all of our hands hurt," Harrison says. "My kids were glad we stayed until the end and

were excited to know that all those kids were going to be super happy on Sunday finding all of those eggs at the hunt."

In Council Bluffs, association President & CEO Lee Denker and his wife, Julie, joined students organizing donations to the thrift store benefitting New Visions Homeless Services.

Farther from campus, 2009 UNO graduate Kimberly Talcott (MPA) participated in a new recycling effort in Spearfish, South Dakota, where she lives.

"I remember taking a sustainability course as part of my master's at UNO," Talcott says. "It was so relevant and the discussions in that course continue to challenge me to find ways, however small, to care for my community."

Former Maverick footballer and 1988 grad Cliff Arfman, meanwhile, mentored grade school students at a church near Jacksonville, Florida, while 2006 alum Lamarr Womble helped students at the Bronx Collegiate Academy in New York, during a fundraiser.

In Phoenix, Karen Furbush (1986) and Micah Uram (2006) led graduates helping a family move into a new home through Furnishing Dignity, an organization that assists families transitioning from homelessness or foster care into self-sufficiency.

Outside the U.S., UNO student Michaela McClellen, studying abroad in Germany, spent time picking up litter in Karlsruhe, Germany. William Randall, Class of 2014, joined a service project at the high school where he teaches in Madrid, Spain.

Next year's UNO Alumni Global Day of Service is set for Saturday, March 23. Alumni are encouraged to think of ways they can serve their community. Send ideas or suggestions to Elizabeth Kraemer at [ekraemer@unoalumni.org](mailto:ekraemer@unoalumni.org) or 402-504-3343.

# CAMPUS TOURS



More than four dozen alumni and friends attended the inaugural UNO Alumni Campus Tours hosted by the association Saturday, May 19.

Participants took Maverick shuttles around campus to see what's new, what's improved, and what was just as they remembered it.

The complimentary tours were designed and narrated specifically for alumni.

For Diane Peabody, a 1998 UNO graduate, the changes were more than just cosmetic.



"In the past 20 years they've added student housing, a second campus at Aksarben Village and a hockey team, just to name a few," Peabody says. "Even the library experience has changed with the advances in technology."

Having students on hand added a personal touch to the tour.

"My favorite parts were touring the student housing and interacting with our student tour guides and hearing about their experiences



on campus," Peabody says. "With all of the progress that's been made at UNO, it makes me proud to be a UNO alum."

Some of the guests gathered after the tour for a social in Aksarben Village adjacent to the Scott Campus.

More campus tours are being considered, including a possible date this fall.

Contact Elizabeth Kraemer at [ekraemer@unoalumni.org](mailto:ekraemer@unoalumni.org) or 402-504-3343 with questions.

# A PARTY, A PIN AND A 'PLOMA



## ASSOCIATION HONORS CLASS OF 2018 WITH INAUGURAL UNO GRADUATION CELEBRATION

The UNO Alumni Association helped Maverick seniors celebrate their graduation like never before in May, getting up close and personal with nearly 1,800 members of the Class of 2018.

On Thursday, May 3, 200 students attended the inaugural UNO Graduation Celebration the evening prior to commencement. The event, co-sponsored by the UNO Alumni Association and UNO Bookstore, was hosted at the Thompson Alumni Center and featured food, a live DJ, door prizes, giveaways and special souvenirs, a graduation cap decorating station, an alumni photo booth and a bookstore merchandise shop.

All graduates were invited to attend with a guest. Association President and CEO Lee Denker gave a special salute to attendees commemorating their educational accomplishments and welcoming them as the newest members of the UNO Alumni Network.

Union Pacific, First Data and First National Bank sponsored the event.

At the two commencement ceremonies the following day the association hosted another alumni photo booth featuring props and the ever-popular Durango, UNO's mascot.

During the ceremonies, past and present members of the association's Young Alumni Academy distributed official UNO Alumni lapel pins to every graduate as they exited the stage after receiving their diploma.

With the addition of the Class of 2018, UNO pushes past 110,000 living Maverick alumni.

# LAURIE RUGE TO LEAD ASSOCIATION AS 95<sup>TH</sup> CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



LAURIE RUGE

The UNO Alumni Association Board of Directors confirmed a new executive committee during its quarterly meeting held May 22 at the Thompson Alumni Center.

Laurie Ruge, a 2001 MBA UNO graduate, will serve as the 95th graduate to chair the board. Ruge is director of internal audit at ACI Worldwide. She joined the association board in 2008 and since has served terms as treasurer, secretary and vice chair.

Ruge will head the following executive committee for 2018-19. Years of UNO graduation are in parentheses followed by place of employment.

**CHAIRMAN****LAURIE RUGE** (2001) ACI Worldwide**1ST VICE CHAIR****CHRIS DENNEY** (2005, 2017) Nebraska Orthopedic Hospital**2ND VICE CHAIR****BRIAN ALLISON** (2005) Children's Hospital & Medical Center**SECRETARY****TAMI WILLIAMS** (2003, 2009) UNO**TREASURER****SHARI MUNRO** (1986) Frankel Zacharia**LEGAL COUNSEL****RANDY STEVENSON** (1982) Baird Holm**PAST CHAIRMAN****AL HANSEN** (1984) First National Bank**PRESIDENT & CEO****LEE DENKER** UNO Alumni Association

Also at the meeting, Scott Durbin, 2016-17 board chairman, was presented a Maverick Monument statuette in appreciation of his service. A vice president at Harry A. Koch in Omaha, Durbin joined the board in 2011. He was the third generation in his family to serve as chair, following his father, Doug Durbin (chair in 1994), and his maternal grandmother, Ellen Hartman Pearey Gast (1971-72).

Also, a Director Appreciation Award was issued to outgoing member Steve Schmitz, a 1995 and 2008 graduate. A nuclear specialist at Omaha Public Power District at Omaha Public Power District, Schmitz served the board since 2012 and was active on its scholarship golf tournament committee.

Student Regent Renata Valquier Chavez reported to the board on student affairs during her first session as an ex-officio member of the board.

A complete board roster is provided at [www.unoalumni.org/board](http://www.unoalumni.org/board).

## ANNUAL BOARD MEETING SET FOR AUG. 28

The UNO Alumni Association Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting Tuesday, Aug. 28, at 4:30 p.m. in the Thompson Alumni Center.

For more information contact Meri Kennedy (402) 504-3342 or [mckennedy@unoalumni.org](mailto:mckennedy@unoalumni.org).

## ROCK YOUR CAREER

### ACDC AND OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS

UNO's ACDC – the Academic and Career Development Center, offers career help to all alumni, including career coaching, interview practice, help with resumes, access to tools and more.

New to ACDC, and available to alumni, is Handshake, a career job board platform. Also available to UNO alumni is Startup Tree, an alumni and entrepreneurial network that brings together collaborators, investors and mentors in Omaha's entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Alumni also can join the UNO Alumni Association LinkedIn group featuring thousands of members. Fellow alumni often are receptive to helping fellow graduates find a job – if they know who they are. Those connections can be made on UNOAA's LinkedIn page.

For access to these career tools, as well as tips and advice, visit [unoalumni.org/careerservices](http://www.unoalumni.org/careerservices).



## PARTNERSHIPS

### INSURANCE

Are you in need of home, life, auto, health or life insurance? The UNO Alumni Association offers graduates insurance for these and other needs at discounted rates available thanks to the purchasing power of nearly 110,000 graduates.

See all the coverage available at [unoalumni.org/insurance](http://unoalumni.org/insurance).



### TRAVEL

The UNO Alumni Association is pleased to offer discounted travel opportunities through a partnership with travel provider Go Next!

2019 trips include:

#### **Southern Grandeur**

(Memphis to New Orleans) **April 7-15**

#### **Gems of the Danube**

(Prague to Budapest)

**April 29-May 9**

#### **Northern Frontiers**

(Oslo to London)

**July 22-Aug. 4**

#### **Masterpiece Montage**

(Venice to Monte Carlo)

**Sept. 30-Oct. 11**

#### **Cuba Charms**

(Miami to Miami)

**Oct. 29-Nov. 9**

See details on these trips and other cruises at [unoalumni.org/travel](http://unoalumni.org/travel).

To receive a brochure for any of our trips by mail, call the association toll-free at **800-432-3216**.

## ASSOCIATION HONORS NINE FACULTY WITH OUTSTANDING TEACHING AWARDS

The UNO Alumni Association celebrated the 22nd year of its Alumni Outstanding Teaching Award program when it presented the honor to nine faculty members during the UNO Faculty Honors Convocation Thursday, April 12.

Peer committees in UNO colleges chose recipients, each of whom received a \$1,000 award and commemorative plaques. With the 2018 awards the association has issued \$194,000 through the program.

Recipients are listed at right in order pictured (Chancellor Gold is fourth from right). For brief biographies of each recipient, visit [unoalumni.org/2018aota](http://unoalumni.org/2018aota)



**CHRISTINE CUTUCACHE**, Biology, College of Arts & Sciences

**JOHN CONRAD**, Chemistry, College of Arts & Sciences

**MELISSA CAST-BREDE**, Teacher Education, College of Education

**JEREMY C. BAGUYOS**, Interdisciplinary Informatics,  
College of Information Science & Technology

**SHELBY VANNORDSTRAND**, Music, College of Communication, Fine Arts and Media

**REBECCA LUTTE**, Aviation Institute, College of Public Affairs & Community Service

**ELIZABETH JONES**, Civil Engineering, UNL College of Engineering

**RAMAZAN KILINC**, Political Science, College of Arts & Sciences

**DALE EESLEY**, Marketing & Entrepreneurship, College of Business Administration

## PAUL CRITCHLOW, IVAN GILREATH RECEIVE HIGHEST ALUMNI AWARD

The UNO Alumni Association bestowed its Citation for Alumni Achievement award upon UNO graduates Paul Critchlow and Ivan Gilreath during the university's spring commencement ceremonies May 4 at Baxter Arena.

Critchlow, principal at Black Cat Communications, was recognized at UNO's 9 a.m. ceremony for three colleges. Gilreath, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands, was recognized at the 3 p.m. ceremony for UNO's four other colleges.

Inaugurated in 1949, the Citation is the association's highest honor. It encompasses career achievement, community service, involvement in business and professional associations, and fidelity to UNO. It now has been issued to 177 graduates.

Critchlow earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from UNO in 1971. His career has encompassed print journalism and government and corporate communications. Today with Black Cat Communications he advises senior executives at Fortune 100 corporations on strategic communications. Critchlow began the firm after more than 30 years with Bank of America Merrill Lynch, where he was the firm's senior-most relationship banker with governors, mayors and treasurers around the United States.

Prior to joining Merrill Lynch, Critchlow from 1978-1984 was press secretary to Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh and the commonwealth's director of communications.

An Omaha native, Critchlow first attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from 1964-68 and was a member of the Cornhuskers football team. From 1968-70, he served with the infantry and artillery in the U.S. Army, earning a Bronze Star for Valor and the Purple Heart during a combat tour in Vietnam. He transferred to UNO after the war. He has long been involved in civic affairs and also is an active leader in veterans' advocacy programs. He and his wife, Patty McCormick, an author, have three children and live in New York.

Gilreath earned an MBA from UNO in 1989. A lifelong Omahan, he has served as president & CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands (BGCM) since February 2011. The club serves at-risk youth, providing them with results-oriented educational and recreational programs. Gilreath oversees 11 clubs in metropolitan Omaha and southwest Iowa and Camp Nakomis, an outdoor summer camp. The club serves more than 7,000 children and teens, many of whom are minorities, economically disadvantaged and living in single-parent households.

Prior to joining BGCM, Gilreath was president of the employee benefits division at global financial institution ING. That preceded a 20-year career at Mutual of Omaha, where Gilreath held several positions, including senior vice president of three departments. He began his career at Xerox Corporation, where he became district financial control manager.

Gilreath is involved extensively in the community, with current membership on organizations including Nelson Mandela School, Avenue Scholars, Jesuit Academy, Big Brother/Big Sisters, Boys to Men Book Club and the UNO College of Business Administration. He also is founder of the Midwest Trailblazers, a nonprofit youth development program begun in Omaha in 1990 and focused on academics, sports and mentoring.

Gilreath received a BSBA in 1982 from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he played one season for the Husker basketball team. He and his wife, Rita, have two adult children.

For more information about Critchlow, Gilreath and past Citation recipients, visit [unoalumni.org/citation-award](http://unoalumni.org/citation-award).



PAUL CRITCHLOW



IVAN GILREATH



ACADEMY GRADS LESLIE KLUSAW AND JENNA TAULMAN (CENTER) WITH ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT & CEO LEE DENKER AND ELIZABETH KRAEMER, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING.

## YOUNG ALUMNI ACADEMY MEMBERS REACH A NEW HEIGHT

As up-and-coming young professionals, members of the UNO Young Alumni Academy are always reaching new heights.

That was especially so in April when the academy's Class of 2018 commemorated the end of its eight-month leadership development program by visiting the top of the Henningson Memorial Campanile 168 feet above campus.

The award-winning academy, designed for alumni 35 and younger, facilitates peer networking and professional growth. The group's campanile tour was followed by "commencement" at the Thompson Alumni Center. Several group members serenaded campus with an attempt at "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

The campanile tour was one of eight sessions held at locations across campus that included a night with UNO's college deans, a behind-the-scenes tour of Baxter Arena and a service project.

Nearly 300 young alumni have taken part in the program, which begins its ninth year in September. See more information about the UNO Young Alumni Academy, including a roster of the Class of 2019, at [unoalumni.org/yaa](http://unoalumni.org/yaa)

Class of 2018 members and their place of employment are listed at right. Direct questions to Elizabeth Kraemer at [ekraemer@unoalumni.org](mailto:ekraemer@unoalumni.org) or 402-504-3343.

### YOUNG ALUMNI ACADEMY CLASS OF 2018

**JAVIE ALBA**, Kiewit; **SAPPHIRE ANDERSEN**, UNO; **JUAN AYALA-ROMAN**, Lutz; **SHAUNA BENJAMIN-BRICE**, Gallup; **JENNIFER BENSON**, TeamMates Mentoring Program; **ERIC BURNS**, Gazella Wifi-Marketing; **ANDREA DARBY**, Home Goods; **JOHN DIETZ**, United States Strategic Command; **NADIRA FORD-ROBBINS**, Nebraska Methodist College; **NATHAN GRETEMAN**, DP Management; **AUSTIN HANKE**, Hayes & Associates; **DAN HASING**, Lamson, Dugan & Murray; **JESSICA HEIDEBRECHT**, Metropolitan Utilities District; **ABBEY HENRICHES**, UNO; **MICHAEL HUGHES**, Avenue Scholars Foundation; **LESLIE KLUSAW**, Richdale Apartments; **JUSTIN KORTH**, Lutz; **CHUANE LI**, First National Bank; **BRANDY COLGROVE**, Bellevue University; **CHELSEA LISCU**, Kiewit Corporation; **TYLER LOEWENS**, Conductix-Wampfler USA; **JONNISHA MCCLEOD**, Nebraska Extension; **ARIANA OROZCO**, SilverStone Group; **JAMES SCHLEHR**, Hancock & Dana; **WILL SMITH**, Frankel Zacharia; **ASHLEY SPURLOCK**, University of Nebraska Foundation; **JENNA TAULMAN**, Center for Innovation; **ELLIE TIEHEN**, Omaha Public Schools

## SAVE THE DATE

### NIGHT OF HONOR IS OCT. 23

The association will host the fifth UNO Alumni Night of Honor Tuesday, Oct. 23, at the Thompson Alumni Center.

The event highlights achievements by members of the worldwide UNO alumni network. It will celebrate 2018 UNO Athletics Hall of Fame inductees, Young Alumni Achievement Award recipients, Alumni Achievement Award winners, and other distinguished graduates who have earned special recognition for service or professional accomplishments.

Details are available at [unoalumni.org/nightofhonor](http://unoalumni.org/nightofhonor). Direct questions to Elizabeth Kraemer at [ekraemer@unoalumni.org](mailto:ekraemer@unoalumni.org) or 402-504-3343.



## A PLACE FOR A PORTRAIT

UNO Chancellor Emeritus John Christensen and his wife, Jan, have a new place to hang out on campus — in perpetuity.

In April, a painting of the couple was installed in the UNO Milo Bail Student Center Chancellor's room. The UNO Alumni Association commissioned the painting in honor of the couple's longtime service to UNO, unveiling the work at UNO Alumni Night of Honor last fall.

Christensen was UNO's chancellor from May 2007 to May 2017. He is the only UNO graduate to have served as chancellor, doing so after service as a professor, department chair, dean and vice chancellor during a UNO career spanning 39 years. Jan, his wife of 45 years, also is a lifelong educator and was integral to UNO's success, assisting several UNO initiatives and serving as honorary president of the UNO Women's Club.

The painting was created — and hung — by award-winning Omaha artist Stephen Roberts, a 1976 UNO grad.

# A QUEEN'S TALE



Connie Claussen gave of herself to help establish UNO women's athletics — and is still doing so today

Once upon a time, the University of Nebraska at Omaha had a queen.

She reigned with passion from a castle of corrugated metal — a Quonset hut — where the women who competed in sports had to play. This was long, long ago, back in the days before Title IX, when the women's athletic teams didn't have the facilities or the money or the support the men's teams did.

The Quonset hut was shaped like a half-moon. It looked like an airplane hangar from World War II. It was old and hot, and its roof was made of tin.

The women had no real uniforms, either, at first. Just sweaters and shorts they'd bought from the bookstore. They made jersey numbers out of electrician's tape. On their few trips to play other teams, they drove their own cars and bought their own burgers, and they couldn't go far, because of the cost.

But it was 1969, and the rising tide of the times was on their side. So was their queen — Connie Claussen.

She laughs.

"They called me the Queen of the Quonset Hut," says Claussen, a 1961 graduate of then-Omaha University and now UNO's athletic director emeritus. "It was difficult back then. But we've come a long way from the very beginning."

## SOFTBALL TO START

Women's athletics began at UNO in 1969, when the Omaha Softball Association asked Claussen to help start the Women's College World Series (CWS) in Omaha. UNO would be the host. But how could it be a host if it didn't have a team?

Claussen started one. And coached it. And helped raise money for it.

That first year, her team went 0-2 in the women's CWS. The next year, UNO added teams for women's basketball and volleyball. Claussen coached those, too. And bowling, which was funded by the student center. Title IX began in 1972. But it still was a long, long time, she said, until the playing field was evened out.

“ | THEY CALLED ME THE QUEEN OF THE QUONSET HUT.

In 1975, when she and her softball players won the national title, they had to raise money for a sign to put up on the front of the Eppley Administration Building, congratulating themselves.

She keeps a framed photo of that team on the wall of her basement. She likes to look at it. And remember. And smile back at those smiling faces.

“I look at those players a lot,” she says. “I don’t think anybody was on scholarship yet. And if they were, it was maybe a hundred dollars. Those players didn’t have anything, but they enjoyed it, and when I look at them now I think, at least they got an opportunity to compete.”

That photo is among the artifacts that Claussen, who retired in 1998 as the assistant athletic director, will donate to the UNO archives when she dies.

“It’s spelled out,” she says. “I want whoever is in charge of the archives to come see what they want.”

Claussen gave a lot of herself along the way. She donated her own money to support the women, mainly for better facilities. Her name is on a donor wall beside the new soccer pitch. She created a scholarship in her name. In 1986, she started the major fundraiser for women’s sports at UNO called the Diet Pepsi Women’s Walk. It has raised more than \$4 million over the years.



## CROWNS FOR A QUEEN

Several organizations have recognized Connie Claussen through appointments and awards, including:

In 1997, Claussen served as vice chair of the Pan American Softball Games Committee. In 1979, she was manager of the USA Women’s Softball team that won the gold medal at the Pan American Games. She served on several NCAA national committees, including the NCASS Executive Committee. She was a member of the search committee for the organization’s executive director. She also chaired the NCAA II Championships Committee.

Claussen is the first female member of the UNO Athletic Hall of Fame. She also was inducted into the Omaha Sports Hall of Fame and the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Hall of Fame, among other honors.

Claussen is the only person to have received the UNO Alumni Association’s Outstanding Service Award (1976) and Citation for Alumni Achievement (1997) and be inducted into the UNO Athletic Hall of Fame (1983).



CONNIE CLAUSEN (BACK ROW, CENTER) POSES WITH THE 1975 MAVERICK SOFTBALL TEAM

The walk is now named for her and for her late friend and boss, Don Leahy, the athletic director who arrived at UNO in 1974 and was an advocate for women's sports.

Trev Alberts, UNO's current vice chancellor for athletic leadership and management, has been a big supporter, too. He was at the Claussen-Leahy Maverick Run last month. They posed for a photo.

"Trev works really hard," Claussen says, "to make sure the women get the same treatment as the men."

## STILL GIVING

She's 79. She stays fit. She walks 2 to 3 miles, most days, at the mall. She fishes in the summers at her Minnesota cabin.

Why does she give back now?

"UNO has been very, very good to me," she says. "It was a struggle to begin with, but it's been good to me. It's kept me busy. I had a lot of great parents and people in the community who got involved and helped me out. That was especially important in the beginning."

"You don't do this by yourself. And a lot of people have helped me out, and they're still helping me."

In her role as emeritus AD, she goes to the office every two weeks, from September through April, for executive staff meetings. She gives advice when needed. She's good at raising money, for all sports, so she takes a lot of donors to lunch.

She writes a lot of thank-you notes.

What do you tell them?

"I really don't have to say much," she says. "I think they see the product UNO has and the need and how much the student-athletes appreciate it and how they do great in the classroom, graduating and staying out of trouble."

"It's a pretty simple sell for UNO athletics."

Claussen has included UNO in her will, with planned gifts directed to the University of Nebraska Foundation to support women's sports through the One Fund and to the Connie Claussen Women's Athletic Scholarship Fund.

And so the queen's story will end the way it began, giving back.

Happily ever after.

# SMALL GIFTS HAVE BIG IMPACT ON MAVERICK STUDENTS

It only takes five minutes to help a UNO student earn his or her degree. By setting up a monthly credit card gift to the UNO Fund, you can give a small amount each month that adds up to a great amount over the course of the year.

A gift of \$8.34 monthly becomes a yearly gift of \$100, and just \$20.85 per month will qualify you for recognition in the UNO Century Club, which honors UNO Annual Fund donors of \$250 or more every year in UNO Magazine.

Recurring monthly giving can be a great option for young alumni who don't think they can make a big difference (they can!), or busy professionals who might not have time to respond to a mailing or student phone call.

The UNO Fund lets you choose how your monthly donation is best spent at UNO. Through the UNO Fund, you can choose to directly support whatever you think is most important, including:

- Student scholarships that ease the cost of education for deserving UNO students.
- Faculty recruitment and retention to recruit the state's best educators and produce the most cutting-edge research.
- Your college's academic priorities, whether it be new courses, student support programs, special guest lectures or more.
- The most pressing needs of the university, immediately benefitting student goals and dreams.
- The UNO Alumni Association, which continues to produce award-winning alumni programming and communications for the benefit of UNO's students.

If every UNO graduate gave just \$10 a month, over the course of the year, the UNO Fund would help turn aspiring, deserving students into UNO grads, and we'd all enjoy the priceless rewards. Please consider a gift today to the UNO Fund. For more information, or to make your gift, visit [nufoundation.org/UNOFund](http://nufoundation.org/UNOFund).

# The Webster legacy lives. Will yours?

For 100 years, the Webster family has helped Omaha and its business community. Their positive influence on the city's students has lasted nearly as long. In 1923, John R. Webster started a fund to help then-University of Omaha students pay for their education. The name of the school has changed, but the impact of his generosity has not. Students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha are benefitting from his fund nearly a century later.

You have the same opportunity to make the same kind of impact. To find out how, visit us online at [NUFoundation.org/giftplanning](http://NUFoundation.org/giftplanning) or call a gift planning officer at the University of Nebraska Foundation at 800-432-3216.

# A LIFE CHANGED

UNO'S IMPACT EXTENDS ACROSS THE STATE — AND SOMETIMES INTO THE STARS

The University of Nebraska at Omaha isn't just about ... Omaha. Its impact is felt throughout the state, and sometimes that happens in dramatic, life-altering fashion.

Just ask Sandra Jones.

A UNO senior and elementary education major, Jones in March took to Facebook to write about how detrimental state budget cuts to the university system would be to her and other students.

To do so, she had to get personal, talking of growing up in Imperial, a city of 2,000 in southwest Nebraska. It's closer to Denver than to Omaha — by two hours.

It's "Rural USA."

"There are more cattle in my home county [Chase] than there are human beings," she wrote. "There are no traffic lights or McDonald's, and the closest shopping mall is hours away."

Her family didn't have a lot. "Poverty in every sense of the word." Jones wasn't always sure where or when she'd get her next meal. Her clothes didn't fit. Money she earned in the summer as a lifeguard went to help her parents keep the lights on or the gas running.

But Jones kept looking to the future. And to the University of Nebraska.

"I knew from a very young age that for me to get out of the situation I was in, attending college was the first step," Jones wrote. She worked hard in school and received a full-ride scholarship for first-generation college students to be used at any school in Nebraska.

She chose UNO.

"From the moment I stepped foot on campus, I knew it would be my home during undergrad. What I soon found out was that the University of Nebraska system was exactly the place I needed to be. The professors and advisors I have met during my journey have become lifelong mentors who are always in my corner rooting for me. UNO exposed me to experiences and involvement opportunities I would not have had the privilege of being a part of elsewhere."

Jones dove into her studies — and numerous activities. She gave tours to prospective students. She advised College of Education students preparing for a teaching career. She mentored young girls exploring STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). She wrote curricula on robotics and coding and created engineering design challenges for teachers to implement in their classrooms. She served on student government and wrote legislation that led to accessible door entrances into every building in Maverick Village.

Her most notable endeavor — with NASA — "has UNO written on every page along the way."

Literally.

One day, between advising appointments, Jones was flipping through UNO Magazine. She read an article on Professor Neal Grandgenett's innovative work in STEM education.

"On a whim, I decided to email him and ask if there was any way we could sit down and discuss opportunities for me to get involved," Jones wrote.

They met in his office 10 minutes later. Discussion turned to the NASA Nebraska Space Grant and the possibility of landing a NASA internship. Jones later met with Michaela Lucas, faculty director for NASA Nebraska Space Grant, and learned more about NASA internships.

Jones applied for such a post but did not hear back from NASA for more than a year. She was told there was an opening at Johnson Space Center (JSC) for a single student who was an education major ... but the deadline to apply was in three days.

Jones made the cutoff and got the internship, in JSC's education office. She has completed



SANDRA JONES IN AN ANTIGRAVITY MACHINE AT NASA



JONES WITH NEBRASKA ASTRONAUT CLAY ANDERSON

three internships since and this summer is on her fourth, with the Public Affairs I External Relations Office.

She's changed her career trajectory — and more. After graduating, Jones plans to apply to UNO's CADRE Project, a nationally recognized program that helps newly certified teachers complete an accelerated master's program with support from UNO faculty, veteran teachers and other first-year teachers. After that, she might pursue a doctorate in STEM education. Then, perhaps she'll teach at the college level, work on curriculum development, or head back to NASA.

For now, she has a summer with her head in the stars — a far cry from where her life was just five years ago.

"I cannot say anything with more confidence than this — being at NASA, and everything else I have accomplished during my time at college, would not have been possible for me without the University of Nebraska System," Jones wrote. "UNO is the reason I am even at NASA in the first place. Dr. Grandgenett and Michaela Lucas are just two examples of dozens of caring, dedicated, committed, faculty members at UNO that make this school the life-changing place it is. I would not be where I am right now if I had not come to UNO, met these individuals, and gotten involved in the way UNO allowed me to."

# SPACING OUT ACROSS NEBRASKA



MEMBERS OF THE NEBRASKA SPACE GRANT PREPARE A HIGH-ALTITUDE BALLOON TO CARRY SCIENCE EXPERIMENTS INTO THE STRATOSPHERE.



STUDENTS WATCHING THE TOTAL ECLIPSE DURING DURANGO DAYS.

Nebraska may not be one of the first states that comes to mind for programs, activities and research focused on space, but as it turns out, a lot of the state has eyes on the stars.

Thanks, that is, to the NASA Nebraska Space Grant Consortium on the UNO campus.

The consortium has been promoting and financially supporting aerospace-related activities since 1991 as part of NASA's National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program.

Funding provided by the Nebraska Space Grant supports a variety of activities, ranging from educating Nebraska teachers about space, to organizing space camps, to launching high-altitude ballooning payloads. The program, staffed with four UNO employees, also funds students to intern at NASA

A big part of what the program funds are different STEM (Science, Engineering, Technology, Math)-related teams that compete against other schools and groups within the United States. Groups perform a variety of challenges: designing aircraft operated remotely; building rockets or aerial robotics; even attempting to complete tasks in zero gravity aboard a modified Boeing 727.

The consortium's presence extends well west of Omaha. Last year that included activities and events related to the summer's solar eclipse. The biggest of these events took place at the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island, Nebraska, attracting 9,000 people to watch the launching of three high-altitude balloons with NASA and student experiment payloads. The effort was part of a 55-team, nationwide effort to capture the eclipse as it transited

**“ | THE SPACE GRANT PROGRAM PROVIDES NEBRASKA STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS WITH UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO TAP INTO NASA’S INCREDIBLE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.**

centers across the country, including some who have gone on to work in the aerospace industry. That includes current student Mike Leite from Chadron State College, who is working with scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) to further the Mars 2020 mission by facilitating geological mapping of Mars by that mission's rover.

Nearly 170 Nebraska college students last year were funded via fellowships, internships and higher education programs. More than 630 college students participated in all of its programs.

"The Space Grant program provides Nebraska students and educators with unique opportunities to tap into NASA's incredible educational resources," says consortium director Scott Tarry, who also is director of UNO's Aviation Institute. "The program's reach across the state through our affiliate institutions and our K-12 teacher ambassadors ensures that these opportunities are available to the widest possible audience."

the country. The payload had cameras pointed toward Earth to caption the moon's shadow during the eclipse.

The consortium also has hosted space camps at Bluffs Middle School in Scottsbluff, Nebraska City Middle School and Walthill Elementary.

Today, consortium members are collaborating with other groups to determine how they commemorate a crucial turning point in American space history — the 50th anniversary of the Apollo moon landing on July 20, 1969.

"My colleagues in the Space Grant office are passionate about space and aeronautics," Tarry says. "They are personally invested in improving STEM education in Nebraska and connecting Nebraskans to NASA, which is exciting."

To learn more about the Nebraska Space Grant Consortium, visit [nespacegrant.org](http://nespacegrant.org).

— Jessica Yrkoski, University Communications

# ALL NEBRASKA'S A STAGE

THANKS TO NEBRASKA SHAKESPEARE AND UNO ALUMNI, COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE STATE GET TO KNOW THE BARD

To some, Shakespeare's works can be intimidating pieces of literature — difficult to understand; hard to connect with; out of date.

Watching one performance by actors from Nebraska Shakespeare, though, has opened doors to a world of Shakespeare many never knew existed.

"Shakespeare shouldn't exist on a page, it should exist in a performance," says Suzanne Withem, a company manager with Nebraska Shakespeare.

A UNO theatre graduate and digital learning coordinator at UNO, Withem is part of Nebraska Shakespeare's leadership team composed almost exclusively of UNO alumni. That includes Vincent Carlson-Brown (artistic director), Sarah Carlson-Brown (director of education) and Wesley Houston (director of production).

Nebraska Shakespeare helps shape the way people across Nebraska think about and experience the Bard of Avon. That's done most notably through its flagship event, Shakespeare on the Green, which takes place in Omaha's Elmwood Park every summer. Performances are free, but not everyone can make the trip to Omaha.

Thirteen years ago, Nebraska Shakespeare addressed that issue by launching a travelling program, Shakespeare in American Communities, funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Each year in September and October, Nebraska Shakespeare takes a team of nine actors into middle schools and high schools throughout the state to perform a 75-minute adapted version of a Shakespeare play. Past visits have



been made to Lincoln, Grand Island, Kearney, Valentine, Cozad, O'Neill and Gering.

Withem admits it can be a tough sell — at first.

"A lot of students and adults have a bad taste in their mouth from Shakespeare because they think it's too fancy or they can't understand it," she says.

However, it often only takes one performance for Nebraska Shakespeare to be asked back. The group often visits the same schools almost every year while also continuing to grow its footprint. Last year, it performed for more than 10,000 students across the state.

Sarah Carlson-Brown says some might get nervous about "putting Shakespeare in front of young minds."

But, she adds, "If you do it the right way, and you challenge them and raise the bar, they will match you."

Nebraska Shakespeare regularly makes adaptations to the music and wardrobe so the play is a little more contemporary, but many students are surprised when they hear that none of Shakespeare's prose has been changed. The troupe also experiments with gender and show students that women can play men's roles.

Another challenge in having a successful season is hiring the right people.

"You have to cast the right actors when you're going into high schools," Carlson-Brown says. "You can't have a big ego."

She has a reliable pipeline of talent coming from UNO Theatre. More than half of the touring actors last year were UNO graduates.



Most UNO Theatre students cut their teeth by performing at Shakespeare on the Green. They build a relationship and trust with Nebraska Shakespeare staff, and by the time they graduate they're ready to tour.

It's a long couple of weeks on the road. Actors drive themselves to each community. They put up and take down sets at each stop. They interact frequently with the crowd.

One visit, Carlson-Brown recalls, included a talented, first-time actress performing an emotional scene from "Macbeth." It was in front of a room full of rowdy middle schoolers, and Carlson-Brown thought the actress' approach was going to be a little "too much" for kids that age.

"They're going to make fun of her," she thought. "It's going to be a learning experience."

She could not have been more wrong. Once the actress began her monologue, the room fell silent. The students' eyes and ears were completely focused on the performance.

"It challenged them, and students don't get offered that a lot because people don't think they can handle it," Carlson-Brown says.

"Every year we challenge them more, and every year they meet us."

— Nolan Searl, University Communications

# PLANTING FUTURES IN RURAL NEBRASKA



This summer, UNO junior Trevor Harlow went far from home ... but got much closer to his career aspirations.

Through Rural Futures Institute (RFI) Student Serviceship, Harlow, lived, worked and served alongside community leaders in Red Cloud, Nebraska, a community of 948 on the south-central border of the state. It's best known as the childhood home of celebrated Nebraska author Willa Cather. And even though it bills itself as "America's Most Famous Small Town," community leaders are seeking a higher profile — and growth.

Enter Harlow, a political science and environmental science major who helped create a strategic marketing and economic development plan to fulfill the Heritage Tourism Development Initiative.

The primary aims were to increase visibility of the Red Cloud brand and to persuade local voters to approve application of Nebraska's Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB840), which authorizes incorporated cities and villages to collect and appropriate local tax dollars for economic development purposes.

"I hope to learn great and innovative ways to support community development and gain skills that I can utilize to support my hopeful career in government," Harlow, a Waterloo, Neb., native shared before heading to Red Cloud. "I'm excited to be able to work in any way I can to support an amazing community such has Red Cloud, but specifically I'm very excited to do anything in the political realm."

Harlow was one of three Mavericks participating in RFI's program. Also representing UNO were Clayton Keller and

Kyle McGlade, both graduate students in public administration.

Keller lived and worked in Columbus, Nebraska, where he split his time between the Columbus Area Future Fund and Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce. He played an integral role in the Future Fund's "Toward a Bolder Future Campaign" while also planning and organizing local activities for Young Nebraskans Week. He even helped promote a lemonade stand that raised funds to fight childhood cancer.

McGlade worked with the Omaha Municipal Land Bank to support legislation to develop housing strategies for regional organizations in rural communities across Nebraska.

RFI, one of four interdisciplinary institutes working across the University of Nebraska system, employed 24 students this summer from UNO, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Peru State College. Working in pairs, they served 11 communities, problem-solving and creating opportunities in housing, community recruitment, community planning, welcoming, economic development and more. The work included strategic planning; event planning; assessment creation and analysis; visioning; and marketing.

"We want to thank everyone who makes this program possible, especially the community host teams," RFI Executive Director Chuck Schroeder says. "We are honored to have such great trust relationships with Nebraska's rural communities and to be able to connect them with so many high-level students from the University of Nebraska. We know that the more rural experiences



*Photo: Jeff Haller*

RED CLOUD



CLAYTON KELLER



KYLE MCGLADE



TREVOR HARLOW

we can give our student leaders, the better perspective they will have as they take on leadership roles throughout the course of their careers."

Extended details, including student bios and community project descriptions, are available at [ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2018serviceship](http://ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2018serviceship).

— Jessica Yrkoski, University Communications

## BUSY AS A BEE FOR NEARLY THREE DECADES

UNO's Nebraska Geographic Bee continues to map educational opportunities for students from the Panhandle to the Platte

Know which country has an economic output equal to Nebraska's own?

Could you name the state's oldest city — or say how many miles of rail run through the state?

If you were at the Thompson Alumni Center on UNO's campus April 6, chances are you could have found more than a few grade schoolers who knew the answers to those questions.

UNO hosted the Nebraska State Geographic Bee then, bringing in more than 100 fourth-through-eighth grade students from across the state. UNO has hosted the bee since its inception in 1989, testing students on their geographic knowledge and for the chance to make it to the National Geographic Bee in Washington, D.C.

The contest was created to encourage teachers to include geography in their classrooms, spark student interest in the subject and to increase public awareness about geography. The contest was run for nearly two decades by UNO geography Professor Charles Gildersleeve, who passed away in 2009. Geography staff assistant Brenda Todd now organizes the bee.

Michael Peterson, a UNO geography professor, has served as a judge for the bee since its first year.

"I think any time you can raise awareness of any discipline among younger people, that is an important thing to do," Peterson says. "I think it was something Gildersleeve really enjoyed doing. He was always amazed by how well the children could answer the questions."

"This is information you can use later in life, and I think Charlie saw the importance of that."

Students must pass a qualifying test to make it to the state competition. The qualifier is taken online, comprised of 70 multiple choice questions with a 60-minute time limit. The top 100 scorers advance to the state-wide competition at UNO.

There's plenty of incentive to make it beyond Omaha. The 2018 national bee champion received a \$50,000 college scholarship, a lifetime membership in the National



RAMAZAN KILINC, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, HELPS A STUDENT FROM OMAHA'S MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S ROOM PREPARE FOR THE SCHOOL'S GEOGRAPHY BEE QUALIFYING EXAM

**I THINK ANY TIME YOU CAN RAISE AWARENESS OF ANY DISCIPLINE AMONG YOUNGER PEOPLE, THAT IS AN IMPORTANT THING TO DO.**

Geographic Society and an all-expenses-paid expedition to the Galapagos Islands. The students who finished second and third received \$25,000 and \$10,000 in college scholarships, respectively.

Nebraska can claim one national champion — in 2008, sixth grader Akshay Rajagopal went to Washington D.C. and won the title. Rajagopal won on his first attempts at the school, state and national levels. He completed the finals with a perfect score, answering a final question that was considerably harder than simply naming a state's capital:

The urban area of Cochabamba has been in the news recently due to protests over the privatization of the municipal water supply and regional autonomy issues. Cochabamba is the third-largest conurbation in what country?

Rajagopal answered correctly with "Bolivia" to become the state's first champ.

The majority of Nebraska State Bee winners come from Omaha- and Lincoln-area schools, but there have been winners from as far away as North Platte and Gering. The 2018 Nebraska State Geographic Bee winner was Quentin Bauer, a seventh grader from Millard Central Middle School in Omaha.

— Jessica Yrkoski, University Communications

### CAN YOU BEE PERFECT

See how you fare with the following questions typical of what Nebraska State Geographic Bee participants are asked.

1. How many metropolitan statistical areas are at least partially located in Nebraska?
  2. What is the oldest continuously inhabited city in Nebraska?
  3. How many miles of rail run throughout the state of Nebraska?
  4. Nebraska's economic output, as measured using gross domestic product (GDP), most closely equals that of which country?
    - A. Brazil
    - B. Kenya
    - C. Poland
    - D. Morocco
    - E. Iran
  5. What is the most populous city in Nebraska located more than 10 miles from I-80?
- ANSWERS**
1. Four – Omaha/Council Bluffs, Lincoln, Grand Island and Sioux City
  2. Bellevue
  3. About 3,400 miles
  4. Morocco at about \$100 billion
  5. Fremont (population about 26,000)

# TWEET. POST. SNAP.

## UNO STUDENTS HELP ENGAGE NEBRASKANS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA

Over the past decade, social media have become key to how people connect. For communities — including the smaller cities and towns across Nebraska — that's meant a major shift in how to spark civic engagement.

Last fall, UNO students began helping such communities by showing them how they can better tweet, post, chat and more.

The students, from Professor Jeremy Lipschultz's Social Media Measurement and Management course, teamed with University of Nebraska Extension offices in Ashland, Ravenna and Nebraska City to address how rural communities could leverage social media to connect with their citizenry. Other partnering organizations included Purdue University Center for Regional Development and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Agricultural Economics Department.

Through funding from the Nebraska Rural Futures Institute (RFI), Lipschultz and his longtime collaborator Charlotte Narjes, special projects coordinator for the Nebraska Agricultural Economics Department, are aiming to cultivate best practices for smaller communities across Nebraska and the nation.

"It's begun a little differently in each of the three communities," Lipschultz says. "The students broke up into three teams and conducted social media audits. From that environmental scan, Maverick Social Media

(MSM) account executives developed and presented social media plans."

Students found that each community had unique needs. In Ravenna, for example, the Chamber of Commerce wanted to focus on business development.

UNO senior Jurge Cruz-Alvarez, an MSM project leader and Social Media Lab technician, then visited businesses in the area.

"They were doing things well already, but we wanted to enhance those efforts," Cruz-Alvarez says.

There was a need, he adds, to focus on how the Ravenna Chamber of Commerce could emphasize the uniqueness of each business while also reflecting the Chamber's personality in each of its social media posts.

As a benchmark, students utilized last August's solar eclipse, which brought thousands of visitors to Ravenna. Lessons learned have already been used to help guide promotion for the town's annual Annavar festival, which took place in June.

"They had a major influx of interaction online [during the eclipse] that translated into dollars spent in the community," Cruz-Alvarez says.



UNO STUDENT KYLIE KIGHT COLLECTS DATA FOR A SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIT OF NERASKA CITY TO HELP THE AREA LEVERAGE NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

"We wanted to see if we could find a way to match that level of engagement."

Enhancing social media engagement in these communities goes well beyond improving local commerce. For Robert Gallardo, assistant director of the Purdue University Center for Regional Development, it is also about issues of safety and equality.

"There are issues that are time-sensitive, and if you rely on your traditional methods, you may not be responsive enough," Gallardo says. "But more importantly, you must listen to all sectors of your residents, not just a particular type that tends to show up to town hall or city hall meetings."

Lipschultz is presenting his students' plans this summer to the Purdue University Center for Regional Development and University of Nebraska Extension offices.

— Charley Steed, Associate Editor

## MAKING THE CASE FOR MORE SOCIAL WORKERS



Across the state of Nebraska — but especially in rural communities — there is a need for more social workers. That's doubly true for those with both a specialization in child welfare and a master's degree.

UNO is helping meet that need with the university's first Child Welfare Cohort — a three-year program bringing together 18 social work employees from across the state working to earn a master's degree while continuing to work full time. UNO's Grace Abbott School of Social Work began the program in 2016, doing so in collaboration with the Nebraska Department of

Health and Human Services, Project Harmony and the Nebraska Families collaborative.

"The program is doing great," says Amanda Duffy Randall, director of the Grace Abbott School of Social Work. "We are more than halfway done and we've gotten through the most difficult part, which was getting the students set up with their practicum experience."

Coming from Nebraska cities including Wayne, Greeley, Grand Island and Kearney, the 18 students take courses online while also attending in-person classes every other weekend at UNO or at a satellite location at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. The students also are responsible for 512 hours of on-site practicum credit at an agency other than the one for which they work.

The cohort will graduate in December 2019 but, as part of the program, will continue to work in Nebraska for a minimum of three years after earning their master's degrees. By the end of the program, each student will have worked for seven years.

That's considerable given that average turnover for a child welfare professional is closer to one-and-a-half years, according to Duffy Randall. Such frequent change can be to the detriment of children in foster care. According to a December 2017 article in the Lincoln Journal Star, nearly 17 percent of the youth in out-of-home care had five or more caseworker changes and nearly 37 percent had three to four caseworker changes.

— Charley Steed, Associate Editor



# AHRENS JUMPS TO HISTORY

BECOMES FIRST MAVERICK TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETE TO BECOME DIVISION I ALL-AMERICAN

At the University of Oregon's historic Hayward Field June 9, UNO senior Stephanie Ahrens made some history of her own.

Ahrens earned All-American honors at the NCAA Outdoor Track & Field Championships, becoming the first Maverick in UNO track & field history to do so since the university moved all sports to Division I competition.

Ahrens tied for eighth in the high jump with a height of 5-feet-10 inches. Alexus Henry of the University of Texas at Arlington won the meet with a jump of 5-11 1/2. The top eight performers in NCAA track and field events become All-Americans.

"I want to give a huge thank you to the coaching staff for helping me achieve this goal, especially Coach Jill Sutton for preparing me for everything in Oregon, including the weather," said Ahrens.

Ahrens cleared 5-8 on her first attempt. She cleared 5-10 on her third attempt.

The jump capped an incredible Maverick career for Ahrens, a graduate of Lincoln Southwest High School. She won four Summit League high jump titles and was named All-Summit League and Academic All-Summit League four times. She holds the UNO record in the high jump at 5-11 1/2, set in April at the Bryan Clay Invitational.

Ahrens also competed for UNO in the triple jump and the 60-meter and 100-meter hurdles.

"This is such an incredible accomplishment for Stephanie, our track and field program and the athletic department," said Head Coach Chris Richardson. "This performance is a culmination of all the hard work that she and Coach Sutton have put in all year. I can't express how happy I am for both of them."

Former Mavericks Heather Minssen and Sami Spenger were the last UNO track and field athletes to earn All-America status, that happening in 2011 during the Division II era.

# GETTING A HEAD START IN ATHLETIC TRAINING

## UNO HELPS STUDENTS FROM ACROSS NEBRASKA EXPLORE CAREER PATH IN AT

There's a steady stream of athletic trainers working in high schools across Nebraska, and significant portion of that trend begins at UNO's High School Athletic Training Day.

For the past eight years, the athletic training program at UNO has hosted high school students from throughout the state to show them the basics of being an athletic trainer.

It originally began with just students from Omaha-area high schools but since has grown into a regional event with athletic trainees travelling to Omaha from Lincoln, Kearney, Hastings, Grand Island and North Platte.

The event provides an opportunity for students with athletic training to get experience outside the classroom.

"We're doing a lot of hands-on activities and providing an opportunity that the high school students probably wouldn't have gotten at school," says Sam Wilkins, an instructor in UNO's School of Health and Kinesiology.

While most students have some athletic training experience, it isn't a requirement. UNO's free, one-day camp, then, often

becomes a catalyst for other training experiences. Students with even the smallest interest end up with lots to gain.

The event consists of two sessions, including hands-on training in the morning. Opportunities include a spine-boarding session; learning how to tape ankles, knees, and elbows; basic first aid; and a session about concussions and head injuries.

"We don't want to get students here and put them in a classroom and have them listen to people talk all day long," Wilkins says.

UNO students also get valuable experience as they facilitate all sessions alongside faculty, staff and even some alumni.

UNO's athletic training program has alumni scattered at high schools across the state. Many of them nudge their students to attend UNO. The day as a recruiting event, though, isn't the program's goal.

"It's more about giving back to the community," Wilkins says. "Giving students an understanding of what an athletic trainer does."

*— Nolan Searl, University Communications*



## MAVERICKS BRING HOME SUMMIT FOOD FIGHT CROWN

UNO Athletics won its first Summit League "Food Fight" title in 2017-18, gathering more than 56,500 pounds of food for charity.

The final tally of 56,583 pounds is the largest amount by one school in league history and marked an increase of more than 55,000 pounds by UNO from the previous year. The Mavericks worked with five elementary schools in Papillion (Carriage Hill, Hickory Hill, Patriot, Bell and Portal) to raise the donations. The food was donated to the Tri-City Food Pantry.

Each Summit League school had two weeks, one in the fall and one in winter/spring, to collect the food. Total amounts were calculated from non-perishable food, cash and online donations.

South Dakota State, which had won the title in each of the last five years, came in second with 41,297 pounds of food raised. South Dakota was third with 11,466 pounds.

The league's eight schools raised more than 150,000 pounds of food in 2017-18, and in the 10 years of the "Food Fight" program, more than 728,700 pounds of food have been collected for charity.





## MAVERICK LEGEND DON LEAHY PASSES AWAY

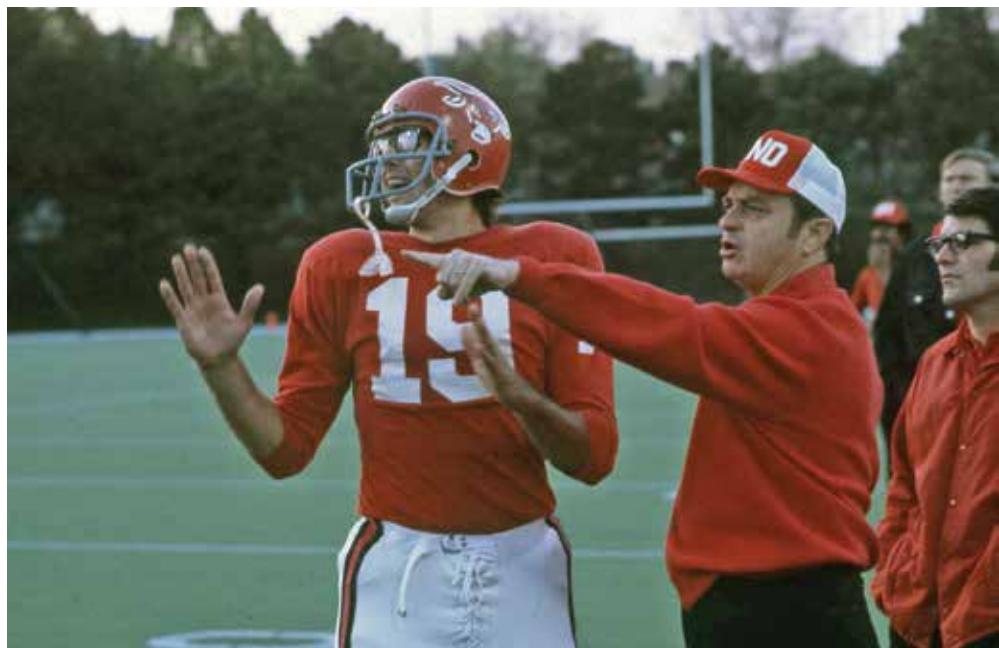
**FORMER ATHLETIC DIRECTOR  
PLAYED PIVOTAL ROLES IN UNO  
ATHLETICS HISTORY**

UNO lost one of the foremost figures in the history of its athletic department Feb. 23 with the passing of athletic director emeritus Don Leahy. He was 88.

"It is difficult to overstate Mr. Leahy's impact, not only on our department, but on the campus as a whole," said Trev Alberts, vice chancellor of athletics. "His longtime association with Omaha Athletics brought about profound change to the department and positively affected countless student-athletes, fellow administrators and staff."

"He was someone who very early on recognized the contribution UNO Athletics could make to both the campus community and to greater Omaha. He was a strategic thinker, a tireless worker and a warm and genuine person. No one was a more positive representative for UNO."

Leahy began his association with UNO in 1974 when he became athletic director, the first of two stints at the position. He immediately pushed to elevate the Mavericks to the North Central Conference, at the time one of the strongest Division II conferences in the country. The move, which was completed two years later, boosted the Mavericks in prominence and competition. UNO went on to win or share the NCC Championship in football nine times and four times in men's



basketball before the dissolution of the conference in 2008.

Remarkably, Leahy also served as the offensive coordinator of the football team for three seasons during the transition from independent to NCC membership.

His second stint as athletic director lasted just two years (1995-97), but he had an equally momentous affect on the fortunes of the athletic department in that short time. At the request of then-Chancellor Del Weber, Leahy was charged with starting a Division I hockey program at UNO. Leahy assembled a broad, influential committee of Omaha citizens who helped lay the foundation for Maverick hockey.

Leahy rejoined UNO Athletics for the last time in 2009, returning as athletic director emeritus at the invitation of Alberts. Leahy served in an advisory role during Alberts' transition into the job, a role he maintained until his passing.

An Omaha native, Leahy graduated from Creighton Prep and later attended college at Marquette University, receiving his bachelor of science degree in 1952 while also playing football there. He returned home and earned his master's degree from Creighton in 1958. He worked at Creighton Prep from 1952 to 1972, serving as a teacher, administrator and coach. In 17 seasons, he led the school to eight state football championships.

**IT IS DIFFICULT TO OVERSTATE MR. LEAHY'S IMPACT, NOT ONLY ON OUR DEPARTMENT, BUT ON THE CAMPUS AS A WHOLE.**

Less than a year later, UNO announced that it would field a team beginning in the 1997-98 season.

Leahy hired Mike Kemp as the hockey team's first head coach in June 1996 and later oversaw a season ticket drive that netted almost 6,400 seats reserved in just 16 days.

"I always will be very grateful to Don for giving me the opportunity to come to Omaha and be a part of this remarkable campus," said Kemp, now associate athletic director. "He hired me twice, first as the coach of our short-lived club team in the mid-'70s and then as the head coach when we began to play at the Division I level. He was always a great supporter of the program as well as a valued mentor and friend."

From 1972-74, Leahy was director of coliseum activities at Ak-Sar-Ben in Omaha before becoming UNO's athletic director.

Leahy is a member of the UNO Athletics Hall of Fame, the Nebraska High School Hall of Fame and the North Central Conference Hall of Fame. He was named the Creighton Prep Alumnus of the Year in 1974. In addition, his name adorns the football practice field at Prep.

Leahy was preceded in death by his wife, Carmen (2013). They are survived by children Richard, John and Mary Leahy Bayne, seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.



## PLAYING FOR A PURPOSE

UNO's season ended in March with an NCHC playoff loss to North Dakota, but that's not the last time Mavericks laced their skates in 2018. In April, former UNO players (above) held a game on the Holland Ice at Baxter Arena as part of the Omaha4Humboldt Fundraiser. Proceeds supported families of the 16 members of the Humboldt Broncos junior hockey team who died in a bus accident in Saskatchewan, Canada, April 6. Former UNO players representing every roster in Maverick hockey history played.

# GABINET STAFF GETS NEW FACES

The UNO hockey bench will look markedly different in 2018-19.

Head Coach Mike Gabinet saw several changes to his staff beginning in March with the departure of assistant coach Peter Mannino, who left to become associate head coach at Miami, a fellow member of the National Collegiate Hockey Conference.

In May, Gabinet filled that opening by hiring NHL coach Paul Jerrard as an assistant coach.

"We are very fortunate to be able to add someone with Paul's reputation, character and work ethic to our staff," Gabinet said. "He has NCAA experience and most recently at the highest level of hockey, running the Calgary Flames' defense and working with their special teams."

"He has a great track record of developing players," Gabinet added. "His hiring shows the level at which our program is committed to excellence. We want to be known as one of the top programs in the country at developing players and people."

Jerrard is a hockey veteran with 21 years as an assistant coach in the National Hockey League, American Hockey League and college hockey. In addition to his last two seasons with Calgary, he also was an assistant coach for the Dallas Stars for two years and with the Colorado Avalanche for one season.

Also new to the Maverick staff is Brian Kaufman, who was hired as director of hockey operations.

Kaufman is no stranger to Omaha. He spent five seasons with the Omaha Lancers of the USHL, first serving as an assistant coach for the 2012-13 season before taking over as head coach for the next four seasons. As the head coach, he led the Lancers to a record of 121-91-28 and two playoff appearances.

"UNO has a great hockey tradition, and I'm really looking forward to joining Coach Gabinet and his staff to build on that tradition," Kaufman said. "College hockey offers a tremendous opportunity for these student-athletes, and I can't wait to work with these players because I'm excited where this program is heading."

Under Gabinet's first season as head coach, the Mavericks were 17-17-2 in 2017-18 and went 10-13-1 in the NCHC, finishing in fifth place. The conference finish was above expectations as UNO was predicted to finish seventh in the NCHC's preseason poll. The Mavericks ranked in the top 10 in the nation in offense and on the power play. In addition, the Mavericks finished fourth in the country in average attendance.

The Mavericks open their 22nd season in October. Season tickets are on sale at the Baxter Arena box office, at OMavs.com/tix and by calling (402) 554-MAVS.

# GETTING BUSINESS DONE IN NEBRASKA

By Kent Walton



MARTIN BREMMER OF VENANGO, TURNED TO NBDC FOR HELP GETTING GRAINGOAT IN PRODUCTION.

**NBDC PROVIDES STATEWIDE SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS LOOKING TO LAUNCH, GROW AND MAINTAIN A BUSINESS**

As the only dually licensed therapist within 90 miles of Sidney, Nebraska, who provides counseling for both mental health issues and addictions, Nichole Peralta knows her specialized skills are in high demand in the southern panhandle.

So when the Cheyenne County Board of Commissioners voted earlier this year to close the doors to the Panhandle Mental Health Center, the organization where she'd been employed for the past eight years, she knew she wanted to continue serving clients. Without the support of a parent organization, however, that meant hanging her own shingle and starting a private practice — from scratch.

A master's degree in counseling prepared Peralta for helping clients through mental-health challenges. It didn't prepare her, though, for the headaches of launching and operating a small business.

"When it comes to business, I'm clueless," Peralta says. "It's not what I went to school for."

"Owning my own business wasn't in the cards ever. When I started looking into it, there were phone lines and fax lines, software and liability insurance. You have to put all this money down before you can start making money. I don't know how people do it."

For many prospective business owners throughout Nebraska — including Peralta — help has come time and again from UNO's Nebraska Business Development Center.

Peralta began working with NBDC's Scottsbluff office director Margaret Akin soon after it was announced the Panhandle Mental Health Center would close. This summer, less than half a year later, she opened Karuna Counseling.



ANNETTE AND BRUCE WILES OF MIDWEST HOP PRODUCERS IN PLATTSMOUTH GOT HELP FROM NBDC IN EXPANDING SALES TO NEW MARKETS, INCLUDING CHINA.

## STANDING UP FOR SIDNEY

At the same time Peralta was pondering how to get her private practice up and running, the city of Sidney was contemplating its own economic future. Since the 1960s, the city had been home to the corporate headquarters of Cabela's, a multibillion dollar specialty retailer that employed 2,000 people in the community of 7,000. But earlier this year, Cabela's was purchased by longtime rival Bass Pro Shops, which moved the bulk of the community's top-paying jobs to its headquarters in Springfield, Missouri.

To help the struggling community revitalize its devastated economy, a group of organizations that included NBDC, a department of UNO's College of Business Administration, joined forces to create new employment opportunities.

Akin and NBDC have worked closely with the Sidney campus of Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) to provide an array of services for entrepreneurs looking to start new businesses there. Akin, who has a background as a CPA, is providing free business counseling on topics including how to develop a business plan, legal issues, hiring, taxes and bookkeeping. WNCC is providing free use of campus space and resources for up to two years to serve as an incubator for new businesses trying to gain a foothold. It's where Peralta opened Karuna Counseling.

Once the startups are off and running, the city of Sidney will provide owners six months of free rent in a downtown location. In addition, businesses in Sidney are qualified to receive additional funding under legislative bill 840, which allows cities to put together a plan to siphon off a portion of their sales tax money and put it toward economic development. The effort to revitalize Sidney and its surrounding

communities started simply but has spread like a prairie fire across the high plains region.

"We started out with just a meeting," Akin says. "People started taking advantage of the resources and it's still happening. The word kind of spread and we started going into some of the outlying communities that have been impacted by what's happening at Cabela's. We've had a meeting in Kimball, we've had two in Chappell. We've kind of spread out that way, and more people are requesting them. It's become a successful way to reach out to people."

Resource meetings like those held in Sidney are often hosted by a Chamber of Commerce, community colleges and Centers for Economic Development. Such meetings can bring financial and consulting resources to as many as 35 businesses at a time. Each meeting closes with networking when business owners can reach out to colleagues and support organizations to build strategic partnerships.

With hundreds of miles of rural highways separating her from the rural communities she serves, Akin has grown accustomed to spending many hours a week on the road. Growing demands in Sidney and the southern panhandle have increased the amount of time she spends there. As a result, she hopes to establish a satellite office on the WNCC campus located on the town's east side.

Having easy access to NBDC's resources and Akin's expertise provided Peralta a much-appreciated measure of relief.

"I know I have the support I need. I can just walk down the hall and say, 'Help. I'm stuck,'" Peralta says. "Even when I'm done at the college, I know I can still go back and get help. That's a huge relief. Opening a private practice is scary. But they've made it less daunting. Anytime I come to a roadblock, they say, 'It's okay, let's reach out to this person for help.'"

## A HISTORY OF HELP

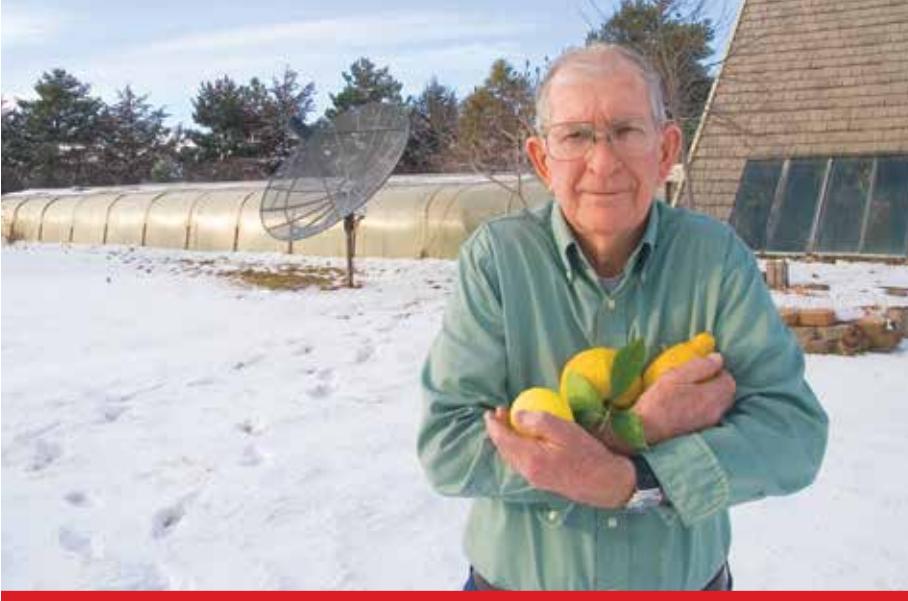
NBDC has been providing such help for more than four decades. It began in 1977 when UNO was awarded one of seven federal contracts to operate a University Business Development Center (UBDC). In 1980, President Carter signed the Small Business Development Center Act, transforming the UBDC project into today's SBDC program that is active in all 50 states. In 1981, UNO helped lead the effort to create the Association of Small Business Development Centers, the professional development and advocacy organization for the small business development center movement.

In 2011, the university received its accreditation by ASBDC and SBA as a Small Business and Technology Center — just the eighth program to earn this national distinction. Today, Nebraska's NBDC programs include the Small Business Development Centers, the Procurement Technical Assistance program, the Pollution Prevention Resource Information Center, Technology Commercialization and Professional and Organizational Development. Funding is provided by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the Defense Logistics Agency (U.S. Department of Defense), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State of Nebraska and First National Bank of Omaha. Through the University of Nebraska, the organization leverages one dollar of state support to receive two dollars of federal funds.

"This braided funding forms the basis by which we provide different kinds of services depending on the need of a business here



NBDC STATE DIRECTOR CATHERINE LANG.



RUSS FINCH OF GREENHOUSE IN THE SNOW IN CHADRON.

in Nebraska," says NBDC State Director Catherine Lang.

NBDC employs 27 consultants and maintains offices in Omaha, Lincoln, Wayne, Norfolk, Grand Island, Kearney, North Platte, McCook, Scottsbluff and Chadron. It also partners with University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Wayne State College and Chadron State College, which leverage their funding to support NBDC efforts. According to information released in its 2017 annual report, Nebraska's NBDC clients created or saved 1,858 jobs, invested \$46.4 million in their operations and increased their sales, including government contracts, by \$221.7 million. All that created an economic impact to Nebraska of \$496.5 million.

## SUCCESSES

Among NBDC successes outside Omaha is White River Feed in Chadron. In 2012, Cody Brooks and then-business partner Craig Hoffman turned to NBDC's Chadron office for help writing a business plan in order to purchase White River Feed & Trailer Sales. The business duo also signed a waiver allowing NBDC to work directly Security First Bank in Chadron, expediting the loan process.

"We wound up with a good, solid business plan," Brooks says. "It got us the loan. We kept referring back to it. It gave us a three-year plan that served as a way to gauge our progress and where we needed to be."

The duo discontinued trailer sales and changed the business name to White River Feed. Brooks and his wife later bought Hoffman's share of the business — and turned again to NBDC for help securing three government contracting awards in 2015. White River Feed, which has five employees, has increased sales every year since 2012.

"For a young person, or for anyone just starting out in business, they're a good resource to have, and they're right here in our hometown," he says. "I'd darn sure recommend them to anybody who needs business advice and assistance."

Those sentiments are echoed by Martin and Patricia Bremmer of Venango, a village of 164 people in Perkins County on the Nebraska-Colorado border. The couple turned to NBDC for help getting their GrainGoat invention and production company off the ground. The hand-held GrainGoat measures moisture content in grain. That can be a big deal considering a 2,000-acre wheat crop can lose \$2,600 in value per day if the grain is not harvested at optimal moisture.

Full-sized harvest equipment moves slowly and often has to cover fields many miles apart. Six hours of harvesting for testing costs approximately \$800 in equipment value and fuel. GrainGoat saves money and time.

The Bremmers connected with Odee Ingersoll at NBDC's Kearney office. They founded their company, Windcall Manufacturing, and since have received two rounds of private investment funding and one round of state funding.

Bremmer says Ingersoll "was instrumental in providing us guidelines, pointers and milestones we needed to meet."

"Since then, Odee has always been there for us. The expanse of his background is pretty phenomenal. We have never thrown a salvo of questions at him that he couldn't answer."

Also in Chadron is Russ Finch, who created a greenhouse design in which the indoor climate is warmed in the winter and cooled in the summer by using the Earth's natural temperature eight feet underground. The only

energy used to maintain the temperature is a 10-inch wheel blower that circulates air, using a geothermal concept that conserves energy and reduces production costs.

With NBDC's help his company, Greenhouse in the Snow, sells detailed instructions for building the greenhouses, along with frames and Lexan Polycarbonate glazing in six-foot modules. To date, he has sold his greenhouses in six states, 90 percent of which are being used for commercial plant production.

Other examples of NBDC successes:

- Annette and Bruce Wiles, co-owners of Midwest Hop Producers in Plattsmouth, partnered with NBDC to receive accurate market analysis as they looked to expand sales of their uniquely Nebraska-grown hops to new markets, including China.
- Leanne Ruskamp, the owner of Dawg's Hut, a Beatrice retailer that sells custom screen-printed and embroidered team apparel, used NBDC certified business valuation services and met with NBDC consultants to learn about operational and inventory management tools.
- Carla and Tim Schuster, owners of Schuster's Outdoor & RV in Beatrice, worked with NBDC consultants to provide strategic planning and financial analysis as they expanded their business to include camper and RV repair.
- NBDC consultants provided Dennis Rosene, owner of Rosene Machine, a full-service machine shop in Firth, manufacturing analysis and financial consulting for growth during an intensive business development program.

From assisting a smalltown startup in the panhandle to developing a business plan for an expansion in the Omaha or Lincoln metro areas, the key to serving the diverse communities spread across Nebraska is to have consultants in place who understand the unique business climate each presents, Lang says.

"Certainly, each business presents unique opportunities and challenges, and areas present unique opportunities and challenges for a business to start and grow in," Lang says. "That's the benefit of having people who are regionally placed. They understand those nuances and can help the business navigate in the area they're going to start to grow."

## LOOKING AHEAD

As NBDC looks to immediate and long-term future of small business across the state, the organization's primary goal is to strengthen its status as a trusted partner with all the entities that form Nebraska's complex business ecosystem. Nebraska commercial lenders and banks is just one group NBDC has targeted in this effort, Lang says.

"A lot of people go to their banks first and say, 'I've got the greatest idea for a business and it's written on a napkin.' What happens consistently is the banks will say, 'We cannot wait to work with you and serve you, but we want you to go to the NBDC. They can help you get that into a form that we can then consider for financing,'" Lang says.

Lang also cited NBDC's involvement with Blueprint Nebraska as the type of partnership she hopes the organization will contribute to in the years to come. Launched in May, Blueprint Nebraska is a statewide coalition that comprises a group of Nebraska leaders representing business, agriculture, government and higher education. Its aim is to develop a plan for economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity as Nebraska looks to its next 150 years and beyond. The Blueprint Nebraska Steering Committee will oversee an analysis of 15 areas key to Nebraska's long-term economic success and quality of life, including: agriculture; healthcare; education attainment; workforce, taxation and incentives; housing; community vitality; and technology and innovation. The coalition will then develop an action plan based on extensive research and results of a statewide road tour this fall that will engage Nebraskans in charting a plan for growth.

"The university is very engaged in Blueprint Nebraska. (University) President (Hank) Bounds is intimately involved with Blueprint Nebraska. NBDC has been asked to help provide program management and support to Blueprint Nebraska. While we have our main programs across the state, we're also proud to be called upon by the university to engage in other business and economic development opportunities to support the university and the state of Nebraska," Lang says.

"We're excited about these additional opportunities that we can participate in, and we're honored to be considered as a partner in those conversations about making Nebraska a successful place to start and grow a business."



CODY BROOKS PURCHASED WHITE RIVER FEED & TRAILER SALES IN 2012.



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# FOR THE BIRDS

FROM THE PLATTE TO THE PANHANDLE AND  
THROUGHOUT NEBRASKA'S RAINWATER  
BASIN, RESEARCHERS IN UNO'S LABORATORY  
OF AVIAN ECOLOGY ARE ANSWERING  
QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO PRESERVE AND  
PROTECT OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS

*By Susan Houston Klaus*



**CRANES OF THE GREY WIND**  
THOMAS D. MANGELSEN

Early March snow flurries and dim morning light blend the soft greys of sandhill cranes standing in the shallow waters of a submerged sandbar. A pair of mallards and a female wigeon are dwarfed by the regal cranes whose ancestors have come to the Platte River for more than 10 million years. Soon, mated pairs and family groups will come together, and like smoke rising from a chimney, great kettles of cranes will spiral and rise miles above the river. As they sail on southerly winds, the skeins of cranes will disappear against blue April skies — only the sounds of their ancient voices trailing back to earth as they journey to their northern home.



Photo: Sue Cedarholm

## THE WORLD IS HIS STUDIO

It was apparent as far back as his days at then-Omaha University that Thomas D. Mangelsen had a thing for birds. As a 19-year-old freshman in 1965, Mangelsen won the title of world champion goose caller in a competition at Missouri Valley, Iowa.

Mangelsen spent two years at OU as a business major before transferring to Doane College and earning a degree in biology. He since has put his studies in both disciplines to good use — and then some.

Mangelsen today is one of the world's foremost nature photographers, having captured stunning images of flora, fauna and wildlife on all seven continents. Recently profiled in a "60 Minutes" feature, he also is owner of eight Mangelsen Images of Nature Galleries, including one in Omaha and another in his home of Jackson, Wyoming.

Among his most popular works is "Cranes of the Grey Wind" taken of sandhill cranes on the Platte River during early March snow flurries in 2011. The early spring gathering of sandhills on Nebraska's Platte is among the greatest wildlife spectacles on the continent, with hundreds of thousands of birds present at once.

See more about Mangelsen, his work, his honors and awards at [mangelsen.com](http://mangelsen.com)



**CHELSEA FOREHEAD**

While many of her cohorts this summer have been following news, entertainment and more on Twitter, Chelsea Forehead has been busy tracking different kinds of tweets.

The graduate student is conducting field research through the UNO Laboratory of Avian Ecology on the interactions of the brown-headed cowbird (a real jerk of a bird) and the dickcissel.

If you're like most Nebraskans, you've likely never heard of them. Nor, for that matter, most of the other 461 varieties of birds that have been sighted in the state.

But birds matter. How they survive and thrive in their habitat has an impact on those who want to protect and preserve their ecosystem, like conservationists and land managers — and on those who simply want to appreciate them, like tourists and residents.



JOHN MCCARTY AND LAREESA WOLFENBARGER OF THE UNO LABORATORY OF AVIAN ECOLOGY.

"Birds are really excellent indicators of the health of the ecosystems as a whole," Forehead says. "By studying them, we can investigate larger environmental issues. It's about the air we breathe, the water we drink and the soil we grow our food in."

### A SPECIAL PLACE FOR BIRDS — NEBRASKA

The state's agricultural landscape is constantly changing, and along with it the migratory, breeding and nesting habits of birds. Fewer resources available to birds, as well as man-made influences, mean that the avian population has to find a way to adapt.

Some species can. Others can't.

Through the lab, co-principal investigators and mentors John McCarty and LaReesa Wolfenbarger guide students in gathering data to address questions from resource managers and other decision-makers about how to strive for an ecologically balanced environment.

"Our focus is on answering really specific applied questions that people need the answers to, and that's why students come and work with us in our lab," McCarty says.

Sharing what they discover with others is "kind of built in" to the projects, Wolfenbarger adds. "In so many of the projects, the person who has the questions is an active part of the research."

The husband-and-wife biology professors — McCarty is director of environmental studies and Wolfenbarger is biology department chair — founded the lab after they arrived at UNO in 2001.

"I think Nebraska has a really special role in bird conservation," says Wolfenbarger. "We're in the middle of the spring migratory pathway and that makes our state a special place in terms of the diversity that we have coming through the state."

The Eskimo curlew, a shorebird that regularly stopped here during spring migration in the 1880s, had all but disappeared by the turn of the 20th century. Today, it's almost certainly extinct.

That was the direction the whooping crane was headed. One of the rarest species in the world, it's an annual visitor to Nebraska, stopping on its way from the Gulf Coast of Texas to northern Manitoba through the state's Rainwater Basin.

"In the 1940s, only a couple dozen of these birds existed," Wolfenbarger says. "Since then, massive conservation efforts have resulted in a slow but steady increase in population. Now there are more than 430 in the population that migrates through the state."

I THINK NEBRASKA HAS A REALLY SPECIAL ROLE IN BIRD CONSERVATION. WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SPRING MIGRATORY PATHWAY AND THAT MAKES OUR STATE A SPECIAL PLACE IN TERMS OF THE DIVERSITY THAT WE HAVE COMING THROUGH THE STATE.

### COMMON GROUND

The first graduate student in the "McWolf" Lab — a portmanteau created by students — began her research in 2002. Since then, 17 others, with support from McCarty and Wolfenbarger, are working on or have completed their master's theses. Several members have been nominated for or received awards from UNO and national groups for their research.

They've partnered with organizations, land managers and peer institutions — in areas that span the Sandhills, the Rainwater Basin in south central Nebraska, and rural areas outside Omaha — to study grassland birds as well as migratory shorebirds.

Getting buy-in from local landowners when lab researchers are in the field is important, not only in accessing land but also for sharing the goals of the data collection, Wolfenbarger says.

"One of the cool things when you're working with landowners is that they know the wildlife of Nebraska and they appreciate it, so there's a common ground that you have from the get-go. We've had really positive interactions."

McCarty, a board member of the Nature Conservancy, gives credit to the financial support the students have received through the lab from that group, as well as UNO, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

### **INFORMING CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

Forehead's research is taking place at the Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies, located between Grand Island and Kearney. Nearly every morning this summer, she's woken up with the birds to head out to a 3,000-acre piece of land where she gathers data for her study.

She's looking for the presence of perches — natural and man-made — that cowbirds may use as vantage points from which they can target dickcissel nests. A nest parasite, the cowbird destroys an egg from the nest of another bird, replacing it with its own egg and leaving it to hatch and be raised by the host bird.

"I'm looking to see if the presence of these structures is affecting the levels of parasitism experienced by the dickcissel, which is a bird of conservation concern," Forehead says.

Parcel by parcel of land, she's also been looking for dickcissel nests to identify whether or not they've been parasitized. By the end of the summer, she estimates that she'll have methodically visited each identified nest about 200 times.

"I want to try to help answer questions that would address a need in conservation — not just for curiosity's sake, but for something that would inform our further conservation efforts."



MICHELLE BIODROWSKI

### **NESTLING INTO CAREERS**

Members of UNO's Laboratory of Avian Ecology have used their time in the lab and in the field as launching pads for a variety of careers. Among them:

**JOEL JORGENSEN**, 1997 (BS) and 2007 (MS), who studied the buff-breasted sandpiper in the Rainwater Basin. He's now the manager of nongame birds for the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission and continues to collaborate and consult with the lab (see article page 34 for more about Jorgensen). "I wouldn't be in my job today if it wasn't for my experience and what I got there," he says.

**CHASE WICKARD**, 2017 (MS), who researched how Conservation Reserve Program land is impacting the Brown-headed Cowbird in prairies just outside Omaha. After receiving his degree, he joined E&A Consulting in Omaha as an environmental services scientist. "How John and LaReesa go about being professionals in the lab, how they deal with students, being very positive and encouraging, really translated into the workplace for me," he says.

**MICHELLE BIODROWSKI**, 2013 (MS), who looked at the effects of patch burn grazing on the dickcissel and grasshopper sparrow at Platte River Prairies. Today, she's a private lands wetland easement team specialist for Conservation Districts of Iowa. "The lab is producing some very good science in all kinds of interesting research, and Nebraska species are benefiting directly from the work the lab does," she says. "I have a lot more confidence and I feel that I'm a better scientist because I've worked with them."



## BRINGING AWARENESS

Some research involves the impact of man on birds.

That relationship is what Heather Leas wanted to examine with her research on male greater prairie chickens near the NPPD Ainsworth Wind Energy Facility in the Sandhills.

The question: Do wind turbines have a physiological impact on these birds?

"We wanted to make informed decisions, both from a wildlife management perspective and for energy users and builders," she says. "It wasn't just about any negative effects — it was to see if there are any effects at all."

Leas and the lab collaborated with UNL researchers on the study, collecting more than 200 samples of droppings from 15 display sites near the wind farm. She analyzed the birds' corticosterone, a stress hormone, and testosterone at UNO's Endocrine Bioservices Lab.

"The stress hormone, if they were more stressed out, would have been elevated," Leas says. "We were looking at variations and levels of the hormones in relation to the distance from the wind farm."

Ultimately, she didn't detect any effects of the wind turbines or distance from the wind turbines on either the corticosterone or testosterone — a finding that indicates the birds aren't more stressed in relationship to the wind turbines.

Leas says her experience underscores how important the work of the lab is to people across the state.

"We have to coexist more and more — agriculture and environment and urbanization. A lot of it isn't a lack of care, it's a lack of knowledge. Bringing more awareness to how human-caused factors are impacting the environment and how that can come back to us, it's important."



## THE BIRD MAN OF NEBRASKA

For birders like Joel Jorgensen, the promise of a new sighting is always around the corner. This spring, he added his 407th — a Swainson's warbler, last reported in the state in 1977 — to his list.

As program manager of nongame birds for the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission, the 1997 (BS) and 2007 (MS) biology grad's normal day at the office can include fielding calls from the public about backyard sightings or presenting at an ecotourism conference.

He's seen a growing interest in birds and birding and says it's somewhat different than other fields. The lines are more blurred between who's involved.

"You have this mix of people who are employed professionally like me, but also a robust community of amateurs who are very serious about birding. Those people are valuable to

our overall understanding of knowledge of bird distribution in the state."

This summer, he and co-author W. Ross Silcock will publish an updated version of 2001's "Birds of Nebraska: Their Distribution and Temporal Occurrence." The new online edition — available at [birdsofnebraska.org](http://birdsofnebraska.org) — now features maps. Each species has its own page with an overview of their status and distribution in the state.





## WANT TO ATTRACT MORE BIRDS TO YOUR YARD? HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DO IT:

- Plant a diversity of plants and select native species, says Joel Jorgensen. "Many people may think about trees and shrubs, but also include flowers for pollinators since most birds eat insects. Having a robust insect community should attract more birds. Avoid plants treated with neonicotinoids and also avoid or limit use of chemicals. And provide a water source."
- LaReesa Wolfenbarger recommends these websites:

### [audubon.org](http://audubon.org)

Find the "Native Plants" page then enter your ZIP code for a list of plants (trees, shrubs, flowers), what type of food or habitat you want to provide and what type of bird you'd like to attract.

### [plantnebraska.org](http://plantnebraska.org)

offers a guide to Trees & Shrubs for Wildlife from the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

- Keep in mind that not all birds migrate in winter. Diana Failla, executive director of the Urban Bird & Nature Alliance and a 1984 grad, recommends these plants and trees for food and shelter: American bittersweet, American cranberry bush viburnum, arborvitae, blue spruce, black chokeberry, hawthorn, boxwood, firethorn, winterberry, serviceberry, sumac, holly, red chokecherry; bachelor buttons (cornflower), baptista, buckeye shrub, butterfly weed, camelia, columbine, lupine, foxglove, fuchsia, phlox, rhododendron and viburnum.

- For ways to live peacefully with our feathered friends, John McCarty suggests this site from The American Bird Conservancy:

### [abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-friendly-life/](http://abcbirds.org/get-involved/bird-friendly-life/)

- Bookmark eBird.org, a site from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, to explore birds in your neighborhood, share sightings or create a list to track what you see.



# BIRDS, BEES, BUTTERFLIES AND ... BOERSMA



How will you spend your 86th birthday? UNO Graduate Larry Boersma (BA, 1953; MA, 1955) spent it defending birds, bees and butterflies.

An award-winning wildlife photographer (under the pen name Larry Allan), Boersma traveled to Washington, D.C., in early May to lobby congressmen to oppose changes to the Endangered Species Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act. He was among nearly two dozen volunteers from 10 states doing so under the auspices of Defenders of Wildlife.

Boersma was particularly concerned with provisions in a Farm Bill that he says would allow pesticides to imperil pollinators. Boersma wrote about the lobbying effort in the Sarasota (Florida) Herald-Tribune, his hometown paper.

"Bees have already been hit hard by pesticides, leading to significant declines in bee populations," he wrote. "The issue is so serious that seven bee species were added to the endangered species list in 2016, and one in four bees faces extinction. Butterflies are also at risk and are one of the fastest-declining of all endangered species. In 2015, two additional butterflies required protection under the ESA due in part to pesticides. Overall, more than 270 recovery plans covering over 300 endangered species list pesticides as a threat to recovery."

"Undermining protections for pollinators also harms farmers who depend upon pollination and intact natural systems for sound food production. Florida's farmers will surely be affected by this lack of oversight."

Boersma is no newcomer to wildlife protection. He has authored and/or illustrated more than a dozen books about the wildlife of North America. In 2005, the Sierra Club awarded him its Ansel Adams award "for superlative use of still photography to further a conservation cause."

That includes recent photos of sandhill cranes (pictured) taken at the Nature Conservancy's Platte River Prairies located between Grand Island and Kearney, Nebraska.

See more about Boersma and his work at [larry-allan.pixels.com](http://larry-allan.pixels.com)

**UNO OWNED A FARM?**

**THERE'S A MAVERICK LAKE IN THE SANDHILLS?**

**UNO HAD CATTLE AND HERDED THEM TO  
WESTERN NEBRASKA RANCHES?**

**IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW THOSE LITTLE TIDBITS,  
THEN YOU JUST MIGHT NOT REALIZE HOW  
CONNECTED UNO IS THROUGHOUT NEBRASKA.  
UNO MIGHT BE THE STATE'S METROPOLITAN  
UNIVERSITY, BUT IT ASSISTS NUMEROUS RURAL  
EFFORTS FROM THE PLATTE TO THE PANHANDLE  
AND ALL POINTS BETWEEN.**

**MANY OF THOSE INITIATIVES ARE  
ILLUSTRATED THROUGHOUT THIS ISSUE.  
HERE ARE A FEW MORE WAYS NEBRASKA  
AND UNO ARE CONNECTED.**

### **WHEN OMAHA U. OWNED A FARM — AND DREAM OF AN OIL STRIKE**

Black gold fever can be hard to shake, so when oil was discovered in Nebraska's Kimball County in the 1950s, even the University of Omaha had dreams of cashing in on "bubblin' crude."

OU had owned 160 acres of Kimball farmland since 1934, acquiring it via foreclosure from defendant Alfred Watson. "It looks like OU loaned some of its endowment funds for a farm mortgage," says UNO Archivist Les Valentine. "When the loan defaulted, OU got the farm."

The quarter section of land, located just south of the town of Kimball, was worth \$1,700 then. The university leased it for 20 years for wheat farming.

Beginning in 1950, though, Kimball landowners discovered oil-bearing sands thousands of feet beneath their crops — including farms neighboring OU's spread.

University officials got to drilling. In July 1954 OU contracted Rogers Oil to explore its property. By August the company had gone 6,440 feet deep. Telegraphs reporting moist earth, "aroused a flurry of excitement at the University," reported the Alumni Newsletter.

But no oil was found. The drilling was abandoned and wheat farming resumed. The 1957 crop brought \$700 to OU coffers.

In 1958, Kimball resident L.L. Nickle thought the land could yield even more. At public auction, he won the rights to lease the property from OU and drill again. OU would receive one-eighth royalties on oil and gas.

Once more, drilling came up bust.

In September 1961, the land was sold to Fern A. Jones for \$5,760. University Regents recommended that proceeds fund the "Kimball County Greenhouse" on campus. The deed mentions the university retains one-half interest in oil, gas and mineral rights.

Kimball would become known as the "Oil Capital of Nebraska," producing the most barrels in the state in 1960. Today, State Highway 71 borders OU's former Kimball Farm to the east. To the north is Interstate 80 and an abandoned Burger King.

# **KNOWING NEBRASKA AND UNO**



## TRES SENATORS

Three of the men elected to represent Nebraska as a U.S. Senator were educated at UNO — and two of them have roots west of Omaha. The trio:



**ROMAN LEE HRUSKA**, one of Nebraska's longest-serving U.S. Senators having served from 1954 to 1976. A native of David City, Nebraska, Hruska attended then-University of Omaha from 1923-1925.

**J. JAMES EXON**, senator from 1979 to 1997. An Omaha U. student from 1939 until he entered World War II, Exon also was Nebraska governor from 1971-1979.

**CHUCK HAGEL**, U.S. Senator from 1997 to 2009. Born in North Platte, Nebraska, Hagel was raised across Nebraska, living at different times in Ainsworth, Rushville, Scottsbluff, Terrytown, York and Columbus. He later served as U.S. Secretary of Defense from 2013-2015. He graduated from UNO in 1971.



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA FOUNDATION IN 2007 COMMISSIONED UNO ART PROFESSOR GARY DAY TO SKETCH "TOWER HILL" REFLECTING THE TOWERS (FROM LEFT) AT UNO, UNK AND UNL.

## TALLEST IN THE STATE

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has one. So does the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. But even if you stacked them on top of each other, the bell towers on those two campuses wouldn't measure up to UNO's 168-foot-tall Henningson Memorial Campanile. Few do, in fact — UNO's landmark, dedicated in 1989, is among the tallest clock towers in the world. Here's the breakdown just in Nebraska:

**UNK Carillon Tower** 66 feet tall

**UNL Mueller Tower** 84 feet

**UNO Henningson Campanile** 168 feet



## MISS NEBRASKA

Vanita Mae Brown really started something. Brown in 1949 was a sophomore at Omaha University majoring in speech and dramatics. And beauty pageant titles. First she was crowned Miss South Omaha. Then Miss Omaha.

Finally, Miss Nebraska. She took the last crown to Atlantic City, New Jersey, where she competed in the famous Miss America finals. Brown was the first of 18 UNO students or graduates to hold one Nebraska title or another.

Here they are:

### Miss Nebraska America

Vanita Mae Brown, 1949

Debbie Sullivan, 1970

Evelyn Rahm, 1979

Jodi Miller, 1988

Ashley Bauer, 2007

Marion Watson, 1976

### Ms. Nebraska United States

Natalie McGovern, 2014

### Miss Black Nebraska

Jantha Whitmore, 1975

Beverly Bray, 1976

Johndrea Whitmore, 1977

Bettye Brizendine, 1978

### Miss Nebraska USA

Lori Lynn Novicki, 1982

Stacey Skidmore, 2002

Jessica Perea, 2003

Guerin Austin, 2004

Emily Poeschl, 2006

Michaela Johnson, 2008

Haley Jo Herold, 2011

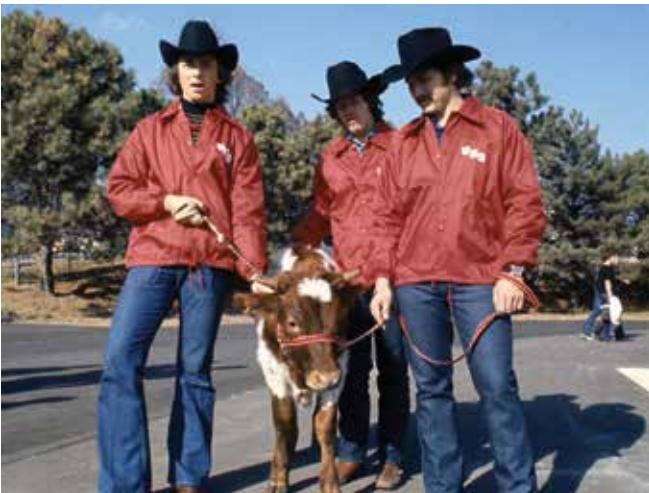
Many others have taken city crowns and are local titleholders from various pageant systems over the years.

## NEBRASKA'S MOST DIVERSE UNIVERSITY

Nearly

**50%**

of all students of color in  
the University of Nebraska  
system attend UNO



## WHERE UNRULY BULLS ARE SENT

Turns out bull sitting isn't so easy. The UNO Alumni Association discovered that when it sponsored live bull mascots at home football games in the 1970s. First came Sudden Sam at Homecoming 1972. But that would be his only appearance as he proved too unruly for his handlers. Then-Alumni Association Director Jim Leslie hauled the steer to Fort Niobrara Refuge in Valentine and traded him for a 6-month-old 300-pound calf — Longhorn Steer, U.S. 324. Named Victor E. Maverick, he debuted in 1973. Three students selected as handlers, outfitted with black Stetsons and UNO windbreaker jackets, ran Victor E. onto the field following scores. Eventually, though, this little doggie would have to git along, too. Only he wasn't so little. By 1977, Victor's horns had spread to nearly six feet. And he'd become set in his ways. "Victor," Leslie said, was "becoming quite ornery in his old age." He was retired that year, to a farm in Arlington, Nebraska.

## JOBs, SALES AND MORE

There's more than a few folks in the state cashing paychecks — and spending them — thanks to the work of UNO's Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC). According to a study by CBA Professor Christopher Decker:

- NBDC clients in 2017 created or retained 766 full-time-equivalent jobs in Nebraska, a jump from 605 jobs in 2016.
- A total of \$221.3 million in sales by NBDC clients were attributed to NBDC efforts.

See more about the work of NBDC on pages 26-29.



## KINGS OF "NEBRASKA" ... WAIT, WE'VE GOT THAT BACKWARD

Yes, we know we live in a republic, but twice, Nebraska had a king in the top man at UNO. Sort of. Milo Bail, president of then-Omaha University from 1948 to 1964, became the first educator to rule the mythical realm of Quivera when he was crowned King Ak-Sar-Ben LXI in 1955. Chancellor Emeritus Del Web, meanwhile, reigned in 1989.

## AN ALUM IN EVERY COUNTY ... ALMOST

No matter where you go in Nebraska, there's a Maverick ... almost. As of July 1, UNO had at least one graduate living in 92 of Nebraska's 93 counties. Only the state's least-populous county, Arthur County in the west-center of the state, is without a Mav — though county data is not known for about 600 of Nebraska's 62,000+ UNO alumni.

HERE'S THE TOP 10 COUNTIES BY MOST NUMBER OF ALUMNI:

Douglas	40,427	Dodge	679
Sarpy	10,944	Saunders	519
Lancaster	3,083	Hall	382
Washington	1051	Platte	369
Cass	790	Madison	311

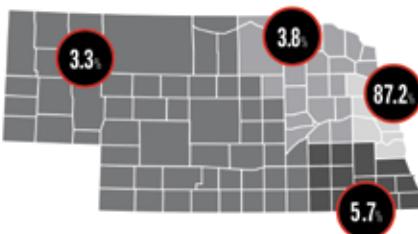
## ALL OTHER NEBRASKA COUNTIES

Adams	171	Frontier	2	Nance	10
Antelope	35	Furnas	17	Nemaha	56
Arthur	0	Gage	123	Nuckolls	12
Banner	3	Garden	2	Otoe	162
Blaine	1	Garfield	6	Pawnee	12
Boone	51	Gosper	6	Perkins	10
Box Butte	24	Grant	2	Phelps	49
Boyd	11	Greeley	10	Pierce	45
Brown	12	Hamilton	62	Polk	32
Buffalo	234	Harlan	12	Red Willow	57
Burt	125	Hayes	2	Richardson	30
Butler	71	Hitchcock	4	Rock	3
Cedar	59	Holt	66	Saline	49
Chase	14	Hooker	1	Scotts Bluff	108
Cherry	21	Howard	32	Seward	101
Cheyenne	26	Jefferson	39	Sheridan	4
Clay	28	Johnson	27	Sherman	15
Colfax	62	Kearney	22	Sioux	3
Cuming	99	Keith	23	Stanton	40
Custer	34	Keya Paha	2	Thayer	17
Dakota	92	Kimball	5	Thomas	2
Dawes	20	Knox	35	Thurston	26
Dawson	66	Lincoln	150	Valley	22
Deuel	3	Logan	2	Wayne	41
Dixon	25	Loup	2	Webster	4
Dundy	3	Mcpherson	1	Wheeler	1
Fillmore	23	Merrick	43	York	89
Franklin	10	Morrill	10		

## HOMEgROWN

**86%** of current UNO students are from Nebraska

DISTRIBUTION OF UNO STUDENTS FROM NEBRASKA:





## MARKING HISTORY

Lots of Nebraska history has been made on UNO's campus. But only one blast from the past has merited state recognition. Nebraska State Historical Marker 170 on UNO's Scott Campus near the Peter Kiewit Institute commemorates the U.S. Postal Air Mail Service that began at that location at Ak-Sar-Ben Field May 15, 1920. A tornado in 1924 destroyed its hangar, but services already were being transferred to a new field at Fort Crook. The field still was being used as late as the 1940s, though, used for training during World War II.

## DONORS BEYOND DOUGLAS

It's no surprise that most alumni donors to UNO come from the university's home seat of Douglas County (DC). Since UNO's start, a whopping 48,871 alumni from DC have made at least one gift to their alma mater. But alumni from throughout the rest of the state also have been generous. All-time, alumni from 70 of Nebraska's 93 counties have made at least one gift. Here's the top 10, by number of alumni donors.

Douglas	48,871
Sarpy	10,639
Lancaster	2,542
Washington	1,948
Saunders	724
Cass	663
Dodge	304
Hall	263
Platte	195
Adams	131

## PEOPLE ... BY THE NUMBERS

What's Nebraska look like? Not its rivers, hills, prairies, forests or other topographical features; rather, its people. Each year, UNO's Center for Public Affairs Research (CPAR) presents a snapshot of Nebraska's ever-changing population, doing so as the lead agency of the Nebraska State Data Center Network. CPAR on Aug. 15, 2017, hosted its 29th annual Nebraska Data Users Conference.

HERE'S A LOOK AT SOME OF CPAR'S WORK AND ANALYSES THAT SHOW NEBRASKA'S PEOPLE TOPOGRAPHY:

### COUNTY COUNTS

Nebraska has 18 counties estimated to have gained population so far this decade (2010-2017), reversing population losses seen during the 2000s (2000-2007). Additionally, 49 of the state's 93 counties lost population in both the early 2000s and early 2010s decades, but losses so far from 2010-2017 are less than what they were during 2000-2007, a positive development.

### COUNTY BOUNTY

In 1950, Nebraska's three most populated counties of Douglas, Lancaster and Sarpy had just more than 30 percent of the state's residents. By 2010, more than half the state's population resided in those three counties. CPAR projects 56 percent of the state will be in those counties in the 2020 Census, meaning 27 of the state's 49 unicameral senators will reside in those counties.

### FACING THE NATION

So far during the 2010s decade, Nebraska's population growth rate is nearly identical to the U.S. average, trailing it by only a half percent. Since the 1900s, Nebraska has trailed the U.S. growth rate in every decade, often by 8 percent or more, with the best-ever prior performance being during the 2000s, when Nebraska was 3 percent less than the national growth rate.

### MORE BOOMERS THAN BABES

CPAR projects that by 2035, for the first time in the state's history, there will be more Nebraskans aged 80 and older than under age 5.

### WE WORK

Nebraska ranks in the top five states regarding most workforce metrics, including the labor force participation rate of those aged 65+.

### HELP NEEDED ... SOON

CPAR population projections indicate the prime workforce aged 25-64 will peak in 2018 with around 965,000 individuals of that age. It then will decline over the next 10 years to less than 950,000, putting pressure on local labor markets.

### BRAIN DRAIN

Nebraska ranks in the bottom 10 states regarding the net outmigration rate of those with a bachelor's degree or more education. This "brain drain" has significant negative economic impacts.

### BIRTHS IN NEBRASKA

Nebraska has a top-five birth rate among the states. Regarding total fertility, Nebraska is one of six states having a lifetime fertility of greater than 2.1 births per woman, the level needed to replace the current population, given infant deaths.



## MAVERICK LAKE ... IN THE SANDHILLS

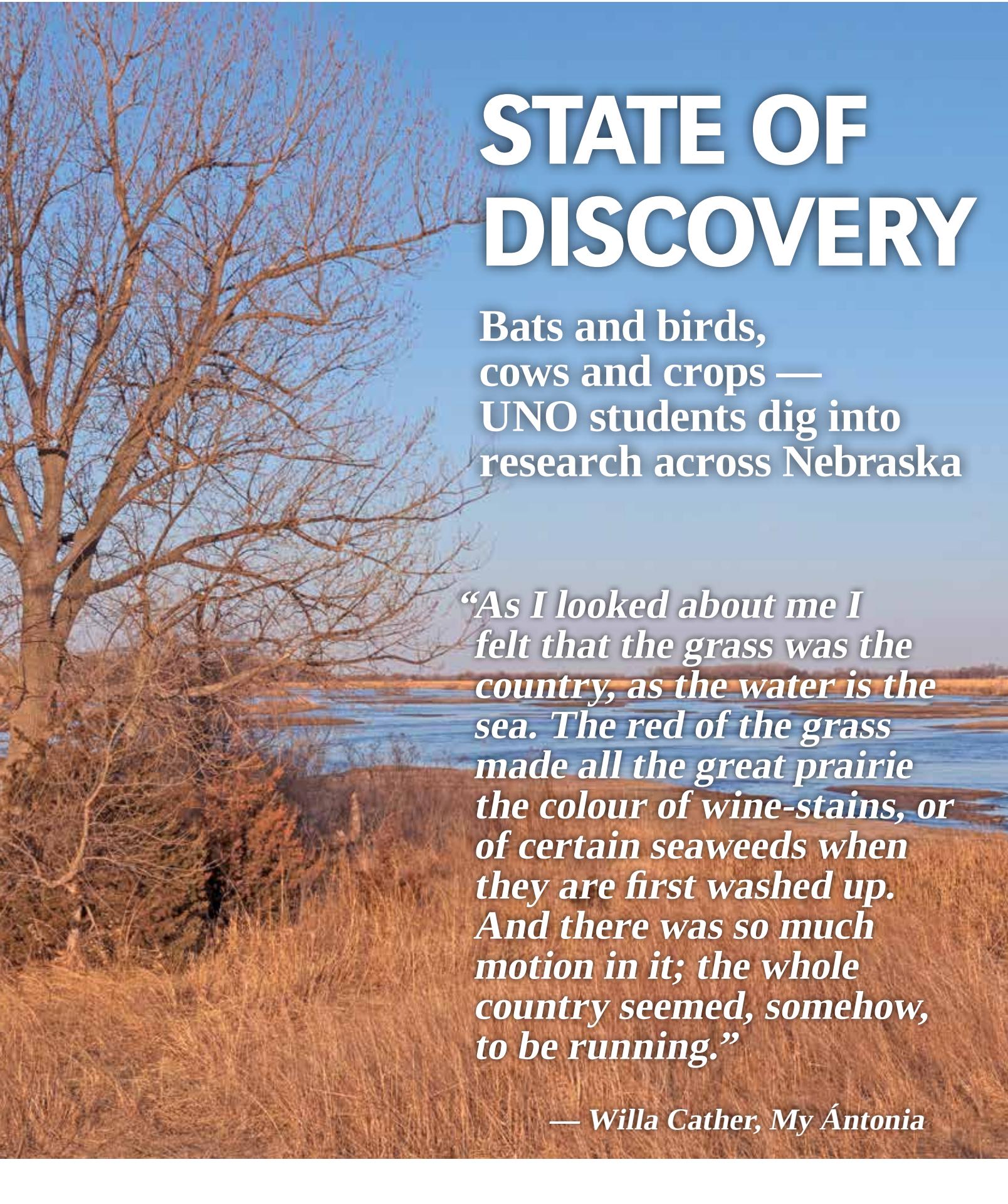
There's a Maverick Lake in Nebraska, but it's nowhere near campus. It's 400-plus miles from Omaha, in fact, located near the township of Lost Creek, Nebraska in the Sandhills of Garden County. That's 35 miles due north of Oshkosh, Nebraska. Maverick Lake is owned by Farmland Reserve Inc., which is owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## SUPREME THANKS, NEBRASKA

On Dec. 23, 1930, the Nebraska Supreme Court approved creation of the Municipal University of Omaha. Just 38 years later came another change when the university joined the University of Nebraska to create the University of Nebraska system.

## CELEBRATING THE STATE'S START

It was 89 years ago that Omaha University students celebrated ... 75 years of Nebraska as a territory. Students on Nov. 6, 1929, took part in the Nebraska Diamond Jubilee by staging a scene in the pageant, "The Making of Nebraska," at Ak-Sar-Ben Field. The scene featured Native American life and customs in the Middle West.



# STATE OF DISCOVERY

Bats and birds,  
cows and crops —  
UNO students dig into  
research across Nebraska

*“As I looked about me I felt that the grass was the country, as the water is the sea. The red of the grass made all the great prairie the colour of wine-stains, or of certain seaweeds when they are first washed up. And there was so much motion in it; the whole country seemed, somehow, to be running.”*

— Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*

The plains, farmlands and diverse ecosystems of Nebraska — home to a brilliant mixture of fauna and flora — have not only captured the imagination of generations of writers, but also of researchers and scientists.

Renowned frontier author Willa Cather described the rugged, natural beauty of the state and the pioneering spirit of those early Great Plains settlers, farmers and ranchers.

That connection to the land and discovery is in the state's blood.

And UNO students are taking the pulse — through a wide range of research in Nebraska that offers promise here and beyond.

Like Cather's prairie, their efforts are replete with motion: Long days. Late nights. Road trips. Setbacks. And flashes of inspiration.

We profile a few of these modern-day pioneers here.



## FIELD WORK

Giving farmers real-time data regarding field conditions, to help improve water usage and crop yield, was the aim of a wireless sensor network designed and constructed by three May UNO graduates as part of their senior capstone project.

**John Kotsalis**, Kyle Dlouhy and Clayton Heymann were students in UNL College of Engineering's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department delivered on the UNO campus. Their idea for the project came from Dlouhy's father-in-law, a farmer in Deshler, Nebraska.

At a career fair in September, Dlouhy met with officials from Reinke, a Deshler-based manufacturer of irrigation products. Dlouhy, who had interned there, explained the group's project, and the company pledged its support.

By the spring semester, the students were building a prototype. Reinke provided a few guidelines and some basic materials.

"But as far as putting it all together and making a prototype that worked, we did all that," Dlouhy says.

Sensors were designed to collect data on soil moisture, temperature, humidity, wind and rain. They feed that information to a website to help farmers make more informed decisions regarding crop irrigation.

"Today, if a farmer wants soil moisture readings, they have to physically go out in the field and insert a probe," says Kotsalis, of Omaha. "This automates the process."

"Our hope is that these can be paired with Reinke center pivots, and together they can provide more accurate variable rate irrigation."

Basically, this involves applying more water where it's needed, and less where it's not.

Currently, this irrigation method is based primarily on crop yields from previous years. "What our solution does is it gives farmers real-time knowledge of what the different parts of the field need," Dlouhy says.

While the prototype was not tested in farm fields, the nodes showed promise in outdoor tests. "They held up great, just as we expected," Dlouhy says. "All the sensors worked; they were reading accurate values. They reported to the website correctly."

The students shared the technology with Reinke, but are no longer working on the project as they pursue postgraduate careers. But they are proud of their work, and seeing a project through from concept to prototype. It's part of the real-world experience that first attracted Kotsalis to UNO.

"A lot of the program here was hands-on," he says. "I could be in the classroom and learn theory. But I could also go into the lab and get some hands-on application. For me, that's the best way to learn."



## BAT MAN

UNO senior **Jonathan Korbitz** is a bat man.

The biology major has been studying the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) — a threatened species in Nebraska — for the past year and a half under the direction of UNO biology professor Jeremy White, whose research interests include the natural history of bats in the central United States.

"Bats are fascinating creatures," says Korbitz, who is from Omaha.

But the news from Nebraska's bat caves has been troubling of late. A quiet but deadly super villain — a fungal disease known as white-nose syndrome — has been infecting the bats, interfering with their hibernation and leading to mass deaths here and across the northeastern United States and eastern Canada.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that this devastating disease has killed millions of hibernating bats since it first appeared in New York in 2007 and warns that it "continues to spread at an alarming rate."

For those who don't like bats — or consider them frightening — consider the following:

"It's estimated that bats contribute billions of dollars to the agricultural sector as a natural form of insecticide," Korbitz says.

"They do a lot of work stopping bugs from eating crops and keeping insect populations in check."

The northern long-eared bat typically hibernates from October to March. The fungus infects a bat's nose, ears and wings, causing skin lesions. These painful lesions wake the bat from its slumber, leaving it too weak to survive. Once a cave is infected, it can kill 20 percent to 60 percent of the bat population inside, Korbitz says.

From late June to mid-July last year, Korbitz and his research colleagues traveled to four sites in Nebraska and deployed large mesh nets to trap the bats: Ponca State Park in northeast Nebraska; Larrabee Creek north of Rushville, Nebraska; Elm Creek in Kearney, Nebraska; and Fontenelle Forest in Bellevue, Nebraska. They captured 31 northern long-eared bats and took tissue samples from their tail membranes for genetic testing.

"The goal is to create a better understanding of the genetic makeup of this species in Nebraska," says Korbitz, as little is known of the genetic diversity of these bats in the region.

This may lead to clues on how to protect the bats from the deadly white-nose fungus, which would be good for the bats, farmers and — ultimately — all of us.

## MOOMANAGER

Innovation often stems from challenges and struggles — along with a dose of serendipity. That was the case for **Rachel Ostrander Brownlee**, an award-winning 2015 graduate of UNO's IT Innovation program.

Brownlee, who grew up on the Pine Creek Ranch in Rushville, Nebraska, where her family raised 400 head of cattle, originally came to UNO intending to study graphic design.

To her surprise, her graphic design advisor suggested she consider computer science instead.

"I didn't know anything about computers," Brownlee says. "I barely knew how to use one. I was home-schooled; there was no IT education."

But she took a chance.

In her first IT innovation course, students were asked to create a tech-related product or service. Brownlee thought of her family's ranch — and the struggles they and other local ranchers had keeping data on their cattle.

That moment was the beginning of what would become MooManager, an agricultural software company providing ranch management software to cattle ranchers. Brownlee is the founder, CEO and programmer.

"I worked on pieces of it for each class, and for the capstone class, I built a working prototype," Brownlee says.

She since has built another fully functioning prototype completely from scratch, incorporating many of the features she researched at UNO.

"We now use it fully on my husband's family cattle ranch," the JHL Ranch in Ashby, Nebraska, she says, where they raise 1,200 head of cattle.

"At this point, I am working on developing the side of it that will allow me to add other ranchers' ideas, and to start using it on other ranches eventually," Brownlee says.

While she is working to determine interest locally, regionally and nationally, Brownlee says she may find a better response internationally, particularly among the large cattle operations in Brazil.

Brownlee won several awards and competitions as a student at UNO, including the Maverick Business Plan Competition, the Peter Kiewit Capstone competition (twice) and the Peter Kiewit Student Entrepreneur of the Year. She also placed second at a national competition hosted by the Collegiate Entrepreneurs' Organization, in which she gave a 90-second "elevator pitch" on her business idea.



## SONGBIRDS ON THE PRAIRIE

When UNO biology graduate student **Conor Gearin** imagines the untamed Nebraska prairie, he hears the song of a sparrow-like bird called the dickcissel.

"When you think of Nebraska pre-European settlement, who doesn't think of the prairie stretching on endlessly and the distinctive fauna of that prairie," Gearin says. "For me, it's these birds. In the summer, their songs are everywhere. They let you know where you are. You're in a grassland."

Gearin has been studying grassland songbirds such as the dickcissel in 30 fields in five central-Nebraska counties: Howard, Greeley, Merrick, Nance and Sherman. Nebraska serves as a breeding ground for these migratory birds from May through late July and early August.

This summer is Gearin's second working in the field, studying the birds and how they interact with their habitat. He works with private landowners; government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission; and nonprofit organizations, such as Pheasants Forever, to explore questions of land management practices.

"Landowners and farmers can take a field out of production by signing up for the USDA's Conservation Reserve Program," Gearin says. "And the USDA will help them manage that habitat."

Increasingly, private lands in Nebraska are managed for game birds, such as bobwhites and pheasants, and for the conservation of pollinator insects.

"These game birds share a lot of the same habitat needs as these other native grassland birds, which are in decline," Gearin says. "So it could be good news for everyone."

The dickcissel is a relative of the cardinal, though it bears little resemblance. Its typical colors are yellow, black and brown, and it's named for the sound it makes when it sings.

"This is a typical bird you would hope to see in a Nebraska prairie," Gearin says.

Gearin earned his undergraduate degree in biology from Truman State University and holds a master's degree in science writing from MIT. He will earn his master's degree in biology from UNO this December. A native of St. Louis, he loves the image of the Midwestern prairie.

"It's a big part of our natural legacy," he says. "Whenever you conserve grassland habitat, it feels like you're giving back and paying respect to that natural legacy."



## SHORING UP SHOREBIRDS

**Lindsay Ann Brown** of Omaha earned her undergraduate degree in environmental studies from UNO in 2013 and a master's degree in biology this May. She studied plant ecology as an undergraduate, but an ornithology class her final semester gave wings to a new research interest.

"I became so interested in birds after this class," Brown says. "My professor told us about how these tiny, little shorebirds travel halfway around the world. That's when I really got interested in migration."

As a graduate student, Brown has studied three long-distance migrating shorebird species — the American golden-plover, the buff-breasted sandpiper and the upland sandpiper. These birds winter in southern South America and migrate across the Great Plains to breeding grounds in the Arctic. The agricultural fields of south-central Nebraska's Rainwater Basin are a favorite April and May stopover.

Brown visited about 100 sites, observing the birds and their interaction with the habitat. To the untrained eye, the fields appeared the same — flat and, in early spring, bare. But Brown began to notice subtle differences.

"Even though, looking at it, you would say an ag field is an ag field," Brown says, "these birds don't see it that way. They are selecting specific features in these fields."

The buff-breasted sandpiper, for instance, prefers raised elevations — which might aid in courtship. "We're thinking that they are using these higher spots to attract other 'buffys' in the nearby fields," Brown says. These are also favored locations for increasing numbers of wind turbines, creating a potential conflict.

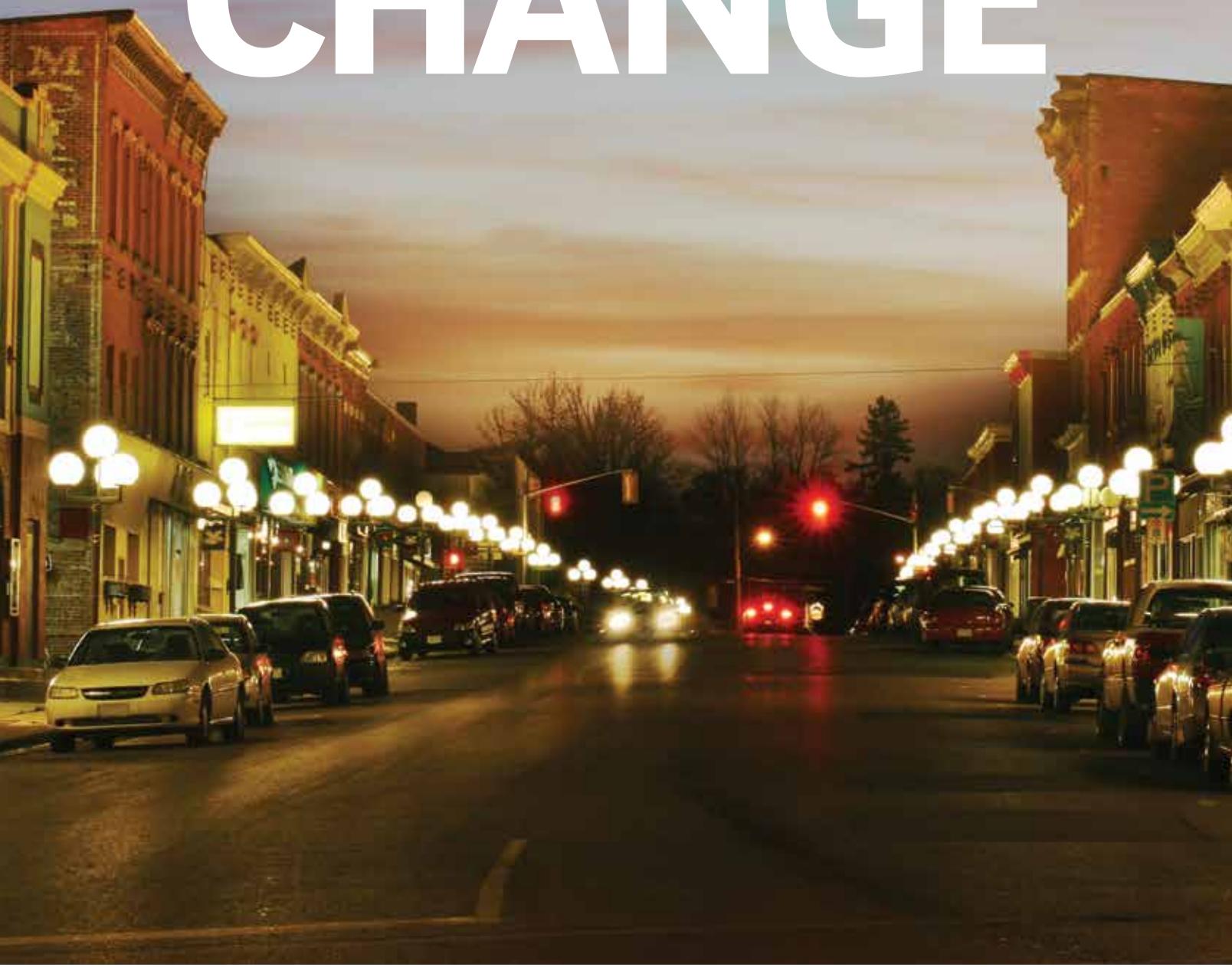
"A lot of the shorebirds are declining, especially these migrants, as their stopover sites are being changed," Brown says. "This could help us identify areas that are really important to migrating birds, and maybe move turbines."

Brown has presented at conferences in Nebraska and Michigan, and addressed a working group in Peru that is developing a conservation plan for the buff-breasted sandpiper.

She currently is working as a conservation biologist at Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program in Corpus Christi, Texas, trying to improve the nesting conditions for waterbirds and the black skimmer, whose habitat was upset by Hurricane Harvey.

"My graduate degree prepared me well," Brown says. "I feel like I have a good grasp of how to develop a research question and how to get the answers."

# AGENTS *of* CHANGE





## UNO'S MPA GRADUATES BECOME THE 'MOVERS AND SHAKERS' IN CITIES ACROSS NEBRASKA

By Greg Kozol

ON A CLEAR DAY, JEFF SPROCK CAN SEE LARAMIE PEAK FROM THE GOLF COURSE IN MITCHELL, NEBRASKA.

SPROCK WAS HIRED TO SERVE AS CITY ADMINISTRATOR IN MITCHELL, A COMMUNITY SO FAR WEST THAT HE COULD THROW A ROCK IN NEBRASKA AND IT MIGHT LAND IN WYOMING.

OMAHA ... ISN'T SO CLOSE. BUT NEBRASKA'S BIGGEST CITY LOOMS JUST AS LARGE AS THE 10,000-FOOT MOUNTAIN TOWERING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION.

THAT'S BECAUSE SPROCK, SINCE 2012, HAS TAKEN ONLINE CLASSES TO GET HIS MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (MPA) DEGREE AT UNO.

"THERE'S GOOD QUALITY INFORMATION," SAYS SPROCK, WHOSE UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE WAS IN BIOLOGY. "FOR SOMEONE WHO STEPPED INTO THIS POSITION WITHOUT FORMAL TRAINING, THE BUDGETING AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY CLASSES HAVE BEEN VERY HELPFUL."

### GO WEST, UNO GRADS

UNO's reach extends far across Nebraska through its MPA program. From Omaha's suburbs to distant communities in the state's panhandle, MPA graduates bring professional management to city government across the state.

UNO's MPA graduates work as city managers or city administrators in at least 16 communities in Nebraska. That's nearly a third of the estimated 50 Nebraska communities that employ a city manager or administrator.

Another 20 of UNO's MPA graduates have municipal jobs in other states, including 10 in Iowa.

These graduates don't always grab headlines, but they make an impact in rural communities, says Robert Blair, professor of public administration and director of UNO's Urban Studies Program.

"The city manager and administrator is one of the key movers and shakers," Blair says. "They are deeply involved in economic development and community betterment. They are making these smaller communities more viable."

The program often attracts mid-career professionals looking to make a career change or upgrade. About 200 active students are in the program, with some finishing in two years and others taking longer as they balance career, family and educational obligations.

Craig Maher, a professor and director of UNO's School of Public Administration, says most students have one thing in common.

"The biggest attraction is this idea of wanting to be an agent of change. There is a strong commitment to serving the public."



## WHAT, NO MAYOR?

A local government with a city manager or administrator is different from the system used in Omaha, Grand Island, Lincoln and other big cities where an elected mayor functions as the chief executive.

**UNO Professor Robert Blair (pictured) says a city manager is hired to bring technical and managerial expertise to municipal government. "They take their marching orders from elected officials," he says.**

An elected city council often hires a city manager- or administrator-type to act as a chief administrative officer, although powers and responsibilities vary by community. A city manager can handle budgeting, carry out policies and make recommendations to the council.

The elected leaders often maintain control of broader policy-making objectives.

Different variations of a city manager or administrator type of government are used in many mid- to small-sized communities throughout the state.

The manager or administrator form of government grew to about 55 percent usage in the early 21st century, according to the International City/County Management Association. Despite the growth trend, tensions still exist between elected officials, appointed managers and the public.

"Every time they have a council meeting, their job is on the line," Blair says. "I knew a guy who says he wouldn't hire a city manager who hasn't been fired once. It meant you took a stand."

### PUBLIC SERVANTS

The MPA program includes coursework in budgeting, finance, public policy and human resources. It sounds like the outline for an MBA program, but the MPA student puts those skills to work in a government or nonprofit setting rather than the corporate world.

Maher says a growing number of students are interested in careers with nonprofit organizations, but many MPA graduates still take roles in municipal leadership.

Some MPA graduates, like Bellevue City Administrator Joe Mangiamelli, served in the nation's armed forces before turning to government work.

Mangiamelli was drafted in 1967 and served in Vietnam. He received his MPA from UNO in 1991.

"When I did get my degree, I was offered a number of positions in the private sector that really tempted me," he says. "I was so ingrained in public service. The rewards for that far outweigh the wage."

Over the years, Mangiamelli rose through the administrative ranks of Omaha's municipal government and also took a position as city administrator in Columbus. He described a sense of pride in bringing tangible improvements, like a new fire station or library, to a city's residents.

"All these projects are very exciting," he says.

Phil Green, assistant city administrator in Blair, was involved in ministry before getting his MPA from UNO. He and other MPA graduates don't share the skepticism about government that often bubbles to the surface in today's political environment.

"Local government is the level of government I like best," he says. "You still deal primarily with local citizens. They don't hesitate to stop you in the grocery store. I appreciate that."

### PROGRAM PROPS

UNO's program remains popular for multiple reasons.

U.S. News and Word report ranks UNO's MPA program 25th best in the nation. The program scores as high as sixth in the teaching of public budgeting and finance.

UNO offers the only accredited MPA program in Nebraska or Iowa, making it a popular choice for aspiring city managers throughout the region. About 60 percent of UNO's MPA graduates come from the Omaha area.

"Some of the best candidates for these jobs are men and women who grew up in small communities," Blair says. "I tell people it's a wonderful career. You've got to work in a smaller community. That's the way it is."

Other benefits of the MPA program are harder to quantify, but just as meaningful for those who earn the degree.



CHRIS ANDERSON



JEFF SPROCK



CRAIG MAHER



PHIL GREEN



JOE MANGIAMELLI

Faculty members make an effort to get out of the classroom and provide professional development through organizations like the Nebraska City/County Management Association.

"We are out in the field," Maher says. "Especially for mid-career students, they are going to call you out if you are just lecturing theory."

"In many professions, one of the most important elements is networking and being involved in a number of different organizations," Anderson says.

Current MPA students also benefit from a scholarship program awarded through the University of Nebraska Foundation. The Nebraska City/County Management

"You can teach good philosophy and talk about policy formulation," he says. "Then you sit down at your desk and say, 'I'm going to need to buy a dump truck. How do I do that?'"

Many city managers and administrators say the job requires thick skin, especially in a smaller community when unpopular decisions are made, or at least recommended to the city

## “ IT IS OUR TASK TO HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO PURSUE THEIR DESIRES, PASSIONS AND GOALS.

Blair even went to Norway as part of UNO's sister university relationship with Adger University. He found that Norway's city managers are able to work with a large city council, some with 30 members.

"Norway is a lot like Nebraska," he says. "It's a relatively small country with two or three large urban areas."

Chris Anderson, city administrator of Central City near Grand Island, says contact with faculty remains a benefit of the program long after coursework is completed. He received an MPA from UNO after getting his bachelor's degree in political science at UNL.

"It's not like you graduate and they send you off and you never hear from them again," he says.

Anderson believes it's important to tap into the expertise of both faculty and active city managers because the job demands such a broad range of knowledge.

"They say jack-of-all-trades and master of none," he says. "You can be working on a personnel issue at one moment and talking about wastewater treatment the next."

At one point, Anderson was named a vice president of the International City/County Management Association. At the time, the president of that organization was from Montreal.

Association puts money into the fund, which pays around \$1,500 for two or three students a year.

Blair received the scholarship when he was a student. More recently, Srock found that the scholarship boosted his goal of using the MPA to improve his community.

"I come from a long line of public servants," he says. "It's always been part of my culture. I feel like I need to give back."

### A BOOST FOR NEBRASKA

City managers and administrators face challenges, some of which don't get covered in the MPA program. Blair says UNO's faculty teaches technical skills — things like management, budgeting and finance. These are essential to running a complex municipal government.

That's only part of the job. The rest, sometimes, comes through experience.

"The other skills are soft skills," Blair says. "People skills and political skills."

Green says UNO prepared him for the job, but the program can't teach everything. The position is so diverse, with administrators overseeing everything from economic development and labor relations to public works and utilities infrastructure.

council. Green, however, says he wouldn't give it up for anything.

He says he's always had a fascination with cities and looks forward to helping Blair deal with its pressing issues, such as finding affordable housing and developing a use for the former Dana College campus.

"When I have a chance to visit really big cities, you see all of the cars and all of the buzz," he says. "It's amazing to think that we are all individuals and yet we all live in this beehive of activity."

"It is our task to have the infrastructure in place for people to pursue their desires, passions and goals," he says.

Anderson says UNO's MPA programs is essential to helping local government meet the needs of citizens in cities and towns across the state.

"There are a lot of city managers in the state who have relied on the training they get from UNO and make a huge difference in their communities," he says. "The truth is, we're not going to draw qualified MPA graduates from distant states to come here. So having an effective, efficient local government in Nebraska is highly reliant on the students UNO is able to put out."

# CLASS NOTES

Send your class notes to [unoalumni.org/classnotes](http://unoalumni.org/classnotes). Or, post your note on the UNO Alumni Association Facebook page: [facebook.com/UNOAlumni](https://facebook.com/UNOAlumni)

**55 LYDELL CRAIG KIPLIN** (BA) retired from the United States Air Force in 1977. Kiplin continued to practice medicine, specifically ophthalmology, until he retired from medical practice in 1999. Now he enjoys skiing, traveling and hunting in Argentina. Recently, he won a gold medal for winning a downhill ski race in his age group. [lckiplin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lckiplin@sbcglobal.net)

**JAMES A. RATEKIN** (BA) is celebrating his 32nd year in retirement from the NP ward of the 3rd Station Hospital in Korea and financial management in the aerospace industry in Southern California. Ratekin says, "Great career, exceptional retirement." [jgratekin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jgratekin@sbcglobal.net)

**56 GLORIA ANN STORCH** (BS, MS-90) is teaching Czech, her original language, at Omaha Metro Community College during the fall and spring semesters. Storch attended Charles University in Prague for seven summers after her six kids were in college. Her goal was to bring back the language and to learn grammar. Storch writes, "I love my Czech heritage." [golad@mac.com](mailto:golad@mac.com)

**61 DOUGLAS L. VAN HORN** (BS) spent the bulk of his career in Omaha at Mangelsen Wholesale, for 26 years. He retired at 62 and traveled in addition to teaching other seniors about computers. He writes, "In May 2018, we took a tour of the 'slightly grown' school. I was most impressed by the new library. I am 81 and creaking in all my joints, but still as active as my body permits." [dvanhorn1936@centurylink.net](mailto:dvanhorn1936@centurylink.net)

**GOLDIE GENDLER SILVERMAN** (MA) writes, "At age 85, we're downsizing, giving up our wonderful big house and moving to a small condo in downtown Seattle." [goldie@goldiesilverman.com](mailto:goldie@goldiesilverman.com)

**64 REX CARL KISER** (BGS) attained his doctor of theology degree in January. Kiser's thesis was titled, "Biblical Christianity Restoration to Prominence in the United States." [rexkiser@att.net](mailto:rexkiser@att.net)

**RICHARD THOMAS ROBINSON** (BGS) writes, "UNO was a significant part of my academic life." He went on to earn his master's degree from the U.S. naval postgraduate school and naval war college and did postgraduate work at the University of Pittsburgh. Robinson retired as a colonel as chief of staff of corps of engineers, followed by more than 30 years in property development. He's now fully retired. [rtrobinson@bbtel.com](mailto:rtrobinson@bbtel.com)

**65 ED POWERS** (BGS) writes, "after six years, I still love to share the mountain with the local wildlife. We live at 7,600 feet in the foothills of Colorado. I follow the activity of UNO closely. I am proud of the education I received. It was first class." [eghome@hotmail.com](mailto:eghome@hotmail.com)

**66 WARD SCHUMAKER** (BFA) lives in San Francisco and works as an artist creating one-of-a-kind paintings. Artsy.com released an article about his newly published, text-based paintings book, "Hate Is What We Need." Schumaker recently gave a presentation on his new book at Magic City Books in Tulsa and says it was "so good to see those broad Midwestern skies again." [schumaker.ward@gmail.com](mailto:schumaker.ward@gmail.com)

**THEODORE L. SAMLAND** (UNL-BS, UNO campus) is fully retired and enjoying the good life. Samland travels back to Nebraska a couple of times a year and is amazed at how much Omaha University has changed into UNO. He writes, "Best wishes to all." [samlandted@yahoo.com](mailto:samlandted@yahoo.com)

**JOEL CHARLES SNELL** (BA, MA-70) recently wrote an article titled "Fake & Spurious News: The College Textbook," that will be published in "Psychology & Education: An interdisciplinary Journal." [joelsnell@hotmail.com](mailto:joelsnell@hotmail.com)

**67 MARJORIE J. WIKOFF** (BA, MA-69) earned a doctorate of philosophy in 1980, then retired as assistant dean in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1991. Wikoff and her husband, Dr. Richard Wikoff, who retired in 1993 as professor in the psychology department, have since traveled to 53 countries on all seven continents. Now, they have settled into a quiet life in southwestern Missouri, where Marjorie recently celebrated her 90th birthday.



**69 JOHN A. PRESCOTT** (BS) saw his children's book "Oracles Fables" be the best-selling title at the Berkshire-Hathaway Shareholders meeting bookstore for a third-straight year. Illustrated by Tom Kerr, the book is written in the style of Aesop's Fables and answers the question, "What would Warren Buffett tell a child about making good decisions as early as possible in life?" The book is available at the Bookworm and online at Kerrtoons.com. [johnprescott333@gmail.com](mailto:johnprescott333@gmail.com)



**FRANCES JANE TOOLEY** (BA) retired from the Nebraska State Patrol as a lieutenant in 2001 after 25 years. Eight years were spent in executive protection providing security for the Nebraska governor. She then worked for the Butler County Sheriff's Department for 11 years, retiring in 2012 as a sergeant. In 2017, she was inducted into the Nebraska Law Enforcement Hall of Fame. The education at UNO was the beginning of a career that "I truly loved and would do again in a heartbeat," she writes. Retirement is filled with travel, family, volunteering and serving on several boards.

deputytooley@hotmail.com

**JAMES F BARD JR.** (BGS) is serving his second year on the board of directors of the Players Club Owners Association, Hilton Head Island, South Carolina. He writes, "Come on down, the weather is great."

jimbardjr@comcast.net

**70 LEONARD THOMAS STEINER SR.** (BGS) served in the United States Air Force for 21 years and attended air traffic control, electronics, and radar technical schools. He has also served as an adjunct remote instructor of business and economics for the University of Alaska while stationed at a remote Air Defense Radar location. He has written and published three novels available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble: "Climb Up the Steel Mountain," "Strange Tales of the Ironic and Eclectic" and "Days of Sand and Royals." His fourth book has not been published yet. It tells the fictional story of the application of Sharia Law in the United States. He is presently seeking an agent and a publisher. See more at leonardsteiner.com.  
clmbstlmtn@yahoo.com

**71 DAVE STOLLER** (BS) was a physical education teacher and coach from 1971-2011. In 1985, he earned a master's from Peru State College. Stoller writes, "Best job in the world is teaching the joy of physical fitness and activity. Education should begin in delightful discovery and end in wonder. Stimulate each student's curiosity and help them to become dream catchers and believe in success."

### CATHERINE GRACE POPE

(BS, MS-75) is the first African-American and African-American graduate of UNO to enter and win the title of Miss Omaha in the Miss American Franchise. She also was Miss Omaha 1969 during the civil rights movement. Pope published an autobiographical memoir in 2015, "In Search of the Crown." The book was one of several honored by the San Diego Public Library in 2016 at the 50th Annual Local Author's Exhibit and Reception. After retiring from San Diego Unified School District as an administrator in the integration office and later as a principal, Pope completed her doctor of education degree from NOVA Southeastern University, where she received the Phi Gamma Sigma Award for making significant contributions to the community. Later Pope became a professor at Point Loma University in San Diego. Currently, she is writing a play and a screenplay based on her book. Pope doesn't plan to retire, "only to continue the journey."

cponce7@cox.net

**WILLIAM P. GLASER** (UNL-BS, 77 MS, UNO Campus) has written an e-book, "Wealth Building Secrets from Warren Buffett Annual Shareholders Meetings." It has been purchased by readers in 38 countries.

billglaser@hotmail.com



**72**

**MICHAEL L. ENGELMANN** (BS) retired in May after a 45-year career in insurance, the last five years with Farm Bureau Insurance Company.  
mengelmann@sbcglobal.net

### RALPH EDWARD JONES SR.

(BGS) retired from the United States Air Force in 1979. He then worked as a counselor and psychologist running large-size substance abuse programs and mental illness programs, both inpatient residential and outpatient programs, then retired again in 2003. Since, he has authored four books and for the last four years has written a weekly column on wellness for his local newspaper in Harlingen, Texas, the Valley Morning Star. Jones says his time at UNO in the Bootstrap Program was most rewarding and completing his undergraduate degree, equally so.

rjonessr29@att.net

**RAYMOND LEE SUMNERS** (BGS) later earned a master of arts in education in 1972 and a double master's in management and human resources development in 1988. Sumners retired from the United States Air Force in 1990. He then taught at private college for 12 years, retiring in 2012.

**74**

**BARBARA J. FREEMAN** (BS, MS-81) after graduating went on to teach second grade, then earned a master's in guidance and counseling. Since then she has three children's books published. The National Association of Professional Women honored Freeman in 2016 when she was inducted into the VIP Woman of the Year Circle.

barbarafreeman7@yahoo.com

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**DIANNE K. POLLY** (MS 80) writes, "UNO offered me a great start to a great career." Polly lives in Tennessee, where she is currently serving as the speaker of the house of delegates for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. [diannepolly@gmail.com](mailto:diannepolly@gmail.com)



**GENE R. HAYNES** (MS) recently completed his 51st year working in the Omaha Public Schools. He says, "This has been a great opportunity for me to serve this community." [gene.haynes@ops.org](mailto:gene.haynes@ops.org)

**ROBERT P. HOUSTON** (BA, MS-81) after 39 years with the Nebraska department of correctional services, including 11 years as a prison warden and eight years as the state director of corrections, retired four years ago and came to UNO as a senior community research associate for the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Houston and his wife enjoy bike riding, golf, skiing, kayaking and spending time with family and friends. [rhouston@unomaha.edu](mailto:rhouston@unomaha.edu)

**77 JOHN MARTIN FEY** (BS) writes, "We're adjusting to life in Plattsmouth's Bay Hills, fully retired and enjoying multiple rounds of golf at Bay Hills Golf Course. If you're ever in the area, stop by and say hello." [jmfey1952@gmail.com](mailto:jmfey1952@gmail.com)

**KEN KIRCHHOFF** (BS) is a 42-year law enforcement veteran, with 38 years at the Fort Collins, Colorado, Police Department as the investigator in personnel and training unit professional standards for the Office of the Chief of Police. He is also owner of Ken Kirchhoff Consulting. [kirchhusker@comcast.net](mailto:kirchhusker@comcast.net)



**ROGER L. HUMPHRIES** (BS) retired in January 2018 after 44 years with the United States Postal Service, the last 24 as the public relations director. Humphries began serving a two-year term as board member for the downtown Omaha YMCA. He was elected to serve a third term as president for Downtown Omaha, Inc., and a second term as president for the UNO Hockey Blue Line Club.

**SUSAN CLARE BEDNARZ** (BS, MS-82) has worked at Fontenelle School in Omaha Public School for the past five years. Bednarz teaches students from all over the world whose families come to Omaha for a better life. Specifically, to teach students the alphabet and the variety of phonemic patterns and sounds that make up English words. While working with them, Bednarz enjoys learning about their cultures and traditions and writes, "It is very interesting and rewarding!" [susan.bednarz@ops.org](mailto:susan.bednarz@ops.org)

**78 PHUOC HUU TRAN** (MS) After graduating in 1978, Tran became a math professor at UNO and was director of the math lab from 1980-1988. He then chaired the math department at Bellevue University from 1988-2015. [pht@bellevue.edu](mailto:pht@bellevue.edu)

**RON F. DEADY** (BS) earned his master's degree in urban education then worked as a United States Air Force officer. Following his career in the Air Force, Dady flew for an airline in Berlin, Germany. Later, he earned an MA in psychotherapy. He taught at a maximum-security prison, preparing men to leave transition to life after their sentence. Dady says, "My MS from Nebraska has been a VERY

useful adjunct to my life. I became an active promoter of quality public education." Dady and his wife of 56 years live in Idaho. [deady30758@aol.com](mailto:deady30758@aol.com)

#### **CATHERINE FOLSOM**

(BA) works as the editorial page editor for the Omaha World-Herald, where she has served as an editor for the bulk of her 39-year career. As an assignment editor, she led several award-winning reporting efforts, including coverage of the safe-haven law, issues stemming from the Von Maur mass shooting, and state prison sentencing miscalculations. She and her reporters received the UNO Andy Award for "At War/At Home," a series on Nebraska and Iowa soldiers in Afghanistan.



#### **NORMAN J. CRATTY**

(BS) since graduating from UNO with his broadcast and production degree in 1978, Cratty now lives in Chicago, Illinois. Cratty is now the tenor leader of a major production at all of the performance rehearsals. After two nearly sold out performances of "Too Hot to Handel" the jazz and gospel version of Handel's Messiah, he will be coming to perform in Omaha at the Orpheum Theatre in April. [normcratty@yahoo.com](mailto:normcratty@yahoo.com)



**81**

**VALERIE JEANNE BOURDAIN** (BA) writes, "At my December 1981 graduation from UNO, with baby Megan in arms, I had planned to take the art world by storm with my Bachelor of Fine Arts in drawing. For 25 years I was on a successful trajectory designing for national home party companies. All of life changed the day Megan Bosselman graduated from UNO in 2004 and said the life-changing words, "Mom, I'm sick." A flurry of tests began and by late summer she was diagnosed with adrenal cancer, deadly within five years. While in hospice, Megan asked me to design her funeral stationery, stating, "I'm not an old woman, Mom ... I don't want the praying hands on my thank-you notes." After Megan passed in 2008, strangers would stop me and say, "You should do that for a living." The next two funeral programs would be for my mom in 2012 and dad in 2013. A new career was born, launching me into full-time funeral program design work. But in 10 years of designing programs, I've learned that almost all families come to my desk unprepared. At time of death, some loved one will need to make 160 decisions about funeral and burial that they are not ready for. In addition to design work, I am now an international speaker on funeral readiness, speaking at retirement homes, estate planning seminars, law offices and business meetings. End-of-life decisions should be made before end-of-life." [valerie@valeriebourdain.com](mailto:valerie@valeriebourdain.com)

**79 DALE NOVACEK** (BS) has worked in the commercial real estate industry for 37 years. He and his wife, Lori, after living in Nebraska their entire life recently moved to San Antonio, where he is a senior property manager at the Whataburger corporate office. novacekdale@gmail.com



**DONALD R HOTZ JR.** (BS) recently completed 26 years with Lozier Corporation, where he worked in accounting and customer service. Hotz writes, "A couple more years to go before retirement. We're considering relocating to somewhere with minimal winter conditions — I've had enough fun with snow and ice. We love to travel and are looking forward to that in retirement as well."

**80 PAUL A. YOCHUM** (MS) fully retired in 2016 at age 70. He volunteers for the Arc-Dane County in Madison, Wisconsin, where he serves as president of the Capital Times Kids Fund. Paul and wife, Marcia, walk and work out daily to keep up with granddaughters, age 16 and 14. "Having fun in retirement!" pmyochum@charter.net



**81 STEVEN EDMOND CHERNEY** (BGA, MPA-87) retired from AT&T and has subsequently held management positions with private and public organizations. Cherney has also been appointed to planning commissions and was elected as a city council member in two Minnesota Cities. He has served as a board of director for the Burnsville FireMuster and loan executive to United Way. In addition, he was elected to serve as a republican senate district chairman and was elected to be a state delegate five times. Currently, Cherney serves as a city council member. He writes, "I am very proud to be an alum of our great university and proud to be a Nebraskan living in Minnesota with my wife, Joy, who is also alumni of UNO and of Creighton University School of Law. I am very proud to say that we have three grown children and nine grandchild and four great-grandchildren and many friends." cherneysj@mediacombb.net

**83 VICTORY A. SEDLACEK** (BM) has been the accompanist at Burke High School for 20 years. She also has accompanied for ballet at Creighton, Omaha Academy of Ballet, Nebraska Children's Choirs, Voices of Omaha yearly Messiah productions, Mastersingers and musicals at Chanticleer and Bellevue Little Theatre. She enjoys being part of the musical scene in Omaha. Her fondest memory at UNO was being one of the first students in the Honors Program and working with Rosalie Saltzman.



**AILEEN WARREN** (BS, MSW-85) continues to be active in the community and currently serves as an executive committee member on the boards of the Omaha Home for Boys, the Women's Fund of Omaha, and the Institute for Career Advancement Needs. aileen.warren@unmc.edu

**DENA MANGIAMELE** (BA) released her second book, "Dena's Fuel for Fitness - Moving from Animal-based Grub to Plant-based Fuel." Helping make the transition to a whole food plant-based lifestyle easy with this plant-based cook book. To read a summary of the book and order a copy go to [www.doctordena.com](http://www.doctordena.com). contact@doctordena.com



**85 FORREST ALLEN ROPER JR.** (BS) has worked for the State of Nebraska Probation Supreme Court services for more than 30 years. He writes, "UNO's Criminal Justice (CPACS) prepared me for this adventure over these many years." forrest.roper@nebraska.gov

**KRISTI NELSON-HITZ** (BS) retired from Lincoln Public Schools in May after 29 years of teaching physical education and 27 years coaching volleyball. knelhitz@gmail.com

**KEVIN WARNEKE** (BAJ, MA-94, Ph.D.-12) has raised more than \$90 million during his time at the Steier Group, where he was recently promoted to client advancement director. Warneke co-wrote the book, "The Call to Hall: When Baseball's Highest Honor came to 31 Legends of the Sport," with fellow author David Ogden, published in 2018.

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**ZAN BOCKES** (BA) second poetry collection, "Alibi for Stolen Light," is now available from FootHills Publishing. Her first book, "Caught in Passing," came out in 2013. [zanbockes@montana.com](mailto:zanbockes@montana.com)

**86 RANDALL S. FARWELL** (UNL-BS, UNO Campus) founded CornBorn in 2010. An official licensee of the University of Nebraska, it produces unique Husker apparel for fans across the nation. [randy@cornborn.org](mailto:randy@cornborn.org)

**87 HAROLD H. HUNTER** (BSBA) is managing Attorney of the Hunter Law Group in Dallas, Texas. He litigates cases and manages litigation for a variety of clients in Texas and nationally. Hunter is active with animal rights organizations and enjoys music, travel and college sports. [HHJD@verizon.net](mailto:HHJD@verizon.net)

**88 KAREN MCGINN** (BA) completed a certificate in library/information services from University of Maine at Augusta in 2005. McGinn lives in Northern Nevada. [karenmcg@live.com](mailto:karenmcg@live.com)

**91 ELLEN FREEMAN-WAKEFIELD** (BGS, MPA-95) was awarded the International Institute of Municipal Clerks 2018 Annual Institute Director Award of Excellence for her outstanding contributions in advancing the education and personal development of Municipal Clerks and the work of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. The award was presented in Norfolk, Virginia, in May. [efreemanwakefield@unomaha.edu](mailto:efreemanwakefield@unomaha.edu)

**92 SCOTT LAWRENCE FLORY** (BS, MS-97) after serving successfully as city administrator in Shenandoah, Iowa, and Atlantic, Iowa, recently entered his 17th year as city administrator in Clear Lake, Iowa. In 2014, he spearheaded an economic development project with a total capital investment of \$80 million and brought McKesson Corporation to Clear Lake to build a state-of-the-art warehouse and distribution center. [slawrenceflory@yahoo.com](mailto:slawrenceflory@yahoo.com)



**93 MARC D. BAUER** (BS) was inducted into the NCAA Division II Wrestling Hall of Fame on March 8, 2018. Bauer led The University of Nebraska at Kearney to three national titles (2008, 2012 and 2013), five national runner-up finishes and 14 conference and regional titles while head wrestling coach at UNK from 1999-2016.

**94 CHRISTOPHER R. BILDER** (BS) is a professor in the department of statistics at UNL. Bilder co-authored a research paper that has been given two awards this year. The paper, "Hierarchical group testing for multiple infections," appeared in the journal Biometrics. It was given the American Statistical Association's Outstanding Statistical Application Award for 2018 and the Best Paper in Biometrics for 2017. The awards were to be presented at the Joint Statistical Meetings in Vancouver and the International Biometric Conference in Barcelona during the summer. In 2016, Bilder was named a fellow of the American Statistical Association, for his professional contributions, leadership and commitment to the field of statistical science. [chris@chrisbilder.com](mailto:chris@chrisbilder.com)



**95 MELISSA ANNE CLEAVER** (BS) after 20 years of working in the classroom as an art educator in Omaha Public Schools became a project coordinator with IMS Instructional Technology Training team in 2015. She writes, "I enjoy leading professional development opportunities that engage staff to integrate technology tools that support students to become career- and college-ready." [melissa.cleaver@ops.org](mailto:melissa.cleaver@ops.org)



**DR. LEDONNA WHITE GRIFFIN** (BS, MS-97) has worked for Omaha Public Schools for 25 years, most recently as principal at Masters Elementary School. Griffin is the mother of two, Darryl and Dominique. Recently, Griffin went on a mission trip with her church to Cuba, which she writes was "very humbling." She enjoys advocating for all students but specifically for underserved populations, while supporting classroom teachers. [ledonna.griffin@gmail.com](mailto:ledonna.griffin@gmail.com)

**96 AMALI DILRUUKSHI WEERATUNGA** (BA) joined Monash College, pathway provider to Monash University in Australia. For 18 years he has been manager for student administration working with international students. [dilruk@hotmail.com](mailto:dilruk@hotmail.com)

**DR. SHAWNA MEFFERD KELTY** (BA) lives in New York and was recently awarded tenure at the State University of New York in Plattsburgh, where she is an associate professor of theatre. She is also the KCACTF Region I recipient of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education Innovative Teaching Award (2018).

**98 HEATHER A. JENSEN** (MS) has worked for UNO as an animal care coordinator for 17 years. [hajensen@unomaha.edu](mailto:hajensen@unomaha.edu)

**01 LIAM CUNNINGHAM** (MS) is pursuing an MAI designation with the Appraisal Institute. He has three tests and one research paper to complete to become designated. [liamcunningham07@att.net](mailto:liamcunningham07@att.net)



**02 BERIKA SHUKAKIDZE** (MS) was an international student from the Republic of Georgia. He writes that education administration and supervision graduate program, chaired by Dr. Martha Bruckner, equipped him with hands-on practical knowledge that helped him become one of the leading educationalists in his home country. "The professors at UNO and mentors from different public schools helped make a successful career," he writes. [berika.shukakidze@iliauni.edu.ge](mailto:berika.shukakidze@iliauni.edu.ge)

**03 TAMI WILLIAMS** (MS, Ed.D.-09) published her first book, with two metro administrators: "When They Already Know It: How to Extend and Personalize Student Learning in a PLC at Work." [tamarawilliams@unomaha.edu](mailto:tamarawilliams@unomaha.edu)

## IN MEMORIAM

Deceased alumni reported to the UNO Alumni Association or University of Nebraska Foundation between Dec. 9, 2017, and June 12, 2018.  
We extend our condolences to the family and friends of these graduates.

<b>1940</b>	Jean E. Hermann Betty J. Beard	<b>1965</b>	Marianne Furlow Malcolm L. Cochran	<b>1973</b>	Douglas J. Moss Willie Baxter	<b>1982</b>	Charles W. Lammert King C. Oberg
<b>1941</b>	J. Eugene P. Jorgensen		Thelma Y. Frederick		Barba J. Edwards	<b>1983</b>	Eric M. Rix Cleo A. Bonn
<b>1942</b>	Ralph F. Schroeder	<b>1966</b>	Norman Goldberg		Jane F. McGlade-Warsaw		Louise M. Ramsey
<b>1946</b>	Darrald B. Harsh		Theodore L. Schleiffer		Linda K. Ostling		Kenneth P. Simpson
<b>1947</b>	Walter B. Graham	<b>1967</b>	Edward J. Burke		Delwyn E. Ward	<b>1984</b>	Clinton D. Schutt
<b>1948</b>	Bill T. Meyer		Barbara Ficenec		Merlin E. Howe	<b>1985</b>	Stacy S. Stranick
<b>1950</b>	Barbara R. Lieberknecht John L. Bohrer		Beryl N. Harris	<b>1974</b>	Helen M. Patterson		Patricia A. Tuel
<b>1951</b>	MaryLou K. Stoffel	<b>1968</b>	Joseph A. Fluet		Lynne Richt	<b>1989</b>	Linda K. Hannam
	Fred Abboud	<b>1969</b>	Jon P. Haddock	<b>1975</b>	Frank J. Greise		Cecilia M. Seldon
	Donald C. Bahnsen		Judy A. Manhas		Kenneth E. Roy		Jeffrey J. Drake
	Dorothy A. Dollis	<b>1970</b>	Everett Meredith		John H. Chunka		Elisabeth A. Doyle
	Beverly Houts		William C. Daniel	<b>1976</b>	Richard W. Harper	<b>1992</b>	Diane L. Schilmoeller
<b>1953</b>	Phyllis E. Kroeger		Thomas J. Glasco		Elvin A. Shew	<b>1996</b>	Scott D. Hansen
<b>1955</b>	Richard J. Bauer		Raymond C. Kruger		Kevin R. Cahill	<b>1997</b>	Margaret A. Sima
<b>1956</b>	Joseph Firmature		Quillie Polk		Robert K. Buck	<b>1998</b>	Gerald J. Wees
	Jacqueline A. Pospisil		Viola M. Timm	<b>1977</b>	Janet V. Drieling		Mary L. Kline
	Keith G. Pollard		James H. Anderson		Eleanor Caron	<b>2001</b>	David A. Markley
<b>1957</b>	Robert C. Vondrasek	<b>1971</b>	Norma B. Johnson	<b>1978</b>	Valerie J. Farivari	<b>2002</b>	Deborah J. LaPier
<b>1959</b>	Loysen Mahoney		James A. Mobley	<b>1979</b>	Marjorie Hartnett		Jon C. Woodward
<b>1960</b>	Donald L. Howland		Daniel K. Powers		Adelle T. Klappa	<b>2005</b>	Daniel E. Bloom
<b>1961</b>	Joe T. McCartney		Robert M. Bigley		E. Roberta R. Roach	<b>2006</b>	Keisha M. Holloway
<b>1962</b>	Deanne K. Mack		Jerome L. Bosse		Margaret Shanahan	<b>2007</b>	Susan M. Gutowski
<b>1963</b>	Robert D. Fiala		James W. Carlson		Jeffrey A. Bier	<b>2008</b>	John Ammerman
	Donald D. Garnett		David R. Griffiths		Dennis M. Foye	<b>2013</b>	David A. Murphy
<b>1964</b>	William A. Harriger		Harold L. Hawkins	<b>1980</b>	John A. Goings	<b>2015</b>	Arlene V. Steier
	Stephen A. Beckman		Arlene E. Lindquist		Pamela S. Lamb		
	Joseph D. Horvath		Mary E. Schendt		Terry L. Stofferson		
	Robert A. Laychak		Martha T. Brown		David L. Songster		
	Francis P. Herlihy		Stephen F. Spelic		S. Gregory Green		
	Earl L. Ziebell	<b>1972</b>	Alyce C. Green		Leonard Heavican		
			James Judkins		Larry L. Walker		
					Jeffrey Wilson		
					Edward J. Pawol		

**SANDRA RENNER PEASLEE** (BA) spent 12 years in telecommunications management and marketing and four years in health and human services. In 2015, Peaslee was hired at The Center for Rural Affairs, a national nonprofit focused on supporting vibrant rural communities.  
[sandra.renner1@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.renner1@gmail.com)



**05 JEREMY SCOTT WANGLER** (BS) was promoted in January to assistant director of marketing and communications at the Washburn University Alumni Association and Foundation, where he is editor of the alumni magazine.  
[jew100@gmail.com](mailto:jew100@gmail.com)



**06 GARY L. BECK DALLAGHAN** (MA) worked at University of Nebraska Medical Center for nearly 23 years but recently became director of educational scholarship at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.  
[gbeck@unmc.edu](mailto:gbeck@unmc.edu)

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## FUTURE ALUMS

Bergen Samuel Pike, son of Kati and **DAVID ('08, '10) PIKE** of Omaha.

Lila Josephine Miller, daughter of Lucas and **BECKY (LANCE, '06) MILLER** of Randolph, Nebraska.

Everett Fitch Shannon, grandson of **JOYCE LUSIENSKI FITCH ('71)** of Omaha.

Grace Ellen Walker, daughter of Billy and **KARIETA LASHAWN (JOHNSON, '16) WALKER** of Omaha.

Myles Gerard Montgomery, son of Michael and **WENDY (BAILEY, '09; '11) MONTGOMERY** of Avoca, Iowa.

Ava Marie Joslin, daughter of Michelle and **JOSH ('05) JOSLIN** of Bellevue, Nebraska.

Leo Vincenzo Leone, son of Vito and **ERIN (COSTELLO, '12) LEONE** of Orland Park, Illinois.

Sadie Kristine Simpson, daughter of Ryan and **KELSI ('17) SIMPSON** of Omaha.

Sullivan Mac Smith, son of **STEPHANIE (SACKETT, '11; '13) and MATT ('12) SMITH** of Omaha and grandson of **MARY (EGAN, '81; '86) and JIM ('80) SACKETT** of Omaha.

Audrey Colleen Carmen Zak, daughter of **KATHLEEN (LEAHY, '12) and DANIEL ('12; '15) ZAK** of Omaha and granddaughter of **JOHN ZAK III ('18)** of Omaha. (Also recognizing Aaron John Carmello Zak, born in February 2016.).

Landyn Reece Gandy, daughter of Melanie and **CHAD ('00) GANDY** of Ennis, Texas.

Naomi Christina Zak, daughter of John James Zak IV and Christina **MARIE (NIXON, '05) ZAK** of Glenwood, Iowa.

Hannah E Kalinkowitz (*pictured*), daughter of Rachel Feinmark and **BENJAMIN ('17) KALINKOWITZ** of Glen Rock, New Jersey.

Jane Marie Staley, daughter of **SARAANN (LAMPERT, '11; '16) and CHAD ('14) STALEY** of Omaha and granddaughter of **JERILYN ('96; '06) and PAT ('90) LAMPERT** of Omaha.

Kristine Marie Williams daughter of **KERI (BRODHAGEN, '13) and KANE ('12) WILLIAMS** of Omaha.

Brady Korger, son of Patrick and **AMANDA (DEMERS, '09) KORGER** of Omaha.

Corbin Lyle Cousins, son of Corey and **KYLA (SANDEN, '08) COUSINS** of Moore, Oklahoma.

Amelia Eloise Barnes, daughter of Dagmar and **JUSTIN ('14) BARNES** of Atwater, California.

Evelyn Leone Seaman, daughter of **BRITTANY (NIELSON, '11 '07) and DANIEL ('16) SEAMAN** of Omaha.

Noah Gabriel Neilson, son of Brittany and **JEREMY ('07) NEILSON** of Aurora, Colorado.

Cody Jace Sabey, son of **LYNN (GORACKE, '11) and Cody Sabey** of Wymore, Nebraska.

Bennett Lee Versendaal, son of Alyssa and **ADAM ('11) VERSENDAAL** of Omaha.

Paige Margaret and Penny Marie Curtis, twin daughters of **LISA ('06) and RYAN ('06) CURTIS** of Omaha.

Paxton Reid Jones, son of **JESSICA (JUNGERS, '10) and CHRIS ('09) JONES** of Omaha.

Monroe Elizabeth Pandorf, daughter of **MELISSA SCOTT-PANDORF ('03, '05) and JESSE ('02) PANDORF** of Kearney, Nebraska.

Lael Ruth Dinkel, daughter of Kelley and **DANAE (WOLCOTT, '10) DINKEL** of Omaha.

Charles Alexander Heida, son of **ASHLEY (LAMBRECHT, '11) and JONATHAN ('12) HEIDA** of Omaha.

Matilda Rose Pitsch, daughter of **NAOMI (SEIM, '06) and NICHOLAS ('06) PITSCHE** of Omaha.

Jack Allen Mohr, son of Kate and **DARREN ('10) MOHR** of Omaha.

Aarón Eleazar Zambrano Morales, son of Ismael Zambrano and **HILDA MORALES ('17)** of Omaha.

Liam Joseph Setlik, son of Justin and **JESSICA ('11) SETLIK** and grandson of **SHERYL GAU HEALY ('83) and TIM ('85) HEALY** of Omaha.

Zacharias James Brockman and Joseph Leroy Brockman, twin boys of Jenny and **ANTHONY ('05) BROCKMAN** of Beatrice, Nebraska.

Bennett Alexander Shoemaker, son of Danielle and **CHRISTOPHER ('06) SHOEMAKER** of Battle Ground, Washington.

Henry Thomas Rindone, son of Joseph and **BRITTANY (WURDEMAN, '10) RINDONE** of Omaha.

Logan Lucas Langer, son of Ashley and **LUKE ('09) LANGER** of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and grandson of **DAN LANGER ('75)** of Valley, Nebraska.

Dahlia Pearl Gordon, daughter of Amber Lea and **KRISTOPHER ('05) GORDON** of Reno, Nevada.

Ronan Allen Mukherjee, son of **JESSICA (LEISURE, '11; '15; '18) and RAJA ('11; '18) MUKHERJEE** of Omaha.

Oliver Talamantes, grandson of **KIMBERLY TALAMANTES ('10)** of Omaha.

Eli Jerome Nemec, son of **NICHOLE ('12) and RYON ('14) NEMEC** of Omaha.

Gustavo Garrett Correa, son of **LAUREN ('16) and CHRISTIAN ('09, '16) CORREA** of Omaha.

Tayson James Wieseler, son of Tyrel and **JENNIFER (DETERMAN, '12) WIESELER** of Lincoln, Nebraska, and grandson of Marj and **JIM ('82) DETERMAN** of Lincoln.

Magnolia Deacon, daughter of James and **COLLEEN KLAIBER ('13) DEACON** of Omaha.

Electra Janette Rosenberg, daughter of Eric and **MOLLY (CLARK, '13) ROSENBERG** of Omaha and granddaughter of **CHARLES CLARK ('72)** of Lincoln.

Benjamin Andrew Baker, son of **BECKY (STEPANEK, '05) and JEFF ('02, '06) BAKER** of Waukee, Iowa.

Rilian Hope Grone, daughter of **MELANI (HALL, '09) and BENJAMIN ('09) GRONE** of Johnstown, Colorado.

**08 VICTORIA GRAEVE-CUNNINGHAM** (BA, MA-15)

was named a National Point of Light for her dedication to volunteer service. In addition to fostering more than 60 dogs for the Midwest Dog Rescue Network she has also donated countless hours to community organizations. Cunningham received the recognition for her ongoing commitment to promoting skills-based service through ThriVinci.

director@thrivinci.org

**CASSANDRA KAY LOSEKE** (BS) celebrated the first anniversary of her communication consulting company.

Controlled Chaos Consulting services focuses on communication strategy and implementation for small to mid-level businesses and nonprofits. Prior to founding her firm, Loseke was digital media and public relations coordinator for Godfather's Pizza and an account coordinator for a boutique public relations firm in Omaha. She moved to Goodyear, Arizona, in 2017, where she lives with her partner, Luke, and their cats, Indy and Sadie.

cassy@controlledchaosconsulting.com

**09 FERIAL PEARSON** (MS, Ed.D.-17) was promoted to assistant professor for the fall of 2018 in the Teacher Education Department of the College of Education at UNO.**12 ERICA TRABOLD**

(BA, MA-14) currently writes and teaches in Portland, Oregon. She recently was named winner of the inaugural Deborah Tall Lyric Essay Book Prize for her first publication, "Five Plots." The book will be available for purchase online and in stores in October.

ericatrabold@gmail.com

**13 MARQUISHA SPENCER** (BGS, MS-14) graduated with her Ph.D. in higher education administration with an emphasis in women and gender studies from Claremont Graduate University. "I work as an assistant dean for academic success at Pomona College and teach at the University of La Verne," Spencer wrote. "I am so proud to be an alumna

of UNO and look forward to continuing to give back to the community."

**SHERYL CUMMINGS** (BS) went on a cruise to the Eastern Caribbean. Cummings writes, "It was a fun-filled vacation. I enjoyed the various ports embarked upon. I really enjoyed the many cultures and the history of the cities I visited. That's it for now. Stay strong, UNO alumni!"

**14 REN LONG** (BS) has moved to Texas, where he recently got a new job as a senior internal auditor.

renlong@unomaha.edu

**PHILLIP J. FOSTER** (MA) recently

graduated from the University of Nebraska with a master's degree in educational administration. He writes "I am particularly proud of this because I am the second person in my intermediate family to have an advanced degree." Since graduating, Foster began employment in the student affairs department at Doane University in Crete, Nebraska.

pfoster1390@gmail.com



**JAMIE WENDT** (MFA) in September will publish a collection of poetry, "Fruit of the Earth," with Main Street Rag Publishing Company. The book is available for purchase now at <https://mainstreetragbookstore.com/product/fruit-of-the-earth-jamie-wendt/>

jkwendt7@gmail.com

**LISA E. KENT** (MS) started a new position as a log consultant at Werner Enterprises.

lisaekent@hotmail.com

**15 JUSTIN ARNOLD** (MS) is the communications specialist for the Stimson Center, working on project 38 North, a website specializing in monitoring North Korea. In this role, he interacts with the media, promoting the site, sending out satellite imagery to journalists all over the world and making sure that "people get a clearer understanding of an extremely opaque nation."

**16 AMANDA HARPOLD** (BS) is an emergency management specialist Manitowoc County's Emergency Services Division. Harpold oversees

training, exercises and drills, and community outreach for the county, in addition to working closely with a nearby nuclear power plant for emergency preparedness. Harpold writes, "It's been incredibly fun and rewarding, and the curriculum for the program did an amazing job preparing me to work in the field. It was an almost seamless integration from school to work."

amandaharpold@co.manitowoc.wi.us

**ALYSEN RAIL** (BGS) is in search of a job and has been looking online in addition to attending job fairs since graduating. Rail has stayed busy by learning some new technology skills in addition to taking family vacations to church historical sights and a lavender farm.

alySEN@cox.net

**DOMINIQC K. WILLIAMS** (MA) recently became the assistant director of competitive sports for Campus Recreation at UNO. After moving from California to Nebraska to be the graduate assistant of Competitive Sports (2014-2016). Williams writes, "It has been a dream come true to be back in Omaha working with the Campus Recreation department again."

dkwilliams@unomaha.edu

**17 BENJAMIN KALINKOWITZ**

(MPA) and Rachel Feinmark recently celebrated the birth of their daughter, Hannah Evelyn, on March 1 in New Jersey. Big brother Joey is happy to welcome the new addition to the family.

**MARIA C. JIMENEZ** (BA)

is finishing her master's from the UNO school of psychology and expects to graduate December 2018.

mcjimenez@unomaha.edu

**BRYONNA JOHNSON**

(BA) after graduating in December 2017, Johnson received her first job as an account coordinator at advertising agency Redstone Communications. Their biggest client is Nebraska Furniture Mart and her main duties include conducting the logistics from start to finish for all NFM's broadcast advertising. She writes, "I am really enjoying all that I do at this agency and I am learning so much being in the advertising field."



## A look at happenings on and off campus

### CHAT WITH CHELSEA

More than 100 people gathered at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center in May to hear from Chelsea Clinton, now a best-selling author of children's books, among other titles. Clinton provided the keynote address for the "Stronger Together" three-day conference for library professionals.

**ONE OF THE THINGS YOU [LIBRARIANS AND EDUCATORS] ARE UNIQUELY IN THE POSITION TO DO IS TO HELP STUDENTS THAT DON'T HAVE THE RESOURCES OR SUPPORT THEY NEED.**

### HOLI COLORS

The Indian Student Association brought color back to a gray campus in April with Holi – the Festival of Colors – and DJ Raj kicking out tunes.

### CHILD'S PLAY

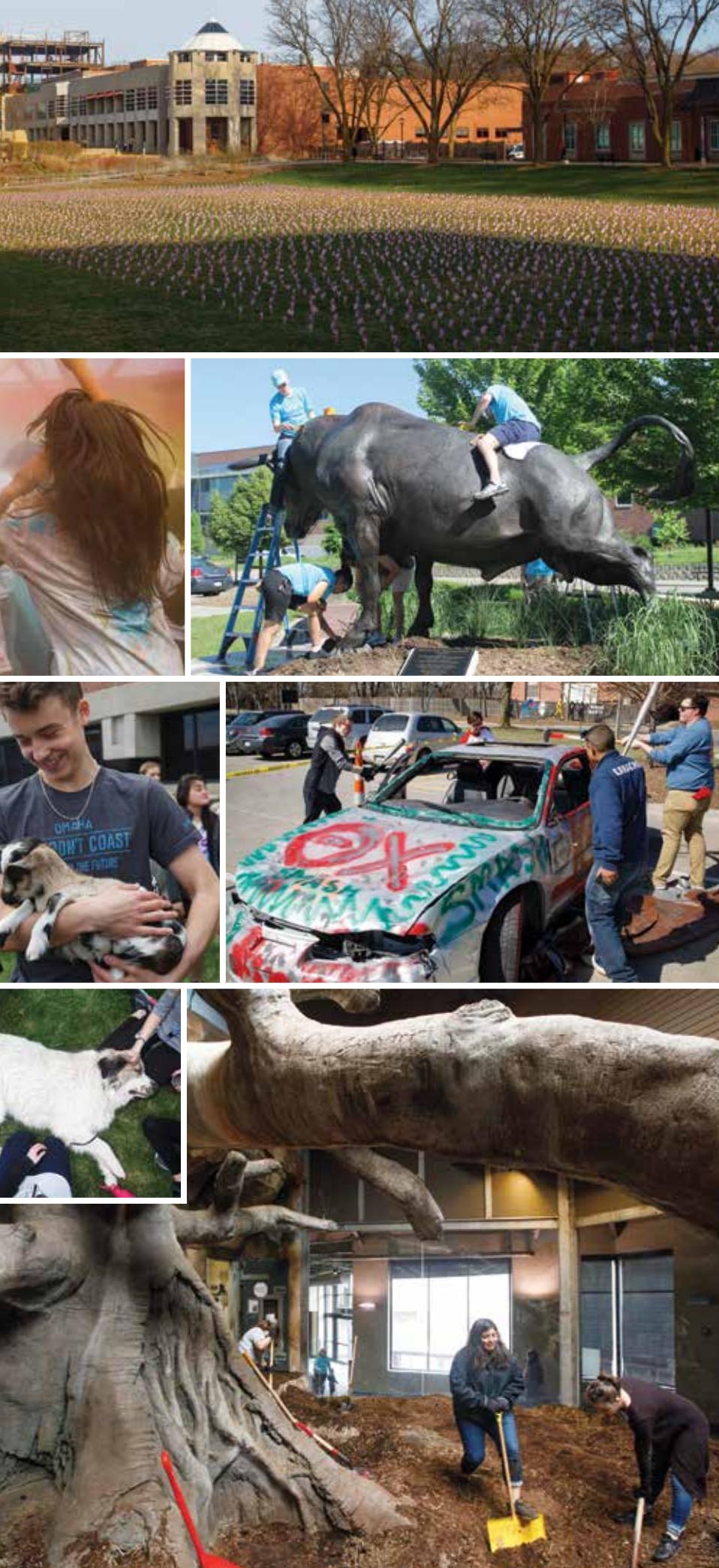
There were lots of laughs when best-selling author Lee Child continued the Marion Marsh Brown Writers Lecture Series in April at Baxter Arena. More than 3,000 free tickets were claimed for the event. Child is author of the Jack Reacher franchise of books. He began the lecture by answering a question he says he fields more often than any other: when did he know he wanted to be an author?

**IN MY CASE, THE ANSWER IS NEVER. I NEVER WANTED TO BE A WRITER. I STILL DON'T WANT TO BE A WRITER. WHAT I WANTED TO DO ALL MY LIFE WAS ENTERTAIN PEOPLE.**

### TOUR TIME

UNO Chancellor Jeffrey Gold visited the John Paul II Newman Center in April, touring the student residence and Catholic activity center with Omaha Archbishop George Lucas and Fathers Joe Taphorn and Andrew Roza. The center is located adjacent to UNO's Scott Campus on 71st and Pacific Streets.





## FALLEN — BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

UNO students honored service members who have lost their lives during military operations with a special "Tribute to the Fallen" event. Beginning April 16, military-affiliated students placed more than 7,000 miniature American flags in UNO's Pep Bowl to represent each life lost since 2001. Throughout the week, volunteers also read the names of each fallen service member from the Milo Bail Student Center plaza. The UNO Student Veteran Organization coordinated the event.

## A FOUNDATION OF SERVICE

The University of Nebraska Foundation held its third annual Day of Service on June 1 in honor of its 82nd anniversary. The foundation had 108 staff complete projects on the four campuses it serves — UNO, UNL, UNK and UNMC — with work totaling 298 volunteer hours. At UNO, foundation employees cleaned and waxed Maverick Monument, planted flowers and plants around the campanile, cleaned windows at the Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center and inserted bookmarks for the Common Reader Experience Program.

## HUGGING — AND SMASHING — STRESS

UNO helped students chill during finals week with "De-Stress Fest," an assortment of activities designed to give brains a break. The fun included time with pettable pets, crafts and exercise. Students also took a hammer to stress with Theta Chi's Car Smash, a fundraiser supporting the United Service Organization.

## SEVEN AT 16

UNO's Office of Civic & Social Responsibility hosted the 16th annual Seven Days Of Service in March, bringing together UNO students, K-12 students and members of the Omaha community to work on projects throughout the city. Projects focused on social justice, education, international service, environmental stewardship, health and wellness and economic sufficiency. The 2018 lineup included time working at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium. Each year, UNO students contribute more than 300,000 hours of service to the community.

Test your brainpower with these puzzles created by UNO graduate Terry Stickels ('76). Terry Stickels ('76), an author, speaker and puzzle maker. Stickels' FRAME GAMES is published by **USA Weekend** magazine and in 600 newspapers. For more information on Stickels, or to order any of his books, visit [www.terrystickels.com](http://www.terrystickels.com)

## **LOGIC**

How creative are you? Can you solve for the missing letter in the last triangle and solve the triangle word game at right? There is a certain logic in and around the triangles that will point you to the right answer.

# MATHEMATICS

Try this baseball math:

The distance from home plate to the pitcher's mound is 60 feet, 6 inches. A 90 mph fastball will reach the plate in 0.458 seconds.

If you moved back 90 feet from home plate, how many feet per second would the ball have to travel to reach the plate in 0.458 seconds?

## **CREATIVE THINKING**

Mrs. Periwinkle left on a trip the day after the day before yesterday and she will be back the eve of the day after tomorrow. How many days is she away?



WORD PLAY

Below is a jumbled quote from Shakespeare (*Julius Caesar*).

See if you can unscramble the words to come up with the correct quote.

*"Death times many before cowards but taste once never the die of their valiant deaths."*

## ANSWERS

**MATHEMATICS**

Beginning with the "C" in the first triangle and moving clockwise in each successive triangle, the phrase completes out "Can you solve this puzzle?" The missing letter is "E".

196.5 feet per second (about 134 mph). Moving to 90 ft.  
and having the ball reach home plate in 0.458 seconds, an  
equation can be set up for  $x$ -ft. per sec. Thus:  $90/x = .458$   
seconds;  $.458x = 90$ ;  $x = 90/.458$ ;  $x = 196.5$  ft./second.

**WORD PLAY**

WORD PLAY

as well.  
will be gone less than 48 hours (and you say  
will return early tomorrow, and therefore  
if you're nosed out she left late yesterday and  
she left yesterday and will return tomorrow.  
Three days.

**CREATIVETHINKING**

"Cowards did many times before their deaths,"  
The valiant never taste of death but once."



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# TODAY IS THE DAY I GIVE MYSELF THE ADVANTAGE.

## **Felicia Webb, Graduate**

Social Gerontology, MA  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

My today started when I realized dreams don't have a time limit. At 48 years old, I decided to go back to school. As soon as I reached out to the University of Nebraska at Omaha they grabbed my hand. The professors were all willing to help. Before, I thought my education was something I couldn't attain - I was busy trying to make a living. But one day I felt smart enough to try and never looked back. With my online program I felt like I was in a classroom with other classmates, but from within the four walls of my home. I did my schoolwork everywhere: airports, traveling, at home. Wherever I was, I was walking into a classroom and never felt alone. The impact of the people I've never met face to face is just as strong as if I'd stood there and shook their hands.



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