

UNIVERSITY OF SIOUX FALLS

Magazine

// FALL 2021





Hello & Welcome



amidst times of significant change, we strive to appropriately position the University in the rapidly shifting higher education marketplace. Throughout these times, the University has remained steadfastly committed to adjusting our strategies and practices without abandoning the rich traditions of the University's 138 years of existence. In pursuit of these necessary changes, the institution's traditional motto of Culture for Service has continued to serve the University well. To this end, we remain mission-centric in offering high-quality Christian higher education focused on the development of mature Christian persons for service to God and humankind.

Undeniably, the challenges of the last 20 months brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as changing societal views relative to the overarching purposes of higher education, have inspired institutional innovation addressing the demands of the day. However, this shifting mindset has not occurred at the expense of those cultural dynamics which we hold most sacred within the USF faith and academic community. The stories within this publication examine service in many forms—by students and alumni, by faculty and staff, and by this institution and its role in the greater Sioux Falls region and beyond.

As we embarked upon the 2021 fall semester, and in times of waning enrollment among colleges and universities across the nation; USF was proud to announce tying the record for its largest freshmen class in the institution's history. Furthermore, the University also recorded its second largest overall headcount. Additionally, the University successfully launched its inaugural doctoral level degree program with a very strong initial cohort in terms of enrollment. Simultaneous to the doctoral program launch, the University also opened its Center for Workforce Development, featuring a variety of certificate and two-year degree programs providing seamless pathways to further educational attainment at the University.

In our collective efforts to serve the community and region, the University finds itself becoming a significant player in workforce development. In September, our campus hosted Talent Draft Day in conjunction with the Sioux Falls Development Foundation. USF welcomed over 2,750 participants to the USF community representing approximately 250 schools across the upper-Midwest. The event greatly assisted the University in its efforts of positive public outreach and exposure. Through its various programming, USF continues to pursue adding value to the lives of its students, alumni, faculty, staff, the regional business community, and beyond. We extend our gratitude for the ambassadorship our alumni contribute to this endeavor!

Sincerely,

Dr. Brett Bradfield
President, University of Sioux Falls

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CAMPUS UPDATES

USF COMMUNITY BAND



The newly formed USF Community Band offers an opportunity for any instrumentalist in the greater Sioux Falls community to make music and enjoy fellowship with other local musicians. The USF Community Band welcomes musicians who currently perform at church or community ensembles, as well as instrumentalists of all ages who have not picked up an instrument since high school or college. The band, conducted by Dr. Jonathan Neiderhiser, Director of Instrumental Music at USF, has more than 50 regular members in its inaugural year.

The new ensemble was created in collaboration with the Augustana School of Music. The USF Community Band will rehearse and perform in the fall, and the Augustana Blue and Gold Band will rehearse and perform in the spring, which will allow musicians the opportunity to participate in both ensembles. Two performances will take place this fall, on November 21 in conjunction with a USF Instrumental Concert, and on December 5.

More at usiouxfalls.edu/communityband.

TALENT DRAFT DAY



The Sioux Falls Development Foundation held a major workforce event at USF in September. Talent Draft Day served to get middle schoolers, high schoolers and college students thinking about in-demand career paths and the employers who are looking to them as the region's up-and-coming workforce. It included various hands-on training camps with faculty in various fields, speed networking with area employers, a keynote on navigating the first year of their careers to come and an address from Sioux Falls Mayor and USF alumnus Paul TenHaken. The event also was streamed to about 250 schools throughout the Upper Midwest.

GROUNDS UPDATES



This summer Grand Island Residence Hall received a series of updates including new flooring and new beds in each room. Additionally, the Pierce Hall maintenance garage was torn down and a new maintenance garage was built on the southeast side of campus. Under the leadership of Brad Flayton, Director of Facilities, and through the good work of our Maintenance, Grounds, and Facilities employees and the Student Summer Project Team, the USF campus continues to be cared for and updated.



D O N O R

Spotlight

Craig and Noelle Okken

Noelle (Beauchamp) '99 and Craig Okken '98 both attended USF and were inspired to give back when they heard about USF offering students a new in-demand academic program: data science. The Okkens were deeply impacted by their own experiences as USF students, like finding life-long friends, growing spiritually, meeting each other and discovering new academic possibilities.

"I am grateful for the professors and coaches who invested in me while attending USF and for the long-standing friendships that were made with fellow classmates and teammates," Noelle says.

"My time at USF was incredibly impactful," Craig says. "It was a time where I really made my faith in Christ my own. I also was introduced to a career field I didn't know existed or have a clue I would like."

When Craig came to USF he had never heard of computer programming, and today he is the Vice President of Corporate Data and Analytics at Seismic.

"My professors helped me find a skill I didn't even realize I had," Craig says. "The Dot Com Boom was happening as I graduated from USF, so I had amazing opportunities to pursue a computer science career."

The Okkens see the same potential with data science. "It's a booming field right now," Craig says. "All companies have data and need to understand how to utilize it for their benefit. I want USF students to have the opportunity to excel in the data science field and discover a career in data science that they had no clue existed before they arrived at USF."





Culture for Service

MOSES'S STORY

Despite a lifetime of adversity, Moses Idris is an overcomer with a heart to help others and glorify God. A 2020 USF grad, Moses started his life in a refugee camp. He has worked five jobs at once, torn both ACL's at the same time and balanced full-time school while supporting his family and his Eritrean Kunama community in Sioux Falls. Despite a lifetime of adversity, he is an overcomer with a heart to help others and glorify God. While still a student at USF, Moses began forming a soccer team for young boys who needed a positive outlet. After struggling with personal challenges in 2018, Moses continued to push through numerous obstacles to build the Rising Stars soccer program. Today, the team of approximately forty players is not only successful on the field but also is gaining success in life with the help of Moses's valuable connections.

Below is a Q&A profile with Moses.

What first inspired you to start the Rising Stars soccer team?

MOSES: In 2018 my Eritrean Kunama community in Sioux Falls was on the news for gang related activities. I was deeply hurt because I love my Kunama people. They are a kind people and the actions of a few do not define the whole community. I wanted to change that perspective, but I had doubts because I was just a college student. I started practicing soccer with my little brother and some cousins, and more kids kept coming. I told myself I may not be able to change my entire community, but I can start with helping the kids create a better future for themselves!



//**ABOVE** The Rising Stars play soccer with Des Moines youth team during the summer of 2021.

Why was it important to you to help these young boys?

MOSES: I took one leadership class at USF, and we studied the leadership styles of every great leader in history. I wrote a small essay on Jesus's leadership style. There is not a more perfect example of a person who lived for service to God and humankind in the world. Jesus lived to serve, he uplifted the lowly, comforted the tormented, healed the sick and died to save humanity from sinfulness. That is why I made Jesus the core of my being and do my best to abide in him and to serve like him.

Have there been struggles along the way?

MOSES: In the winter of 2018 I found out I had to have ACL surgery on both my knees because of a work-related injury. During the recovery time, everything fell apart for me. I was not able to drive, work, go to school or provide for my family. I let all of those negative emotions drag me down and I was depressed and suicidal. My family was so

supportive and caring, but I shut everything off. It got so bad I had to be taken to Avera Behavioral Health where I spent two weeks trying to pick myself up. I relapsed, and the second time around, I realized something. It's something I already knew, but I had to personalize and accept, and that was God's love. God loves me so much that He sent his son to die for me, so that I may have life. At that moment I had to listen to God's voice, and make Jesus my personal Lord and Savior. I said to myself I will take it day by day, step-by- step and let Jesus shine through me. I committed to bringing Christ's light wherever there is darkness. One of the reasons I continue this program is because I want everyone, and especially the youth in my Kunama, to understand God's love and purpose for their lives.

Tell us how the Rising Stars became a competitive soccer team.

MOSES: We've faced so many challenges. When we started, the kids had no cleats or rides to practice, so I

would drive around and pick them all up for practice. The first summer we only played one game against a Kunama team from Des Moines, Iowa, and we lost 7-1. I had to ask the tournament organizers to buy us jerseys. I asked the parents to buy cleats and shin guards. The next summer the tournament was in Des Moines and just getting them there was a challenge, but I worked hard to save money and asked some of the parents to contribute money. We tied the first game and lost the second game 1-0 by a last minute goal. It was the best time me and my boys had as a team, and we will remember that for years!

Through all of this, what has been happening in your own life?

MOSES: I graduated from USF in May 2020. I worked as an educational assistant at Whittier Middle School and also as a youth development specialist at Boys and Girls Club. This past summer I had a paid internship opportunity at Avera Health as a diversity, equity and inclusion administration intern. I took this opportunity because I want to get my MBA in healthcare administration from USF. I learned so much during my internship about the healthcare world and met amazing community leaders within the Avera Health system. After my summer internship ended, I started my current role as a patient care technician at Avera McKennan in their brain & spine unit. What I love most is that I get to be the hands and feet of Jesus every day, and do the Lord's work of healing and comforting the sick.

How did your experiences at USF help shape you toward a life of service?

MOSES: My most memorable times at USF are the times when I was able to stop my busy schedule and live in service of others. For my senior Culture for Service event, I chose to be on the team where we cleaned up garbage around the USF campus and the surrounding neighborhoods. Picking up garbage might not sound like a fun idea, but it's a symbol of service. If we help each other by clearing a path, we can all go far! Another

//**RIGHT** Moses smiles for a photo with his undergraduate diploma and looks forward to pursuing an MBA and Doctorate at USF.

“There is not a more perfect example [Jesus] of a person who lived for service to God and humankind in the world. Jesus lived to serve . . . healed the sick and died to save humanity from sinfulness. That is why I made Jesus the core of my being and do my best to abide in him and to serve like him.”





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good memory for me was whenever I got off from my dishwashing shift in the USF cafeteria. I would sit in the McDonald Center and do my homework, drink Starbucks or eat the free food I got from working the shift. I would look up at the big poster that reads “Academic Excellence” and “Culture for Service.” I would then ponder how lucky I am to come from a refugee camp to be able to attend this great school and be fortunate to have all of these amazing opportunities. I would look at this poster again and again and re-commit myself to always try my best to be excellent in my academics and to serve others once I graduate.

Now that you have graduated, how have your real world experiences helped you?

MOSES: Since I worked for the school district, I have a lot of connections to teachers and school administrators. I also networked a lot and got to meet other folks in the same mission. One of my best

connections was meeting Mr. Frank Gurnick, the director of Dakota Alliance Soccer Club. He donated a lot of soccer equipment to us and would come to our soccer practices to help me coach the kids. I am also grateful for my assistant coach, Mr. Andrew Siebenborn. He is a lieutenant in the Sioux Falls Police Department and a USF alumnus. He has helped me so much this summer, and it has been special to be able to impact the kids together! Now I am trying to work with other organizations to help take the program to the next level. Since I have been an administrative intern with Avera Health, I worked with them to set up a soccer job fair. They reserved the Avera Sports Dome and I took 40 of my soccer kids there. The Avera Direct Hire Team came with computers to help the boys apply for jobs, conduct interviews and even hired four of them on the spot! I have also been working the past few months with Orthopedic Institute to create an after-school program that is just getting started.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of coaching your team?

MOSES: The most rewarding thing is just helping bring out their full personalities and see their growth. Since I have coached most of them for three years now, they are like family. Most of these kids are growing up in a low-income household. Their parents work long hours and don't have much time to help them. It's great to see them connect with each other after school and have fun, but at the same time, be exposed to different opportunities that the community has to offer. My goal is to help them become a better leader than I am and become their own stars. I can already see some of them working on their leadership skills.

What dreams do you have for the future?

MOSES: I believe that if you impact one person they will impact another person. The ripple effect will continue and change our community. I pray for this every day: that everyone is given the opportunity to follow their dreams, and that we all use our God-given gifts to help each other realize our full potential and fulfill our purpose in life. ■



//LEFT Moses sits in front of the Culture for Service and Academic Excellence banners that motivated him during his time as a student at USF.

//RIGHT TOP Champions! The Rising Stars pose for a photo after winning a tournament for the first time.

//RIGHT BOTTOM "If we help each other by clearing a path, we can all go far!" Moses helps clean up garbage during the 2019 Culture for Service Day at USF.



SAAC

IS A WIN FOR USF

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Promotes Campus Initiatives and a Positive Athletic Experience

If you spot a lime green bandana tied around a USF student's backpack, it is not a fashion statement. The colorful symbol is part of a service initiative being carried out by the USF Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC).

The Green Bandana Project is just one of several initiatives facilitated by SAAC to help raise awareness about important issues and provide valuable services to USF students and the Sioux Falls community.

"A green bandana means this person is safe to talk to in the event of a mental health crisis," says Kylan Straight, a senior SAAC officer representing USF softball. "It means the person is part of a peer network that can help you."

Other projects led by SAAC include Slam Dunk Don't Drive Drunk (an anti-drinking and driving program), It's On Me (focused on domestic abuse and sexual assault) and fundraising for Make-A-Wish South Dakota.

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According to David Ecker, SAAC President and a member of the USF Cross Country Team, members raise money for local charities by hosting numerous campus events each year.

"For example, we hosted a bean bag tourney at one of the basketball games. Entry fees were donated and students had a lot of fun," he explains.

SAAC was established at USF in 2012 after the University joined the NCAA Division II Conference. The purpose of SAAC is to promote a positive student-athlete image through organized community service and to seek student-athlete input on the regulations that affect athletics and the lives of those playing and practicing NCAA Division II sports.

"There are a lot of service organizations on campus, but SAAC accommodates student-athletes specifically. Many of the things we do take place at athletic events, like basketball games," explains

//ABOVE SAAC President David Ecker wears his green bandana on his backpack as a symbol to others that he is a safe individual to talk to about mental health.

MORE COUGAR ATHLETIC HEADLINES



USF student-athletes JJ Cooney of Men's Golf (first team), Krista Goerger of Volleyball (first team) and David Ecker (third team) of the Track & Field/Cross Country Program were named 2020-21 Division II College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-Americans.



The University of Sioux Falls Softball Team ranked a program-best sixth in NCAA DII with a 3.740 grade point average as a 2020-21 Easton/National Fastpitch Coaches Association All-America Scholar-Athlete Team.



Seven individuals and four teams were inducted into the USF Athletics Hall of Fame this fall. For a complete list and bio info, visit USFCougars.com



Wade Merry was named the USF Men's and Women's Golf Coach late this summer. In addition, USF announced hirings of Director of Strength and Conditioning Micah Cloward, Head Athletic Trainer Emily DeGroot and Assistant Athletic Directors Jason Ferro and Nick Moen.



For the seventh time in nine meetings, the USF Football Team defeated city rival Augustana University with a 28-26 come-from-behind victory in the "Key to the City" game at Bob Young Field.

usfcougars.com



//ABOVE SAAC members show their green bandanas during the first meeting of the academic year.

//LEFT Big smiles during a Special Olympics basketball game! This event was another opportunity SAAC participated in to serve the community.



Aaron Voigt, a senior SAAC officer representing Cross Country. “We try to use big platforms to get big attention.”

There are 27 SAAC members representing 15 sports at USF. The members are nominated by coaches for their leadership abilities and passion for service.

“SAAC provides a great opportunity for student-athletes to make a difference,” says Micha Thompson, USF’s SAAC advisor. “Some of them really have a heart for this. It gives them a voice and teaches them the right way to advocate for the things that matter to them.”

Students involved with SAAC learn that service doesn’t always take the form of grand events and fundraisers. A common struggle for student-athletes at any institution is balancing academic

and athletic schedules. SAAC provides a supportive avenue for talking through these struggles and finding ways to communicate better understanding between student-athletes and faculty.

“Occasionally, an athlete will have trouble in a class because of a special circumstance or a sports-related commitment that takes them away from a lab or a test,” Aaron says. “SAAC provides an outlet and a voice for the student-athlete.”

In addition to serving student-athletes on campus, SAAC members also have the opportunity to impact NCAA Division II legislation by casting votes on behalf of USF.

“The NCAA proposed legislation a few years ago that involved adjusting the way schools do practice hours,”

Thompson says. “Our SAAC members talked through the positives and negatives with their teammates, and together they decided how we would vote. This was a great experience for all involved and really ignited some powerful conversation.”

Whether tying on a green bandana, helping a fellow student-athlete resolve a problem or thoughtfully voting on Division II legislation, SAAC members discover that serving others is a powerful way to grow their own character.

“SAAC has really benefited me personally,” Kylan says. “When I was younger, I struggled with speaking out and voicing my opinion. SAAC has really helped me hone those skills so that I can reach my greatest potential.” ■

COUGAR FAMILY

Students



Emma Deneui '22

"I came to USF pursuing a nursing major, and if I am being honest, I thought that I would never be a part of the statistic that said pretty much all college students change their majors once or even twice throughout their time," Emma Deneui says. "But the Lord had different plans for me." Emma is now pursuing a degree in Theology and Youth Ministry. While Emma's career plan shifted, her passion to help others remained—it simply took on a different form. "I did not have the greatest church experience growing up," Emma says. "When I was in my high school and middle school, I did not feel like I could ask questions about faith or about who God was." Because of her experience, Emma longs to be someone whom adolescents feel safe bringing their questions to. "I want to influence my students for Jesus," says Emma when asked how she hopes to impact the world after graduation. "I want to make church feel like a safe and consistent place they want to come to. I want to make students feel heard, understood and cared for. I want them to feel like they can ask really big questions, even if I do not immediately have the answer."



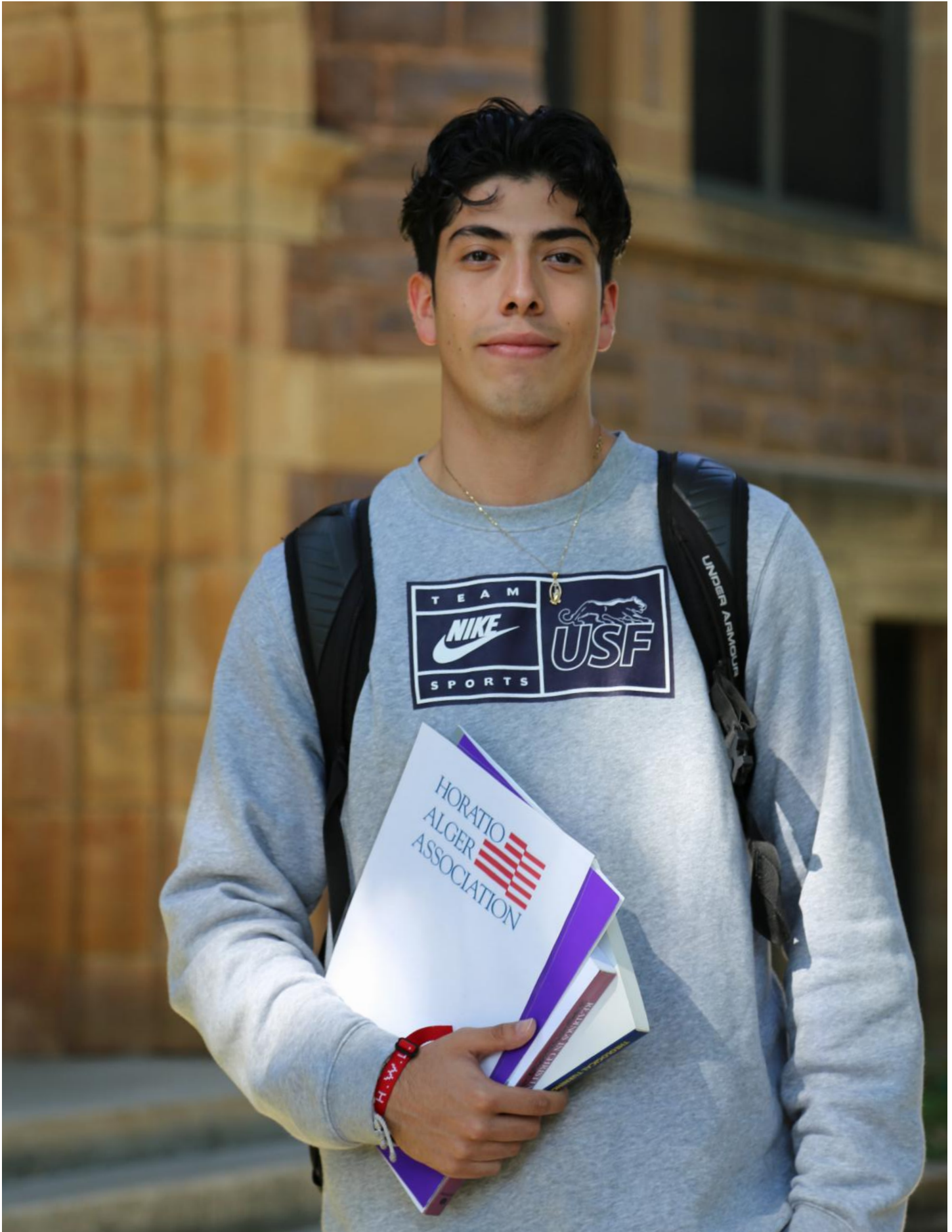
Philip Leneau '26

Philip Leneau's journey has been challenging. "I come from a low-income area," Philip says. "It's difficult to find opportunities to leave and pursue your passions." Philip's passion is music, and he is creating a new narrative for his life and being recognized for his persistence and passion. He is one of a select few that received the high honor and assistance of the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship. "This scholarship means a lot to me because it allowed me to go to college," Philip says. One hundred percent of first-time full-time freshman at USF receive financial aid to make pursuing their dream affordable—just like Philip. "I want to be a song writer and musician someday," he says. "It's my dream job." Philip is on the path to make his dreams come true.



Lexi Frank '22

"Being a student-athlete has impacted me in so many ways, from my teammates becoming my best friends to boosting confidence in who I am," says Lexi Frank, a Nursing major and USF Track & Field athlete. "Athletics has also taught me to keep going and to recognize I can do more than my mind limits me to, which has shaped me into the person I am today." At USF Lexi is growing academically with career training in nursing and personally through athletics, but that doesn't mean she is waiting until she graduates to serve the community. "I currently volunteer in Children's Ministries at Central Church Downtown, along with leading a high school youth group at Sioux Falls First," Lexi says. "I wanted to volunteer in these areas primarily because I felt the Lord's calling on my life to be there, to be able to share His love, and encourage kids to walk boldly in who they were created to be." Lexi views Culture for Service not just simply as a volunteer opportunity, but a way of life. "I hope to influence the world after graduation by sharing God's love with those around me through the youth I serve, my future patients, everyday encounters, my friends, my family and strangers," Lexi says.



Dare to Dream

UNIQUE

SCHOLARSHIP

PAVES THE WAY

TO USF

"I was in shock when I saw the email informing me that I was getting the scholarship," says Cristian Zuniga Garcia, a junior Psychology and Theology double major. "I really wanted to go to USF, but didn't know how to afford it. I told my family this scholarship meant I could go and make them proud. It feels amazing to be one of the people chosen for this."

The Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship was awarded to Cristian prior to his freshman year, along with some grants, work study and a few other scholarships. The first generation student also works a part-time job and is looking ahead to graduate school.

"I want to become a psychologist and get into private counseling," he says. "There are times when I doubt myself. English classes challenge me as a reader and a writer, but my USF professors push me to do my best. They believe in me, so it is easier to believe in myself."

Rather than relying on GPA or ACT scores, the selection process for the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship

prioritizes applicants having overcome challenges in their lives and as well as having critical financial need.

Currently 26 students at USF receive the scholarship.

For students like Cristian, receiving the scholarship and attending USF has been life changing.

"I knew I was interested in psychology, but double majoring in theology was not on my radar. After I took my intro to theology classes, I knew I wanted more. I wanted a deeper relationship with God," he explains. "I feel like my theology major will help me in my life and in my career."

Many of the students selected for the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship at USF have a desire to grow their faith and to give back.

Jace Burma attended high school at Sunshine Bible Academy, where his parents are both teachers. The junior History and Education major knew USF and a Christian liberal arts education were right for him—he just wasn't sure it was possible.

// **LEFT** Cristian Zuniga Garcia is a junior Psychology and Theology double major.



// **ABOVE** Jace Burma is a junior History and Education major.

“ USF IS
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“I really wanted to go to USF, but I was worried about putting myself or my family in debt,” he explains. “When I came for a visit, the USF admissions counselor told me I qualified for the Horatio-Alger scholarship based on my family’s income. It took me some time to get the application done. I nearly gave up, thinking I would

not get it, but my mom encouraged me to keep going. I’m so glad I did. I got the scholarship, and I love it here.”

With a value of \$25,000 per student, the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship is well worth the application process. The biggest hurdle is making sure eligible high school seniors apply for it.

“We are always looking to identify students who would benefit from this scholarship,” says Crystal Carlsen-Pennington, a USF admissions counselor. “We give out at least six per year, and USF is committed to providing students with ongoing support to help them graduate and succeed.”

One such student who might have easily slipped through the cracks is Anastacia Suing. Anastacia was living as a ward of the state when she tagged along with a friend on a visit to USF.

“She wanted to go to college, but she had no parental support, and wasn’t sure of her next steps,” Carlsen-Pennington says. “I identified her as a candidate for the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship and gave her all the help I could. We texted back and forth for about three weeks in order to ensure she filled out all the right forms, completed her essays and supplied all the documents. The application is lengthy, but she got it done before the deadline.”

FAST FACTS

about the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship

- > The Horatio Alger Association of Distinguished Americans, Inc was established in 1947 to inspire young men and women to reach their highest potential, even when the odds are against them.
- > As one of the nation's largest need-based scholarship programs, the Horatio Alger Association has awarded \$235 million to over 35,000 deserving students so far.
- > A generous \$30 million gift from T. Denny Sanford established the endowment for the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship. It was the largest single gift ever to the Horatio Alger Association.

“ I AM JUST GLAD THERE
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Anastacia was awarded the Horatio Alger-Denny Sanford Scholarship along with several other scholarships and grants and is now enrolled at USF as a freshman pursuing a career in architecture.

“I am so excited to be here,” she says. “I went to orientation and am doing everything they recommended. I bought a planner. I set up a meeting with a student resource advisor. I know where to go if I need tutoring. I am just glad there are so many people here willing to help if I need it.”

After years of living independently from her parents, Anastacia tends to view the world both realistically and through the eyes of a dreamer.

“I want to graduate college with as little debt as possible,” she says. “After I get my degree and start working as an architect, I want to do some missionary work in a third world country. Eventually, I would love to own my own firm and live a simple life out in the country. I want to be in a place where I can always see the stars.”

And this is exactly what that Horatio Alger Scholarship is all about. ■



// ABOVE Anastacia Suing is a Pre-Architecture Art major.

USF GRAD TAKES

SERVICE

TO THE STREETS

AS SIOUX FALLS CHIEF OF POLICE

Jonathan Thum had no intention of ever becoming the Sioux Falls chief of police. Through faith, circumstance, opportunities and lessons learned, he feels he was being prepared for this position long before he was ready to accept it.

"Looking back, I see that my Christian liberal arts education gave me tools I never thought I would need, but that are vital to my role today," he explains. "I was exposed to a broad academic background, diverse people and some incredible service experiences. I was also involved in youth ministry, the football team, the choir and the band. While admittedly I was not the best student, USF prepared me to be a student of life."

Thum graduated from USF in 2003 with a business administration degree. He worked in sales for two years, all the while feeling called in a different direction. His wife, Melissa, also a USF grad, understood his desire to make an impact and encouraged him to pursue his childhood dream of

becoming a police officer.

In 2005, he quit his sales job and took a job with the Sioux Falls Police Department.

Within five years, he joined the SWAT team and worked his way into a training officer position. In 2015 he was promoted to sergeant. In 2019 he became a lieutenant, earning awards and accolades along the way.

"I've always found fulfillment through service. My dad and grandpa both served in the military. My dad is USF's campus pastor, so I pretty much grew up understanding the Culture for Service mission," he says. "A career with the police department allows me to serve our community in a way that really fits me."

Thum's hard work and commitment to being a leader stem from what he considers one of his life's greatest failures. While a student at USF, he quit the football team after "mismanaging my opportunities and not putting in the work."



"I left some things on the table and learned a hard lesson," he says. "While I regret walking away from USF football, that failure ultimately brought me to where I am today. I learned how important it is to give everything my best effort. My motto is 'No Avoidable Regrets.' I never want to disappoint myself like that again."

After leaving the football team, Thum switched gears and became involved with USF's music program. He traveled the world with the choir and learned to appreciate a variety of cultures and people—something he finds great value in today.

In his first years as a street cop, he was assigned to the northeast side of Sioux Falls, where he loved interacting with the community. This experience led him to volunteer with Lutheran Social Services and the Multi-

Cultural Center in an effort to build relationships and connect with the people he was working to serve.

Thum also had the opportunity to serve as an adjunct faculty member in the USF Criminal Justice department. He taught

classes in 2019 and 2020, using his industry knowledge about policing issues to help inform the next generation.

"Coming full circle and teaching at USF was an incredible opportunity to give back on a more practical level," he says. "There really is a difference you can see and feel on this campus. The faculty is invested. The students are involved."

As a person whose career path was shaped rather than planned, Thum offers solid advice to students wondering about their own futures.

"USF prepared me well for some of the challenges of my position," he says. "I believe that any higher education you receive from USF, regardless of the degree, will take you great places. I encourage students to take advantage of professors from every discipline. You will learn something valuable from them all." ■

PHOTOS

Photos captioned from left to right.

//**ONE** Thum visits with a community member.

//**TWO** The 3rd Annual Sioux Falls Police Department Community Soccer Game. Thum, members of the SFPD and other city departments played in a game versus several members from Sioux Falls' Somali and Eritrean communities.

//**THREE** Thum, Mayor Paul TenHaken, and Fire Chief Matt McAreavey participated in the coin flip at the annual "Key to the City" football game.

//**FOUR** Thum celebrates Ethiopian Day at Sertoma Park this fall.

//**FIVE** A throwback to Thum's college days, this photo captures a moment with his brother and grandparents after a Madrigals singing performance at USF.



USF PREPARED ME
TO BE A STUDENT
OF LIFE.



COUGAR FAMILY *Memories!*



The USF family celebrated the gift of being together in person, tradition and long-lasting relationships at this year's Cougar Days, Oct 1-3. As time has gone by, Cougar Days has become the overarching title for many activities and celebrations taking place around USF Homecoming. Each year alumni return and reunite with friends and old classmates, and parents join their students to celebrate homecoming with special family weekend events.

1

TAILGATE FAMILY CARNIVAL AND FOOTBALL

Cougar fans gathered before the football game to enjoy good food, inflatables, lawn games and socializing. Fans held their GO COO foam paws proudly as Cougar football defeated rival Augustana University, winning the "Key to the City" (above).

2

50TH CLASS REUNION BRUNCH

Members of the class of 1970 and 1971 shared laughs and memories of their time at Sioux Falls College during a special brunch that celebrated their 50th class reunion.

3

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS & HALL OF FAME

USF family gathered at the Orpheum Theater to celebrate the excellence and accomplishments of alumni at the Hall of Fame Banquet and Alumni Achievement Awards Ceremony.

4

MUSICAL MOMENT

USF choir poses for a selfie before singing the National Anthem at the football game. The Concert Chorale also contributed to worship on Sunday at First Baptist Church.

5

5K RUN/WALK

USF community members gathered at Pasley Park for a 5K run/walk that raised funds to support USF Track & Field.

6

COUGAR ROYALTY

King: Devin Wolthuizen

Queen: Zoe Cigard

7

GENERATION TO GENERATION

Dr. Hiigel shares a moment of reconnection with an alumnus and their family at the Faculty and Alumni Art Reception.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7

Save the Date!

GIVE2COO

USF'S GIVING DAYS MARCH 22-24, 2022

COUGAR

FAMILY *Faculty*



DR. ANDREW BECK

"Research is my passion," says Dr. Andrew Beck, Assistant Professor of Psychology at USF. His passion for research is impacting lives in his classroom at USF and the greater community. Recently, he earned his Ph.D. and completed a dissertation researching the topic of vehicle turning performance for middle-age and older drivers. The study aimed to help find ways to provide a data-driven way to assist medical professionals and families in making informed decisions on revoking or limiting driving privileges of drivers diagnosed with dementia. "Knowing that my research on this topic may play a small role in helping others is very meaningful to me," Dr. Beck says. While his research is serving the general public, he also gets to share his passion for research with his students. "In each class I teach, I draw on my experience as a researcher to help guide students through the research process," he says. "I am part of the USF community that is devoted to Culture for Service. My role is to help and serve our students, and that is very important to me." Dr. Beck recalls the influence of professors who encouraged him to excel beyond what he thought he was capable of and hopes to pay forward that encouragement to the students in his classroom.



**PROFESSOR
JAMIE JUHL**

"I have always had the desire to help people," says Jamie Juhl, Assistant Professor of Special Education at USF. "As an educator I have the ability to serve the students I work with daily. There are roughly 9 months to work with students and take them from where they are currently (academically, socially and emotionally), to where they can be!" Juhl teaches both undergraduate and graduate-level courses at USF. She brings 10 years of K-12 education experience from a variety of roles such as kindergarten teacher, K-4 special education teacher, 7-12 special education teacher, 3rd-grade teacher, volleyball coach and more. This past spring Juhl was recognized for the impact she is making by receiving an Outstanding Faculty Award. This honor recognizes excellence in teaching and scholarly endeavors that contribute in a meaningful and positive manner to the academic community at USF. "She cares for everyone," says a USF student who nominated Juhl. "She cares not just about how we are doing in class, but how we are doing in life. She goes out of her way to ensure that her students are okay both emotionally and academically."



**INSTRUCTOR
TIM EASTER**

"I am passionate about what I teach because it is important for everyone to learn about the Native American culture of this area," says Tim Easter, a Native American Studies Instructor at USF. "The culture provides lessons and ways that all people can learn from." Easter has been teaching Native American Studies for Educators for over a decade at USF. The course is designed to give future educators a deeper understanding of the backgrounds and ways of life of Native American people as well as methods and techniques to enhance learning opportunities for Native American children in the K-12 classroom. "Native American Studies for Educators has been a great class to teach," Easter says. "It has been a wonderful experience to teach Native American culture and share my experiences while I continue to learn more about my culture and language." Outside of teaching at USF, Easter teaches Native American Connections and Lakota/Dakota Language for the Sioux Falls School District. "My hope is that students can become impactful teachers for everyone they encounter," Easter says.

CLAS NOTES

All notes are based on information received between March 1 and August 31, 2021. Send us your update today at usioxfalls.edu/keepintouch.

// CELEBRATIONS

Alumni

Aleta (Jensen) '60 and **Pete Beier '62** celebrated 60 years of marriage on July 1, 2021.

Judy (Moberly) '66 and **Terry Kukuk '66** celebrated 55 years of marriage on Aug. 10, 2021.

Carol (Eliason) '68 and **Don Roozenboom '66** celebrated 55 years of marriage on Aug. 15, 2021.

Pat (Johnson) '71 and **Dennis Hoffman '71** celebrated 50 years of marriage on June 14, 2020.

Patricia (Perkovich) '72 and **Terry Comstock '66** celebrated 50 years of marriage on July 31, 2021.

Laycee Cain '20 married Jared Kluin on Aug. 14, 2021, in Harrisburg, SD.

Jaren (Johnson) '05 and Luke Guetter welcomed Piper Drew on May 4, 2021.

Jody Monson '06 married Erik Blomberg on April 17, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Alex Heinert '07 and Kelsey welcomed Henry Alex on June 28, 2021.

Heidi (Wolff) '08 and **Taylor Calmus '09** welcomed Otto Oskar on April 25, 2021.

Amy (Schrader) '08 and Jason Palmund celebrated 10 years of marriage on Oct. 8, 2021.

Amanda (Jastram) '08 and Alexander Snyder welcomed Ethan on March 22, 2021.

Sarah (DeVries) '09 and Chad Kurtenbach welcomed Ava Elizabeth on March 4, 2021.

Miranda (Metzger) '11 and Tyler Goodchild welcomed Zion Ray on April 20, 2021.

Rachel (Heeney) '11 and Justin Wittler welcomed Kinsley Rae on Sept. 10, 2020.

Rachel Dewey '12 married Peter Coates on July 10, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Kendra Kooiker '12 married Ross Leonhardt on July 2, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Kristen (Johnson) Niemeyer '12 welcomed Palmer Marie on Aug. 18, 2021.

Leah (Wensmann) '13 and Ryan Anderson welcomed Branch Ryan on June 17, 2021.

Shae Reinke '13 married Derek Smith on April 3, 2021, in Barrett, MN.

Emily (Sazama) '13 and **Dan Stee '12** welcomed Hadley Ann on March 7, 2021.

Maura Bickner '14 married Kyle Galvin on May 29, 2021, in Minneapolis, MN.

Kelli Hoff '14 married Andrew Pillatzki on July 10, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Davee (Johnson) '14 and **Blaze Kilian '15** welcomed Nadia Ezra on May 1, 2021.

Breonna Oveson '14 welcomed Ryah Ann on June 13, 2021.

Blake Stevenson '14 and Mackenzie welcomed Grady Alvan on June 1, 2021.

Anna Thvedt '14 married Paul Malcolm on April 10, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Alix Jansma '15 married **Tanner Grotewold '15** on April 24, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Kiley Wolles '15 married Dylan Peters on June 18, 2021, in Colton, SD.

Ally Kroehler '16 married Andrew Little on May 29, 2021, in Chaska, MN.

Tanner Mans '16 and Katie welcomed Connor Reid on May 12, 2021.

John Tidwell '16 married Miranda Tidwell on Aug. 30, 2021, in Stillwater, MN.

Amy (Wolff) Frankman '17 welcomed Vivian Jane on Aug. 23, 2021.

Laura (Ebbesen) '17 and Jeremy Nettifee welcomed Elliot Otto on June 4, 2021.

Whitney (Senden) '17 and **Christian Schwab '17** welcomed Nora Joy on June 23, 2021.

Devon Comp '18 and Lexi welcomed Parker Joy on April 10, 2021.

Allie (Thiesse) '18 and Nicholas LaFave welcomed Eleanor Grace on April 21, 2021.

Addie Oliver '18 married Caleb Havekost on July 10, 2021, in Omaha, NE.

Kennedy Clark '19 married **Grant Sweeter '19** on June 26, 2021, in Aberdeen, SD.

Mataya Otten '19 married **Graham Ferguson '21** on Aug. 7, 2021, in Sioux Falls.

Alyssa (Micke) '21 and Jon Bausch welcomed Ashtyn Irene on Jan. 26, 2021.

Faculty & Staff

Brittany Domino and Derek welcomed Harrison Drake on June 5, 2021.

Sarah Strasburg and Victor welcomed Iris Leigh on May 4, 2021.

// IN MEMORIAM

Alumni

Robert Johnston '48, June 7, 2021, Sioux Falls

Hal Krantz '49, April 2, 2021, Minnetonka, MN

Muriel (Bergdale) Goettsch '51, March 6, 2021, Winnebago, IL

Laverna Mehlhaff '51, July 20, 2021, Oak Park, IL

Lorraine (Johnson) Sapp '54, June 23, 2021, San Antonio, TX

Vaneta (McIrvin) Ford '57, April 25, 2021, Charleston, SC

Donald Decker '58, Dec. 30, 2020, La Mirada, CA

Juanita (Lueck) Nielsen '59, Aug. 15, 2021, Harrisonville, MO

David Stratton '59, April 4, 2021, Eau Claire, WI

Cordell Westphal '61, March 6, 2021, West Union, IA

Carol (Hodges) Yearwood '61, May 17, 2021, Orange Park, FL

Nellie (Hollingsworth) Petterson '62, May 8, 2021, Sioux Falls

LeeDel Howard '63, June 8, 2021, Sioux Falls

Sue (Pollmann) Scribner '63, Aug. 25, 2021, Sioux Falls

Roger Craig '64, July 21, 2021, Aurora, CO

Les Bertsch '65, April 13, 2021, Sioux Falls

Shirley (Newville) Courier '65, Dec. 19, 2020, Mankato, MN

Pamela (Robinson) Healy '65, July 9, 2021, Sioux Falls

Roberta (Clay) Kennedy '68, June 26, 2021, Columbia, SC

Charles Larsen '68, July 28, 2021, Oshkosh, WI

Jim Beal '70, April 5, 2021, Sioux Falls

Lloyd Harless '70, Aug. 19, 2021, Pipestone, MN

Sheryl (Hammerstrom) Korsch '70, June 19, 2021, Kelowna, BC

Ed Lloyd '70, July 11, 2021, Minneapolis, MN

Ruby (Shields) Aldrich '71, June 23, 2021, Sioux Falls

Terry Janisch '71, July 21, 2021, Oxnard, CA

Lowell De Vries '72, Aug. 31, 2021, Summerset, SD

Larry Sagness '72, April 12, 2021, Sioux Falls

Judith (Fluegel) Steele '72, July 22, 2021, Sioux Falls

Steve Dvorak '73, July 28, 2021, Sioux Falls

Marian (Gambrel) Winckler '73, Aug. 5, 2021, Sioux Falls

John Heege '77, March 9, 2021, Sioux Falls

Dick Hines '78, March 21, 2021, Sioux Falls

Karen (Karlson) Taylor '83, April 16, 2021, Sioux Falls

Lynn Golden '88, March 8, 2021, Arnolds Park, IA

Julie Koenig '90, July 3, 2021, Valley City, ND

Troy Shaffer '96, April 3, 2021, Pella, IA

Michael McIntosh '00, June 20, 2021, Los Angeles, CA

Laura Brandt '05, June 12, 2021, Sioux Falls

Brenda Thompson '06, Aug. 27, 2021, Sioux Falls

Kristin (Salo) Baker '10, April 14, 2021, Sioux Falls

Friends

Leon Bill, June 4, 2021, Sioux Falls

Vicky Burcham, Aug. 28, 2021, Sioux Falls

Cal Salem, March 23, 2021, Waconia, MN

Earl Sherburne, June 17, 2021, Saint Paul, MN

COUGAR

FAMILY *Alumni*

Crystal Johnson '99



Crystal Johnson's life has been formed around service to others. In her personal life she volunteers at her church, coaches youth sports and works as an adjunct professor. "My biggest role of service to others is in my career," says Johnson, a deputy state's attorney for Minnehaha County. "I focus on crimes against persons, so I work directly with victims impacted by crime—often times helping them deal with the very worst day of their lives." Johnson has served in nearly every career role in the courtroom. She is passionate about caring for the Sioux Falls community by advocating for victims and empowering those who don't have a voice. "Getting a child victim to testify in a courtroom in front of their monster is one of the greatest things I get to do," Johnson says. "While that might sound different, empowering that child to give them the strength to overcome their fear is what I strive to do. Likewise, coaching children and getting to see a lightbulb turn on when they are learning volleyball or beginning to understand a concept in basketball is incredibly rewarding on a completely different level."

Dr. Richard P. Olson '56



From a humble childhood in northwest South Dakota, Dr. Richard P. Olson has spent his ministry career serving as an associate pastor, a sole pastor, and a senior pastor in rural, urban, suburban and university settings. Dr. Olson has been a college and seminary professor as well as a pastoral counselor, which included part-time assignments with an addiction treatment center and a divorce court. Out of these ministries, and in support of them, he has authored 20 books. Subjects addressed in his literature include life stages, family ministry, theological inquiry, humor as a spiritual practice, changing male roles, Christmas stories and dramas, and guidance in finding one's vocation. Now in his 80s, he and MaryAnn, his wife of 64 years, live in the Oakwood Retirement Community in Madison, Wisconsin—but there are no plans to slow down as he is currently developing a book on grandparenting as a Christian vocation. "My life as a pastor, professor and writer had firm foundations," Dr. Olson says. "These foundations include a loving family, great little home church and pastor, the family into which I married and, not least, four years in the rich little community that was Sioux Falls College."

Deb (Sweat) '80 and Jim House '80



Deb (Sweat) and Jim House have dedicated their lives to serving others. This service has taken form specifically in the classroom, as they both are award winning educators. "While at USF, I developed a passion for working with children and doing what I could to help them to be successful," Jim says. "Serving as a teacher allowed me to make a real and tangible difference in the lives of my students." Outside of the classroom, Jim and Deb have served as short-term missionaries in Malawi, Africa, and traveled there several times to support teachers and disadvantaged students at Montessori Christian School. "We've also had the opportunity to serve in a number of local and international missions," Jim says. "I've learned early on that serving in such conditions isn't about changing the world, but more about changing my perspective. I love helping in any way I can. Hopefully, that help will make a difference, but in the end, I find that I'm the one who walks away changed." Jim and Deb also co-founded an annual Outdoor Conservation Camp for students in grades K-6 in the Snowy Range Mountains, and Jim started the Boy Scout Program and Deb started the Girl Scout Program in Elk Mountain, Wyoming. Though Jim has faced a number of health challenges in recent years including open heart surgery in 2018, he has since run two marathons, completed long-distance bike rides, and continues to run, walk, and cycle daily. As of June 2020, both are retired and now love traveling to visit family and see the world.

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