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**BRIDGE**

2022 • Volume 75

**FINLANDIA**  
UNIVERSITY

*From the President*

## TIMOTHY PINNOW



Greetings, Finlandia Family!

I'd like to welcome you to this issue of the Bridge in Finlandia University's 126th year. This issue of the Bridge is all about how our shared interest in Finlandia forges not only connections between us, but connections to those we've never met. Inside, you'll have an opportunity to connect a bit more with me as your new president through my thoughts on FinnU and leadership during challenging times for higher education.

You will also have the opportunity to connect with Finlandia's new management team and learn about the wealth of experience they bring to FinnU. You'll meet the family and friends of alum and former faculty member Ryan Bessolo, who established a scholarship fund in his memory that will connect Ryan's legacy to generations of future students. Similarly, a new donation of Winter War memorabilia to Finlandia's Finnish American Heritage Center connects our present to Finland's past. And finally, you'll have a chance to see how the Finlandia Family connected to help paint the historic Hoover Center.

We hope that you find something that can strengthen your connection to Finlandia in this issue, and we look forward to seeing where these new connections take us as we move forward together.

Go Lions!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Timothy D. Pinnow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Timothy Pinnow  
President



# FEATURES



*Leadership: Finlandia University Management Team*



*Collaboration Makes Us Stronger*



*Timothy Pinnow: 17th President of Finlandia University*



*The Price of Freedom: North America's Largest Collection of Finnish War Memorabilia Donated to FAHC*

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the Bridge • 2022  
Volume 75

the Bridge is published periodically  
by Finlandia University.

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COVER PHOTO: On July 1, 2022, Timothy  
Pinnow became the 17th President of Finlandia  
University.

# LEADERSHIP



*Curtis Wittenberg, Cyril FoxPetrov, Dr. Luke Morrill,  
Anthony Schwass, Dr. Fredi de Yampert, President Timothy Pinnow, Teresa Hill, Kailee Laplander*

## FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The president's Executive Management Team provides collaborative and strategic leadership to ensure the fulfillment of the university's mission, uphold its core values and vision, and manage its operations. Governed by the Board of Trustees, Finlandia is led by President Timothy Pinnow and directed by a team of academic and administrative leaders, including: Curtis Wittenberg, Director of Athletics; Cyril FoxPetrov, Director of Finance; Dr. Fredi de Yampert, VP for Academic Affairs; Teresa Hill, Director of Human Resources; and alumna Kailee Laplander ('12), Executive Assistant to the President and Advancement. Together, they advise the president on the university's critical needs, challenges and opportunities.

Guided by a passion for higher learning and an inherently deep commitment to our mission, Dr. Luke Morrill shepherds the student experience at Finlandia, bringing over 17 years of experience to the team.

"My first year at Finlandia has been incredibly rewarding," said Morrill, VP for Student Development and Dean of Students. "Everyday I get to collaborate with an outstanding student development staff and dedicated campus stakeholders

to develop and implement student support and engagement initiatives."

Amidst its seemingly undefinable qualities, the team embraces the Finnish term *sisu*. No stranger to the concept is Dean of Enrollment Anthony Schwass, who leads a trio of departments at Finlandia, including admissions, communications, and student financial services. Born in Hancock, Schwass was celebrated for his successes at Davenport University before enthusiastically returning to his hometown.

"Finlandia's commitment to service and excellence is what truly brought me back to the Copper Country. From my first campus visit, I could see the staff and faculty's passion for developing students and preparing them for the future. The beauty of the region is reflected in the dedication I see from our campus community each day, and I take great pride in how efficiently we have implemented those ideals into our processes."

Faculty, staff, and alumni all play essential roles in the governance of Finlandia University and are important partners in sustaining the future of our 126 year-old institution.

# FINDING PURPOSE

## *Meaningful Relationships Created Through Seaton Center's Mentorship Program*

Celebrating its official launch in 2021, the Seaton Center for Vocation & Career strives to accompany the whole student toward a whole life. The center provides a space for students to cultivate their identity and aspirations from a place of strength and self-acceptance by stimulating personal and professional growth through career and vocational education.

Last spring, the Seaton Center expressed this mission, perhaps most evidently through a pilot program called Vocational Mentorship. The course matched five students with mentors from California, Michigan and Minnesota, which fostered meaningful relationships lasting well beyond the six-week program. Such was displayed when Ella Lindgren, a senior marketing major from Midland, MI, found the opportunity to meet in person with her California-based mentor, Andrea (Hautala) McAleenan. Founder and president of the international consulting business Building Global Bridges, McAleenan has spent a career in senior leadership roles in higher education settings and is currently

establishing a diverse resource and support network of women leaders worldwide.

"This past summer, we had the chance to plan a lunch where we were able to meet in person after months of zoom meetings, since she lives in California," Lindgren said. "By having Andrea as a mentor, I gained someone I can talk to on a professional and personal level. She connected me to people in the area and talked me through things I was worried about when it came to school and finding an internship. On the other hand, we also talked about our personal lives and what was going on in them.

"One thing I learned from taking the class is that just because something is in my life right now doesn't mean it always has to be. I have the ability to change what I'm doing, where I'm at and how my life plays out."

Accompanied by Vocational Mentorship, a robust series of programming delivered by the CVC nurtures students with a greater awareness and appreciation for who they are and want to be. The Seaton Center's career preparation programs provide experiences to help develop the practical tools students need to access jobs that fuel their curiosity and tap into their unique talents.



# CAMPUS NEWS

STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL THINGS FINNU | [FINLANDIA.EDU/NEWS](https://finlandia.edu/news)



## NURSING PROGRAMS RECEIVE ACCREDITATION THROUGH 2032

Finlandia's nursing programs received national reaccreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). The renewed accreditation was granted for 10 years, indicating that the programs have consistently demonstrated quality and effective educational practices. The accrediting commission spoke highly of Finlandia's student support services and was pleased to hear how engaged its students were, especially throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Including aiding in the fight against COVID-19, many nursing students competed in NCAA Division III athletics and volunteered their time with community organizations.

## 17 RECEIVE HANCOCK PROMISE FOR FALL 2022

Finlandia's Education Partner Manager and Dual Enrollment Advisor Lauren Husted proudly presented 17 students with the Hancock Promise to attend FinnU in Fall 2022 at Hancock Central High School's Senior Awards Night. An agreement dating back to 2009 between the Hancock School District and Finlandia, the Hancock Promise allows Hancock Central High School graduates to attend FinnU at a tuition cost of up to \$2,500 per school year. In 2020, Finlandia renewed the Hancock Promise for another seven years.



## COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES ANNOUNCES PLAN FOR TOWSLEY FOUNDATION GRANT

Since 1998, the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation has partnered with Finlandia University in providing instrumental funding for technology and equipment. The foundation's most recent expression came as a five-year \$220,000 grant to provide a robust, state-of-the-art healthcare education for College of Health Sciences (CHS) students at their new facility, Hirvonen Hall. Now entering year two of the grant, CHS announced plans to furnish their computer lab with new computers, equipment and furniture, ultimately serving as a community learning center.



## COMMENCEMENT RECAP

There was standing room only in Hirvonen Hall Auditorium with more than 700 in attendance as Finlandia honored 84 graduates at its Spring 2022 Commencement Ceremony. Vance Blackfox, a Cherokee Nation citizen and a Lutheran higher education graduate, served as the commencement speaker.

The Board of Trustees honored Dr. Richard Gee, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice, with the 2022 Distinguished Faculty Award. "I was honored to be nominated by Dr. Virtanen for the award," Gee said. "I appreciate the recognition. It is important that the students know they have valued faculty and the award communicates that to them."

Gee, who attained his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia, joined Finlandia's arts and sciences department in 2012 to develop the university's criminal justice curriculum. "I like to focus on the second portion of the title. Justice is something that is important to keep in focus when addressing the criminal. There needs to be a limit on collateral damage to not only the person that committed the crime, but also to those that were not convicted, such as family, friends, etc.," said Gee. Since 2012, Gee has revised, created and taught more than 30 courses and established multiple articulation agreements for continued learning.

The Class of 2022's Student Representative, Arty Puntus, graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. An ambassador of student leadership, Puntus served as president of the Student Senate, an ALD Honors Society member, and VP of FinnU's Student Nurses Association. After graduation, Puntus joined the workforce through an Optional Practical Training (OPT) program on the medical surgery floor of a Level I trauma hospital in South Carolina.

## FINNISH STUDIES PROGRAM SHINES SPOTLIGHT ON FINNU

Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen has been named co-editor of the Journal of Finnish Studies. Having worked on the journal's editorial staff since 2009, Virtanen now shares co-editorship with renowned folklorist and scholar, Thomas A. DuBois.

Finlandia's associate professor of Finnish & Nordic Studies was also featured in three PBS regional premieres last spring. The documentary films featured Virtanen's research and production-related work on Finnish American traditional arts in the Copper Country.

"The journal and documentary work is an important opportunity to spotlight late FinnU professor Melvin Kangas and to provide paid work for a student as editorial assistant," Virtanen said. "It is always a joy when I can use these works to provide benefits to our academic community beyond myself."

## TWENTY-ONE ALUMNI FROM AROUND THE WORLD REUNITE IN AN EXHIBIT MARKED BY DIVERSITY & EXCELLENCE

Alumni from across the United States and as far away as Malta submitted works for this year's annual International School of Art & Design Alumni Exhibit at the Finlandia University Gallery. Compositions included tailor-made hats, sculpture, photography, mixed media, painting, ceramics, and a music video.



## GOING GLOBAL: BUSINESS STUDENTS ASSIST LOCAL ENGINEERING FIRM

A group of BUS 388 Global Entrepreneurship students worked with Steve Bethel, president of Leadfoot Engineering (Chassell, MI), to analyze European and Arab Gulf States markets for the company's product line. The students identified major regional trade fairs, powerboat and boating associations, and significant U.S. Commercial Service contacts for each country.

One of the project's highlights was a Zoom meeting in March with Eve Lerman, an international trade specialist from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Paul Vandeventer from Vandeventer Trade Law, and Chris Bosio from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. During the meeting, Finlandia instructor Kevin Manninen and a student project team were able to ask specific questions regarding their internationalization plan. To conclude the project, the students visited Leadfoot and met with Bethel to present their findings and recommendations. The Global Entrepreneurship course at Finlandia prepares students to assist small and medium-sized enterprises in going global.



## FINLANDIA BUSINESS STUDENTS FORM INVESTMENT LABORATORY

With help from International School of Business accounting professor Laura Sieders, three students have formed the Finlandia Multi-Variate Screening and Portfolio Construction Data Analytics Lab. Joe Dancy, a lecturer at Southern Methodist University and investment expert who recently relocated to the area, contacted the ISB to inquire about their interest in forming such a club. Today, Dancy serves as a community advisor for the organization, now commonly referred to on campus as the Finlandia Investment Lab.



## FINNISH DELEGATION BUSINESS FINLAND, CONSUL GENERAL VISIT FINLANDIA

Led by Okko-Pekka Salmimies, Consul General of Finland in Los Angeles, two Finnish business delegations visited the Copper Country in May to advance economic and trade relations and explore partnership opportunities. Finlandia University, the only remaining institution of higher education in the U.S. founded by Finns, hosted the groups for an opening reception at the university's Finnish American Heritage Center.

In his opening remarks, Consul General Salmimies shared recognition of the Copper Country's strong embrace of its Finnish heritage and Finland's interest in expanding relations between the regions.

"We're of course extremely happy representatives of Finnish Government that there is this strong Finnish community, and we are also extremely happy that we share the interest of the constant, and developing the Finnish country image," Salmimies said. "We want to identify possibilities for mutual benefit partnerships and, of course, business opportunities," he later added.

JAMK University of Applied Sciences (Jyväskylä, Finland), one of Finlandia's key exchange partners, sponsored the delegation's visit. Delegation member Marko Luoma, owner of the consulting company Xport, was a Finlandia exchange student in 2003.





# SHARK DAY ▲

## FINNU HOSTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION FOR LOCAL STUDENTS

With a spin on the hit T.V. show Shark Tank, Finlandia University held its inaugural FinnU Shark Day in March with more than 60 high school students from L'Anse, Baraga Area and Calumet in attendance. Students competed for the chance to win a \$2,500 scholarship in the first event of its type on Finlandia's campus.

The day's theme, health and wellness, was announced shortly after the students' arrival. "Mini-sharks", such as International School of Business Dean Kevin Manninen, worked with groups of three to four students to promote critical thinking through basic marketing principles. Three groups, one from each school, were chosen to advance to the final round and delivered their pitches to a panel of judges consisting of local business owners and community members.

A group from L'Anse won the competition after pitching a waistband to hold insulin pumps.

The "Sharks" included Daniel Yoder, senior business consultant for the Michigan Small Business Development Center; Jeff Ratcliffe, executive director for the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance; Jason Mack, VP of business development at MTEC SmartZone; Denise Vandeville, former Finlandia dean of ISAD; and Shana Porteen, owner of Black Ice Comics & Books.





# COLLABORATION *makes us* STRONGER

▲ *Michael Lahti cutting the ribbon at the Hirvonen Hall Grand Opening ceremony on July 23, 2022.*

When Finlandia was offered the former Hancock Public Schools building in 2009, the price was right, but how the university would use the structure was unknown. Over the following decade, two men and their families would provide a direction: Ray Hirvonen and Michael Lahti. The Hirvonen's and Lahti's kindness has not only changed the physical landscape of campus but has shined a light on how generous spirits can affect both a campus and a community.

"He was a man of action and few words, so we often learned of his generosity through other people," Mark Hirvonen said of his father, Ray. "If a particular cause was struggling either financially or had a great idea but

insufficient management or resources, he would pitch in and helped many organizations stay on their feet long enough to get positive traction. Dad loved an underdog."

While a small private college on the shores of Lake Superior surely could be considered an underdog by some and a challenge by most, Ray Hirvonen was far too much a gentleman ever to say it. In a world where flash and spirited talk can get you far, Ray and his wife Peg had something in common with Finlandia University; hard work with a serious amount of *sisu*. Ray was asked to join the Suomi College Board of Trustees in 1994, and remained on the board until 2009.



Ray's first wife, Peg, worked hard to become a registered nurse, leading Ray to contribute to Finlandia's College of Health Sciences. After Peg's passing, Ray's second wife, Rachel Hetico, supported Ray's continued generosity. The former Hancock Public Schools building would be renamed Hirvonen Hall, home of the Ray & Peg Hirvonen College of Health Sciences in their memory as a thank you to Ray, Peg and Rachel's continuous support.

Before his passing, Ray also established the Ray & Peg Hirvonen Foundation. Now run by their daughter, Linda Hirvonen, the foundation operates with a simple goal: to improve the quality of life in the communities where Ray and Peg built their lives. The foundation carries on Ray and Peg's conviction that all people deserve to be treated equally, and their children continue their legacy of helping those in need and leading by example.

## *“Dad loved an underdog”*

While all this was happening, local businessman and long-term Finlandia supporter Michael Lahti took note. Lahti was on the Finlandia Board of Trustees from 1994-2010 and, after a short break, rejoined the board in 2011.

Lahti's passion for Hancock and Finlandia was instilled at a young age by a combination of experience and example. While attending Hancock High School, the same school he would later renovate, Lahti took advantage of courses offered at Suomi College. Learning through example, he watched his father.

"My father was involved. He was the

mayor. I followed what he did. Then I found I really enjoyed it, and I like supporting the area and Finlandia," Lahti said.

Lahti knew the history of the building and took an interest. His knowledge of local real estate development and his passion for his community made him the ideal candidate. A creative partnership developed between Lahti and Finlandia, where Finlandia would own the first two floors and Lahti the third. Lahti is clear that his ventures in the community are a joint effort with his wife, Sharon, whom he credits for the best advice and ideas. When asked why the Lahti's continue to give back, Sharon said, "We have lived here all our lives. The town is important to us – we raised our children here."

"The Hirvonen building turned out so good," Michael added. "It's good for the University, and it's good for the town. I was honored to do it." ❁



▲ *Michael Allkins, Linda Hirvonen, President Timothy Pinnow, Dr. Fredi de Yampert, Mark Hirvonen and Kathy Hirvonen stand for a photograph in Hirvonen Hall Auditorium.*



# Meet TIMOTHY PINNOW

17<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT *of*  
FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY

*In 1978, Tim Pinnow stepped  
foot onto the campus of  
Suomi College for the first time.*

Nominated to attend a leadership school for Lutheran youth, Pinnow's life changed forever, and set him on the course he is on today, a course he calls, "of service."

"It is no stretch to say that my experiences those two summers on the campus led me to discover at a very deep level that I was destined for a life of service. While I didn't realize until later that service would be in higher education, the essence of the person I want to be was laid during those summers. I will admit to even becoming a little emotional several times during my visit after returning to the campus after 40 years."

On July 1, 2022, Tim Pinnow completed his journey back to Suomi, taking his first steps on campus as the 17th president of what is now Finlandia University. Humbled and appreciative of the opportunity to serve with the Board of Trustees, the faculty, staff and students of Finlandia, Pinnow said:

"Together, we seek to position Finlandia for a prosperous and significant future as it honors its traditions and heritage while adjusting to the current changes in higher education. As we move forward together, we will seek to make Finlandia University's next 125 years even greater than its first."

Previously serving as Senior Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at Colorado Mesa University, Pinnow's journey back to Finlandia has included years of recognized leadership in higher education. At CMU, he led and managed identified growth areas including online programs, graduate studies, industry partnerships, sponsored programs, institutional research and non-traditional students. As Founding Director of Graduate Studies, he helped in the creation of eight new graduate programs during his six-year tenure including physical therapy, physician's assistant and social work. Pinnow was active in fundraising at both CMU and in his previous position at New Mexico State University, where he spent 15 years after beginning his career in higher education at ELCA-affiliated St. Olaf College.

## *Insights from President Pinnow:*

### **VISION**

I hope that Finlandia University continues to be a small university in the middle of Michigan's Upper Peninsula that speaks to students' needs and remains true to its Finnish and Lutheran identities. One that offers students an opportunity to really get to know their professors, staff, and fellow students. I want this to be a place where everyone knows everyone, where it's hard for a student to fall through the cracks because we're small enough to know what's going on. I've taught at big universities, I've taught at medium-sized universities, I've taught at small universities; small is better, small is beautiful. What we want is for students to have more connections with each other, with faculty, and especially with the community and employers in the community. We want the people in the community to have connections intimately with this university, so that when the community says they need help with something, the first place they turn is Finlandia University. So, what I really see going forward is strengthening the interconnectedness between the University, the region, and the community. By doing so, we will find opportunities to grow.

### **LEADERSHIP APPROACH**

I always start by hiring the best people, then turning them loose and expecting them to make mistakes. And I say expect them to make mistakes because if we're not making mistakes from time to time, we're not pushing the boundaries, and we're not working as far and into our boundaries as we can. So, we may make mistakes because we need to try new things. We want to hire people who have a chance to make us better, who are willing to take the reins and who are eager to try new things. We want to turn to them and say, what are your ideas? I also believe that if you're going to be a leader, you have to lead from your values, and when decisions become tough, you follow those values. I believe in higher ed, particularly for first-generation and lower socio-economic students - that's where I've spent the bulk of my career. Higher education is transformative, changing not only the student but also the trajectory of the student's family for generations into the future.



*"...my experiences those two summers on the campus led me to discover at a very deep level that I was destined for a life of service."*

## AREAS OF GROWTH

With Finlandia, there are certain things we know about the region. It is a rural region, so we must be flexible with how we teach. That might mean that we need to have hybrid programs that are online but then have in-person components, maybe on the weekend or during the summer, so that people who are already working or need to work can still access higher education. Another area could be that Finland's K-12 public education system is the envy of the world – it's the gold standard. We would be the logical place for that to happen here in the states. We need to look into creating some possibilities for teachers who are already in K-12 to get continuing education in the Finnish philosophy of education here at Finlandia. There's also room in Upper Michigan and even Northern Wisconsin for growth in the nursing ladder. You can get your CNA in high school, an LPN, an RN, and a BSN. We have an RN-BSN, but there really isn't an LPN-BSN program, so that may be an option. There seems to be a need for LPNs in particular, so there may be room for an LPN program that caters to a specific group. Another thing I've thought about is an online certificate in social media marketing that would allow small businesses to up their social media skills across the U.P. Those are the sort of things that you try and find, you match up the region and what the needs are with what you can offer and you try and put that puzzle together.

## LET'S CONNECT

What I would say to everybody is get involved. Get involved with Finlandia even if you live far away. Stay attuned to what's going on here. Ask yourself if you could help us recruit a few students wherever you live. Please consider donating, but even if you can't do that, stay involved. Come to a football or soccer game if we're in your region. Be part of the family. Don't lose touch. In terms of the students, we're glad you're here. You're the reason we do what we do, so get to know us. I always tell students the most important thing you can do in your first semester as college students is to sit down with a faculty member who's in an area you think you want to study. Talk to them and get to know what it's like to do that thing. They might be the person who gets you your first job. Those are relationships you can start forming now. And for the community, come see us! Come to events on campus. We'll be reaching out to you, and we hope that you'll reach back. So, the sum total of that is – let's connect and form an extended Finlandia University community beyond the geographic boundaries of our campus. 🌱



# ADVANCEMENT

FINLANDIA.EDU/GIVING | (906) 487-7201

## A CALL TO DONATE

**Finlandia University would like to extend its deepest thanks** to those who have contributed financially throughout the years. We recognize that because of our faithful supporters, Finlandia has celebrated many successes, however, Finlandia continues to face the same challenges as other small, private universities.

Under new presidential leadership and with a passionate faculty and staff, Finlandia is ready to take on these challenges, but we are asking that you partner with us to ensure that Finlandia's history and future are preserved.

Please consider donating via the button below, or by sending a check to Finlandia University at Advancement, 601 Quincy Street, Hancock, MI 49930.

**MAKE A  
DONATION**

## GIVING TUESDAY 2021: DONORS SUPPORT STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

During Giving Tuesday, the global annual day of giving, Finlandia focuses on raising scholarship funds for its students.

In 2021, Finlandia alumni, friends and families donated over \$10,000 when a matching donation came in from an anonymous donor. Between the matching gift and several late arrivals, the final total raised was \$22,127. With 100

percent of full-time domestic students receiving financial aid and over 50 percent of its students being PELL eligible, Finlandia's Giving Tuesday has become an important tradition. Since November, hundreds of FinnU students have shared their appreciation for scholarship support. Most admitted they couldn't afford college if it weren't for scholarships. For more information about Giving Tuesday at Finlandia University, visit [finlandia.edu/givingtuesday](https://finlandia.edu/givingtuesday).



## COMMUNITY COMES TOGETHER TO PAINT HOOVER CENTER

Finlandia's new president spent his first weeks in office focusing on community. With one of his first priorities, President Pinnow aimed to restore two of the campus's most historic buildings, Old Main and the Hoover Center. Donors received an email informing them of the need, offering the opportunity to donate or the chance to lend a helping hand. In July, campus met community when over 40 volunteer alumni, employees, trustees, donors and community members met at the Hoover Center to paint the historic building.



# THE PRICE OF **FREEDOM**

NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST COLLECTION OF FINNISH WAR MEMORABILIA DONATED TO FAHC



The archive at Finlandia's Finnish American Heritage Center is home to the most extensive collection of Finnish-North American materials in the world. That collection grew significantly when Harry and Ritva Manner of Florida contacted FAHC Archivist Joanna Chopp in April.

"The Price of Freedom museum collection is not only relevant to the people of Finland. There were Finnish Americans who volunteered to fight for Finland against Russian aggression, some even from Suomi College and the Copper Country," Chopp said. "Finnish-American communities across the U.S. gathered supplies and sent care packages to family and friends back in Finland who were facing severe rationing due to the war. There are many parallels between the Winter War and current events with Russia today. This is really a part of history that everyone should be aware of, and the FAHC is honored to be able to help tell that story."



*Finnish soldier during Winter War in Finland 1939*



*Harry and Ritva Manner speaking to guests at the Price of Freedom Museum reception*

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***“Each item here has a story of its own.”***

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Harry Manner donated his collection – valued at about \$2 million – hoping to inspire youth and bring awareness to Finnish history and culture for generations to come.

"Lots of World War II history is wrong, based on Russian propaganda, is still being taught in schools," Harry explained. "My objective is to get the right information and make it available, about what Finland did. It grew from one-third of a room, to one-half of a room, to the whole room. I was constantly working on it."

While the museum had plenty of visitors in Florida, it wasn't drawing in the younger generations that Harry and Ritva had hoped would take interest. Now, with the collection housed at a university founded by Finns, they anticipate the interest among folks their grandchildren's age will be what they'd hoped for when this endeavor began.



*Lotta uniform on display at Price of Freedom Museum*

"I'm glad for the attention it's gotten," Harry said. "Now it's in the perfect place. Each item here has a story of its own."

Ritva added: "It couldn't be in a better place. It's exactly where it needs to be."

The Price of Freedom Museum, located on the sixth floor of the Jutila Center, is part of the ever-growing historical collection of the Finlandia University Finnish American Heritage Center and Historical Archive. Since its founding in the 1930s, the archive has continuously preserved and promoted items that help tell the stories of the Finnish immigrant experience in North America.



# *Ryan Bessolo, 1989 - 2022*

## *Memorial Scholarship Created in Honor of Alum*

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Created by his parents, Laurel and Michael Bessolo, and sister, Amy Kemppainen, Finlandia University alumnus and former nursing clinical instructor Ryan Bessolo ('11) will be remembered for years to come through the formation of an endowed scholarship in his name.

Bessolo, a Calumet High School graduate, chose to continue his education at Finlandia University and attained his Bachelor of Science in Nursing in May 2011. He was known for his driven nature, working as a CNA at Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital to continue gaining critical nursing skills.

"Ryan was a natural when it came to Nursing," said Gladys Polzien, RN, MSN. "As one of his former instructors, I know he was smart, hardworking, and compassionate when he cared for his patients. He was always friendly and willing to help others such as his classmates or clinical staff."

After graduation, Bessolo continued working for Aspirus and worked with Finlandia's nursing students during their clinical rotations. His interactions with students encouraged him to reach out to Finlandia to seek a teaching role, which he began in 2012. He completed his Master of Science in Nursing from Western Governor's University in 2018 and was promoted from instructor to assistant professor.

At the time of his promotion, Bessolo said, "I feel that there are so many aspects to the nursing profession that having

an advanced degree will allow me to provide a greater understanding of the art of being a nurse to my students."

At the time of his passing, age 32, Ryan was the supervisor of the Emergency Department at Aspirus Keweenaw.

"Ryan was a life-long member of our team. His compassion and selflessness embodied our values and what it meant to be a health care worker. Ryan was an inspiring leader and supported ongoing education of student nurses," said Darcy Donnelly, director of nursing at Aspirus Keweenaw.

Like many who experience loss, Bessolo's parents and sister looked for a way to honor him. The Ryan Bessolo, MSN, RN, CMSRN Memorial Endowed Scholarship was created. In the creation of the scholarship, it was noted that all of Bessolo's credentials should be listed, as Bessolo was incredibly proud of each one.

When asked what Bessolo's family wanted scholarship applicants to know about him, his sister, Amy, said he was compassionate. His father, Michael, said he was dedicated and hardworking. His mother, Laurel, said he was respectful and humorous; he loved to entertain. Financing the scholarship was possible through generous gifts from Bessolo's family, friends, and colleagues. Additionally, Aspirus Keweenaw provided \$2,500 for the creation of the fund.

# DONOR RECOGNITION

JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

In each donor edition of the Bridge, we are pleased to recognize and thank the many individuals, organizations, churches, clubs, associations and businesses that generously donated to Finlandia University in the preceding fiscal year between **July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022**, and in years past. Some have pledged deferred gifts, or named the university in their wills. Some have given in memory of loved ones or to honor a special date, event or person. We are grateful for the thoughts and prayers of our friends and alumni, and for their gifts in support of our students' educational goals.

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Names of donors who have made anonymous gifts do not appear in the lists below. Finlandia, however, wishes to acknowledge their generosity.

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## DISTINGUISHED GIVING

### NIKANDER CLUB (\$10,000 AND ABOVE)

Juho Kustaa Nikander (1855–1919), born in Lammi, Finland, helped found Suomi College and served as president from 1896 to 1919. An ordained Lutheran pastor, Nikander traveled to the Copper Country from Finland in the fall of 1884. As a national leader of Finnish-American communities, he helped advance local congregations and fight the discrimination many of the immigrants faced.

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**NISONEN ASSOCIATES COUNCIL (\$5,000-\$9,999)**

In 1922 Martti Nisonen (1891 – 1946) left Finland with his wife and four children to become Suomi College’s music instructor. He created a music program that drew many Finnish-American musicians. A noted composer and arranger of cantatas, operas and several orchestral works, Nisonen is remembered as a tireless and dedicated instructor, not only of music, but also of cultural and moral development.

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**WARGELIN COUNCIL (\$2,500-\$4,999)**

Dr. John Wargelin (1881 – 1970) was president of Suomi College from 1919 to 1927 and 1930 to 1937. In 1896, at the age of 15, Wargelin enrolled in the college’s first class, graduating in 1904. In 1906 he graduated from Suomi’s former seminary. Wargelin served as a Suomi College trustee for 36 years. In 1966 the university’s library and science building was officially named for him.

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**WAINO “POP” LEHTO LEAGUE (\$1,000-\$2,499)**

Waino “Pop” Lehto graduated from Suomi College in 1918. From 1920 until 1962 he served as instructor and dean of the business, commerce and liberal arts programs at Suomi College.

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**OLD MAIN SOCIETY****(\$500-\$999)**

Built in 1899, for many years Old Main was the sole Suomi College building. In its early years it housed classrooms, a chapel, offices, a cafeteria and a dormitory.

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**QUINCY CLUB****(\$250-\$499)**

Quincy Mining Company helped develop the region that Finlandia University serves. The company employed thousands of Finnish immigrants, including many who helped establish and support Suomi College. Finlandia University's campus on Quincy Street in Hancock sits on a hillside once mined by the Quincy Mining Company.

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**MINNIE PERTTULA-MAKI CIRCLE****(\$100-\$249)**

Minnie Perttula-Maki (1880–1957) was Suomi College's only woman president to date, serving from 1922 to 1923. She was born in Lohtaja, Finland, and was a member of the college's first class, graduating in 1904. She continued her education in Chicago, Duluth and at the University of Helsinki.

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(continued on page 20)

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(continued on page 24)

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## FINNISH AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER & ARCHIVE DONORS

Another year has come and gone at the FAHC. Visitor and researcher numbers are on the rise once again. In 2022 we welcomed people from at least 38 U.S. states, and five countries.

As the year began, David Maki was appointed as the new FAHC director and managing editor of FAR. The FAHC's mission remains the same, and our donors are the people who make the Heritage Center successful. This past year was no exception. Numerous individuals and organizations made contributions to the Center, and while there are too many to detail here, some examples are: a collection of paintings by the late Lawrence & Evelyn (née Koivupalo Sohlden) Carter which were donated by Evangel Community Church; the Price of Freedom museum exhibit from Harry & Ritva Manner; local historical photographs from Harold Heikkinen; church records from Bethany Lutheran Church in Covington, MI; and several weavings and national costumes.

One of the most exciting donations came just before this issue of The Bridge went to print, when

William Hoffman of Brantwood, WI, brought a collection of more than 200 pieces of Finnish folk art to the FAHC. The collection consists of two- and three-dimensional wood carvings depicting pastoral scenes, sauna culture, Finnish landmarks, historical figures, and much more. Included in the collection are unique examples of "trench art," which is commonly defined as any decorative item made by soldiers, prisoners of war, or civilians, where the creation is linked to armed conflict or its consequences. Archivist Joanna Chopp is planning a long-term exhibit of Hoffman's collection at the FAHC for 2023.

The Finnish American Folk School, under the direction of Phyllis Fredendall and Clare Zuraw, has continued to provide varied and exciting classes, both in-person and online. The latest course schedule can be found at <https://www.finlandia.edu/fahc/finnish-american-folk-school/>. We appreciate the support of all of our patrons and supporters who help us to fulfill our mission to preserve and promote Finnish-American culture and heritage. Kiitos kaikille!

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# LOCKER ROOM LEGACIES

BE PART OF THE TRADITION

## LOCKER ROOM LEGACIES

A tradition of fierce loyalties and competition are hallmarks of Finlandia University student-athletes. They are individuals and teammates of high reputation and a spirit of *sisu* akin to the stalwarts of Finnish-American heritage for which this region and university are known. Lion student-athletes of today stand on the legacies of their predecessors who donned blue and white as champions. And now, you can be a part of that tradition with Lions Locker Room Legacies.

Proudly supporting the traditions and history of Finlandia Lions Athletics, Locker Room Legacies is a program that provides you the opportunity to show your support for generations to come. When you become part of the tradition, a plaque will permanently hold your name on a locker at Paavo Nurmi Center, Houghton County Arena or McAfee Field. Your legacy will continue to live on through our future Lions in honor of your support. The one-time cost of the Lions Locker Room Legacies program is \$600. To learn more, visit [fulions.com/legacies](http://fulions.com/legacies).

## NINE PROGRAMS EARN ALL-ACADEMIC HONORS

Finlandia Lions Athletics had 67 student-athletes earn all-academic honors for the 2021-2022 year. The awards came from three conferences and associations: the WIAC (Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference), the Krampade / ACHA American Hockey Coaches Association, and the Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference. Athletes from nine programs earned accolades, including Men's and Women's Basketball, Hockey and Soccer, Baseball, Softball and Volleyball.

## NEW AND FAMILIAR FACES JOIN ATHLETICS STAFF

Finlandia Lions Athletics welcomed several new staff members this year. Ronald Fullove, who joins Finlandia from Stillman College in Alabama, has been named Assistant Athletic Director for Sports Medicine. New faces on the coaching roster include Ryan Gruszka, Head Coach of ACHA Hockey; Michael Kuruc, Head Coach of Women's Hockey; Brandi Hainault, Head Coach of Women's Basketball; Luke Paul ('16), Head Baseball Coach; and 2018 graduate Aaron Froelich, Director of Esports. Before their promotions, Hainault and Paul previously served as assistant coaches for their respective programs.



# LIONS ESPORTS WIN 2022 VALORANT NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The Finlandia Lions Esports program beat the University of British Columbia Marine in Valorant for the NECC National Championship trophy last spring. It was the program's second season in competition and the third national title for Lions Athletics, the first in 18 years.

Valorant, an online 5v5 multiplayer game, is a first-person-shooter (FPS) that features 25 rounds per game, with the first to 13 named victor. In a best-of-five series, the Lions took an early 10-0 lead and handily secured victory on map one, 13-3. The Lions' Sebastian Kemppainen led the Pride with a fierce performance on map two, closing out the game 13-7 to be just one win away from the national title.

Continuing pressure on map three, Kemppainen and the Lions took early advantage of mistakes made by UBC as the Pride jumped out to a 5-0 lead. The Lions' communication proved too much for UBC as they rolled their way to the national championship title with a sweep, winning 13-2.

"This is just a great feeling to bring home the national championship. After we won Saturday night to advance to the final, we looked back at the last time we played UBC Marine. We saw what we did right and figured out what we had to improve upon. We really communicated well in the match today and felt very confident," said Valorant Team Captain Dillion Farmer.

Joining the program at the perfect time was Lions Esports Director Aaron Froelich, a 2018 graduate of Finlandia, who started his duties in May as the NECC Tournament got underway.

"I am incredibly proud of this group of competitors," Froelich said. "They played a long and challenging weekend, losing to UBC early on was a good wake up call for this team and pushed them towards the success they achieved. We have a couple of great seniors on this roster we are sad to see go, but the legacy and benchmark they have set for our program, will last for years to come."

Finlandia Lions Esports team for the game Rocket League also enjoyed a competitive season, advancing to the quarterfinals of their NECC National Tournament before falling to the George Fox University Bruins.

# ALUMNI NEWS

NEWS & UPDATES FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## FINLANDIA ALUMNI BOARD RAISES \$10,000 FOR STUDENT TEXTBOOKS

Student support initiatives at Finlandia University provide opportunities to remove barriers and promote academic and spiritual success for all students. On June 14, Finlandia University alumni, families and friends joined together in support of Giving Day 2022 to raise money for student textbooks. The 2022 fundraiser raised over \$10,000 and awarded 35 student scholarships. The remaining \$1,550 created a need-based emergency student supply fund for books and online course codes. Determined to find a way to give back to students, the Finlandia Alumni Board (FAB) started Giving Day in 2019 and has since raised more than \$60,000 for the cause.



## WEATHERS ('83) JOINS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Michael Weathers ('83) of Jacksonville, Fla., has joined Finlandia University's Board of Trustees after being sworn in at the Board's May 2022 meeting. Weathers is the finance & legal manager of Bankruptcy Auto Advisors, LLC in Jacksonville. Weathers, who has teaching experience at the high school and college levels, spent five years working in the non-profit sector as director of family services & executive director for Habitat for Humanity. Throughout his career, Weathers has been elected to various public posts and has supported charitable organizations and services that assist in raising the human spirit. He attended Suomi College ('83), Michigan State University, the University of St. Thomas and Wake Forest University with degrees in Education, Business Administration, Business Law and Theology.

## LET'S KEEP IN TOUCH!

Finlandia looks forward to connecting with its Alumni & Friends. To ensure you are getting the most up-to-date information, please complete our Alumni & Friends Update Form at [finlandia.edu/alumni](https://finlandia.edu/alumni). This form, which you can also complete by calling (906) 487-7201, is open to all friends of Finlandia.

## ALUMNI UPDATES

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**ANDERS SAARELA ('22)** is pursuing a Master of Science in Accounting at Michigan Technological University in Houghton, MI.

**ARTY PUNTUS ('22)** started an Optional Practical Training (OPT) program in South Carolina at a Level I trauma hospital.

**FRAN FERNANDEZ ('22)** is pursuing a Master of Social Work at Northern Michigan University in Marquette, MI.

**MARIAH AUSTIN ('22)** started a position as 906 Operative at Recycle 906 in Marquette, MI.

**MICHAEL STUBER ('22)** started at Finlandia University's Finance Department as an accountant.

**NOAH RAISANEN ('22)** accepted a position as Business Development Representative at Calabrio, Inc. in Minneapolis, MN.

**ETHAN ST. GERMAIN ('21)** started at Finlandia University's Finance Department as an accountant.

**HALEY MAKELA ('19)** started at Finlandia University as Visiting Assistant Professor of Marketing.

**AARON FROELICH ('18)** started at Finlandia University in May as Director of Esports.

**LUKE PAUL ('16)** started at Finlandia University in September as Head Baseball Coach.

**KAREN MACDONALD, NP-C ('13)**, accepted a position as Nurse Practitioner at Aspirus Health Cardiology in Laurium, MI.

**KAILEE LAPLANDER ('12)** accepted a new role at Finlandia University as Executive Assistant to the President & Advancement Office.

**TERRI OLSEN ('94, '08)** accepted a new role at Finlandia University as Director of TRIO Student Support Services.

**GARY FISH ('06)** has been named President and Chief Lending Officer at Northern Interstate Bank in Norway, MI.

**JASON SULLIVAN ('01)** accepted a new role at Bay College as Executive Director of West Campus in Iron Mountain, MI.

**SHERRY KUNNARI ('96)** started at Finlandia University's Human Resources Department as Benefits Coordinator.

## IN MEMORIAM

---

**FRANK CARLTON**

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**CHARLOTTE UREN WEST**

11/17/2021 • BROOKLYN PARK, MN

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12/24/2021 • TRAVERSE CITY, MI

**JOHNNA THERRIAN**

01/10/2022 • LAURIUM, MI

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01/14/2022 • HANCOCK, MI

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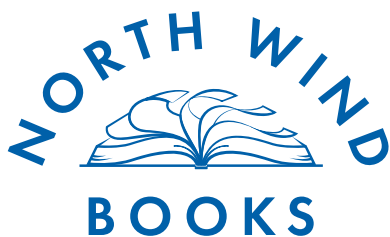
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