

NEBRASKA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

ARCHWAYS

REAP WHAT YOU SOW | SPRING 2018 | VOLUME 18, ISSUE 1

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

NWU men's basketball wins it all.

DESIRABLE TRAITS

Can a small seed company compete in the big world of crop genetics?

FROM THE PRESIDENT



In any of these endeavors, a fear of failure could have kept us from even trying. But it would be unlike us to hold back.

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This spring, Nebraska Wesleyan welcomed Xuan-Trang Thi Ho Morton ('06) back to campus. I wasn't yet president when she became our third Rhodes Scholar in 2007, but I've followed her story.

Trang was born in Ca Tong, a rural Vietnamese village outside Ho Chi Minh City. She has childhood memories of standing barefoot, watching for thieves in her family's watermelon field.

Fast forward to December 1994 when Trang's family arrived in chilly Lincoln. They were among many political refugees fleeing Vietnam. The move meant starting over within an unfamiliar culture, a new language, a new school.

In nearly all things, her initial steps were uphill. Her early victories felt like exciting upsets. As Americans, we root for underdogs instinctively. And Trang Ho is an easy person to cheer for.

At Nebraska Wesleyan, she poured herself into her studies. She traveled with NWU's distinctive Global Service Learning organization to the mountains of El Salvador and back home to the villages of Vietnam. She collaborated with professors as an Archway Seminar student instructor. The Rhodes Scholarship selection committee saw what Nebraska Wesleyan watched unfold every day; members made her one of just 32 Americans to receive the prestigious honor that would catapult her to more amazing opportunities.

Trang came back to campus recently with her husband, Matthew, to deliver the 2018 Curtis Lecture on Public Leadership. She described her work with UNICEF, the U.N. agency where she helps protect children very much like that barefoot girl watching for thieves among the watermelons.

This issue of *Archways* features more underdogs—Davids staring down their Goliaths. There are alumni entrepreneurs launching small businesses in spite of fierce competition. There are students who don't let circumstances become excuses to shy away. There are small farmers weighing big risks. Each spring, they remind me there's no act more faith-filled than planting a seed.

I'm reminded as well that upset victories are not unusual at NWU. Who can forget the men's basketball team leaping into the NCAA Div. III Final Four by overwhelming the number one team in the nation on their way to a national championship? Beyond sports, I have many examples of students sharing plans to move to New York, Chicago or Los Angeles following a successful four years onstage at McDonald Theatre. I know a student who, in his first year, wasn't quite sure what a pre-med major was all about. Now, he's received early acceptance into medical school. Even the three-story Duane W. Acklie Hall of Science that I see from my office window might have once seemed an insurmountable challenge to fund and build.

In any of these endeavors, a fear of failure could have kept us from even trying. But it would be unlike us to hold back.

Nebraska Wesleyan remains driven to thrive, driven to serve, and driven to help people lead remarkable lives. Together, our alumni's experiences combine to form an incredible chronicle of success. That story is brimming with underdogs—people like you, with too much grit and wisdom to fear a little thing like failure.

You're wonderfully easy to cheer for.

Yours truly,

—Fred Ohles
President

**17****24****28**

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Nebraska Wesleyan University is an academic community dedicated to intellectual and personal growth within the context of a liberal arts education and in an environment of Christian concern.

Archways is an examination—and, ideally, a conversation—of how Nebraska Wesleyan University and its people relate to the world around us. That examination is academically sound, socially conscious, and continuously curious.

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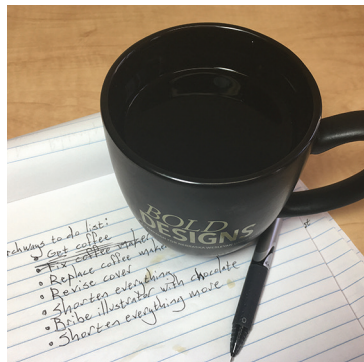
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The Thing Edition...

Here, we normally highlight the people who helped create this issue. This time, let's tip our caps instead to the *things* that make *Archways* happen.

Photo by Angela Hatcher



Coffee

Yes, paper and ink are involved. But let's not kid ourselves. *Archways* is mostly made of coffee. Black, please. With University Place's Mo Java Coffeehouse just a stone's throw west of marketing's 49th Street office, the coffee flows like water over here.

FreeImages.com/St. Mattox



Snow shovels

The lion's share of writing, editing and design work on our spring issue occurred in the depths of a particularly icy winter. When the snow fell, NWU's maintenance staff pounced early and often to keep the entire campus humming.

FreeImages.com/taf ng



Yoga mats

Archways magazine is one of many hundred print, digital and social media projects that NWU's Office of Marketing and Communications manages each year. Staying on top of it all requires some serious inner peace. So our marketing and public relations directors both make regular use of NWU's weekly yoga classes in the Weary Center.

Photo by Angela Hatcher



Bicycle

Many of the feature stories you read in this magazine were thought up astride this bomb-proof, 7-year-old, Minnesota-made Surly Long Haul Trucker, somewhere along the beautiful 5.5-mile stretch that separates campus and the editor's home.

Letters

The Good News

I wanted to share something about the Nebraska Wesleyan community that stirred my soul recently. Late on Sunday, November 5, University Minister **Eduardo Boussón** and I drove the First Church van to the Omaha airport to pick up NWU students who attended a wonderful weekend event designed for college students who are exploring ordained ministry.

Here's the great news: Of the 400 college students from around the U.S. attending the big event in Portland, Ore., the largest group was from our own Nebraska-Kansas area, the Great Plains Annual Conference. Over 10 percent of all those attending the nationwide event were from Nebraska and Kansas.

And the largest delegation from Kansas and Nebraska was from Nebraska Wesleyan University. We at NWU had eight students there! Eduardo and Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion **Jonathan Redding** deserve a lot of credit for nurturing NWU students into exploring possible vocations in the church.

The students' joy, insights and energy were contagious when they got off the plane at 11:30 p.m. Eduardo and I dropped them off at their residence halls by 1 a.m. Monday morning, and we were tired, but so happy. Several of the students who went have been part of First Church life.

I'm deeply proud of them and of this community that First United Methodist Church and NWU lovingly share.

Rev. Larry Moffet

Pastor, First United Methodist Church
Lincoln

Message Received

In your last issue, I was pleasantly surprised to see the letter from **Julie R. (Gaughen) Warford** ('03) ("Thanks, Max") referring to the article you had written about me back in the summer of 2015 ("Dismantling the Unabomber"). I really appreciate her kind comments and the thank you.

If she liked the article, I'm sure she'll enjoy the movie being produced by Rob Lorenz, who also produced "American Sniper." The screenplay has been written and casting has begun. Look for it in the next year.

I've attached a Newsweek magazine cover from April 1996 that depicts Ted Kaczynski and me. Before I retired, I used to keep this photo over my desk with an arrow pointing to Kaczynski saying "Harvard PhD" and an arrow pointing to me saying "Nebraska Wesleyan BA."

Ms. Warford has my thanks.

D. Max Noel ('64)

San Ramon, Calif.



Opinions expressed in letters to the editor are not necessarily those of *Archways* magazine or Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Anonymous letters will not be printed. Letters may be edited for length, content and style.



Be heard. Contact us.

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NWU Forges Two More Pathways Partnerships

In our last issue, we announced an exciting new “Pathways Partnership” between Nebraska Wesleyan and Southeast Community College (“SCC Students Find New Pathways to NWU”). The partnership is designed to clear a path for community college students to transfer to Nebraska Wesleyan.

Before the winter was up, NWU established identical partnerships with Metropolitan Community College in Omaha and Mid-Plains Community College in North Platte. “We’re eager to welcome more community college students to our traditional undergraduate program in Lincoln and help them continue to reach

their academic goals,” said President Fred Ohles. “In addition, our degree-completion program offerings in Omaha give these students the convenience and educational experiences they’ve valued at their schools.”

Ohles signed an agreement with Metro’s president, **Randy Schmailzl** (’76), in December. He signed a similar agreement with President **Ryan Purdy** (’00) of Mid-Plains in February. The agreements establish \$15,000 Pathways Scholarships for every student transferring from those schools into Nebraska Wesleyan’s traditional undergraduate program in Lincoln, or a \$15 per credit hour tuition reduction for those who enroll in Nebraska Wesleyan’s accelerated degree completion programs for working adults in Lincoln or Omaha.

CAMPAIGN CONNECTION:

Opening doors to students through scholarships like this one is a Bold Designs priority.

Business Students Thrown to the (Prairie) Wolves

NWU’s Business Summit returned to Smith-Curtis on February 16 and 17 with a group of 25 regional business professionals, 16 of them Nebraska Wesleyan alumni serving as panelists and judges.

One of the summit’s most popular features is its Quick Pitch Contest, where would-be entrepreneurs have just minutes to pitch their business ideas.

At stake for the winners: an invitation to develop their concepts in Estonia as part of the multi-university Network Globally Act Locally (NGAL) initiative sponsored by the Huge Foundation. (Read more about the Huge Foundation on page 35.)

THE FINAL

The Business Summit is another example of how NWU goes beyond the classroom to help students build experience and expand their networks.

Provost Emerita Brings National Spotlight to NWU

Provost Emerita **Judy Muyskens** has been awarded Nebraska Wesleyan’s 2017 Roy G. Story Award. The award, now in its 25th year, honors an individual or group for significantly enhancing Nebraska Wesleyan’s national stature and reputation.



Judy Muyskens

Photo by Chad Greene

Muyskens, who retired from NWU last spring, was recognized for her advocacy with organizations like the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). She connected NWU to new funding and research opportunities through professional organizations and national foundations like the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

She helped connect NWU to a range of exciting national collaborations on integrative learning and senior capstone initiatives with schools like George Mason University, Wellesley College and Duke University.

Her efforts to launch and support Nebraska Wesleyan’s Archway Curriculum also brought national attention to NWU, said President **Fred Ohles**. In 2013, the AAC&U lauded our Archway Curriculum as a model of best practice.

Ohles called Muyskens a consummate mentor, citing her support of student-athletes, many of whom became Academic All-Americans. Muyskens also supported NWU’s nationally noteworthy prestigious scholarship program.

The Roy G. Story Award honors the legacy of **Roy Story** (1919). Story’s career with Texaco and Swift & Company included 50 patented inventions.

THE FINAL: A former provost is credited for tending many of the programs that make NWU an outstanding national liberal arts university.

Prairie Wolf Seeks Cottontail

Prey animals don't dress in flashy colors. When you're in the business of not becoming lunch, it's best to hop under the radar. But when cottontail rabbits switch from hide to bolt, the dress code changes. And that tawny grey coat gets a vivid accessory in the form of a bright white cottontail.

Ever wonder why?

"No scientific information exists to definitively explain why rabbits do this," said Associate Professor of Biology **Cody Arenz**. But biologists have their theories.

To test those theories, Arenz and his colleagues radio collared several rabbits on campus in November (with a permit from Nebraska Game and Parks and approval from Nebraska Wesleyan's Animal Care and Use Committee). And, with sup-

port from NWU's Fleming Student Research Fund, NWU biology students used those radio signals to sniff out and observe campus cottontails in action.

The NWU students' observations can add to

our understanding of Nebraska's rascally rabbits. Beyond that, the project also provides NWU students with an accessible field study opportunity right on campus.

Our students study everywhere from the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota to the coral reefs off Belize. But it can be just as revealing to take a close look at the wildlife in our own back yards.

Arenz and his collaborators are evaluating data from their cottontail observations now to see if they can pounce on the elusive functions of those bouncing tails. It's what Prairie Wolves do.

THE FINAL

By focusing on the wildlife on campus, NWU professors can provide more biology students with valuable field study experiences.

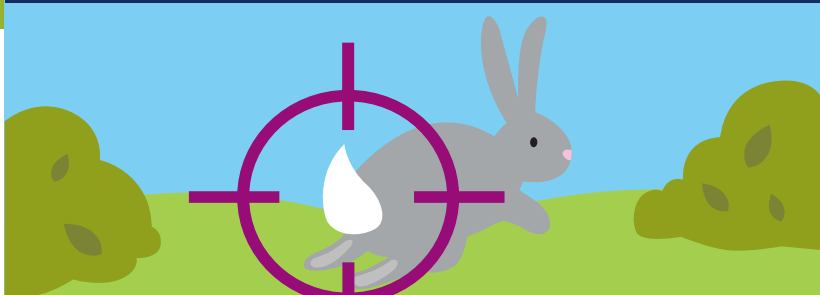
No scientific information exists to definitively explain why rabbits do this.

Why wear white?

Biologists have three main theories behind rabbits' white behinds.

1

It's a false target. That bright white tail "could be a deflection mark that distracts a predator's attention from more vital parts of the body." The rabbit is more likely to withstand a paw swipe to the rear than to the belly or throat.



2

It's a red alert. The white tail could be an alarm signal that warns other rabbits that there is danger."



3

It's a red herring. The tail could also be a ploy. "Flash behavior" could make a rabbit's hide/run/hide strategy more effective, Arenz said. To detect a hidden rabbit, predators use smell and shape. They look for the half-circle of a tucked bunny. Once it flees, the predator switches to tracking that bouncing white flash. When the rabbit reaches cover, it halts and sits on that tail. "And the predator has a very hard time finding them because now they're looking for a white tail."



Infographic by Hannah Segura ('19)

First Faculty Mentor Award Goes to English Alumna

A Nebraska Wesleyan University English professor and coordinator of services for students with disabilities has been recognized by her peers for generously devoting time and energy to mentoring faculty.

In December, **Sandy McBride** ('84) was honored with the university's inaugural Faculty Mentor of the Year Award. The new award celebrates faculty who have helped other NWU

professors improve as teachers, colleagues and professionals.

"Sandy understands that the impact of her mentoring spreads beyond any single faculty member to benefit the students and other faculty," said one nominator.

In her role as coordinator of services for students with disabilities, McBride was celebrated for not only helping students learn how to advocate for themselves, but for her work in helping faculty expand their awareness, understanding and pedagogical repertoires as

they work with students with a variety of disabilities.

The award also recognizes a professor for their work in mentoring faculty to improve teaching, foster professional growth and participate in meaningful service.

"Sandy's style of working across disciplines and facilitating idea sharing among senior and junior faculty is exactly the kind of connectedness we enshrined in the Archway Curriculum," said another nominee. "When I experience a sense of belonging, I know that is her influence on my life at NWU."



Photo by Lauren Andies ('21)

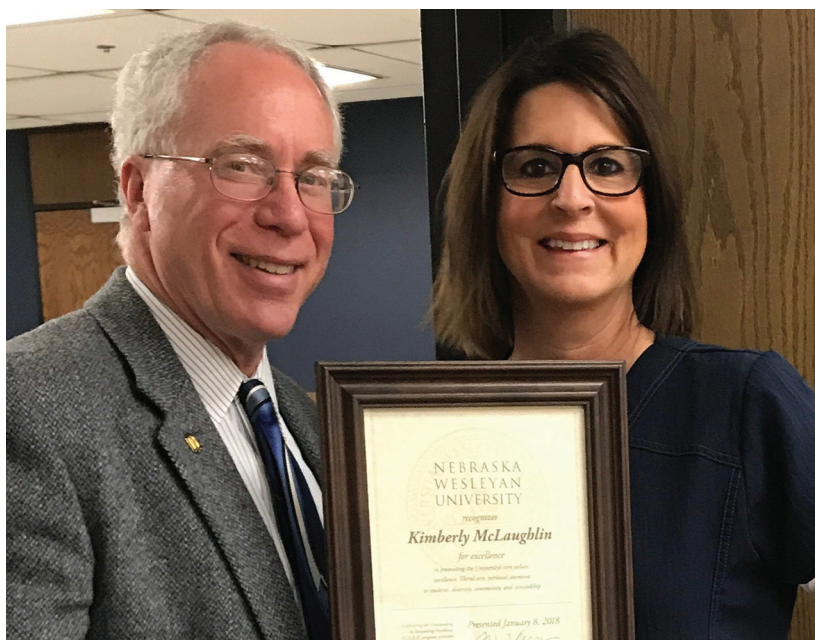
Sandy McBride ('84)

CAMPAIGN CONNECTION:



Supporting professors who go the extra mile is a Bold Designs priority.

NWU Nurse Is Caring to the CORE



"Her affable demeanor, warm regard for individuals and diligence to duty have resulted in students and staff trusting, respecting and admiring her," said **Pete Armstrong**, dean of students.

McLaughlin's extraordinary care for students was celebrated on

January 8 when she received the university's CORE Award.

The CORE Award recognizes a staff member whose efforts significantly exceed expectations in demonstrating or promoting

Nebraska Wesleyan's core values of excellence, the liberal arts, personal attention to students, diversity, community and stewardship.

McLaughlin has helped hundreds of university students and staff over the past 20 years with CPR training. And, following the death of her son, **Patrick McLaughlin** ('06) the summer after his graduation, she championed the placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) around campus.

McLaughlin was also recognized for stepping temporarily into the role of Student Health Service director during the fall semester and managing a contract with a new health care provider. "Throughout all of this, Kim came to work each day with a smile and provided students with exceptional care," said Armstrong.

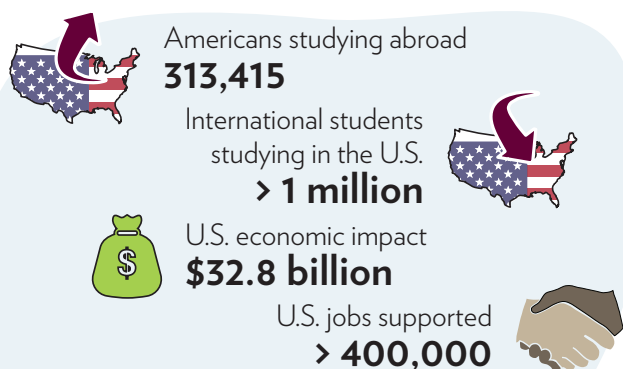
THE FINAL: The university honored a longtime advocate for the health and safety of NWU students.

For nearly 20 years, **Kim McLaughlin** has helped nurse NWU students back to good health. The assistant director of student health services has treated students for colds, flu, sore throats, sprained ankles and all sorts of other minor medical calamities.

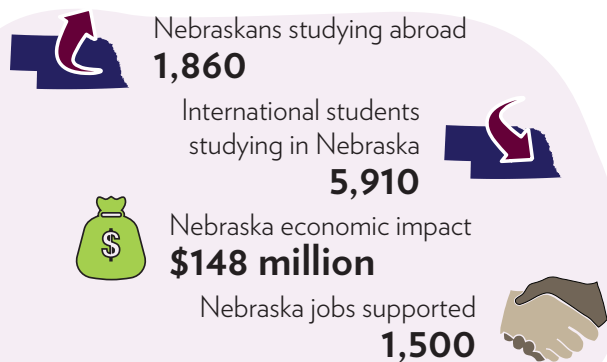
International Study Reaps Domestic Rewards

We often tout the benefits of global study on the individual: the horizons broadened, the cultures absorbed. But what is the benefit to the domestic community when we send Americans abroad and open our doors to students from other nations?

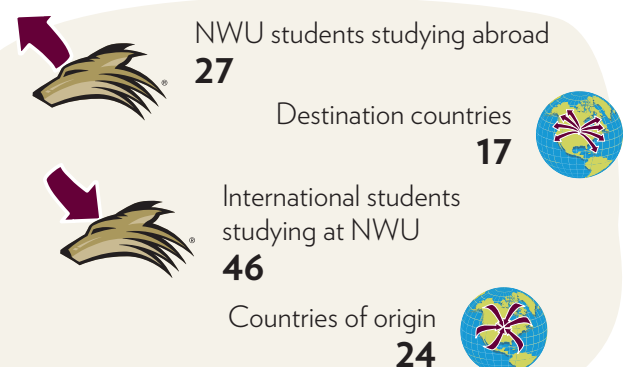
Sarah Barr ('93) directs the Joyce Michaelis Office of Global Engagement at NWU. She said the economic impact of global study is both real and measurable. She shared data from the Institute of International Education, the Association of International Educators and NWU to reveal how our country, our state and our campus benefit through economic activity and jobs supported.



2014-2015, Institute of International Education



2015, Association of International Educators



Fall 2017, NWU Office of Global Engagement

NWU Intern's Super Bowl Party Was Better Than Yours



No offense to your seven-layer dip, your comfy couch or your big TV, but **Brittany Pair** ('18) helped throw a Super Bowl party that probably blew yours out of the water.

For one, Pair had her party professionally catered. Then there was her invite list: a who's who of NFL VIPs. Then there was her location in Super Bowl LII's host city of Minneapolis, Minn. Everything about her party was, well, super.

As an events management intern with the NFL Players Association, Pair helped plan the party's venue and catering. Earlier in her internship, she had also helped throw a draft party for 2017's top draft pick: the Cleveland Browns defensive end Myles Garrett. "It's really great to see how everything pans out," Pair said. "And as a reward, you get to see their excitement and how happy they are at the event."

The sport management major said, "The experience really gave me an overall perspective on what event management is. It isn't just operations and staffing for the event. It's hospitality. You want to

make sure they are having a great time. And just being able to see how other people experience it, I think that's most rewarding."

She credited NWU for helping her land the competitive internship and thrive in the NFLPA's Washington, D.C., headquarters. "I have some really great advisors and professors who were willing to let me go to D.C. halfway through my semester and let me finish my finals out. I couldn't have asked for better professors or advisors. They have always been there encouraging me to pursue what I want to do."

One detail about that Super Bowl party didn't turn out the way Pair would've hoped. The Longmont, Colo., native would have preferred to see her Denver Broncos make it to Minneapolis. But 2017 wasn't the Broncos' year.

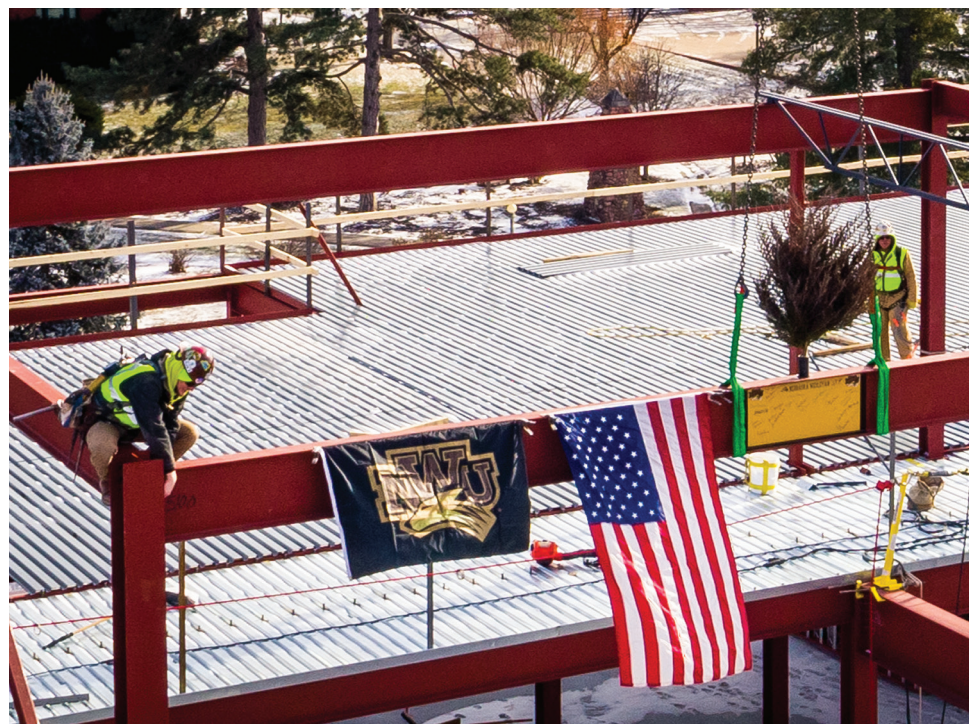
THE FINAL: Whether you're hosting your next-door neighbors or the NFL's top draft pick, hospitality is all about helping people enjoy their time.

Science Construction Update: Beams Up

The new year brought a new phase in the construction of the Duane W. Acklie Hall of Science. The 80,000-square-foot building's last steel beam was bolted into place on the frigid morning of Friday, January 12. With the girders in place, focus now begins to shift to the building's interior.

The first floor's biology classrooms and labs will soon be topped by spaces for the psychology and chemistry departments. The project continues to move on schedule and on budget.

"We can build the building we wanted and not cut corners," President Fred Ohles told the *Lincoln Journal Star*.



CAMPAIGN CONNECTION:

Acklie Hall of Science is just one way Bold Designs supports premier learning facilities at NWU.



Aerial photos by Sampson Construction Co., Inc. Beam signing photos by Peggy Hain

Above: Board members and presidents are used to required signatures. But this one also required hardhats and winter gear.

Left: Steelworkers placed a small spruce atop the final beam. The old tradition is said to ensure a safe worksite and demonstrate how, in the end, nature tops anything we build.

NWU Honors Three Diversity Advocates

Nebraska Wesleyan University's Martin Luther King Day celebrations included a ceremony for the campus community's 2018 Advocates for Diversity. Honored this year were Vice President for Campus Community T. J. McDowell ('94), Malik Morris ('18) and Associate Professor of Sociology Susan Wortmann.

McDowell and Wortmann partner as NWU's Title IX coordinators. They work together to educate people on campus and advocate for students on issues relevant to Title IX, including gender and sexuality discrimination.

McDowell has advocated for people who have experienced sexual assault by putting a process in place for handling cases, organizing a capable response team and listening to students' stories. He was also recognized for his work on diversity issues, including speaking about his own experiences as a student and staff member of color.

Assistant Professor of Art Sarah Berkeley described Wortmann as someone who "has devoted her life and teaching career to promoting diversity on and off campus." She makes regular presentations to faculty to increase their awareness on Title IX issues.

And Morris received NWU's Mary Butler Award, which recognizes a junior or senior who identifies as a student of color, is in good academic standing and

demonstrates the ability to enrich the campus through extracurricular involvement, leadership, responsibility and concern for others. The award is named after Mary Butler, who served as an NWU staff assistant for nearly 30 years.

"Beyond being one of our best athletes, Malik is also one of our best leaders," said his track & field coach, Ted Bull-



Malik Morris ('18)

ing ('80). "His work ethic, his ability to relate to all of his teammates and his enthusiasm in all that he does make me proud to have him in our program."

Morris is a long jumper and NCAA All-American sprinter. He will graduate in May and plans to become a family and marriage counselor.

THE FINAL

The university marked MLK Day in part by applauding progress on Title IX and a leading student-athlete.

Photo by Anderson Studio



CAMPAIGN CONNECTION:

Bold Designs will strengthen the nursing program's facilities with an additional nursing simulation laboratory.

March of Dimes Gives NWU Nursing High Marks



Left to right: Sue Gabriel (MFS '03, MSN '05), Sydney Wergin ('18), Cassie Newton ('06, BSN '18) and Molly Fitzke

The March of Dimes and Omaha Magazine hosted the 2017 Nurse of the Year Awards on November 9 to honor leading nurses from across Nebraska and western Iowa. It was a good night for Nebraska Wesleyan alumnae, students and faculty.

Associate Professor of Nursing Sue Gabriel (MFS '03, MSN '05) was named the Nebraska Nurse of the Year for Academic Excellence. Nominees for that award included Associate Professor of Nursing Molly Fitzke. And Sydney Wergin ('18) and Cassie Newton ('06, BSN '18) were named Nebraska Nursing Students of the Year.

These awards—given to NWU educators and students alike—speak to the strength of a program geared to help nurses succeed in today's health care environment.



The March of Dimes began 80 years ago to fight polio. Today, its mission is geared to support healthy mothers and babies.

Succeed with an MSN from NWU.

NW you

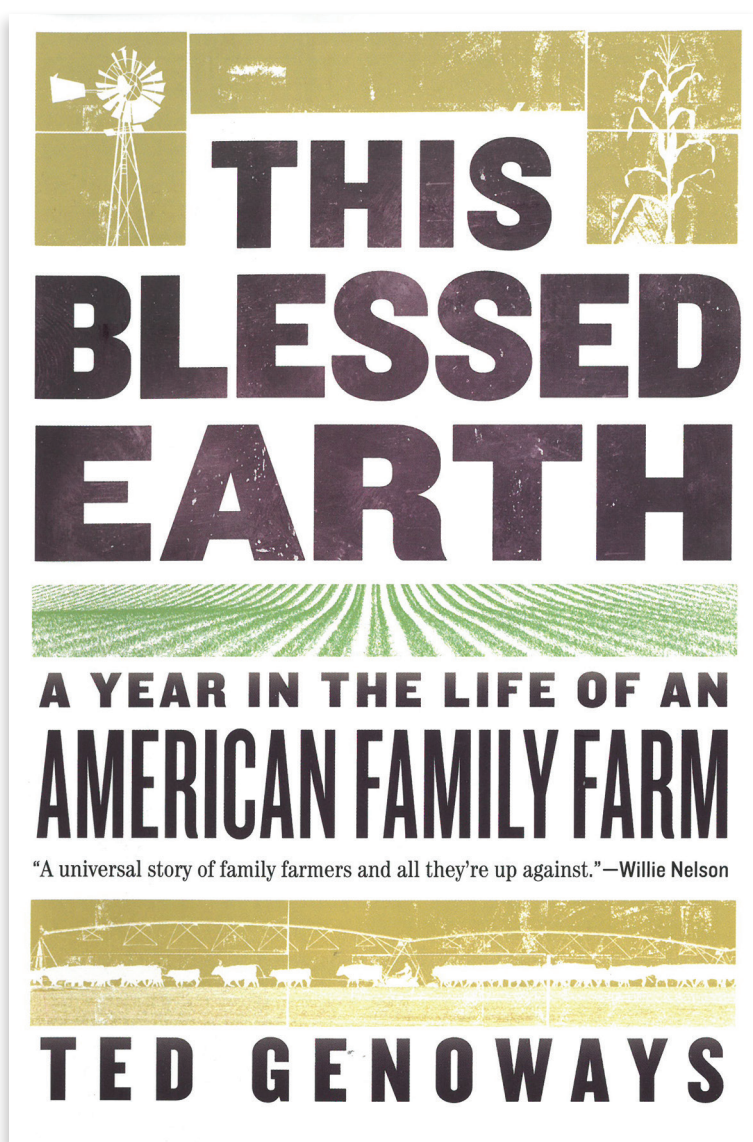
Seize new opportunities
and give yourself a powerful
career advantage with
Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Apply today at
nursing.nebrwesleyan.edu.

Jaimie Young ('17)

Be a leader in nursing education or administration.





This Blessed Earth

By Ted Genoways ('94)

W. W. Norton & Company, 2017 | 226 pages | \$27

—Reviewed by Eric Wendt ('99)

I've often looked at the name "Nebraska Wesleyan University" as a three-word label for "where we are, who we are and what we are." And I've thought a lot about why our particular "who" is so necessary in this particular "where." What is it about life in Nebraska that makes having a Nebraska Wesleyan University so necessary?

Ted Genoways' ('94) latest book, *This Blessed Earth*, had no intention of answering that question for me. Still, I believe it does.

This Blessed Earth follows Rick Hammond and his family farm's operation in central Nebraska for a year, from one hard-won harvest to the next. And while the Hammonds are not NWU alumni, the versatility and interdisciplinary knowledge everyone on Centennial Hill Farm shows are as compelling an argument for the liberal arts in Nebraska as one could ever hope to make.

Genoways reveals how the Hammonds must be good with blowtorches, botany and biotech. They must repair pipe, birth calves, manage software and predict markets. They are chemists, economists, ethicists and stewards.

And they are gamblers.

The farmer stereotype famously "bets the farm" on the whims of sunshine and storm clouds. Genoways shows how the Hammonds' gambles hinge on so much more than weather. The complexities of volatile markets, hybrid seeds and competitors' choices all play intricate parts in the Hammonds' success or failure.

In 2014, after several years of drought, Rick bet on another dry year—and planted incredibly short-season beans. ... And he was dead on, right up until the rains started in August. If he could have gotten out early, ahead of farmers in other parts of the country, and caught the market at its peak, he was positioned to make up for all the other setbacks going into harvest. But if you guessed right on the growing season, as Rick did, and then got an extremely wet fall, you could end up with hundreds of acres of mature soybeans and fields too wet to run the combine.



Genoways balances a personal narrative of the Hammonds' year with well-researched, balanced examinations of key elements in modern American agriculture: factors like hybrid seed genetics, chemical herbicides and pesticides, and modern irrigation practices. He gives an interesting history of that most impactful Nebraska invention: the center pivot. And he makes fascinating even the engineering behind their spray. (Bigger is better.)

"The latest design innovations have focused less on fine droplet dispersal and more on getting water all the way to ground level. After all, the goal is watering root systems, not leaving droplets on leaf surfaces where they will be lost."

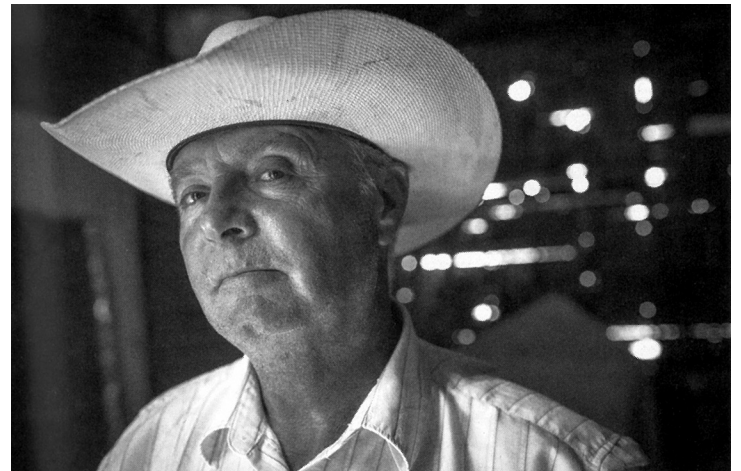
This Blessed Earth is not a partisan polemic designed to push agriculture to the left or right. Instead, Genoways eloquently shows just how many directions the few small farmers who remain today are pulled. He shows the perils and contradictions that complicate their choices.

For instance, there's a market concerned with animal welfare that will pay a premium for beef raised free of antibiotics. Rick's daughter, Meghan Hammond, asked Genoways where that leaves a farmer with a sick cow? Do you protect the profit behind that antibiotic-free designation? Or do you displease a supposedly animal-friendly market, destroy that premium, and treat the illness?

By showing the nuances behind a thousand interdisciplinary choices, Genoways does justice to the dizzying complexities of the "simple" farmer.

In his acknowledgments, Genoways thanks the Hammonds and many others who were gracious with their time and perspectives. "This city kid appreciates the education," he writes.

The great range of learning Genoways shows in this book makes me equally grateful for that education. And you don't have to be an agronomist to follow the roots of Genoways' learning back to Nebraska Wesleyan University. 🍷



Photos by Mary Anne Andrei



Top: Rick Hammond's Centennial Hill Farm dates back to 1876.
Middle: There's a rush to load the planter with soybeans ahead of the rain.
Bottom: Kyle Galloway sprays herbicide in midsummer.



Give Grain.

*What you plant today can help students
keep their roots right here in Nebraska.*

Sharing your harvest is one more way you can
support Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Ask how at your local co-op. Or contact Susy Miller
at 402.465.2124 or smiller4@nebrwesleyan.edu.

nebrwesleyan.edu/give-nwu



NEBRASKA
WESLEYAN
UNIVERSITY

DESIRABLE TRAITS

Does a small-town guy have the genes to compete with agriculture's heaviest hitters?

Ben Benson's ('07) family business germinated on an infamous day. The Bensons couldn't have known, but their company's first day of operation, March 9, 2009, was the Great Recession's rock bottom. That day, the Dow Jones Industrial Average skidded to its low of 6,507.04.

If Benson's new ag company was a seedling that March, then its elders were looking pretty recession-wilted. Businesses in and out of agriculture had dropped leaves and workers, curled inward, and done their best to simply survive. You can't blame them for looking at Benson's little sprout of a business with a mixture of quaint hope and grim condescension.

Ben Benson (left) meets with a customer on planting day. "Lots of people we call 'small farmers' are truly big businesspeople running complex, efficient operations," he said.

And what do you want to be when you grow up, little one?

I'm an independent seed company.

A what?

An independent seed company.

Oh, bless your heart.

Big Cob Hybrids entered a competitive field utterly dominated by green

giants like Pioneer and Monsanto. You want to compete with them? Look around, sprout. Search from Nebraska's panhandle to the Missouri. How many independent seed companies are left? Can you find even two?

Word to the wise, Benson: Brace yourself.



Photos courtesy of Big Cob Hybrids



Big Cob's young president was undeterred. Benson had majored in business and played soccer at Nebraska Wesleyan University; competition didn't scare him. And he'd grown up in the seed industry. His father, David Benson, held more than 50 patents as a corn breeder for Pioneer and Mycogen. David was on board as Big Cob's corn and soybean product lead. And Ben's wife, Amy (Vanderkolk) Benson ('06), was chief financial officer.

The economy looked bleak in 2009. But the Bensons will tell you, a field never looks so barren as it does on the day you plant. The economy into which Big Cob grew has rallied. Grain prices have both soared and plummeted. The farmers operating now, like Benson himself, have their eyes on the long-term.

Ben Benson crossed the rock lot between Big Cob's offices and a vast, newly constructed shop south of Seward, Neb. "I can't wait for our 10-year anniversary," he said. On one hand, the 10-year mark is just one more figure in an industry obsessed with numbers: row width, seed depth, germination rates, water inches and bushels per acre. But a

...in the Western Corn Belt, it's more rugged. You get more drought. More heat and humidity. More wind. More brittle snap.

decade proves something to Benson and Big Cob's employees—two-thirds of whom are NWU alumni.

Big Cob Hybrids is a seedling no longer. The family business is growing in a region where few other independent seed companies have survived, let alone thrived.

"You'll find more independents farther east," Benson said, gesturing past a field where cattle munched on the stocks of last year's crop. "But here, in the Western Corn Belt, it's more rugged. You get more drought. More heat and humidity. More wind. More brittle snap."

He said, "It takes special genetics to make

it out here." It wasn't entirely clear whether Benson was referring to the genes of the seed, the farmer or the seedsman.

Josh Becker ('03) is familiar with the Western Corn Belt's ruggedness. He's a fourth-generation farmer who works alongside his father and uncles to operate roughly 5,000 acres near Beaver City, Neb., some 75 miles southwest of Kearney. They raise cattle and grow corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa almost entirely without irrigation.

The mixture of crops and livestock means Becker gets no off-season. "Your timing's good," he said over the phone. "You caught me driving up to Ogallala to pick up some heifers, so I have time to talk."

Becker said his reasons for choosing to plant Big Cob Hybrids were similar to what drew him to NWU. "I grew up in a small town, and I knew who I could count on." Becker is most comfortable when he knows the people he's working with.

"At Nebraska Wesleyan, everything was close-knit," he said. "I knew my business and



math professors well—how they taught and what they were experts in. And running for Coach **Ted Bulling** ('80) was like a family experience.”

Becker remains close to many of his track & field teammates. He got to know Ben Benson through Amy, who was a talented hurdler on the same team where Becker was a sprinter.

Becker wanted a team partnership with his seed company. “I know I can call Ben any hour of the day,” he said. He described a different feeling when he’s called the larger conglomerates. “You’re never quite sure who will pick up. You’ll talk to a rep and maybe they know a lot and maybe they don’t. You just can’t be as sure.” And Becker prefers to be sure.

Becker may have been certain about Big Cob’s service. But what kind of genetics would he find in those blue bags?

“The seed industry is really performance based,” said **Aaron Ochsner** ('17), who works a 4,400-acre fourth-generation farm near

Ceresco, Neb. “If the yields aren’t there,” he said, “customers won’t stick around.”

Ochsner pointed to a popular corn variety for 2017 from one of the biggest companies. “For whatever reason, this variety had problems with ears dropping,” he said. Farmers harvested largely unaware of just how much corn had fallen beneath their

soybean genetics with the big players and their bottomless research budgets?

Benson had a surprising answer to that question. “We call it ‘coopertition,’” he said. In dealing with the big conglomerates, Big Cob cooperates. And it competes. Simultaneously.

It works like this.

The seed industry is really performance based. If the yields aren’t there, customers won’t stick around.

combines’ reach. Their losses compounded when they turned cattle out to feed on the stocks. The cattle gluttoned on that dropped corn, and many died before farmers realized the extent of the problem.

Ochsner predicted many of those growers will have gone elsewhere for seed this year.

So a tremendous amount rides on the quality of any company’s genetics. And how on earth could a little seed company outside Seward, Neb., compete on corn and

The big ag companies spend billions to develop varieties that will produce well throughout a great swath of America. For corn, that region stretches across Indiana, Illinois and Iowa and on into parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and Colorado. Like a huge maple sloughing millions of seeds in the hope of producing a few winning adults, this research spawns more varieties than even the biggest companies

could ever bring to market. The big players choose to promote only a few of their most promising hybrids.

(Here comes the part where Benson cooperates.)

Independent seed companies like Big Cob pay licensing fees to access rights to the unchosen hybrids. For the big companies, it's a way to draw some revenue out of varieties they couldn't otherwise bring to market. And for the independents, it's access to high-performing genetics. The cooperation benefits both players.

If you're Becker in Beaver City or Ochsner in Ceresco, it's fair to ask: How good are these genes if their developers basically gave them up for adoption? Are these the high performers, or just leftovers?

(Here comes the part where Benson competes.)

Benson explained, "Monsanto has to care how its seed will perform across the entire Corn Belt. And I don't."

A variety Benson leases from Monsanto

might lay an egg in Indiana. That mattered to Monsanto. It means nothing to Big Cob, because Big Cob doesn't sell to Indiana farmers. Benson wants traits that perform in Nebraska, western Iowa, northwestern Missouri, northern Kansas and eastern

*Monsanto has to care
how its seed will perform
across the entire Corn
Belt. And I don't.*

Colorado. By focusing on the data relevant to his market only, Benson can isolate corn and soybean varieties that may outperform here what the big companies settled on for the Corn Belt as a whole.

Big Cob's independence also means it's free to invest in available hybrids with

Monsanto, then do the same with Bayer, and BASF and Syngenta. And on and on. Benson said independence gives Big Cob access to the fruits of some \$26 billion in crop research.

Not bad for a little guy.

"Ben's making leaps and bounds toward the west and south," Becker said. It's telling that Big Cob's reputation is growing on the Corn Belt's southwestern fringes—on those roughest edges where it's most difficult to yield consistently.

In serving the interests of these farmers on the fringes, Benson sounds more like a financial planner than a salesperson. He knows the same hybrids that boom one season can often bust the next. So he urges his clients to diversify, diversify, diversify.

"We protect our growers using a diversity of genetics," Benson said. "We don't tell them, 'Well, this hybrid did best last year. Go all in with that.' We sell a system that reduces their risk."



Big Cob's diversified approach has suited Becker's operation well. Like so many successful Nebraska farmers, Becker is given to understatement. He's been "a little busy lately." His industry can be "kind of tough." He describes his own success as "just making it work."

You have to know Becker's plain style to appreciate how deep his regard for Big Cob runs: "I believe in this seed enough to recommend it to my friends."

Thirty miles east of Big Cob's offices is a field, just 120 yards in length. Despite its greenness, nothing grows there. Yet Weary Field at Abel Stadium can take some credit for Big Cob's growth. You see, Weary Field is where Benson "got serious about skill acquisition."

James Beckmann ('99), former head coach of NWU's men's soccer team, called Benson "one of the most fascinating players I've coached." He said, "Ben was always a good athlete, but he arrived on campus unrefined as a player. He had to turn himself into a really good soccer player through hard work."

Beckmann said, "He was dedicated even when he wasn't playing, which is really an admirable trait. He was serious about his own development. He was a grinder with a long-term plan."

By his senior season, Benson's grinding resulted in a team captaincy. "He made himself and his teammates better," Beckmann said. "It was easy to invest in a kid so invested in our program."

Benson's contributions didn't necessarily show up in stats. Defenders' priorities are, by name, defensive. And if you're not a goalkeeper, there is no statistic for the goals you stop.

Benson's impact was more like that of a hidden gene, silently responsible for his team's health. He did more than stop opponents' possessions, Beckmann said. "He set up our offense. He allowed his teammates to go be good attackers." Their trust in his defense and his deliveries allowed them to be wildly more aggressive.

"I don't know the seed business," Beckmann said. "But Ben's success doesn't surprise me one bit. He's the kind of leader who'll grind for others. He'll do anything



to set his teammates up to succeed. We watched him become that."

Benson's academic advisor saw the same drive to acquire skills in the classroom. Benson took four courses from Professor of Business **Loy Watley**. "That's one class short of a minor in Watley," he joked.

"I remember a young man with a quiet intensity of focus."

Benson was so quiet, in fact, that Watley was surprised when Benson declared a public relations minor. "Our PR minors are usually the gregarious types," Watley said. Natural talkers. Schmoozers. "That wasn't Ben. At least not then."

Still, Watley watched Benson throw himself into his PR courses and electives. "He took 'Business Communication' before it was a requirement," Watley said. "That's a pretty remarkable choice for a reluctant talker."

But maybe it's not such an odd move for the son of a corn breeder. Maybe Benson looked at the "natural" communicators on campus and simply saw a set of traits he desired. What if he set out to cross his own strengths with new skills that could prove useful in his field?


Ochsner did much the same, augmenting his NWU experience with a few ag courses next door at the University of Nebraska's East Campus. "Prof. (**Thom**) **Jackman** ('84) knew my goals and helped me find

the ag-related things I was looking for over there," Ochsner said.


Jackman said he and his colleagues have discussed expanding Nebraska Wesleyan's ag-relevant courses and perhaps even offering an agriculture minor in the years to come. He said it would attract and serve students with an eye on farming and ag-supporting industries.

"I could've just gone to an ag college," Ochsner said, "but this way, I learned a lot more about markets and trade and finance. I got to play baseball. I got involved in the Student Investment Group. I even took meteorology from Prof. (**Nathaniel**) **Cunningham**. That's all useful to me, and it's not something I'd have necessarily found at an ag college."

In this way, NWU and Big Cob are both in the hybrid business. NWU crosses the arts, the sciences and the humanities. We match students' natural strengths with desirable traits native to partnering fields. And while the school modifies no one's genes, we do seek to produce a special variety of graduate uniquely suited to thrive in rugged, complicated environments.

Our alumni ranks are filled with success stories in agriculture, with growers like Ochsner and Becker and entrepreneurs like the Bensons—each of them growing in their own directions as healthy examples of what a remarkable education can yield. 

Worth Cheering



For one NWU cheerleader, winning comes after the cheering stops.

—By Emmalie Harris ('18)

Sofia Tate ('19) doesn't much care for artifice. Fake friendships. Fake concern. Fake applause. Like so much artificial sweetener, it's all meant to be nice. But it's empty. She'll pass on all of it. Thanks, but no thanks.

Most days, the communication studies major from Columbus, Neb., even eschews her prosthetic leg as too bulky. Too cumbersome. Tate prefers her crutches. They're lighter. They're real. Crutches don't pretend.

So she reserves her prosthetic for her shifts as a server at a Lincoln restaurant. Carrying plates and pitchers between tables just doesn't work on crutches. But otherwise, she's typically just fine on one foot.

She shakes her head when people act as though Tate, the experienced dancer and former NWU cheerleader, is this profound inspiration.

"It's kind of like, 'Congrats! You were born with one leg and now you're doing things!'" She knows people mean well. But she'd rather lead cheers than receive something she doesn't need. "I just don't feel like I'm out of the ordinary."

Tate chose Nebraska Wesleyan in part because she saw the chance to be treated like everyone else. "I was interested in a smaller college because I knew getting around a larger campus would be difficult for me, especially in winter." Nebraska Wesleyan's campus was something she could cross without extra fuss.

And the friendliness she found here was anything but fake. "The minute I stepped on campus, I saw that everyone just smiles at you and says hi. People here don't walk with their faces down, looking at the sidewalk." She liked that.

The university offered support, but didn't make assumptions about what she might want or need. "Wesleyan made it very clear that if I needed any accommodations, they would be more than happy to help. That was really awesome to me," Tate said. "I don't really need it, but I think the fact that they made it so clear says a lot about them and their eagerness to welcome anybody who wants to be on this campus."

It's not unusual for NWU basketball fans to be impressed by the speed and agility they see in Snyder Arena. But those impressions are usually made by students in jerseys—not cheerleading uniforms. But for two years as an NWU cheerleader, Tate made fans of her own.

She would leap at the whistle of a called timeout—with the help of neither crutches nor her prosthetic—and have herself in position alongside her teammates in time to launch into rapid routines on one foot that most fans couldn't hope to match on two.

Her experience cheerleading was so positive that her decision to leave it behind this year was difficult. "But I figured preserving my body was a little more important than doing something for fun," she said. "I miss it, but I also know it was the best decision."

Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance **Tamra (Trehearn) Llewellyn** ('06) put the toll that cheerleading took on Tate's body in context. "Whether walking, running or jumping, she was basically doing twice the work with the same time for recovery, day in and day out," Llewellyn said. "More stress is put on the one leg, opening up more chances for injury and soreness.



(Sofia) was basically doing twice the work with the same time for recovery, day in and day out.

"Cheerleading involves powerful movements, requiring muscles to use primarily anaerobic metabolism. If her muscles can't fully recover, they can't perform to their peak ability."


Tate's decision to stop cheerleading—wise as it was—runs counter to our stereotype of a young woman triumphing over disability. But she has no interest in our stereotypes. They're just one more artificiality Tate rejects.

"Some people, you know, they're like, 'I don't let my disability shape the person I am!' But I really do think my leg has shaped how I behave," Tate said. She knows she's not going to "overcome" one-leggedness. She's going to manage it. She's going to manage it just fine.

"I don't feel bad for myself," she said. She said her disability has helped her to "value and rely on my inner talents—like communication. My communication skills are super important to me."

After leaving the cheerleading squad, Tate became all the more grateful for the community she has within the Communication Studies Department. "This sounds cheesy," she said, "but it really is like a family. [The professors] like to see your growth in your four years at Wesleyan, as well as what you go on to do from here after graduation."

Within that NWU family, Tate has learned how to be both independent and open to the help she sometimes needs.

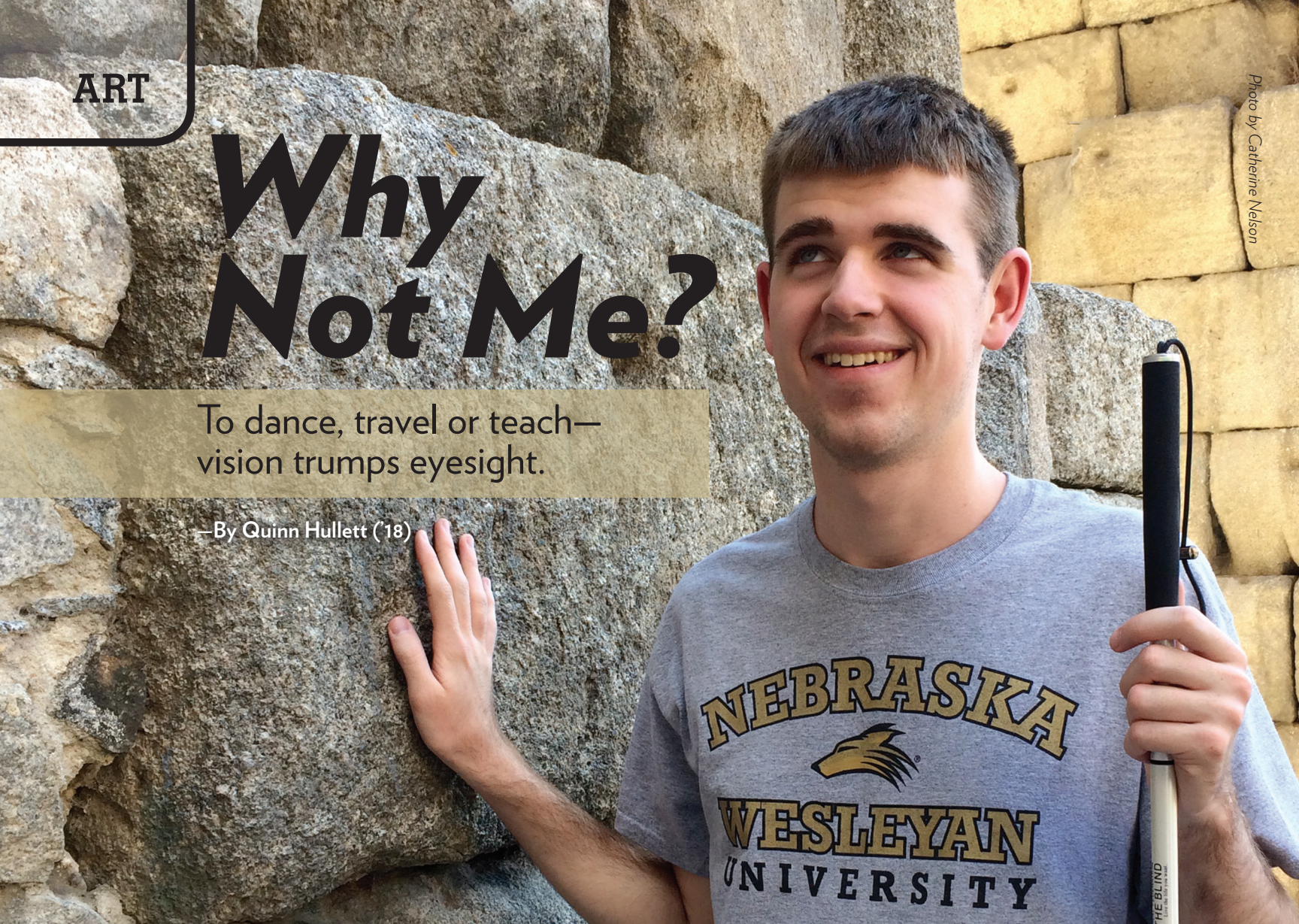
"I do depend on people, sometimes physically, because I can't do everything," she said. "It's just about being comfortable with yourself and the people you're around." 

Why Not Me?

To dance, travel or teach—vision trumps eyesight.

—By Quinn Hullett (18)

Photo by Catherine Nelson



Almost as soon as **Chase Crispin's** ('19) parents learned their son had no eyesight, they developed a vision for how his childhood would unfold. That vision was filled with birthday cakes, backpacks, fieldtrips, school concerts, sleepovers, report cards, amusement parks, swimming pools, high school dances—the whole thing.

"Growing up, my parents expected me to do what any other kid would do," he said. "And that's just stayed with me."

That mindset led to a positive high school experience in Blair, Neb. But the question remained whether that mentality could carry him over to his first-choice university.

Sandra McBride ('84) teaches English and coordinates Nebraska Wesleyan's services for students with disabilities. Her Old Main office was one of Crispin's first stops.

"Chase wanted to meet with me because he wasn't sure he'd be able to get sufficient services at a small private college," McBride recalled. "I'd had experience working with blind and visually impaired students—including music students—and I could reassure him he'd get the services he needed to have full access to the programs at Nebraska Wesleyan."

For most college students with impaired vision, the bulk of accommodations involve making texts accessible. "That means making sure they have either recorded books or electronic texts that can be read by a screen reader," McBride said.

At Nebraska Wesleyan—where reading loads are heavy—that can involve hunting down a lot of audio and screen-readable texts. "And Chase is a little different because of his music education major and Spanish minor," McBride said. "To have proper access to music and to texts in Spanish, he must have Braille."

Nebraska Wesleyan has established relationships with several people who can transcribe music into Braille, McBride said. "And Nebraska Wesleyan purchased an embosser so we can take the transcribed files and produce Braille for Chase."

But academic reading is just one aspect of the Nebraska Wesleyan experience. The music education and Spanish student wanted to perform, tour, teach and travel. And why not?

So he auditioned for Nebraska Wesleyan's award-winning University Choir, and found a strong community there. "Music brings people together," Crispin said. "We rehearse every day and

CAMPAIGN CONNECTION:

Bold Designs prioritizes student services and experiences that take student learning beyond the textbook.

spend a lot of time together on tour, which creates strong friendships. Everyone in the choir watches out for each other, which makes it feel like a family.”

University Choir’s director, Professor of Music **William Wyman**, said, “He’s just part of the group, one of the choir.”

While that may sound like mellow praise, it’s exactly what Crispin set out to become. “It’s my goal to be seen as any other student on campus, to be a part of the class or group.”

And being a trusted (and trusting) member of that group encouraged Crispin to tackle more. He was cast for a role with NWU Opera—in a part that required Crispin to dance a waltz.

There are more than a few alumni who’d be hard pressed to describe a more frightening academic experience than stepping onto the O’Donnell Auditorium stage to sing opera and dance in front of an audience. Now, imagine you can’t see your castmates or the stage beneath your feet. You know that stage ends in a bone-breaking drop. But you can’t see where.

If the prospect scared Crispin, he didn’t show it. “I didn’t take my cane onstage so I’d look more in character,” he said. “I had to completely trust the other cast members to get me where I needed to go.”

Moving and singing onstage was an exhilarating feeling. Crispin didn’t feel in the spotlight so much as he felt like one of the cast. “It was a lot of fun! I appreciated that the expectations for me were the same as for the rest of the singers,” he said.

Crispin carried this same adventuresome attitude into his Spanish study.

“I have always been curious about other places, languages and cultures,” he said. Spain particularly piqued his interest, thanks to two of his influential high school teachers who had lived there.

“I think traveling is the best way to experience another culture,” he said. But the prospect of navigating airports, foreign cities and public transportation in his second language was enough to give even Crispin pause. “I’m always interested in opportunities to learn more about the world ... (but) I don’t think I would have gone without Cathy’s encouragement.”

Cathy would be Professor of Spanish **Catherine Nelson**. “I was so excited when I learned he was considering the six-week trip,” Nelson said. “I knew we’d be traveling as a group, and I knew that whole experience in Spain, with his knowledge


and confidence, he could do it.”

His experience in Spain was so positive that after the Nebraska Wesleyan group returned home, Crispin stayed behind. He met up with his family, and proceeded to lead them around to see the sights.

Back in Lincoln, Crispin has also begun guiding middle schoolers through his student teaching practicum in Lefler Middle School’s music room. It’s just one more life-changing experience made possible by Crispin’s “Why not me?” mindset.

“I am so glad to have experiences like these with (middle school) students to figure out what works well and what challenges I still have,” he said.

McBride gives Crispin all the credit for making the most of what he’s found on campus. “Chase excels at NWU because he’s intellectually curious, he works hard and he takes advantage of every opportunity,” McBride said.

“I feel lucky that he chose NWU over the other schools he looked at.” 

Everyone in the choir watches out for each other, which makes it feel like a family.

For Crispin, a student who often stands out, singing in the award-winning University Choir represents a valuable opportunity to be one of the crowd.

Photo by Chad Greene





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Student Pride

Prestige scholars and awards

Photo by Lane Hickenbottom



Native American to Study Indigenous Art and Culture of New Zealand

For Angel Geller ('18), life-changing opportunities in art arrive named Benjamin. Last spring, the NWU art major, peace and justice minor and member of the Omaha Tribe seized on the opportunity to work with globally renowned sculptor Benjamin Victor on his colossal bronze of Chief Standing Bear ("Made Human," fall 2017). She helped form the Ponca chief's moccasins. The completed sculpture now stands on Lincoln's Centennial Mall.

And in December, another Benjamin arrived, giving Geller the opportunity to study on the other side of the planet. The Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship is funding her study this spring at the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

"I'm intrigued by the idea of going to a different country on the other side of the world that has an indigenous community I have no ties to," Geller said.

"I didn't choose this host site because it would be easy or convenient," she said of New Zealand. "I understood that I absolutely would be an outsider looking in."

Geller is Nebraska Wesleyan's 47th Gilman scholar. The prestigious scholarship program is sponsored by the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

Photo by Allison Woods ('20)



Scholarship Takes English Major to Taiwan

"The moment I walked into my first Chinese class, I knew that it was a language I wanted to stick with," recalled Terri Seier ('20). Now Seier has stepped into a Chinese class in Taiwan, thanks to a Freeman-ASIA Award she received in December.

The Freeman-ASIA Award is a national scholarship for U.S. undergraduates who want to study abroad in East or Southeast Asia.

Seier, an English major from Petersburg, Neb., is spending her spring semester at Providence University. In addition to taking classes, Seier has volunteered with students studying English, building valuable experience for a career as an English Language Learner educator.

"Studying abroad and becoming proficient in Chinese will help me as an ELL teacher because it will be easier to make known the cultural difference—especially if they are planning to move to the United States," she said. "Likewise, my experience on learning Chinese and how others respond to the different methods of teaching a language can be transferred into my own methods for teaching English."

Seier is also pursuing minors in Chinese and writing, and is active in the NWU Philosophy Club and Creative Writing Club. She is a graduate of Pope John XXIII Central Catholic High School in Elgin, Neb.

The Reverend and the Wrestlers

Nebraska Wesleyan University hired **Brandon Bradley** in 2016 to bring intercollegiate wrestling back to campus. Today, NWU's wrestlers practice in a new facility north of the gates to Abel Stadium. But heading into its first season of competition, Coach Bradley's program was technically homeless.

Without a practice facility, the university turned to a trusted neighbor for help. First United Methodist Church had just refurbished its basement gym. Would the church be willing to host Nebraska Wesleyan's practices until a permanent solution could be reached?

Pastor **Larry Moffet** considered the university's request and offered the wrestlers some surprising terms.

"A number of kids in our neighborhood come from major challenges. We have to figure out how to build community amidst those challenges—amidst the chaos," Moffet said. "The kids need to know there are others who care for them."

Open your arms to those teens, Moffet said. Join in First Church's teen mentoring work and we'll open our church to your practices.

Bradley did more than agree to Moffet's deal. He leapt at it. "This was a great opportunity for our team," he said. "I reminded them, 'This is what you do when you are part of a team, when you are part of a community.'"

During the 2016-2017 school year, NWU wrestlers joined First Church's congregants weekly to mentor teens from Lincoln's University Place neighborhood in various ways. The wrestlers served as positive role models, led pick-up basketball games, played touch football. They held study sessions and offered honest conversations about their own lives, their own choices as students and athletes.

"They're going through experiences I've had growing up," said **Nick Pray** ('20) of Omaha. "In some ways, I've been where they are now." Student-athletes like Pray are proof there are routes to college success. "Anyone can get through challenges," Pray said. "They just have to see it and have the drive."

"They're good kids, and they need to be reminded of that," said **Ryan Smales** ('20) of Bellevue, Neb. He let sports serve as that reminder. "They just needed a place where they can go and have fun."

For **Justin Hennessy** ('20) of Alvo, Neb., mentoring became a way to improve as a wrestler. Wrestling overlaps the team and the self. You wrestle as an individual; you compete as a team. "To not focus on yourself is so impactful," Hennessy said.

The wrestlers made the most of every square inch of that basement gymnasium. Likewise, the teens made the most of every minute with their mentors from First Church and NWU.

*This is what you do
when you are part of
a team, when you are
part of a community.*

WINTER SPORT SUMMARY

Women's basketball

NWU took another step forward in Sam Dixon's first season as head coach. The Prairie Wolves rode a perfect nonconference schedule to their highest season win total since 2001 (14). The next step will be improved performance within the IIAC, where the women are still working to find their feet after a 5-11 conference record.

Men's basketball

The Prairie Wolves' full-throttle approach yielded a season for the ages in 2017-2018. Read about it on page 30.



Photos by Sideline Media/Keith Lucas

Swimming

The men were undefeated in duals and took second at the Liberal Arts Championships in Decorah. Check NWUsports.com to see how Garrett Cadotte performed in three events at nationals. The women turn their focus to next year after a winless season.


NWU's wrestlers needed a temporary practice facility. The one they found came with an unusual catch.

—By Quinn Hullett ('18)

Today, NWU wrestling holds its practices back on campus in the university's new facility. And the informal "deal" between Moffet and the wrestlers has technically expired. But the returns continue.

The culture of NWU wrestling now more strongly links commitment to team and commitment to community. Each wrestler knows that First United Methodist Church is one more place where he can make a difference. And their service has won NWU wrestling more fans—including Rev. Moffet.

Moffet can also measure the agreement's returns. First Church's mentors regularly reach roughly 50 neighborhood teens. That year, six of them were high school seniors facing considerable barriers of poverty and instability. There were reasons to doubt their academic prospects. But each of those six seniors graduated high school in 2017. And they didn't stop there. They also successfully applied and enrolled at colleges and universities across the U.S.

The reverend and the wrestlers agreed: That's a good deal. 

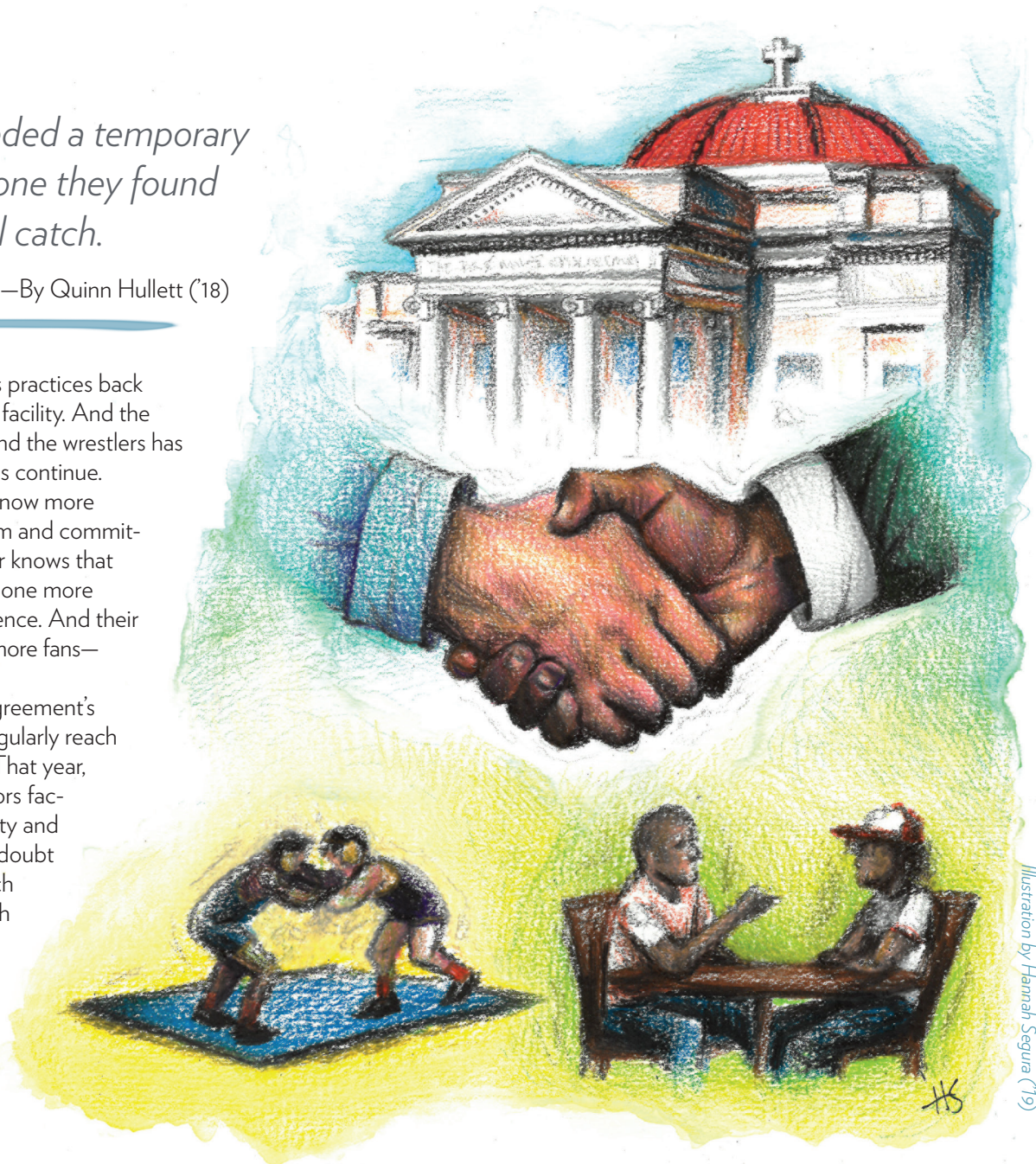
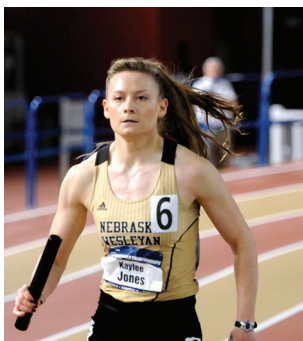


Illustration by Hannah Segura ('19)

Wrestling

There are signs of growing strength in year two of this young program. NWU posted its first IIAC dual victory with a 39-15 win over Buena Vista on January 10. The Prairie Wolves also bested Concordia University (Wisc.) in a December 17 dual.

Photos by d3photography.com



Track & field

NWU's women are frankly one of NCAA III's finest teams. And nowhere are they stronger than at the 400 m distance. NWU's 4x400 relay (Anna Frazier, Kaylee Jones, Aspen Rolfes, Elizabeth Jones) took its fourth national title at the indoor championships. The Jones sisters added All-American performances in the open 400, where both cracked the top 10 in NCAA III history. SteaVen Becker's fifth-place finish in the shot put added to NWU's list of All-Americans. They finished fourth nationally as a team. For the men, Trent Koehler became an All-American long jumper, finishing seventh.

Champions!

NWU men's basketball
takes the national crown.



Photos by Sideline Media/Keith Lucas



Nebraska's only NCAA Div. III men's basketball program went from unranked and unnoticed to undisputed champion in March.

Your Nebraska Wesleyan University Prairie Wolves are national champions. NWU won the 2018 men's basketball NCAA Div. III national championship in thrilling fashion in Salem, Va., with a 78-72 victory over the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh on St. Patrick's Day.

It's one of basketball's ironies that most teams this gifted never win championships. Freakishly fit and accurate, Coach **Dale Wellman's** Prairie Wolves welcomed any opportunity to turn games into track meets. Nebraska Wesleyan's shooting and speed shined brightest in NWU's 130-97 upset of #1 ranked Whitman College in the Elite Eight.


For most teams with that kind of firepower, running and gunning becomes more than a preference. It becomes a lifeline. Take that style of play away, and there is no Plan B.

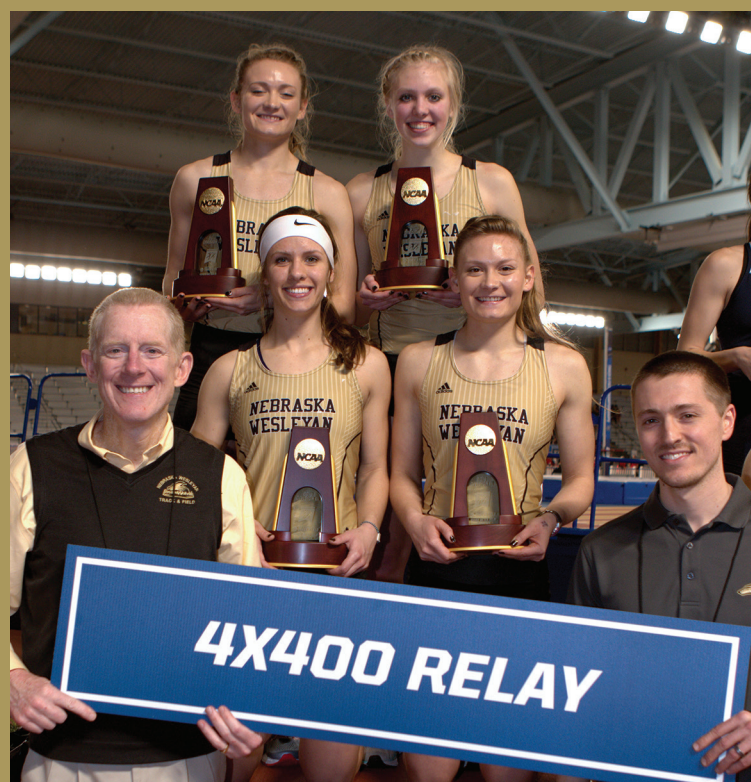
Wellman contended that Nebraska Wesleyan's success hinged on their unselfishness and their willingness to adapt. "One of our biggest strengths is our chemistry, and it shows up in the stats," Wellman told *Archways*. "We have six guys averaging double digits and we lead the conference in assists per game. That doesn't happen with a selfish team."

To even reach the national tournament, the Prairie Wolves had to slug their way out of an 18-point second-half deficit to Central College in the IIAC championship. That comeback wasn't about fast-break offense; it was driven by gritty defense, disciplined free throws and possession basketball.

Three weeks later, senior forward **Deion Wells-Ross** ('18) and his teammates won the national championship thanks to their shared versatility and unselfishness. Each starter contributed tournament-altering moments. Pick your favorite.

- > There was sophomore guard **Nate Schimonitz's** ('20) pair of buzzer-beating shots to grab leads.
- > Wells-Ross's beastly dunk in overtime shook the Final Four.
- > **Ryan Garver's** ('19) semifinal pump-fake layup drew the conventional three-point play that forced overtime.
- > Or maybe you liked **Jack Hiller's** ('20) umpteen tipped passes that created transition opportunities for his teammates.
- > But it's tough to beat **Cooper Cook's** ('19) brake tap at the three-point line—a move that sent his defender sprawling to the floor—as he calmly delivered another three-pointer in the championship win. (Watch for more on Cook's impressive athletic and academic honors in our next issue.)

Whichever moments you remember, remember also a hard-working squad of unselfish student-athletes who represented you and your school tremendously well. 



Photos by d3photography.com

4x400 Four-peat

Men's basketball wasn't the only Final Four team on campus this winter. The women's indoor track & field team finished fourth at nationals in Birmingham, Ala., with its stable of 400-meter runners leading the way.

"This indoor season has been an absolute joy," said **Ted Bulling** ('80) in his 33rd season as NWU's coach. "Both our men's and women's teams are filled with student-athletes who love our sport, love each other and have a deep desire to excel."

The 4x400 relay team of **Anna Frazier** ('19), **Kaylee Jones** ('19), **Aspen Rolfes** ('21) and **Elizabeth Jones** ('19) took the lead in the final lap to win NWU's fourth consecutive national championship in the event (indoor and outdoor).

"They ran their fastest time exactly when we planned to run our fastest time—in the NCAA final," said Bulling. "And the fourth consecutive title came to fruition."

In the open 400, **Elizabeth Jones** took second, and **Kaylee Jones** took fourth. **SteaVen Becker** ('18) also scored with her fifth-place finish in the shot put.





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ALUMNI PAGES



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Shelley McHugh ('91)

Director of alumni relations
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Update your contact information, professional details and more in our alumni directory at alumni.nebrwesleyan.edu.

MYSTERY PHOTO

Homecoming Sign of the Times

Winning won't always make you happy.
But we're glad whenever happiness wins.

Can you name any of the fraternity brothers behind (or in front of) this 1967 sign?

Send your responses to:

Eric Wendt
Nebraska Wesleyan University
5000 Saint Paul Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68504-2794
ewendt@nebrwesleyan.edu

MYSTERY PHOTO REVEALED



Game. Set. Match.

We served. You returned.

Left to right, they are: Jeff Alexander, Mark Mueller, Steve Tegler, Steve Marvel, Brian Ellwood and Doug Hinkle. I played tennis at Wesleyan a year or two later with Steve and Mark's brother, Kurt.

—**Doug Tegler** ('85)

I put *Archways* aside before Christmas and am just now finding it. The guy third from the left in the striped shirt is Steve Tegler, I believe.

—**Julie (King) Belding** ('82)

That's Eric Journ with the zip-cover on his head, I believe they were the 1 and 2 seeds on the team, with very different styles. Eric could hit beebees. Steve was described to me (by Eric) as a human backboard. Both were Theta Chis, nice guys, class of '82 or '83 or '84.

—**Steve Pascal** ('85)

The mysterians in the photo comprise the starting lineup of the 1979 men's tennis team. I remember the photo like it was taken yesterday. The Plainsmen from left to right are myself, Mark Mueller, Steve Tegler, Steve Marvel, Brian Elwood and Doug Hinkle. Mark and the Steves formed the core of NWU's first NIAC championship team for many years in 1981. It was great fun competing with these fantastic young men and, as the photo conveys, we all got along great with each other. Thanks for jumpstarting some long dormant neural synapses!

—**Dr. Jeffrey Alexander** ('81)



Photo by Chad Greene

Alumni News

Harry and Reba Huge Foundation Named Transatlantic Promoter of the Year

The Harry and Reba Huge Foundation was honored on November 3, 2017, at the Transatlantic Business Awards ceremony in Tallinn, Estonia, as the Transatlantic Promoter of the Year. The American Chamber of Commerce Estonia partners with the U.S. Embassy and the Baltic American Freedom Foundation to host the annual awards program. The program celebrates American and Baltic economic ties, job growth and shared prosperity.

The Huge Foundation is the brainchild of Harry ('59, Hon. LL.D. '05) and Reba Huge, and

has a long history of generous support for Nebraska Wesleyan University and its students. Harry Huge was active in the late 1980s in advocating for Estonian liberation among U.S. policymakers. Estonia gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and honored Huge with its Order of the Cross of Terra Mariana in 2010.

In December, he was also named an honorary fellow at the University of Tartu in Estonia.

Today, the Huge Foundation actively supports academic excellence and global learning at NWU, the College of Charleston (S.C.), the Citadel, Tallinn

So much of what Harry, Reba and the entire foundation do is geared toward giving our students the opportunity to experience Europe and Estonia.

University of Technology and the University of Tartu through scholarships, exchange relationships and entrepreneurship programs like Network Globally, Act Locally (NGAL).

"So much of what Harry, Reba and the entire foundation do is geared toward giving our

students the opportunity to experience Europe and Estonia," said **Thomas Ochsner** ('92), NWU's director of scholarships and financial aid. "Our students benefit when they travel. They also benefit when they meet the Estonians who study on our campus."

NWU Welcomes New PBA Members

President Fred Ohles welcomed four new members to the President's Board of Advisors (PBA) at its fall 2017 meeting, which focused on enrollment growth.

New members include:

David Arnold ('07), Omaha; corporate development manager, Buildertrend
Phylis (Stelling) Hollamon ('65), Coupeville, Wash; president (retired), Bryan College of Health Sciences

Dr. Ronald Stock ('78), Portland, Ore.; adjunct faculty, Department of Family Medicine, Oregon Health & Science University

Lincoln Zehr ('86), Lincoln; chief executive officer, Hampton Enterprises

Ohles expressed appreciation to outgoing PBA cochair **Bob Bartle** ('72) and **Gene Crump** ('69), both of Lincoln. New cochair is **Mishayla (Richardson) Freburg** ('11), Gothenburg; and **Deb (Jones) Frison** ('77), Omaha.

The President's Board of Advisors provides advice to President Ohles in fulfilling Nebraska Wesleyan's mission, vision and strategic plan. Its members include alumni, parents or children of alumni, and other devoted friends of the university. Each is an ambassador for Nebraska Wesleyan University. The PBA meets on campus twice annually.



David Arnold ('07)



Phylis (Stelling)
Hollamon ('65)



Dr. Ronald Stock ('78)



Lincoln Zehr ('86)

Photo by Dan Luedert

Alumni Cross Tracks at Railway Safety Organization

When Helen Sramek ('70) graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University 48 years ago, there were roughly 12,000 collisions between trains and motor vehicles each year. Sramek committed herself to reducing that number, serving as president of Operation Lifesaver, a rail safety education organization with a mission to end collisions, deaths and injuries at crossings and on railroad property.

And while the population of Americans crossing paths with trains has since grown by 120 million, railway collisions in this country have actually dropped by more than 80 percent. Investments in safety infrastructure and public awareness have been crucial in that remarkable success.

Sramek has retired as Operation Lifesaver's president, but NWU still has an important connection with rail safety. Mark Schulze ('88), vice president of safety, training and operations support at BNSF Railway Company, serves on the Operation Lifesaver board of directors. Sramek and Schulze discovered the connection while serving together on the NWU President's Board of Advisors.



Operation Lifesaver's efforts include public awareness campaigns like these.

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NW
you

Built for Speed

New tech company brings speed off the field and into the stands.



NWU students like Tucker McHugh ('19) helped in beta testing.

Michael Longe ('03) will tell you: Speed is everything in sports. What's the quarterback's release time? The pitcher's fastball? The receiver's 40 split?

Speed is especially crucial in soccer, where NWU backs like Longe must cover vast amounts of turf to make defensive stops. If there's one thing Longe absorbed as an All-GPAC defender that applies to his professional life, it would be Coach James Beckmann's ('99) simple imperative: "Move!"

And move, Longe has. The late Professor of French Anthony Epp connected Longe to polyglot mentors like Brenda Bence ('83). They encouraged

Longe to make gutsy moves to advance in his career. "I sold everything I owned, packed two bags and moved to Spain to pursue a new opportunity—which led to even more opportunities," Longe said.

Longe followed Spain with professional leaps to China, Switzerland and Germany

before heading back to the U.S. a dozen years later. Longe's multilingualism, business savvy and love of soccer opened doors in industry, imports and exports, and global sports. He's worked for FIFA and its European equivalent, UEFA, on the UEFA Champions League. And he deepened his business knowledge with an MBA from the

University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

In 2016, he partnered with one of his MBA classmates, Conrad Caplin, to launch a speed-hungry sports business, appropriately named Pronto CX. Pronto sought to take the "speed is everything" mantra in sports and apply it to the fan experience.

Longe and Caplin began by visiting 30 stadiums and arenas. They interviewed executives, venue operators, vendors and fans to learn everything they could about game-day operations and experiences. They were especially interested to learn about fans' "pain points."

The lesson came through loud and clear.

Fans' number one pain point is all the waiting. Our technology makes the lines move much faster for fans, so they can get back to the game.

Fans pay good money to see speed on the field. Oftentimes, that's the only place they see it. "Fans' number one pain point," Longe said, "is all the waiting. You wait to park. You wait in line for your ticket. You wait again at concessions. If you want merchandise, there's more waiting."

He said, "Our technology makes the lines move much faster for fans, so they can get back to the game." Pronto uses "contactless" Near Field Communication technology to connect and accelerate all of the purchases associated with a live sporting event. "It's your ticket, your wallet and your parking pass," Longe said.

Pronto uses the NFC capabilities already in your smartphone. Or it could take the form of a team-branded bracelet, card, or even a chip sewn into the sleeve of the jersey you wear to the game.

Under this system, fans wouldn't have to unlock their phones, let alone open their wallets, to make a game-day purchase. Just hold the chip near the reader to complete a transaction. "The technology cuts 40 seconds off the time of a traditional transaction," Longe said. Multiply those 40 seconds by the number of transactions made at an event, and you can begin to see how this technology could transform the game-day experience.

Image courtesy Pronto CX website




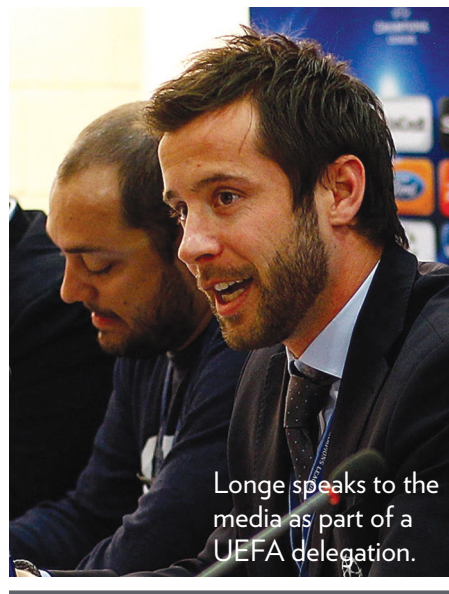
“We make fans happier,” Longe said. “Happier fans come to more games and spend more money.”

Longe returned to NWU in December for beta testing of Pronto’s platform. He spoke in Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance **Gina (Duensing) Chambers**’ (’97) “Sports Marketing and Communications” course about Pronto CX and his experiences within the global sports industry. And, with a small army of friends, family and student volunteers, Longe ran Pronto beta tests at NWU basketball games in Snyder Arena.

Chambers was excited when she learned about Longe’s young company. “I looked at it from the academic side,” Chambers said. “Sports technology and the fan experience—these are such huge topics right now.” She called Longe’s return to campus “a great opportunity for our students to see how a new company develops, tests and releases that technology.”

Pronto’s testing is now moving out of the beta phase, and the company’s technology marks the first time NFC passes have worked with auto-select functions on both Apple Pay and Google Pay at live events.

Pronto will soon deploy at professional sports venues, including MLS and professional tennis venues. “We’re excited to work with these pro clubs. But coming to NWU at this stage was just as important to me,” Longe said. “Nebraska Wesleyan is more family than a customer. I can’t think of a better place to get started.” 



Longe speaks to the media as part of a UEFA delegation.

Photo courtesy of Pronto CX

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W CLUB GOLF TOURNAMENT

JUNE 4, 2018

Hillcrest Country Club in Lincoln

4-PERSON SCRAMBLE

11 a.m. check-in and lunch, noon start, dinner to follow

For registration and sponsorship information, contact
Dale Wellman at dwellman@nebrwesleyan.edu or
register at nebrwesleyan.edu/wclubtournament.

Calendar

Mark your calendar for these alumni events. All are welcome.
Contact Shelley McHugh ('91) for details at smchugh@nebrwesleyan.edu or 402.465.2123.



May 5 Commencement

Commencement day begins with graduates' 9:40 a.m. "final walk" across campus to baccalaureate at First United Methodist Church at 10. Bachelor's and master's degrees are awarded on Taylor Commons at 1 p.m.

APRIL

5 Visiting Writer Series

Julie Schumacher, winner of the 2015 Thurber Prize for American Humor, reads from her best-selling novel, *Dear Committee Members*. The free reading is open to the public and begins at 6 p.m. in Callen Conference Center.



6 NWU opera: Die Fledermaus

Tickets to this Johann Strauss opera are available at the door at O'Donnell Auditorium. The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. (A second performance is set for 3 p.m. on April 8.)

MAY



Photo by Lane Hickenbottom

5 NWU track & field

Consider yourself invited to the Nebraska Invitational at UNL's Ed Weir Stadium. There'll be plenty of red, so wear your black and gold. Events begin at 11 a.m.



Photo by Double 6 Photography

10 NWU baseball: IIAC tournament

Coe College hosts the 2018 IIAC baseball championship tournament at Daniels Park in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Check NWUsports.com for times.

UPCOMING

SAVE THE DATE

October 4–7, 2018 HOMECOMING

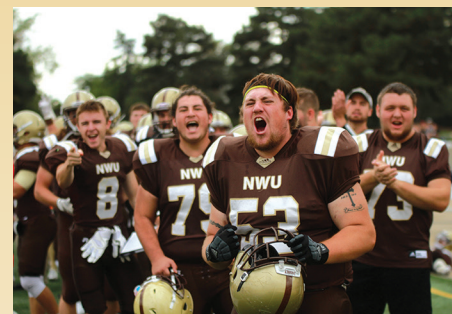


Photo by Allison Woods ('20)

Football vs. Central College All-class reunion, October 5

All NWU alumni are invited for an all-class celebration. Special spaces will be designated for milestone reunion years (e.g., 1958, 1968 and others).



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