

FALL 2017 | Urban Honey | World Music Instruments | Childhood Obesity | The Heroin Project

# KENT STATE

MAGAZINE

## Sky High Dreams

Kent State is charting a course for young women to pursue careers in aeronautics. SEE PAGE 12

CONTENTS

FALL 2017  
On the cover: Participants in Kent State’s Nikki Kukwa Memorial Aeronautics Camp check out the inner workings of an aircraft. See page 12.

COVER PHOTO: MELANIE NESTERUK '18

FEATURES

10 Humanizing the Heroin Crisis

Fed up with hometown friends battling with—and dying from—heroin addiction, sophomore public relations major Emelia Sherin decided to interview 50 people involved in the opioid epidemic to see what she could learn. She and a classmate turned those stories and experiences into a play that connects with audiences on an emotional level and educates them on how to help during this nationwide crisis.

BY EMELIA SHERIN, AS TOLD TO JAN SENN

12 Taking Flight

Kent State’s flight program is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. We profile five female alumni who have found their place in the sky, and take a look at how the College of Aeronautics and Engineering is enabling young women and girls to pursue aeronautics-related careers.

BY ERIN PETERSON

22 Continuing Threads

Art professor Janice Lessman-Moss has built her career—and Kent State’s Textile Arts Program—by bringing the ancient art of weaving into the 21st century. Using traditional techniques and computer technology, she’s introduced mystery and randomness to digital weaving.

BY LAURA BILLINGS COLEMAN

24 A Weighty Concern

We present a roundup of findings on childhood obesity from Kent State experts in a variety of disciplines who are researching its causes, treatment and prevention.

BY MICHAEL BLANDING

30 The Sweet Life

The honey Brent Wesley, BBA ’04, sells is sweet, but so is the sense of community he’s fostered and the connections he’s forged by turning empty lots in Akron into apiaries—and by expanding his business with men’s personal care products.

BY JUSTIN GLANVILLE

DEPARTMENTS

02 Feedback

03 Presidential Perspectives

04 Flash Forward

20 KSU Collections

32 Alumni Life

40 Flashback

41 Giving Voice

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Take Note

“Finding purpose is an intensely personal journey,” writes President Beverly Warren in her column (page 3), and the stories in this issue reveal some of those journeys: an entrepreneur whose passion to build community led him to keep bees and grow a business, faculty members whose scientific research and artistic pursuits better society and inspire creativity, women whose love of flight propelled them to break barriers, and a student whose concern for her community caused her to address a national crisis at a local level—and prompted a positive response from people in far-flung places.

As our incoming students discuss Kent State’s Common Reading book (page 4) and ponder their passions and purpose, perhaps you may be persuaded to reflect on your life’s journey so far. Although everyone’s path is different, we all discover challenges and opportunities along the way.

In case you’re wondering why you didn’t receive a summer issue of *Kent State Magazine*, its production schedule has changed. Instead of being published fall, spring, summer, the magazine is now published fall, winter, spring. So going forward you can expect to see it in your mailbox in September, January, and May. Please note that the deadlines for Class Notes have changed (page 38). As always, we love to hear from you, so do keep in touch—and tell us about *your* life of purpose!



FEEDBACK



via **INSTAGRAM**

"bout to spend 4 years in  
this library with mollie"  
cait  
@cgslattery

We'd like to see your best  
photos of Kent State scenes!  
Please use the hashtag  
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via **EMAIL**

**Blast from the Past**

I was pleasantly surprised when a former roommate at Kent State alerted me to the story on Kent State's Ultimate Frisbee Club ["Disc Jockeys" Flashback, spring 2017]. I am second from the right in the photo. I am still in touch with a couple of the teammates. After graduating, I continued playing Ultimate with clubs in Arizona and California. Although I haven't played in many years, I still keep a 175-gram disc handy. You never know when you may need it!

**EVAN DAVIS, BS '79**  
San Jose, Calif.

Wow! I spotted myself in the original [Ultimate Frisbee] team photo. I'm in the front row right with shorts over sweat pants. Flanking Jerome from left to right is Steve Tollan and Ron Thomas. Front row left to right is Ed Zeller, Fred Thaxton and I think Greg Smith. Great times!

**TOM (ZY)DZIAK, BBA '83**  
Madison, Ohio

**Paying Attention**

Your cover photo of Earl Miller '85 was familiar. As photo editor at *Discover* magazine, I arranged the photo session last year to illustrate Adam Piore's *Discover* story on the MIT neuroscientist. It was nice to see his profile ["Attention, Please" spring 2017] included in your magazine.

**ERNIE MASTROIANNI, BA '81**  
Whitefish Bay, Wis.

The feature story "Attention, Please" took me quite some time to get through, as irony would have it. Thank you for this article and consider it passed along and forwarded!

**VANESSA ARON, BS '05**  
Westlake, Ohio

**Important Takeaway**

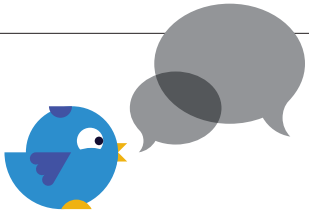
Thank you for sharing this heart-tugging glimpse into the lives of foster children ["Fostering Hope" spring 2017]. The most important sentence was this: "When we can create something positive from our own negative experiences and help others, it's healing, restorative and empowering." Keri Hope Richmond, you are on your way to a very rewarding career.

**JANET (CUBIC) SIMA, BM '71**  
North Olmstead, Ohio

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Anddd That's A Rap! Had  
So Much Fun Being A DKS  
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CCIKentState! Good Luck Class  
Of 2021! ❤️💙💛 #kentstate.  
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Daughter's Graduation Party!!  
#KentState  
Torry Jackie's Mama  
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presidential **PERSPECTIVES**

On With Purpose

At Kent State, those three words above represent how much we value a life of purpose—that sense of calling that can open our minds, uncover new paths and transform the world around us.

**Finding purpose, however, is an intensely personal journey.** When I was an undergraduate, becoming a college president was certainly not my goal, but I did aspire to be a teacher and coach. So I pursued my passion for teaching and coaching and took every opportunity to participate in sports and club activities. And I learned that teaching and coaching skills had value that translated more broadly into almost every aspect of life's meaningful endeavors.

**Here at Kent State, we ask students to think about a mission and a major early on.** But I always say to write that in pencil! Meaning and purpose can take many different directions, so it's important to be open to opportunities. The college experience is more than collecting enough credits to graduate. Of course, we want students to be good scholars and take advantage of learning, but so much growth and development happen outside of the classroom, too.

**In fact, many of our students make an impact long before they graduate.** For example, recent graduate Jake Addressi took part in alternative spring break trips during each of the four years he was at Kent State—including feeding the poor in Chicago and helping restore a community center in New Orleans that was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. Jake, a health services major, may not know exactly what he will be doing ten years from now, but he does know he will be helping people.

And consider sophomore public relations major Emelia Sherin, who interviewed fifty people affected by the heroin epidemic and, with classmate Zachary Manthey, assembled their stories into a play that illuminates the profound, often tragic impact of opioid addiction. The play debuted in August to sold-out crowds at the Akron Civic Theatre, *The New York Times* picked up the story, and requests have come in from all over the country to see the script and put on the play. Emelia is amazed by the positive impact the play has had on those who've seen it—and she says her purpose now is "to give a voice to the voiceless and instill hope in society."

**Through myriad transformative experiences like these, many Golden Flashes have already found their life's purpose revealed.** When passion and purpose are found, charting a course for giving back in this world quickly follows. This is what drives and unites us, what makes us undeniably Kent State. Our purpose is to help students find theirs.

*Beverly J. Warren*

Beverly J. Warren, President

Email: [president@kent.edu](mailto:president@kent.edu), Twitter: @PresBWarren

When **PASSION** and **PURPOSE** are found, charting a course for giving back in this world quickly follows.



**Beverly Warren** @PresBWarren • May 14

It has been a joy to watch you grow & learn from the @KentState family. Thanks for the memories & please come back & share your new ventures!

**Corey Patterson** @cjpatters

Our friendship is as never changing just like our selfies. Thanks for being a fantastic president and friend, @PresBWarren! #FlashesForever

# flash **FORWARD**

## Learning to Connect

To help new students get acclimated to academic life, during the summer all incoming students to Kent State read the same book, write an essay in response to reading prompts and then talk about it in discussion groups when they get to campus.

This year's Common Reading book, selected by the Common Reading Committee and the Office of Student Success Programs, is



**I wrote it to share the lessons that I learned about acclimating to new environments, trying to make a difference, trying to find my own sense of purpose and direction in the world.”**

KATE OTTO, author of this year's Common Reading book, *Everyday Ambassador: Making a Difference by Connecting in a Disconnected World*

*Everyday Ambassador: Making a Difference by Connecting in a Disconnected World* by Kate Otto, a global health consultant and the founder and director of Everyday Ambassadors, a network for young people who are currently pursuing or have completed an international service opportunity, fellowship or travel abroad experience.

In *Everyday Ambassador*, Otto shows us how today's limitless technology can end up limiting our ability to interact thoughtfully with each other. By focusing on four core values that allow us to become truly connected—empathy, patience, focus and humility—Otto demonstrates that the power of technology is not in the tool, but in the intention of the person using it. She reveals the secrets of how to unite people, even

when our differences and divisions seem insurmountable.

“I tried to write a book that I wish I would have had when I was starting college,” says Otto in a welcome message video that was sent to incoming students prior to the start of classes and her appearance on the Kent Campus for Convocation.

“I wrote it to share the lessons that I learned about acclimating to new environments, trying to make a difference, trying to find my own sense of purpose and direction in the world. . . . I look forward to spending time with you and helping through my book and our conversations to tailor your different interests and passions into a specific purpose that you can give to your community here at Kent State and to the whole world one day.”



BOB CHRISTY '95

## by the **NUMBERS**

Digitizing *The Kent Stater*

**10,127**  
ISSUES

**93,541**  
PAGES

**498,536**  
ARTICLES

**NOW**  
**SEARCHABLE**

## A Look Back

Have a question about something or someone you remember from your time at Kent State? Here's some help to find an answer. A five-year process to digitize every printed issue of *The Daily Kent Stater* (now *The Kent Stater*) concluded this summer. Ninety years of issues, spanning 1926–2016, are now searchable at <http://dks.library.kent.edu>.

“Newspaper gets really brittle over time, says Virginia Dressler, digital projects librarian at the University Libraries. “By digitizing this and putting up an online archive, we're saving the original print.”



Plus, the opportunity to do keyword searching speeds up research that once took hours. “You can put in somebody's name, or an event you knew happened,” says Cara Gilgenbach, head of Special Collections and Archives. “I think alumni, in particular, are using it as a walk down memory lane.”

## Live and Learn

This fall marks the beginning of the second year of Kent State University's living-learning community for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and asexual (LGBTQA) students and their allies in the recently renovated Korb Hall.

While Residence Services has offered gender-inclusive housing for students in the past, executive director Jill (Church) Jenkins says she heard from students who saw a need for more options to better accommodate LGBTQA students. Along with allowing residents to pick a roommate they feel most comfortable living with, the living-learning community offers programming and activities catered to its 25 LGBTQA students.

As a learning community, the students take a core course each semester in the LGBTQA Studies Program and have the chance

to interact with affiliate faculty members in small-group lectures and discussions.

Ken Ditlevson, BA '95, MED '98, director of the LGBTQ Student Center, worked on the project for several years with Residence Services and the Center for the Study of Gender and Sexuality.

“The living-learning community strengthens the LGBTQA community in having one more resource available for our students,” says Ditlevson. “But it also draws students to Kent State who want to be immersed in those studies.”

Kent's LGBTQA community is also celebrating 46 years of PRIDE! Kent, one of the longest running student organizations in the country. —Lauren Rathmell '17

**Namesake:** Otto Korb, BS '18, was awarded an honorary doctorate from Kent State in 1960 for his dedication to public education. While serving as superintendent of East Cleveland Schools, Korb also served as the vice president of Kent State's Board of Trustees from 1940 until his death in 1962. The building was dedicated to Korb in 1964 and was used as a guest house for visitors staying for an extended period of time on campus. Visitors weren't permitted to stay in dorms of the opposite sex, so residents had to go to Korb Hall to spend time with their visiting friends.

One University Commencement

Dix Stadium was the place to be at 10 a.m. on May 13, 2017, as graduates from all campuses gathered for Kent State’s first One University Commencement Ceremony, and their friends and families joined together to celebrate their achievements.

“This approach enables us to honor all graduates from our eight-campus system in one ceremony—a tangible manifestation of our ‘One

Whatever your next chapter is, define it by being true to your authentic self. Fill it with meaning.”

OCTAVIA SPENCER, Academy-award-winning actress and author, keynote speaker at Kent State’s One University Commencement Ceremony, May 13, 2017

University’ vision,” says President Beverly Warren. “We aim for this change to make a bold statement that affirms Kent State as one of the largest public research universities in the nation, but one of the closest families in the world.”

The university-wide ceremony was held in addition to the college ceremonies currently hosted each spring at the regional and Kent campuses. At these college and regional campus ceremonies, students had the opportunity to be personally recognized as they crossed the graduation stage.

In total, at its Spring 2017 Commencement ceremonies Kent State conferred 5,636 degrees, including 992 associate degrees, 3,319 bachelor’s degrees, 1,139 master’s degrees, 181 doctoral degrees and five educational specialist degrees.

See outside back cover for group photo.

Dr. C. Owen Lovejoy, Distinguished Professor of Human Evolutionary Studies, receives the President’s Medal at the ceremony. This is the highest honor conferred by Kent State University and is in recognition of his important and transformative contributions in the fields of human origins modeling, developmental biology, biomechanics, paleontology and forensic medicine.



International students carry the colorful flags of their countries during the procession.



Commencement speaker Octavia Spencer greets students at the ceremony.

Noteworthy

**Scholar Athletes:** For the third consecutive year, five Kent State teams—gymnastics, volleyball, women’s basketball, women’s cross country and women’s golf—received NCAA Public Recognition Awards for outstanding academic performance, the most by any Mid-American Conference Institution. Softball joined them as APR (Academic Progress Rate) leaders in the conference.

**Great Workplace:** For the eighth time, Kent State University was recognized as a “Great College to Work For” by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the only college in Ohio named to this prestigious list. *Forbes* named Kent State one of America’s Best Midsize Employers, ranked 170 out of 301. And the Society for Diversity honored Kent State with its Innovation and Inclusion Leadership Award.

**Top Airport:** The Kent State University Airport was designated Airport of the Year by the Ohio Aviation Association, during its annual conference in Columbus, Ohio.

**Safe Campus:** Kent State University was ranked #11 Safest College in America, among more than 2,000 four-year colleges and universities, by the National Council for Home Safety and Security.

Golden Year

In its 50th year, Kent State’s College of Nursing has been designated a Center of Excellence for 2017–2022 by the National League for Nursing, in the category of “Advance the Science of Nursing Education”—the same category it received when first designated in 2013. It will be recognized at the 2017 Education Summit held in San Diego in September.

“This designation highlights our faculty’s commitment to steering the future of nursing by instilling excellence in our graduates,” says Barbara Broome, PhD, RN, FAAN, dean of the College of Nursing. “As we celebrate 50 years of nursing education, research and community outreach, our alumni faculty and staff can be proud of their affiliation with the college, as they built the foundation for our success.”

The college is committed to inspire nurses at all levels, and of all genders, ethnicities, races and social statuses, to advance their education. “Our graduate programs offer opportunities for nurses to prepare as nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, educators and administrators, while our doctoral programs prepare nurses to challenge and change the health-care landscape through practice and research,” Broome says.

We want to break the stereotype of nursing being a woman’s profession. It’s not. It’s for anyone who has a desire to make an impact and change things.”

DEAN BARBARA BROOME, PHD, RN, FAAN

The United States has experienced nursing shortages for decades, mostly due to an aging population and a limited number of nurse-education opportunities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects a need for more than one million new registered nurses by 2022 to provide quality health-care services for aging baby boomers.

KSU’s College of Nursing is one of the largest and most comprehensive nursing programs in the nation, with more than 2,000 nursing students in its baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral programs—and more than 12,000 alumni worldwide.

Looking ahead to the next 50 years, Kent State plans to provide more nursing specialties and state-of-the-art technology to keep its highly skilled nurse graduates at the cutting edge of the profession. Learn more at [www.kent.edu/nursing/50](http://www.kent.edu/nursing/50).



Dean Barbara Broome, PhD, RN, FAAN, and Kent State President Beverly Warren blow out candles at the College of Nursing’s 50th birthday party celebration in Henderson Hall.

campus **QUOTE**

Being a scientist is spending a good fraction of your life feeling uncomfortable because you don’t know if you’re right or wrong. You don’t know if what you’re doing is relevant or not. But that is who we are fundamentally—we are explorers. Science is the dramatic story of discovery.”



BRIAN GREENE, PHD, world-renowned theoretical physicist for his discoveries in string theory, “The Drive to Innovate: Stories from the Frontiers of Discovery,” Guest of Honor University Artist/Lecture Series, April 12, 2017

flash **FORWARD**

Cool Course

**Course number:** GEOG 40195 (Special Topics)  
**Title:** Campus and Community Gardens  
**Instructor:** Christopher Post, PhD, associate professor of geography  
**Description:** Three-week summer intersession course at Kent State University at Stark that explores the complications of large-scale agriculture and the potential of local community gardening as a remedy for “food deserts”—areas, including much of Stark County, that lack fresh produce.  
**Film:** *Food, Inc.*

**Readings:** Academic articles from highly-ranked journals in geography, in addition to readings from *The New York Times* and other media outlets

**Field Trips:** Kent State University at Salem Campus Garden, Flash’s Food Pantry at the Stark Campus, local nurseries (for seeds, seedlings, and supplies)

**Projects:** Students survey entire states (such as Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, California) for examples of campus gardens. Gleaning ideas from these examples, along with information from readings and other course activities, students design, plan and plant a campus garden on the Stark Campus (result: two 4-foot by 8-foot raised beds).

**Outcomes:** Educational tool that teaches students about sustainability and the benefits and challenges of both corporate and local agriculture, including the goals of campus and community gardens and the means by which they are produced. Creation of a local food incubator for Stark Campus kitchens (Emporium Grille and Conference Center) that also serves local community needs through Flash’s Food Pantry, Refuge of Hope and the Akron-Canton Food Bank.

**Ongoing:** During the summer, a student employee cares for the garden, along with students in the class who formed a club. This fall, students in classes such as Sociology of Food and Human Geography will help, as well.



ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE MIKE RICH '02



Clearing the Air

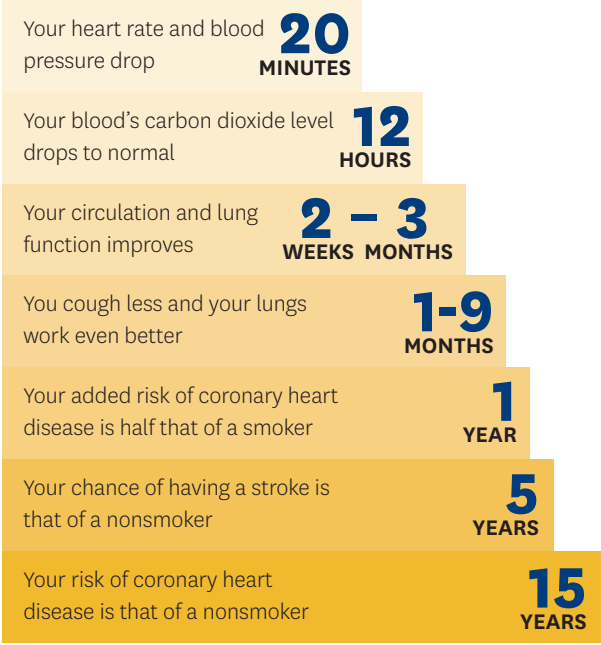
Kent State became a smoke-free, tobacco-free university on July 1, 2017. Approved last year by the Board of Trustees, the new policy aligns with the university-level initiative to create a healthy campus environment for all employees, students and visitors.

The policy covers all Kent State campuses, locations and properties, both domestic and international, and applies to all members of the university community: students, employees, volunteers, vendors, visitors and customers—who are all encouraged to be good neighbors and not smoke on neighborhood lawns, medians, etc.

All smoking is prohibited, including electronic smoking devices, mod boxes or electronic nicotine delivery systems that create an aerosol or vapor. Also prohibited is the use of nicotine, tobacco-derived or plant-based products and oral tobacco. See [www.kent.edu/smoke-free](http://www.kent.edu/smoke-free).

Did You Know?

Here’s what happens when you quit smoking:



SOURCE: American Cancer Society, “Guide to Quitting Smoking”



JEFF GLIDDEN '87

Notes from the Margins

Sociologist Christopher Dum, PhD, an assistant professor in the sociology department at the Kent Campus, spent a year living at a residential motel to better understand its residents and the varied paths that brought them there—prison, disability, mental illness, addiction, poverty. Cast aside by their families and mainstream society, they paid \$205 a week to live in squalid conditions.

Told through the voices and experiences of the motel residents, Dum’s book, *Exiled in America*, paints a portrait of a vibrant community whose members forged identities in response to overwhelming stigma and created meaningful lives despite crushing economic instability. The following excerpt exemplifies the fine line residents trod between shelter and homelessness:

**“For recovering addicts Dee and Toby, the physical environment was a constant reminder of the fragility they faced on a daily basis.** Because of this, they established a narrative of comfort to combat the psychological stress of the motel’s living conditions.

I visited their room in early December 2012 and was amazed to see that they had decorated a large Christmas tree that Dee had gotten from an ex-partner. Dee offered me a glass of eggnog as we chatted, and she claimed that there were 172 decorations on the tree. They had also put up two stockings, and Dee said, ‘We live in a household that does not exchange gifts.’ Cause you know we live here weekly, you never know what’s gonna come next week. Are we gonna have the money? Do we have to move out, are we gonna get evicted? We’re always livin’ like that.’

Toby chimed in, ‘We don’t choose to live here, this is where we have to live.’ Dee nodded and said, ‘I hate it here, but it’s my home you know. I hate it, I love it.’ ”

Excerpt from *Exiled in America: Life on the Margins in a Residential Motel*, Columbia University Press, 2016. Learn more at [www.christopherpdum.com](http://www.christopherpdum.com).

# Humanizing the *Heroin Crisis*

By Emelia Sherin, as told to Jan Senn

As the heroin epidemic continues to make headlines and devastate communities across the country, Kent State sophomore public relations major Emelia Sherin found a way to help people better understand what's going on, who is affected—and what we can do about it.

**I**t all began because I was angry. In the news, I saw a photo taken in East Liverpool, Ohio, of a grandmother and her boyfriend passed out in a car from a heroin overdose, with her young grandson in the back seat.

As a public relations student, I thought, “Okay, they are building awareness, they are showing people what is happening, and it's getting people talking.”

But as someone who has seen the tragic effects of this epidemic in my hometown, I was heartbroken, because the media was treating this like a circus. The people in the photo are human beings. My parents taught me to treat people with decency, respect and support no matter what, because you don't know what they're going through. The media was saying “this problem is happening,” but they weren't telling you what to do about it.

That upset me, and I wanted to educate myself so I could educate others. A dear friend of mine is currently an addict; she's transitioning into recovery, and it's been hard to watch. I grew up with kids who are funny, intelligent, caring and compassionate—and then I'd see an obituary with their face and name on it.

I'm tired of it. We're so young. We shouldn't be suffering from addiction. We shouldn't be going to rehabilitation centers or Narcotics Anonymous meetings. We should be traveling. We should be having fun. We should be going to school, getting an education, working, seeing the world.

**I** began talking with people all over northeastern Ohio about the heroin crisis—paramedics, current and recovering addicts, families, friends, complete strangers off the street. I talked with them face-to-face, because confrontation is key to communication. I started writing down what people were saying and recording it—their feelings, their experiences, their stories.

And then I thought, “I have all these interviews; what am I going to do with them? I can't just write a news article or TV spot, because this needs more of an emotional connection. Why not theater?” Theater is up close and personal, and you can feel the emotions the actors and the audience are giving off.

I approached one of my professors, Stephanie Smith, who is such an amazing role model, and I told her, “Hey, I'm going to write a play.” She was supportive and encouraging, and has been there for me throughout this entire project.

After I wrote out all my scenes in an outline, I had no idea what format to put it in. I'd never written a play. However, I happened to sit next to Zachary Manthey in my Communications course this past spring semester, and I noticed he was always writing something on his laptop. So I asked him what he was doing. And he said, “I'm writing a play.” And I'm like, “No way. Me, too!” He showed me his format and taught me how to use Celtx, this free scriptwriting website he was using.

I am so thankful to have met Zach, who is majoring in digital media production. He became my cowriter. We locked ourselves in my apartment for three days, with nothing but pizza and coffee, and stitched together the stories and the characters. Probably six different interviews went into each character. We kept editing and thinking of little things to add here and there. That's

how we created *(In)Dependent: The Heroin Project*. The story line follows two addicts undergoing recovery. One successful and one really struggling.

We were fortunate to debut the play at the Akron Civic Theatre, especially since Akron is the founding place of AA's 12-step program for recovery from alcohol and addiction. We only had two shows, but both were sold out and received standing ovations. The proceeds went to Orianna House Inc., a local nonprofit that provides addiction treatment, counseling and court-ordered correctional services, as did about five hundred dollars we collected in donations and about nine bags full of shampoo, toothbrushes, body wash, socks and shirts.

**As someone who has seen the tragic effects of this epidemic in my hometown, I was heartbroken.”**

It's awesome, because the show isn't meant just to educate people about the epidemic on an emotional level, but also to reach out to those who give so much to the community and who are desperately trying to help.

I thought, “Wow, it can't get any better than this.” Then I got a call from *The New York Times* who wanted to interview us. Zach and I met the reporter at Scribbles Coffee downtown and talked with him for hours. Then the next day we met up with a photographer. A week later, we were in *The New York Times*.

Two days after that, I got a message from [Hollywood writer and director] Chris Columbus, who grew up in my hometown and wanted to read our work. People have messaged me from California, Mississippi, Missouri, Massachusetts, New York and Pennsylvania, who are willing to pay for

rights to the play so they can put it on at their colleges or local playhouses.

We had the play copyrighted, and it's been shipped to Chris Columbus and to a couple of community colleges in New England and down south. Wherever it's performed, we ask that the proceeds and donations go to a local rehabilitation center.

People think they're going to get things done if they protest and sign petitions. And yes, you're getting proof that people want to support it. But there's so much more that you can do. You can raise money, collect donations, volunteer at a needle exchange or a rehabilitation facility. The important thing is to give back to your community and other communities around the world who are willing to listen, learn and understand this message and the truths behind it.

**I've been amazed to see such a positive response**, and I hope to continue educating people on issues like PTSD, domestic violence, and so forth. Kent State has not only helped me find my path, through my classes and campus activities, but I know that the people I've met here will be with me for the long haul. I'm beyond grateful for everything that's happened and for the support I've received on this campus.

I've worked so hard and been so caught up in all these incredible opportunities that I didn't have a chance to sit down and relish the moment until a couple days ago. My best friends told me, “Hey, you need to just sit down and enjoy it.” ⚡



Cowriters and classmates Zachary Manthey and Emelia Sherin sign the copyright to their play, *(In)Dependent: The Heroin Project*.

# TAKING FLIGHT

As Kent State celebrates the 50th anniversary of its flight technology program, we survey the sky-high dreams of women in aeronautics.

By Erin Peterson, Illustrations by Jason Zehner '10

**W**hen Amelia Earhart became the first female aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean in 1932, she launched the dreams of millions of girls who suddenly saw a future in flight for themselves.

It hasn't been a straightforward path. After substantial growth from 1960 to 1980, women still make up just 5.2 percent of the total number of "for hire" pilots in the United States. They also remain underrepresented in most aeronautics-linked careers, including air traffic controllers, flight dispatchers and aerospace engineers—but those numbers are growing.

Aeronautics programs like Kent State's (its flight technology program celebrates its 50th anniversary this year) have been making a difference for women. The university's Aeronautics Program in the College of Aeronautics and Engineering (CAE)—including accredited concentrations in aeronautical studies, air traffic control, aviation management and flight technology—has cleared a path for women who have gone on to work at NASA, who have broken glass ceilings in military aviation and who have risen to the highest levels in aviation-linked fields.

These days, Kent State is accelerating its efforts to support women in an industry still dominated by men. Robert Sines, Jr., CAE's interim dean, has committed to doubling the

number of women in its aeronautics degree programs in the next two years. Currently, there are 59 women majoring in aeronautics (12.4 percent) and one woman majoring in aerospace engineering (4 percent). And this fall the college launched its newest bachelor's degree, aeronautical

systems engineering technology (formerly a concentration in aeronautics), with two women in the new degree so far (13 percent).

Maureen McFarland, senior academic program director for Kent State University's Aeronautics Program, is one of the only women in the country to hold a top post in an academic aeronautics program—and her entire team is working to create an environment where girls and young women can excel in aeronautics.

McFarland speaks frequently to groups about promoting women in aeronautics and feels a special responsibility to give women in Kent State programs the tools to succeed—a responsibility she takes seriously based on her own experiences as a woman in the field and the first female aviator in her squadron in the Marine Corps.

Ongoing efforts at the university are also building a stronger pipeline for women in aviation for the future (see pages 18–19 and [www.kent.edu/cae](http://www.kent.edu/cae)). This summer saw the first Girls Geared for Engineering Camp for middle school girls and the tenth annual Nikki Kukwa Memorial Aeronautics Camp for high school girls to help stoke their interest in flight.

Current female students are supported in events like the all-women Air Race Classic and participate in the Kent State chapter of Women in Aviation International. And in October, Kent State is hosting the first-ever SkyHack, an aviation hackathon where students will try to solve some of the industry's biggest issues.

Ultimately, Kent State wants to ensure that every woman who plans to pursue flight at any level has the support they need to excel. "Our goal," says Sines, "is to make sure young women realize they can go as high as their dreams can take them."

In the following pages, we profile Kent State women from past decades who are breaking new ground in aeronautics-linked careers and experiences. They share the opportunities they chased and the optimism they have for the field.

1970s

## SUSAN JOHNSON

*Engineer project manager Susan Johnson's four decades at NASA have led to groundbreaking innovations.*

When Susan (Weisenbach) Johnson, BS '74, was hired as an engineering technician at NASA just a month after graduating from Kent State (and two years after Congress passed Title IX), she knew she'd be among a tiny number of groundbreaking women in NASA. But even she admits that she was surprised by some of the early challenges she faced.

"The building where I did my research didn't have a women's bathroom," she recalls. "The nearest one was in the office building across the street." (If it sounds familiar, it is: a similar issue served as a plot point in the Oscar-nominated film *Hidden Figures*.)

Eventually, Johnson's boss bought a magnetic sign for the bathroom door that employees could flip between "men" and "women," which solved the problem.

"Of course, it was a different era," she says. When she entered Kent State, she was the first woman to sign up for the aeronautics technology curriculum. By that time, she'd already earned her private pilot's license and her family had built an open cockpit airplane. "I understood aerospace and I did fine in the curriculum," Johnson says. "I also was involved in the student chapter of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics; that's how I met a number of NASA people."

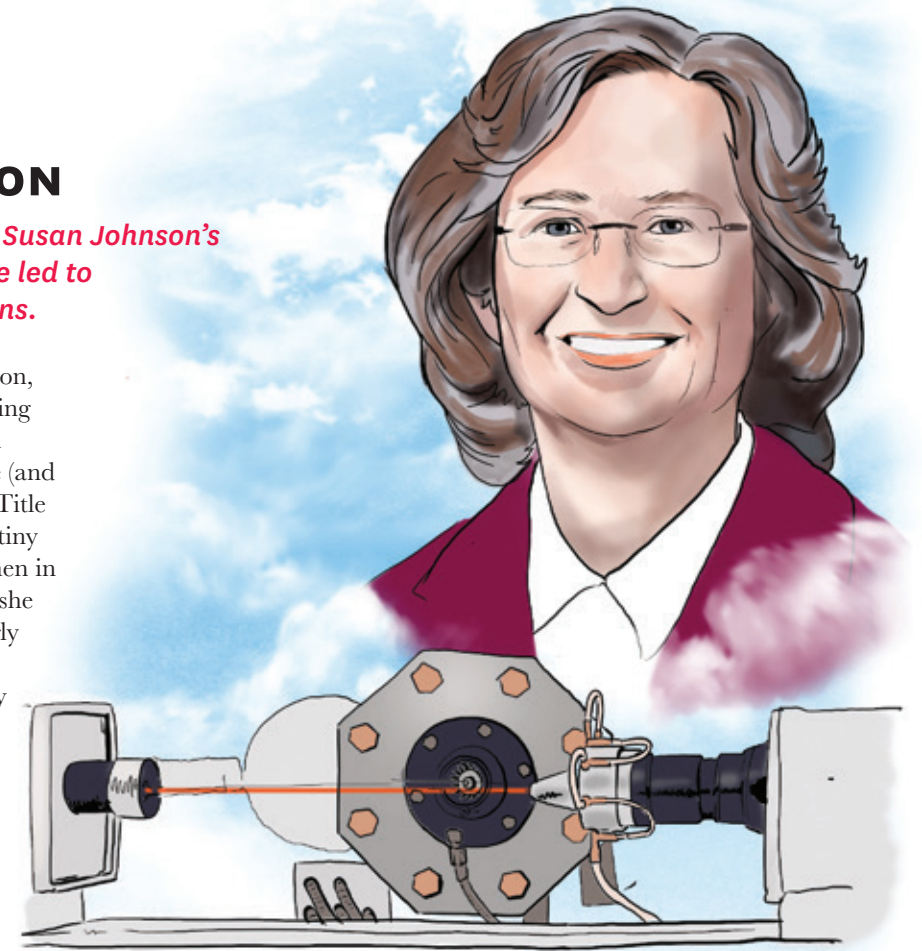
If Johnson was going to be a pioneer, though, she wanted to do so on her own terms. Before she was hired by NASA, the U.S. Navy asked her to apply to become one of the first eight

women pilots in its flight program. "Fighter jets?" she asked. "Cargo aircraft," they responded. She passed.

Johnson went on to earn a master's degree in mechanical engineering, and she was on a NASA team that won the coveted National Aeronautic Association's Collier Trophy in 1987 for their development of advanced turboprop propulsion concepts.

During her four-decade career at NASA, she has watched the number of women rise steadily in fields related to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). It's important progress for women, she says, but notes there is still a need and opportunity for more women in STEM careers.

Mostly, she's excited to talk about her work as an engineer project manager at NASA's John H. Glenn



**“Our goal is to make sure young women realize they can go as high as their dreams can take them.”**



## Better together

Support through corporate partnerships has helped give Kent State's Aeronautics Program a boost, giving all students more opportunities to benefit from cutting-edge technology and more time in the air. Here are two recent examples.

**FedEx** pledged \$1.5 million to Kent State's College of Aeronautics and Engineering to help support expansion and renovation of the Kent State University Airport.

**Cessna** named Kent State one of its four "Top Hawk University Partners" in 2016, an honor that included the use of a Cessna Skyhawk 172 and an internship for one Kent State student.

1980s

## JODI DEVER

*Jodi Dever's path to captain at FedEx was propelled by a love of flight.*

For Jodi Dever, BBA '88, captaining a Boeing 757 for FedEx offers plenty of benefits. It gives her a regular schedule with lots of time off to spend with her family, including her two sons. It pays well. And there are no passengers to cause trouble. "The boxes don't talk back," she jokes.

Dever climbed into the captain's chair two years ago, and admits it's been a long ride since she first began dreaming of a life in the sky in the '70s. Growing up a few miles from Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport, she spent long summer days in the backyard with her older sister, lying on her back and watching the planes overhead.

"I remember meeting pilots when my family went on trips," she says. "They'd always tell me I could do something like [become a pilot], but it was a lot of sacrifice and a lot of time to get to where they were."

At Kent State and beyond, she says the small numbers of women in flight

have led to a tight-knit community. "In a way, it feels like there are a ton of women out there, but that might be because I know all of them," Dever says.

Dever and her husband, also a pilot from Kent State, have stayed in contact with many of their friends from college because of the close bonds they forged while spending so much time together.

And while she's unflinchingly pursued her career as a pilot, she says she understands why many women who start off in aviation pursue other endeavors—because of how long it can take to land top jobs like hers.

These days, she often informally advises young women who want to carve a path in aviation while raising a family. Her best advice? Be willing to wing it. "I wanted to wait until everything was exactly right before starting a family, but if you get 70 percent of where you need to be, you'll be fine," she says. "If you get bit by the [flying] bug, you'll do anything you can to make it work."

1990s

## STEPHANIE JOHNSON

*Stephanie Johnson, Delta's first African-American female captain, encourages young women to consider a career in the skies.*

As long as she can remember, Stephanie Johnson, BS '91, has been fascinated with airplanes. So when her high school physics teacher mentioned he had an airplane, she asked him if he'd take students flying. He agreed, as long as she could get a couple friends to join her and pay for gas. She found her two bravest friends and set a date.

"Taking off from Burke Lakefront Airport [in Cleveland] in his Piper Cherokee was the thrill of my life," Johnson says. "Once we were airborne, he actually let me fly the plane. I will never forget looking out at the horizon, Lake Erie over one wing and the city of Cleveland over the other. My interest was fueled."

Learning to fly at Kent State—the ROTC program and the size of the school appealed to her—Johnson was often the only woman in the class and was never in training with another black woman. "This didn't faze me, because I knew I wasn't entering a traditional field for women," she says. "I learned not to give up when you come across obstacles and doubters."

Her persistence paid off, and Johnson became a flight instructor before she'd ever taken a commercial flight. While she worked several jobs and built her flight time as an instructor, the men of the Cleveland chapter of the Tuskegee Airmen—a group of African-American military pilots who fought in World War II—inspired her. "I spent time with some of the original members and, though most have passed on, I still draw inspiration from them."

Working for a commuter carrier, she earned enough flight experience to apply for a job at Northwest Airlines (now Delta Air Lines) and was hired as their first African-American female pilot in 1997. "Many people

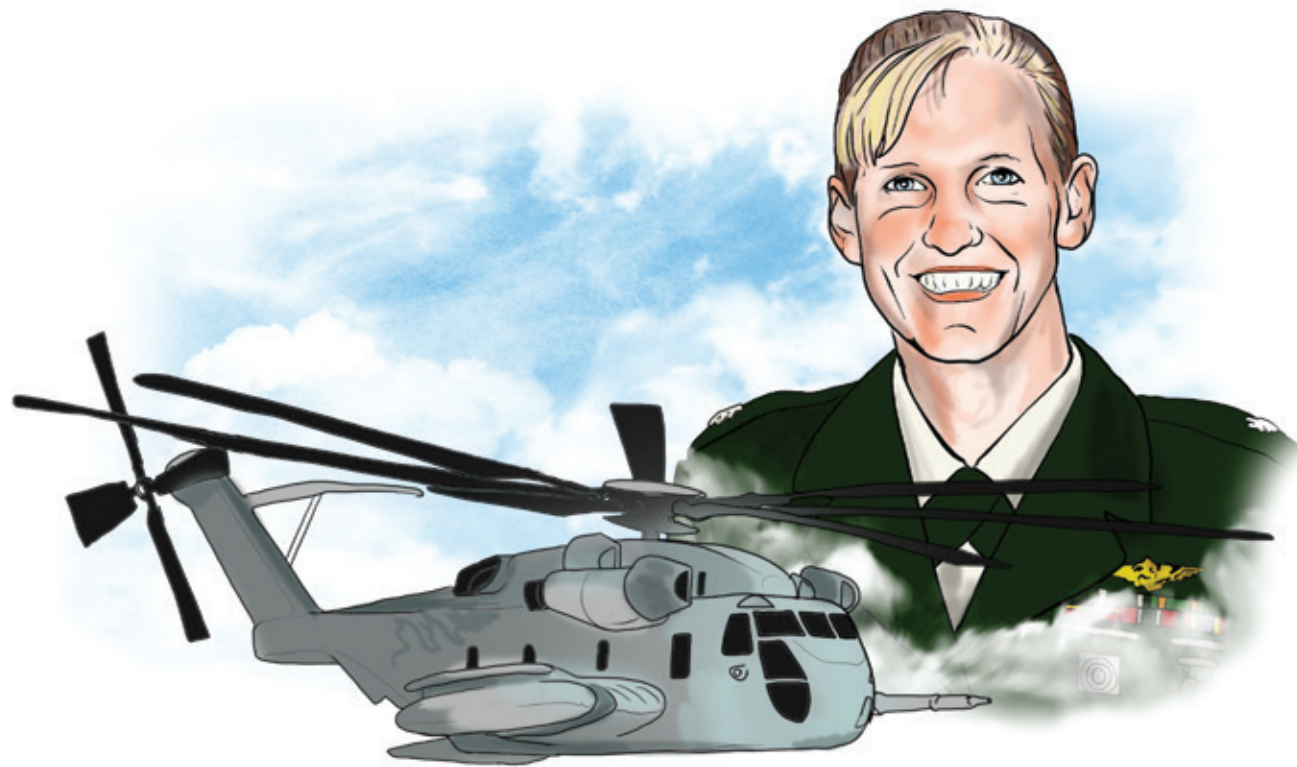
I flew with had never flown with a woman before meeting me, let alone a black woman," Johnson says. "I saw skepticism on many faces, but fortunately that didn't last long. For the most part, my experiences have been positive."

Upon completing her captain training in 2016, she became Delta's first African-American female captain and currently flies the A320 (Airbus). In February, she again made history when she and Dawn Cook, a first officer, flew as the first African-American female cockpit crew on one of Delta's mainline flights—a feat that garnered the duo a lot of media attention.

"I feel a great sense of responsibility to be a positive role model," says Johnson, who has three children and regularly participates in career events for youth. Her goal is to share her passion for aviation and expose young people to opportunities in the field. And she's succeeding—her eldest daughter enrolled in the Kent State's flight technology program this fall.

"There are so few women in this profession, and too many women who still don't think of it as a career option," she says. "This is a great career—it's worth the hard work." ▶





1990s

## SARAH DEAL BURROW

*A pioneer Marine Corps helicopter pilot, Sarah Deal Burrow blazed a trail for the female Marines who followed her.*

In 1993, when U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin created a new policy that allowed women to compete for assignments in combat aircraft, Sarah Deal Burrow, BS '92, was perfectly positioned to take advantage of the change.

She'd earned a private and commercial pilot's license at Kent State, in what was then called the aerospace flight technology program, where she says she always felt welcome: "The people there—Ruth Sitler, Dick Schwabe, Tom Friend—gave me the confidence to do what I wanted to do."

She'd joined the Marine Corps after graduation and had been working as an air traffic controller as her military operational specialty [MOS] and had joined flying clubs on the bases. She'd racked up a lot of flight time and multiple ratings that allowed her to fly a wide range of aircraft.

So she jumped at the chance and was selected for training that summer. But the new policy wasn't welcomed by everyone, including some of her fellow pilots. "The only way to deal with it was to turn it into motivation. I was going to show them."

She did. In the spring of 1995, she earned her aviator's wings and became a pilot for CH-53Es—the largest and heaviest helicopter in the U.S. military. It was an exceptional accomplishment, but the pressure remained.

"I had to be strong for the female Marines following behind me," she says. "I wanted everybody to know we were here to stay, and we could do just as well as men."

She deployed to Afghanistan in 2006 (she worked in the tactical air command control center) and again in 2009 as a reservist—where she got to fly. "That meant a lot to me. I could have said no," she says. "But I knew

if I did, I'd regret it for the rest of my life. I've been really proud to be able to serve my country."

While Burrow is done flying combat aircraft—pilots typically are asked to step down from such roles in their 40s—she's helped Marine Corps recruiters near her home in Michigan. She's also stayed in touch with Kent State friends and was the keynote speaker at the 2015 alumni weekend.

This August, she again deployed to Afghanistan, where she's in charge of a defense logistics agency, receiving and cataloguing a range of returned gear in a combat zone.

Burrow says it felt "like a bomb went off in [her] office" when she realized she'd be leaving her husband and three sons for seven months, but after the shock wore off, she is excited for the opportunity. And when the opportunities are right, she's proven that she can rise to the challenge.

2000s

## LINELL HOMENTOSKY

*If your experience at the airport is getting better, you may have AECOM aviation project manager Linell Homentosky to thank.*

Linell Homentosky, BS '06, was five years old when her family flew to Florida to go to Walt Disney World. "The pilots let me go into the cockpit, and I got a set of wings," she recalls. "From that point on, I knew I was going to fly."

She stayed focused on flight. Homentosky went to airshows and gobbled up every detail about planes and flights when her family traveled. When she began looking at colleges, Kent State fit the bill: it had a flight program, its own airport and a university big enough to give her plenty of diverse opportunities.

Homentosky got her pilot's license while she was at Kent State, but soon realized that the 30,000-foot view that intrigued her most was metaphorical, not literal. "I got really interested in the business challenges of airport management," she explains. "I liked thinking in terms of the 20-year road maps for planning that airports needed as they grew."

It's no simple task: airports are entire communities within themselves. "They have their own police and fire departments, their own concessions and retail operations," she says. "And, of course, everything they do has to be synchronized, because if one thing goes wrong it can trickle through the entire system of aviation."

Today, Homentosky is an aviation project manager at the Philadelphia office of AECOM, a global consulting firm that provides services for major infrastructure projects. One project she's had a hand in is the master plan created for the Philadelphia International Airport, which includes a new runway and terminals to prepare for expected growth.

*Airport Business* magazine recently named Homentosky one of its "Top 40 under 40" for her efforts in this and other projects.

Looking ahead, she says one of the projects she's most excited about is one that is personal: her company is working on a design for the Kent State Airport and Classroom Terminal Building. "We're designing a modern classroom and terminal building that's going to be great for current students, and it will attract new ones," she says. "Being able to come back to present to professors I had in college feels very full-circle to me. Kent State got me here, and now I have a chance to give back." ⚡

*Erin Peterson is a writer and editor based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*





## AIR RACE CLASSIC

*An all-female air race has inspired generations of women to fly.*

For the second year in a row, Kent State has participated in the **Air Race Classic**, which began as the Women's Air Derby in 1929. Joining the all-female racing teams this year for the four-day competition that started in Frederick, Maryland, and ended in Santa Fe, New Mexico, were Jaila Manga and Helen Miller (pictured left to right, upper left), both Kent State seniors majoring in flight technology. Manga flew in last year's race as a student; this year, she was the certified flight instructor leading the way. "There are a lot of amazing women who participate in this event, and I am lucky to be able learn from them," says Manga. The pair, racing as the Flying Flashes in the university's newest Cessna Sky Hawk, finished fifth out of 12 universities that competed and 15th, penalty free, out of 47 teams overall.



JEFF GLIDDEN '87

## GIRLS GEARED FOR ENGINEERING CAMP

*Middle school girls gain experience in aeronautics and engineering during a weeklong camp.*

"This summer, we offered our first **Girls Geared for Engineering Camp** for middle school girls," says aeronautics program director Maureen McFarland. "Only about 28 percent of workers in the aeronautics industry are women of all ethnicities, so there is a need and an opportunity for more. Northeast Ohio is the number one supplier to Boeing and Airbus of aircraft parts and equipment; it's a \$3.2 billion industry."

"Using drones, girls learned about aerospace engineering and mechatronics while designing, building and testing their own components. And to tie in with the space portion of our program, they built their own rocket and launched it."



PAUL SILLA



MELANIE NESTERUK '18

## NIKKI KUKWA MEMORIAL AERONAUTICS CAMP

*Now in its 10th year, this annual camp teaches high school girls about aeronautics careers.*

The **Nikki Kukwa Memorial Aeronautics Camp** is named for a Kent State flight student who died of leukemia in 2006; her parents created the camp, and a golf outing to raise funds for it, in her memory. Nikki Kukwa was an exemplary aeronautics student who founded the Kent State Women in Aviation chapter.

Each summer, 15 selected high school girls interested in aviation and their moms (or other female surrogate) receive a free, three-day experience that shows them the many possible paths that exist in aeronautics.

## Here's a glimpse at some of the opportunities Kent State currently provides for young women who are interested in flight.

Campers stay in Kent Campus dorms and all meals are provided. Participants visit corporate facilities and Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport, tour the air traffic control simulation laboratory at the College of Aeronautics and Engineering, and more. One thing sure to bring a smile is the flight from the Kent State University airport with a flight instructor who does maneuvers in the local area.



JEFF GLIDDEN '87



AARON SELF '18

Visit [www.kent.edu/cae](http://www.kent.edu/cae) for more information.

ksu **COLLECTIONS**

World Music Instruments

Room C 304,  
Center for the Performing Arts

At the end of each semester, members of Kent State’s world music ensembles demonstrate what they’ve learned in a World Music Concert—an enlivening evening of music and dance organized by the Ethnomusicology Program in the Hugh A. Glauser School of Music.

The ensembles, open to undergraduate and graduate students of any major or musical background, cover a range of cultural music and dance from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean.

Those cultures are represented in the Ethnomusicology Program’s collection of world music instruments, available for students to study in courses and play in the ensembles. (See a selection of instruments from Ghana, Thailand and China, pictured at right).

Many of the instruments (and the custom cabinets in which they are housed) were donated by Kent State ethnomusicology professors emeriti Terry E. Miller, PhD, and Sara Stone Miller, PhD—and a recent donation of Northern Thai instruments by Gerald P. Dyck expanded the collection.

The KSU Thai Ensemble, founded by Dr. Terry Miller in 1978, is one of the few Thai ensembles in the American academic system. Members traveled to Los Angeles in March to perform at a conference highlighting the restoration of the UCLA Thai instrument collection and its newly established Thai Ensemble. “Our students saw the music they are learning performed at the highest level,” says Andrew Shahriari, PhD ’01, associate professor of ethnomusicology.

The other world music ensembles at Kent State include the KSU African Ensemble, founded in 1980 by Halim El-Dabh, PhD, ethnomusicology professor emeritus (who died in early September), and the KSU Steel Band, founded in 2016 by Ted Rounds, director of percussion studies (who died in 2016) and Tyler Rounds, an adjunct faculty member.

The African Ensemble’s repertoire includes traditional and modern drumming, dancing and singing from various cultural groups in Africa and its diaspora, and the Steel Band’s repertoire includes numerous forms of Trinidadian and American music.

See [www.kent.edu/music/upcoming-concerts](http://www.kent.edu/music/upcoming-concerts) for more information about the World Music Concert. The fall concert, free and open to the public, is scheduled for December 5, 2017, at 8 p.m. at Ludwig Recital Hall in the Center for the Performing Arts.

**GHANA**

**1. Gankogui** (gahn-KO-gwee)  
A backbone of traditional music of the Ewe (EH-way) people (an ethnic group concentrated in Ghana and also found in Togo, Benin and Nigeria), this clapperless forged iron bell has two tones (low and high). A wood stick is used to strike the rim of the bell, which vibrates when the bell is played.

**2. Axatse** (ah-HAHT-say)  
A rattle-like instrument used in traditional Ewe music, made from a hollowed-out gourd covered with a net of seeds or beads.

**3. Horsetail fly whisks**  
Accessories that symbolize weapons used by dancers in *Agbekor*, an Ewe battle dance performed prior to battle to energize warriors or after battle to describe great deeds or the death of a leader. A section of *Agbekor* will be performed in the fall World Music Concert.

**4. Ewe drums**  
Played with sticks and hands, these Ewe drums are hand-carved from logs and stretched with antelope skin. They were brought back from Ghana by assistant professor of ethnomusicology Janine Tiffe, MM ’06, PhD, who codirects the African Ensemble and the Steel Band.

**5. Dondo**  
Called by many names in different areas, this hour-glass shaped drum from West Africa has two drumheads connected by leather tension cords that allow a player to modulate the pitch by squeezing the drum between the arm and body and playing it with a curved stick.

**CHINA**

**6. Sheng**  
A Chinese mouth-blown free reed instrument consisting of vertical pipes, it is polyphonic and popular as a solo instrument. A student who is expert in playing the *sheng* will perform a solo in the fall World Music Concert.

**7. Pipa**  
A four-stringed plucked instrument, sometimes called the Chinese lute, the *pipa* has a pear-shaped wooden body and a varying number of frets. It is one of the most popular Chinese instruments and has been played for almost two thousand years in China.

**8. Sanxian**  
A three-stringed fretless plucked lute that is traditionally made from snake skin stretched over a rounded rectangular resonator. The *sanxian* is made in several sizes for different purposes, and it sounds similar to a banjo.

**9. Erhu**  
A two-stringed bowed instrument, sometimes known as the Chinese violin or Chinese two-stringed fiddle. The *erhu* originated in central Asia and is believed to have come to China in the 10th century. Though it only has two strings, it can convey a wide range of emotions.



**THAILAND**  
**10. Ranad thum**  
A low-pitched xylophone used in playing the music of Thailand. It has 18 keys, typically made from bamboo, which are stretched over a boat-shaped trough resonator. Musicians sit cross-legged on the ground as they play it, and it is usually played to accompany a *ranad ek*, a xylophone with a higher pitch.

**11. Taphon**  
A traditional Thai drum that is barrel-shaped with two heads. It is played by both hands, one on each side. Most sacred of all Thai instruments, the *taphon* is believed to embody the spirit of the first teachers of Thai music and dance.

**12. Ching**  
Thai finger cymbals, used for keeping time. Melody in both Thai and Khmer music is regulated by cyclic patterns realized on the drums and *ching*.

**13. Klong khaek**  
Double-headed barrel drums used in Thai music. There are two types, one high-pitched (male) and the other low-pitched (female); they are always played in a pair. Believed to have originated in Sri Lanka, it is referred to as a foreigner’s drum: *klong* means “drum” and *khaek* means “Indian or Malay.”

**14. Khong wong yai**  
A gong circle used in Thai music. It has 16 tuned bossed gongs in a rattan frame and is played with two beaters. The player sits in the middle of the circle.

# Continuing Threads

By Laura Billings Coleman

The head of Kent State's Textile Arts Program, Janice Lessman-Moss has spent 35 years elevating woven cloth into high art.

**C**onfronted by a blank canvas, art professor Janice Lessman-Moss claims she'd have no idea where to start. But challenged by the practical limitations imposed by one of the weaving looms in Room 176 of the Center for the Visual Arts, or the digital loom in her home studio, there's no stopping her.

"A blank page would be intimidating to me because I need something to rest on, dig into or push up against," says Lessman-Moss, the head of Kent State University's Textile Arts Program. "The basic intersection of warp and weft thread is so direct and simple that what fascinates me is the way layering patterns and altering structural systems can add mystery to it. I never want a viewer to look at a work and say, 'Oh, I get it'—I want them to step back and say, 'Wow, what's going on here?'"

If her complex creations invite comparisons to everything from natural patterns to neural networks, that's also by design. "The loom is a binary system, just like a computer," she says, noting that the 1804 Jacquard loom, with its simple punch card programming, is considered the 19th century precursor to the 20th century computer processor. "The thread goes up or down, warp or weft, zeros or ones. Working with parameters like that, I think, makes you more inventive."

Elevating the centuries-old craft of fabric making to a high art that connects complex math, digital algorithms and deep intellect is the continuing thread that's run through Lessman-Moss's 35-year career at Kent State University, where she was selected for a 2016 Faculty Excellence Award. With textiles and tapestries that have been on display in galleries and museums around the world, she's earned growing recognition in the regional arts community. In addition to receiving numerous fellowships from the Ohio Arts Council, they

*When Lessman-Moss first saw the term random walk listed on a weaving software program, she figured it was a weaver's invention. But she found it was a financial theory that says stock prices take a random and unpredictable path. "It's an underlying math theory for many growth patterns," she says, and it has inspired many of her recent weavings, including "Random Walk Sun," a close-up of which is seen at right.*



recently honored her with a 2016 Ohio Governor's Award for the Arts, the highest award for any individual artist in the state.

While many textile arts programs at other institutions have been subsumed into studio arts or sculpture programs, Kent State University's commitment to protecting the square footage taken up by the program's large looms, combined with Lessman-Moss's hands-on teaching style and active exhibition career, have created a small but tightly-woven program that's gained greater prominence thanks to the new Center for the Visual Arts, where the weaving studio now occupies prime real estate.

**The loom is a binary system, just like a computer."**

"Fabric is part of our everyday lives—we wear it, we sit on it, we sleep on it, and we don't necessarily think about the complex work that goes into making it," says Theresa Bembnister, associate curator at the Akron Art Museum, who featured Lessman-Moss's geometric weavings in a 2015 show called NEO Geo. "What impresses me about Janice is her ability to explain the complicated process of weaving in a way that helps viewers

gain a new appreciation of textile arts and see what we so often miss. And with the advent of digital processes, in order to teach these new ways to weave, she had to teach herself first."

"When you teach, you learn so much more than you can ever share," says Lessman-Moss, adding that embracing technology has taken her weaving in new directions, creating complex patterns with computer software that allows her to see, pixel by pixel, where each thread will come together on the loom.

Though she starts most of her work on screen now, she never loses touch with the looms she loves. "It's a counterbalance to this fast-paced world," she says. "Working with tactile materials and just slowing down—like slow food, I call it slow art—makes you live in the present."

While science and math majors are often attracted to her work, finding signs of fractals, cellular automata and other geometric patterns, Lessman-Moss says the cultural history of weaving is full of metaphors that the humanities majors in her classes find just as compelling.

"The warp is representative of eternity, because it's put on the loom under tension and it has a sense of permanence. And the weft is indicative of the vagaries of life, or change. So weaving is the intersection of these two things—the earthly and the heavenly, the temporal and the eternal, the human and the heavens," she says. "These ideas come from all different cultures, and I make sure to tell students about that, because I think it makes us feel connected to a long history—and that's a good feeling."

*Laura Billings Coleman is a writer and editor based in St. Paul, Minnesota.*

In her home studio (once a garage), Janice Lessman-Moss weaves at a TC2 digital Jacquard loom she ordered from Norway after her sabbatical there in 2013. "I'd much rather have this loom than a car," says Lessman-Moss, who typically walks or bikes to the Kent Campus.

Here, she is working on her latest iteration of a "random walk" pattern. Following a traditional technique called *ikat* (found in many cultures), she has resist-dyed the weft threads at strategically measured intervals to introduce randomness to the weaving.



# A WEIGHTY Concern

*How can we halt the health hazard of childhood obesity?  
Kent State researchers weigh in on their latest findings.*

By Michael Blanding

**T**he stock market fluctuates, hemlines go up and down, but one thing reliably keeps getting higher: the weight of American children. Since the 1970s, the percentage of kids in the United States who are classified as either overweight or obese has more than doubled. According to the latest figures from the Centers for Disease Control, now more than 35 percent of children and teens are either overweight (with a body mass index or BMI over 25) or obese (with a BMI over 30)—for the first time crossing the threshold of one in three children with a weight problem.

By now, the dangers of those extra pounds are well-known—obese children are more likely to suffer from heart disease, type 2 diabetes and breathing problems such as asthma, among other ailments. And they also are likely to experience social and psychological consequences, including a greater likelihood of being bullied and having low self-esteem. The threats to children's weight have never been more dire, with the ubiquitous presence of high-calorie processed foods and the temptations of technologies that encourage kids to spend more time sitting and staring at screens.

Despite those challenges, researchers at Kent State continue to make inroads in helping us understand obesity and combat it in our children. We talked to four scientists who are researching different aspects of the epidemic about what they have discovered—and how we might apply it to help keep our kids healthy. ►

**Since the 1970s, the percentage of kids in the United States who are classified as either overweight or obese has more than doubled.**

## DOES YOUR BRAIN DECIDE WHO'S AT RISK FOR OBESITY?

*Your children may be hardwired to be active or sedentary, but you can help them establish healthy habits at an early age.*

It's long been known there's a genetic component to obesity. Some people seem to eat whatever they want and not gain weight, while others struggle to shed pounds. Research by associate professor of biological sciences Colleen Novak, PhD, provides one reason why: it's all in our brains.

Novak has focused her research on rats—examining why some rats tend to be highly active, always flitting around their cages, while others tend to be more sedentary. “I started looking at the brains of these rats, focusing on what made them high or low activity,” she says.

In particular, she has honed in on the melanocortin system, a network of neurons in the brain that has been tied to weight regulation. Rats with higher activity, she found, have more receptors in that system for certain peptides—tiny strings of amino acids that tell the brain to burn more energy, even when the body is only moderately active.

Those peptides, or some like them, could be key to explaining differences in humans, as well. Before coming to Kent State, Novak studied at the Mayo Clinic with Jim Levine, a world-renowned obesity expert who has coined the term Non-Energy Activity Thermogenesis, or NEAT, to refer to the amount of energy we burn in daily living. Like people with high NEAT, rats with high NEAT

tend to move around more during the day—and their muscles literally burn hotter when they do, consuming more calories for the same amount of activity.

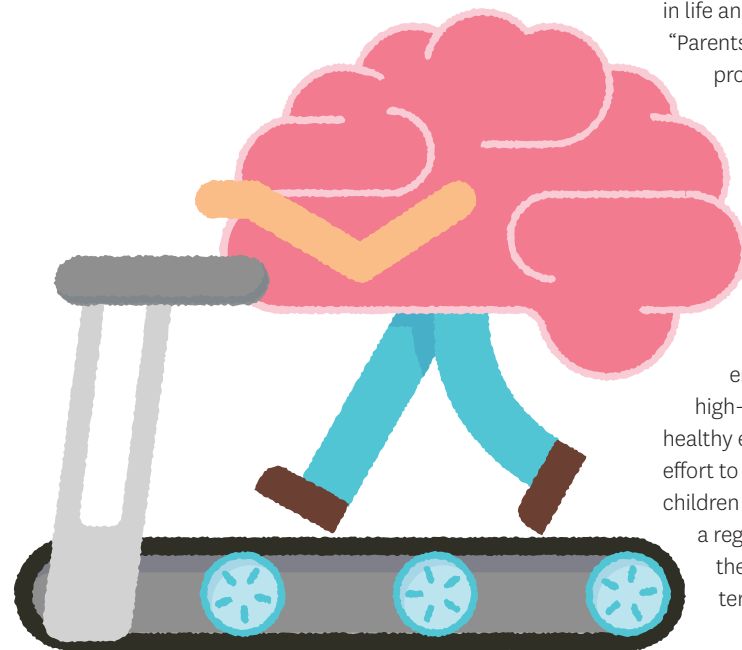
**HYPOTHESIS:** The brain sends signals to the rest of our body based on our level of NEAT, telling it to take in more energy by eating or expend more energy through activity. “When you have enough calories and you don't need to eat, these peptides tell you to feel free to be active,” Novak says. “Their counterparts do the opposite; they will make you eat more and suppress your calorie burn.”

In her research, Novak has been able to inject sedentary rats with a drug to activate more receptors in the brain, leading them to become more active and lose weight. “The efficiency of their muscle cells actually changes, and they will burn more calories,” she says.

**POSSIBLE HUMAN APPLICATION:** One eventual outcome of Novak's research may be the creation of a similar drug for humans, helping them increase activity and burn more calories with less effort. While that may seem like a magic bullet for weight loss, Novak hastens to explain that such a drug might only result in the loss of a pound or two at most.

The more immediate benefit of her research may be in identifying the genes in humans that result in higher or lower NEAT. Since young children are more active than adults in general, it can be difficult to identify who might be inclined to be sedentary later in life and, therefore, more at-risk for gaining weight. “Parents aren't always reliable in detecting weight problems in their kids,” says Novak. “We need to get the message to them if we want to have an impact.”

**WHAT TO DO RIGHT NOW:** Until we can identify which children are more genetically inclined for low NEAT, parents can help jumpstart healthy habits that could override a body's natural tendency to gain weight. For example, they can encourage more exercise, restrict access to high-calorie snacks and ensure that kids develop healthy eating habits. They can also make an extra effort to determine what physical activities their children like best, so they can get used to exercising on a regular basis. “If children like doing something, they are more likely to continue doing it long term,” Novak says.



## HELP REDUCE AND MANAGE STRESS

*Stressful situations can lead to obesity, but they don't have to.*

Many of us know what it's like to overeat when we're under stress. But for low-income children, chronic stress can lead to chronic overeating.

Amy Sato, PhD, assistant professor of psychological sciences and director of the Pediatric Health and Stress Lab at Kent State, has worked with teenagers from low-income backgrounds who live in areas where it's not safe to go outside, so physical activity is difficult. Others experience food insecurity as a result of their parents' financial stress. “Not always knowing you are going to have food around can cause you to overeat in anticipation,” Sato says.

Since coming to Kent State, she has researched how those stressors can lead to obesity, and how we can intervene to stop the cycle.

Here are some things you can do to reduce your child's stress and encourage a healthy weight—whatever your family income.

**SHOW DON'T TELL.** Sato made a surprising discovery when, as a postdoctoral researcher at Brown from 2009 to 2011, she studied a group of teenagers in a 16-week weight loss program that included dietary change, physical exercise and cognitive behavioral techniques.

After teens were weighed at the end of the program, the only independent predictor of whether they lost weight was whether their parents lost weight, too. It was even more surprising, says Sato, since “the parents weren't targeted at all.”

Any talk of weight loss by parents can be interpreted by teens as criticism, adding to their stress, she says. However, when parents also make an effort to lose weight, they send a powerful message—without words.

**REDUCE TEMPTATION.** One of the most effective ways to get kids to lose weight is to reduce access to high-calorie processed foods for everyone in the family. “By getting the Oreos and Doritos out of the house,” Sato says, “you are changing the environment for the kids.”

**MANAGE STRESS LEVELS.** In studies with adults, overeating has been associated with higher levels of cortisol, a hormone the body releases in response to stress. Stress may be a factor for children and teenagers who struggle with emotional eating, too.

In an ongoing study funded through a \$150,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health, Sato exposes low-income teens to stressful situations, such as public speaking in front of a group, and monitors their cortisol levels and the amount they eat when given access to food in order to gauge the correlation between physiological stress reactivity and eating. She also has them report on the stress they experience outside the lab, as well as the eating and exercise habits of their families. Over time, Sato hopes that this research will be helpful in exploring interventions that can reverse harmful patterns.

**BE MINDFUL.** One possible solution is teaching teenagers mindfulness meditation as a way to reduce the cortisol response and perception of stress. While such techniques may not dispel the stressors in these teens' lives, Sato says, they could give teens more self-control to help manage stress and resist the temptation to overeat in response. “We all know the feeling when we are 80 percent full, but still feel somewhat hungry,” Sato says. “Mindfulness can help someone accept that discomfort in order to achieve a higher goal.”

**WATCH TRANSITIONS.** In another study that Sato conducted on the topic of stress, she found the transition to college—and the disruption associated with it—can be a particularly trying time for teens, even if they haven't struggled with their weight before. Examining 97 Kent State first-year students, she found no change during the transition to college for those with the highest BMIs. However, for those who weren't already overweight or obese, greater feelings of stress contributed to more emotional eating and weight gain.

Those who had better coping mechanisms—for example, the support of family or friends and the ability to talk about their problems—experienced less emotional eating. Resources such as family support and therapy can help during this time of transition.

## TURN OFF THE TUBE

*Limit television viewing at an early age to help your child combat obesity now—and as an adult.*

One of the biggest battles parents and doctors face in combatting childhood obesity happens right in our living rooms—in front of the television. For years, studies have associated watching greater amounts of television with a higher risk for being overweight or obese, the so-called couch potato effect. New research by Chance York, PhD, assistant professor of mass communication, has found that the threat caused by the tube is even greater and longer lasting than we realized—and that the benefits of cutting down on screen time can be even more effective in combatting obesity.

York's research focuses on patterns of media usage over time, not just on a single snapshot. Recently, he used one of the longest running studies of human behavior to see how early exposure to television affects a person's media usage and beliefs over time. Begun at the University of Michigan in 1968, the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) is now on its fourth generation of study participants, allowing researchers to study not only the impact of behavior on an individual, but also on his or her children and grandchildren.

"It is a cool dataset if you are looking at something like obesity because it has all of these height and weight details, and you can look at a person over a long period of time," York says.

**CUT DOWN NOW, REAP FUTURE BENEFITS.** For his recent study, York looked at how frequently children watched television in 1997, and then linked it to how frequently they watched television 14 years later, in 2011—and how that frequency of usage affected body mass index (BMI) over time. As with previous studies, he found an association between television and BMI; the more TV children watch, the more likely they were to be overweight. He also found that the more television children watch when they are younger, the more television they will watch as adults.

While having a high BMI as a child tends to lead to having a high BMI as an adult, York found an additional, independent effect on BMI of watching high amounts of television as an adult. In other words, watching a lot of television as a child causes a double whammy—leading to obesity as a kid, and then leading to more television watching, which can lead to obesity as an adult.

"If you try and intervene when they're kids and interrupt TV time, you could impact their BMI many, many years down the road," York says. "You don't have impact just over the next year or two, it could have an impact over the next few decades."

**EXERCISE ISN'T ENOUGH.** The mechanism that leads television viewing to increase overweight and obesity isn't completely understood, but York's study found that it is independent of the amount of exercise a child gets. Some researchers have concluded that the extra pounds might come from extra snacking while watching TV, or exposure to advertisements for sugary snacks and cereal. Whatever the cause, it's not enough for kids to watch 8 hours of TV and then go outside and run around to work off the calories—television seems to have its own unique way of packing on the pounds.

**LEADING BY EXAMPLE.** As alarming as his study is, however, York says it also offers an opportunity. Other research has shown that kids' TV use is directly related to the example of their parents' TV use. By breaking their own habit of switching on the tube, parents can potentially have an outsized influence on limiting their children's television usage—as well as their tendency to become overweight. "Kids don't always copy what their parents do," York says. "But if parents are watching a lot of TV, then at the very least, their kids see it as acceptable behavior, and so they may watch as well."

## GET KIDS MOVING

*Social interactions and today's technologies pose challenges for keeping children motivated to be active.*

Jacob Barkley, PhD, says many of his ideas for research come from observing friends and family. That was the case a few years ago when the associate professor of exercise science and physiology was watching his then three-year-old playing in the backyard by himself.

"He was moving slowly, not being very active," Barkley says. Suddenly a friend came over, and the two started running around. "His level of activity increased dramatically." And it inspired his father to explore further.

We asked Barkley, whose past research has focused on motivating children to make healthier choices, to tell us some practical implications of his recent research.

**EXPERIMENT:** Intrigued by the effects of positive peer interaction on exercise, Barkley set up a controlled experiment in a gymnasium, filling it with mats, tunnels, cylinders, nerf balls, hoops and jump ropes in one area, and sedentary activities like coloring and puzzles in another. He then measured physical activity on an accelerometer for kids released into the space. When released on their own, he found that they gravitated towards the sedentary activities. But when they were released in pairs, they tended to be much more active.

**IMPLICATION:** "Having another child there is inherently motivating and encourages more physical activity," Barkley says. Since today's style of parenting relies more on supervised playdates rather than just letting kids outside to play unsupervised, "It's important that parents create opportunities for social interaction."

**EXPERIMENT:** In another study, Barkley introduced children to a computer simulated game of catch, in which each child was told he or she was playing with two other kids. In reality, the other two "players" were controlled by the computer, which randomized how much they threw the ball to the child. Children who were thrown the ball less often felt left out. When they were released into the same gym environment as in the

previous experiment, they tended to do sedentary activities by themselves—causing them to be less physically active.

**IMPLICATION:** "Often the kids who need more physical activity are the ones who tend to be targets of negative social interaction," Barkley says. "Then that may further reduce the motivation to be physically active." While schools have made headway in introducing anti-bullying programs, they may need to make an extra effort to include children who are overweight or obese.

**EXPERIMENTS:** In his latest studies, Barkley collaborated with fellow associate professor of exercise science Andrew Lepp, PhD, to explore the effects of the newest threat to physical activity: cell phones. In a study of Kent State students, they found that high users of cell phones were sedentary for 90 to 100 minutes more than low or moderate users. And that trend may apply to younger children, as well.

In another study, Barkley, Lepp and former graduate assistant Mallory Kobak, PhD '16, again filled a gym with active and sedentary choices, with one change: they added an iPad as an option. As a result, they found that when children were released into the gym on their own, they were drawn to the iPad and were much less active overall than when the iPad wasn't available.

**IMPLICATION:** The increasing prevalence of cell phones, tablets and other mobile devices presents a new danger in keeping children motivated to be active, Barkley concludes.

"We need to start looking at the use of these devices as critically as we have looked at watching TV and playing video games," he says. "It used to be that you could only be a couch potato at home. Now you can be a couch potato on a park bench surrounded by a wide variety of physical activity options." ⚡

*Michael Blanding is an investigative journalist based in Brookline, Massachusetts.*





SHANE WYNN

# THE Sweet Life

By Justin Glanville

Brent Ian Wesley, BBA '04, isn't just a keeper of bees—he's an entrepreneur with a passion for uplifting people while selling urban honey and men's personal care products.

**F**rom a distance, the scene looks like a 1950s science-fiction movie come to life.

Two beings, covered in what appear to be silver space suits with hoods over their heads, stand in a vacant lot, hunched over a half-dozen or so tall wooden boxes. Wisps of white smoke rise around them.

Come closer, and a low buzzing becomes audible. One of the beings looks up.

"Hey, how are ya?" asks a friendly voice from behind a mesh mask. "Come on in—just don't get too close. I don't want you to get stung."

Brent Ian Wesley, BBA '04—the man behind the mask—is probably Akron's most famous beekeeper, and among its best-known entrepreneurs. Since 2013, he's been maintaining bee colonies and harvesting the fruits of their labor for Akron Honey Company (AHC), the business he founded and runs with his wife.

But AHC and Wesley aren't just about honey. A big part of what makes his work unique is that it happens right in the middle of Akron's close-packed urban neighborhoods. His two main apiaries are on vacant lots surrounded by century-old houses, brick industrial buildings and busy city streets.

For Wesley, visibility and connection to community aren't just incidental. They're the whole point of his work.

"My first allegiance is to people," he says. "When people see I'm doing good things with spaces that were once empty, it seems to give them hope. It solidifies in their mind that things are good."

In fact, honey was the farthest thing from his mind when, with savings from his day job, he bought two vacant lots, measuring just under an acre, in Akron's Highland Square neighborhood.

"They were for sale, near where I lived and affordable," he says. "I thought, 'I bet I could do something special there.'"

He bought the land for cheap, then sat on it until a friend suggested beekeeping. Wesley visited Amish country, tasted some locally produced varieties of honey and was blown away by the vivid flavors.

He got to work buying equipment and setting up his first bee colonies. Those space suits? They're what prevent him from getting stung (mostly). The crates are where the queen, thousands of workers and a few hundred drones live and make honey. And the smoke, created by burning dead leaves, prevents the bees from spreading a signal to attack.

He's also purchased additional lots on Akron's East Side, where he's set up another apiary, and he maintains another four colonies at St. Vincent-St. Mary Catholic high school nearby. He sells small batches of honey at local markets, each jar named after the apiary where it was collected.

"I don't mix any batches together," he says. "Honeybees forage within two to three miles of their colony, so when you keep the batches separate, you're tasting the neighborhood where it was made."

As accolades and attention have poured in—"The flavors are amazing, no comparison to store-bought!" reads one typical review on the company's Facebook page—Wesley is embracing a growing sense of confidence and ambition.

In addition to selling his honey at pop-up shops and local stores (and eventually online), he's been traveling to larger-market cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago, attending conferences for entrepreneurs and trying to make connections with distributors, bloggers and other "influencers."

**When people see I'm doing good things with spaces that were once empty, it seems to give them hope."**

Partly as a result of inspiration from those travels, he's now developing a skin-care line for men—"The women's market is already established," he says, "while men are not as well served"—derived from beeswax, honey and its byproducts. He'll produce an all-in-one body wash, moisturizing salve and possibly a hair conditioner in a small business incubator in the Northside District of Akron. The products will be for sale, he says, by the first quarter of 2018.

Wesley was selected to participate in a monthly professional development series

at a Chicago think tank in 2016, and he received another motivation boost—and learned some hard lessons—when he appeared last year on "Cleveland Hustles," LeBron James' cable TV competition show for Northeast Ohio entrepreneurs. Wesley impressed the judges with his drive and mission, then stunned everyone by turning down a \$100,000 investment offer.

"I realized I hadn't defined for myself where I wanted AHC to go," he says. "If I'd taken that money, I would have had to listen to somebody tell me, 'You should do this or that,' and then I might have lost my way."

Not that he's above constructive feedback. One of the reasons he's been traveling to other regions is to push himself to think beyond Akron—while remaining rooted in the city that's so fervently supported him.

"I love Akron, but if I just stay here I'm only going to have people clapping me up all the time," he says. "Who's really being a critic? Who's giving me that dose of what's real?"

In addition to his full-time day job, this father of two fronts an eight-piece soul band called Wesley Bright & The Honeytones and organizes a periodic Open Air Social Market at his Crestland Park Apiary to promote local artisans.

"At each market, we'll represent a culture or theme—maybe it's immigrants or women," he says. "Or we'll feature black entrepreneurs. Sometimes it feels like I'm the only local black entrepreneur some people know about. There are many others."

Whatever happens, he doesn't want to become so focused on running his business, or keeping bees, that he misses out on the spontaneous, personal interactions that give him purpose.

Just the other day, he says, an older man came up to him while he was harvesting honey at one of his apiaries and told him he used to live in one of the houses that had been torn down there.

"He walked around the lot with me, telling me about the old bricks his house had been made of," Wesley says. "He told me he was glad I was doing what I was doing, that it made him feel better about the future."

"That's what's the most fun for me. It's not crunching the numbers or even beekeeping itself. It's making those connections with people I'd otherwise never meet." ⚡

Justin Glanville is a writer based in Cleveland ([www.justinglanville.com](http://www.justinglanville.com)). Visit [www.akronhoney.com](http://www.akronhoney.com).

alumni LIFE



☀️ **Ronald Fowler, BS ’59**, Akron, Ohio, pastor laureate of Arlington Church of God (where he served as senior pastor for 42 years) and longtime community activist, received the first Lifetime Achievement award from the Akron Urban League at its annual Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration in January. Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan presented a proclamation dedicating January 16 as Rev. Fowler Day. Pictured above: Sadie Winlock, president and CEO of the Akron Urban League, and Rev. Ronald Fowler.

class NOTES

☀️ The little sunburst denotes an alumni association member. For a list of life members, visit [www.ksualumni.org/lifemembers](http://www.ksualumni.org/lifemembers).

1940s

**Ardath Franck, BSE ’46**, Akron, Ohio, is one of eight accomplished older Ohioans inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the Statehouse Atrium in Columbus on May 18. Franck, a speech therapist whose career has spanned more than seven decades, has helped generations of students achieve success in reading using innovative methods.

☀️ **Lucille Erb, BS ’49**, Cleveland, Ohio, wrote: “The Kent State Performing Arts Library has accepted my gift of scores, CDs, programs and correspondence related to my late husband, **Donald Erb, MM ’50**.”

1950s

**Donald Brail, BS ’53**, Austinburg, Ohio, wrote: “Still alive and doing well. I live on 76 acres of wood and water (20 acres of water). My biggest problem is to decide what to do each day—go fishing or cut wood!”

1960s

**William Green, MA ’63**, Lexington, Ky., is professor of government at Morehead State University, where he teaches constitutional law and comparative politics. His book, *Contraceptive Risk: The FDA, Depo-Provera, and the Politics of Experimental Medicine*, was published by NYU Press in May 2017.

**Jay Lacy, MEd ’67**, The Villages, Fla., wrote: “I was recently inducted into the Warren, Ohio, Sports Hall of Fame. A presentation was held at a game, with a dinner and induction the next day. My wife, Marlene, and I were married 60 years in August. Our daughter, **Jana Lacy Rahrig, BA ’85**, and son, **John Lacy, BS ’88**, went to Kent State.”

**James Lowry, BA ’68**, Hagerstown, Md., wrote: “After graduating from Kent State, I earned a MA in Classics (Greek and Latin) from the University of Chicago in 1970. I am married, have five children and 29 grandchildren. My latest book in a scholarly series of writings, *Documents of Brotherly Love: Dutch Mennonite Aid to Swiss Anabaptists, Volume II, 1710-1711*, was published by Ohio Amish Library, Inc., in December 2015. I have donated copies of most of my writings to the Kent State University Library.”

☀️ **William “Bill” Monroe, BArc ’69, MArc ’71**, Yorktown, Va., was honored by the Kiwanis Club of Grafton, Va., with the Kiwanis International George F. Hixson Fellowship Award in February 2017. Monroe, a retired architect who has been an active Kiwanian since 1974, was a founding member of the Grafton Club, has served as president, been on the Board of Directors, and has led many service projects over the years.

1970s

**Bill Finley, BS ’70**, Kent, Ohio, wrote: “I, along with my two sons, Jon and Peter, started a business in Kent called Lucci’s Place in June 2015. Thanks to the pizza gods, we have been extremely fortunate in this wonderful college town. *The Kent Stater* voted Lucci’s number one pizza in May 2017; prior to that we were recognized as number one pizza in Portage County by the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. When the boys were small, I used to tell them what to do; now they tell me what to do. It’s been fun!

☀️ **Dale Barber, MEd ’71**, Sandusky, Mich., has been appointed pastor of the Shabbona and Minden City United Methodist Churches in Michigan.

**Ken Burgess, BA ’71**, Brenham, Texas, wrote: “I implemented a successful alcohol/drug intervention program for Ural Steel, Novatroitsk, Russian Federation, while working as a consultant for Chestnut Global Partners, Bloomington, Ill. Ural Steel is one of the largest heavy industries in the Lower Siberian region of Russia. The program’s positive research results were recognized and published by the University of Southern California in their *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health* (2015), and also appear in the University of Maryland School of Social Work Research Archives, April 2017.”

**Harry Dempsey, BS ’71**, Stanwood, Mich., wrote: “Although I retired from teaching music last year after 39 years at Ferris State University, I was brought back in January to serve as director of operations for the

Department of Humanities. Evidently I flunked at retirement. I plan to try it again sometime within the next year.”

☀️ **Dorothy Murray, BS ’71**, Mogadore, Ohio, wrote: “I was one of 29 students chosen to attend the English-speaking Pahlavi University in Shiraz, Iran, for five months in 1970. Dr. Abbas Amirie, a political science professor at KSU at that time and an Iranian by birth, accompanied us along with his family. While taking classes at the university, we also traveled extensively throughout Iran and gained an appreciation for that country’s rich and varied culture. Because of that trip, the ‘travel bug’ bit me. I have visited all 50 states, 30-plus countries, six continents, and I still have a lengthy bucket list. I will always be indebted to KSU and that unique opportunity for my continued love of travel.”

☀️ **Robert Rosenfeld, BS ’71**, Solon, Ohio, was elected to the Board of Trustees of The Emily Jerry Foundation for Medication Safety (of Chagrin Falls, Ohio). He was also appointed its Chief Legal Officer and will serve as its Director of Planned Giving.

☀️ **Richard Conrath, MEd ’72, PhD ’76**, Miromar Lakes, Fla., wrote: “My first book, *Cooper’s Moon*, came out in spring 2017. (See [www.coopersmoon.com](http://www.coopersmoon.com).) The next two books, *Blood Moon Rising* and *A Cold Copper Moon*, will be coming out in winter 2018. The three-book mystery/crime fiction series is set in Miami, Fla., and the Everglades. Much of the action in *Blood Moon Rising* occurs in Cleveland.”



**Sue Kutosh, MA ’73**, New York, N.Y., wrote: “I am currently showing work on Your Art Gallery. com, with images and descriptions of two paintings and one pen and ink (<https://www.yourartgallery.com/SueKutosh>). Signed giclées are available on request.” Pictured above: *Cleopatra VII*, oil, 36 x 24 inches.

☀️ **Dixie Benshoff-Ludick, MEd ’73, PhD ’77**, Aurora, Ohio, is pleased to announce the publication of her book, *Increasing Your Personal and Professional Effectiveness: A Manual for Women Who Want to Accomplish More Without Changing Who They Are*. She is also author of the children’s book, *David Was a Pirate*. (See [www.drdixiebenshoff.com](http://www.drdixiebenshoff.com).)

**Kathy (Miller) Ewing, BA ’73, MA ’76**, Cleveland, published a memoir, *Missing: Coming to Terms with a Borderline Mother* (Red Giant Books) in August 2016, which Alix Kates Shulman calls “searching, touching, and elegiac.” Ewing blogs at [www.kathyewing.com](http://www.kathyewing.com).

☀️ **Christine Rosenbloom, BS ’73**, Hartwell, Ga., after a 30-year academic career as a nutrition professor at Georgia State University, is publishing a book, *Food & Fitness after 50*, for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

☀️ **Stephan Wilder, BA ’73**, North Canton, Ohio, retired in March as North Canton police chief, after working at the department for more than 35 years. He rose through the ranks and spent the last six years as chief. Wilder plans to continue helping the North Canton Area Chamber of Commerce and volunteering with the Boy Scouts. He has completed more than 35 marathons and hopes to get back into long-distance biking and swimming.

**Gary David, BA ’74**, Tucson, Ariz., wrote: “Adventures Unlimited Press has recently released my fourth nonfiction book, *Star Shrines and Earthworks of the Desert Southwest*. I write about the Hopi tribe of Arizona and am also a published poet.”

☀️ **Timothy Jay, MA ’74, PhD ’76**, North Adams, Mass., is a professor of psychology at Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts. His newest book is *We Did What?: Offensive and Inappropriate Behavior in American History* (ABC-CLIO, 2016).

☀️ **Patricia (Hanlon) Sherman, BS ’74**, Dover, Ohio, a retired registered nurse wrote: “In late 2015 I published my first book, *The Blue Swing: Parental Abuse, Choices and Living Without Anger*, a combination memoir and book of my own poetry, available on Amazon.com.”

**Richard Duncan, BA ’75, MA ’79**, Aurora, Ohio, specialized in urban geography and trained for a career as a city planner. He used this background as the basis of his run for U.S. president as an independent in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. In the 2016 election, he says he received 24,307 votes, ranking him ninth in the nation, on an approximate \$5,000 budget.

☀️ **Nancy McManus, BSN ’75**, Hudson, Ohio, was awarded the Gingy Harshey-Meade Excellence in Leadership Award by the Ohio Nurses Foundation at the 17th Annual Nurses Choice Luncheon on April 28 in Columbus.

☀️ **Rick Niece, MEd ’76, PhD ’88**, Hot Springs Village, Ark., recently published *Perfect in Memory: A Son’s Tribute to His Mother*, his third book in the award-winning Fanfare for a Hometown series. (See [www.RickNieceBooks.com](http://www.RickNieceBooks.com).) After a 45-year career in education,



☀️ **Erin Cole, BA ’98**, Yellow Springs, Ohio, wrote: “Three generations of the Cole family to attend Kent State: [From left to right] ☀️ **Lawrence Cole, BS ’74, MEd ’74, MLS ’83; Erin Cole, BA ’98**; and **Ayanna Cole**, class of 2020!”

Niece retired as a university president and serves as President Emeritus for the University of the Ozarks in Arkansas.

**Candy (Newcomb) Watkins, BS ’77**, Tacoma, Wash., wrote: “I graduated in deaf education and relocated to the Seattle area a year later. After dabbling in various jobs, I landed in early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities. In 2001, I started a nonprofit agency in Tacoma—A Step Ahead In Pierce County—working with these children. I’m the executive director, and the agency has since grown to a staff of 25, enrollment of about 600 children annually and a budget of \$1.8 million.”

☀️ **Christopher Opalinski, BS ’78**, Gibsonia, Pa., was recognized as one of the “Top 50 in Pittsburgh” in the 2017 edition of *Pennsylvania Super Lawyers*, published by Thomson Reuters. An attorney with Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott LLC, he was honored for construction litigation.

**Rachel (Giannamore) Legg, BFA ’79**, Tampa, Fla., wrote: “I am a freelance graphic designer and a partner with my husband, Bill, in R&B Realty Group—specializing in relocation to sunny Florida!”

☀️ **Kevin Moore, BA ’79**, Roswell, Ga., recently joined the 50 States Marathon Club—an exclusive group of almost 4,000 runners who have participated in marathons in all 50 states—and he has no plans to hang up his running shoes. His current schedule includes marathons in San Juan, Puerto Rico, followed by events in Raleigh, N.C., and Pittsburgh, Pa., as well as half marathons, culminating in a 50-mile race later in the year.

**Gregg Schoof, BA ’79**, Shaker Heights, Ohio, serves as the manager of engineering student programs and is the assistant director of the Fenn Academy Program at Cleveland State University’s Washkewicz College of Engineering. He oversees recruiting, community outreach to middle schools and high schools, and engineering student organization activities. He obtained a MSSA from Case Western Reserve University in 1992.

1980s

**Krista Taracuk, MLS ’80**, Columbus, Ohio, was elected president of the State Library of Ohio Board.

**Raymond Wulk, BBA ’80**, Oaklyn, N.J., is the new executive director of Flaster Greenberg PC, a business law firm with offices in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Delaware. As of March 2017, he is responsible for managing and directing all administrative areas.

**Michael Loderstedt, MFA ’85**, Cleveland, professor in print media and photography at Kent State, announced his retirement in June. He served 35 years at the School of Art, recently as its interim director. Loderstedt plans to spend time in his studio making art after retirement.



☀️ **Beverly Laubert, BA ’84**, Lewis Center, Ohio, wrote: “I received the Distinguished Alumnus Award for Career Achievement from the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University, where I received my master’s degree in 1993. My acceptance remarks highlighted my gratitude to Kent State University: ‘My gerontology degree from Kent State University equipped me for who I wanted to serve—our nation’s elders—and the John Glenn College equipped me for how I wanted to serve.’ I am full of gratitude for the outstanding preparation Kent State gave me for a wonderful career.” Pictured above: Trevor Brown, Dean of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs, and Beverly Laubert.

alumni LIFE

**Jon Jivan, BS '08**, Munroe Falls, Ohio, a video producer at Kent State, tracked the first 100 words of his son, Elliot, from birth to age 20 months, on a Google Sheets spreadsheet, created a data visualization in Tableau and posted it on Reddit in early March (see chart at bit.ly/Jivan3). It's been picked up by 19 news sites so far, including huffingtonpost.com and parents.com, and shared on social media.

"All words recorded were said in context (not simply a parroting of sounds) and were witnessed by both myself and my wife (**Lindsay Jivan, BS '09, MS '11**) for confirmation," wrote Jivan. "The first ten words [uh oh, dada, mama, kitty, no, car, toot, ball, baby, papa] were recorded based on a combination of memory and video evidence. The remaining 90 words [including Yachtzee, moon, house, mouse, and buckle] are accurate to the day they were first spoken. I'll continue to track up to his second birthday." The couple's second son, Gideon, was born in May, and Jivan says he will track his language acquisition, too.



MELISSA OLSON

class NOTES

**Ann (Darnell) Otto, MEd '86, PhD '96**, Tallmadge, Ohio, recently published *Yours in a Hurry*, a historical novel of the 1910s based on her family history, including stories on the founder of Hollywood, Calif., an early aviator, and American military influence in the Pacific.

**Kathleen (Barnum) Vogler, BS '86**, North Royalton, Ohio, wrote: "I retired from the Cleveland Metropolitan School district after 30 years of teaching and one year as a LD tutor in Strongsville. I taught every grade from 2nd to 8th, and spent the last 12 years teaching middle school and 15 years involved with the Cleveland Teacher's Union."

**Carol Bohatch, BS '87**, Madison, Ala., wrote: "I was chosen as James Clemens High School 2015-16 Teacher of the Year, Madison City Schools 2015-16 District Teacher of the Year, Alabama District VIII 2016 Teacher of Year, and State of Alabama Sweet 16 Teacher of the Year 2016."

**J.G. (Julie) Woodward, BA '87, MEd '91**, Copley, Ohio, released *Prose of Passion*, Invincible Publishing, in December 2016, after publishing a series of four poetry books.

**Darrin Mann, BBA '88**, Lithia, Fla., has been appointed national business development manager for Hercules Sealing Products in Clearwater, Fla.

**Louis Aliberti, BBA '89**, Mentor, Ohio, was appointed as an administrative law judge for the U.S. Social Security Administration.

**Douglas Detweiler, BBA '89**, Twinsburg, Ohio, has accepted the role of director, contract development and analytics with Sanofi Pasteur, the vaccines division of Sanofi Pharmaceuticals. Detweiler is the son of **Myron "Mike" Detweiler '59**, uncle of **Michael Detweiler '12**

and father of **Halle Detweiler**, a KSU fashion merchandising major with minors in public relations, marketing and media.

**1990s**  
**Vicky Bartholomew, BFA '90**, North Royalton, Ohio, released a paranormal romantic suspense novel, *Mind Waves*, published by Wild Rose Press. It is the first book of four in the Mind Hackers series, published under the pen name Amanda Uhl. (See www.amandauhl.com.)

**Lisa Dael, BA '90, MLS '91**, Athens, Ohio, wrote: "I was promoted to online and outreach programs coordinator in The Patton College of Education Curriculum and Technology Center at Ohio University in July 2016."

**Robert Melchioris, BBA '90**, Aurora, Ohio, was recently inducted into the distinguished Massage Therapy Hall of Fame at the 2017 World Massage Festival. This recognition honors leaders and pioneers whose work and dedication have furthered the profession of massage therapy. He was celebrated for his outstanding contributions, which include working at Ground Zero as part of the relief effort after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, being part of the official Winter Sports Massage Team at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and being a core medical staff member at the Dew Tour.

**Aimee (Molnar) Downing, BFA '91**, Bradford Woods, Pa., wrote: "I currently work as a creative director at a marketing/communications agency in Pittsburgh. My debut novel, *Into the Air* (published under

**Marissa Bland, BA '14, MPH '16**, Newton Falls, Ohio, wrote: "Kent State University was a second home to my sisters and me for six years. We are grateful for the valuable education we have received and the priceless memories we have made. Our legacy at KSU began with our mother [**Carol Bland, BA '78**] and we are proud to follow in her footsteps to become champions of change in our community and our work." Pictured left to right, at last summer's Commencement: **Marissa Bland**, Jean Allen (grandmother), **Mary Bland, BA '14, MPA '16**, and **Kathryn Bland, BA '14, MPH '16** (Marissa and Kathryn are identical twins.)



the name A.K. Downing), was a 2017 National Indie Excellence Awards Finalist in the Young Adult Fiction category. It's a post-apocalyptic adventure story about a girl who has lived her entire life underground, but receives a mysterious letter inviting her to embark on a journey that no one has been allowed to take for over a hundred years. Print and Kindle versions are available on Amazon.com."

**Trudy (Tinglan) Kelly, MLS '91**, Palm Harbor, Fla., is author of *The Fenway Hotel: The Grand Lady of Dunedin; Her Struggles, Success, and Survival*, published in 2016.

**Michael Lanstrum, AS '88, BS '91**, Cleveland, presented "Historical Women in Mathematics" for the Moses Cleaveland & Shaker Chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolution on October 12, 2016. He also published a review of *Algebra: A Very Short Introduction* by Peter M Higgins in the *Mathematics Teacher*, December 2016/January 2017; an opinion piece, "'Hidden Figures' show strength in numbers for women mathematicians," Cleveland.com, April 30, 2017; and a commentary, "Adding up women's influence on history of mathematics," *Sun Post*, May 4, 2017.

**Tom Rector, BBA '92**, Pittsburgh, was promoted to director of finance for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Community Behavioral Health Network.

**Rodger Roeser, BS '92**, Sheffield Village, Ohio, wrote: "After 20 years in New York and Cincinnati, I moved back to my hometown of Cleveland and opened the second office of The Eisen Agency, a full service marketing firm."



**Christopher Garber, BS '99**, Philadelphia, Pa., (at left above) is enjoying a third career of executive protection work. After serving in the U.S. Army, where he won the U.S. Army Corps Wrestling Championship, he enrolled at Kent State, where he was on the varsity men's wrestling team. He later became a professional athlete in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, winning the 2008 National Championship in Rio de Janeiro, where he fought on the world championship Alliance team under world champion Fabio Gurgel (at right above). He now has his own security and firearms training company, The Self Defense Center (www.theseelf-defensecenter.com).

**Larry Wagenaar, MA '92**, Ada, Mich., was recently reappointed by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder to a four-year term on the Michigan Historical Commission. The Commission serves as an advisory body to the Michigan Historical Center, which is a part of Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Wagenaar also is the executive director of the Historical Society of Michigan (since 2001) and publisher of HSM Magazines, which includes the largest circulating state history magazine in the United States, *Michigan History*.

**Jeff Copetas, BA '94**, Maynard, Mass., recently was named director of e-commerce strategy and operations for Avid Technology in Burlington, Mass. Avid is the market leader for audio/video production software and storage, including its Media Composer software for video and Pro Tools software for audio.

**Karen Adinolfi, MA '95**, Akron, Ohio, a partner in the employment services practice group at Roetzel's Akron office, was named vice president of the Board of Directors for the Akron Area Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management.

**Julie Manterea, BA '95**, New York, N.Y., has been promoted to director of marketing at UHY Advisors NY, a leading professional services firm. Based in New York, she is responsible for all national and international marketing initiatives for the Northeast and California offices, and she represents the United States on UHY International's Ambassadors Committee, which drives thought leadership for the firm internationally.

**John Grove, BA '96**, Seattle, Wash., was promoted from senior program officer to deputy director, evidence and policy, at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in July 2016.

**Mary Neuenschwander, BS '97**, Kutztown, Pa., associate director for alumni relations with the Kutztown University Foundation, has been named Outstanding Advisor by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Affiliated Student Advancement Programs for District Two. She has been with the KU Foundation since 2012, and prior to that she was an elementary and middle school teacher in Illinois and Ohio.

**Laurie Katusin Swallen, BA '97, MLIS '16**, Canton, Ohio, a district library media specialist at Tuslaw High School, received the Dan MacLachlan School Library Media Award from Kent State University's School of Library and Information Science (iSchool) in April. The award is given to iSchool graduates who have exhibited creativity, leadership and dedication to the K-12 audience.

**Jennifer Zisk-Vitron, BA '97**, Cleveland, was recently promoted to director of programs at Adoption Network Cleveland. She oversees programs for adult adoptees and birthparents, prospective and adoptive parents, families, youth in foster care and the Permanency Champions Mentoring Program. Zisk-Vitron holds a master of social work from Cleveland State University.

**Jason Shelton, BA '98**, Arlington, Texas, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Texas at Arlington, was named director of the university's Center for African American Studies, effective January 2017.

**Benjamin Thomas Wolf, BA '98**, Chicago, Ill., has announced his candidacy for the U.S. Congress in 2018, running as a progressive Democrat for the 5th Congressional District of Illinois. Wolf, a former FBI national security investigator and career U.S. diplomat and foreign service specialist, served multiple deployments in Iraq and North Africa. After entering the private sector in 2012, he became president of Keep Chicago Livable, a fair housing nonprofit. During his senior year at Kent State, Wolf interned on Capitol Hill as part of the Washington Program in National Issues. He credits his success to that program and his experiences at Kent State. See www.benjaminthomaswolf.com.



**Scott Haws, BS '99**, Canton, Ohio, was a 2017 recipient of the 30 Faces of Leadership award by Leadership Stark County for contributing to areas of community impact, volunteerism, leadership roles and lasting achievement. He has been selected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cleveland Division, to the 2017 FBI Citizens Academy. Haws recently was selected as a finalist for the KSU Alumni Association Distinguished Citizen Award. The award honors alumni for their extraordinary service to the public and who have given of their time and talents for the enrichment of others and the betterment of the community.

alumni LIFE  
Connecting Alumni Worldwide

Challenging educational experiences, unforgettable memories, long-lasting friendships and a network of connections are all reasons why Golden Flashes still support their university today. Whether it's cheering for your favorite team, attending an area event or volunteering for your alma mater, alumni have many opportunities to join others who share a love for Kent State. (See [www.ksualumni.org](http://www.ksualumni.org) for more information.) Here's how Kent State connects with alumni worldwide:



class NOTES

🌟 **Erich Merkle, MA '99, MEd '99, EdS '06, PhD '10**, Stow, Ohio, was recognized as the Public Sector Psychologist of the Year by the Ohio Psychological Association. He is presently employed as a school psychologist in the Pupil Adjustment Program of the Akron Public Schools. Merkle was past president of the Ohio School Psychologists Association and remains on the Board of Directors for the Ohio Psychological Association.



**Angelia (DiAntonio) Becker, BFA '14**, and **Tobias Becker, BS '14**, Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, were married on October 15, 2016, in Canton, Ohio. They met as freshmen during their first weekend at Kent State in 2010. Their wedding photos were taken by **Amanda Goodin, BFA '16**.

**Susan Spellman, BA '99**, Hamilton, Ohio, associate professor of history at Miami University, recently published *Cornering the Market: Independent Grocers and Innovation in American Small Business* (Oxford University Press, 2016).

**2000s**  
**Chuck Thomas, BA '00**, Painesville, Ohio, was recently promoted to deputy director of the criminal intelligence unit at the Ohio Attorney General's Office, Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI).

**Stephanie Buntin, BA '01**, Royal Oak, Mich., has become a shareholder in the full-service law firm Howard & Howard. She concentrates her practice on intellectual property.

**Amy DeGirolamo, DPM '01**, Coral Gables, Fla., joined Florida Foot and Ankle Associates in 2011. She is a fellow of both the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons and the American Professional Wound Care Association, and she has participated in medical mission trips to both Jamaica and Dominican Republic.

**Ellen Ernst Gavankar, BA '01**, Chicago, has become a shareholder in the full-service law firm Howard & Howard. She concentrates her practice in a variety of corporate tax matters.

**Jenita McGowan, BS '01, BFA '01**, Cleveland, chief of sustainability for the City of Cleveland, was honored by *Midwest Energy News* as one of "40 under 40" leaders in the region's transition to clean energy.



Three alumni were honored as newly licensed architects at the AIA Pittsburgh's President's Holiday Party in December 2016. Pictured from left to right: **Jason Hindes, MArch '07**, Pittsburgh; **Lainey (Castelli) Phillips, BS '08, MArch '09**, Midland, Pa.; and **Jonathon Hoag, BS '06, MArch '07**, Pittsburgh.

**Jayne Juvan, BA '02**, Twinsburg, Ohio, joined the business department of Tucker Ellis, LLP, as a partner in April. She advises public and high-growth private companies, private equity firms and venture capital firms on transactions, corporate governance and regulatory compliance. Juvan also co-chairs the American Bar Association's Task Force on Director Misconduct and has been featured in the *Harvard Business Review* and *Forbes* for her use of social media as an attorney.

**Tyra Oliver, BS '02**, Pittsburgh, staff attorney at the Superior Court of Pennsylvania, will serve a three-year term as the at-large minority governor on the Pennsylvania Bar Association Board of Governors. Her term began on May 12



**Amy Gross, BA '08, MA '10**, and **Kurt Gross, BS '12**, Cleveland, announce the latest addition to their family: daughter Kennedy Presan Gross, born September 16, 2016.

at the conclusion of the PBA Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh. She previously worked as an assistant district attorney in Allegheny County.

**Vincent Defebo, BS '03**, Toronto, has completed Steven Spielberg's *The BFG* and Marvel's *Doctor Strange*, and has relocated to Toronto, where he is continuing his career in film, working as a 3D producer on a much-anticipated fall release.

**Julia Duhart, BS '03, MArch '04**, Stow, Ohio, recently earned her architectural license. She works for Akron-based Braun & Steidl Architects on a range of project types that include higher education, K-12 schools, senior housing and hotels, and she is a sustainability leader in the firm.

🌟 **Dori Gatta MacMillan, MEd '03, EdS '05**, Niles, Ohio, is currently pursuing a PhD in educational leadership from Concordia University (Chicago), while providing school psychology services to students in Niles, Ohio. She plans to teach at a college level and/or consult for the state education department.

🌟 **Brad Gable, BS '04, MS '05**, Columbus, Ohio, has accepted the positions of site director, emergency medicine residency program, Riverside Methodist Hospital, and system medical director, OhioHealth Simulation.

**Matthew Morris, MS '04**, Pittsburgh, was named a stockholder of engineering and infrastructure firm Gannett Fleming. He currently serves as the geotechnical practice leader and is based in the firm's Pittsburgh office. He has worked across North America, dealing with the geotechnical aspects of a variety of transportation and infrastructure development projects.

**Joy Winstead, BA '05**, Mogadore, Ohio, wrote: "I published my first book of poetry, *Walk My Path*, available on Amazon and Amazon Kindle."

**Allison (Pritchard) Jack, BS '07**, Avon, Ohio, completed a master's degree in magazine journalism from Northwestern University and recently accepted a new role as a marketing writer at Lorain County Community College in Elyria, Ohio. She is also an adjunct professor at Cuyahoga Community College in Cleveland.

**Jeremy Langham, BA '07**, Lakewood, Ohio, won \$5,000 in the Community Change category of Accelerate 2017: Citizens Make Change pitch contest on February 22nd, for his idea to create a benevolent brewpub, "Ironborne Brew Works," that raises money for nonprofit organizations.

**Hallie DeVillan, BS '08, MArch '09**, Akron, Ohio, was promoted to associate of Bialosky Cleveland. As the architectural firm's marketing director, she is a primary author of the firm's vision and values. She serves on the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Cleveland Board, co-founded the chapter's Women in Architecture committee, and was honored at the 2016 Cleveland Design Awards in November with a Presidential Citation from AIA Cleveland, citing her hard work, strategic council and advocacy for equity.

🌟 **Theodore Ferring, MArch '08, MUD '08**, Cleveland, was promoted to associate of Bialosky Cleveland. Filling the role of business development director for the firm, he also champions projects with deep social impact on communities. He is the project manager of the Cleveland Metroparks' Edgewater Beach House, and he served as the 2016 Chair of the American Institute of Architects National Associates Committee.

**Rebekah Curran, BBA '09**, Columbus, Ohio, has joined Columbus-based investment management and financial advisory firm Hamilton Capital Management, Inc., as a retirement plan services representative.

🌟 **Gregg McCullough, MLIS '09**, Seaford, Del., was elected senior national curator of the National Society of the Children of the American Revolution for a two-year term in April 2016.

**2010s**  
**Lisa Davala, BS '10**, Canton, Ohio, has been promoted from marketing coordinator to director



**Chris Davidson, BBA '11**, and **Amanda Green, BS '11**, Lakewood, Ohio, met at Kent State when they were both living in Stopher Hall their freshman year. They got engaged on the front lawn of the Kent Campus on November 12, 2016.

of marketing at the Akron-Canton Airport. She will lead all strategic brand, marketing, communications, air service development and public interaction initiatives.

**Rex Hughes II, MLIS '12**, Groveport, Ohio, has accepted the position of metadata and cataloging librarian with North Dakota State University, as of July 2017.

**Samantha Scholz, BS '13**, Urbana, Ill., graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in May. She will be taking on a small animal medicine and surgery rotating internship at IndyVet Emergency and Specialty Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana.

**Emilia Strong Sykes, BA '07**, Akron, Ohio, a member of the Ohio House of Representatives, received the Rev. Dr. Robert Denton Outstanding Victim Service Award from the Summit County Victim Assistance Program, a local nonprofit. The award is given to an individual who assists victims in the criminal justice, legislative, medical, mental health or social work arenas. Sykes has led the charge to protect victims of dating and domestic violence in Ohio. Pictured below: Rep. Sykes speaks on new domestic violence legislation at a news conference.



alumni LIFE

**Chantel Owens, BS '17**, Euclid, Ohio, celebrated her graduation with her mother, **Heather Owens, BS '94**, at Kent State's Commencement on May 13, 2017.

Sixteen years old when she first arrived at Kent State in 2014, Chantel Owens was the youngest student on campus then—and she was one of the youngest students to graduate in the spring.

“My mom and aunt were hard workers, and they were part of my motivation to finish in three years,” says Owens, who earned a bachelor of science in public health. “Why not get out there and do something more?”

Owens attended John Hay Early College High School in Cleveland and was a part of High Tech Academy, where she took classes at Tri-C, earning high school and college credits at that same time. When she came to Kent State, she had 45 credit hours.

While she applied to several out-of-state colleges, Owens says, “My mom loved Kent State and would always say, ‘You have to go there.’ She instilled it in me forever, and it was only right for me to come here.” She plans to pursue a master's degree in the health-care field this fall.



Be a Part of the Tradition!

Homecoming 2017

OCTOBER 14

Kent State's Homecoming is just around the corner! Homecoming weekend offers a variety of events and entertainment for all Golden Flashes. Come back to campus to catch up with classmates, enjoy the parade, be a part of the fun at the welcome home party, tailgate at the stadium and much more.

For information about Homecoming, visit [www.ksualumni.org/homecoming](http://www.ksualumni.org/homecoming). If you have any questions, please call the alumni association at 1-888-320-KENT (5368).

**Norma Jones, PhD '16**, Bridgeport, Texas, is now editor of *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, as announced by the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association in March. Part of the editorial team since the journal's inception, Jones previously served as its associate, managing and production editor.

**Katelyn Walker, BA '16**, Cleveland, received an IIDA [International Interior Design Association] Honorable Mention at the 2016 Cleveland Design Awards in November for SCFBC [Stockyard, Clark Fulton and Brooklyn Centre Community Development Office] Revitalization, her studio project at KSU.

**Christopher Persons, BS '15, March '16**, Cleveland, received an AIA Merit Award at the 2016 Cleveland Design Awards in November for Drydock 2, his graduate project under associate professor Gregory Stroh in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design.

**Courtney Klesta, BA '16**, Cleveland, joined Sweeney, a leading full-service agency headquartered in Cleveland, as a graphic designer supporting many of their consumer, business-to-business and industrial accounts.

**Rosanne Hart, MA '16**, Plano, Texas, wrote: “I am teaching Fashion Public Relations at Southern Methodist University in Dallas as an adjunct professor, and I joined the part-time faculty of the Corporate Communications and Public Affairs Department starting with the Spring 2017 semester.”

Send Us Your Class Note

We'd love to hear from you!

To share your news, complete the form at [www.ksualumni.org/classnotes](http://www.ksualumni.org/classnotes) (you may include a high-resolution image in JPEG, GIF or PNG format) or write Kent State University Alumni Association, Center for Philanthropy & Alumni Engagement, P.O. Box 5190, Kent, OH 44242.

Limit your notes to 100 words or less and include your class year, city, state and degree(s). Notes may be edited for length or clarity and published as space allows.

**Issue:**      **Deadline for submissions:**  
**Fall**              March 31  
**Winter**            July 31  
**Spring**            November 30



**Erin Monsman, BFA '12**, and **Christopher Shippy, BA '12**, Broadview Heights, Ohio, met at Kent State in 2010 and were married on October 22, 2016.



Celebrating 50 Years of Distinguished Teaching

Recipients of the Distinguished Teaching Award gathered at a luncheon on Friday, April 21, to celebrate 50 years of this prestigious award and the profound impact award winners have had on students' lives. Since 1967, the Kent State Alumni Association has recognized nearly 150 faculty for excellence in classroom teaching.

“It is an honor to recognize distinguished teachers any time of the year,” says President Beverly Warren, who spoke at the luncheon, “but recognizing 50 extraordinary years of quality teaching is a treat for us and a special occasion.”

in MEMORY

☀ The little sunburst denotes an alumni association member.

1930s

**Gretchan Broom '39**, April 16, 2016  
**Flora Carlton '39**, November 8, 2016

1940s

**George Wegman '40**, August 10, 2016  
**Donald Sinn '42**, October 18, 2016  
**Stephie (Jicha) Roubal, MED '43**, November 23, 2016  
**Carol Chamberlain, MED '44**, January 1, 2017  
**Alyce Duncan '46**, August 16, 2016  
**Marshall Friedland '47**, September 24, 2016  
☀ **C. Klein '47**, October 22, 2016  
**Cecil Huff '48**, May 11, 2016  
**Marie Dittebrand '49**, October 21, 2016  
**Joan Marie Gebhardt '49**, October 28, 2016

1950s

**Carl Albu '50**, August 25, 2015  
**Thomas Howells '50**, January 7, 2016  
**Harry Jeanneret '50**, May 10, 2016  
**John Lilley '50**, August 8, 2016  
**Anne Mason '50**, October 7, 2016  
**Harold Oseroff '50**, December 26, 2016  
**Hollis Ho '51**, April 14, 2016  
**J. Nearhood '51**, October 1, 2015  
**Thomas O'Brien '51**, September 30, 2016  
**Paul Calder '52**, October 28, 2016  
**Frances Litun '52**, October 18, 2016  
**Dean Putnam '52**, November 22, 2015  
**Dale Rarick '53**, June 13, 2016  
**Judith Schoenfeld '53**, May 1, 2016  
**Lowell Smith '53**, August 25, 2016  
**Richard Stewart '53**, January 10, 2016  
☀ **James Tschantz '53**, February 6, 2017  
**Kitty Anderson '54**, August 5, 2016  
**Mildred Cesen '54**, December 3, 2015  
☀ **Terri Sippel '54**, January 22, 2017  
**Paul Amodio '55**, November 17, 2016  
☀ **Thomas Competti '55**, October 1, 2016  
**John Gordon '56**, January 17, 2016  
**Jack McGeary '56**, April 30, 2016  
**William Buttriss '57**, August 16, 2016  
**John Barbour '58**, February 28, 2016  
**Wayne Kryszak '58, MLS '65**, April 22, 2017  
**Sharon (Gentry) Cruickshank '59**, March 8, 2017

**Row 1 (left to right):** Dr. Deborah Barnbaum, Rudolph Bachna, Dr. Jerry Lewis, Dr. Ben Newberry, Dr. Lovejoy Das, Dr. Rebecca Chism, Dr. John Hubbell, Dr. Robert Stadulis, Dr. Sanford Marovitz, Dr. Thomas Pynadath, Dr. Alexander Seed

**Row 2 (left to right)** Dr. Catherine Amoroso Leslie, Dr. Lowell P. Orr, Dr. Susan Stocker, Dr. Deborah Bice, Dr. Clare Culleton, Dr. John Jewell, Dr. Susan Taft, Dr. Averil McClelland, Dr. Thomas Emmons, Dr. Rhonda Richardson, Dr. Edwin Gibson, Dr. Cynthia Barb, Jan Leach

**Richard Medve '59**, November 1, 2016  
**Daniel Pierog '59**, August 13, 2016  
**Barbara Pleis '59**, April 17, 2016  
**1960s**  
**Donald Flower '60, MBA '65**, February 18, 2015  
**Mary Ramsey '60**, December 27, 2016  
**Richard Dean “Dick” Tate '60**, May 14, 2017  
**Judith Brown '61**, October 18, 2016  
☀ **David Meeker '61**, May 26, 2016  
**Robert Mikolashek '61**, August 19, 2016  
**Ronald Widowfield '61**, March 19, 2017  
**David Clark '62**, October 18, 2015  
**Paul Krajcovic '62**, September 5, 2016  
**Eugene Degyansky '63**, January 22, 2016  
**William Gordos '63**, October 15, 2016  
**James Hultin '63**, March 30, 2016  
**Janice Molino '63**, January 24, 2017  
**Harold Lukens '64**, August 15, 2016  
**Ki Ryon Shim '64**, November 22, 2015  
☀ **John Hobart '65**, June 21, 2016  
**James Lehman '65**, February 5, 2016  
**Kathleen MacRae '65**, April 27, 2016  
**Dale Craig '66**, August 26, 2016  
**William Telliard '66**, October 22, 2016  
**Virginia Allanson '67**, September 1, 2016  
**Rollin Linderman '67**, February 27, 2016  
**Dorothy Shepherd '67**, August 5, 2015  
**Ronald Vaughn '67**, July 13, 2016  
**C. Helen Derby BS '67, MED '73**, January 4, 2017  
**William Hedl '68**, July 29, 2016  
**David Uhrlaub '68**, February 20, 2016  
**Robert Cerny '69**, July 16, 2015  
**William Gold, MAT '69**, December 23, 2016  
**Walter McFarland '69**, August 14, 2016

1970s

☀ **Michael Haughn '70**, November 1, 2016  
**Kenneth Kassouf '70**, October 4, 2015  
**Joyce Messina-Garrison '70**, March 31, 2017  
**Charles Donner, MBA '71**, March 9, 2017  
**Robert Katz '71**, October 23, 2016  
**John Perme '71**, November 1, 2016  
**Martha Volan '71**, August 17, 2016  
**M. McGeorge '72**, July 2, 2016  
**Maryann Ray '72**, August 25, 2015  
**John Waters '72**, December 23, 2016

**Row 3 (left to right)** Dr. Gustav Medicus, Dr. David Hacker, Dr. G. Dennis Cooke, Scott Layman, Dr. Don-John Dugas, Dr. Patricia Koontz, Dr. Walter Davis, Dr. Douglas Kline, Carol Bersani, Dr. Norman Duffy, Dr. Stanley Christensen, Dr. B. Eddy Patuwo, Dr. Wilbert Hubin

**Row 4 (left to right)** Dr. Donald Gerbig, Dr. Ann Abraham, Dr. Wayne Gorder, Dr. John Johnson, E. Timothy Moore, Barbara Hipsman Springer, Dr. Cynthia Wolford Symons, Dr. Murali Shanker, Gary Hanson

**Thomas Cavanaugh '73**, June 9, 2016  
**Padmanabha Pillai '73**, March 20, 2016  
**William Sprunk '73**, August 12, 2016  
**Kathleen Stephenson '73**, September 29, 2016  
**Edward Toth '73**, July 14, 2016  
**Russell Davison '74**, August 19, 2015  
**Leroy Smith '75**, April 27, 2015  
**L. Chapman '77**, May 13, 2016  
**Charles Fergusson, MSA '77**, January 12, 2017  
**Anthony Doskocil '78**, November 27, 2016  
**Joel Hanson '79**, September 29, 2016  
**Nathalie Kirlik '79**, August 1, 2015  
**Mary Odonnell '79**, September 10, 2015  
**Donald Witmer '79**, September 9, 2016

1980s

**Leamon Sims '81**, June 24, 2016  
**Martin Skipper '82**, December 8, 2016  
**Robert “Bob” Manak '83**, March 22, 2017  
**David McClure '83**, June 30, 2016  
**Robert Lowe '85**, November 5, 2016  
☀ **Kathy Liszka '86**, October 1, 2016  
**Harry Filkorn '88**, April 28, 2016  
**Robert Dale '89**, September 29, 2016  
**Christopher Sommers '89**, September 6, 2015

1990s

**Charles Roberts '90**, November 24, 2016  
☀ **James Pukys '91**, January 26, 2016  
**Kimberly Cossick '92**, August 17, 2016  
**Jarrett Sullivan '94**, September 7, 2016

2000s

**David Wilder, MFA '03, MLIS '07**, March 25, 2017  
**Donald Bogert '04**, September 20, 2016  
**Heather Meyers '08**, February 22, 2016

FACULTY/STAFF

☀ **Robert Bauman “Yank” Heisler Jr., MBA '74**, former dean of the College of Business Administration (fall 2008–fall 2011), April 11, 2017  
**Ed “Ziggy” Ziegler, PhD '02**, former professor in the College of Business Administration (1999–2014), November 22, 2016.  
☀ **Gary Hanson, MA '99**, former professor in the School of Journalism & Mass Communication (1999–2016), May 18, 2017



## Building on Firsts

On July 29, 1914, Kent State Normal School held its first Commencement ceremony, celebrating the 34 members of its first graduating class, who received two-year diplomas qualifying them to teach.

Most of those students and faculty members gathered for a photograph on the steps of Merrill Hall, which housed the library, administrative offices and classrooms (see above). The first building on campus, it had been completed in time to host the first classes on campus at the beginning of the first summer term, May 19, 1913. That first session was attended by 47 students, along with 20 faculty members.

It seems implausible that a group of 34 students could have completed the work to earn two-year diplomas just one year later. However, prior to the completion of Merrill Hall, Kent State Normal School had been holding classes in 25 Northeastern Ohio communities, which was the foundation for Kent State's regional campus system.

Thanks to the extraordinary vision and leadership of Kent State's first president, John Edward McGilvrey, the school had grown quickly and gained a strong

President John McGilvrey and faculty members pose proudly with the first graduating class in 1914 on the steps of Merrill Hall, the first building completed on campus.

reputation. Known for his principled belief that education should be available to every citizen, President McGilvrey persuaded the Trustees to make instruction free and set room-and-board costs at \$4.00 per week. Many presidents of other state schools followed his lead.

Due to the rapid growth of Kent State Normal School's population—extension enrollment passed 1,600 in spring 1914 and on-campus registration totalled 1,378 in the summer term that followed—several tent classrooms and a wooden pavilion, known as the Tabernacle, were hastily erected among the grove of trees just north of Merrill Hall, in an area now known as Front Campus.

In his Commencement address to the crowd of 3,000 people who jammed the Tabernacle and the lawns around it on that warm July day, Ohio's governor, James Cox, congratulated Kent State Normal School's "auspicious beginning," and called the school a "great institution," one regarded "as a model, an example, as an inspiration to the other institutions in Ohio."

As one of two normal schools in northern Ohio established in 1910 by the Ohio General Assembly's passing of the Lowry Act—to provide training and professional development for teachers—Kent State Normal School was already graduating teachers, while the other normal school, Bowling Green, was still a year away from offering its first courses.

Fast forward 103 years, and Kent State University celebrated its first One University Commencement Ceremony at Dix Stadium on May 13, 2017, as graduates from all eight campuses were convened and honored in one ceremony. ⚡

See page 6 and the back cover for more information and photos from Kent State's One University Commencement Ceremony this spring.

### Send us YOUR Flashback:

Share your memories from Kent State and they may appear in a future issue of *Kent State Magazine*. Email your stories and photos to [magazine@kent.edu](mailto:magazine@kent.edu).

ILLUSTRATION BY ZUZANA KUBISOVÁ '17

## ALTAR BOY AT THE GRAND TETONS

When did I begin to dance past  
the path of broken branches,  
so satisfied with wandering lost  
beneath an empty barrel of dying stars?

I look up to curse the moon  
and see a single comet burn across the night.  
It is a blessing on the forehead.  
Ash Wednesday.

So I plant myself on a bed of moss,  
and glaze my hands with dew and dirt.  
A blessing on my forehead.  
I begin to pray for rain.

by Regis Louis Coustillac  
Senior, College of Arts and Sciences  
Mentor, Ohio

## share your VOICE

In partnership with the Wick Poetry Center, *Kent State Magazine* features a poem by one of our readers in each issue. To submit your poem, visit [travelingstanzas.com](http://travelingstanzas.com), click "Submit," and label it "Magazine Entry."

## All Together Now!

Kent State University held its One University Commencement Ceremony at Dix Stadium on May 13, 2017. The ceremony marked the first time all Kent State graduates from the eight-campus system were convened and honored together.

Friends and families joined in the group celebration, which featured Academy-Award-winning actress and author Octavia Spencer as the much-anticipated keynote speaker. SEE PAGE 6

