

BLUFFTON

A magazine for Bluffton University alumni and friends | Fall 2021 | Vol. 18 No. 2



THE GREAT ADVENTURE

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As students begin to get the full Bluffton Blueprint experience this semester, I rejoice that Bluffton University continues to transform student lives amidst the “new” normal. We are grateful for our students, our faculty and staff, and all of the resilience that has resulted in our strongest enrolling class since 2011! I hope that as you read this magazine you remember your own experiences with Bluffton, whether they were on or off campus. We know that the Bluffton community extends far beyond University Drive and Little Riley Creek. You are a member of the Bluffton family, and we are pleased to share some of the highlights of the past year and our plans for an exciting future:

- Following census day on Sept. 13, the incoming class held strong with a third year of growing enrollment at 242 traditional undergraduate students, which is the largest first-year class since 2011. Please encourage any high-school-aged student in your circle of influence to consider Bluffton University as their college home.
- Simply Innovate: The Campaign for Bluffton drew to a successful conclusion on June 30, 2021. The 5-year, \$26-million campaign succeeded in moving Bluffton forward by funding construction of the Austin E. Knowlton Science Center and other priority projects. We were so excited to break ground for the new science center on Oct. 1 as part of Homecoming and Alumni Weekend 2021 festivities.
- We are excited to continue engaging students in the Bluffton Blueprint, with traditional classroom learning and experiential components. Our first-year students became Bluffton's first-ever class to go on The Great Adventure! During this fall break experience, the first stage of the Bluffton Blueprint, students focused on the question “Who am I?” Surrounded by God's beautiful creation, this experience helps students connect to Bluffton's mission as they prepare for “life as well as vocation.”
- This summer, our admissions staff and members of our faculty had a presence at #MennoCon21, the biennial Mennonite Church USA convention. I was pleased to attend the event and visit with alumni. I applaud the MCUSA staff on their very hard work to hold an in-person gathering and a virtual experience during the pandemic. It was great to see our faculty leading sessions and our admissions and alumni relations team connecting with constituents in the beautiful city of Cincinnati.

We are launching into the second year of our strategic plan that will continue to grow our collaborative vision and guide our flourishing. Your support of Bluffton's mission and programs for our growing number of students helps us create sustainability for the generations to come.

Gratefully,

Jane M. Wood, Ph.D.
President



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BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY MISSION:

*Bluffton University seeks to prepare students
of all backgrounds for life as well as vocation,
for responsible citizenship, for service to all
peoples and ultimately for the purposes of
God's universal kingdom.*

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We welcome your comments!

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On the cover: Students climb a rope bridge during a zipline canopy tour in Tennessee. All first-year students traveled to the Great Smoky Mountains as part of The Great Adventure. The fall-break experience is designed to help students build deeper relationships with their classmates and answer the question "Who am I?"

Photo by Alison King



THE GREAT ADVENTURE





For Ayanna Mackey, sitting at the edge of Clingmans Dome, the highest point in Tennessee, was “like I was in the clouds.”

For Cheyanne Bolden, stepping off a platform and ziplining 300 feet across the sky “challenged me to get outside of my comfort zone and try something new.”

And for Colby Schlabach, nestling into the side of a cliff while pondering Psalm 139 “helped me figure out where I am going.”

These are just a few examples of the extraordinary experiences Bluffton University students took part in during The Great Adventure, Bluffton University’s fall break retreat for first-year students. Embedded into the curriculum of Becoming a Scholar, the entire first-year class traveled to the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee Saturday, Oct. 9, through Tuesday, Oct. 12.

During the retreat, students took part in three major experiences: hiking in the national park, ziplining in Gatlinburg and completing a solitude experience at the retreat center. They also bonded with classmates in their Becoming a Scholar sections and formed deeper connections with peers during free time and evening recreation activities.

“Experiences like this can be exciting or scary, depending on the student, or both at the same time. However, it all connects to the piece of our mission that says we are preparing students for ‘life as well as vocation,’” explained President Jane Wood. “The core message for our first-year students is ‘Who am I?’ To answer that question, they need to get outside of their daily routines and habits. Being among God’s beautiful creation certainly opens them to reflect on this question.”





ANGEL VELASCO-URBINA

Exercise science
Lexington, Ky.

“There are very few times in my life that I’ve gotten out of my comfort zone and experienced stuff like this. Scaling up the boulder, it felt like being on top of the world.”

STEPHEN CHHAN

Business administration
Brooklyn, Ohio

“I felt free. College is a really big step. It’s a hard thing to do. Now, I’m just stepping out of my comfort zone, meeting new people and seeing new things. It’s a really good feeling.”

Hiking: Cataract Falls and Clingmans Dome

Divided into their Becoming a Scholar sections, students traveled into Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Their first stop was the Sugarlands Visitor Center with a short hike, appropriate for a variety of skill levels, to Cataract Falls.

Next, students traveled by bus to Clingmans Dome, the highest peak in the Smokies with an elevation of 6,643 feet. From there, they climbed nearby boulders, hiked to the observation tower or just sat in awe of the view, which on a clear day can expand to 100 miles and seven states.

The hike and the views impacted each student in a different way.

“I loved it,” said Ayanna Mackey, a criminal justice and psychology major from Dayton, Ohio. “It’s so different than where I’m from. It’s so peaceful.”

“It was really cool seeing God’s creation and realizing how big the world is and how small we are,” said Macey Thomas, a history major from Bowling Green, Ohio. Thomas described herself as an adventurer, but “helping other people and seeing my classmates face their fears was really cool.”





TIM BRUNS

Economics and
business administration
Wapakoneta, Ohio

“We got up to the first one, and I’m not going to lie, I was really nervous. I’ve always wanted to try ziplining, and I’m glad I had the opportunity to do it with my group today. It was really fun, and we had great communication. I think a retreat for the whole first-year class is a great way to meet each other and create friends.”



Ziplining: CLIMB Works Gatlinburg

Through ziplining at CLIMB Works Gatlinburg, students overcame fears by working together as a team. The mountaintop experience featured an ATV ride, four ziplines, two sky bridges and a controlled rappel. Cheyanne Bolden, a nursing major from Sidney, Ohio, was in the first group of students to tackle the course.

“Stepping onto the first block, I was shaking, I was nervous, I was sweating and I just wanted somebody to push me while I closed my eyes,” Bolden explained. “On the way down, I did not look anywhere. I was so scared, but then I got to the next one and I was feeling great.”

With the encouragement of their peers and the views of Mount Le Conte, the third highest peak in the Eastern United States, panic quickly turned to awe and triumph for many of the students.

“The view. It took my breath away,” said Josie McCollough, a primary P-5 and intervention specialist major from Arcanum, Ohio. “You hear that saying a lot, but it physically took my breath away.”

By the fourth line many students, including students who were initially hesitant to go ziplining, followed the suggestions of the guides and completed tricks such as flipping upside down and jumping off the platform backwards.

“This is an amazing start to my college experience. I feel a lot closer to my classmates, and I’m building new friendships,” said Bolden. “If I hadn’t gone ziplining with this group, I don’t think I would have ever done it.”





IMANI SMITH-ENAMORADO

Medical lab science
Middletown, Ohio

“We had the opportunity to go out into nature and learn about ourselves, to explore ourselves in deep thought and reflect on religion and God and how that plays into our lives. I really thought about how my life is going now, what I want to do in the future and how my family and values reflect what I want to do.”

Solitude: Great Smoky Mountains Retreat and Conference Center

For the first 10-15 minutes of the solitude experience, students were asked to not accomplish anything. Instead, to sit still, take a few deep breaths and ask God to open their hearts. After reading Psalm 139 in its entirety, the verses were broken down into sections with a series of questions for students to consider including:

Who is it in life who knows all there is to know about you?

Is there something about you that nobody knows?

How does it feel knowing that God knows all about you, even those things you have hidden from others?

Does knowing that God created every last part of you give you a sense of purpose or responsibility?

“The solitude experience was a time of introspection,” said Dr. Randall Keeler, associate dean of academic affairs and professor of religion. “It was an opportunity to get away during the retreat and think more deeply about yourself, about who you are in community, about how you respond when things don’t go as you planned.”

The experience was designed with the understanding that students have different life experiences in regards to their spiritual beliefs or exposure to scripture.

“Regardless of our religious beliefs, we can learn from the words of wisdom on life’s big questions that have been written by other’s who have gone before us,” said Keeler.

While a quieter and more subdued activity than hiking or ziplining, the solitude retreat was a profound experience for students in a different way.

“The experience was awesome. We had the opportunity to sit by ourselves and reflect on a Bible verse,” said McCollough. “The sun was coming through the trees and I just kind of saw God everywhere.”





Deepening relationships and achieving goals

Not everything went as planned on the trip, including challenges with charter buses and traffic, long lines for the alternative experience to ziplining and a bear sighting, which prevented some students from hiking in the national park.

“The alternative is, we did these activities in the midst of adversity. They deepened their relationships and they turned any kind of difficult situation into a fun time of being together,” said Keeler.

And repeatedly, students like Colby Schlabach, a mathematics and economics major from Sugarcreek, Ohio, who describes himself as an introvert, spoke of reaching out to new people in addition to trying new experiences.

“It’s been a really great experience to get to know people and deepen the existing bonds with friends I’ve made so far,” said Schlabach. “I’m more confident going into the rest of the semester.”

Before returning to Bluffton, students, faculty and staff came together in prayer, wrote goals on purple bracelets and linked them together to signify the importance of relationships in achieving individual goals.

“We have witnessed students really encouraging each other as they are building stronger relationships in their Becoming a Scholar sections,” said Keeler, who also described the experience as a retention tool. “They’re growing and asking good questions and responding in ways that I wouldn’t expect them to respond.”

The chain is now hanging in Marbeck Center so students are routinely reminded of The Great Adventure, the goals they made in Tennessee and their journey to answer the question “Who am I?”

GREAT ADVENTURE PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Great Adventure is a retreat for first-year Bluffton University students to dig deeper into the ultimate goals of the Becoming a Scholar course. By taking students to a location with inspirational beauty and removed from their normal environment, they will be asked to ponder, process, and seek answers to questions concerning their own purpose and how it relates to their personal and vocational direction. They will participate in activities that help to solidify their place within the university community and reflect on their calling in contributing to the care of God’s creation.





Groundbreaking for the Austin E. Knowlton Science Center

After an Oct. 1, 2021, groundbreaking, construction is now underway on the Austin E. Knowlton Science Center at Bluffton University. The two-story, nearly 20,000 square foot building will feature six labs, faculty offices and interactive collaborative spaces for students.

The event kicked off Homecoming and Alumni Weekend 2021 at Bluffton with more than 100 people gathered for the ceremony.

“As most building projects go, there were years of visioning, planning and many conversations with students, donors, faculty and staff on what Bluffton needed to drive science teaching and learning into future generations,” said Dr. Jane M. Wood, president of Bluffton University. “This facility will help ensure science education here lives out Bluffton’s mission to ‘prepare all students for life as well as vocation.’”

Named after Austin E. Knowlton, the \$10 million building will feature teaching labs for nutrition and dietetics, chemistry and biology and is expected to be open in 2023.

Former chair of Bluffton’s Board of Trustees and current Knowlton Foundation Trustee, Ed Diller ’69, spoke on

behalf of the Knowlton Foundation, which provided the \$4 million naming gift for the science center.

“Bluffton is known for its quality education and, of course, for the quality of its graduates. Consequently, the Knowlton Foundation is very pleased to partner with Bluffton for the Knowlton Science Center,” said Diller. “This facility will enhance the great education that Bluffton already provides.”

Austin E. Knowlton was the owner and chairman of the Knowlton Construction Company in Bellefontaine, Ohio. The Knowlton Foundation’s goal is to improve and support STEM education, particularly on college campuses. The foundation also awards scholarships to Bluffton mathematics and science students each year.

Zachary Nobis ’22, a biology and chemistry double major from Bryan, Ohio, also spoke at the groundbreaking. One of Bluffton’s Knowlton Scholars, Nobis is currently applying to medical schools.

“The science faculty have prepared me well, and I’m excited for the faculty and the next generation of Bluffton science students to learn in the new building,” said Nobis. “Please



share our appreciation with the Knowlton Foundation for their investment in us and future generations of Bluffton alumni.”

Exercise science major Haley Byrnes '23 shared a few thoughts on the impact of Bluffton's last building project on her education.

“I often think about what my Bluffton story would be like in sports medicine if it wasn't for the Sommer Center,” said Byrnes, of Worthington, Ohio. “It has made a real difference in my educational experience, and I know the Knowlton Science Center will do the same.”

Funding for the Knowlton Science Center was part of the 5-year, \$26 million dollar Simply Innovate Campaign, which successfully concluded in June with additional funds providing annual support, endowment growth and academic program development.

Greg '77 and Donna (Thompson '78) Wannemacher, Lima, Ohio, and Dave '82 and Tanya (Lehman '83) Baumgartner, Berne, Ind., served as campaign chairs. Greg Wannemacher provided remarks during the ceremony.

“Bluffton alumni and donors carry a strong passion for leading lives of purpose. I want to share appreciation to the Simply Innovate donors: alumni, friends and of course the many faculty and staff for their commitments and gifts to the campaign,” said Wannemacher. “During the last few years of uncertainty with the pandemic, it is encouraging to be here today to break ground on the Knowlton Science Center.”

Construction is now underway at the Knowlton site, starting with the removal of a portion of Rosenberger Drive. The facility is expected to take 18-24 months to construct. Live views of the progress are available at www.bluffton.edu/webcam



WHO IS AUSTIN E. KNOWLTON?

Austin E. Knowlton was the owner and chairman of the Knowlton Construction Company, a business started in Bellefontaine, Ohio, in 1937. Knowlton and his company were responsible for more than 600 significant construction projects throughout Ohio and the Midwest, including school buildings, hospitals, libraries and post offices.

An avid sportsman, he was an original founding partner of the Cincinnati Bengals, where he served as chairman. He also held a major ownership interest in the Cincinnati Reds for many years.

In 1981, inspired by his success made possible by the education he received, Knowlton established his namesake foundation to promote the ideals of higher education, support student success, and enable colleges and universities to create more rewarding and inspiring educational experiences.





A GREAT DAY TO BE A BEAVER!

From campus tours to Beaver Tail-Gating, students, alumni and Bluffton fans came together for a full slate of activities Oct. 1-2 for Homecoming and Alumni Weekend 2021.

A few highlights:

- Members of the class of 2020 and 2021 reuniting at Southgate Lanes for a first-of-its-kind event at Bluffton.
- The 2000 football team getting back on the field during half-time of the football game for a recognition of their co-conference championship.
- Students and alumni proudly wearing the Homecoming 2021 t-shirt with artwork by Hannah Brown '20.



ALONG THE RILEY



Enrollment growth

A large incoming first-year class combined with successful retention efforts and growth in adult and graduate studies enrollments account for a 49-student increase over 2020-21 enrollment.

Bluffton's first-year class includes 242 students which is the largest first-year class since the 2011 class of 250. The class GPA is also higher and applications were also at an all-time high as were acceptances, with credit going to Bluffton's test-flexible option.

"The 2021 recruitment cycle was filled with many uncertainties, but one thing is certain: students want to come to Bluffton. We believe our extra efforts to safely and successfully 'do college' in person and on campus last year showed high school students that a thriving college experience in the midst of a pandemic is possible," said Robin Bowlus, vice president of advancement and enrollment management.

Total full-time enrollment of 774, which includes adult and graduate studies, has grown by 55 students in the last three years. Bluffton's adult and graduate studies programs have experienced increased enrollment thanks to the Corporate and Education Partner programs.

U.S. News rankings

Bluffton University has once again been named to the top tier of Midwest regional colleges in the "U.S. News & World Report" rankings released in September.

The 2022 edition of the magazine's "Best Colleges" guidebook ranks Bluffton 31 among 76 comparable institutions in 12 Midwest states. Now listed in the "U.S. News" rankings for 24 consecutive years, Bluffton has consistently ranked in the top tier of Midwest colleges.

The rankings also place Bluffton second in Top Performers in Social Mobility (up from 13) and ninth in Best Value Schools (up from 18) among Midwest colleges.



"Bluffton's innovative approach to a 4-year college education, including our Design Your Life curriculum, Bluffton Blueprint general education program and focus on Emotional Intelligence, help students get more out of their college experience and life," said Robin Bowlus, vice president of advancement and enrollment management. "We are pleased to once again be recognized for these markers of distinction as well as for our dedication to social mobility and affordability."

Dr. Wood reappointed



During their June meeting, the Bluffton University Board of Trustees completed a presidential review process and reappointed President Jane

M. Wood for a five-year term. The board noted her areas of strength as mission and planning, administrative management, budget and finance, enrollment

management, student life and representing the institution. President Wood came to Bluffton in summer 2018.

Members of the board also completed the Building Cultural Competencies within Organizations training program through Tiffin University. Five Bluffton employees completed the training earlier this year, and they will be rolling it out to the rest of Bluffton's faculty/staff starting this fall. The program is designed to help individuals work more effectively with people who are different from themselves and strengthen their awareness and understanding about diversity and inclusion through the lens of cultural intelligence.

"Strengthening diversity, equity and inclusion is central to the vision of Bluffton's We Flourish five-year strategic plan. We want all members of our campus community trained in cultural competency and that starts from the top down," said President Wood. "I'm excited to continue moving these efforts forward and am pleased the ad-hoc committee formed last year to focus on DEI efforts is now a standing committee."



NSCA recognition

Bluffton University's strength and conditioning program is now an approved and recognized program through the National Strength & Conditioning Association's (NSCA) Education Recognition Program (ERP).

"This recognition means great things for Bluffton students and provides validation for our program, which we already knew was excellent," said Amanda Beard, assistant



professor of health, fitness and sport science. “Our students will now be able to register for their CSCS knowing that Bluffton has adequately prepared them.”

NSCA is the leading certifying organization in the field of strength and conditioning, and students who plan to sit for the Certified Strength & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) exam must earn their 4-year degrees at an ERP recognized school. ERP verifies the content of the material taught as well as the credentials of faculty. Bluffton’s recognition is valid through March 31, 2024.



Transfer consortium

Bluffton is one of 14 independent colleges and universities and 10 community colleges participating in the Ohio Consortium for Transfer Pathways to the Liberal Arts. The initiative is organized by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and Ohio Foundation of Independent Colleges (OFIC) and funded by a grant from the Teagle Foundation and Arthur Vining Davis Foundation.

The grant-funded initiative streamlines the transfer process so community college students are better able to earn bachelor’s degrees in English, psychology or biology. “Our faculty and staff work closely with all transfer students to make sure their transition to Bluffton is as seamless as possible,” said Dr. Lamar Nisly, vice president and dean of academic affairs. “We have several articulation agreements and transfer relationships already in place, but we’re delighted to continue these efforts



Creating vibrant campus spaces

Adam Shanaman ’22, Colby Schlabach ’25, Alexa Chung ’25 and Madisyn Sheppard ’25 take advantage of Bluffton’s new hammock park located on Musselman Library green. Students are now able to check out hammocks for free, which are stored in Marbeck or set up their own using the poles permanently in place. The hammock park project was organized by Student Senate.

and increase access to a four-year degree for community college students.”

The goal of the consortium is to address some of the most challenging barriers faced by community college students transferring to four-year colleges and universities including developing discipline-specific guided pathways.

Cross-cultural learning

During the bi-annual cross-cultural forum, students shared about the challenges, beauty and culture of the locations they traveled to during summer 2021.

In Kentucky/Appalachia, students completed service work alongside Serving with Appalachian People (SWAP), a division of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

Students learned from and interacted with people who had recently crossed the border along the Rio Grande Valley during the San Antonio/South Texas experience.



In the U.S. Southwest, students visited national parks, learned about American Indian history including The Long Walk and completed service.

In Guatemala, lessons and experiences revolved around war, history and corruption; religion and the economy.

“We returned with more than memories,” said Laura Irwin ’23, a music education major who went to Guatemala. “Our perspectives on life will be forever enhanced.”



ALUMNOTES

1970-79

Ellyne (Ramseyer '70) and Harold **Sollenberger**, Kendallville, Ind., were selected to be the Citizens of the Year by the Kendallville Chamber of Commerce at their annual banquet. The Sollenberger's are very involved in volunteering activities throughout the community.

Beverly Ann (Fleming '71) Benner, Goshen, Ind., received her MSW in 1992 from the University of Illinois at Chicago and is a registered play therapist-supervisor and a licensed clinical social worker. She is working as a psychotherapist at a community mental health center, the Bowen Center.

Cynthia (Wagner '71) Gardner, Van Wert, Ohio, taught kindergarten and first grade for 30 years. She plays violin in a community orchestra, is a member of the church choir and bell choir, and sews for a group that supports the area hospice. Cynthia and her husband **Randy '69** fund an annual banquet that celebrates teachers.

Pamela Neff '71, Columbia, Md., earned her master's degree and Ph.D. in public administration and became a CPA. She worked in the federal government's Department of Health and Human Services and also began entrepreneurial pursuits in accounting, taxes and farming. Neff also volunteers for genealogy projects at her local church and several libraries.

Rachel (Habegger) Pannabecker '71, North Newton, Kan., retired as director of Kauffman Museum at

Bethel College in 2014 and remains a volunteer. She served on the team for traveling exhibits on racial stereotypes, WWI conscientious objectors, posters from the Chinese cultural revolution collected by the late Bluffton president Robert Kreider, and vaping and addiction.

Diane (Hertzler '71) Schrock, Goshen, Ind., taught K-12 music and choir, and college music education. She has enjoyed raising her family on a "farmette" and traveling. Schrock volunteers as co-director of an over-50s choir, helps with church music and teaches piano lessons. She has appreciated book studies on restorative justice during the pandemic.

Bernice "Bernie" Burr-Wilken '77, Laramie, Wyo., retired from the Albany County Public Library after 21 years as the interlibrary loan specialist. She is looking forward to spending more time with her five grandchildren, traveling with her husband, Gary, and expanding her micro-bakery, Tea & Cookies, LLC.

1980-89

Denise Miller '80, Sarasota, Fla., retired after 41 years of teaching middle school special education students.

Janeen Bertsche Johnson '86, Goshen, Ind., has served as campus pastor at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary for 26 years. She also has roles there as alumni director, admissions associate, development associate, and instructor. She recently wrote an

article for Vision journal about her journey with amyloidosis called "Unfolding Hope."

Nancy Bertsche Grittman '87 was promoted to senior director of program services in January 2021 at the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. She has been with the AAVSB since 2011. Nancy and her husband, Brad, live in Lenexa, Kan., with their daughter, Abigail.

Rachel Petropoulos '87, Sewanee, Tenn., is currently the energy specialist for the University of the South and addresses sustainability issues as they relate to facilities management on campus. She has finished her 21st year at this institution.

1990-99

Deanna Risser '93, Goshen, Ind., completed 22 years at Goshen College in July 2021, the last five as the vice president for finance. In August, she began as vice president for administration and CFO at Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, Ind.

Anthony Mirones '95, Dry Ridge, Ky., was recently named by the Ohio Associated Press Media Editors "Best Photographer" for the fourth time since 2005. He is currently a digital journalist at NBC4i.com in Columbus, Ohio. Since graduating from Bluffton, Tony has received numerous recognitions for excellence, including 11 Emmys from NATAS Ohio Valley and a coveted Society of Professional Journalists "Sigma Delta Chi Award."



John Hung

Class year: 1960

Major: Mathematics

For 1960s graduate, pursuit of knowledge and mentorship was nourished at Bluffton

When John Hung '60 reflects on his time at Bluffton, he remembers the people, the place and the preparation for the future.

A mathematics major, Hung was mentored by J. Richard (Dick) Weaver, a long-time professor of chemistry and physics at Bluffton.

"Somebody as brilliant as Professor Weaver could have gone to a big name school to teach, but he loved Bluffton," said Hung. "The professors really cared for us and left deep impressions on us."

Born in Peking (now Beijing) just before the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), which was followed by a four-year civil war, Hung's family moved a lot. They eventually landed in Tokyo where his father met Roy Wenger '32, a fellow professor at International Christian University. Upon his high school graduation, Wenger suggested Hung study at his alma mater, Bluffton.

"I had never heard of Bluffton or Mennonites before" said Hung.

Bluffton short-termer

The original arrangement was for Hung to study math for two years at Bluffton and then transfer to Ohio Northern University to pursue engineering. Instead, Hung progressed quickly and ran out of math classes to take, so Weaver provided independent study opportunities on Theoretical Mechanics and Electricity and Magnetism. Studying through the summer, Hung graduated with a degree in mathematics from Bluffton in just two years.

"I was a short-termer, but 1958-60 were two years that I enjoyed very much," said Hung.

To help pay for his education, Hung worked a variety of jobs from helping in the Ropp Hall kitchen to serving as the custodian in Hirschy House (nicknamed Hirschy Castle). Having grown up in big cities in Asia, life in small-town America was sometimes "awkward."



Schoolmates wondered why Hung didn't greet them in passing. "We don't say hi to strangers," Hung explained with a chuckle.

Career moves

Following graduation, Hung started graduate school, working as a part-time instructor, then became a prep school teacher before completing his first master's degree at Bowdoin College in Maine. Eventually, he returned to Ohio with his wife, Winnie, and worked in civil service at Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton for 42 years.

Through all of the career changes and moves, Hung remained in contact with Weaver, whom he considered a mentor and lifelong friend.

"Whenever I was close to Bluffton, I would take Bentley Road and do a loop around campus and drop in and talk to Professor Weaver," said Hung.

A love for language

Retired for the past six years, Hung remains committed to advancing his knowledge and skillset in different languages. He studied Japanese while in Japan and picked up German at Bluffton. Using tapes, CDs and some classes, he's learned fragments of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. He became a freelance translator/interpreter in 1980. He's also translated a restaurant cookbook, nearly 100 hymns and a book on Biblical inerrancy and discrepancies.





2021-22 Bluffton Board of Trustees

Back row

Doug Luginbill '85, Bluffton, Ohio, conference minister, Central District Conference of Mennonite Church USA

Tim Stried '98, Powell, Ohio, communications director at Ohio High School Athletic Association

Heather Reichenbach '99, secretary, Warsaw, Ind., Warsaw Community Schools board president

Greg Wannemacher '77, vice chair, Lima, Ohio, Wannemacher Total Logistics board chair

Kent Yoder '78, Middlebury, Ind., CFO at ReGen, Inc.

Mitch Kingsley '71, Bluffton, Ohio, attorney, Samuel W. Diller Co., LPA

Jim Amstutz '76, Akron, Pa., faculty member at Lancaster Mennonite High School

Lynn Carpenter '94, Lima, Ohio, foundation director, Lima Memorial Health System

Front row

Cheryl Hacker '81, board chair, Columbus, Ohio, retired attorney

Jane Roeschley '77, Graymond, Ill., retired pastor

Kerry Strayer '84, Columbus, Ohio, professor of communication at Otterbein University

Hannah Heinzekehr '07, Goshen, Ind., communications director, Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame

Alysa Short '02, Wauseon, Ohio, coordinator of volunteers at Ohio Conference MCUSA

Annette Heslep '89, Bluffton, Ohio, CFO, Grob Systems Inc.

Not pictured

Azra Nakicevic '98, Hilliard, Ohio, CPA, GBQ Partners

Joseph Recker '78, treasurer, Delaware, Ohio, retired entrepreneur

Bethny Ricks '06, West Liberty, Ohio, writer and entrepreneur

Luke Shipp '04, Perrysburg, Ohio, vice president at First Insurance Group

Steve Speicher '96, Bluffton, Ohio, regional vice president at Auto-Owners Insurance

Teresa (Endicott '97) Pfeiffer,

Payne, Ohio, started a new role as principal for grades 3-5 at Defiance Elementary School. Prior to her new position, she taught for 24 years at Wayne Trace Local Schools in grades 1-6. Teresa and her husband, Sean, have two children, Gage and Kylie.

Rachel Thompson '99, Vandalia,

Ohio, started a new job as a bankruptcy paralegal with the Greater Dayton Volunteer Lawyers Project.

2000-09

Darnel Parker '00, Liberty Township, Ohio, married Samantha McElfresh on Sept. 25, 2021.

Jackie Doner-Campbell '02,

Americus, Ga., is an ESOL teacher at Furlow Charter School. She was recently named an exemplary ESOL teacher by the Georgia Department of Education. She also received a Golden Apple Award which was given to her by a class of 2020 honor graduate. In her free time, she enjoys running, gardening and spending time with her family.

Diana Shoaf '02, Columbus, Ohio,

graduated from The Ohio State University with her MSW and Certificate of Leadership in Human Services Management in June 2021 and obtained her LSW. She will be an outpatient therapist at Columbus Springs. Shoaf is on the pastoral education team at her church and gets to preach from time to time.

Jill (Mack '04) Bingham and her

husband Scott, Canton, Ohio welcomed their first child, a boy, Asa Oliver Bingham on March 25, 2021.

Scott '05 and Amber **Steiner**, Berne,

Ind., welcomed a new addition to their family, Graylynn Nicole Steiner, on March 26, 2021. She is joined by her



loving brothers, Gabe age 11, Grandy age 9 and Gerrick age 4.

Carmen (Stechschulte '06) Cupples, Pandora, Ohio, became program coordinator for the OSU-Lima social work program in 2019. Carmen was awarded the 2021 Outstanding Teaching Award, a student-driven honor. She is married to **Brandon Cupples '01**, who has taught for 20 years at Liberty Benton High School. Together they have four girls.

Lowell Wyse '06, Tacoma, Wash., is a scholar of modern American literature and the environment with special interests in place, travel and environmental justice. He recently published "Ecospatiality: A Place-Based Approach to American Literature."

Pia Wendorff '08, Torslanda, Sweden, was recently promoted to head of internal communications at Polestar, an electric performance automaker.

She lives in Sweden with husband, Martin, their son, Elian, and Martin's older children, Samuel and Alicia.

Kate Barnett '09, Dublin, Ohio, started a new position with the Ohio High School Athletic Association in Columbus.

Danae King '09, Orrville, Ohio, graduated from Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Ind., on May 1, 2021, with a graduate certificate in theological studies.

2010-19

Jason Fisher '11 and Kaitlyn Leopold '15, Wapakoneta, Ohio, were married in November 2020. Jason started a full time coaching position at Ohio Northern University in 2020 as the assistant track and field coach. Kaitlyn is a dietitian/ personal trainer at Anytime Fitness.

Christopher '11 and Amy Malkowski, Sandusky, Ohio, welcomed their first child, Paxton Christopher Malkowski, on June 11, 2021. After spending a week in the Toledo NICU, Paxton was released to go home and is continuing to do well.

Brent '13 and Leah (Waltermeyer '13) Schroeder bought a home in Pennsauken, N.J. Brent is the individual giving and campaign director at UrbanPromise Ministries in Camden. Leah is a virtual executive assistant at Delegate Solutions. They are enjoying their new home along with their cat, Luther.

Scott '13 and Allison (Trent '13) Troyer moved to Grand Rapids, Mich., in July 2021. Scott started a new job as the youth violence prevention coordinator at Safe Haven Ministries in August.

John Parent '18, Delphos, Ohio, was promoted from high school teacher



OUR LEGACY

Bluffton alumni in the world

How do you turn your passion into your profession? During a recent Alumni Forum, students learned how **Brandon Freytag '08**, Troy, Ohio, turned a passion for gaming into a successful career as cofounder and president of talent at Loaded.

Loaded's client roster includes professional gamers and content creators including Shroud, summit1g, Lirik and QuarterJade. Freytag's clients have sponsorship deals with brands from Doritos to Logitech and have partnered with musicians including Ariana Grande and Marshmello.

Outside of the presentation, Freytag spoke to students individually, met members of Bluffton's esports student organization and toured the Esports Center in Neufeld Hall.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm with the students which was exciting to see," said Freytag. "I just want to let them know they can do it, too."





TEACHERS, EARN YOUR INTERVENTION SPECIALIST LICENSE

Licensed teachers now have an accelerated summer option to complete their coursework for an Ohio Department of Education intervention specialist license.



Participants will take classes in May, June and July and can complete their clinical practicum in the fall at their own school. Classes are offered online through Zoom videoconferencing. Upon completion, program participants are eligible to take the Ohio Assessments for Educators (OAE) examination to become a licensed intervention specialist for students with mild/moderate needs.

Bluffton also offers a similar summer program for teachers seeking their reading endorsement.

For more information about either summer program, visit www.bluffton.edu/maed

to his new role overseeing K-12 English/Language Arts curriculum for Lima City Schools in April of 2021.

IN MEMORIAM

Myron D. Brown '41, Lima, Ohio, passed away Aug. 8, 2021, at age 101.

Edison G. Lugibihl '50, Poland, Ohio, passed away May 2, 2021, at age 97.

Harold E. Stone x50, Harpster, Ohio, passed away June 18, 2021, at age 92.

Nina Crabtree '51, Cleveland, Ohio, passed away Aug. 16, 2021, at age 92.

E. Stanley Bohn '52, North Newton, Kan., passed away May 19, 2021, at age 90.

Carolyn M. Warren '52, Rittman, Ohio, passed away July 24, 2021, at age 91.

Robert Coon '55, Goshen, Ind., passed away July 28, 2021, at age 90.

Owen B. Etter x55, Mechanicsburg, Pa., passed away Nov. 5, 2020, at age 89.

Harvey H. Carter '58, Medina, Ohio, passed away Sept. 5, 2021, at age 85.

Sara (Yoder '65) VonGunten, Goshen, Ind., passed away June 4, 2021, at age 78.

Rita (Roth '66) Roberts, Bellefontaine, Ohio, passed away June 11, 2021, at age 76.

Cheryl Reynolds '68, Lima, Ohio, passed away April 28, 2021, at age 75.

Ann (Diller '68) Snyder, Columbus, Ohio, passed away Sept. 11, 2021, at age 75.

Sandra Sommers '68, Canandaigua, N.Y., passed away July 23, 2021, at age 74.

Richard A. Geiger '69, Pandora, Ohio, passed away Aug. 17, 2021, at age 74.

Christine (Ribero '70) Concannon, Norfolk, Va., passed away June 2, 2021, at age 72.

Kenneth C. Roth '72, Allentown, Pa., passed away Jan. 2, 2021, at age 71.

Minta Diane (Porter '73) McMillion, Columbus, Ohio, passed away April 18, 2021, at age 70.

Cora Green '74, Columbus, Ohio, passed away June 2, 2021, at age 69.

Jennifer (Rosebrook '76) McDougall, Hope Creek, Belize, passed away May 26, 2021, at age 70.

Roger L. Fuller '82, Delphos, Ohio, passed away Sept. 6, 2021, at age 76.

Gerald Pitman x86, Fairfield, Ohio, passed away Aug. 25, 2021, at age 57.

Brant E. Hilty '87, Kidron, Ohio, passed away June 18, 2021, at age 56.

Jeff Rickens '90, Lewis Center, Ohio, passed away Sept. 2, 2021, at age 53.

Chassity (Romick '95) Gallant, Tallahassee, Fla., passed away July 8, 2021, at age 48.

Phyllis J. (Augsburger '96) Barger, Findlay, Ohio, passed away May 3, 2021, at age 78.

Heather (Feasby '01) Cramer, Maria Stein, Ohio, passed away July 15, 2021, at age 41.

Aaron L. Shellhorn '02, Sycamore, Ohio, passed away Feb. 21, 2021, at age 40.

Heather (Clausen '10) Siefker, Wauseon, Ohio, passed away Sept. 3, 2021, at age 49.

Staff

Wendy Helmig, Lima, Ohio, passed away Aug. 30, 2021, at age 53.



LEARNING IN COMMUNITY

On any given day in Bluffton's Learning in Community class, students could be touring the Allen County Museum, studying data sets and trends in the classroom, or volunteering at a Lima-area non-profit agency. The class introduces students to the history of Lima, Ohio, as well as the people and agencies currently working to make a difference in the community.

"We want students to see that communities matter and to know they have agency in these systems as voters, leaders and engaged citizens," said Dr. Walt Paquin, professor of social work and community engagement coordinator for the class.

"We are also hopeful that our students will be exposed to new ways of thinking through the stories they hear from community leaders and the residents they meet at their service learning projects."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the class had been taught for its first three semesters in an ad-hoc, make-do way with students unable to volunteer in agencies or tour facilities.

"We were all excited to teach this class and then COVID hit," explained Dr. Perry Bush, professor of history. "It's a real morale booster to teach this course in the way we had intended."

The need at many of the partner agencies is greater than ever. For example, the West Ohio Food Bank, which is located in Lima but covers an 11 county region, experienced a 600 percent increase in need from 2020 to 2021, according to Dena Hedrick, program and compliance manager. Administrators attribute the increase to the fallout from the pandemic.

During their first service learning experience of the semester, student volunteers at the food bank assembled more than 100 senior commodity boxes which were immediately distributed. Other students volunteered at locations such as the Lima YMCA, Head Start, Allen County Board of Developmental Disabilities and Crime Victim Services.

David Voth '78, executive director of Crime Victim Services, said the volunteer experience allows students to learn "first-hand how problems are addressed by nonprofits."

"You can tell by their comments and questions that they see the value of what they are working on and that they feel good about their positive role."

Typically taken during a student's sophomore year, Learning in Community is the second class in the Bluffton Blueprint.



THE GIFT OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Joanne Passet '75 invests in Bluffton University for one simple reason, "because of all the schools I've attended, Bluffton had the greatest impact on me," said Passet. "It was the perfect place for me at a critical point in my life."

Opening the world

A self-described farm girl, Passet's passion for knowledge was kindled starting with her first class at Bluffton focused on China and the Far East. The class was part of an experimental curriculum called Human Exploration or HUEX, and students were immersed in just one class at a time. For Passet, the class opened her up to a world far beyond the farm fields of Ohio.

"Honestly, I just wanted to learn everything I could," said Passet.



Passet recalled mentors including longtime librarian/historian Delbert Gratz, who led Passet, her fellow classmates and community members on a Swiss Mennonite tour through Europe, and history professor John Unruh Jr., whose high standards improved her writing and research skills and was known for his passionate lessons.

"He was a rigorous but animated lecturer," said Passet. "He truly modeled what you want to see in a history professor."

Educating through experience

After graduating, Passet began her career as an elementary school teacher but quickly pursued graduate education and eventually earned doctorates in both library science and history. She served as a history professor at Indiana University East in Richmond, Ind., for many years, and brought her own lessons to life by routinely taking students to the Levi Coffin House in Wayne County, Ind., also known as the Grand Central Station of the Underground Railroad, or to Conner Prairie, an interactive historic park near Indianapolis.

Greatest impact

Passet's first-hand knowledge of the impact of experiential learning informed her decision to give to Bluffton's cross-cultural fund and to the donation of new equipment for exercise science students.

"The bottom line in my decision is what will have the greatest impact for the most students?" explained Passet.

The gifts also align with Passet's interests in the global community (she hosts international students through Bloomington Worldwide Friendship, volunteers as an ESL teacher and taught in Vietnam as a Fulbright Scholar) as well as healthy living and exercise.

Retired for the last seven years, Passet lives in Bloomington, Ind., and is currently writing a biography of Mary Wooley, a peace activist who served as president of Mount Holyoke College from 1901-37. She is active in her community, gardens, volunteers and plays French horn in a community band.





Kinetic learners

Last year, Amanda Beard, assistant professor of health, fitness and sport science, used videos and textbook explanations to teach labs in her Exercise Physiology class.

“A lot of the students in our majors are kinetic learners, hands-on learners,” explained Beard, “but it was so passive and hands off.”

Now, thanks to Joanne Passet’s gift, students are doing research and analyzing data using the iWorx Data Acquisition and Analysis Systems. The portable piece of equipment comes with accessories to run multiple different labs. Recent uses have helped students better understand how the brain communicates to muscles or how the heart and blood vessels all work together.

Confidence boost

“Doing these labs will be helpful to our students when they begin their graduate-level studies,” said Beard. “They’ll understand data analysis a lot better. It also gives them experience using technology, and it will give them a confidence boost, whether in internships or job shadowing, that some of the stuff they’re doing they’ve already experienced in class.

Students in the class range in major from pre-physical therapy to exercise science.

I invite you to consider making a year-end contribution on or before Dec. 31 to fund experiential learning initiatives at Bluffton including The Great Adventure, cross-cultural experiences and classroom equipment.

Enhancing the educational experience of our current students supports our mission to “prepare students of all backgrounds for life as well as vocation.”

Please use the envelope included in this magazine or go to www.bluffton.edu/giving to make a gift.



Robin Bowlus

Robin Bowlus, MBA '17
Vice president of advancement and enrollment management





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