

# BLUFFTON

A magazine for Bluffton University alumni and friends | Spring 2019 | Vol. 16 No. 2



**A GUIDE TO BUILDING  
YOUR GREATER PURPOSE**

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**A**s the daffodils and tulips begin to bloom and daylight lingers longer, Bluffton University joyfully concludes the academic year. For our graduates, it is the culmination of their education at Bluffton. But with every ending, a new beginning commences. For our graduates, this means the next step forward on their intended path. As we know from data compiled by our Center for Career and Vocation, Bluffton alumni have excellent post-graduation outcomes. Our most recent survey reveals 98 percent of the class of 2018 were employed, in graduate school, or engaged in long-term service within six months of graduation.

This outcome is possible because of Bluffton's ongoing focus on mission. Since 1899, our faculty and staff have truly educated students of exceptional character, expansive vision and deepened faith for lives filled with meaning and purpose.

It is an honor to now have the opportunity to educate the next generation. "Gen Z" is comprised of students who grew up with abundant access to technology, and they come to Bluffton with their own unique skillsets and challenges. How do you educate young people who grew up with an endless supply of data and facts at their fingertips?

Commencement speaker Riordan McClain, profiled in this issue, aptly explained this on graduation day. A Bluffton education does not provide answers to all of life's questions. Instead, it provides "the skill of how to think and how to pursue the truth." Bluffton's motto "The Truth Makes Free" continues to guide our faculty

and staff as they teach and mentor a new generation seeking truth in a post-internet era.

Many members of the class of 2023 have already been on campus for orientation. They're a long way from graduation, but through the Bluffton Blueprint, they will follow a guided pathway to Commencement Day and beyond. In this issue, you'll learn about the Bluffton Blueprint and some of the new experiences that will both stretch and shape our students. In fact, the class of 2023 will be the first to take part in the new sophomore Learning in Community class.

The Bluffton Blueprint, a four-year integrated, experiential learning curriculum, designed by Bluffton University faculty, will help Gen Z students find their greater purpose in life. Starting this fall, the campus community will come together to develop our own "blueprint" for the next five years through strategic planning. This will be a time for change, but also excitement and growth.

Thank you for your support and prayers during my first year leading at Bluffton University; I invite you to continue to walk with us as we live out our mission in preparing the next generation for their greater purpose.

Sincerely,

Jane M. Wood, Ph.D.  
President



# BLUFFTON

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Spring 2019 Vol. 16 No. 2

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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!

## A GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR GREATER PURPOSE

- 4 Bluffton Blueprint
- 6 The Great Adventure
- 8 Learning in Community
- 10 Cross-Cultural Experience
- 12 What Then Shall We Do?
- 14 Along the Riley
- 16 Alumnnotes
- 19 Alumni Profile
- 23 Preparing for Life and Vocation—Bluffton's Greater Purpose



**On the cover:** 2019 graduates Maria Hernandez, a mathematics and physics double major from Alamo, Texas; Quincy Salcido, a business administration and sport management double major from Van Wert, Ohio; and Kiera Suffel, a communication major from Edgerton, Ohio, are ready to seek their greater purpose.

Photo by Claire Clay '18



# BLUFFTON BLUEPRINT

## A GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR GREATER PURPOSE

How do you prepare the next generation of students for a future that will be different than anyone can imagine?

At Bluffton University, the answer is through the Bluffton Blueprint—four foundational courses, one for each year of college, which create a core of resiliency for the next generation of Bluffton students.

Featuring both traditional classroom learning and experiential components, the Bluffton

Blueprint starts with The Great Adventure, a fall break retreat focused on the mind, body and spirit, in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. These experiences will push students to look at their majors and futures in unexpected ways.

From changing careers to moving across the country, the Bluffton Blueprint provides a framework for the challenges that come with life and, ultimately, for their greater purpose.



----> WHO AM I?



----> WHO AM I IN  
COMMUNITY?



## BEYOND THE TRADITIONAL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

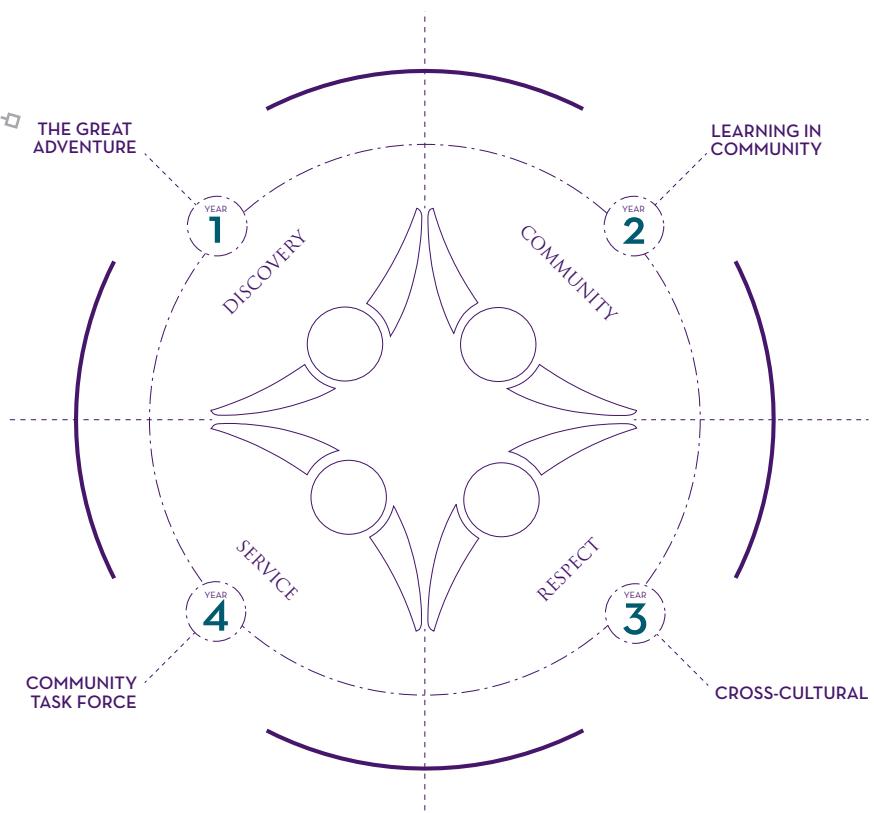
Each course within the Bluffton Blueprint aligns with one of Bluffton's enduring values—Discovery, Community, Respect and Service. These courses, as part of the Bluffton University Enduring Values General Education Program, will allow students to see how different groups of people come together to create positive change. The experiential components will also prepare students for their future in ways that go beyond developing specific skills in their major. The Bluffton Blueprint, according to Dr. Lamar Nisly, vice president and dean of academic affairs, moves forward the concept of the traditional college experience.

"We hope this is going to be learning like students have never before experienced," said Dr. Nisly. "Students will gain significant insight as they go through the program that will push them into contexts where they encounter people with a wide variety of experiences and backgrounds. Those experiences will set them up well as they move into the world."

## SKILLSETS FOR SUCCESS

While the Bluffton Blueprint is new, the knowledge and support that comes with a Bluffton education has helped alumni for nearly 120 years position themselves for change. Some of the blueprint courses, including the senior capstone, have been part of Bluffton's general education program for years. However, the strength of those courses combined with the new experiences will advance the benefits of a Bluffton education in a whole new way.

"I knew community was important when I came to Bluffton, but I've come to appreciate the true richness of



this community," said President Jane M. Wood, Ph.D. "That community facet of Bluffton works well with the experiential learning pieces that we are developing. It's the part of our students' education that will ground them for all the changes that come with life."

## WHAT THEN SHALL WE DO?

Throughout their four years, students will be challenged to reflect on a different question about themselves in relation to the enduring value, course topic and experience presented each year. As students make their way to their senior year, the question intentionally moves from an individual reflection to a look at their collective role in the wider world. The final question, "What then shall we do?" is the same question John the Baptist is challenged to answer in Luke 3:10-14.



WHO AM I IN  
THE WORLD?



WHAT THEN  
SHALL WE DO?





YEAR  
1

# THE GREAT ADVENTURE

Surrounded by the vast natural beauty and immensity of the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee, The Great Adventure, a fall break retreat for all first-year Bluffton University students, provides the opportunity to reflect on the big questions in life. *Who am I? What is my truth? What values do I live by?*





**STARTING DURING FALL BREAK IN 2020, THE GREAT ADVENTURE WILL HELP BLUFFTON'S FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS GROW CLOSER TO EACH OTHER, DISCOVER THEMSELVES AS INDIVIDUALS AND EXPLORE THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF GOD.**

While the experience is still being developed, some key components have already been determined.

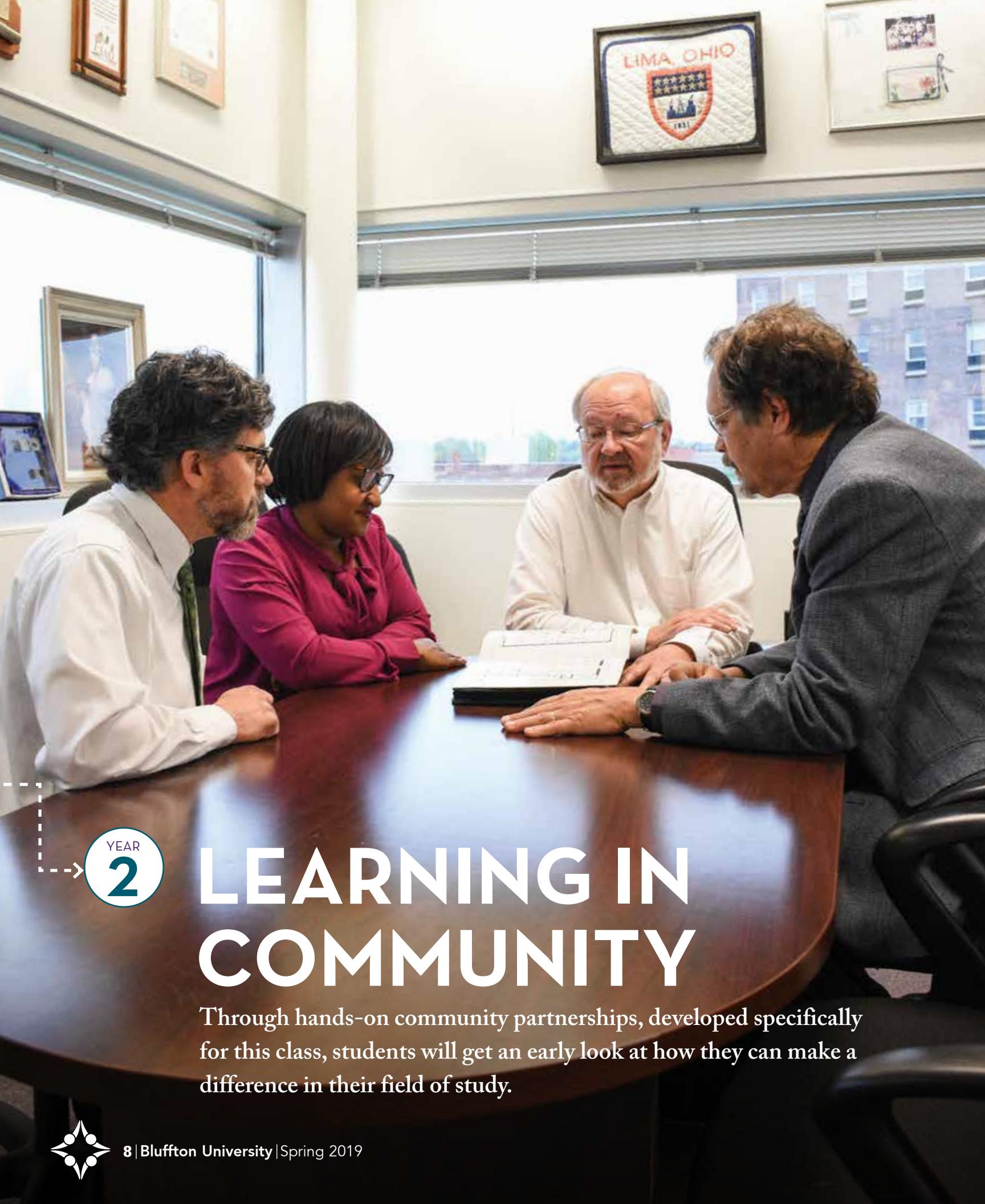
Students will be asked to reflect on who they are and where they want to go in life. "We want them to imagine that trajectory and make plans so they can dream big but be grounded in reality," explained Dr. Lamar Nisly, vice president and dean of academic affairs. "We will ask them to map out the steps they need to take to reach those goals."

Dr. Randy Keeler, associate dean of academic affairs, is working on plans for the students to challenge themselves physically and mentally through an "adventure activity."

"We place limits on ourselves, but we want our students to challenge and confront their fears so they can open up new ways of imagining who they will become," explained Keeler.

Finally, an overarching spiritual component will help students envision how faith can be central to their larger vision. And while many students come to Bluffton with a faith background, Nisly says some do not, but "we all ask the bigger questions in life."





YEAR  
**2**

# LEARNING IN COMMUNITY

Through hands-on community partnerships, developed specifically for this class, students will get an early look at how they can make a difference in their field of study.



## THE BLUFFTON-LIMA CONNECTION

In 1969, associate professor of sociology John McCartney led an interterm that brought Bluffton students to nearby Lima, Ohio, to study the city's economic struggles. Forty years later, professor of history Dr. Perry Bush published "Rust Belt Resistance," a look into both the struggles and resilience of Lima. Over the years, dozens of Bluffton students have completed internships in the community, alumni have become Lima residents, and many are now leading major agencies and non-profits in the region.

Now, Bluffton University and the City of Lima are connecting in a new and meaningful way through Learning in Community.

"With this class, I think we're on the forefront of helping students early in their college career understand multiple ways they can have an impact in the world," said Dr. Walt Paquin, director of social work and the outreach coordinator for the class. "Gen Z wants to give back. They want to apply their learning. This class will help students move outside of the classroom and into the community."

## A NEW WAY TO LEARN

In developing the partnerships, Paquin found that colleges and universities routinely implement service-learning components into their coursework, but what Bluffton is developing, is unique.

"To have students across various majors spend an entire semester studying community, being engaged in one particular community and completing internship-type work in that community is something I haven't found. We really are building something," explained Paquin, who has spent the past year developing relationships in Lima. So far, 11 agencies have committed to partnering with Bluffton. Six of the agency liaisons are Bluffton alumni.

## COMING TOGETHER FOR A COMMUNITY

The class will be taught by a team of professors in a range of disciplines. Paquin, Bush and Dr. Darryl Nester, professor of math, will serve as the main core. Data analytics will be a major component, as well as a piece where students get practical work experience at the partner agencies. Lima's city administration is one of the key partners.

"I think all parties will benefit from this. I think students will benefit, the university will benefit and certainly the community and individual agencies and organizations will benefit," explained David Berger, mayor of Lima, who elaborated on the value to students.

"I think for many students the connection between what they're studying and what they will be doing in practical terms is sometimes difficult to make. Actually being active in some internship or co-op experience helps ground their studies in ways that I think can either inspire those studies or change those studies," said Berger. "It can help sharpen a person's interests and hopefully make their academic pursuits even richer."

The class will be piloted during the spring 2020 semester and will be fully integrated into the general education program for the class of 2023.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS





YEAR  
**3**

# CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE

A pivotal element of a Bluffton education, cross-cultural experiences are explorations for growth and new understandings. They offer a journey of personal discovery into the richness and challenges of other cultures and communities.



## DESIGNED FOR CONTEMPORARY LEARNING

While cross-cultural study has been a fixture at Bluffton for decades, it became a pivotal element of the general education curriculum in 1995. These experiences are foundational to developing Bluffton students into well-rounded, globally-minded citizens, and are often described by participants as life-changing.

“Coming into this I had little knowledge about the meanings of the words service and culture, but I now know the true meaning of both of those words whole heartedly,” said Nick Taflinger ’21, a business administration major from Lima, Ohio, who went to Appalachia. “I’m thankful for the opportunity.”

While exploring eastern Kentucky, students work with SWAP (Serving with Appalachian People), a Mennonite Central Committee program that serves low-income families. Students become acquainted with families whose homes are being repaired by students while also learning about the social and environmental effects of the coal mining industry and other challenges faced by residents of the region.

Other students who took part in a domestic experience traveled to Chicago and stayed at the Olive Branch Mission, a homeless shelter on the south-side of the city, to better understand the social, racial and economic struggles low-income families face in an urban environment.

## FROM INDIVIDUAL TO GLOBAL CITIZEN

Internationally, students traveled this May to Bolivia, a land challenged by poverty but blessed with natural resources and breathtaking beauty; Botswana, where students learned how residents live, work and worship in a village very different from Bluffton; and Israel Palestine, where students visited significant biblical and historical sites while learning about religious and political conflicts in the Middle East.

“Going to Botswana was so overwhelming and incredible. The only way I can describe it is indescribable. We made so many relationships and did things we never thought we would do!” said Jules Frazier ’21, a psychology and social work double major from Nova, Ohio. “This trip really changed us all and has helped me believe that I can do anything.”

More than 3,000 Bluffton alumni have studied in international and domestic locations. The majority of students undertake this challenge during a May-term experience following their junior year. However, some choose to immerse themselves in a new culture through semester experiences in Chicago, Washington, D.C., or abroad.

## BRINGING THE BIGGER PICTURE OF A BETTER WORLD CLOSER

Program destinations for the 2019-20 academic year include China: Culture in Transition; Germany and Central Europe: Focus on the Holocaust; Guatemala: Culture and History; Arizona: The Hopi, Navajo and Zuni; and Kentucky: Sharing with Appalachian People.



**BOLIVIA**



**BOTSWANA**



**KENTUCKY**



**CHICAGO**



**ISRAEL/PALESTINE**



YEAR  
4

# WHAT THEN SHALL WE DO?

A student's education comes full-circle during the final course in the Bluffton Blueprint, Christian Values in a Global Community, when students are challenged to answer the same question posed to John the Baptist.





“At Bluffton, I learned more about and have come to appreciate the idea of service. I volunteered off-campus, on-campus and served as a leader in a club. Service is something we can practice throughout our lives no matter where we go.”

*Kiera Suffel '19*

REAL ESTATE MARKETING COORDINATOR,  
SUPERIOR PLUS REALTORS



“When I first came here, I remember asking myself, ‘why are people so nice?’ I eventually realized that we attract the same energy we give off. The importance of building relationships and having positive mentors and friends is one of the most important things I discovered at Bluffton.”

*Quincy Salcido '19*

ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR,  
BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY



“I had never thought about conflicts on the other side of earth. I had never thought about hunger and poverty. I had never thought about federal government funding. Because of the Christian Values in a Global Community class, I have become more thoughtful on those issues.”

*Chanhee Hwang '19*

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION MAJOR



“Bluffton prepared me to go into the real world. All aspects of my university experience, from Forums to my extracurriculars, made me ready to move on and succeed. Being a first generation college student was scary at first but Bluffton removed that fear, and I graduated with confidence.”

*Thomas Wagler '19*

QUALITY SYSTEMS SPECIALIST,  
WANNEMACHER ENTERPRISES



“Through the community I found at Bluffton, I have noticeably seen a growth spiritually, I have gradually learned how to break out of my introversion, and my capacity for compassion has expanded immensely.”

*Hannah Brown '19*

NEW YORK CITY MENNONITE  
VOLUNTARY SERVICE, XAVIER MISSION

# Graduation Outcomes

*class of 2018*

**98%**

OF GRADUATES ARE  
EMPLOYED OR IN  
GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OR LONG-TERM SERVICE  
WITHIN SIX MONTHS  
OF GRADUATION

*– Class of 2018*

**91%**

OF STUDENTS SEEKING  
EMPLOYMENT SAID  
THEIR BLUFFTON DEGREE  
WAS IMPORTANT IN  
OBTAINING THAT JOB.

*– Class of 2018*

## TOP 5 INDUSTRIES for recent Bluffton graduates (5 year average)



1. K-12 EDUCATION



2. HEALTH CARE



3. MANUFACTURING



4. MENTAL AND  
BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH



5. HIGHER  
EDUCATION



# ALONG THE RILEY



## Peace Oratorical Contest

Hannah Conklin '19, a convergent media major and journalism minor from Westerville, Ohio, was named the winner of Bluffton University's annual C. Henry Smith Peace Oratorical Contest held April 3.

Conklin's speech, "Water Access as Inequality: A Vision for Justice and Healing," explored how the global water crisis uniquely and disproportionately impacts women and girls. She will compete against winning students from other North American Mennonite colleges during the bi-national competition.

Kiera Suffel '19, a communication major and psychology minor from Edgerton, Ohio, came in second and examined how the church can be more supportive for struggling married couples.

Zachary Lykins '21, a communication major and Bible and theology minor from Pickerington, Ohio, discussed Christian persecution and how we can support those who are persecuted and have no voice. He placed third.

This contest is administered on Bluffton's campus by the communication and theatre department. Dr. Gerald Mast, professor of communication, has taken the lead for 23 years.

## Civic Engagement Day

Bluffton University's year-long exploration of the theme, "When Talking is Tough: Respectful Conversations in a Divided

Nation," concluded during Civic Engagement Day held April 3.

Throughout the year, Bluffton's students, faculty and staff drew on the theme to learn about and put into practice ways to better engage with each other. On Civic Engagement Day, students attended workshops, many led by their peers, including hands-on activities led by Dr. Melissa Friesen's Theatre for Social Change class.



More than 30 workshops were offered focusing on the theme from perspectives ranging from faith to science to social work. Marathana Prothro, assistant professor of communication, provided the Civic Engagement Day Forum.



## Keeney Peace Lecture

During Bluffton University's annual Keeney Peace Lecture, John Sharp shared "Changing the World One Life at a Time: The MJ Sharp Story." The lecture took place on March 26, just days from the two-year anniversary of the confirmation of MJ's murder in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While the details of MJ's death continue to be a mystery, Sharp shared the details of MJ's life that left a tangible impression on the world.

Sharp ended the presentation with an invitation to Bluffton students to spread peace.

"I tell you the story of MJ's life to invite you to become a reconciler," said Sharp. "You don't need to be called. You don't have to go to Africa. Engage wherever you are in life."

Bluffton's Keeney Peace Lectureship was established in 1978 by the family of William Sr. and Kathryn Keeney to express appreciation for Bluffton's influence and to strengthen the continuing peace witness among the community.



## Athletes of the Year

Bluffton University presented its top athletics awards April 16 to standout athletes in football and volleyball.

Isaac Zickafoose of Middlebury, Ind., received the 2019 A.C. Burcky Award as outstanding senior male athlete of the year.

Zickafoose was the first Bluffton athlete to earn American Football Coaches Association All-American status, garnering 2nd Team honors in 2018. He is Bluffton's all-time leader in sacks with 35.5, sack yards with 228, tackles for loss with 60.5, tackles for loss yards with 308, quarterback hurries with 15 and fumble return yards with 80.

The Burcky Award is named for the late professor of physical education and coach who served Bluffton from 1922-68. A.C. Burcky was inducted into the NAIA Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. In 1970, the A.C. Burcky addition to Founders Hall was dedicated in his honor.



Erin Weisgarber of Bolivar, Ohio, received the 2019 Kathryn E. Little Award as outstanding senior female athlete of the year.

A setter on the volleyball team, Weisgarber finished as Bluffton's all-time career assists leader with 4,319 and all-time career assists per set with 9.79. A two-year team captain, she was a four-time Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference First Team Selection.

Weisgarber's award is named for Kathryn Little, who served in Bluffton's health, physical education and recreation department and in athletics from 1958-74. Little was a member of the first class inducted into the Bluffton Athletics Hall of Fame.



### Riley Creek Festival

Bluffton's annual Riley Creek Festival featured block-party style events including family-friendly inflatables, face painting and a shaved-ice truck. Members of student organizations completed hands-on activities with the Lil' Sibs and community members including flower planting with the Sustainability Club, sensory crafts with the Social Work Club and an Ooblek experiment with the Science Club.

This year's theme was "Ducks in Space," and the event concluded with the traditional rubber duck race on Riley Creek. Rubber ducks were sold for \$1 each, with proceeds benefitting the Bluffton Public Library. Prizes also featured a space theme.

Riley Creek Festival concluded the university's Lil' Sibs weekend, April 12-13.



### Global Festival

Wilmar Caal Botzoc '20, a social work and sociology double major from Guatemala, leads Bluffton students Anteneh Asratu '20, Katelyn Amstutz '19 and Emily Rush '19 in a spontaneous group drumming performance. Behind them, Paul Neufeld Weaver, director of global education and his grandson Logan Kerns join in.

Caal Botzoc shared his talents during Global Festival, which also featured a parade of flags, cultural displays and international food. The event was co-sponsored by International Connection (ICon), Multicultural Student Organization and Marbeck Center Board.

### Esports Center established

Bluffton's recently established Esports Club is now meeting and connecting in the new Esports Center located in the basement of Neufeld Hall. The Esports Center features five fully-equipped gaming stations, an 82" flat screen TV with screensharing capabilities and space for students to gather.

Esports is a growing, team-based community that focuses on the organized and competitive playing of contemporary video games. Dr. Zachary Walton, associate professor of communication, is serving as the adviser. He's excited about engaging current and future students in a new way.

"I really like what esports has to offer to prospective students that may not be



interested in campus athletics but still interested in competition, teamwork and honing the skill of being in a community," said Walton, who has taught a special-interest course on video games.

Walton also hopes to make Bluffton's Esports Club distinctive by integrating learning opportunities and critical thinking.



# ALUMNOTES

## 1950-59

**John Stutzman '50** and his wife Erma moved to Ontario, Canada, in December 2018. The move from Illinois puts them closer to a large, supportive group of family. Their home is in Clair Hills Retirement Community in Waterloo.

**Martha (Kraft '54) Hug**, Gresham, Ore., sings in her church choir and spends her summers at her vacation home in Elgin, Ore. Visitors are welcome!

**Don '59 and Joyce (Detwiler x61) Hostetler** have lived in Bluffton, Ohio, since 2002 and attend many Bluffton University events. Don retired after 44 years as a veterinarian, and Joyce is a retired teacher. They have two children and three grandchildren.

## 1960-69

**Shirley Jane Jackson '66**, Exeter, N.H., thought she was retired for good from college-level teaching, but after an 18-month reprieve, she has decided to teach again. She is excited to begin teaching college composition, a course she helped plan, at New Hampshire Technical Institute in mid-August.

**Tom Gross '67**, Washington, Ill., was named recipient of the 2018 Washington Roots Award by the Washington Illinois Historical Society. The annual award is given to a person with a notable career achievement who attended grade and high school in Washington. Tom and wife **Judy (Osborn '68)** have three children and four grandchildren.

**Karen (Esmonde '68) Diller**, Fort Thomas, Ky., was a teacher and small business partner before becoming a full-time mom and school and church volunteer. She enjoys container gardening, birding and traveling. Karen and husband **Ed '69** have been married 50 years. They have two children and five grandchildren.

**Karyl (Gratz '68) Eckenwiler** and her husband Roger celebrated 50 years of marriage last October. Karyl retired after 32 years as a teacher and now enjoys time with their grandchildren, family and traveling. They have four sons and eight grandchildren.

**Lyndella (Larlham '69) Andrews**, Saint Marys, Ohio, was a teacher and was elected five times to city council, serving as president during her fifth term. She and her husband **Burton '70** have two children and three grandchildren. Burton, a retired teacher, is Bluffton University's sports information photographer.

**Mary Fran (Gumper '69) Bennett** retired in 2007 as manager of the Chardon Library in Chardon, Ohio. She and husband Jack then moved to Prescott, Ariz., where they enjoy hiking and exploring national parks. Mary is a docent for the Sharlot Hall Western History Museum. They have three children and two granddaughters.

**Jan Benroth '69**, Painesville, Ohio, is retired from corporate finance and sold his internet-based business selling auto supplies two years ago. Jan and his wife **Carol (Gregg '66)** have been married 38 years, have one son and now share their home with Chloe, a five-year-old rescue schnauzer.

**Kathleen (Osborne '69) Benroth**, Fort Wayne, Ind., is retired. She plays bridge and other card games, is a prolific letter writer and has a passion for antiques, especially American primitives. She and husband **Roger '67**, have two sons.

**Lorren Caffee '69**, Bluffton, Ind., is retired from practicing law in Indiana and St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

**Steve Clark '69**, Paulding, Ohio, retired from Paulding Exempted Village Schools, having taught American history and driver education and serving six years as athletic director. He was head football coach for 17 years. Steve and his wife **Mary (Delp '67)** will celebrate their 52nd anniversary in July. They have a daughter and two granddaughters.

**Corwin Croy '69**, Bluffton, Ohio, and his wife Rita Dietrich have been married 42 years. They enjoy snow skiing and recumbent cycling when not serving as adjunct instructors in Bluffton's classrooms. Corwin, a retired teacher and administrator, is also active in the Bluffton Lions Club and The Lions Foundation Board.

**Georgia (Crow '69) Daria**, Bethel, Ohio, retired in 2012 from teaching English at Bethel-Tate High School. She works at her local free store, sings in her church choir and stays busy with her family. She has four children, 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Ed Diller '69**, Fort Thomas, Ky., continues to practice real estate and corporate law at Taft Stettinius & Hollister in Cincinnati. His hobbies include serving on non-profit boards,



church and community volunteer work, promoting downtown Cincinnati, and networking and traveling with his wife **Karen '68**, with whom he has two children and five grandchildren.

**Larry '69 and Pamela (Cole '69)**

**Faulk**, Delaware, Ohio, are both retired and active in their church. They spend a lot of time in the summer at Geneva-on-the-Lake in Ohio. Larry and Pamela have two children and three grandchildren.

**Richard A. Geiger '69**, Pandora, Ohio, is a retired accounting controller. He volunteers every week at Et Cetera Thrift Store in Bluffton. He has also completed assignments with Mennonite Disaster Service and Christian Peacemaker Team. Richard has four children and 11 grandchildren.

**Susan (Malin '69) Hamilton**, Waynesfield, Ohio, is a retired elementary school teacher. She is a certified master gardener and volunteer Ohio certified park district naturalist. Susan has two daughters and five grandchildren.

**Bob Hewitt '69**, Chambersburg, Pa., retired in 2008 from Shippensburg University but continues to present and train in cultural humility, multi-ethnic church development and family development. He sings on his church's worship team and serves on a spiritual advisory committee. Bob and his wife Nicole have three children, two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

**Jan (Siebert '69) Holcomb**, New Bremen, Ohio, retired after teaching for 31 years. She then worked two five-year terms as an aide at New Bremen Public Library. She is a member of the handbell choir and chancel choir at St. Paul UCC. Jan and husband **Norm '70** have two children and four grandchildren.

**Linda Hoover '69**, Galion, Ohio, retired in 2012 after 38 years of teaching, which included nine years of home economics and 29 years of special education. She immediately began volunteering at Galion Historical Society and was elected to their board in 2013.

**Thomas Keller x69**, Washington, Maine, served in the U.S. Navy for four years. He earned two college degrees and worked as an accountant. Thomas later became a CFO at two companies. He retired in 2015.

**Jim Langhals '69**, Delphos, Ohio, retired from Delphos Jefferson High School as an English and history teacher, and is retired as the broker/owner of Jim Langhals Realty. He and his wife **Paula (Ransome '70)** have three daughters and five grandchildren.

**Wendy Miller '69**, Bloomsburg, Pa., retired after teaching vocal/choral and music history for 30 years, mostly at Bloomsburg University. She remains an active soprano soloist, enjoys visiting historic sites on the East Coast and in Pennsylvania, sews and cooks as hobbies, and is active in her church.

**Linda (Dolbey x69) Overholt** and her husband Roger have been married 51 years. They own and work a farm in Van Wert, Ohio. Linda volunteers at their church, including with preschool Bible school. They have three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

**Phil Pannabecker '69**, Tucson, Ariz., is retired but continues to work part-time for the same non-profit for whom he worked for 31 years. He enjoys time with family, cycling and staying at their cabin in the mountains southwest of Denver. Phil and his wife Jan have three daughters, two granddaughters and one grandson.



## Unearthing the Lincoln Hall cornerstone

Featuring items ranging from a Bible donated by a Bluffton resident to coins including a Buffalo nickel, the contents of the Lincoln Hall cornerstone were on display during an exhibit at Musselman Library on May Day weekend. The small time capsule, tucked inside the cornerstone, was dedicated during a public ceremony on May 21, 1923, as the ground floor of the new men's dormitory began to take shape.

Learn more about the contents curated by **Carrie (Holcomb '99) Phillips**, archives and special collections librarian, with assistance from **Justin Berg '19**, archives assistant.

[www.bluffton.edu/cornerstone](http://www.bluffton.edu/cornerstone)



**Paulette (Luginbill '69) Reichenbach**, North Manchester, Ind., has enjoyed a career caring for children in the home, school, church, camp and community. She has been a part-time staff and volunteer at One World Handcrafts, a local fair trade store, for the past six years. She and husband **Doug '67**, have five children and 10 grandchildren.

**Jim Richard '69**, Wooster, Ohio, has practiced law in Wooster since he graduated from law school. He and his wife Marcia have three children and eight grandchildren.

**Barbara (Fretz '69) Ross**, Longmont, Colo., taught 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades for 27 years before retiring to help with her grandchildren. She also volunteered at their local elementary school. She and husband Archie have been married 47 years. They have two children and four grandchildren.

**Tom '69 and Mary Lou (Fretz '70) Roush**, Lima, Ohio, have been married 48 years. They have three children and six grandchildren. Tom enjoys playing tennis and golf in Lima and at their winter home in Estero, Fla., where they are also active in the Methodist church.

**Kay (Motter '69) Sommer** married **Jim Sommer '68** in 2018 and moved to Tremont, Ill. After retiring from teaching in 2001, Kay worked at Beining Nursery & Landscaping, stayed active in Trinity United Methodist Church and as a Delphos Canal Museum trustee. She has two children, four step-children, four grandchildren and eight step-grandchildren.

**Maggie (Snyder '69) Sprunger**, Glen Allen, Va., is a retired teacher. She is active at her church, First Mennonite Church of Richmond, where she is on a support team for an Afghan refugee family and is chair of the worship commission. Maggie and her husband

**Joe '68** have three children and six grandchildren.

**Nedra (Brookmyer '69) Steury**, Fort Wayne, Ind., enjoys gardening and is a volunteer gardener at Hospice Home in Fort Wayne. She also enjoys porcelain painting, having pieces scattered across the U.S., with some on display at the World Museum in Oklahoma. Her blended family includes her husband Art, five children and six grandchildren.

**Mary (Hostetler '69) Witte**, Decatur, Ind., is a retired high school English teacher. She continues as her church's music director, now at 51 years, and as a private keyboard instructor for the past 45 years. Mary also volunteers at nursing home and day care music programs. She has three children and two grandchildren.

## 1970-79

**Jim Cotner '74**, Whitehouse, Ohio, retired in 2016 after 36 years with BP Oil Company. He and his wife Kathy are enjoying retirement by spending time with their two grandchildren, other family and friends, and traveling in their RV. Jim figured out his calling is to be retired and a grandpa.

**Roger Hoffman x74**, retired in June 2018 after 45 years as manager of Peerless Ohio Glove Co., in Bluffton. He and his wife Sandy have moved to Tavares, Fla., to remove themselves from the Buckeye state's winters.

**Douglas Meister '74**, Louisville, Ky., retires June 30, 2019, after 45 years in ministry, with 27 years of service at Jeffersontown Christian Church – Disciples of Christ in Louisville. He plans to sleep for a month and then read the Sunday newspaper on Sunday!

**Marty Riggs '74**, Marion, Ohio, retired from education in 2005 to coach

baseball at Duke University in Durham, N.C. For the past eight years he has worked for the Columbus Clippers baseball team. He also attends many events for his 12 grandchildren.

**Cynthia (Neufeld '76) Smith** and her husband Roger finished 30 years of ministry in July 2018 at the Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, Kan. They now reside in Jackson, Miss., where they lead a service adventure unit through Mennonite Mission Network.

**Vicki (Packard '78) Cooper**, Springfield, Ohio, earned a master's degree in educational leadership and her curriculum, instruction and professional development (CIPD) and principal licensures from the University of Dayton. She currently teaches English and works as an educational leader.

**Christopher Benson '79**, Grand Ledge, Mich., is retired from the Michigan State Capitol Tour & Information Office. He and his wife Mary enjoy traveling, volunteering at their church and prying into the lives of their two grown children, who live and work in metro Detroit.

**Beth (Gundy '79) Boehr**, Bluffton, Ohio, is working as an on-call physical therapist assistant. She and her husband **Jeff '78**, who has completed seminary, are ready to go where life takes them next. They enjoy time with their three grandchildren as often as they are able.

**Connie (Jackson '79) Brew**, Chesapeake, Va., has been married to **Terry '82** for 36 years. She retired as a private elementary school teacher and for the past 10 years has served as a ministry assistant at her church. She and Terry travel annually to Norway to visit family. They have two children and four grandchildren.



**Riordan McClain**

State representative

87th District, Ohio

Bluffton '06

Major: Sport management

## From sports information to the Statehouse

If Riordan McClain had to summarize in one word his journey to serving in the Ohio House of Representatives it would be “unexpected.”

“There were twists and turns in my path that I wouldn’t have projected,” explained McClain, but it all started with his education at Bluffton.

### Taking advantage of opportunities

While in past generations college graduates typically stayed in the same general field for the course of their career, the professional world has changed, and younger Bluffton alumni, like McClain, are taking advantage of opportunities in many different industries.

McClain came to Bluffton to study sport management and play baseball. As a sports information student assistant under Tim Stried '98 and Bill Hanefeld '05, he started building his resume and upon graduating, he was offered a graduate assistant position in the sports information office at the University of Findlay, where he also earned his MBA. Over the years, he worked in retail, market analytics and brand building and took a chance with Doc Investments, a start-up in the precious metals industry.

“I really enjoyed the entrepreneurial spirit of starting from scratch, building a brand and forming a way to make a business profitable. When I started, it was an industry I knew nothing about, but I knew how to learn and I knew how to connect to a consumer,” said McClain.

But in 2017, when the state representative for the 87th district resigned, McClain was ready to serve Wyandot, Crawford and Morrow Counties and parts of Marion and Seneca counties at the Statehouse. He was appointed in 2018 and elected to his first full-term one year later.

### Serving God, family and the 87th district

While he’s still involved in Doc Investments, “Columbus takes the majority of my time and should be my primary focus,” explained McClain, who represents about 120,000 of Ohio’s 11 million people.

Despite some long days (and nights), McClain says, “I’m where I want to be, need to be and where God has called me to be for now.”

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, McClain can be found in Columbus in committee meetings or Statehouse sessions. That work regularly extends to Thursday, as well, but on Mondays and Fridays, he meets with constituents. With four children, including a newborn at home, juggling family-work balance can be a challenge.



“This is a role that has stretched our family, but every career decision I’ve made has been with them in mind,” said McClain. “My priorities are to God, my wife and my kids, and everything else comes after that. I make sure to take time away from politics because I can be successful in whatever career I have, but if I don’t give my family the time they need, I’ll know that I failed.”

### A well-rounded education

McClain says meeting with constituents, hearing their concerns and potentially being involved in promoting issues or solving problems in his district is a huge honor, but developing the skills to do that work goes back to his days at Bluffton.

“There’s a lot of information from class that I use today, but what I return to the most is the ability to interact with people—the ability to impart your ideas or position, but more importantly, to listen and have good interactions with people,” said McClain.

So who imparted these skills on McClain? He points to James Grandey, baseball coach; Phill Talavinia, director of athletics; Gary Schiefer, associate professor of business; and Tami Forbes, health, fitness and sport science department chair, with whom he had long conversations about his future. He also credits Dr. Randy Keeler, associate dean of academic affairs, for stretching him spiritually and Dr. Perry Bush, professor of history, for challenging him politically.

“Bluffton was filled with a lot of people, from faculty to classmates, that I will be forever connected to,” said McClain.

Thirteen years after graduating, McClain returned to campus to serve as the Commencement speaker for the 119th ceremony at Bluffton. Reflecting on his own path in life, he gave this advice to graduates.

“Set your course and work hard to get there, but be open to what life might bring,” shared McClain. “Sometimes, it turns out much better than what you could write for yourself.”

**Jodi (Lugibihl '79) Diller**, Bluffton, Ohio, retired in June 2018 after 20 years as the administrative assistant in the music department at Bluffton University. Jodi enjoys spending time with her two grandchildren, gardening, traveling, music and watching sports.

**Michelle (Baumgartner '79) Fennell** is retired and moved to Melbourne, Fla., in 2018.

**Kerri (Lyle '79) Fisher**, Goshen, Ind., has been a CPA at Everence for 38 years. She and her husband Jim enjoy traveling, golfing, birding and spending time with family.

**Rick Fricke '79**, Pandora, Ohio, continues to teach at Patrick Henry High School. In June 2018, Rick, his wife Kathy, and a group of current and former students spent 15 days traveling to London, Paris, Italy and Greece. He and Kathy have two daughters, five grandchildren and one on the way.

**Roger Gill '79**, Marysville, Ohio, is a florist at Kroger. Roger sings with the Columbus Symphony Chorus, The Alliance Barbershop Chorus, The Columbus Gay Men's Chorus and annually in Marysville's presentation of Handel's Messiah. During summer he works at the Chautauqua Institute near Jamestown, N.Y., where he and his husband have a home.

**Joyce (Baumgartner x79) Hall**, State College, Pa., retired last year from working with elementary-aged children in the State College area school district as a speech/language pathologist. She enjoys volunteer work, reading, music and travel. She and her husband of 40 years, **Marvin '77**, have three children and a granddaughter.

**Michelle (Magier '79) Lobuglio**, Medina, Ohio, has taught high school ceramics for the past 20 years. She enjoys gardening and music, playing

violin in the New Horizons String Orchestra at Baldwin Wallace University. She and her husband Ed recently celebrated 36 years of marriage.

**Deb (Lenhart '79) Oberhaus**, Bluffton, Ohio, is retired after teaching for 30 years at Elida Local Schools. Deb and her husband Jim enjoy traveling and spending time with their four grandchildren.

**Ken "Skip" Simmers '79**, Lima, Ohio, is the secretary/treasurer/comptroller of Superior Wholesale Distributors, a position he has held for 28 years.

**Laura (Becker '79, MBA '08) Voth** has worked for 37 years at Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio in Bluffton, where she is CEO. She and husband **Dave '78** have been married 39 years and have two children and four grandchildren. Laura enjoys their country home in Bluffton, summer flowers and organizing old family pictures.

**Sue (Liby '79) White**, Camden, Maine, continues to custom sew and sells her aprons on Etsy at Aprons Goods. She and husband Hugh have two children. In May, they plan to visit their daughter in Beijing, where she teaches English as a second language.

**Debbie (Gehman x79) Witman**, Dayton, Va., is after 20 years, a semi-retired librarian. She now works part time in Carrier Library at James Madison University. Debbie enjoys time with family, reading, birding, gardening, nature walks and church activities. She and husband Charlie have two daughters and a fourth grandchild on the way.

## 1980-89

**Jan (Mohr '84) Croyle**, Wadsworth, Ohio, is transitioning from an accountant at OrrVilla Retirement

Community in Orrville to a time of discernment and study. She is nearly halfway through Journey, a missional leadership development program through Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Central District Conference and Indiana-Michigan Conference.

**Lauren (Mast '84) Hershey**, Boise, Idaho, is the assistant to the English department chair at Boise State University.

**Kathleen Kern '84**, Rochester, N.Y., published an article in the Dec. 16, 2018, issue of "The Independent," titled "Kurdish villagers are dying at the hands of a war the world has ignored for too long." It is based on a trip Christian Peacemaker Team members took to the Iraqi Kurdistan border regions.

**Tami (Rucker '84) Speicher**, Marysville, Ohio, retired in June after 33 years of teaching.

**Jayne Russell '88** is currently working in Missions Mobilization in Ukraine. She has been in Ukraine for 19.5 years and lives in Kyiv.

**Melissa (Howenstine '89) Brand**, Alliance, Ohio, is an elementary music teacher at West Branch Local Schools.

**Ted Christman '89**, Anthem, Ariz., started a new position as vice president of mortgage lending with Guaranteed Rate in Scottsdale.

**Lori (Miller '89) Nester**, Bluffton, Ohio, works part time at the Allen County WIC office as a registered dietitian and lactation consultant. She is actively involved in Ohio's state breastfeeding coalition and Ohio Lactation Consultant Association, as well as other public health efforts.





## OUR LEGACY

### *Bluffton alumni in the world*

"The Brotherhood" recently celebrated 30 years of Bluffton basketball under the leadership of Guy Neal. A surprise event was held in March for the men's basketball coach and his wife, Diane Neal, assistant professor of education. Neal's players refer to themselves collectively as The Brotherhood, a moniker that has stuck around because of the natural connection that has formed over the years.

"As a coach, you hope your players have a feeling of togetherness," said Neal. "You could see this as the evening went on. All of the different teams came together and were talking, laughing and telling stories. It was just an overwhelming experience."



## 1990-99

**John Burkhardt '94, MBA '06,** Pandora, Ohio, has taught the past four years in the business department at Bluffton University.

**Shane '94 and Jama (Brookmyer '94) Gruber** live in Goshen, Ind., with their two sons. Shane is a research chemist for Serim Research Corp and has a 3D printing business. Jama teaches art at Goshen Community Schools and is a Ten Thousand Villages board member. They are members of Waterford Mennonite Church.

## 2000-09

**Shawn Goetz '00**, Lima, Ohio, started in January 2019 as a research analyst at Reservoir Wealth Management.

**Andy '02 and Whitney (Lehman '02) Bixler**, Medina, Ohio, welcomed a son, Finn Gregory, on Sept. 27, 2017. Finn joined siblings Maggie, Colin and Grant.

**John Simpson '04**, Denver, Colo., earned a bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Colorado. He recently accepted a position as a registered nurse in the correctional care unit at Denver Health Medical Center. He resides in Denver with his wife **Bethany (Blough x04)** and two sons, Ian and Shane.

**Erin Renee Wahl '05**, Las Cruces, N.M., accepted a tenure-track assistant professor and instruction coordinator position in the library at New Mexico State University in August 2018. She also co-edited the upcoming issue of the Journal of Mennonite Writing, which focuses on the intersection of writing and information.

**Ashley (Perko '06) Bodin** and her husband Jeff welcomed their first child, Benjamin Martin, on Feb. 1, 2019. They reside in Sugar Grove, Ill. Ashley works as the children's church director at Restore Church in Yorkville.

**Charles '06 and Crystal (Graber '08) Conklin**, Red Hill, Pa., and their two young daughters are moving to Phnom Penh, Cambodia, in August 2019. They will serve for five years with MCC as country representatives for Cambodia and Myanmar. Crystal, a licensed occupational therapist, will focus on empowering people with disabilities.

**Jason Wellman '06**, Columbus, Ohio, completed a doctor of ministry degree in leadership and spiritual formation from Portland Seminary. His dissertation topic focused on the integration of faith and work from a Wesleyan perspective.





## Celebrating 75 years of social work!

Bluffton's nationally accredited social work program is marking this major milestone during the 2019-20 academic year, and we want to celebrate with you.

Social work graduates, reconnect with Bluffton, update your contact information and let us know what you are doing. As a thank you for strengthening communities near and far, we'll send you a small gift of appreciation.

[www.bluffton.edu/75years](http://www.bluffton.edu/75years)

**Andrew Lehman '09**, Berne, Ind., graduated with a master's degree in mathematics education from Ball State University in May 2019.

## 2010-18

**Walter Queen '10**, Piqua, Ohio, and his wife started a trade show company. They are on pace to break seven figures in total sales. Walter attributes their success to the education, business skills and confidence he received while at Bluffton University.

**Joel Wildermuth '11**, Delaware, Ohio, will start work this fall on a doctoral degree at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati. His wife **Anna (Pawsey '10)** is a social skills specialist at Schultz Elementary School.

**Levi '12 and Brandy (Bidlack '11) Hahn**, Piqua, Ohio, welcomed a son, Tyrus Drew on July 18, 2017. Levi is an intervention specialist at Piqua Central Intermediate. Brandy teaches science at Piqua Junior High School.

**Micah Yoder '12**, Baltic, Ohio, worked for more than six years as a marketing manager at Keim Lumber Company. In March he left Keim to join Ideal Growth Marketing, a digital marketing agency he co-owns with a cousin.

## IN MEMORIAM

**David G. Schultz x42**, Knoxville, Tenn., passed away March 30, 2019, at age 98.

**Esther (Geigley '43) Daetz**, Chambersburg, Pa., passed away April 22, 2019, at age 98.

**Lois (Sommer '45) Kreider**, North Newton, Kan., passed away Jan. 31, 2019, at age 94.

**Paul G. Comba '47**, Prescott, Ariz., passed away April 5, 2017, at age 91.

**Arlene (Hartzler '48) Christner**, Goshen, Ind., passed away March 15, 2019, at age 93.

**Vance "Buddy" Frank '49**, Orange, Mass., passed away April 19, 2019, at age 92.

**Ruth Haenny '49**, Cottonwood, Ariz., passed away Dec. 31, 2018, at age 91.

**J. Richard "Rich" Gratz '50**, Lima, Ohio, passed away Jan. 28, 2019 at age 94.

**Howard Shelly '50**, Bluffton, Ohio, passed away May 4, 2019, at age 90.

**Helen (Burkholder x51) Brooks**, Bluffton, Ohio, passed away May 6, 2019, at age 90.

**Esther (Guthrie '51) Hofferbert**, Xenia, Ohio, passed away Feb. 1, 2019, at age 89.

**Bob Landes '55**, Wickenburg, Ariz., passed away March 13, 2019, at age 86.

**Frank David Tice '55**, Muncy, Pa., passed away April 7, 2019, at age 85.

**Richard "Dick" Jordan '56**, Bluffton, Ohio, passed away March 8, 2019, at age 84.

**Robert Ted Grotzky x62**, Thornville, Ohio, passed away April 12, 2019, at age 78.

**Shirley Harkness '63**, McMillan, Mich., passed away April 3, 2019, at age 84.

**Michael Goings '65**, Bluffton, Ohio, passed away Feb. 8, 2019, at age 76.

**Paul Ropp '66**, Worcester, Mass., passed away April 14, 2019, at age 75.

**Lowell Miller '68**, Chicago, Ill., passed away Jan. 1, 2019, at age 72.

**Ruth (Maple '69) Braunagel**, Columbus Grove, Ohio, passed away Feb. 9, 2019, at age 96.

**Amy (Wyse '69) Robinson**, Hartford, Conn., passed away May 8, 2019, at age 73.

**Linda (Kohn x69) Ruetz**, Whitehouse, Ohio, passed away March 12, 2019, at age 71.

**Stephen Puchta '76**, Waterville, Ohio, passed away March 13, 2019, at age 65.

**Ronald W. Denney II '08**, Louisville, Ky., passed away Feb. 4, 2019, at age 32.

**Dennis Dellinger '05**, Jackson, Mich., passed away Feb. 28, 2019, at age 70.



# *Preparing for Life and Vocation—* BLUFFTON'S GREATER PURPOSE

I hope this issue of the magazine inspires you to reflect on your experience of “general education” at Bluffton and how it prepared you for life and vocation. Whether you graduated during the decades of Inter-term, May-modules, self-directed studies, 1:3:1 scheduling (don’t ask), early cross-cultural pilot programs and more, I trust you will agree that Bluffton, your university, has always been committed to a dynamic and evolving general education curriculum designed to prepare students for life and vocation. Yes, we have and continue to believe in the importance of the combination of liberal arts and professional preparation for graduates who will likely change jobs and even professions multiple times during their lifetime.

As I write this column, we are nearing completion of our fundraising for a new science building on Bluffton’s campus. Thankfully, this is good news, not just for academic majors in the natural and health sciences but for all students because Bluffton, your university, continues to be committed to hands-on learning experiences for all students, in science labs, with instruction and mentoring by Ph.D. faculty. Bluffton students, regardless of academic major, graduate with the competencies they need across disciplines to be successful in their professions and to contribute to their communities and to society’s pressing needs.

Yes, Bluffton continues to be the same institution you remember, committed to an enduring mission, values and purpose that prepare students for life, vocation, responsible citizenship and, ultimately, for the purposes of God’s kingdom.

Looking forward, Bluffton is embarking on a 2019-20 strategic planning process to sharpen the focus of our mission and vision for the next five years. Please stay tuned as there will be opportunities for you to participate.

And yes, please stay connected and support your alma mater as a volunteer and with financial support for the general education program, academic, athletics or student life areas you love. It’s easy to visit [www.bluffton.edu/giving](http://www.bluffton.edu/giving) and make an online gift!

Thank you for your past, present and future support of Bluffton’s community, students and mission.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hans Houshower".

Dr. Hans Houshower  
Vice President for Advancement

## ALUMNI & FRIENDS – EUROPE 2020

### *Cross-Cultural Learning – It's Not Just for Students*

President Wood and faculty are planning to lead an alumni and friends travel experience to Europe in 2020. The itinerary will likely include the Netherlands, Belgium and additional European arts and culture, as well as Mennonite heritage destinations.

Stay tuned for details in the Alumni e-newsletter.



BLUFFTON UNIVERSITY  
**HOOTONING**

*save the date* SATURDAY, OCT. 12, 2019

