IN-PERSON CLASSES RESUME AUGUST 25, 2020
WITH PRECAUTIONS AND GUIDELINES POSTED THROUGHOUT CAMPUS
Look for the Lifters

Since the first warnings of the coronavirus, the word pandemic, which was not a very familiar word to us before, has become an active part of our vocabulary. The dramatic changes we have experienced in all aspects of life moved us rapidly into crisis mode as things we’ve taken for granted have been replaced by adjustment, uncertainty and even confusion.

Throughout scripture, even in the most distressing circumstances, God is at work and the evidence of His presence is clearly recorded. He promised then and now that in our weakness He provides His strength, in uncertainty He offers hope and in confusion He brings peace beyond our understanding. But many still ask, “Where is God in all this and where is the evidence of His presence?”

My father used to tell me the world divides into two groups of people, the leaners and the lifters. The leaners are those who stand by waiting for someone else to respond to the problem and remedy the situation. When faced with crisis, he said, follow the lifters. Even though they don’t seek or get attention, they are the heroic leaders who serve quietly with passion and courage. Lifters among us are better known as first responders because that is exactly who they are and what they do.

Throughout its history, MNU has emphasized God’s call to lead lives of purpose and do so with a compelling passion to serve others, regardless of vocation. During these challenging days, we want to especially recognize our graduates who are the lifters in healthcare, such as nurses, physicians and emergency first responders. They occupy the front lines of this battle and as they serve, they provide evidence of God’s heart and hands in action.

Mark 9:41 reminds us, “If anyone gives you even a cup of water because you belong to the Messiah, I tell you the truth, that person will surely be rewarded.” We salute our Pioneers who are the lifters among us representing Jesus Christ with courage, skill and a passion to serve.

Dr. David J. Spittal
President
Cheers for The Class of 2020

THE GRADUATES OF 2020 ARE AMONG MILLIONS who have had traditional milestones of life cancelled or postponed due to unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Completing their senior year on campus and enjoying the celebrations surrounding Commencement are just two of these important markers in adult life. To honor the Class of 2020 and the unexpected change in their final semester in college, six of our newest graduates share their thoughts about their MNU experience and their future plans.

Dacia Harris
Major: Biology
Hometown: Olathe, Kansas
Activities: Resident Assistant, Student Diversity Council (photo above), Track & Field
Most Influential Pioneer: Director of Residential Life Devon Brown

“She’s a sister when I need a sister. She has shaped and impacted me. I always leave our meetings with so much more than expected.”

Significant Memory: “When Dr. Larry Fine, professor emeritus, said to me, ‘If Jesus is your perfect example and we follow Him, then why wouldn’t you want to be baptized?’ He invested so much in explaining that to me. That moment meant a lot.”

Current Plans: Planning a late August 2020 wedding to Michael Magee. Ministry is her passion and she is excited to serve at MNU as resident educator in Stockton-Rice Dorm.

Cortlyn Eisele
Major: Nursing, Minor: Psychology
Hometown: Overland Park, Kansas
Most Influential Pioneer: Amy Cain, Assistant Professor of Counseling

“She changed the way I view and treat others. She makes you feel seen…you’re not just another student in class. She cares that you are there and wants you to be there.”

Significant Memory: “Before MNU I had a lot of knowledge about Jesus, but a mission trip to Haiti in my freshman year was life-changing. To see how people live in an underdeveloped country was so impactful. I wondered how we would minister to them when we can’t speak their language. I learned that love doesn’t have a language. Love can be your actions toward someone.”

Current Plans: Accepted her “dream position” as a nurse on the mother/baby unit at University of Kansas Medical Center, has passed the NCLEX and is training to run a marathon with fellow alumni teammates.

Logan Borger
Major: Business Administration
Hometown: Overland Park, Kansas
Activities: Associated Student Government President
Most Influential Pioneer: ASG Advisor Lisa Downs

“She has shaped my life in ways I didn’t even know it needed to be shaped. She has been a significant mentor in my life, although mentor seems too hierarchical of a term. She’s played such a relational role and walked me through some really tough seasons.”

Significant Memory: “The way I see God changed throughout my time at MNU. I realized I was allowing other things to guide my decisions as opposed to the Lord. At MNU, I received an image of God that I never would have gotten had I not allowed myself to be loved by the people of this community. Over the last four years, I have learned that there is love waiting to be found in every corner of this campus.”

Current Plans: Will wed fiancé Maris George ’21 in July. Working to earn his real estate license and join his father, Kevin Borger ’97, at Generation’s Real Estate.

Chloe Smith
Major: Communications, Minor: Psychology
Hometown: Bennington, Nebraska
Activities: Student Chaplain, Honors Student, National Society of Leadership and Success
Most Influential Pioneer: Sharon Jackson, Spiritual Life Administrative Assistant

“Sharon has shaped my life in ways I didn’t even know it needed to be shaped. She has been a significant mentor in my life, although mentor seems too hierarchical of a term. She’s played such a relational role and walked me through some really tough seasons.”

Significant Memory: “The way I see God changed throughout my time at MNU. I realized I was allowing other things to guide my decisions as opposed to the Lord. At MNU, I received an image of God that I never would have gotten had I not allowed myself to be loved by the people of this community. Over the last four years, I have learned that there is love waiting to be found in every corner of this campus.”

Current Plans: Working as a Medical Office Specialist. Plans to attend graduate school for school counseling.

Cortlyn Eisele
Cheers for The Class of 2020

(CONTINUED) To honor the Class of 2020 and the unexpected change in their final semester in college, six of our newest graduates share their thoughts about their MNU experience and their future plans.

Dante Scroggins

Major: Criminal Justice  
Hometown: Sedalia, Missouri  
Activities: Basketball  
Most Influential Pioneer: Rev. Marge Owens (Below Right), Olathe resident and long-time supporter of MNU and Dante’s “MNU Grandma”

“Marge was the biggest supporter of MNU basketball. She loved the community. She was someone I looked up to. She loved to eat in the cafeteria where she would welcome anyone and have conversation about the day. Having lunch with her was the highlight of my day. She told us about her journey and where she’d been. I enjoyed building relationship with her. Marge passed last summer. She always told me that the Bible says, ‘work till Jesus comes.’ You did just that ‘Grandma.’ She was a lady who represented God in the right way.”

Significant Memory: “I’ve been transformed here at MNU by people I’ve been surrounded by. I was distant. Now I talk with people I never saw myself talking to. It helped me grow my personality. Over the years I’ve grown closer to people of MNU. They sought after me. I was not a big church guy but MNU has shaped me to love God even more.

Current Plans: Working as a Juvenile Intake Specialist for Johnson County, Kansas.

Louis Michael

Major: Communications  
Hometown: Vallejo, California  
Activities: Football, Resident Assistant, Student Diversity Council Events Chair  
Current Plans: Working at ACES ABA, a treatment center for autism in Orange County, California, as a behavioral therapist.

“When you see my accomplishments and this smile to go along with it, just know that it didn’t come easy.”

About five years ago, I would have been on my way to a small school in Kansas that gave me a chance, but life took a turn for the worse. I graduated from high school and was headed to MNU to play football. Days before my flight, my mom was shot. Being a bartender at the time, she happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and this changed our lives forever. I chose to stay behind to help her recover, and my dream of going to college was put on hold. I had no idea what God was doing behind the scenes. He had a plan that I could not yet see.

I attended a local community college and played football with hopes to have another opportunity to play at a university. My grades were average, my performance on the field was average and I was not motivated. I was about to finish my second year at community college when I decided to reach out to the coach at MNU. By the grace of God, I was given a second chance to play football for MNU.

In spring of 2017, I was headed to Kansas. Prior to leaving, I made a promise to my girlfriend that I would go to church with her every Sunday until I left. THIS IS WHEN MY LIFE CHANGED! I decided to give my life to Christ on December 25, 2016. I was moved by the Spirit and knew that God was calling me to something bigger than I could even imagine. I didn’t know what that looked like at the time, but I knew I just had to trust Him.

I went off to Kansas feeling like a new person, having just been baptized. I was ready to take on any challenges standing in my way. My experience was not what I thought it would be. It was amazing. I met people, made connections, built relationships and learned so, so, so much.

I was able to be comfortable with being uncomfortable. I exposed myself to things I wouldn’t have exposed myself to if I continued on the path I was on before; if I would have continued to follow the crowd and tried to please everyone else but myself, I would not have accomplished what I have accomplished.

“I am proud to say that I am a graduate of MidAmerica Nazarene University.”

Thank you, God. Thank you to the family and friends who supported me along this journey. Thank you to my fiancé for making me go to church with her. Thank you to MNU and all my professors who have poured so much into me and for all the opportunities you have provided. I have a bachelor’s degree. Nobody can take that away from me. Not even COVID-19!

As a first generation, black man, I am beyond grateful to say I have graduated from college. A lot of people in my community did not have the opportunity I had, which is why I will always be dedicated to giving back in any way possible.

It’s not over yet, I will continue to strive for greatness. Next up, master’s degree. 😊

IF YOU KNOW OF A 2020 GRADUATE with a great job or who’s been accepted to graduate school let us know by emailing accent@mnu.edu.
Pilot Hero Visits Olathe

MNU and Olathe welcomed Alumna Capt. Tammie Jo (Bonnell ’83) Shults for several events Feb. 3 and 4, 2020. Capt. Shults, who was thrust into the public spotlight in April 2018 when she safely landed Southwest Airlines flight 1380 after the catastrophic loss of an engine, has authored “Nerves of Steel.” The book recounts her humble beginnings, perseverance to become one of the early female Navy pilots and the training and opportunities that culminated in her God-given strength that day.

Capt. Shults and her husband, also a Southwest Airlines pilot Capt. Dean Shults, enjoyed the Kansas City Chiefs win in Super Bowl LIV with friends, before a variety of events on Monday and Tuesday, held for the university at MNU, Garmin International and the Olathe Public Library.

At MNU’s Community Chapel on Tuesday, Shults was given the key to the City of Olathe by fellow MNU alum, Olathe Mayor Michael Copeland (’84), in recognition of her extraordinary skill and bravery in the face of danger, and for exemplifying the values of leadership, perseverance and service.

Resilience Project

Gains Relevance Amid Pandemic

In early 2019 Addison Lucchi, associate professor, instructional and research librarian, gained grant funding for a series of events focusing on Resilience Through Story. He could not have guessed how timely the topic would become. Throughout the 2019-2020 academic year, until the COVID-19 pandemic canceled the last event, the series featured authors and artists whose work touches on how human story can be healing.

The series, underwritten by a grant from Humanities Kansas, featured lectures, workshops, book discussions and an appearance by Kansas Poet Laureate Huscarr Medina. Medina was joined at the Community Poetry Reading by three community and seven student poets as well as a local spoken-word dance group.

Other series speakers:

- In her Game-based Storytelling Workshop, University of Kansas PhD student Brynn Fitzsimmons discussed how storytelling and games can address stress and help people cope with adverse life events.
- Novelist and poet Miguel Flores led a poetry workshop tying poetry to identity and discussing poetry as a therapeutic exercise.
- Writer/Director Stephen Pruitt’s film, The Tree, portrayed themes of aging and life stages—connecting one’s past, present, and future into a single narrative. He posits that doing so helps one to make sense of their own stories.
- Award-winning writer and creator of The One Year Adventure Novel, Daniel Schwabauer, discussed how stories work on a macro and micro level—exploring the benefits of storytelling and the dangers that stories can have in certain situations.

Lucchi hopes a takeaway from this series is that individuals will be intentional in using stories of hope and encouragement to lift one another—especially as the world navigates a historic pandemic.

“I do not know how future generations will respond to the stories we tell them about this pandemic,” Lucchi says. “My hope is the stories we tell them fully reflect the challenges we faced, the resilience of our communities, and the presence and grace of our God in the midst of it all.”

Enjoy our Flickr album of the event here: flickr.com/photos/mnu-pioneers/albums/72157712797435573
“MidAmerica Nazarene University is known by its strong commitment to academic excellence, innovation and quality services for students,” Spittal said. “This recent action by the Higher Learning Commission is a credit to our faculty and staff and their continued commitment to serve our students with excellence.”

HLC Affirms MNU Accreditation

Colleges and universities periodically complete an extensive self-study to earn continued accreditation. In fall 2019, MNU completed this process and was notified in March 2020 that the Higher Learning Commission’s Institutional Actions Council accepted the team report, which affirmed that MidAmerica Nazarene University met all criteria for accreditation. The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) is an independent corporation that accredits degree-granting post-secondary educational institutions in the North Central region of the country. President David Spittal expressed gratitude to the self-study team and its leaders.

MNU First University in Kansas to Offer New Advanced Practice Nursing Program

The School of Nursing’s newest online program started in January with students seeking the credentials to become Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioners (AGPCNP). MNU is the first university in Kansas offering this specialty.

An AGPCNP is an advanced practice nurse with a clinical focus on treating people from adolescent through adult and into advanced age. The School of Nursing chose this focus due to growing demand for advance practice nurses who specialize in adult and gerontology care as the U.S. population ages.

Gwen Wagner, DNP, APRN, ANP-C, associate professor and program director, says students in the program are dealing with increased responsibilities at work and home as many healthcare professionals are experiencing due to the pandemic.

“We are trying to be flexible with assignments and due dates with our present students as we certainly understand their additional responsibilities and difficulties during this time,” Wagner says. “We meet with them in Zoom meetings to assure them of our support and to try to ascertain how we can best support them during this time. The faculty are wonderful and very responsive to students’ concerns.”

MNU holds many top-rated rankings for its nursing programs, from pre-licensure BSN to graduate-level MSN. Programs are accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing (CCNE) and the Kansas State Board of Nursing. The next start date for a new cohort is in August.

For more information about the MSN program for Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, visit MNU.edu/ag-pcnp.

MARKET-DRIVEN ACADEMIC PROGRAM EXPANSION

MNU is introducing several initiatives aligning with industry needs in STEM and business

The digital communication major replaces the communications major and will prepare graduates to create and deliver strategic messaging through courses in:

- Video editing
- Basic animation and imaging
- Web development and design
- Web advertising and analytics

Professional students in an online accelerated bachelor’s degree completion program can now choose from three new options. Management & Leadership majors can now specialize in healthcare administration, business or information technology.

The School of Professional and Graduate Studies now offers the Master of Science in Education Leadership. The program is designed for educators to gain the credentials needed to provide instructional leadership, student discipline, teacher evaluation, budget administration, and development and implementation of school policy. Adjacent to and sharing some of the same course work is the Building-Level Licensure program. Master’s-educated teachers may complete the licensure curriculum in just 11 months. Both the MS in Education Leadership and the licensure program qualify for a new State of Kansas designation for educators.

If you remember having class in Osborne 118, you would be surprised to see it today. The lab is completely remodeled thanks to funding from the now completed U.S. Department of Education Title III Grant. In the updated lab, courses in human genetics, anatomy and physiology and general science come alive through 3D modeling in computer programs allowing students to see inside the human body. The lab’s technology lets students zoom inside real-life MRI’s to uncover the source of illness such as a brain tumor.

Remodeled STEM Labs enhance learning with 3D modeling

Title III Grant. In the updated lab, courses in human genetics, anatomy and physiology and general science come alive through 3D modeling in computer programs allowing students to see inside the human body. The lab’s technology lets students zoom inside real-life MRI’s to uncover the source of illness such as a brain tumor.
The Council for the Advancement and Support of Education says alumni engagement is “Any event and activity that is valued by alumni, builds enduring and mutually beneficial relationships, inspires loyalty and financial support, strengthens the institution’s reputation, and involves alumni in meaningful ways to advance the institution’s mission.”

Last fall the alumni office engaged MNU’s marketing research class, led by Dr. Lisa (Leslie ’94) Wallentine, to research alumni engagement with the university. After a semester of work, the students produced a 173-page report full of charts, graphs and responses from focus-group interviews and online surveys.

Survey Says
Seven themes emerged from the research.

- Alumni really care about MNU and they want MNU to return that concern in tangible ways.
- Alumni know MNU needs their financial support to thrive; they want MNU to appreciate they are more than potential donors.
- Alumni believe the student-to-alumni transition could be improved.
- Alumni would like more interaction with current students.
- Alumni value enrichment activities, such as networking, career-development, and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Alumni want their children to have the same rich student experience they had; they would like the university to become strong competitors for their kids during student recruitment.
- Alumni crave relevant information—about important news, events, and ways to get involved.

The insights gained from the report indicated greater alumni involvement in the planning process might move the needle on the engagement issue. So, for the past eight months a larger group of alumni leaders has been recruited to serve as the “voice” of alumni in important university matters.

The Strategy
The enlarged council is forging a bold plan forward. This includes:

- Revitalizing the Alumni Association with a new identity and renewed purpose.
- Establishing alumni “hubs” where clusters of alumni reside, so they can gather, recruit students to MNU, and embrace fellow alumni when they settle in their city.
- Transforming the reunion experience in meaningful ways.
- Helping recent grads transition seamlessly into active alumni.
- Creating enriching events for alumni at every stage of life.
- Encouraging fellow alumni to embrace their vital role as investors and stakeholders in MNU’s mission and future.
-Welcoming alumni back to campus for Homecoming, college visits with their children and volunteering their time and talents.

Currently there are 20 council members and the goal is 30. If our efforts sound like something you would like to help achieve or you want to suggest someone, please email your interest to alumni@mnu.edu.

To learn more about the Alumni Council, contact Pete Brumbaugh at alumni@mnu.edu.
NOW OFFERING UP TO A 20% TUITION DISCOUNT*

We make it easier than ever to pursue your graduate or professional degree in areas like business, nursing, counseling, education and computer information systems. MNU can keep you and your career moving ahead.

Classes start soon so NOW is the time to pivot with purpose.

CONTACT LISA HOOD
lbhood@mnu.edu mnu.edu/pivot 913.971.3868

ANNOUNCING ...
MNU THUNDER DRUMLINE

NOW ENROLLING FOR NEW PROGRAMS:
Fine Arts and Athletics introduce a new program and Drumline Instructor, Benjamin Gervais.

And, MNU welcomes Aaron Bohn, Assistant Professor for the new digital communications major.

CALL TO LEARN MORE

MidAmerica Nazarene University – is a community that values people, ideas and faith.
Here professors are mentors, classmates are friends and friends are family. We serve our neighbors, our city and our world.
New Class Schedule is WIRED

Wired Wednesdays Begin This Fall

Imagine a course schedule with ample opportunity outside the classroom for real-world experience and hands-on learning, with students and faculty outside the classroom and from other disciplines.

That is precisely what a newly designed plan called WIRED Wednesdays for traditional undergraduate students will do starting this fall.

Every class session will be 75 minutes in length. Classes formerly held on Monday/Wednesday/Friday will now be held Monday and Thursday. Classes previously held Tuesday and Thursday will now be held Tuesday and Friday. The new schedule leaves Wednesdays free of traditional class sessions. Instead, Wednesdays will become connection days to build relationships, expand learning through experiential activities, or connect content from different classes. This connection day includes a variety of research, career-focused, culturally enriching, or service-learning options for students.

WIRED Wednesdays will allow students to immerse themselves in fields that may or may not be part of their major. Students can apply what they learn in class as well as try a profession on for size to see if it fits their desired future. Some of the Wednesday events will be required based on the courses in which a student is enrolled. Some will be free for students to explore activities for other subject areas if they choose.

“This is an exciting academic development,” says Dr. Nancy Damron, vice president for academic affairs. “We are cultivating spaces and opportunities for students to engage with faculty and peers from their own and other subject areas. Beyond the content, students will see an added relational benefit. They’ll connect with faculty and peers outside of the classroom, learn about their major from an upperclassman’s perspective and get to know professors at a deeper level.

“Traveling Nurses Chase Adventure

Matthew (‘17) and Hayley (Pankratz ‘15) Reynolds

Matthew (‘17) and Hayley (Pankratz ‘15) Reynolds, both chose adventure when they bought a well-worn RV to rehab and accepted assignments as travel nurses in 2019. After finishing their first contract in Orange County, California, they are now in Everett, Washington, just 30 minutes north of Seattle.

“We both have a passion for travel and seeing new places, so travel nursing just made sense,” Hayley says. “We are young, have no kids yet, and thought it would be an awesome way to see America while still being able to work.”

Travel nurses typically get one to three days of orientation before acting as an independent staff nurse,” Hayley says. “Confidence and a strong base of knowledge is crucial. So is flexibility. Going with the flow is essential.”

In regard to her calling in a hospital setting, Hayley says, “In the Emergency Department we see various situations that are traumatic for patients and families. Being a kind, smiling face for our patients throughout a potentially scary, confusing situation is why we love nursing.”

“– For us, nursing is a way to be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

Like other healthcare professionals, the couple has had to adapt to treating patients during a pandemic.

“Our hospital has been dealing with COVID for months. In fact, the first documented COVID-positive patient in the U.S. was at this hospital. For our daily work routine, it means screening every patient early for symptoms or potential exposure, so we can protect others and ourselves as quickly as possible,” Hayley says, “We think about everyone as a potential COVID patient. This doesn’t necessarily make us fearful, but more cautious.”

SPEAKING OF NEW SCHEDULES

The fall semester has been revised due to COVID-19. The beginning and ending dates for the Fall 2020 semester remain as scheduled. To reduce the need for student travel, traditional, campus-based classes will not meet in person after Thanksgiving break. Students will complete projects through the end of the semester and take finals remotely. Students involved in athletics, nursing practicums, student teaching, or who have local work responsibilities may (with approval) remain on campus, with housing and food service, through the end of the semester.
Announcing Virtual Homecoming
October 16 - 18, 2020
And ... it’s free!

In light of the pandemic and its uncertainty, we’ve moved Homecoming online.


Video content. We’ll have video to provide a university update from Dr. Spittal and an inside look at academic programs. Get behind the scenes with arts & humanities, nursing, the Student Investment Club, and our new virtual anatomy lab. See innovations in new academic programs, and much more.

Virtual tours of campus. It will be a special treat if you haven’t visited the campus in several years. We’re working on a virtual tour of how the new Cunningham Student Center—MNU’s newest construction project—will look.

Downloadable content. Resources including memory books for reunion alums, background art for your Zoom account and mobile devices, and ringtones, with activities for future Pioneers!

No registration is necessary. We’ll send more details in the monthly Alumni & Friends E-Newsletter. Make sure you’re subscribed at https://connect.mnu.edu

Please visit MNU.edu/homecoming

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
2020 HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND

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Schedule subject to change.
handful of games, going 8-3 (including a late loss to the team ranked #2 in the nation) behind a .344 team batting average and a 1.96 team ERA. Sophomore outfielder KK Bayless was hitting .576 (fifth in the NAIA), and freshman pitcher Alexis Wilds was fourth in the NAIA with 10.6 strikeouts per game. The promising start should carry over to 2021.

The Pioneer Baseball team completed about one-third of their season before everything was shut down. MNU was off to one of their best starts ever, boasting a 15-6 overall record and a 9-2 start in conference play. Junior pitchers Kyle Waller (4-1, 3.19) and Easten Garrett (5-1, 3.21) were building great seasons on the mound. And juniors Joshuan Sandoval (.354, 7 HR) and Ryan Leo (.371, 5 HR) combined for 12 homers in 21 games.

COVID-19 Athletics Schedules Changes for Fall 2020

The National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) has released new guidelines for competition which results in modified (shortened) schedule: All sports competitions except Football may begin on September 5. Football may begin September 12.

Cross Country: 7 meets
Football: 9 games
Men's & Women's Soccer: 14 games
Volleyball: 22 dates

All reductions are proportional to the shortened schedules. See MNUsports.com for periodic updates.

The MNU Indoor Track & Field season was highlighted by great finishes at nationals, including a national champion when Senior Camry Bradford (above) won the 60m hurdles. The men’s 4x400 relay team finished national runner-up by a mere .01 seconds. At the conference level, Ardeen Walker was named Conference Athlete of the Week three times and led the women’s team to a dominant Heart Conference Championship. She was named Athlete of the Year and Head Coach Nate Wiens was named Women’s Indoor Conference Coach of the Year.

The MNU softball season had just gotten started before getting cut short. The Pioneers looked very good in their

Want to learn more? Visit mnusports.com
General Superintendent Emeritus Paul G. Cunningham passed from this world to his heavenly home July 18, 2020. Dr. Cunningham served 16 years, beginning in 1993, as a leader of the Nazarene denomination, traveling internationally, preaching, encouraging and leading pastors, missionaries and congregants around the world. But to MNU Pioneers everywhere, it was Pastor Cunningham’s 30-year tenure as senior pastor of College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe, Kansas, that endeared him to the campus community that would not be here, if not for his vision.

Dr. Cunningham was a young minister in his first pastorate in the 46-member Olathe Church of the Nazarene in 1964 when the denomination voted to start a new college. Convinced that his city of 15,000 residents held the best potential location, Dr. Cunningham approached bank president and civic leader R.R. Osborne with the idea of locating the college here.

Dr. Cunningham and Osborne put together a group of business leaders who donated land and secured local support. The location became MidAmerica Nazarene College and opened in 1968.

Not only did he influence the university’s location, but from 1968 to 1993, Dr. Cunningham served as the spiritual shepherd to students, faculty, staff and many residents of the area. He and his wife, Dr. Connie Cunningham, welcomed students to their home, provided guidance and influenced thousands for Christ. His purpose was so much greater than providing another institution of higher education in the heart of the country. It was, as he said in a thank you video to Nazarene congregations, for the purpose of creating a university with global impact for the Gospel of Christ.

“Dr. Paul Cunningham was a true shepherd servant whose passion for his Lord was reflected in his love for the church, people around the world and a vision that birthed our university,” said MNU President Dr. David Spittal. “We extend our condolences to his wife Connie and family and share the gratitude of all whose lives have been changed by his leadership, influence and legacy of faithful service.”

The student center is named for Drs. Paul and Connie Cunningham.

The largest component of the comprehensive Bright Futures Campaign is now fully funded—thanks to the generosity of MNU donors who long to see a new student center built on campus. On January 8, 2020, supporters of the Cunningham Student Center met the $1 million challenge grant terms from the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation by raising the final $11 million for the project in just one year. It was daunting to consider raising that much funding so quickly, but MNU organizers rallied the volunteer leadership of the Campaign Executive Committee. Chaired by Tim and Gail Buchanan and Dan and JoAnne Rexroth, the committee mobilized leaders to use their time, talents and influence to make introductions, hold in-home events and make presentations to individuals and organizations who could give.

“The greatest takeaway from the Mabee Challenge phase of this campaign is that volunteer leadership and widespread support from our constituents made it happen,” says Dr. Jon North, vice president for university advancement. “We want to thank the many MNU friends, alumni, parents, faculty and staff, trustees, the Foundation Board, the Campaign Executive Committee, the Mabee Foundation, and donors who support our mission and gave to the project.”

A groundbreaking ceremony is planned for August 28, after students return to campus. The act of beginning construction when the first scoop of dirt is moved will be exciting. It will be the start of a dream realized.

“‘This process began with the students and their hopes and dreams for this building,’” President David Spittal says. “‘The visibility and natural light throughout the building will be incredible. It’s going to give students and all of us options. Options for dining, meeting, collaborating and enjoying our beautiful campus together. When completed, this building will just hum with activity and vitality.’”

Currently the building is slated to be complete in December 2021 with a fitting celebration to open the building as soon as possible thereafter.

$20 Million Student Center Goal Met! Thank You, MNU Supporters!

“‘This process began with the students and their hopes and dreams for this building,’” President David Spittal says. “‘The visibility and natural light throughout the building will be incredible. It’s going to give students and all of us options. Options for dining, meeting, collaborating and enjoying our beautiful campus together. When completed, this building will just hum with activity and vitality.’”

Currently the building is slated to be complete in December 2021 with a fitting celebration to open the building as soon as possible thereafter.

“Dr. Cunningham was a young minister in his first pastorate in the 46-member Olathe Church of the Nazarene in 1964 when the denomination voted to start a new college. Convinced that his city of 15,000 residents held the best potential location, Dr. Cunningham approached bank president and civic leader R.R. Osborne with the idea of locating the college here.

Dr. Cunningham and Osborne put together a group of business leaders who donated land and secured local support. The location became MidAmerica Nazarene College and opened in 1968.

Not only did he influence the university’s location, but from 1968 to 1993, Dr. Cunningham served as the spiritual shepherd to students, faculty, staff and many residents of the area. He and his wife, Dr. Connie Cunningham, welcomed students to their home, provided guidance and influenced thousands for Christ. His purpose was so much greater than providing another institution of higher education in the heart of the country. It was, as he said in a thank you video to Nazarene congregations, for the purpose of creating a university with global impact for the Gospel of Christ.

“‘Dr. Paul Cunningham was a true shepherd servant whose passion for his Lord was reflected in his love for the church, people around the world and a vision that birthed our university,’” said MNU President Dr. David Spittal. “‘We extend our condolences to his wife Connie and family and share the gratitude of all whose lives have been changed by his leadership, influence and legacy of faithful service.’”

The student center is named for Drs. Paul and Connie Cunningham.
A year ago, when this issue was planned, the world had not heard the term COVID-19. The idea was to introduce readers to some of the many healthcare professionals who completed their pre-professional education at MNU and went on to serve the world in a variety of settings. Some of the first graduates became medical doctors, dentists and missionary doctors.

In 1979, the first students enrolled in a brand-new nursing program. MNU has since developed curriculum and faculty advising to prepare graduates for careers as chiropractors, occupational therapists and physical therapists. Graduates of biology and chemistry have become optometrists, pharmacists, psychiatrists, veterinarians and more.

The latest program addition is for nurse practitioner which began in January. It prepares graduates for a professional practice with optometrists, pharmacists, psychiatrists, veterinarians and more.

In the midst of COVID-19, alumni of these programs take a special place in our hearts and minds as they serve on the front lines of this pandemic. The profiles in this issue represent hundreds of other Pioneers who serve as well. We are proud to have been part of their preparation to lead in this manner. Please remember them in your prayers of gratitude.

Dana Suderman (BSN ’11, BA ’09), RN, PCCN, unit coordinator The University of Kansas Hospital.

Dana leads the night shift on the Neuroscience ENT Progressive Care Unit. After completing a degree in organizational leadership in 2009, she found herself being led to nursing. How did you choose your profession?

“I didn’t start college knowing exactly what I wanted to do. I remembered my parents and other people saying I’d make a good nurse. I don’t know how to explain it other than it really was God’s hand directing me and laying out the path for me.”

Stepping out in faith, Dana enrolled in the Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, an intense, year-long program for career changers.

“Every class, lab, test and clinical became a prayer, a fleece, that I literally laid out to God every step of the way. I took every passing class as one of my signs that I needed to keep going. Now I feel so truly blessed and honored to be in this profession! As cliché as it may sound, I feel I didn’t choose nursing. Nursing chose me.”

**Why did you choose your profession?**

“It is truly a calling,” Bryan says. “After graduating from MNU with a degree in religion and philosophy, I started right away at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Through a long, and at times faith-rattling process, it became clear God was calling me in a different direction than the pulpit or classroom. Entering the field of medicine, and particularly emergency medicine, has allowed me to continue to minister, just in a different way than we often talk of ‘ministry’ in the church.”

Bryan serves as assistant professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine; Iredell Memorial Hospital. Why did you choose your profession?

**Passion to Serve**

“I am driven by Christ’s words to the disciples in Matthew 25 which calls us to have a faith that is not merely intellectual assent, but tangible and born out in the way we love and serve others. With that in mind, my practice of medicine is very much shaped by the words of Teresa of Avila, ‘Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the eyes, yours are the ears, you are his body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.’”

Frontline Challenges

“I never imagined spending my entire shift every day in a mask, goggles, and gown, unable to take them off. Going to work has taken on a new level of risk for all of us on the frontlines of this pandemic. Though we are well aware of those risks, I could not be more proud of my colleagues who continue to show up, day in and day out, to care for our patients with many volunteering to go and care for those in the worst affected parts of the country.”

What’s next?

In July, Bryan, his wife Amy and children Brady, Anabelle and Brennan moved back to Kansas City where Bryan joined the University of Kansas School of Medicine faculty as an assistant professor of emergency medicine and will develop and direct an EMS and Disaster Medicine Fellowship program for the university.

Bryan Beaver (’03) MD, FAAEM, assistant professor, medical director Wake Forest University School of Medicine; Iredell Memorial Hospital.

Bryan earned his medical degree from the University of Kansas School of Medicine. He completed an emergency medicine residency and EMS/Disaster medicine fellowship at Wake Forest University.

Bryan serves as assistant professor of emergency medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine where he is core faculty for the EMS and Disaster Medicine Fellowship program. He is also medical director for Iredell County Emergency Medical Services, assistant medical director for Wake Forest Baptist Health AirCare Critical Care Transport, and medical director for the Wake Forest staffed emergency department at Iredell Memorial Hospital.

**Pioneers in Healthcare**

By Carol (Knight ‘81, MA ‘08) Best

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**HEALTH SCIENCES Programs**

Athletic Training Pharmacy
Chiropractic Physical Therapy
Dental/Dentistry Physician Assistant
Health & Fitness Psychiatry
Pre-Medical Sports Medicine
Music Therapy Veterinary Medicine

Occupational Therapy

Find Health Science Pre-professional programs at: mnu.edu/undergraduate/majors-minor
transferred to MNU for its highly regarded nursing program. Science and a career working with people. Nursing fit and she

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a School of Nursing mission trip. At MNU, Megan traveled to Guatemala over winter break on

Passion to Serve

nurse serve her well in her current assignment. Turns out, all the flexibility and adaptability learned as a travel

branches of service in 2014, she became a Navy reservist. As it

opportunities looked promising and after interviewing with two

schedule there for several years. In the meantime, military

Health System and has kept that status, working a full-time

"Actually, it resembled what we do here in a way," she says. "The village we visited didn’t have any healthcare at all. In New York City the hospitals are full, so people have little access to care. Going into a community and caring for those who may not have access to healthcare feels rewarding in the same way."

It is in Megan’s nature to be compassionate and experiences like the mission trip helped solidify her choice of a nursing career. Now it seems those previous experiences have prepared her for serving in this crisis.

Frontline Challenges

"As we arrived in New York there were so many people waving along the pier, holding signs, welcoming us," Megan says. "We were escorted by the NYPD, US Marines and tugboats. Apparently, this is quite unusual. That’s when it sunk in for me. We are here to help, and we want to help."

Megan and her coworkers worked 12-hour shifts for seven nights in a row. She talked with Accent on her first day off.

"We wear the Navy working uniform. We don’t wear scrubs. The boots are not comfortable for 12 hours a day. I’m grateful not to put those on tonight. The uniform can be intimidating for some patients while some find it comforting. We have to gauge where the patient is with that. Imagine being a patient and coming on a Navy ship and you can’t have visitors."

Megan and the other healthcare providers work hard to provide as much comfort as they can to patients while maintaining protective protocol. Thank you, Megan, for answering the call to protective protocol. Thank you, Megan, for answering the call to

that I am going to adequately anesthetize them and wake them up from anesthesia. It is here that I have the unique opportunity to connect with and comfort my patients. To be that reassurance to them is extremely valuable."

Frontline Challenges

Mark’s hospital is in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, which is considered a hotspot for the virus requiring them to open several improvised ICU units. He currently works with emergency room physicians to manage the patients’ respiratory needs.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has forced CRNAs to redefine our role in healthcare delivery. While emergent surgical cases still require our expertise, we are now being asked to manage ventilators and ICU teams.”

Thriving on the challenge of the situation and with compassion for his patients and families, Mark finds his faith keeps him going.

"Being on the frontline has challenges, but I know that God is watching over me," he says.

Mark J. Haffey (’92), MSN, CRNA, APRN, certified registered nurse anesthetist Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center.

Upon completing a degree in biology at MNU, Mark earned a BSN at University of Kansas in 1997, an MSN at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in 2001, and the Certificate of Nurse Anesthesia at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in 2001.

How did you choose your profession?

In high school God called Mark to help others. Volunteering at Olathe Medical Center, a job at a dialysis center and working as an ICU nurse, reaffirmed his call. The challenge was what attracted him to anesthesiology.

“CRNAs are responsible for the patient from assessment prior to the procedure through waking them up and assuring they are stable in recovery. I provide anesthesia for all types of procedures including cardiac, ENT, neurology, OB/ON, orthopedic, pediatric, robotic, thoracic, transplant, and vascular.”

The Passion to Serve

“God has called me to help others, to be a servant. To show compassion and care and to treat each patient as if they were my family member. When patients come for surgery, anesthesia is many times the scariest part of the surgical experience. To take all control from the patient, they and their family must trust...”

Lt. Megan Roberts (BSN ’11), ICU nurse, Navy reservist/active duty USNS Comfort hospital ship, New York City

After her freshman year at Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts, Megan looked for a way to combine her love of science and a career working with people. Nursing fit and she transferred to MNU for its highly regarded nursing program.

How did you choose military nursing?

“After working at Stormont Vail Hospital in Topeka, I did four travel nursing assignments all in ICU, working in Florida, Massachusetts and Kansas. Travel nursing is great because you work for 13 weeks and then rotate elsewhere. It was great experience. You must be flexible and jump in wherever they need your help. You have no more than three days of orientation and then have to adapt.”

Megan also worked PRN (as needed) at University of Kansas Health System and has kept that status, working a full-time schedule there for several years. In the meantime, military opportunities looked promising and after interviewing with two branches of service in 2014, she became a Navy reservist. As it turns out, all the flexibility and adaptability learned as a travel nurse serve her well in her current assignment.

Passion to Serve

At MNU, Megan traveled to Guatemala over winter break on a School of Nursing mission trip.

By Carol (Knight ’81, MA ’08) Best

Pioneers in Healthcare (Continued)
Jim Edlin, PhD (’72) recently wrote a new commentary for Haggai, Malachi, and Zechariah (The Foundry); “Covenant in the Old Testament,” an article in the January-February issue of Holiness Today; and “The Irony of Jonah,” an article in the quarterly journal, Illustrated Bible Life. Dr. Edlin retired from his position as professor of biblical literature and languages at MNU at the end of the 2019-2020 academic year.

Dean Flemming, PhD (’75) wrote the commentary for the Book of Revelation in the recently published Wesley One Volume Commentary, edited by Kenneth Collins and Robert Wall (Abingdon Press). It is the recently published Wesley One Volume commentary for the Book of Revelation in 2019-2020 academic year.

David Riley, MD (’85) authored The Last Voyage of the Emir (Elm Hill Books, a division of Harper Collins Christian).

Joni (McCleery ’86) Wyatt authored Junctures with Jesus, a series of devotionals ministering to caregivers who walk beside Alzheimer’s sufferers.

Linda Brookshier (’79) (second from left) received the Heart of Kansas City Award from the Greater Kansas City Attractions Association for her work on the Jesse James Farm project.

Vicki (Lund ’80) Fruetel is now PE and Health teacher for preschoolers to eighth graders at Manvel, ND Public School.

Harry Wilson (’81), CPA, CGMA is now a tax examiner for the 1040X division at the Internal Revenue Service in Kansas City.

Dr. Klaus Arnold (’85) is the new global resources generalist at MDWise in Overland Park, Kansas.

Robert D. Branson (The Foundry, 2020). Jim’s article is titled, “Land, Theology of the” and Dean wrote the article on “Missional Hermeneutics.”

Since 2013 the couple has been privileged to see more than 400 survivors of human trafficking assisted through various ministries.

Jack Holmes (MHR ’81) recently retired after 50 years in federal service (20 years of active duty with the U.S. Army and 30 years in civil service). He and his wife, Linda, reside in Alabama.

Dawn (Bornsen ’91) Murphy earned her master’s degree in English from Emporia State University in December 2019. She currently teaches ELA, English composition, and public speaking at Clay Center (KS) Community High School.

Whitney Jenkins (’01) Rodden received the Hallmark Leadership Award at the 2020 WIN for KC event for her work with the Lenexa Police Department and her national charity Harper’s Hugs. Rodden serves as MNU’s strength and conditioning coach.

Patti Blika (’05) has been promoted to principal researcher - Self-Serve Business Insights lead at Dropbox in San Francisco, CA.

Linda Bathurst (’07) is a pediatric clinician at Jordan Valley Community Health Center in Springfield, MO.

Kristi Rose (Jackson ’12) received the Greater Kansas City Attractions Association for her work on the Jesse James Farm project.

Ashley (Hechler ’06) Umphrey was named the 2019 Elementary History Teacher of the Year by Kansas Council for History Education.

Dianna Bell (’07) is now a human resources generalist at MDWise in Indianapolis, IN.

Robert Laughter (’08), lead solution designer at Cerner Corporation, along with fellow creative entrepreneurs, launched a new web design company called Sparkhatch where he is co-founder and lead brand strategist.

Daniel Rincence (’09, MAC ’15) has been appointed MNU dean of students following Kristi Keaton who is retiring in July as vice president for student development.

Tyler Vaughan (MHR ’09) was promoted to business development executive at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Kansas City, MO.

Barrett Alexander (’10) has been named senior policy advisor for humanitarian emergencies for World Vision.

Laura (York ’05) Johnson is an entrepreneur and content strategist for Sparkhatch Website Design, which she co-founded earlier this year.

Ashley (Hechler ’06) Umphrey was named the 2019 Elementary History Teacher of the Year by Kansas Council for History Education.

Karl Purkeypile (MBA ’10) was named the new CEO for AdventHealth Ottawa, Kansas. He previously served as executive director for operations at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission (Kansas).

Ashford Collins (’12) received the Olathe Human Relations Commission Humanitarian Award at the Olathe (Kansas) Community Awards.

Nicole Eubanks (’12) is the development director for membership at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City, MO.

Jeff Bell (PADM ’13) is now an insurance advisor with SelectQuote in the Kansas City market.

Kevin Freeman (’15) was promoted to distribution sales manager at Diageo, where he is responsible for marketing and sales in the Atlanta market.

Kristi Rose (Jackson ’16) Sexton-Chaveya passed her PA-C certification exam for the State of California and is now a physician’s assistant.

Addie (Limmex ’16, MAC ’19) Sudhoff is a pediatric clinician at Jordan Valley Community Health Center in Springfield, MD.

Jonathan Babcock (’17) was elected to the board of directors for the Buddy Fund, a charity supplying sports equipment to nonprofits helping to redirect and change the lives of at-risk children and youth in the St. Louis area. He is currently a client-engagement associate with Foursyth Advisors.

Rebecca Jit-Erlich (AOL ’17), MBA, HRM, is a recruiter at VRC Freight in Overland Park, Kansas.  

Joey Rosales (’17) is now the college unit director for Northwestern Mutual in Kansas City where he leads the college internship program for his market.

Caleb Swartz (’17) was recently promoted to assistant manager of Enterprise Rent-A-Car in Gardner, KS.

Cary Collins (’18) (above) was recently honored for 30 years of service with the City of Leavenworth, Kansas. She is the deputy city clerk.

Corey Sudhoff (MBA ’18) is now defensive assistant on the football staff of Missouri University of Science & Technology in Rolla, Missouri.

Joy Randle (’19) was a finalist for “This is Our KC” song contest on Fox4 (WDAF-TV in Kansas City).

Michael Riha (’19) is a compliance associate at CORE-COO, LLC in Dallas, Texas.
ALUMNI UPDATES

BIRTHS

3) Joe (’12) and Mallory (Sauer ’12) Auer; a daughter: Lexi Kristine, October 2, 2019.
4) Clayton (’15) and Kelly (Neiderhiser ’13) Brandt; a daughter, Rylee Mae, March 5, 2020.
6) Brandon (’11) and Miquela Cluff; a son: Truett Moore, December 14, 2019.
7) Raul and Taylor (Conant ’13) De La Torre, a son: Raul Luca, December 18, 2019.
8) Cotton (’14) and Sarah (Schmalzried ’14) Easdon, a son: Josiah Clark, December 19, 2019.
9) Josh Fash and Sarah Hunt-Fash (’08), a son: Jacob James, January 16, 2020.
13) Micah (’11) and Nellie (Evans ’12) Lawson, a son: Dakota Thor, December 18, 2019.
14) David (’17) and Ashlynn (Burns ’18) Luna, a son: Noah David, December 12, 2019.
15) Tino (’14) and Amber Luna, a son: Liam, March 10, 2020.
16) Jared (’12) and Karissa (Wangberg ’12) Menard; a son: Nolan James, November 28, 2019.
19) Eric (’12) and Tara Overmiller, a son: Caleb Steven, January 5, 2019.
23) Shane and Brittany (Potts ’13) Simpson, a son: Jack Henry, December 18, 2019.
24) Ben (’13) and Katie (Traut ’12) Smith, a son: Oakley Theodore, December 24, 2019.
26) Garrett (’17) and Andie Stadler, a daughter: Shilo Joanne, December 18, 2019.
28) Jonathon (’16) and Cartie (Brandt ’11) Tucker, a daughter: Emma Jo, December 19, 2019.
29) Nathaniel and Molly (Harmel ’13) Turner, a son: Milo, December 30, 2019.
30) Zachary and Monica (Smith ’00) Weeks, October 5, 2019.
32) Paul G. Cunningham (Former Trustee), July 18, 2020.
33) Chester Galloway (Former Faculty), March 17, 2020.
Join us for an inspiring evening of exquisite food, live and silent auctions, and special entertainment. This signature event has raised $4.5 million for student scholarships and other priorities at MNU.

Plan now to be a part of the 2021 President’s Honors, a night to celebrate God’s faithfulness and donor generosity. Be sure to reserve your tickets early!

April 16, 2021
MNU Cook Center
6:30 p.m.

Honoring Tim and Gail Buchanan with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

LEARN MORE AND PURCHASE TICKETS AT www.PresidentsHonors.org