

BEREA COLLEGE

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023 Volume 94 Number 1

Bridging In

Berea's unparalleled student support for transitioning into college

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03, Editor
Kim Brown, Associate Vice President for Marketing
and Communications
Chad Berry Hon. '20, Vice President for Alumni,
Communications and Philanthropy
Emily A. Parrish, Senior Graphic Designer
Crystal Wylie '05, Director of Digital Multimedia
Strategy
JoJo Wray '04, Content Contributor

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03, Brooke Donley '26,
Kim Kobersmith, Chris Lakes '98, Jason Lee Miller,
Sree P S '24

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Jay Buckner, Angela Cisneros '25, Brooklyn Kenny,
Jennifer Lance '20, Thomas Moonjeli '23, Anh Ngo '24,
Jalen Prater '21, Ehku Say '26, Justin Skeens,
Liz Stokes '25, Zack Thompson, Ana Ursaru '25,
Yin Kyay Wai '26, Crystal Wylie '05

Cover photo: Thomas Moonjeli '23

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If you have comments, questions or suggestions
for the Berea College Magazine or would like
information about reprinting any article appearing
in the magazine, please contact:

Editor, Berea College Magazine
Berea College
CPO 2142
Berea, KY 40404
magazine@berea.edu

AT YOUR SERVICE

Web: www.berea.edu
Mail: CPO 2142, Berea, KY 40404
Phone: 1-800-457-9846
Magazine: <https://magazine.berea.edu>

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Chloe '26 is a nursing major from Glasgow, Ky. She has
appeared on the past three covers of the Berea College
Magazine, including this one, but she's more than just a
girl on the cover. Learn about her story and where she
plans to take her career on page 24.

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ONLINE EXCLUSIVE:

Go behind the scenes with Chloe '26 as she speaks about her first
year at Berea College as a nursing major at www.berea.college/CoverGirl



Welcoming the 10th President

On July 1, Dr. Cheryl L. Nixon officially took the reins as Berea College’s 10th president. At a ceremony on June 30, President Lyle Roelofs passed the mace to Dr. Nixon, as she stepped into her new role as Berea’s first female president. During the ceremony, conducted one day after the Supreme Court’s ruling to abolish race as a factor in college and university admissions, Nixon addressed Berea’s stance on the ruling.

“I must state as strongly and emphatically as possible that the Supreme Court’s decision this week will not cause us to back away from our commitment to interracial education,” she said. “It has been both the firm foundation on which we stand and shining light that guides us to a more perfect future. I ask all Bereans to join with me to ensure that our values and our commitments are strengthened and that we stand together in putting these ideals into action. We were founded on the principle of equality; this is our commitment and we will not waiver.”

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Berea Alumni and Friends,

I had been 18 for exactly three weeks when I came to college. I had completed four years at an outstanding, college-prep high school. In those four years I also experienced a move to a new state (the third since starting middle school), bankruptcy and a single mom working two jobs to keep us afloat. I was a prime candidate for Berea College—and I had no idea what I was doing. But I knew I wanted my life to be different. In high school, instead of taking study hall and being a teacher’s aid my senior year, I chose calculus and biology II as electives. I wanted to be ready for college, and I was going to major in biology and pursue dental school because that path would make me money.

In summer 1999, I visited Berea’s campus for the first time in my rusted-out 1984 Chevy Cavalier that died when I parked and refused to start the rest of the day. I attended first-year student orientation and met other students, like Shalamar Stokely Sandifer '03 (read more about Shalamar on page 20), stayed in Anna Smith residence hall overnight and got a taste for attending college two hours away from home.

I thought it strange to only have class Monday, Wednesday and Friday and that 8 a.m. was the earliest class started—I’ve always been a morning person. I sat in an information session about technology and was given my first email address, which I thought was silly and was sure I’d never really use. If it hadn’t been for my advisor, Dr. Megan Hoffman, I don’t think I would have understood anything I was doing.

Dr. Hoffman was also my biology teacher that first semester. She had a delightful way of engaging our class, and I loved studying biology with her, especially genetics. Dr. Hoffman helped me create my schedule for the next semester, moving right along the normal biology track with botany and chemistry II. After my second day in those courses, I knew this major wasn’t for me. I asked Dr. Hoffman if I could major in biology and only focus on genetics. Unfortunately, she said, “no.” I’d have to complete the core major classes—even the ones I didn’t like. But she didn’t just leave it there and wish me well. She asked me what had been my favorite classes so far; what parts of each class had I loved the most? Then she encouraged me to spend a semester taking classes in various disciplines to see what resonated.

By the end of the next semester, I had fallen in love with writing, reading and literature. So, Dr. Hoffman encouraged me to consider an English major. After each semester she met with me and asked me to think deeply about my experiences, and she was thrilled when I finally found my passion. By my junior year when I had to officially declare a major, Dr. Hoffman had to tell me she could no longer be my advisor; I had to have an advisor from the English department. I was disappointed because she had been so instrumental in guiding me through my college journey to that point.

Looking back, I realize exactly how special her attention was. She was a biology professor, and once I decided not to pursue biology, she could have had me transfer advisors then. But she spent time looking at all types of courses with me and made recommendations that didn’t benefit her in the least, just so I could find my path. That kind of selfless empathy, compassion and care doesn’t come along often. And I’m so glad that 24 years later, Dr. Hoffman is still working with Berea’s students to ensure their success—not just in her classroom, but in every area of their lives.

Abbie Darst

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03
Editor

The Bridge Program: *Defining Success*

By Jason Lee Miller

For even the best students, transitioning from high school to college can be a challenge. They are moving from highly structured lives at home and school, with adult direction and limited choices, to a new world where they're suddenly the boss of themselves. They don't have to go to class if they don't want to. They don't have to study. They set their own schedules, choose when to sleep in, when not to. Every day, there are decisions to make.

The situation of a young adult in an unfamiliar, unstructured world with seemingly unlimited options can be stressful because what to do is not at all clear. This has been called “the quarter-life crisis.” It can lead a good student to



Building relationships with other incoming students is one highlight of the Bridge program. Meeting new people, forming early friendships and having a place to belong before classes start in the fall helps Bridge students be successful in their first year.

drop out of school. The Bridge program at Berea College was created to prevent that from happening and to help newly admitted students succeed by inviting them to a kind of summer preview.

Dr. Sarah Adams, assistant professor of General Studies, is the director of Berea Bridge and leads the effort. She says there are two main goals: help students succeed academically and make them feel they belong.

Each year, 60 incoming students are selected via lottery to attend Bridge for a month starting in June. The lottery is not completely random—there are controls to ensure the group is representative. Students coming from far away are provided with transportation at no cost to them. Students receive a stipend to help cover expenses. A trip for supplies is made weekly. They also are provided with a high-quality backpack,

one that won't fall apart right away.

Students take two classes during Bridge and put in about six hours per week at a campus job. Last year, Bridge offered a physics of music course. In Summer 2023, a chemistry of art class was offered. The experience is highly structured and scheduled and helps students get a feel for the reality of attending college in the fall. It also helps them understand that, though each of them is a very special student who has achieved great success so far, college is a different ballgame.

“Since I've started teaching here,” Adams said, “I've had more valedictorians and salutatorians in my classes—students at the top of their high schools. They come to college, and the expectations are different. It's more intense, and those students sometimes experience their first academic stumbling blocks.”



During their time on campus in summer 2022, Bridge students visited the Forestry Outreach Center located at the foot of the Pinnacles and explored the natural beauty and ecosystem there.



Mike Litau, associate professor of Art and Art History, works with a Bridge student in a printing course each student participated in during their Bridge experience.



The 2022 Bridge students also ventured off campus and took trips to places like the Cincinnati zoo.



Participating in a college course is a major component of the Bridge program. The presentation given by these three Bridge students helps prepare them for their first college courses.



Bridge students spend plenty of time enjoying each other's company and building relationships during the weeks they spend on campus.



This group of 37 Bridge students celebrates the end of their Bridge experience. The class of 2026 had the highest retention rate Berea College has seen in many years, with 90 percent of last year's incoming class being retained to year two.

A long time ago, a time students today often call “back in the 1900s,” there was a thing known among (male) college students as “the gentleman’s C.” It represented a good, honest effort at something very difficult. Valedictorians and salutatorians, though, tend to not be familiar with the concept. In college, they may be coming across a letter like that for the first time, and it can affect their sense of self.

The Bridge program both challenges them and connects them to support. They connect with professors and advisors. There are student-teaching assistants who live in residence halls with them, who also can connect them to campus services like Writing Resources. The program also focuses on successful academic strategies: not just taking notes but knowing when to take notes, not just reading a textbook but how to read one and how it’s different from reading a newspaper article. Bridge gives students a realistic sense of what college is going to require of them.

“We require a study hall because we hope students get the idea they need a study routine,” Adams explained. “Once August hits, it might look like you have seven hours of free time in the evening, but it’s not actually free time if you do all the studying that needs to be done. So, we build that into Bridge.”

The Bridge student’s day and week are quite structured and quite busy. Monday through Friday, their day starts at 7:30 a.m. and runs until 8:30 p.m. That includes meals, classes, breaks, work, exercise, workshops, free time and study sessions. The weekends are looser but filled with opportunities like hiking, canoeing, caving, painting classes, and visits to art museums, escape rooms, zoos and baseball games. They have

Sundays to themselves.

“The teaching assistants and resident assistants lead more casual activities like movie night or basketball games,” Adams said. “Karaoke is the biggest hit.

They love their karaoke night.”

Students bond, find belonging among each other despite differences, but also have the opportunity to connect to more familiar things. Once a week, they can have dinner with faculty, staff and students at the various centers on campus, like the Willis D. Weather-

ford Jr. Campus Christian Center, the Espacio Cultural Latinx, the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center, and others.

At Bridge, the whole student is considered. Counseling Services comes in, explains available resources, reminds students to breathe and teaches them how to release body tension, how to get their endorphins going and how to deal with homesickness.

The goal is academic and social success, and part of achieving that goal is understanding or redefining what

success means.

“I don’t mean a 4.0 grade-point average,” Adams said. “That’s not most students. I was not a 4.0 kind of college student. I mean successful and engaged, happy, interested students. Part of what we see from our most successful students is that they’re willing to take risks.”

As she explored other measures of success, Adams noted how the program transforms students. She sees these Bridge students at the beginning of the month and at the end of the month. They come in nervous and alone. They leave crying and hugging, happy and ready to find success at Berea College.



One-on-one assistance from professors is a significant part of the Bridge program. Students are able to learn from and feel supported by College faculty throughout the program.



Students snap photos of the “Mural of Cincinnati” on display at the the Cincinnati Art Museum’s Schmidlapp Gallery, as part of their visit to the city.

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Fiddling to the Top

By Jason Lee Miller

Kimberly's story begins in Portland, Ore., where she lived with her mother and grandparents. Her mother had a lot of responsibility, worked primarily as an accountant but also worked weekends to make ends meet.

"I saw how hard my mom worked," Kimberly '26 said. "I wanted to get a career where I would be able to have enough money to support her and give back to her what she has done for me."

From early on, things were pretty difficult for Kimberly, having to split time between her parents' homes and navigate cultural stigmas related to divorce. This was compounded sometimes by the usual growing pains many young people face. In kindergarten, though Kimberly was just learning to write, the kids at school were giving her a hard time about her handwriting. But adversity moved her to focus on perfecting her script. Soon she was learning calligraphy.

When it came time to learn music, Kimberly faced more difficult issues. In the fourth grade, Kimberly wanted to play the cello and was a fan of Yo-Yo Ma, the world-renowned cellist. She was fascinated by his Bach Cello Suite and became inspired by the cellist's words about how music could bring people together. But cellos are very expensive. Her mother bought her a violin, a Cremona SV-75 Novice, instead.

But people expressed their doubts about how good a violinist she could become given how expensive music lessons can be. The good news is Kimberly had a kind teacher who cared about her and offered her lessons. Just as she had done with perfecting her handwriting, Kimberly worked to perfect her violin playing. Focusing on

music and school gave her an outlet for dealing with messages from some people that suggested Kimberly's financial and family situation meant she was limited in what she could achieve.

"I always felt like it's better to be alone than to be with other people because I didn't want to be constantly hurt," she said. "With the circumstances going on in my life at the time, I

decided to distract myself from those feelings with schoolwork."

Her focus paid off. Kimberly joined the symphonic strings orchestra her first year of high school. By her junior year, she became the concert master. And though she loved music and was proving people wrong about her limitations, Kimberly didn't have any plans to be a professional musician. She also loved



Classically trained on the violin, Kimberly is now learning to fiddle with the Folk Roots Ensemble.

math and science and saw those subjects as a path to the financial security that would allow her to take care of her mom. Her grandfather, a bit of a math wiz, introduced her to the discipline and encouraged her to think of careers in the medical field.

Kimberly developed an interest in becoming a pharmacist, partly because she discovered the wonderful world of biomolecules, but also because she didn't see music and medicine as necessarily different because music can be a kind of antidepressant.

"[Music] worked in my body like a medicine or cure," she said. "I liked how it correlated to different kinds of medicine."

So, she studied hard and practiced hard. By the end of high school, the young woman who some people felt would be limited by social and financial issues was not only a classically trained violinist, she was also the class valedictorian.

That meant she had some college options, though not many of them all that great in a financial sense. Kimberly applied to many prestigious schools—and was wait-listed for most of them. She discovered Berea College through QuestBridge, an organization dedicated to helping low-income students attend college.

"Originally, I thought Berea couldn't be real," she said. "There was no way Berea College would pay tuition for a student."

She applied anyway, and about the same time she was accepted, she also received an acceptance letter from the University of California, Berkeley. Though closer to home and very prestigious, Berkeley also came with quite the price tag. Going there would require big loans, and Kimberly also thought of the size of the school, about how difficult it would be to stand out at a large school or to get individualized attention.

On the other side of the continent,

Berea was a bit of a mystery. Kimberly wasn't familiar with Kentucky, had barely heard of the place, and people were telling her it was rural. They didn't understand why she would want to go there. Though doubtful of her in the

past, people now were telling her she was prepared for so much more than attending a "random" school in Kentucky.

"I thought it might be a good place for me to grow because I'd never been to that side of the country. You have to experience different worlds. I didn't really know much, but I was still curious to know what it was like."

Once Berea appeared to be a real place that she would consider going to, Kimberly began to research more about it. She was then invited to the Berea Bridge program over the summer. She could take a couple of classes and get to know the place and get her first job. The program paid for a plane ticket and gave her a stipend to live on while she was there.

"I took two classes," she said. "One was about physics and music. The other was about visual art. The physics class really resonated with me because it related to music. We were learning equations, all these wavelengths."

At the end of the class, they made copper wind chimes. Kimberly also made a few friends. She matriculated the following August, declared a major in chemistry with a concentration in biochemistry. Her mom, because she could work remotely, moved to Berea, too, and hung up her daughter's wind chimes at her new apartment just down the street. Kimberly joined up with the Folk Roots Ensemble and is now the star fiddle player.

"This is kind of cool because I'm

Music worked in my body like a medicine or cure. I liked how it correlated to different kinds of medicine. — Kimberly '26

Originally, I thought Berea couldn't be real. There was no way Berea College would pay tuition for a student.


— Kimberly '26



Kimberly, the future pharmacist, dons her lab coat outside the Margaret A. Cargill Natural Sciences and Health building, where she performs her summer research assistant duties for the Chemistry department.

getting introduced to all these new forms of music that I've never ever been involved in because I've always been a classical musician, not a fiddler," Kimberly said.

Her second semester, Berea hired a new music professor who teaches violin. She can continue her classical training now as well. This summer, Kimberly is doing a campus internship as a research assistant in the Chemistry department. Her campus job is in the annual giving office. Kimberly writes thank you notes to donors who support students like her. When she gets to the phrase "Thank you," she writes it in calligraphy.

And one day, she's going to buy that cello. 

Building Connections

By Chris Lakes '98

Heading off to college is a significant—and often stressful—transition in the lives of new students. Moving into a new home away from home, starting courses at an academically rigorous institution and creating new relationships on an unfamiliar campus can make the first fall term a tricky landscape to navigate.

However, preparing for that all-important first college term should start well before students' first days in the fall, particularly for students who may be the first in their family to attend college. Despite being well prepared academically, many students struggle with the transition to a new, unfamiliar environment, often battling mental hurdles such as imposter syndrome, stereotype threat, the weight of expectations from family and more. Establishing a sense of belonging on campus is key to the success of a first-year student, and it is


critical to build those connections early.

At Berea College, we want to make sure students joining us each fall have a clear picture of what the experience will be like long before they ever set foot on campus, and a lot of that work takes place in the summer. One of the most exciting events incoming students can engage in during the summer is one of our longest running flagship programs, Summer Connections. Each summer, we invite members of the incoming class to campus for an opportunity to build the foundation necessary to make a smooth and successful transition into the college environment. Letters, brochures and virtual meetings are all valuable ways of communicating with new students, but nothing replaces being on campus, walking from building to building and engaging in the community they'll call home in the fall.

The goal of Summer Connections is exactly what its title implies: to connect incoming students with the community, culture, values and resources of Berea College. Students and their families meet faculty who outline classroom expectations and ways students can prepare for a new, academically rigorous educational environment. They meet with members of the Labor program team to begin understanding what it means to attend a work college and how to incorporate their labor position into their educational journey. Members of the Student Life team introduce them to the concept of residence life and help prepare them for the living-learning

style experience they will engage with on campus. And throughout their visit, we begin introducing them to the culture of Berea College, a unique, mission-driven institution that attempts to educate students' head, heart and hands.

Perhaps most importantly, students can meet fellow incoming students. The entire Summer Connections experience is designed to create formal and informal opportunities for students to talk with each other, learn about one another and become more comfortable with the peers with whom they will be living and learning when they move to campus full time for the fall term. Many students find their first roommate at Summer Connections and begin building relationships with other students that create a sense of excitement about returning to campus and beginning their educational experience.

When a student leaves campus after their Summer Connections experience, our hope is they will be able to envision themselves walking around campus going from class to class, moving from their work assignment to the dining hall where they'll meet their friends for dinner and then heading back to the residence hall or library for a night of studying (and, we hope, getting some sleep). It's these experiences that begin establishing the all-important sense of belonging on campus that will lead to a successful transition, and ultimately a four-year experience ending with a degree from Berea College. Because we're not just preparing the way for new students, we're preparing future graduates, future alumni and future lifelong Bereans. 



Kayla Hush '19, Brooke Green '22 and Erika Warren '21 use candy to encourage first-year students to learn more about cheerleading for Berea College. Cheer is just one of many tables set up during Summer Connections to help incoming students know how and where they can plug in when they get on campus.



Crystal Wylie '05



Kye Anderson, international student and scholar advisor, greets a student arriving at the Lexington airport. When Center for International Education staff welcome international students from long trips overseas, they greet them by name, help carry their luggage and offer them a safe, friendly face to connect with instantly.

Creating a One-Blood Environment

By Sree P S '24

I will never forget the sense of relief I felt as I got off the shuttle in the circle outside the Woods-Penniman building on a cold January afternoon in 2021. I had spent the past 34 hours tucked into seats in pressurized airplane cabins and the secured, sterile environment of airports. I had not slept, and I was on the other side of the planet from my home in India; my body's sense of time had been turned upside down. I was soon greeted by the smiling face of a worker with the Francis and Louise Hutchins Center for International Education (CIE), standing six feet away, who showed me the way to the Commons, an indoor auditorium fitted with the flags of more than 70 countries. There were clothes befitting Kentucky's climate, neatly arranged on tables for us to choose.

More CIE staff arrived to greet me and the other international students who had just arrived, and among them was Kye Anderson, the international student and scholar advisor with whom I had communicated through email to get through the multitude of steps involved in being accepted as an international student at Berea College. I handed him the last bits of paperwork needed, like COVID-19 test results and my passport, to be photocopied. I was taken to my suite in James Residence Hall where I



Kye Anderson (far right) stands with a group of 2020 international student graduates during a recognition ceremony in the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education.

would quarantine for the next two weeks. The room was decked out with bags of different shades of blue filled with goodies sponsored by many of Berea's departments. The bags included socks, scarfs, sunglasses, chocolate and a bottle of Ale-8-One. My bed had already been made for me. I let myself fall into its comfort, and I slept for a very long time.

Being chosen as one of Berea's 35 admitted international students from more than 1,000 appli-

cants is a matter of great privilege. From the day we receive our acceptance letters, we place a great degree of trust in this institution and take a leap of faith across oceans. The CIE and its International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) are an essential part of bridging the diverse body of international students into Berea. Unlike other institutions, Berea does not have many international students from the same countries or regions. Instead, there are students from more than 70 countries on campus at any given time. Communicating with and advising such a diverse and varied population is no easy task.

Before arriving in Berea, I bombarded the CIE with many questions about

"[We] communicate with the [international] students on a regular basis. One of the things we take into consideration is internet access and what that looks like to a particular student so that we can make sure we are providing the best support possible."

— Kye Anderson

campus, culture, costs, visas and travel documents. The CIE sent answers as promptly as possible, specific to my circumstances. The staff sent out instructions and advice on how to advocate for myself to the consular officer to obtain a visa. This was particularly complicated during the COVID-19 pandemic when the functions of consulates and airports often were restricted.

“[We] communicate with the [international] students on a regular basis,” Anderson said. “One of the things we take into consideration is internet access and what that looks like to a particular student so that we can make sure we are providing the best support possible. For example, we may give more grace to a student who might be in a controlled environment when it comes to internet access. We work with that student, understanding that they might take a bit longer responding back to us, or we might need

In some ways, working with international students is a little bit easier in terms of bringing them together. The students come to campus one week before all our other students. And by the end of the orientation, we have a small group of what I would like to call ‘United Nations.’ — Kye Anderson

to respond to a student on a certain timeframe.”

Once I got to Berea, I was excited to see the faces of the people I had only corresponded with through email. I was able to spend more time with them during the extensive orientation process.

A traditional orientation program for international students includes placement tests, campus tours, information sessions about class schedules and work positions, opening a local bank account, setting up direct deposits and

filing legal paperwork to receive social security cards. As we acclimate to life in Kentucky, the CIE staff prepares our food as we are slowly introduced to the

Being chosen as one of Berea’s 35 admitted international students from more than 1,000 applicants is a matter of great privilege. — Sree ’24



During All Peoples of the Earth Day, Sotaire '26 proudly represented his home with the flag of Burundi.

Arin Ngo '24



Helina Asrat '20 (left) and Selemawit Gebremedhin '20 stand with the flags of their home countries during a gathering of international students in March 2020. The gathering allowed the CIE to celebrate its upcoming graduates before they were sent home at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Jose '26 stands with the flag representing his home country of Mexico.

Arin Ngo '24

Americanized food in Dining Services. We build a strong sense of community as international students, surpassing the cultural differences involved in belonging to vastly different countries across the world.

“In some ways, working with international students is a little bit easier in terms of bringing them together,” Anderson said. “The students come to campus one week before all our other students. And by the end of the orientation, we have a small group of what I would like to call ‘United Nations.’”

The CIE provides ongoing support to international students during our four years in Berea. They help us keep track of the processes involved in maintaining our immigration status with the federal government. This might include help with filing taxes, timely submission of documentation and ensuring compliance with employment laws. The meticulous attention to legal requirements is the foundation upon which many international students thrive in Berea. The oldest and one of the largest student organizations on campus, the Cosmopolitan Club, is an international student club at its core, though any



Jennifer Diaz Sales '23 presents at an All Peoples of the Earth worship service in the Phelps Stokes Chapel.




Ana-Maria '26 stands with the Romanian flag as a celebration of All Peoples of the Earth Day.

Arin Ngo '24

Berea College student is welcome. International students have the highest retention rates of all student demographics at Berea and contribute greatly to the cultural vibrancy one may witness at events like the Cosmo Show and Mountain Day.

During the first semester, the CIE is intentional in placing international students as roommates with domestic students in residence halls. This small measure enhances what Anderson calls cultural “cross-pollination.”

The CIE’s steadfast advocacy for international students is a testament to Berea’s commitment to bringing together “all peoples of the earth.” The staff on the first floor of the Woods-Penniman building makes sure international students feel safe to walk into their offices to ask questions and receive advice. It is the warmth and hospitality with which they approach each of their students that translates across cultural differences to retain Berea’s unity in diversity. 



Students from nearly 70 countries are represented at Berea College. Each year the campus joins the Center for International Education to celebrate All Peoples of the Earth Day. Here, students representing 17 countries stand with their country’s flag on the front steps of Hutchins Library.

Arin Ngo '24

Support from *the Start*

By Kim Kobersmith

Destiny Askew '18 knew she wanted to spend time away from her home in Birmingham, Ala., to study at Berea College. She also knew there would be challenges. She has two learning disabilities and would be distant from her mother, her main support system. So, when the opportunity arose to join the Emerging Scholars Program, she signed up.

"Since I was away from home, we decided it might be a good idea to have extra help," she said. "I wanted as many understanding people as I could have on my side when things got iffy."

Askew was an early participant in Berea's Emerging Scholars Program (ESP), a federally funded initiative that

supports disadvantaged college students. A decade ago, College leaders realized the low-income and first-generation college students they served could benefit from additional support to overcome their additional barriers to graduation. The program was the first group on campus to provide wrap-around services to help meet students' academic, financial, personal and career goals. It is now part of the broader work of the Office of Student Success and Transition.

An orientation kick-off is the first chance for the scholars to engage in the program. As first-year students, they arrive three days early to settle in, find their way around campus and begin to form relationships with other ESP students. Another ESP student, Alana '26, has just completed her first year and said the extra transition time increased her confidence going into that first semester.

"I am from Anchorage, Alaska, and didn't know anyone in my class before I arrived," she said. "It was scary coming across the country by myself, and I was able to make some good friends before the year even started."

The foundation of the program is a weekly class, GST 101: Strategies for Academic Success.

Part of the curriculum is academic, providing an orientation to college-level course work and building a base level of skills. Another main goal is introducing students to on-campus resources. ESP staff leads collaborative sessions with writing resources, financial aid, counseling services and career development staff.

The class also covers a "hidden curriculum." Often, students without previous exposure to college life don't even know what questions to ask. ESP staff provides support in a non-threatening environment. They cover basic how-to skills like deciphering communications from the administration, navigating the college website and building relationships with professors.

"Learning how to be my own advocate in class was big," Askew said. "I didn't realize how much expectations needed to be extra clear because of my learning disabilities."

Conversations introduce internship and study-abroad possibilities so students can start imagining those options for themselves. The class has proven so helpful, the College has adopted the course as an optional offering for all first-year students.

Each ESP student is matched with an academic counselor for three advising meetings per semester. One-on-one sessions focus on personal goal setting and working through concerns. Some scholars need guidance on a curriculum plan and class sequencing in order to graduate on time. Others need help with the nitty-gritty work of time management and scheduling.

Another common topic is cause and effect: how much time students dedicate to study and how that level of dedication reflects in their grades. The final session is a focused reflection, a time for students to consider what they might want to do differently going forward.

"We want them to be intentional about growing," said Elle Keys '18, one of the program's two academic counselors.

Keys loves the chance to nurture students' academic success. She shared about one student who was struggling with information overload in a class. Through the conversation, she realized the student didn't know how to take notes or how to discern what was important enough to write down. She pulled out her whiteboard markers and created a diagram. The two talked through hypothetical situations and then brainstormed how to study using the notes.

The ESP staff has a holistic perspective and strives to be a one-stop-shop for students. They can problem-solve on a variety of topics; if they don't know the answer, they know who to ask. Student inquiries have included where to get a broken pair of glasses fixed and tips on buying a car in Kentucky. Alana appreciated that they provided airport transportation for students like her arriving by plane.

While GST 101 and academic counseling are the foundations of ESP, the core of it is relationships. Through spending time together and compassionately reaching out, staff form bonds of real concern with the scholars. They sponsor drop-in events, like a breakfast gathering during registration. Having the staff available in case there are any issues can bring a sense of calm to a stressful time.

"I was shell-shocked at having so much freedom at college," Askew said. "The ESP staff checked on me regularly and kept me from making major mistakes my first semester. Even when I wasn't active in the program after my sophomore year, I would go into the counselor's office and talk with him to get advice."



Alana '26 is an adventurer at heart. Originally from Alaska, she finished her first year at Berea College this past May and spent part of her summer doing medical relief work in Romania at the Ukraine border. Coming to college from nearly 4,000 miles away was a new adventure for Alana, but her time with Emerging Scholars helped her make friends and find her place.

The COVID-19 pandemic experience opened the eyes of staff to how concerning finding community and making friends are to students. Through outings to the Newport Aquarium and the Muhammad Ali Museum, the cohort of scholars form tight bonds with each other.

"Part of the reason I was academically successful in high school was because of the community I built and the support of teachers and students," Alana said. "ESP gave me a safe environment to have that at college. Going to Mammoth Cave with the group was a highlight of my [first] year."

ESP can only accept 70 students a year, and the program always receives more applicants than it can serve. Since so many Bereans come from disadvantaged backgrounds, leaders specifically target students from places that historically have had the lowest graduation

rates: Appalachian counties identified as economically distressed and large, urban areas.

ESP's holistic approach is making a difference. Comparing recent six-year graduation rates, 71 percent of ESP students completed a degree versus 67 percent of the entire student body. In the 2019 academic year, 88 percent of emerging scholars returned as sophomores, while only 73 percent of their peers from economically at-risk counties returned.

ESP runs for two years, with an option for students to continue beyond that. "More of our students are choosing to remain active after their sophomore year," said Laney Coleman, ESP director. "They have a good relationship with their academic counselor. Our programming gives them experiences they wouldn't have otherwise, and they really feel we are their cheerleaders." ■



Destiny Askew '18 tutors students in her work with Berea Buddies and the Center of Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTs). Askew was an Emerging Scholar when she first entered Berea College in 2014, and she credits the program with giving her the support she needed to find success at Berea College.

Another Tool *in the Toolbox*

By Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03

A student's walk across the stage at commencement is momentous, but it is not a moment that stands alone in time. Each step across the stage is a culmination of support that began when that student stepped onto Berea's campus. For most, that first step is exciting and full of anticipation, but for others, it is fraught with challenges, fears and near failures. Maybe it's realizing the stark contrast between high school and college expectations. Maybe it's anxiety about responsibilities left unattended back home. Maybe it's being overwhelmed by everything new in a place that despite its best efforts doesn't feel at all like home. Berea supports students to help them thrive and succeed from day one—but when success begins to shrivel, Berea's support kicks into high gear.

The Office of Student Success and Transition (SST) is charged with providing students with the guidance and development needed to successfully transition into, navigate through and graduate from Berea College. Student Success coordinators Shalamar Stokely Sandifer '03 and Rosanna Hutcheson '13 lead Berea's intervention team. Only three weeks into the fall term, they create progress reports, which allow faculty members to identify students who seem to be struggling academically or are missing class. These faculty concerns are then investigated by the SST team.

"We meet as a team, and we review every single note," Sandifer said, "and then we decide who will intervene, who is going to talk to the student."

"And then we'll [reach out], and sometimes we just send a support note where [the student] can choose to meet with us, or sometimes it's mandatory depending on how many areas they are

struggling in," Hutcheson added.

This alert process remains open throughout the term until about two weeks before the term ends. For each alert, the student success team decides



Rosanna Hutcheson '13 (left) and Shalamar Stokely Sandifer '03 serve as student success coordinators for the Office of Student Success and Transition. The two help students who find themselves struggling to navigate college whether academically, socially, emotionally or mentally. Their goal is to help students find ways to handle difficulties and make it to graduation.

whether the situation is a one-off for a particular class that the faculty member can handle; whether they need to invite a struggling student to meet with the team; or whether the student is missing class or dealing with something else really challenging that calls for a mandatory meeting.

"Berea College students [can] come from very challenging situations," Hutcheson explained.

"Transition is hard," Sandifer added. "Sometimes they think they can walk in and do the same as high school. I say it is like driving a car, and you see high school is in the rearview and Berea College is up front. We remind them high school is done—it's long gone, and we have to talk about college. Through our alert system, connecting them with resources is one of the biggest things."

For some students, Hutcheson said, they just need someone to take notice, step in, acknowledge they're not doing well and ask them what's wrong. Though the team begins by focusing on academics, a student's issue can be anything from not knowing how to approach a professor, to learning how to be away home for the first time, to dealing with multiple deaths in their family, to navigating new social groups on campus.

"There is just so much thrown at them," Sandifer said.

In the 2023 spring term, the SST staff received nearly 250 alerts on students expressing concern over academics, well-being and labor. Faculty and staff taking responsibility for reporting allowed the SST team to support and connect these students to the appropriate resources they needed to continue their college journey.

Though an intervention process has

been a part of Berea's support system for more than a decade, in recent years the office has changed its name from the Office of First-Year Initiatives to better reflect its mission and services to all students, hired new staff and put intentional resources into two full-time student success coordinator positions. In addition, when Hutcheson arrived in 2020, she helped the office launch the new alert system to replace a cumbersome earlier version. All of this has led to serving students better and helping them develop what they need most—accountability.

"We teach study skills, we do self-evaluation, talk about time management, healthy relationships—but it all comes down to that accountability piece—'Oh, I meet with Shalamar this week,'" Sandifer explained. "Because I not only ask about classes, I also ask about labor and how everything is going as a whole. If I notice that they may not be themselves, I can say, 'It seems like you're off, is everything OK?'"

These one-on-one accountability sessions can also help identify mental-health issues that need to be addressed. Sometimes the SST staff needs to hit pause, make a referral to Counseling Services or even walk with a student to meet a counselor.

"They often forget that before you are a student you are a person, and who you are as a person and your relationships and dynamics affect who you are as a student," Hutcheson said. "You can't be a [successful] student if you are not a healthy person."

"It's such a good feeling to see students' challenges and the adjustments they need to make and then to see them progress and experience success,"

Sandifer said. "I don't ask for perfection; I wasn't a perfect student, myself. I struggled, but I walked across that stage. Students put this unrealistic expectation on themselves, so we try to give them tools to survive and then to thrive at Berea, like self-advocacy."

Recognizing student challenges and providing the tools they need to succeed contributes significantly to Berea's higher-than-average retention and graduation rates. Nationally, only 21 percent of first-generation, economically-disadvantaged students graduate college within six years—at Berea, it's triple at 63 percent. And all these interventions seek to move that needle even higher.

Getting every student through the difficulties and challenges of college—personal, academic or social—and to graduation day is the main goal of Sandifer and Hutcheson's work.

"We have those students who constantly come in and out of our office—we have an open-door policy—but when I see that student walk across that stage, knowing that I played even a small part of it, there is something in me that makes me teary-eyed to even talk about it," Sandifer said with tear-brimmed eyes. "[They] have so many cheerleaders on this campus, and they don't know how much we're pulling for them. We have all of these hard meetings, and we are rooting them on—'You're almost there, you're almost there!' And then when you see them walk across the stage, you just want to hug each and every one of them and say, 'Job well done; keep doing and learning.'"

Intervening when that navigation becomes tricky is a critical example of the personalized and exceptional support the College provides every student—from day one to graduation day.

"Part of me is amazed at all the resources Berea has," Sandifer said. "With alerts and probation material and wellness checks, it is really hard with just our office to fall through the cracks, not to mention Labor and Student Life. I am so in awe at the supports in place to make sure students succeed." ■

ACT FIRST

When Rosanna Hutcheson '13 joined the Office of Student Success and Transition (SST), she helped guide the development of new intervention strategies. One was the creation of GST 101P: Strategies for Academic Success, which is a proactive approach to retaining first-year students. In addition, students who end up on academic probation have a similar course that also includes a four-hour workshop and bi-weekly meetings with SST staff. This course, taught by Hutcheson and Shalamar Stokely Sandifer '03, is a quarter-credit course. For more information on the SST office and first-year resources, visit www.berea.edu/office-of-student-success-and-transition.



Social Media responses as to why students chose Berea College

Tuition free...duh

Small Great professional growth opportunities
classroom sizes

Diversity!

Opportunities, study
abroad, amazing faculty

Because Berea is everything that I spent my life
dreaming about, because Berea is a symbol of hope.

Friends

Work directly with experienced
professionals in my field

The support system

Get to do my dream career
as a labor position

Affordable education!

Best College for
International Students!

The beautiful campus and
limitless opportunities

The mountains

Far from
home

Opportunities and sound education

Because, Berea's Education
actually prepares you for the
real world.

Farm store is top notch

My aunt went to Berea and I had amazing memories
of visiting her when I was a kid...I didn't even apply any-
where else—I always knew it was where I wanted to go.

It instantly felt like home when I visited.

Our first campus tour spring break
2007 and it JUST felt like home!!
Plus, no tuition, which was a
huge bonus for my twin and I!
Berea changed my life!

Both parents and my brother
were/are BC grads.

No tuition and no age limit. I entered when I was 16.

They gave me a chance, over and over and over again.

I loved the campus AND the fact that I could work
for my tuition and help my parents out!

Country Dancers.

\$\$\$

All the friendly folks
I met on my visit.

The Berea College Country Dancers visited my
hometown and my mom learned about
the college. We later got to go to Christmas
Country Dance School and I fell in love with
the college. I'm so thankful that my husband
and I both got to attend Berea College.

The service-minded culture

Lots of my family went to or were
at Berea. I had to leave Kentucky
and spend my high school years
in Indiana. Coming to Berea was
coming home for me. Still is.

My Dad told me from the time I was
5 years old, I was going to Berea someday.
I never thought of any other schools.

No tuition!



IT'S MORE THAN A BOWL

by Jason Lee Miller

Ellen '24 is a studio art major with a concentration in sculpture. The Ohio native developed a love of ceramics in high school, and now she applies what she is learning in Student Craft's ceramics program to her major. She hopes to have her own ceramics studio and shop one day.

Ellen came into Berea as a business major but after taking some classes in that field decided it wasn't really for her. She had a passion for making things. In between classes and college life, she sits at the wheel, making bowls and mugs for Student Craft's Flux Collection. Her work is sold at the Berea College Visitor Center and Shoppe, the Log House Craft Gallery and online.

"I get a lot of satisfaction and joy from it because I really love doing this," Ellen said. "I can come in, sit down, make some pots and forget everything else that's going on. It's a very safe place for me."

In her safe place, Ellen focuses on solving problems, mainly pottery problems. Solving them involves a presence of mind, an ability to work through frustration. Working with clay isn't zoning out, it's zoning in.

"If I'm somewhere else mentally," she said, "I start to lose the center of my clay. It starts getting wobbly. Clay is very responsive to your touch. Even the slightest thing can throw it off."

While the process of making is joyful and satisfying, what Ellen loves most is how a piece she makes connects her to its eventual buyer.

"Each piece I make is not going to be exactly the same as another one," she said. "One thing about having people make things instead of machines is that you have that human touch. You have the minor flaws, those maker marks. A lot of times, people don't notice those things until they've had a piece for a while and studied it. That connection isn't just from the moment you acquire the piece—it's like you keep finding things out about it the whole time you have it."

EVERY PIECE TELLS A STORY

When you purchase a handmade Berea College Student Craft product, you are buying much more than a bowl or mug. Each piece is imprinted with the identity and heart of the student who made it.

Photo by Ana Ursaru '25

The Cover Girl

By Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03

Chloe's mom is her rock—the person she tells everything to, her best friend, her role model. The two also work together as certified nursing assistants (CNAs) at a nursing home in Glasgow, Ky.

"I just love her so much because she's been there for everything," Chloe '26 said. "She works really hard to provide for me and my sister. We work together sometimes, and it's fun. I feel like that made us closer. I don't know what I'd do without her."

Raised in a single-parent household, Chloe partly chose to follow in her mother's work footsteps out of admiration for her hard work and independence. "It's inspiring," Chloe said. "I hope that's me one day, to say, 'You can do all this stuff without needing anyone else.'"

But more than the bond the two share that carried over into the CNA positions, Chloe, who just finished her first year at Berea College, has chosen to major in nursing because of something else her mother was there to help her through. In 2017, at her regular 12-year checkup, Chloe's lymph nodes were swollen and, after an ultrasound, nodules were found on her thyroid. A biopsy came back negative for cancer, but the doctor still wanted to remove part of the thyroid to correct autoimmune issues she was experiencing. However, when they performed the surgery, the biopsy was wrong—cancer was present in her thyroid, parts of her voice box and her lymph nodes. The surgery and treatment were successful, but in 2019, the cancer returned, and she had to go through the entire process again.

"That was an experience in itself," Chloe recalled. "But I can remember the

nurses and the doctors just being there and offering me coloring books and stuff to make me feel comfortable. I think that's really when I decided what I wanted to do."

Having finished her first year in Berea's nursing program, Chloe plans to become a pediatric oncology nurse and work with child cancer patients.

"It will be sad, but it will be rewarding," Chloe said about working with those patients. "I feel like [my] experience will help me understand, hopefully, what my future patients are going through, and I'll be able to relate to them on a level that maybe other nurses can't. So, I feel like the reason that happened to me was to make me a pediatric oncology nurse. It's something I'm pretty passionate about, but I'm hoping that I enjoy it, and that it's not too emotionally demanding."

Knowing Chloe today, you would never know the health difficulties of her childhood. Her bubbly personality and sweet spirit exude from her and pour out in her friendships and in her position on Berea's cheerleading squad. Her beautiful voice rang out from the Black Music Ensemble during her first semester, and her friendly and empathetic personality landed her a job as a resident advisor (RA) for the upcoming academic year.

But of all the relationships she has cherished as a first-year student, Chloe says she loved her professors best of all. "I just feel like I got really lucky with my professors so far," she said. "Being at a small school, they can make connections with everybody. I feel like I'm friends with all my professors. I love them all so much, and they're so smart. Some of them just feel more like family."

Chloe found her place on campus, but she still went home once a month,

allowing her to stay connected to her mom and to the patients she'd come to love at the nursing home back in Glasgow.

"I feel like it makes me closer with my mom, like it makes me cherish whenever I get to go home," Chloe reflected. "And I really take it all in more."

Those visits home also allow for a break from the rigors of college life. "I'm not going to lie, [nursing] is one of the hardest majors here, but it's very rewarding," Chloe said. "But at the same time, we have a 100-percent pass rate (on the National Council Licensure Examination for registered nurses). So, it might be hard, but you're going to be prepared."

And her life experience has already prepared her to handle hard things. "I think that it just honestly showed me how strong I can be, and how much I can really do," Chloe said of her cancer journey. "I feel like it just pushes me every day. If I have a hard assignment, I'll be like, 'You've done all of this in your lifetime, you can do this!'"

Looking into what the next three years hold for her, Chloe has her sights set on traveling abroad. Last summer she learned of a group that went to Tanzania and worked in different clinics and orphanages helping people through their nursing skills. Chloe cannot wait for a similar opportunity to open for next summer.

"I want to experience that so bad; it's so cool. And I feel like I would have endless stories to tell about it," she said. "Just learning about a lot of stuff to make me a good nurse—that's all I really want to do. That's the main goal." 📖



Pushing Through: Helping Students in Transition

By Jason Lee Miller

Socioeconomic status can be an important factor in a college student's ability to succeed. Though social pressures, financial struggles and emotional traumas are not limited to individuals from specific groups, they are more prevalent among the low-income and the marginalized. For this reason, Berea College ensures incoming students, including students participating in the summer Bridge program between high school and college, have access to high-quality mental-health services.

Many Berea College students are

the first in their families to attend college, meaning they are pioneers into a world unknown to their parents. All of them are low-income—Berea College covers tuition and gives them a job to help with expenses as they gain professional experience. Many of them feel in some way marginalized, whether because they are of a racial, gender or economic minority, or simply because of the region they call home. At Berea, they find a place they can belong, where all other students share those economic aspects of their background.

According to research, students from these backgrounds have higher instances of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Simply put, they are more likely to have experienced hardship or trauma as kids: divorce, drug use, crime, death, economic or environmental devastation, housing instability, food insecurity, social stigmas, discrimination, abuse and more. Academic success and qualifying for admission to Berea College despite all that is quite the testament to a student's resilience and resolve. Still, the college transition can

be difficult and can intensify a student's struggles.

"College is around the time people experience the onset of most mental-health conditions," said Josh Johnston, mental health therapist for Berea College Counseling Services. "Counseling Services was invited to come and speak to all the participants in the Bridge program. Before students even enter their first full semester, they are being introduced to mental-health resources on campus."

Johnston and others at Counseling Services help incoming students learn about the sources of support available to them through outreach, programming and partnerships with professors and labor supervisors. They come into the classroom to detail common mental-health problems and symptoms and encourage students to seek assistance if they start having issues.

"With the transition to college," Johnston said, "this may be the first time a student is out of the house, experiencing life on their own and exploring what their unique value sets are. So, it's really important when a person is going through that journey that they have access to those types of services."

In addition to socioeconomic factors and ACEs, there may be cultural issues that prevent a student from seeking mental-health services and options. At home or in their broader home culture, therapy may be looked down upon or stigmatized. College may be the first time a student has had access to or awareness of any kind of mental-health services. There may not be mental-health providers available where they come from, the resources needed to access them or the cultural support to seek assistance.

"This may be a student's first opportunity to receive services where

they're able to talk to somebody in a confidential setting to explore what their value sets may be or explore their own mental-health symptoms," Johnston explained. "It's often not the fault of their families. It may be just a dynamic that they haven't had access to. Those three things—cultural values, prevalence rates and opportunity—are incredibly important as we look at our cohort of students."

That points to the resilience of our students, that I have heard so many shocking stories of what they've had to experience and what they've had to endure. Yet, they've managed to push through. — Josh Johnston

There is much Johnston cannot talk about because of issues of confidentiality and because of assumptions of what might be "typical." He cannot talk about specific cases nor paint a picture of what is usual or

unusual. Trauma comes in many forms for many reasons with many different effects. He shared a hypothetical situation as illustration.

A student, for example, may be known as an important caregiver in his family. The student takes care of siblings, prepares them meals, drives them to school, and so on. He is also trying to succeed academically in his own right. So, family responsibility and studies become his identity and what drives him toward success.

"And now they come to college," Johnston said. "This was their out. This was their chance. Now you don't have necessarily the same pressures. You've got food, shelter. You've got your basic needs met, and it becomes this identity experience and the pressure that's placed on the self.

"So, they're coming from a family of origin, and there is pressure to succeed, and at that first sign of stress, they may feel they are not able to do this," he

continued. "The real tension comes into play in battling the onset of some of these symptoms, whether it be anxiety or depression, which are the two most common nationwide. But our students can experience that in a really heavy way here."

For students in the Bridge program, they are facing a transition. "Any type of transition that people go through is often met with a charged emotional experience. There's the fear of the unknown, what's going to happen next. There's the difficulty of leaving what you've always known to create something new. It's a particularly acute experience."

From a wider perspective, the work being done with Berea College students is work that the institution as a whole hopes extends to the community outside and the places students come from. A student with a difficult past or dealing with a difficult present can become a successful scholar or employee and an impactful community and family member. Mental health in college for an individual can create better mental health among those connected to them. Very often, this cohort of students is stronger and more powerful than they realize.

This may be a student's first opportunity to receive services where they're able to talk to somebody in a confidential setting to explore what their value sets may be or explore their own mental-health symptoms. — Josh Johnston

"Prior to this," Johnston concluded, "I worked in community mental health. I've heard more traumatic experiences here than I ever did there. That points to the resilience of our students, that I have heard so many shocking stories of

what they've had to experience and what they've had to endure. Yet, they've managed to push through." ■



Mental health therapist Josh Johnston helps Berea College students navigate their new academic worlds away from home. For many students, this is their first experience with mental-health or counseling services.



“Madison ’26 came to us with very little experience as a runner,” said Michael Thomas, head coach for cross country and track and field. “Her confidence continued growing as the season progressed. It’s not often a first-year places in the top five for a majority of her races. That led to her being more vocal during workouts with her teammates, more confident in how she spoke, and eventually becoming that person we all see and cherish today. I am excited to continue working with her this year and seeing her progression.”

Running toward Success

By Brooke Donley '26 and Abbie Darst '03

Madison '26 has only been running for three years. So, being recognized as Collegiate Conference of the South (CCS) Rookie of the Week, Athlete of the Week and Rookie of the Year in her first cross-country season at Berea College is an astounding accomplishment. Though she began running on a treadmill to cultivate a healthy lifestyle in middle school, the West Virginia native officially took up the sport her junior year in high school at the recommendation of her history teacher.

“My high school history teacher, who was the track coach, asked me to run track because he thought that I would be a good distance runner,” she said. “Once I realized that I was placing well in meets, I decided to stick with it, and then I received offers to run collegiately.”

One of the offers Madison received was from Berea College. During her campus visit, she fell in love with the campus and the emphasis Berea puts on academics.

“Berea allows me to focus on my academics while participating in the sport I love,” Madison said. “It was not an opportunity I thought I would have. I was interested in running for Berea College because I can run without the stress of losing scholarship money if I were to get injured. I want to go into pharmacy school, so I want to do well

win undergraduate school.”

Like most first-year students, Madison found the transition to college to be both refreshing and challenging, and she credits courses like General Studies 110 in helping her transition from high school to college.

“[The course] introduces students to the Writing Resources lab, where students can go to receive help with essays,” Madison said. “It also helps transition their writing to a college level.”

While certain academic supports were in place to help Madison find her place in the classroom, being involved with the cross-country and track-and-field programs also smoothed Madison’s transition from high school to college.

“It has given me close friendships with my teammates,” she explained. “It has given me people I can lean into when things become difficult. It has also given me something that can relieve the stress that comes with being a Berea College student. While I love being at Berea, stress comes from trying to do well academically with a heavy course load along with sports practice.”

In addition to the awards she earned for cross country, in track, she placed second in the 1,500-meter race and fourth in the 800-meter race at CCS meets.


“It made me feel really proud after

all the hard work at practices and workouts that I was able to have a lot of personal bests in meets and continue to improve,” Madison said.

Being a dedicated student-athlete requires Madison to be disciplined, organized and in control of her schedule. From waking up at 6:50 a.m. to eat breakfast before her 8 a.m. chemistry class, to afternoon track practice, to eating dinner early so she still has time to study, the demands of her schedule as a student-athlete are rigorous.

Madison successfully managed her rigorous schedule and had time to savor her favorite memories, like placing second in the conference for cross country and track. “It was special to celebrate with my teammates and be proud of all the hard work we had done throughout the season,” she said.

As her first year came to a close in May, Madison had some advice to offer this fall’s incoming class: “I would encourage them to participate in one of Berea’s many clubs or athletic programs because they are a great way for you to make lasting friendships and become more familiar with college life at Berea,” she said. “I would also recommend that they focus on their academics because Berea provides students with many resources and opportunities to succeed.”

Berea’s student-athletes are found to have higher academic success and retention than students who don’t participate in athletics. Madison is clearly on to something. 

It has given me close friendships with my teammates. It has given me people I can lean into when things become difficult. It has also given me something that can relieve the stress that comes with being a Berea College student. — Madison '26

By the Numbers

503 number of students in the **Fall 2023** incoming class, including
445 first-year students and **58** transfer students
30% identify as Black or African American **15%** identify as Hispanic or Latinx

42%
are from an
Appalachian
Regional
Commission
county



50% are first-generation college students, which means they will be the first in their families to study toward a four-year college degree

88% will receive a Pell Grant based on household income

53% have an Expected Family Contribution of \$0 dollars, based on the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), meaning these families cannot contribute any money toward a college education

\$0 the amount every student has paid in tuition since 1892

BEREA
COLLEGE

M. Elizabeth Culbreth

The Elizabeth Culbreth Society

The Elizabeth Culbreth Society celebrates Berea College's long-time donors, who follow in the footsteps of one of our most loyal and supportive graduates, Elizabeth Culbreth '64, who has been giving to her alma mater for nearly 60 years. The Culbreth Society recognizes those donors who have given more than five years in support of Berea's mission to serve students from low-wealth families.



Photo by Zack Thompson

Berea Athletics to Join New Conference

Berea College will join the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference (HCAC) beginning in fall 2024. The HCAC is an NCAA Division III conference comprised of institutions located in Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

"I am delighted that the HCAC presidents have voted to invite Berea College to join their conference," outgoing President Lyle D. Roelofs said. "We look forward to competing with this group of quality institutions with which we share many important characteristics and values."

"Joining the Heartland is an exciting move for our athletic programs and campus community, allowing Berea the opportunity to compete athletically against institutions with a shared academic philosophy and in close proximity to our campus," added Ryan Hess '98, Berea's director of Athletics. "We look forward to developing connections and relationships amongst their conference administrators, coaches and student-athletes."

Each of Berea's 16 sports currently

compete in the Collegiate Conference of the South (CCS). "We have enjoyed our affiliation with member schools in the CCS and appreciate the many wonderful relationships and memories made while competing against those institutions," Hess said.

The HCAC was originally founded in 1987 as the Indiana Collegiate Athletic Conference before re-branding as the Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference in 1998. Berea will become the 11th member school and the first institution to join the Heartland since Earlham College was added in 2010. The HCAC currently sponsors championships for 21 sports (10 men, 11 women).

Current Heartland Collegiate Athletic Conference members include: Anderson University (Indiana), Bluffton University, Defiance College, Earlham College, Franklin College, Hanover College, Manchester University, Mount Saint Joseph University, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and Transylvania University.

Berea Recognizes New Graduates at Annual Commencement Ceremony

Berea College celebrated 237 graduates at the 2023 commencement ceremony in May. These graduates represent 25 states and 26 countries.

Tommy Espinoza, a prominent architect of Latino community and business development policy and programs, spoke to graduates on Love and Sacrifice by asking them to "reflect on that one person in your life that loved you and sacrificed for you to reach this day," illustrating the importance of support systems from his own career experiences and the examples of other great leaders for social change.

Espinoza began his career more than 45 years ago in his hometown of Phoenix, where he organized youth groups in Phoenix's low-income neighborhoods to help members of the Latinx community escape poverty and crime through educational programs.

He continued his mission at Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC) by working with Latinx families to help them gain access to affordable housing. Because of Espinoza, CLPC has become one of the country's most dynamic forces for Latinx empowerment and economic well-being. During his tenure at CPLC, he was selected by the White House to advise President Jimmy Carter as a member of the Mexican American Advisory Council.

Co-founder of the Raza Development Fund (RDF), the largest Latinx Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) in the United States, Espinoza served as president and chief economic officer of the organization until his recent retirement.

During the ceremony, former Berea College President Lyle Roelofs presented Espinoza with an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of his life's work.

"Mr. Espinoza has been a bridge-builder across racial, cultural, political and socio-economic barriers, and his lifelong commitment to serving others is reflective of Berea College's Great Commitments," Roelofs said.

Scan the QR code with your smart device to access a gallery of commencement photos.



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SAMPLE ONE LIFE RATES	AGE	RATE
Rates are set by Berea College and informed by the American Council on Gift Annuities.	55	4.5%
	65	5.4%
	75	6.6%
	80	7.6%
Effective January 1, 2023	90+	9.7%



BEREA COLLEGE

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BEREA.GIFTLEGACY.COM

Berea hosts bell hooks symposium

In June, the bell hooks center hosted the inaugural bell hooks symposium. Dozens of attendees participated in three days of workshops, panels, round-table discussions, performances, exhibitions and film screenings. Titled Dissident Feminisms, the symposium centered around feminism and intersectionality and was made possible by a generous grant from the Mellon Foundation to honor bell hooks' life, love and legacy. For more details on the symposium sessions and speakers visit www.berea.edu/centers/the-bell-hooks-center/symposium.



Distinguished Alumni Awards



Standing (L-R) Rev. Michael Moore '77, Cluster Howard '78 and Dr. Philip W. Conn '63, and (seated) Betty Jean Hall Hall Fd. '64, '68 were recognized as distinguished alumni during a ceremony at Summer Reunion in June.

Dr. Philip W. Conn '63

Since retiring as president of Western Oregon University in 2005, Dr. Philip W. Conn '63 has devoted himself to promoting family endeavors in Kentucky. A native of Decatur, Ala., Conn moved as a child with his family of 14 to Tennessee, and then he enrolled at Berea College. He earned his degree in biology. This began 60 years of achievement and success.

In the 1960s, Conn joined the staff of the Council of Southern Mountains in Berea, and then served in Washington, D.C., with the newly created Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA, also known as the "domestic Peace Corps"). In 1965-66, he studied social policy at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, Netherlands, as a Rotary International

al Fellow. He returned to Berea, where he served as director of alumni affairs and editor of *The Berea Alumnus* magazine. Between graduation from and returning to Berea College as an employee, Conn explored identities such as folk singer, radio announcer, schoolteacher, social services organizer and federal government field representative.

In the 1970s, Conn directed public relations for the Kentucky gubernatorial campaign of Bert Combs and Julian Carroll before enrolling at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville to earn his master's degree in sociology. He then headed the staff of the Kentucky General Assembly as director of the state's Legislative Research Commission in Frankfort. Between 1982 and 1991, he would earn another master's degree and a doc-

torate, both from the University of Southern California.

Over the years, Conn has held leadership roles at several colleges and universities. He served as vice president at Morehead State University, Central Missouri State University, and the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Conn was chancellor at the University of Tennessee at Martin as well as president of Dickinson State University and Western Oregon University.

Conn married alumna Donna Taylor in Danforth Chapel in 1971. They had four children, Chad, Cason, Cyndi and Christy. Donna passed away in 1998. A few years later, Conn found love again with the famous Tennessee sculptor Julie Warren Martin. They married at the end of 2001, adding her daughter,

Andrea, to the family. So, between the two of them, they have 10 children, including spouses, and 13 grandchildren. In retirement, Philip and Julie teach art together on cruise ships.

Betty Jean Hall '68

Retired Chief Administrative Appeals Judge for the U.S. Department of Labor Betty Jean Hall '68 is a true trailblazer. A tireless advocate for women's rights, occupational health and safety, and social justice in Appalachia, Hall is a graduate of both the Foundation School and Berea College. She majored in history.

In 1976, Hall earned her Doctor of Law degree from Antioch School of Law in Washington, D.C. The Perry County, Ky., native went to work for Appalachia right away, becoming the assistant director of the Youth Leadership Development Program at the Appalachian Regional Commission. In 1977, Hall founded the Coal Employment Project in Oak Ridge, Tenn., advocating for women coal miners and fighting against superstitions about women in coal mines. By 1979, her work in this realm earned her coverage in *The New York Times*, where she was called a "champion of the woman miner."

She was also admitted to the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, the Virginia Supreme Court, the Tennessee Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia and the U.S. Court of Appeals, 4th Circuit.

Between 1978 and 1984, Hall won many awards. She was awarded the John Hay Whitney Fellowships Award from 1978 to 1980. Also in 1980, Hall was recognized by the National Women's Health Network as Health Advocate of the Year and by *Ms. Magazine* as a "Woman to Watch in the 80s." In 1981, Hall won the John D. Rockefeller Public Service Award, and in 1984, she won the Berea College Public Service Award.

Over her long career, she served at Highlander Research and Education Center, Southern Appalachian Leadership Training Program and Southeast Women's Employment Coalition. In 2001, Hall was appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Labor as administrative appeals judge for the Benefits Review Board of the U.S. Department of Labor. She also served as the chief administrative appeals judge and chair of the Board of the Benefits Review Board until she retired in 2019. Under her leadership, the board streamlined the benefits review process,

ensuring coal miners with black lung disease and other workers injured in their occupations received fair and timely reviews of their compensation applications.

Retired to Cary, N.C., Hall has served on the Berea Alumni Executive Council. Among all her accomplishments, she is proudest of her twins, Tim and Tiffany, and her two grandchildren, Athena and Blake.

Cluster Howard '78

A 1974 graduate of Breathitt County High School, former Kentucky State Representative Cluster Howard first attended Lees College in Jackson, Ky., and then Berea College. After graduating from Berea in 1978, Howard returned to Lees College, where he became the school's basketball coach, athletic director, chair of the math and science departments and dean of students. Howard was selected as Kentucky Junior College Coach of the Year six times. He earned his master's degree from Morehead State University.

While serving as the dean of students at Lees College, Howard implemented a college wellness program and supervised security, residence halls and food services. He also was the faculty representative to the board of trustees for three terms.

From 1997 until his retirement in 2020, Representative Howard served as dean of students and student ombudsman at Hazard Community and Technical College. He supervised the Ready to Work Program, Gear Up and student support services. He implemented a college leadership program and oversaw student discipline and student government.

As state representative for the 91st District of Kentucky from 2015 to 2020, Howard served on committees focused on education, natural resources and local government. He sponsored bills addressing environmental concerns, cannabis legalization, military support and term limits; Howard helped acquire funding for healthcare in his district.

His professional honors include Lees College Outstanding Alumni 1985; Outstanding Young American 1991; Commonwealth Fellow 1994; Kentucky Community and Technical College System Leadership Development 1999; Henry Clay Award for legislative service 2019; and Appalachian Renaissance Horizon Award 2019. He raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for educational funding at Lees College and Hazard Community and

Technical College, founded the Breathitt Youth Foundation, and served on the leadership teams of Jackson Parks, Breathitt County Museum, Breathitt County War Memorials and Breathitt County Action Team. Howard is a graduate of Berea's Brushy Fork Leadership Institute and hosted a live sports talk program from 1997 through 2015.

Howard is married to Sandy Tapley Howard, retired nursing director at the Wolfe County Rehabilitation Center. They have two daughters, Lindsey and Emily Howard, who live in Jackson; a grandson, Chase Alexander Howard; and one step-grandson, Brady Robinson.

Mike Moore '77

Reverend Michael D. Moore '77 is the founding pastor of Faith Chapel, with campuses in Birmingham, Ala., and Columbus, Ga. The author of many books on topics ranging from grief and loss to success and abundance, Moore graduated Berea with a degree in business administration and attended law school at Samford University before being called into ministry.

Moore led a team of four to found Faith Chapel in his living room in 1981, without money or support. More than 40 years later, Faith Chapel is the spiritual and social home to thousands. With a special focus on ministering to Birmingham's homeless population, Moore's facility is open for access to showers, computers, phones, laundry, hygiene, food, and legal and medical help. Moore and Faith Chapel also serve the social needs of the community by offering a family activity center, bowling alley, fitness center and other recreational facilities.

Reverend Moore extends his ministry beyond the church campuses. He takes his hopeful and supportive message of building a better life to television, YouTube, conferences and his How to Win podcast. His focus is on easy-to-follow, practical advice for real-life circumstances, inspiring and empowering people to live successfully on a spiritual, physical, mental, social and financial level. Earlier this year, Reverend Moore turned over the pastorate of Faith Chapel to his son, Michael K., so he can focus on Mike Moore Ministries.

Reverend Moore is married to Berea alumnus Kennetha Brown Moore '79. In addition to Michael K., they have a daughter, Tiffany, and three beautiful granddaughters. [B](#)

Summer Reunion 2023

Summer Reunion brought home nearly 700 alumni and guests to campus June 9-11 to celebrate many special reunions from 1948 to 1993. Mark your calendars for Summer Reunion 2024, scheduled June 14-16.



Lakeisha Henderson (left), Brenda W. Lane '79 (middle) and Carlotta Dei '78 pose for a photo at the president's State of the College address.



Sylvester Cook '68 (left) talks with Betty Jean Hall Fd. '64, '68 (center) Joyce Hardy '68 and Betty Heanssler '68 during the picnic on the Quad.



Dr. Dayna Cheesman Mohammadione '78 and Dr. Ali Mohammadione '78 speak at the Sweetheart Reception held in Danforth Chapel. The reception was hosted by Lon '78 and Ann Adams Hays '78 (far right).



Alumni from various class years gather to eat, catch-up with old friends and await their class photos to commemorate the Summer Reunion celebration.



Alumni gather and catch up with one another during the picnic on the Quad.



During the 50th reunion celebration at Summer Reunion, couples Donna '73 and Bill Yost '73 (left), Andrew '73 and Symerdar Baskin (back center) and Elaine '73 and Edward Allen '73 danced the night away.



President Lyle Roelofs spoke during the alumni worship service at Union Church on Sunday morning.



Earlene Prokopec '73 and Joyce Church '73 toast one another as they celebrate with their classmates at the 50th Reunion Breakfast.



Parke '73 and Becky Carter '73 laughed and enjoyed the festivities of their 50th class reunion celebration.



President Lyle Roelofs speaks to a full house at the State of the College Address where participants were allowed to ask questions of the out-going president.



Joyce Hardy '68 (left) and Betty Heanssler '68 take a break and enjoy each other's company during the picnic on the Quad.

Summer Reunion Class Photos



Harry Kilbourne



(L-R) Francis Gabbard Baird, Wallace Baird, Kelly Moss, Elizabeth Hensley Bowling Hibbard, Marguerite Dyer Bertram, Frosty Hubbard, Betty Stephens Lamb-Lynn

(Bottom L-R) Connie Spencer-Ackerman, Betty Thompson Heanssler, Betty Jean Hall, Joyce Howard Hardy, Bill Sturgill, Ruth Campbell Sturgill
(Second L-R) Juanita Smith Lee, Margaret Walker Jeffiers, Ron Good, Ed Montgomery, Sylvester Cook, Maggie Jordan McKinney, Freida Hopkins Outlaw
(Top L-R) Yvonne Ballew Beasley, Dave Jeffiers, Ben Harmon, Jim Ferguson, Walter Olin, Carolyn McDaniel Rogers, Darrel Rogers(Bottom L-R) Jack Tate, Clint Layne, Jane Huff Trammell, Barbara Hewlett Barker, Margaret Turnbull Suters, Roger Lester, Elizabeth McConnell Dishner
(Top L-R) Rod Bussey, Glenn Ihrig, Bill Teague, Betty Sutton Brown Spiggle, Philip Conn, Charles Fiske, Evelyn Ritchie Nachman

(Bottom L-R) Wanda Willis Smith, David Thacker, Ruth Swango Langer, Doris Smithson Temple, Kay Stumbo, Ruth Schaeffer Walker, Linda Osborne, Libby McCord, Joyce Church, Brad Hunt (Second L-R) Marshall Smith, Mary Claiborne Johnson, Linda Latham Brown, Karen Cotton McDaniel, Del Hopkins Gillispie, Elaine Wormley Allen, Montie Fugate, Andrew Baskin, Rebecca Blake Carter, Nancy Johnson Rutherford, Rita Scott Blankenship, Bill Yost (Third L-R) Thomas McKnight, Virgil Burnside (Fourth L-R) Mike Johnson, John Grigsby, Ron Garland, E.R. Boat Blankenship, David Tompkins, Robert Grossman, Donna Massey Collins (Top L-R) Jim Avery, Doug Rector, Larry Grisby, Ray Landers, Darrell Perk Perkins, Nelva Herrin, Doug Miracle, Ann Greenwell Clark, Virginia Hubbard Underwood



(Bottom L-R) Mike Onatolu, Margaret Richardson, Eunice Hall, Paul Yim, Amy Swango Wilson, Lisa Allred (Second L-R) Jeffrey Robinson, Carl Thomas, Bobbie Fields Washer, Carla Brinegar Franklin, Debby Noble Edwards, Leslie Graham Sulfridge, Larry Sulfridge (Third L-R) K. Michele Williams DeLoach, Lon Hays, Ann Adams Hays, Dayna Cheesman Mohammadione, Ali Mohammadione, Jeff Hutton, Jerry Gilbert, Edward Fugaten (Top L-R) Steven Jones, Ken Levi, Cluster Howard



(Bottom L-R) Trygve Thayer, Ruth Piedot Baldrige (Top L-R) Doug Warren, Travis Thayer, Donald Lee Faulkner, Teresa Miller-Ruiz, Joe Bagnoli



(L-R) Diana Smith Thomas, Sherrie Hall Lorenz, Michael Davis, Lisa Thomas Jones



(Bottom L-R) Amy Bick, Matthew Silver, Angela Anderson, Geoff Bartlett (Middle L-R) Juanita Harless Melton, LaMonte Nowlin, Adam Howard, Cathy Luttrell Cornett (Top L-R) Devon Fluty, Kirk Cornett

The Berea College Alumni Association enjoys hearing from Bereans from all over the world. The “Class Notes” section of *Berea College Magazine* reports verifiable news you wish to share with your alumni friends and associates: careers, weddings, retirements, births, and other items of importance to our alumni. Please include your class year and name used while attending Berea. Notes may be edited for style and length. While we will make every effort to put your information into the next issue of BCM, some delays may occur. We appreciate your understanding.

Submit class notes and photographs at www.berea.edu/alumni/classnote

Correction in the Spring 2023 Magazine William Crabtree, spouse of Beverly Clay Crabtree ’81, did not pass away.

1958

Mary Nell Hall Mahler and husband, Del, have moved to a senior living facility. She’d love to hear from Berea friends at 1950 NE 102 Ave, #243, Hillsboro, OR 97006.

1962

Valerie Bauhofer’s partner and husband of 33 years passed away on Jan. 29. Jack White was an extraordinary artist and beloved teacher. Some of his work can be seen by searching Jack White African American Artist online.

James Rodney Terry served three years in the Army, earned a graduate degree in microbiology, and lived 31 years in Miami, Fla. In 2000, he and his wife, Barbara, retired to Fearrington Village near Chapel Hill, N.C. After his wife’s recent passing, he moved to a continuing care community nearby for the next phase of his life.

1967

Dr. Essie P. Knuckle, a retired psychologist, has authored the newly released book “Slate Hill-1949: My Five-Year-Old Memories of My Family and Slate Hill, A Community in Roanoke, Va.” Dr. Knuckle wrote these memories to provide information for descendants of Slate Hill who never had the opportunity to witness the thriving Black community that has mostly been demolished by so-called progress. Her memories and experiences as a preschooler are presented as she experienced her people and her community. It was her intention to reveal her personal memories as experienced through the eyes of a 5-year-old Black female growing up during the period of World War II and intense segregation. This little Black girl’s experiences were characteristic of growing up in a thriving community with a Black cultural experience. This book is available at Barnes and Noble and on Amazon, Kindle, and e-book.

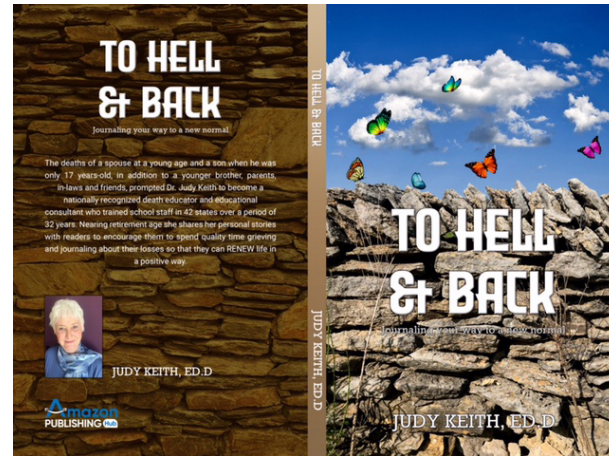


1969

Sharyn J. Mitchell presented “We, Too, Were Here!” at the University of Kentucky in February, which explored the often-hidden contributions that Black Americans have made to Kentucky history. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3BjiOSR>

1970

Judy Bryant Keith published an autobiographical/self-help book about the deaths of her husband, Leonard Joe Keith ’71 and their son, Billy. The book is titled “To Hell and Back: Journaling Your Way to a New Normal” and is available through Amazon or in most bookstores. Dr. Keith has trained school counselors in how to assist students with grief and trauma in 42 states.



1973

Carolyn Grace published “Grenadine and Other Love Affairs,” by the small press of Shadeland-house Modern Press in Lexington, Ky. They celebrated Grace and her debut poetry book on April 29 at The Taleless Dog Booksellers in Berea. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3B3vLjB>

The book is available for purchase here: <https://bit.ly/42wJRWv>



1979

Phillip Ward helped organize a 90th birthday celebration for Yoko Ono in New York. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3pl0BSn>

1982

Dr. Bryn Gabriel is head of the Cochabamba Cooperative School in Bolivia. He was previously the director at the International School of Myanmar. Dr. Bryn, as his students call him, wishes the world will pray for Myanmar.

1984

Rhonda Florence is the library director at the Cynthiana-Harrison County Public Library. She returned to Kentucky after 27 years of teaching in North Carolina public schools.

Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews is president and founder of the Tribute and Honor Foundation. The organization, which is a little more than a year old, recently raised more than \$43,000 to help rebuild a VFW post near his home on Long Island, N.Y., that suffered significant fire damage. In addition to his volunteer work as the foundation’s president, he serves on several other boards, is a former city councilman, and is a freelance voice and speech coach. To learn more about the foundation visit: <https://bit.ly/3M3oirc>

Cindy Durban White retired from Trinity Lutheran School in 2021 after 37 years of teaching. She worked as an auxiliary teacher for grades K-6 her first five years, and then she taught third grade for 32 years.

1988

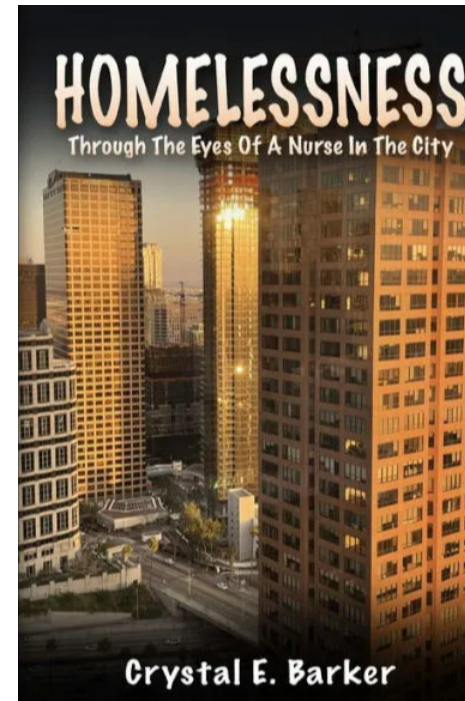
Ebby Luvaga, teaching professor in economics, is the recipient of the 2023 Outstanding Service in Student Recruitment and Retention award from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University. She is the primary advisor for all first-year agricultural business students, coordinator for undergraduate academic advising in the department and supervisor for the student peer mentor team that works with the department’s learning communities. She has been a leading force in developing and maintaining learning communities for students in economics, agricultural business and business economics. She is also a strong advocate for underrepresented and minority students in the department. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3VGT3Fo>

Rebecca Jo Ann Reed was recently named president of the Adams County Genealogical Society in West Union, Ohio.

1990

Crystal E. Barker published her book “Homelessness Through the Eyes of a Nurse in the City.” She grew up on a farm in the hills of Kentucky. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Nursing from Berea College and went on to earn her master’s degree in Nursing at California State University, Los Angeles. She has worked as a registered nurse for 32 years serving veterans. She resides in Nevada and writes in the early hours of dawn, watching the desert’s glow of sunrise blanket her

paper while listening to the sound of awakening songbirds. Her collection of poems is written in the poetic form of Pleiades—seven lines for the constellation of seven sisters and six syllables on each line representing the nearly invisible nature of each sister. Forty-nine poems were written—symbolism of the seven poems and the seven sisters (7x7=49). As with this form, there are one-word titles, and the first letter of each line is to begin with the first letter of the title. For the symbolism and power of the topic of HOMELESSNESS, each poem began with the letter h. This book is dedicated to those who have felt the cold of the street, who have read the pages of an eviction notice, who have heard the words of a loved one casting them out, who have smelled the sour from lack of hygiene, or who have craved the taste of a home with a spirit of love and acceptance. The book is available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon.



1993

Sara Morgan, formerly Fahe’s EVP and chief investment officer, has been promoted to president of Fahe. In her new role, she assumes overall responsibility for the corporation. Morgan has more than two decades of experience at Fahe, and during her tenure she led Fahe’s staff and network through significant growth and expansion. “I’m honored to step into the president role,” Morgan said. “Fahe has doubled in size every five years, the network has doubled in its production as well, and we are at a point in time where there are new opportunities emerging, such as the Inflation Reduction Act’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and other funding opportunities, that we are well positioned to capitalize on thanks to the expertise of our members. I am excited to lead Fahe to go farther, deeper and create more impact in our region.” Read more: <https://bit.ly/3pkZmTa>

2001

Dwayne Compton, chief diversity officer and associate dean of community engagement and diversity at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, was awarded the Diamond Award for Excellence in Education Leadership, Diversity, Equality, Inclusion, Humanitarian, Philanthropic and Community Engagement by the Not Alone Foundation Inc. The Diamond Awards is a program designed by the Not Alone Foundation to honor faces and images of excellence in the entertainment, corporate, education and creative industries for their professional accomplishments and contributions to society on a local, state or international level in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion.



2002

Chaka Cummings was appointed to serve as executive director of the Association for Teaching Black History in Kentucky, which is housed in the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education at Berea College. The association was established to work with Kentucky’s public schools to help ensure that the many social, historical and cultural contributions of Black Kentuckians are not forgotten, but instead are woven into the teaching of the state’s—and the nation’s—history. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3VZB6SH> You can also watch his interview which begins at about the 19-minute mark. Watch here: <https://bit.ly/3nYczRI>



2006

Rachel Rosolina has been named communications director for Appalshop, an Appalachian media and arts nonprofit in Whitesburg, Ky. As of January, she handles internal and external communications remotely from her home in Bloomington, Ind.



2010

Debra M. Bulluck joined Moss & Barnett's family law firm. Read more: <https://bit.ly/44CMUyf>

2011

Heather Dent discusses the inspiration and founding of Winterberry Studio. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3LR9vhY>

2012

Holly Korb Rabnott excitedly began her academic advising career on Nov. 30, 2022, as an advising specialist for the college of STEM at Eastern Kentucky University. She is forever thankful for the impact her advisors had on her while a student at Berea and hopes to now pay it forward to current and future ECU STEM students!

2013

Dan Sinkel will be celebrating his first anniversary working as a project engineer on Blue Origin's New Glenn heavy-lift launch vehicle. Since graduating from Western Kentucky University with a master's degree in engineering technology management in December 2016, Sinkel has served in a variety of roles within the new space industry working on SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule, NASA's SLS vehicle and terrestrial testbeds for NASA's Flight Opportunities Office. After a few brief years living in California and Alabama, he now resides in his home region near Bowling Green, Ky., with his wife, **Katie Newville-Sinkel '14** and their critters on their farm. Sinkel credits his successes to Katie's loving support and organizational skills in maintaining a

smooth transition between each move and job opportunity. They look forward to what the future holds, as well as their seventh wedding anniversary this winter.



2014

BIRTH: a daughter, Harper Layne, born to **Cathy Helen Catherine Hicks** in February 2022. Hicks married in 2020.



2019

Dayzaughn Graves created the "Ain't I a Girl," program, which highlights the collective experiences of other women for Madison County girls. The goals of the program are to "expose participants to tools that can "increase self-worth, identity and relational connections," "to gain/increase knowledge of lived experiences of womanhood in different stages of development among participants" and "foster a creative and judgment-free learning environment that encourages authentic expressions of self." Read more: <https://bit.ly/3Mj7Ymh>

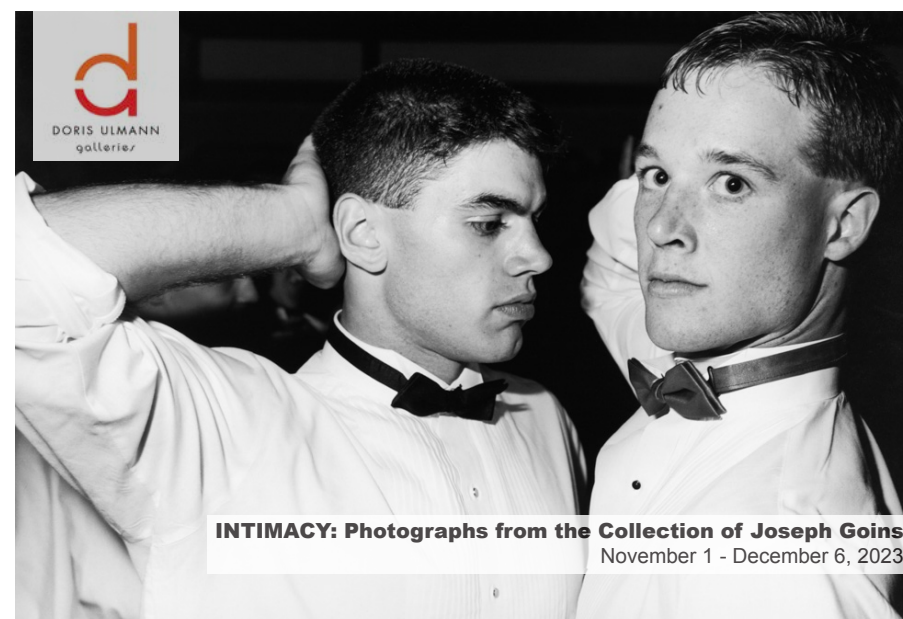
2022

Elijah Hicks published a column in the Lexington Herald-Leader on last July's flooding in Eastern Kentucky. Read more: <https://bit.ly/42hNdge>

2023

Eduardo Alvarez-Esparza's photograph, titled "Underground Silhouette," was selected to be displayed in the state capital through the Team Kentucky Gallery. The photograph is a candid shot captured during a trip to Carter Caves State Resort Park in Olive Hill, Ky.

Gaston Jarju snapped his photograph titled "Adventures with Mountaineers," which was taken during Berea College's annual Mountain Day at the Pinnacles of Berea. His photograph was selected to be displayed in the state capital through the Team Kentucky Gallery.



INTIMACY: Photographs from the Collection of Joseph Goins
November 1 - December 6, 2023

The Doris Ulmann Galleries will present photographs from the collection of Joseph Goins '86 from Nov. 1 to Dec. 6, 2023 in the Upper Traylor Gallery, coinciding with Homecoming 2023. The artists featured in the exhibition explore vast aspects of intimacy—physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual—through the medium of black and white photography. A reception and gallery talk with the collector is scheduled for Nov. 1 at 3:30 p.m.



Always committed to sustainability, Berea College makes an effort to celebrate Earth Day by planting trees and renewing the Earth's natural resources and beauty. Glen Dandeneau '87, forester, (center) helps José Espinoza '24 (left) and former student Axel Quintanar-Pena plant a tree on campus in celebration.

Staff & Faculty

Dr. Linda Karen Ballard '77
Nursing Faculty (1986-1993)
Jan. 20, 2023

1940s

Wallace R. Buchanan Acad. '42
Dec. 22, 2018

Helen Yambor McCann-Herbst '44
Feb. 3, 2023

Clarence Marvin Cave Navy V-12 '44, '45
March 3, 2023

Pansy Morton Howard '46
Feb. 28, 2023

Nancy King La Fratta '46
March 10, 2023

Roberta Halcomb Hall '47
Jan. 30, 2023

Ora Mitcie Hutchins Duff '48
Oct. 31, 2022

1950s

James D. Miller '50
Dec. 22, 2022

Ethel Pearson Ambrose Acad. '47, '51
Dec. 16, 2022

Dr. George E. Barrier '51
Obituary Unavailable

Beverley H. Fleming '51
Jan. 24, 2023

J. Charles Honeycutt '51
March 30, 2023

Charles F. Richardson
Spouse of **Barbara Williams Richardson '51**
March 17, 2023

Dr. Starling K. Alley Jr. '52
Feb. 22, 2023

James E. Brewer '52
July 6, 2022

Rhoda King Guenthner '52
Dec. 12, 2022

Urban T. Peters '52
March 12, 2023

Dr. Roy C. Page '53
Oct. 29, 2020

Billie Wyatt Roark '53
March 20, 2023

Reva Mink Biddix '54
Aug. 15, 2022

Madelin Davis Litteral Fd. '54
March 13, 2023

Woodie Jean Oakley Martin Fd. '54
Jan. 26, 2023

Dr. Simon D. Perry '54
Jan. 27, 2023

Dr. Jacques Renau '54
Obituary Unavailable

Reva Jo Fowler Schumacher Fd. '50, '54
Dec. 17, 2022

Lucille Metcalf Skaggs '55
June 2, 2019

Loring H. Vance Jr. '55
March 31, 2023

Dr. Thomas L. Dawson '56
Feb. 15, 2023

Robert F. Spelman Jr.
Spouse of **Kathryn Sanborne Spelman '56**
Sept. 7, 2021

Betty Lue Wriston Fd. '56
Oct. 28, 2022

Jane Ellen Arthur '57
April 8, 2023

Ed Biddix Jr. '57
Aug. 14, 2022

Dr. Carroll Ray Bostic '57
Jan. 4, 2022

William A. Case '57
Dec. 30, 2022

Jerry Richard Hayes '57
Jan. 28, 2023

Margaret Landis LaMere '57
April 5, 2021

Mary Raley McCollum '57
Jan. 23, 2023

Charles T. Bright '58
Jan. 23, 2023

Dr. Herbert W. Grubb '58
Obituary Unavailable

Maxine Whiteside Martin '58
Jan. 19, 2023

Dr. William A. Thomas
Spouse of **Rachel Leach Thomas '58**
Oct. 1, 2022

Betty Jones Zeller '58
Jan. 3, 2023

Larry Barlowe '59
Feb. 14, 2018

Lois Todd Dawson Fd. '55, '59
April 22, 2023

George M. Honig
Spouse of **Josephine Neely Honig '59**
Oct. 29, 2022

Ava S. Peek
Spouse of **Bobby Peek '59**
April 8, 2021

1960s

James P. Blair Fd. '53, '60
Feb. 17, 2023

Dr. James A. McCool '60
April 7, 2023

Martha Patton Mefford Fd. '59, '60
March 31, 2023

Jerry Parker Workman '60
Feb. 20, 2023

Opal Blanton Abney Fd. '61
Oct. 12, 2020

Glenna Ashley Neill '61
March 22, 2023

Alvin G. Reese '61
March 16, 2023

Billy Ray Banks '62
March 30, 2023

Judith G. Banks
Spouse of **Billy Ray Banks '62**
Jan. 23, 2023

Geneva Caudill Hughes '62
March 11, 2023

Gail Sprague Seto '62
Dec. 31, 2022

G. Phyllis Whitlock Shank '62
Feb. 25, 2023

Paul Zane Williams Fd. '58, '62
Feb. 19, 2023

John L. Dellinger '63
Feb. 28, 2023

Dale Mefford '63
Obituary unavailable

Gail Fryman Stamper '63
Nov. 06, 2020

Paul R. Leach '65
Aug. 9, 2020

Cyrus B. Richardson Jr. '65
Feb. 24, 2023

Dr. Danny R. Robinette '65
Jan. 15, 2023

Linda Gail Stafford Roten '65
Oct. 6, 2022

Mary Alvanell Elkin Fd. '62, '66
Dec. 20, 2022

George S. Giffin '66
March 20, 2023

Kenneth L. Roten '66
April 2, 2023

Karen E. Acord '67
Dec. 01, 2022

Louis Cecil Audia '67
March 14, 2023

Sheila Brown '68
Dec. 25, 2022

Patricia L. Ward '68
Feb. 3, 2023

Marilyn Stanley Hamblin '69
Jan. 1, 2023

Donna J. Stanley Palmyra '69
March 4, 2023

1970s

Ronald E. Amburgey '70
Feb. 18, 2023

Karlyn D. Lamb '70
March 14, 2023

James David Hill
Spouse of **Janet Dishner Hill '74**
March 4, 2023

Leslie Trent Auxier '77
March 24, 2023

Dr. Linda Karen Ballard '77
Jan. 20, 2023

Terry Lee Bailey '79
Feb. 1, 2023

1980s

Carla Yvonne Matthews Baldwin '80
Feb. 12, 2023

Marilyn Murphy Adams '85
April 18, 2023

1990s

Raymond Lee Bennett '90
Oct. 3, 2019

Read full obituaries on our website at
<https://magazine.berea.edu>



Would you like to reconnect with old friends and help continue your class legacy? Berea needs help creating class fundraising campaigns for your reunion celebration. Contact us about serving as Reunion Giving Chair.

To learn more, visit <https://next.berea.edu/reunion-giving> or email **Daniela Pirela-Manares** at pirelamanaresd2@bera.edu.





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