

BEREA COLLEGE

MAGAZINE

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Berea in Service and Love



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Doug Kelley and President Jimmy Carter display a collectible jersey in Plains, Ga., where Kelley and fellow collectors organized a museum in the old train depot that housed Carter's headquarters during his 1976 presidential campaign.



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Crystal Wylie '05



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photo submitted

Justin Skeens

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About the cover: This photo was taken from the roof of Dana with the hands of Residence Hall area coordinator Lyric Jones '19 and student videographer Angela '25.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Berea Alumni and Friends,

In early November, I was reading and came across this challenge: “What if we started to seek the welfare of others? What if we actively went out of our way to contribute to the good of others right where we are? What if we prayed for others’ health, security, situations and relationships?”

What if?

If the urge of our hearts and the action of our hands leaned into what was ultimately best for others—and not ourselves—think of how beautiful our world could be.

Berea College has stood as a beacon of service and love for more than a century and a half, and its graduates steep in these values for four (or five) years, being challenged not just to learn and grow themselves, but more importantly, to be empathetic toward those around them as they seek to leave their communities (or the world) better than when they arrived.

Berea alumni go on to be teachers who inspire generations of students in communities across the nation. They run programs that bring hope and restoration to refugee families. They provide love, healing and happiness to abandoned children. They use their talents to write about truth and fight for justice. They dream of radical organizations where volunteers serve side-by-side with community members across the globe—and help make it happen.

And the world is better for it.

Throughout this issue, you will find examples of service fueled by love for humanity and a desire to give back, which was partially instilled through the mission and values of Berea College—a mission that started with the radical inclusivity and love that created an interracial, coeducational college in the midst of a slaveholding state.

There are more examples of students, staff, faculty, alumni and friends of the College who have given of their love, time, energy, money and lives to serve others empathetically and passionately. We could never capture every selfless act, altruistic initiative or others-focused program that has originated from the heart of thousands of Bereans for generations. But I hope as you read these stories, you are inspired to look at those in communities around you and seek their welfare. I encourage you to “be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble” (1 Peter 3:8).

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03
Editor

Executive Director of Marketing and Communications

The Heart of Teaching

By Derek Shorkey '26

Deciding on a major and career can be difficult for some. One can be interested in too many topics or not interested in any. But for April Townsend Pieper '95, there was never a doubt in her mind. When she came to Berea College, she knew from the start that she wanted to be an educator. Her 26-year career would take her all over Kentucky, progressing from teaching English to special education to school administration and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE).

"All my life, the only things I ever wanted to be was a teacher and a mother," Pieper said.

Growing up in a military family, the only constant was moving. Throughout her childhood, Pieper's family moved from place to place, 23 states and two countries. Eventually, she left the constant moving behind to finish high school in West Virginia with her grandmother. Teachers, Pieper says, provided kindness and compassion during this chaotic time of change.

"I was so grateful, and I wanted to be that person for others," she said.

Unfortunately, college never really seemed like a possibility until her counselor in West Virginia told her about Berea College. "I guess I was always looking for a place to lay down some roots," Pieper said, recalling how Berea looked like it could provide consistency in an inconsistent and often tumultuous world.

In 1989, Berea sent a bus to pick Pieper up from West Virginia and brought her back to campus for a weekend, an opportunity where she could talk to professors in her field of interest and experience residence hall life. "I had never seen a college campus before; I didn't think it would be



For April Townsend Pieper '95, the kindness and guidance of teachers got her through some tough times. She's been paying that kindness forward for 25 years.

"The openness, listening to people, problem solving—to lead with a servant heart. All of that I learned at Berea, and it served me well." – April Pieper '95

possible," April said. "Berea made it possible. I could see my dreams happening there."

Although she was accepted to other, much larger schools, once the Berea acceptance letter arrived, she never looked back.

After being accepted to Berea, Pieper got right to work fulfilling her goals. She was assigned to an art department labor position, where she would spend the next five years working while she pursued her degree. She advanced from a facilities assistant in the art library to a student

supervisor, and she looks back fondly on the lessons she learned.

"I learned a lot about how to help people be happy in their jobs, when you recognize them and celebrate their accomplishments," she said. "I really learned so much."

These skills included staff development, where, as a student supervisor, it was her job to guide other students in their labor positions and give them feedback and encouragement. She would go on to use what she learned in her labor positions in the classroom and in her future work as an administrator.

After graduation, Pieper and her husband, James Pieper '94, spent a year working in a therapeutic residential center for middle school and high school students near Berea, while she sent out applications to schools to become a teacher. Her experience interacting with kids at the center continued to fuel her desire to be an educator.

Berea had instilled a "bone-deep" desire to serve the community and improve the lives of others. Pieper, a Bonner Scholar and volunteer with People Who Care during her time at Berea, was inspired by her experience with the group home to become a foster parent for the Kentucky Department of Community Based Services. Since 2004, April and James have fostered 30 children and adopted three.

In 1996, Pieper landed a position as a high school English teacher in a western Kentucky school district. "I hit the ground running," Pieper recalled about her experience at the school. In one of her first classes, the oldest student was 19 years old. Pieper was just 21. She floated, pushing a cart between classrooms. For the first week, she drove two-and-a-half hours and changed time zones to get to the school, waking up early in the morning and coming home late in the evening, since she hadn't moved out of Berea yet. The drive was worth it, though. Sitting down with her husband, they both decided, "This was my opportunity," Pieper remembers. "We had to take it."

The summer break after her second year, the district decided to cut her position. But her school managed to pull a few strings to get her a position as a part-time art teacher. Having graduated with an English Education degree and with no experience teaching art, she did the only thing she could think to do—jump right in. Studying the school's art textbooks, using what she knew from her time in the Berea art department and borrowing from her Berea art teacher's lesson plans, she managed to teach multiple art classes and even organize an art-themed field trip. She would also substitute part time for

"I had never seen a college campus before...Berea made [my dreams] possible." – April Pieper '95

special education teachers during this time, which gave her experience educating special needs students that she would utilize later in her career.

After finding a new English teaching position in another county, she joined a committee devoted to improving student outcomes for minority students. But she felt that the committee wasn't going about its work in the right way. The committee's approach was to encourage more practice and testing, but members weren't seeing results. Pieper went to KDE's website to find someone to talk to about her concerns. Noticing job postings, she applied and was hired for a position that allowed her to use her experience developing staff in Berea to help students succeed in school. After three years at KDE, she switched to special education, where she remained during her career with the department.

After her 14-year tenure at KDE, she decided it was time to take everything she had learned at Berea, her time as a teacher and in her administrative role at KDE and apply it in a school district. Today, Pieper works as the director of pupil personnel at an independent school district near Frankfort, where she works with special education students.

At Berea, you don't just learn out of a textbook. You also learn on the job, helping those around you and serving the community. Pieper's experience reflects this, starting even before she became a student—personally interacting with professors, learning through experience on the job as a student labor supervisor and eventually achieving her dream of becoming a teacher.

"The openness, listening to people, problem solving—to lead with a servant heart," Pieper recalled. "All of that I learned at Berea, and it served me well." ■

Happy Little Babies

By Jason Lee Miller
Photos submitted

Harry Johnston '71 didn't know why anybody might be interested in him. He's just a retired, third-party medical claims guy living in West Virginia. A pair of old college buddies had accurately described him as unassuming but also said: Harry Johnston has fostered 200 children over the years.

"Two-hundred and thirty, actually," Johnston corrected, but still didn't think that was any claim to fame and was unmoved by the suggestion it might be.

Johnston is a plain-spoken man with a subtle cadence that gives little hint at the depths beneath the surface of words unadorned and unaffected. He plays bridge. He takes care of drug-addicted babies. What's the big deal?

It's hard to get a man like that to brag on himself, to let you in at all on any kind of specialness. One might listen to the straight facts and assume what primarily drives him at the risk of being incorrect. In 1966, Johnston lost his father and ended up at Berea's Foundation School to finish high school. Soon afterward, he chose college over the Navy. That there was a war in Vietnam at the time had little to do with it. A fascination with people led him to major in sociology, to minor in philosophy.

He developed a love of bridge in college, playing the game with his friends between classes and work. He built trails in the Berea College Forest, worked at the laundry, in food service, as a janitor. "Just floated along," he said, until he graduated.

In the 1970s, Johnston traveled across the country—mainly the east coast—painting steel and sandblasting. He married Kathy Aldridge in 1982. Kathy had a daughter, Toni, but she and Harry didn't have any biological children together.

Ten years later, Kathy suffered a massive heart attack.

"The doctors said she had 24 hours to live, and I should be prepared," Johnston said.


Kathy did die. Briefly. When she recovered, she told her husband about her newfound mission to foster children.

"I wouldn't deny her" is all he said.

Between 1992 and Kathy's death in 2022, the Johnstons took in children and babies that entered the system, a few months, a year, nearly always temporarily, just long enough to provide them with medical treatments, visits to the dentists, to get them detoxed, to appear in court for them, to take them to the movies. He says the experience has been rewarding.

"Tiny NICU babies," he related, referring to infants in the neonatal intensive care units of hospitals, "you just have to hold them and hold them." In one case there were twins. "I could hold them each in one hand," he continued. "It's rewarding because you end up with happy little babies."

And five of those babies, Harry and Kathy adopted: John Michael, who passed away in 2021 at the age of 32, John Michael's sister Jessica, 28, Ethan, 15, and his half-brother, Jacob, 11. In October 2022, six months after Kathy passed, Harry adopted CJ, who is 13.

He says he's finished raising children once the three boys remaining in his home have grown up. At 74, he's likely done enough. 



Top: Kathy Johnston (blue dress) and Harry Johnston (front) pose for a photo on the day in 1998 that they adopted Jessica (white dress) and Michael (red shirt), with Judge Irene Berger presiding.

Middle: Harry smiles with adopted children Jessica, Jacob and CJ (blue shirt).

Bottom: Kathy holds Piper Layne, her great great granddaughter.

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Photo by Nay Kaw '23

Becoming “One Blood”

Beyond Isolation, Building Coalition

By Dr. Jessica Klanderud

In summer 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Harvard and the University of North Carolina by calling for the end of using race as a factor in college admissions. This move

left many in higher education questioning how to best ensure that their students would be educated in a racially diverse environment. Berea College was founded on the mission of impartial love through interracial education. It is not the first time we have faced

a Supreme Court decision that put our commitment to our mission in peril. When Kentucky State Representative Carl Day visited Berea College in 1904 and witnessed students experiencing interracial education, he introduced a bill to segregate Kentucky’s schools, aimed directly at Berea College, the only integrated college in Kentucky. Despite opposition from Berea College and others, the bill was signed into law, and Berea College was fined and convicted of violating the Day Law.

The College challenged the ruling all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and in 1908, the Court ultimately ruled against Berea. Undeterred, the College divided its endowment and opened the Lincoln Institute in Simpsonville, Ky., to continue educating Black students of Kentucky and Appalachia during this period of nationwide segregation. This period of segregation lasted from 1908 through 1950, when the Kentucky legislature revised the Day Law to allow

the reintegration of Berea College. From the institution of the Day Law to its overturning, Berea was a white institution. It was a struggle to live our mission of interracial education. It is easy to assume that Berea quickly returned to its vision of an interracial college, but that was not the case.

This reintegration proceeded very slowly as a result of a continued commitment to admitting students from the Appalachian region and the significant outmigration of Black and Indigenous Appalachians from the region. Black enrollment at Berea College remained low—less than 10 percent—until 1995. As a result of the forced segregation of Berea College and the slow pace of reintegration, Berea College was not able to fully live its mission of interracial education for many years. As a result, according to Andrew Baskin’s “Berea College and Interracial Education: The First 150 Years,” African American students at Berea College fought the same fights as students at other colleges and universities to gain more Black professors and access to Black Studies programs in the 1960s and ’70s.

It’s been more than 160 years since the founding of Berea College and a significant milestone in the civic life of African Americans in this country, when the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case declared African Americans were not citizens and had no rights beyond what the dominant culture and government chose to grant them. At the same time, Rev. John G. Fee and the founders of Berea College created a place where “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth,” where Black and white students

could come to learn, work and serve together, and where the divisions that plagued the nation were erased under the banner of impartial love. Interracial education at Berea College was founded during this tension. We do our best work of interracial education through coalition building in times of struggle.

Interracial education is a product of coalition building. Coalition requires all members to enter from a place of equality. Coalitions are created by all the members; they are not dictated from the top down. As 1903 alumnus Carter G. Woodson argued, one can only engage in integration from a place of equality. If the education one receives privileges a white story, an able-bodied story or a cis-gendered story, one will not enter the community with the equality needed to be a full member. Like *Dred Scott*, you will find that you have no rights in the community that the dominant culture is bound to respect. In this way, there is no loss of culture or having to “fit in” to be a full member of the coalition. The Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education invites all to build a coalition with us, including those who are different, rather than only illustrating their differences on campus.

In many ways, we have increased our diversity on campus, but we are more isolated than ever. It is increasingly possible to narrow our view to those of a similar political affiliation, social class or even identity in our interactions in the digital world. We must work to overcome those impulses by learning to discuss our differences. The vision that Berea was founded on offered a method for how to bridge the gaps of the late

19th century. Today, we face the legacies of systemic racism, mass incarceration, multi-generational poverty and environmental degradation. We must find a way to address these in the 21st century, and our focus on interracial education must be clear. I believe Berea College still offers a way to address these issues by focusing on building an intentional interracial coalition.

Interracial coalition building is critical to creating the kind of interracial community we desire. In the months following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., thousands gathered in an interracial coalition to continue his Poor People’s Campaign at Resurrection City, an encampment built along the Mall in Washington, D.C. This work included Black and white, rural and urban, men and women and was an effort at creating a community of dignity and inclusion for all.

Berea has a commitment to interracial education and impartial love. Our Great Commitments call us to a greater emphasis on who we say we are. Just as diversity does not equal automatic inclusion, commitment on paper does not equal a commitment to action. We must work so that who we say we are on paper is a true representation of the

THE MAKINGS OF A MOVIE

The first integrated youth team in the state of Kentucky was created in Middlesboro in 1953. Black kids and white kids took the diamond together, sharing dreams of homeruns and strike outs—just like the big leaguers of their day.

Segregated America of the 1950s made interracial play unheard of almost anywhere, let alone in baseball. Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby had just integrated Major League Baseball.

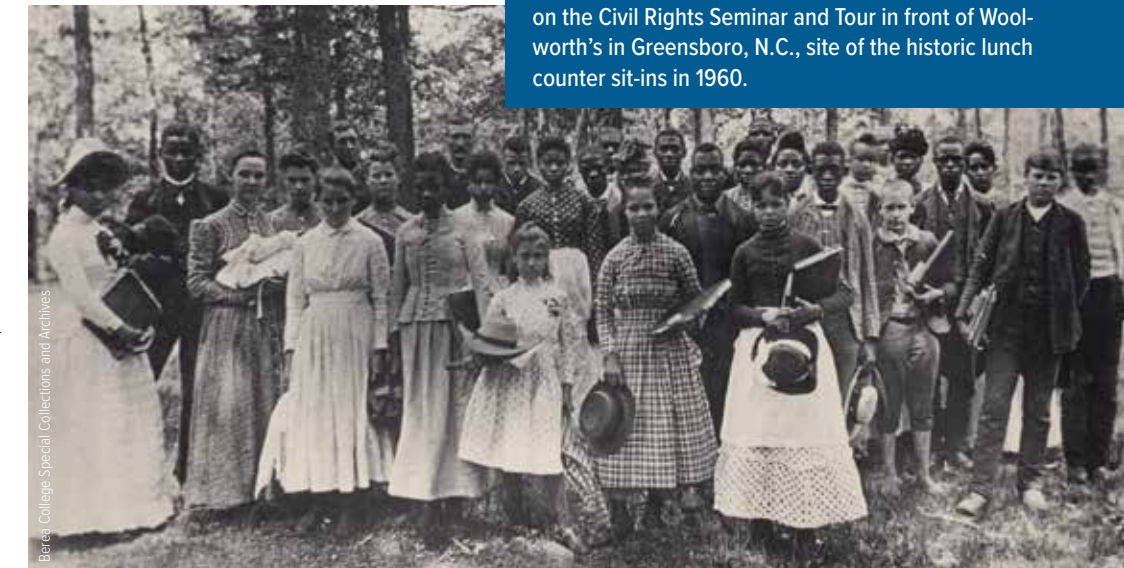
These kids in Middlesboro made history in more ways than one. The little leaguers learned what it meant to be both pioneers and champions, winning the state title.

Their legacy is seen every day across the Commonwealth, from the soccer pitch to hardwood courts, where integrated youth teams in Kentucky are commonplace.

We have a little coal town in Bell County to thank for that.

For more information about this story, check out www.thisfieldlooksgreentome.com.

community we foster and the model we present to the world. Here, at the Carter G. Woodson Center, we are working to advance that cause. [B](#)



(Top) From Berea’s founding in 1855 as the first interracial and coeducational college in the South, through the College’s reintegration after the Day Law was rescinded (middle), Berea has been committed to the kinship of all people. Today, the College hosts events like the Civil Rights Seminar and Tour to ensure faculty and staff understand Berea’s long-standing commitment to interracial education. (Bottom) Dr. Jessica Klanderud, director of the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, hands out lunches on the Civil Rights Seminar and Tour in front of Woolworth’s in Greensboro, N.C., site of the historic lunch counter sit-ins in 1960.

A Berean Footnote in the History of the Peace Corps

By Jason Lee Miller
Photos submitted

On Oct. 14, 1960, at 2 a.m., a young crowd eagerly anticipated the words of John F. Kennedy as he took the steps outside the University of Michigan's student union.

"How many of you are willing to spend 10 years in Africa or Latin America or Asia working for the U.S. and working for freedom?" he asked the crowd. Their youthful enthusiasm cemented

Kennedy's decision to create the Peace Corps in 1961, one of his first acts as president. But this isn't about Kennedy. It's about a particular "footnote" in the history of the Peace Corps.

Half a century later, another crowd gathered in Ann Arbor, Michigan, for a parade. Among the procession, a man dressed as Uncle Sam displayed his infectious patriotism as he passed. Likely, they hadn't the slightest idea the man in the tall, star-spangled hat had envisioned what would become the Peace Corps on the grounds of Berea College in 1951.

According to one account of his life, Doug Kelley '51 only ever admitted to telling one lie. He was 15 in 1944, but to become a page at the Democratic National Convention, one had to be 16. His dad was a Republican and a federal highway engineer. But Doug was a

Roosevelt man. He returned from paging at the Democratic National Convention with an armful of campaign materials—the beginning of a collection that would grow so large a special building was required house it.

Soon afterward, teenage Kelley read "Reveille for Radicals" by veteran Chicago organizer Saul Alinsky and wrote a review for his high school newspaper.

"What's this review you wrote about a book for radicals?" his principal asked him, according to Peter Kelley, Doug's son. "I'm not sure that's the kind of thing we want in our high school newspaper."

His principal's suspicion did not curb Kelley's enthusiasm. The next year, in 1947, as a first-year student at Michigan State University, he met Bill Welsh '49 in Madison, Wisc., who became the first president of the National Student Association before taking jobs with the Democratic National Convention and for U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey.

"He heard about Berea and thought this is the kind of place I want to go to," related Peter. "My people are going to be at Berea."

So, he traveled to Kentucky and, though he was not the typical Berea student, his "relentless enthusiasm" allowed him to "talk his way in." He majored in history and political science; he shoveled manure at the dairy farm; he wrote for the Pinnacle, Berea's student newspaper.

In 1951, about to graduate, Kelley had been serving as the national chair of Students for Democratic Action and was

in touch with George Shepherd at the London School of Economics, along with Julius Kiano (the first Kenyan to obtain a Ph.D.) and Nelson Jonnes (inventor of polywater lubricant) at Antioch College. These four hatched the idea for the International Development Placement Association (IDPA), along with Berea classmate Galen Martin '51, the future executive director of the Kentucky Commission on Human

Rights and author of the state's 1966 civil rights legislation. The IDPA would place people in modestly paid jobs with indigenous organizations and governments in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

At Berea, Kelley also met Mary Louise Corsi '51, the Appalachian daughter of an Italian immigrant clarinet player and barber. Kelley first laid eyes on Corsi as she played the bass fiddle in the orchestra. He proposed marriage. She told him no.

So, on June 12, 1951, the recent Berea grad sent a three-page letter to 65 student leaders in many states to pitch the idea of the IDPA. By the fall, he had secured endorsements from Tennessee Valley Authority chairman David Lilienthal and American Civil Liberties Union founder Roger Baldwin.

And on Dec. 6, 1951, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas wrote in support of the IDPA, saying, "These emissaries will do more to build understanding between these two worlds than all the wealth and all the military might America can muster."

Kelley left his fledgling organization in the hands of friends. Peter Weiss became executive director and moved the IDPA to the Carnegie Endowment International Center, two blocks from the United Nations. Other friends involved in the startup were future U.S. Senator Harris Wofford and workplace safety pioneer Frank Wallick.

In 1953, Kelley married Cynthia Gebauer, whom he met when she volunteered to take notes at an IDPA organizing meeting, and the newlyweds hopped a freighter across the ocean for a "hitchhiking honeymoon" in Europe and Asia. Their goal was India, where

they spent several months living in spartan conditions in Sevagram, Mahatma Gandhi's service village.

"My mom would say that wasn't her idea of a honeymoon," Peter related, noting also that she carried a metal suitcase with the Thomas Paine quotation, "The world is my country and to do good is my religion," painted on the side.

Back in the States, the IDPA struggled. In its first three years, 18 volunteers had been placed in teaching and social service positions around the world, and another 502 had applied, but operating on such a small scale proved costly, and the organization nearly folded in 1954.

But Kelley still had his knack for impressing influential people. As Kelley worked for Michigan's Lt. Gov. and future U.S. Senator Phil Hart, Wallick became an assistant to U.S. Congressman Henry Reuss of Wisconsin. Wallick put the idea in front of Reuss, who introduced a bill in the House of Representatives and recruited Humphrey, who introduced "the Peace Corps bill" in the Senate.

Meanwhile, Kelley joined Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1957 Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom at the Lincoln Memorial, got himself arrested for participating in a civil rights sit-in and made friends with Langston Hughes while volunteering with the NAACP.

When Humphrey lost to Kennedy in the Democratic primary, he sent Kennedy his top five ideas, which included the Peace Corps. Kennedy established it officially by executive order in March 1961. On Feb. 18 of that year, Kelley received a telegram from the president's brother-in-law, Sargent Shriver, saying, "If you want to work on Peace Corps come to Washington Monday. We may be able to use you right away."

That telegram now resides in the Smithsonian.

Kelley began his new job as director of community relations at the organization he inspired. But living and working



Doug Kelley '51



Doug and Mary (Corsi) Kelley relax at Doug's Democratic Archive. Kelley's collection of Democratic presidential campaign memorabilia, containing artifacts from the campaigns of Thomas Jefferson to Barack Obama, has been divided up among presidential libraries across the country. Mary built him the two-story, backyard museum when she tired of his collection cluttering up the house.



Top: Doug Kelley (far right) joins Cameroon prime minister J.N. Foncha as he examines the work of the newly established Bamenda Handwork Cooperative in the early 1960s. While serving in Peace Corps, Berea's craft program inspired Kelley to organize the cooperative.

Bottom: As one of the first to serve in the Peace Corps, Kelley works toward making his dream organization a reality in Cameroon.

in Washington, D.C., wasn't what Kelley had in mind.

"After a very satisfying year in that job, I sent Sargent Shriver a memo explaining that I'd rather be overseas, out in the boondocks, doing the kinds of work we were urging so many others to volunteer for," Kelley wrote.

Kelley, his wife, and two young sons then moved into a mud-brick house in Cameroon.

"No electricity or plumbing," Doug Kelley wrote, "but GREAT landscaping and great neighbors."

While the Kelleys were in Cameroon in the early 1960s, Doug led the establishment of a 1,300-member crafts marketing cooperative of artisans who soon doubled their monthly income.

"My dad came out of Berea with a love for handicrafts," Peter Kelley said. "So, in Cameroon he said let's have a craft cooperative. We'll collect the wood carvings, the bead work, the traditional masks, stools, embroidery, brass figures and musical instruments and create a market for it. The Bamenda Handicraft Cooperative Society still exists. I'm in touch with the woman who runs it on Facebook."

One day, in New York, Kelley happened upon a pair of African basketry-covered musical shakers at the Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall. The tag had his handwriting on it. Kelley sent a postcard to the man who made them, which was read to him by a young boy: "Your shakers are being sold in THIS BUILDING in New York City."

Doug Kelley went on to do a great many things in his life. In 1966, he was assaulted in Mississippi by "bottle-wielding racists" as he recruited for a multiracial training program. He earned his Ph.D. and settled in as a college professor and extension director at the University of Michigan. And, when he found himself single again, Kelley reached out to Mary Corsi through the Berea College alumni office. When Corsi received his letter, she said, "Oh, it's Douglas Kelley. He's going to ask me to marry him."

Twenty-seven years after Doug Kelley asked Mary Corsi to marry him the first time, she said yes. They were wed in Berea's Danforth Chapel and were married until Corsi's death in 2015 at age 85. During their 37 years together, Corsi grew tired of the presidential memorabilia cluttering up the house, so she built him a two-story museum in the backyard. He named it, simply, The Democratic Archive, and it contained campaign materials from Thomas Jefferson to Barack Obama. It also became a Democratic hangout where one might run into Barney Frank or John Dingell.

"Don't miss the Harry Truman bathroom!" Kelley wrote to would-be visitors.

After Corsi passed, Kelley spent the last six years of his life in Glacier Hills Senior Living Community in Ann Arbor, where he met his third wife, Ellen Brady Finn, a retired English and Latin teacher, who lived across the hall. The wing where they resided came to be known as Kelley East and Kelley West.

Doug Kelley died in January 2022. He was 92 years old. Peter Kelley says his dad claimed to only be a "footnote" in the history of the Peace Corps. His collection of presidential campaign memorabilia has been divided up among presidential libraries across the country. [B](#)



Doug Kelley first met Eleanor Roosevelt at the Encampment for Citizenship in Chicago, 1946. Kelley and Roosevelt corresponded with each other until she died.



Berea celebrated its 148th Mountain Day in October. The sunrise beckoned dozens of students to the east Pinnacle to experience the beautiful landscape. This photo was captured just after sunrise as students disseminated and headed to the foot of the mountain for other Mountain Day festivities.

Their Voices Matter

By Kim Kobersmith

For senior political science major Maddie, involvement in the campus Voter Empowerment and Political Awareness Coalition (VEPAC) complemented what she was learning in class and opened her eyes to new possibilities.

“I didn’t know much about civic engagement before, but I know a lot now,” she said. “Being the VEPAC specialist really made a difference in my potential career paths as well. I want to take the project management skills I have learned and go into some kind of advocacy work.”

Encouraging civic engagement is the purpose of the non-partisan cross-campus collaboration. VEPAC formed to coordi-

nate the previous efforts of the Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTs), Student Life and the Student Government Association to increase voter turnout and involvement in the political process among students.

Voter Empowerment

The coalition’s work in the fall semester focuses on facilitating the voting process for students. “We think strategically about removing barriers to voting,” explained Ashley Cochrane, CELTS director and member of the VEPAC leadership team. “At the heart of the work is a hope that students are developing a lifelong habit of being involved in

the electoral process.”

The first step is ensuring students are registered to vote, whether at school or back home. The coalition presents several sign-up opportunities. Registering is an optional step in the housing selection process each year, and a link to Turbo Vote is available to those on campus through an electronic portal.

There is a big push on National Voter Registration Day, when volunteers host information tables around campus. Along with distributing resources on registering, VEPAC student volunteers help students access absentee ballots and inform them of deadlines. According to Maddie, students are overwhelmingly



(Bottom left) Berea College students participated in a VEPAC and CELTS-sponsored trip to the Kentucky State Legislature, in collaboration with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth in February 2023.

(Left) Student volunteers sit at tables outside of the Alumni Building to engage other students in the importance of voting and encourage them to go vote on election day.

“VEPAC is a really good entrance for people who want to get civically involved but don’t know how.” – Rilie ’25

positive about this educational service the coalition provides.

On Kentucky’s early and regular voting days, VEPAC has a table at the College Ecovillage, conveniently located across from the local polling station. Volunteers check students’ registration status, offering reassurance before they go vote. They provide snacks and the chance to walk to the polls together. Election-day shuttles run all day so busy students who might only have a small window of time can fit voting into their day.

A new partnership in 2023 with the College Post Office provided free postage for students voting absentee in their home communities. Maddie said this project, like most VEPAC initiatives, arose from student feedback. During the previous election, she heard from more than 20 students that they couldn’t pay the postage to vote absentee. Several told her this year that the service allowed them to cast their ballot.

Beyond facilitating the process of voting, VEPAC programs help students be informed voters. During city and county election years, it traditionally sponsors one of the only local candidate forums, open to the community. Since 2023 was a Kentucky gubernatorial election, the coalition hosted a candidate

debate watch party, complete with a bingo sheet of common terms like “taxes.”

Historically, Berea College has a higher-than-average rate of voter registration, but a lower-than-average voting rate. “College students are historically underrepresented in the voting pool,” Maddie said. “I tell people if they want to have some say in political decisions, they need to cast a ballot. Their voice matters, no matter how small of a minority vote they feel they are.”

Civic Engagement

The other major aspect of VEPAC’s work is civic engagement, and programs focus on learning to talk about critical issues and the legislative process. Presentations sponsored with the Political Science Students Association provide information about controversial topics, like gerrymandering, and give students opportunities to discuss them.

A critical piece of the legislative process is advocacy, and VEPAC encourages everyone to be involved in that work, whether they have the right to vote or not. The group connects students who want to get involved politically with conference opportunities and like-minded local organizations, like the Kentucky Center for Economic Policy.

During the 2023 session of the

Kentucky State Assembly, Maddie and student Rilie ’25, collaborated to bring a group to the capitol in Frankfort. The event drew a mix of 15 students, from those in campus government to international students wanting to learn how the United States governmental process works.

Rilie was working with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, an advocacy group, and the Valentine’s Day lobbying focused on restoring voter rights for formerly incarcerated citizens. The field trip provided a holistic education. A pre-trip information session covered bills related to the topic and on-site legislative meetings helped students see how bills become law.

Other attendees shared their personal stories about permanently losing their right to vote, even after their release from prison. Students were able to speak with individual lawmakers about the issue. They could also choose to just watch what the process was like, with no pressure to advocate on the topic.

“We showed people engagement is more than voting,” Rilie said. “VEPAC is a really good entrance for people who want to get civically involved but don’t know how.”



Photo submitted

Everyday Art of Service

Sree P S '24

Adrienne Keller Eisenmenger '05 helps young refugees from all over the world settle into their lives in the United States. She helps them in the process of getting high school certifications, searching for scholarships, and visiting and applying to colleges. Eisenmenger is not a volunteer; she is the family and youth services manager at the Kentucky Refugee Ministries based in Louisville, Ky. She is a professional who wades through copious amounts of paperwork, legalities and grant writing to enable refugees to find their place in Kentucky. She developed her commitment to service by incorporating acts of love into her everyday life.

Eisenmenger grew up reading voraciously. As a child, her father would drop her off in the library on a Saturday morning and pick her up in the afternoon. Her favorite teachers had a habit of slipping her a book and encouraged her to read. Brought up in rural Henagar, Ala., books were Eisenmenger's gateway to the world. She consumed everything from Shakespeare to a variety of travelogues that transported her to faraway places on the planet.

She soon realized that her socio-economic conditions might prevent her from seeing the world she read about all the time. She felt that it was not expected of her and her classmates to leave the place they were born to explore the world. Nonetheless, she kept her reading habits alive and fostered a desire to understand the world's diversity.

During the pivotal time of Eisenmenger's life in high school, she received a call from the admission counselors at Berea telling her about the history and ethos of the College. Eisenmenger was captivated by Berea's commitment to social justice and applied.

The first few weeks of her college

life, Eisenmenger was busy exploring the options to serve at the volunteer fair where the Center for Excellence in Learning through Service (CELTS) showcased a variety of programming, from food banks to Habitat for Humanity. Serving students became a part of Eisenmenger's everyday life at Berea.

"I was really lucky because my whole friend group was so motivated to serve," she said. "They would be serving in different organizations. I would find myself going with them or they would go with me. It felt very organic."

At Berea, Eisenmenger took up the position of student chaplain, a trained resident in one of Berea's many residence halls who provides spiritual and emotional support to students who need it.

"I think that chaplain program at the time was unique to Berea," Eisenmenger said. "Many times, you have a crisis in your life, and you may not want to talk to the actual adults about it. But you do want to talk to somebody that's just there to listen and support."

Eisenmenger found herself empathizing with students coping with academic stress or even deaths in their families.


In her senior year, Eisenmenger worked as a service chaplain, a unique position where she helped coordinate the efforts of CELTS and the Willis D. Weatherford Jr. Campus Christian Center. Even as her responsibilities piled up, Eisenmenger found time to extend small gestures of love to the student community like baking cookies and distributing them to her residents, leaving a note on a doormat that contained words of affirmation at her residents' doors. Eisenmenger thought of them as small "blessings," which people across religions or even those without one could appreciate.

When talking to people across cultures and national identities at their most vulnerable times, she learned the importance of acknowledging their differences while seeing the humanity that connected them.

"Cultural humility," she reflected. "I don't know what I don't know. I learn every day. I never know what it's like to be in another person's shoes. And I don't want to have the arrogance or the ignorance or the audacity to think that I can. And I also have learned the value of just listening and really promoting and letting other people share their stories."

Eisenmenger's desire to serve seeped into all aspects of her academic life. While majoring in elementary education, her study-abroad experience in Costa Rica turned her focus to sustainability, sanitation and water conservation, all subjects that focus on improving the living conditions of people across the globe.

After Berea, she earned her Master of International Development degree from Eastern University in Pennsylvania, a program that involved her moving back and forth between South Africa and the United States. Eisenmenger's interests in elementary education and her knowledge of grassroots development work would combine to help her serve immigrant and refugee youth in Louisville's Kentucky Refugee Ministries.

Eisenmenger is helping her country and region become more diverse. She is enabling the cultures and people she read about as a child adjust to the spaces and localities she calls home. 

FULL-CIRCLE SERVICE Read more about how student photographer, Nay '23 was impacted by Kentucky Refugee Ministries, putting him on a path to Berea. www.berea.college/KRMConnection

Adrienne Eisenmenger has always been motivated to help people in need. She now works with immigrant and refugee youth at Louisville's Kentucky Refugee Ministries.

Who Wrote the Great Commitments?

By Jason Lee Miller

Any new employee of Berea College will likely be handed a copy of the Great Commitments. There are eight. Collectively, they are the mission statement, what all Bereans work toward. The document lists no author, only that the Commitments were “first articulated in 1962.” It is interesting, and perhaps unusual, that the guiding language of an historic institution includes no writing credit.

Don Hudson '65, retired associate provost, while shedding a little light on their composition, said, “Pardon me if I slip up and call them commandments.”

And they are, sort of, like commandments, though there's no official penalty for breaking one of them. Despite that, beyond curriculum or accreditation or employee policies or bylaws or federal regulations, the Commitments represent the underlying spirit of the place, its heart, its dreamy ambition.

So where did they come from? The standard answer, as revealed by those in the know and the archives, is Louis Smith, who served as dean of the faculty around the time they were developed.

In 1962, Berea College President Francis Hutchins and Smith were essentially the Old Guard. The world had changed, and as they eyed retirement in the coming years, they reflected on what had happened in Berea's past and discussed the College's preservation for the future.

When Hutchins took over for his father in 1939, Berea College was still, by force of law, a whites-only institution. That changed for the better—or returned to normal—in 1950. As Berea approached its centennial celebration, the South's first interracial college was officially reintegrated, and Hutchins endeavored to reiterate “the Berea idea” that had set the College apart from others.

Setting the school apart was top of mind in 1955 when centennial commencement speaker Robert Hutchins opined that “Berea had shown that it was possible in an age of public relations and mass production to have character.” That character, he continued, was one of “conscientious nonconformity.”

This notion that Berea was different from other schools must have been on Smith's mind as well as he drafted a grant application to the Ford Foundation. To point out that Berea College is different, he suggested, is easy. “But to be different is not necessarily to be distinctive.” Sometimes different can mean eccentric.

But still, in an increasingly homogeneous world, Berea did stand out with regard to how it approached higher education; this school did not charge tuition, implemented a required work program, believed not just in equality but the inherent kinship of people. With increasing curricular standardization, American colleges and universities moved toward uniformity and risked becoming as identical as the nation's gas stations.

“If the College disappeared tomorrow,” Smith asked, “what would be lost?”

And the answer to that question was the, apparently orally conveyed, commitments.

“We inherit the institution [our predecessors] have built...what we usually call ‘the great commitments’ of Berea College, which have come to us from the leaders of the past....They still have great urgency.”

But until this point, those lowercase “great commitments” had not been formally summarized or articulated. They were simply embedded into the culture.

Hudson was a sophomore when Smith was composing his fated grant application. Though the commitments had not been formalized in ink or hung on campus walls anywhere, Hudson understood the values of the College,



At the bottom of the Legacy Wall that holds the names of Great Commitments Society members sits this engraved tribute to Berea College's Great Commitments.

even if he was more concerned at the time with racing cars against his friend, Jack Roush '64.

“Parts of the commitments were always there,” Hudson said. “It was obvious to us that interracial education was important. It was just a matter of fact when I arrived. We shared space with students from other countries, with students who were African American. We got along extremely well. We saw each other for who we were.”

Smith, said Hudson, was a genius with words, the type of writer who composed final drafts the first go at it. One imagines, then, that sentences like “For better or worse, we know rather well what we are about” flowed rather easily from his pen. And then, of course, after consultation with Hutchins, came the historic first draft of the commitments, which set Berea College apart from all the rest:

1. To provide an educational program of high quality.
2. To have a liberal arts foundation and outlook for all aspects of the college program.
3. To emphasize throughout its program, although as a non-sectarian college, the Christian ethic and the motive of service to mankind.
4. To promote ideas of brotherhood, equality and democracy, with a particular emphasis on interracial education.
5. To provide an educational opportunity for students from Appalachia who have high ability and limited economic resources.
6. To serve primarily the Appalachian area—its people to be benefited mainly by education, but with other appropriate services as well.

Smith suggested additionally that these six commitments were written on paper, not etched into stone.

“We know that the formulas adequate for our yesterdays may no longer be viable for tomorrow,” he wrote. “We know that new conditions

“We know that new conditions require adoptions, but we do not believe that time has made our ancient good uncouth.” – Louis Smith

require adoptions, but we do not believe that time has made our ancient good uncouth.”

Smith and Hutchins were to retire soon afterward. Before Hutchins ended his career, he handed the text of the Great Commitments to the incoming president, Willis D. Weatherford Jr., in 1967. Weatherford structured his first presidential report around the new, yet old, Berea College commitments. To become officially codified, to act as a mission statement and guiding document, they would need to be ratified by the faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees.

Hudson joined the faculty just as the new Commitments were being discussed by the governing body. Though there were questions and debate, the sense was that since the dean had “put those out there, they were policy.”


“Okay, this is what we go by,” Hudson said. “This is who we are.”

The faculty ratified the Great Commitments in September 1969, and the Board of Trustees approved them in October. The Commitments stood as they were ratified until 1993, when President John Stephenson led the college community in updating the living document that served as the distinct moral framework by which the College operated.

Faculty and staff in the early 1990s tweaked the language to be more inclusive, more explicit and more complete. The new version corrected the oversight that left out Berea’s historic commitment to gender equality. The total number of commitments became eight, and they added a preamble.

For decades thereafter, it was tradition that the Commitments would

not be enumerated so that one would not be considered more important than another and that they be displayed in their entirety with the preamble. When Lyle Roelofs became president, he established the Great Committees, a campus-wide symposium of faculty and staff to explore the Commitments and determine if they needed to be updated to reflect the modern world. With but a few tweaks, the newest version of the Great Commitments was posted in 2017.

So, then, who wrote the Great Commitments? The driving question of this piece expects to find the name of a particular author. While the man who wrote them down was easily identified from the archives, the true answer to the question is: Everybody. 



*Help them see
a better future.*

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Jordan (Tré) Sims '15 discovered a diverse, empathetic and encouraging community when he came to Berea College. His involvement with strong Black leaders in meetings in this library in the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, helped him learn to be secure in his identity and understand the importance of mentorship to young men. Fueled by his life-changing experiences, he started a group to mentor and encourage young men in the high school where he now works as a college and career coach.

Crystal Wylie '05

See a Need, Fill a Need

By Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03

Building relationships, finding identity and cultivating purpose—these core attributes of Berea College's Black Male Leadership Initiative (BMLI) changed the course of Jordan (Tré) Sims' life. The 2015 graduate came to Berea from a loving, supportive family, but one where he split time between two defined households, unsure of where he fit as a biracial child with Black and white siblings and parents and settled in a central Kentucky high school with a less than 1 percent population of students of color.

In February of his senior year, his high school choir teacher, a Berea College alumna, knowing he would be a first-generation college student and knowing his love for the arts, music and learning, recommended he check out Berea as an option for school. That same month, Sims attended the Carter G. Woodson Diversity weekend at the College.

"It was literally my first time being down in Berea and seeing campus," Sims said. "As soon as I got there, I was just so infatuated with the environment of it—the whole motto, the system that's in place to help students succeed. And it was something that just popped, and I was like, 'Oh, yeah, this is where I need to go.'"

That weekend, Sims met several young men he immediately bonded with, and their connection lasted through the end of the school year and summer as they encouraged one another to stay motivated and get accepted into and attend Berea.

Once at Berea, that connection strengthened with his involvement in the Black Music Ensemble (BME) and the BMLI. Through mentors like Keith and Dr. Kathy Bullock, Dr. Dwayne Mack and Professor Andrew Baskin, Sims began navigating the identity crisis he felt through his childhood and found true understanding, affirmation and belonging.

"Professor Baskin is one of my favorite people at Berea," Sims recalled. "The Bullock family and Dr. Mack, people like that, were people who extended their hand out to me, and were like, 'We're here to help. We can have these conversations, and if you need anything come to us—like anything, literally.' And it was just that feeling of belonging. Knowing they would be there for me was something I never thought I would get at that level."

"When I talk to that friend group, looking back at the challenges, it's what shaped us into who we are now," Sims continued. "Which is kind of why I started the BROTHERS program at Lafayette because of what Black Male Leadership Initiative did for me and my friends."

Having served as the college and career coach at Lafayette High School in Lexington, Ky., since 2020, Sims created the BROTHERS program last school year. The organization is dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive environment through mentorship to generate a sense of belonging and genuine brotherhood. That brotherhood will provide space for productive, healthy conversations conducive to social and emotional development.

"Starting this group was what you could call a 'see a need, fill a need' instinct," Sims said. "The lack of representation and safe space for students of color was something that drove me to create this organization. I felt it my responsibility and my passion to create a group in which students could feel heard and supported."

At its initiation, the group of approximately 80 high school males of various races and ethnicities gathered weekly to discuss important, personal and sometimes difficult topics. With discussion topics ranging from religion to relationships, sex ed, drug and alcohol usage and personal and family issues,

Sims uses this group meeting as a time to engage these young men and help them find a safe place to explore thorny issues in their school and lives.

"I am very real with the students because I feel like if you don't have these conversations with them, then they're kind of thrown out into the world to just figure it out," Sims said.

In addition, Sims brings in mentor figures from the outside to talk to the group while also fostering a sense of mentorship within the group itself, encouraging junior and senior members to help first-year and sophomore members with challenges they face, whether it be difficult classwork or a situation they experienced early in their high school careers.

"I tell them, 'You may not even think you're a leader, but somebody's looking up to you and what you do, because you're going to be a professional or experienced in something that somebody else is not,'" Sims said about working with his council of select student leaders. "So, letting them know that they've always got people looking at them and looking to see how they can learn from them—that is something I'm really happy I can expose them to."

Having found harmony, acceptance and belonging in his friends and mentors at Berea College, Sims feels compelled to craft that same environment for young men at the high-school level so they can approach their college or career path with confidence, self-understanding and a desire to serve others in whatever endeavors they pursue.

"I really enjoy what I do," Sims said. "And Berea is a huge part of why I do what I do. The African and African American Studies program, the Music department and just the whole campus helped me figure out that this was my passion. This was one of my callings, and it's awesome." ■

A Lifelong Commitment to Truth

Sree P '24
Photos by Sarah Hazlegrove Photography

Growing up, Rick Gunter '67 would visit his traveling Southern Baptist uncle's home to type out his name on an old Royal typewriter. Gunter fell in love with the smell of ink and the look of his name on paper, gleaming like an actor's name on a Broadway bill.

In high school, Gunter wrote a journalistic piece on the 1960 election between Richard Nixon and John F. Kennedy, which he took to the *Tri-County News* in Spruce Pine, N.C. The editors published the piece and let him submit a series of features on that year's election. They told Gunter he had a future as a journalist.

"I was living through a politically tumultuous time," Gunter said.

Writing was his chosen means to make sense of the changing world and to express his truth during a time marked by the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement.

Even though Gunter's father only had a high school education, he read newspapers avidly and encouraged young Gunter to read journals from all over the country. His father would discuss news stories from across the globe during supper and invite Gunter to join the conversation. However, as a first-generation student from a working-class family, Gunter's opportunities for higher education were limited. He only applied to Berea College. He still remembers the day his father brought him his acceptance letter. While Gunter was working his part-time job at a service station, his father drove up with a thick envelope that contained instruc-

tions on transitioning to Berea College.

At Berea, Gunter deepened his understanding of the power of words to convey the nuances of truth. He made a habit of reading the *Louisville Times* every day in the lobby of Pearson's Residence Hall. As a political science major, Gunter investigated history and politics with a critical eye and deepened his commitments to interraciality and social justice.

"All of us in that student body between 1963-67 were from impoverished backgrounds, and most of us were from the southern Appalachian Mountains," Gunter said. "We had grown up in some racially charged places. Suddenly, we found ourselves at Berea living in an interracial community that had the distinction of being the first interracial college or university in the American South. I became a Berean for life."

Gunter remembers Dr. Richard Allen Heckman, the professor whose critical examination of American history taught him the need to tell the stories that are often pushed to the periphery. Gunter became the managing editor of the Pinnacle, Berea's student-run college newspaper, his senior year and continued perfecting his craft. Berea's liberal arts curriculum imbibed Gunter with the skills to understand world events from diverse perspectives.

His relentless practice and devotion earned him a position at the *Asheville Times* in his home state and later the *Asheville Citizen*, where he worked under the guidance of editors who pushed Gunter to continuously improve his work. He relocated to Florida to

work for the *Winter Haven News Chief* and then to Virginia to write for the *Staunton News-Leader*.

After 16 years writing for various newspapers, Gunter bought the *Crewe-Burkeville Journal*, a weekly newspaper, in 1999. The publication brings the power of independent journalism to the rural county of Nottoway, Va. Gunter runs the print newspaper alongside his wife June, and together, they have overcome the challenges of the digitized world where people get their information online. He seeks to keep the traditions of print journalism alive and provide his subscriber base with the pleasure of holding newspapers in hand. He believes that he has a greater degree of accountability as a local brick-and-mortar organization, and his subscribers are welcome to question his sources and views.

"We have the obligation to the public to try to get this right," Gunter said. "My wife and I always say that we're in the business of writing the first draft of history." 📰

(Right) Rick Gunter '67 serves as the editor of the *Crewe-Burkeville Journal* in Virginia. He has committed his career to fair and just journalism. (Inset) Gunter and his wife, June, stand with Patti and Stuart Rosenberg, who were so moved by the quality and perspective of Gunter's journalism that they became faithful supporters of his alma mater, Berea College.



SUBSCRIBERS TURNED SUPPORTERS

Patti and Stuart Rosenberg have been loyal subscribers of the *Crewe-Burkeville Journal* since they moved to their farm in Burkeville, Va., after retirement. The couple was captivated by the fairness of Gunter's journalism and the veracity of his editorials.

"The editorials were especially well-written and fearless in standing up for human dignity, fairness and justice and holding leaders at all levels accountable for their actions," they said.

It was within the pages of the journal that the Rosenbergs first came across the Berea College logo and name. They became curious about the alma mater of the journalist they admired and trusted as a source of information.

Patti and Stuart visited Berea's campus to glimpse at its everyday functioning and to see how the College implemented the tenets of its commitments to social justice.

"We liked the transparency, whether we were talking to the CFO, or a professor or a student, everybody was completely open, or we felt they were completely open, about the challenges and the rewarding parts [of being a Berean]," they said.

They decided to support a future generation of Berea students by establishing the Rick '67 and Deborah June Gunter Scholarship Fund, which will contribute to Berea's Tuition Promise Scholarships.

What Looms in Your Future

Giving students the ability to continue their passion after graduation

Brooke Donley '26

The Sarah Fuller Smith Loom Award has been awarded to one student graduating from the weaving department since 1929. “The award covers not only the loom, but all the other needs that go into keeping weaving accessible as students reach a new chapter in their lives,” explained Erin Miller, head of Weaving.

Emerson Croft '21, a 2021 Sarah Fuller Smith Loom Award recipient, had been working with fibers since the age of 6. “My grandmother taught me how to crochet. This started a love of creating.

“Weaving wasn’t something I knew about until I came to Berea,” Croft continued, “but I spent all four years in Student Craft learning about weaving, then I was asked to stay and be the weaving manager.”

A bench, scissors, measuring tape, shuttle, bobbins, warping board, mill and fringe twister are all items a student needs besides a loom when they graduate, Miller explained.

“Looms by themselves are expensive, but there is so much more that goes into weaving than just the loom itself,” she said. “A weaver needs something to sit on, a warping board or a mill to put the yarn on the board and yarn to weave with.”

Receiving the loom award has allowed Croft to continue creating outside of the work they do for the College.

“Realizing I have creative freedom has been the best part of receiving a loom,” Croft said. “While I was at Berea, I mainly wove baby blankets. There are many projects that I have created since receiving the loom such as towels, scarves and place mats.”

Just this month, Croft created a baby



If you have a family loom to donate to a graduating student, contact the Weaving studio at millere2@bera.edu, and the department will gift the loom to a student. “We are always looking for more looms to connect with students,” Miller said.

blanket for their mom and stepfather who are expecting a baby later this year. “It is special that I can show my love by creating something for those I love.”

Giving students the opportunity to continue what they love is important to Croft. “The financial barriers to weaving are immense, especially for Berea students with the financial backgrounds they come from. A loom wouldn’t have been in my future without

the award. Students come to Craft and fall in love with it, and I want to help them continue their love of craft.”

Since joining the staff at Berea, Miller has worked to find looms for students who weren’t awarded one upon graduation. “Looms are expensive and hard to find,” she said. “There are not a lot of weaving studios around the country where students can access a loom.”

ENDOWING OUR FUTURE

At Berea College, we offer a number of charitable gift and estate-planning strategies that can benefit you and the next generation of students.

Contact us to learn how you can make a gift to endow our future.

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BEREA COLLEGE

GREAT COMMITMENTS SOCIETY

Photo by Crystal Wylie '05

Berea College Farm Store Celebrates 10th Anniversary

The Berea College Farm Store is celebrating 10 years of offering students and community members the opportunity to purchase locally grown food while supporting the College, its students and its mission.

The store is open year-round, offering daily hot and cold lunch items, fresh bread and pastries, frozen meat, fresh produce and dry goods. Bakery items are made from scratch with fresh, organic ingredients like grains, herbs, fruits and vegetables from the Berea College Farm. The in-house butchery allows the Farm Store to offer and use meats raised on the College Farm, which was established in 1871 and is among the nation's oldest continuously operating educational farms.

Aside from a few full-time staff, the Farm Store operates entirely on student labor performed by 13 students. They are

a diverse group of individuals who come together with their desire to learn more about farm-to-table food preparation and collaboration of business models.

The store also has been a testimony to Berea College's commitment to supportive and sustainable living.

Watch our recent feature about the Berea College Farm Store at www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/student-run-farm-store-celebrates-10-years-at-berea-college or scan this QR code with your smart device.



Washington Monthly names Berea College No. 2 Best Liberal Arts College, No. 1 in Social Mobility

Washington Monthly magazine has ranked Berea College the No. 2 liberal arts college in the nation in its 2023 College Guide and Rankings, up three spots from the 2022 rankings.

Berea College retained its ranking as the No. 1 Best Bang for the Buck College in the South in this year's guide. Additional rankings include No. 1 in Pell Grant performance, No. 1 in social mobility and No. 22 in service.

"Now more than ever, we need a better set of benchmarks for what 'excellence' is in higher education, ones that measure what colleges do for their country, instead of for themselves," *Washington Monthly* editors say of their rankings. "*Washington Monthly's* college rankings try to do just that, by rating institutions on their commitment to three goals: social mobility, public service and research. Rather than laud the universities that mostly cater to the sons and daughters of the wealthy, we reward those that welcome students from everyday and low-income backgrounds and help them to graduate on time, with good jobs and low debt."

Washington Monthly went on to call Berea College "the best in the nation at enrolling low-income students, and among the best at getting them to the podium on Commencement Day — at exceptionally low cost."

The Wall Street Journal Names Berea College Kentucky's Top College Offering the Best Value

Berea College offers the best value of any of Kentucky's universities, and is ranked No. 20 overall in the U.S., according to the new *Wall Street Journal*/College Pulse college rankings. The rankings look at colleges that not only keep costs low, but also put graduates on the pathway to a meaningful and lucrative career.

"The question of how much a college degree can boost future earnings and how that compares with its cost has become a centerpiece of the college decision process, as many Americans have come to doubt the value of a degree," the *Wall Street Journal* says in its report. "Guided by research conducted by the public-policy think tank, Third Way, our best-value calculation looks at how quickly a degree from each college pays for its cost through the salary boost it provides its students."

Berea College is meeting the "best value" challenge by providing a college degree that immediately transforms students' lives through both economic reward and personal fulfillment. "Since 1892, Berea College has offered students a high-quality liberal arts education that inspires them as they pursue their goals—and we do it through our no-tuition promise that allows our students to graduate with zero or very little debt," said Berea College President Dr. Cheryl Nixon, who began her tenure as the College's 10th president and first female president on July 1. "Upward mobility is our central goal. Our mission is to educate those who may not otherwise be able to afford to go to college, and we are committed to providing them a blueprint for life after college."

At Berea, 96 percent of students receive federal Pell Grants, and the annual household income of students' families is about \$32,000. Nationally, graduation rates for students in that demographic are only in the mid-teens. By contrast, about two-thirds of Berea students graduate on time, with many going on to earn advanced degrees.

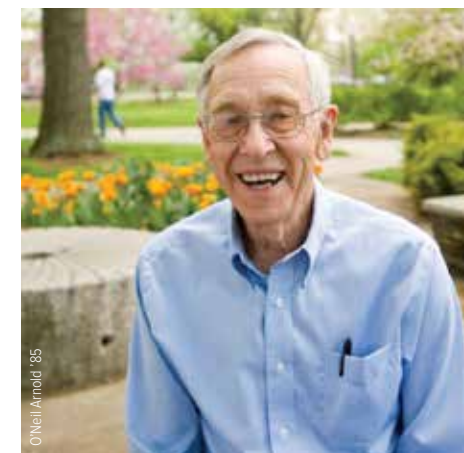
Berea College Mourns the Loss of Two Beloved Bereans

The campus community was saddened by the passing of a pair of beloved Bereans in the fall. **Loyal Jones '54**, a prolific writer and one of the foremost experts on Appalachian life and culture, died at his North Carolina home on Oct. 7, at the age of 95.

"Loyal has been a life-engendering presence in Appalachia and Appalachian Studies from the time he started working with the Council of Southern Mountains in 1958 all the way through his passing," said Chris Green, director of the College's Loyal Jones Appalachian Center. "Loyal loved stories and

people. His life was dedicated to listening and making room for everyone to feel and be heard."

Jones served as founder and director of the College's Appalachian Center, the first of its kind in the nation, from 1970 to 1993. In 2008, the center was renamed in his honor as the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center. His dedication to Appalachia led him to actively engage with organizations centered around education, welfare and reform in Appalachian communities. He earned numerous awards and honors for his tireless commitment to this



Loyal Jones '54



Jessie Reasor Zander '54

often-overlooked region and its people.

Jessie Reasor Zander passed away in Arizona on Oct. 3, at the age of 91. Her 1954 graduation from Berea made her the first African American student to earn a degree from a Kentucky college after the state's Day Law was amended to allow interracial education.

An educator, school principal and avid traveler, Zander was a proud Berean but shied away from the label "barrier breaker." Her love of Berea brought her back to campus many times. In 1989, she worked with student-teachers in the College's Education Studies department and later with the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, where she worked with African American high school students. She was also an award-winning poet. A work titled "Unifying Symbol," about the need for cultural exchanges as a bridge to promote better understanding among people of different backgrounds, was published in the *Appalachian Independent* in July 1975. An excerpt from the work reads: I'd like to join you./In a trip toward healing, toward harmony and wholeness....Say the word and I'll join you/In a walk toward exchange/Toward a new consciousness and understanding.

Berea College Student Craft Opens Exhibit at University of Wisconsin-Madison

An exhibit titled "Heart, Head, and Hand: Making and Remaking at Berea College Student Craft" that traces the evolution of Berea College Student Craft's 150-year history went on display at the Ruth Davis Design Gallery at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Center for Design and Material Culture (CDMC) on Oct. 18.

"Heart, Head, and Hand: Making and Remaking Berea College Student Craft" explores what it means to make on campus—and the power of design and craft to inspire creativity across disciplines. The College's Student Craft program was established in 1893 and has become a well-established center for student-led design production in the United States. Student Craft includes weaving, woodcraft, ceramics, broomcraft and craft education outreach programs. These areas engage not only with experiential learning but also with the cultural myths and values that are

embedded in objects fashioned by hand. With a history rooted in Southern Appalachian material culture, automobile tourism and mail-order catalogs, today's program focuses on student-centered pedagogy and the curious, speculative, inclusive and future-looking potential of craft in the making—heart, head and hand.

In addition to historical objects and examples of current production, contemporary works will be on display, as well as works designed with contemporary designers Stephen Burks and Norman Teague. Works by eight Berea College students are also included in the exhibit. The students—Joshua '26, Ellen '24, Dawn '24, Layne '23, Taylor '24, Sean '25, YoungSoon '24 and Merlyn '23—attended the opening reception and have work from different disciplines featured in the exhibit.

Heart, Head, and Hand: Making and Remaking at Berea College Student Craft

is a collaboration between Berea College Student Craft and the Center for Design and Material Culture. The Anonymous Fund and the Chipstone Foundation are providing support for this project.

The exhibit runs through March 3, 2024. Visit the exhibition website at <https://cdmc.wisc.edu/heart-head-and-hand>



BEREA COLLEGE HONORS DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

Dr. Albert Cobbs '66

Alfred L. Cobbs is associate professor emeritus of German Studies at Wayne State University, where he taught for 34 years. He earned graduate degrees from the University of Missouri at Columbia and a doctorate from the University of Cincinnati. Prior to his appointment at Wayne State, he taught at the Universities of Cincinnati and Virginia. During his career, he received two Summer Fulbright Awards to Germany; he served as a Reader for the Advanced Placement Test in German as well as on the Test Development Committee for AP German for the College Board.

In 1984, Professor Cobbs received the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching from Wayne State University, where he also served as assistant provost. Other responsibilities have included serving as resident director of the Wayne State University Junior Year in Freiburg (Germany) Program, which consisted of a consortium of Wayne State University, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Michigan State University and working with the gifted and talented and dual enrollment programs.

In retirement, Professor Cobbs travels internationally, takes in the culture of Detroit, Michigan, reads and stays in touch with former students and colleagues. He is the author of two scholarly books: "The Image of America in Postwar German Literature: Reflections and Perceptions" (Lang, 1982) and "Migrants' Literature in Postwar Germany: Trying to Find a Place to Fit In" (Mellen Press, 2007). In 2020, he published his memoir, "Locked Out: Finding Freedom and Education after Prince Edward County Closed Its Schools" (Little Star).

Bobi Conn '02

Born in Morehead, Kentucky, and raised in a nearby holler, Bobi Conn is the author of two critically acclaimed books, "In the Shadow of the Valley: A Memoir" and the fictional novel, "A Woman in Time." After completing her degree at Berea College, Conn worked multiple part-time jobs to support her son while attending graduate school at Eastern Kentucky University, where she earned her master's degree in English, with an emphasis in creative writing.

A passionate advocate for educational

access for people on the margins of society, Conn incorporates elements of Appalachian storytelling to bring the lives of ordinary people into focus. Robert Gipe describes her lyrical prose style as one that "stuns and sustains the reader" throughout. Silas House said the intimate moments in Conn's debut novel "transport the reader to a place so vivid that we feel we are walking through the lush woods, gathering flowers with these memorable characters."

In addition to writing, Conn loves playing pool, cooking, being in the woods, attempting to grow a garden and spending time with her incredible children.

Betina Conley Gardner '94

A distinguished leader in higher education, Betina Conley Gardner carried Appalachian Kentucky in her heart throughout a storied career at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU). The self-described "freckle-faced girl on Spaws Creek" in Morgan County finished her degree at Berea College in 1994 and went on to earn her master's degree in library science at the University of Kentucky. Retired after 28 years at EKU, Gardner served as the dean of libraries, chief information officer, executive director of the EKU Foundation and vice president of development and alumni engagement.

From 2019 until her retirement, Gardner led EKU's philanthropic efforts, driving record endowment growth for the university and overseeing the largest Giving Day in the school's history. Her leadership in the completion of the Make No Little Plans campaign exceeded a \$50 million fundraising goal by more than 20 percent. Previously, in her role as dean of libraries, Gardner worked with Friends of EKU Libraries to improve access to critical resources for students and faculty. She also served on the creative team that led to the creation of the renowned Ron and Sherrie Lou Noel Studio for Academic Creativity.

Like many Bereans, the lifelong eastern Kentuckian believes everyone in the Commonwealth deserves access to an affordable education and, though retired, Gardner plans to continue pushing to make that mission a reality.

Jeffrey Reddick '91

Jeffrey Reddick's first attempt at screenwriting came at the age of 14, when he wrote a prequel to Wes Craven's classic horror film, "A Nightmare on Elm Street." He mailed the manuscript to the president of New Line Cinema, Bob Shaye, who would come to mentor the aspiring filmmaker five years later while he interned at the movie company headquarters in New York City. Eleven years later, Reddick's own iconic horror film, "Final Destination," premiered in theaters nationwide, making him both the first person of color and the first member of the LGBTQ community to create a horror film franchise released by a major motion picture studio. Since 2000, there have been four sequels to the film, with another to be announced soon.

Reddick grew up in Jackson, Kentucky, in Breathitt County. After seeing a production of "Of Mice and Men," he decided to hone his theater skills at Berea College. Berea not only gave him a place to perform, it also provided him the tools to shoot his first film project. Reddick was soon accepted into the prestigious American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York, which was followed by his fated internship with New Line Cinema.

As a writer and producer, Reddick has sold or optioned more than 40 projects for film and television. Reddick's produced feature credits include Lionsgate's thriller, "Tamara," the remake of George Romero's classic, "Day of the Dead" and "The Call," starring Lin Shaye and Tobin Bell. In television, Reddick served as a supervising producer on Season 3 of HereTV's "Dante's Cove" and as a story editor on season two of NBC's "Midnight, Texas." He helped create two animated series for Netflix, the Emmy-nominated "A Tale Dark and Grimm" and "The Usagi Chronicles."

His feature directorial debut "Don't Look Back," a mystery thriller, was released in October 2021. He is slated to direct his next horror film, "Dead Rules," in 2024.



Dr. Albert Cobbs '66



Bobi Conn '02



Betina Conley Gardner '94



Jeffrey Reddick '91

Clark Allison '79 Alumni Loyalty Award

Clark L. Allison was born in West Virginia to Roberta Larew Allison, a Berea graduate of the class of 1942. Roberta's dedicated service to Berea College ended this year, with her death at the age of 102, but his passionate support of the College's mission continues. His father was a forester, which sparked Clark's own interest in agriculture and natural resources. Drafted into United States Army during the Vietnam War after a short stint at Marshall University in Huntington, W. Va., Allison married his high school sweetheart, Phyllis, before they shipped out to Germany. Their first child, Stephen, was born in Germany. Their second child, Jeanette, accompanied her mother in utero on the graduation stage at Berea College.

A year after Phyllis completed her degree in elementary education, Allison finished his degree and began work as a soil conservationist in Lebanon, Ky. He would later serve as a district conservationist in Irvine and Prestonsburg. He finished his career as a resource conservation and development coordinator for the Big Sandy area of eastern Kentucky.

Roberta, Clark and Phyllis have been among Berea's most active and passionately dedicated alumni over the decades, attending reunions and homecomings, and hosting alumni and friends events. Having developed an interest in graphic design, Allison has been producing Berea College accessories promoting the "love over hate" mission of his alma mater. In addition, he has expressed interest in helping Berea develop a new composting system.



Clark Allison '79

Senora May Childers '13 Outstanding Young Alumna Award

Senora May Childers' expressive voice, tinged with wildness, has been described by author Wendell Berry as "something straight out of nature." Coupled with intuitive songwriting and folk, rock, country and R&B influences, her singular music has garnered her a national following and recognition as one of the chief architects of the New Appalachian Sound: music that pays homage to the past but that is decidedly progressive and grounded in the present.

She captured attention in 2018 with her debut album "Lainhart," which was followed by her sophomore release "All of My Love" in 2021. Steeped in longing and melancholy, the album featured vocals from Seth Avett of The Avett Brothers and was produced by Jessica Lea Mayfield. Acclaimed by critics as "an album that resonates [with] a maturity far beyond her years," its success led Childers to play at the 2023 Newport Folk Festival and to open for bands including Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats.

Childers credits her years at Berea College with fostering her deep commitment to social justice and bolstering her identity as an artist. "I never really took music seriously," Childers says, "until I was at Berea playing campfires and open mics. That was the first spark that gave me confidence."

With her husband Tyler Childers, Senora founded Hickman Holler Appalachian Relief Fund in 2020 to raise awareness and financial support for philanthropic efforts throughout Appalachia, including natural disaster relief, addiction recovery and higher education. She also supports the Kentucky chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Black Lives Matter movement. She will release new



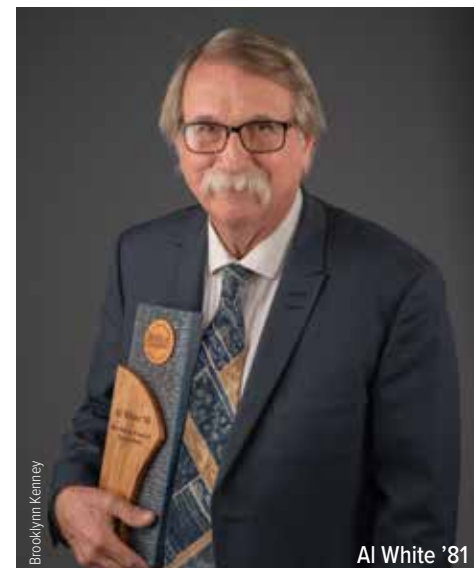
Senora May Childers '13

music in 2024 and remains devoted to creating change in the region she loves so deeply.

Al White '81 Rod Bussey Award of Special Merit

Al White transitioned from Berea College alumnus to Berea College employee in 1999 when he was hired as Berea's first instructor of Appalachian instruments. He taught until his retirement in 2020. White founded the Berea College Bluegrass Ensemble in 2000 and continued as director for 20 years. Between 2004 and 2020, he organized six Bluegrass Ensemble tours in Ireland. The group has also performed in Denmark and Japan. In addition, beginning in 1992, White accompanied the Berea College Country Dancers for performances in England, Denmark, Italy, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. With support of external grant funding, White led the newly-formed Berea College Country Dance Ensemble on a tour to Mexico in 2006.

With the ending of the Country Dance Ensemble in the spring of 2015, White founded the Berea College Mariachi Ensemble, known as Mariachi Berea, in the fall of 2015. The Bluegrass Ensemble, along with Mariachi Berea and many other Berea College music ensembles, gained nationwide exposure when featured on a CBS broadcast of their annual Christmas Concert in 2016. The Bluegrass Ensemble also received much acclaim when their professionally produced video of "Carol of the Bells" went viral with more than 180,000 views on YouTube. The Bluegrass Ensemble has released six professionally produced CDs under White's direction. He now tours domestically and internationally with the McLain Family Band, with the trio Al, Alice & Ruth, and he performs contra dance music regionally with the Berea Castoffs.



Al White '81

HOMECOMING 2023

Homecoming 2023 brought more than 500 alumni back to Berea to celebrate and reconnect. If you weren't able to attend, join in the experiences from these images taken throughout the weekend. Mark your calendars to join us next fall for Homecoming 2024 Nov. 15-17.



Berea College Cheerleaders Allison '25 (left) and Keisha '25 fly through the air during the squad's performance during halftime of the men's basketball game. The squad consists of 16 athletes.



Trey '25 gets excited after making a shot to help his team come back from a deficit to beat opponent Spalding University and secure a homecoming victory.



Tré Sims '15 DJs the Black Alumni After Party on Friday evening. Sims has a passion for music and has released an album of his own. Read more about Sims on page 24.



During halftime of the men's basketball game, members of the 1985 Men's Basketball National Tournament team were recognized for their accomplishments.



Jeffrey Reddick '91 and Betina Conley Gardner '94 pose for a picture after accepting their Distinguished Alumnus awards at a ceremony on Friday night. Reddick and Conley joined five other alumni award recipients.



Ja'dyn '27, Megan '27, Kirstasia '26, Africa '27, Saysha '27 and Alpha '27 celebrate the conclusion of the Black Student Union pageant on Friday night.



The Class of 2003 gets excited as they pose for their 20th reunion photo.



Berea Fest offered fun activities for families including face painting, inflatables and free kettle corn.



Dawayne Kirkman '98 poses with his family at Berea Fest. Kirkman celebrated his 25th reunion at this year's Homecoming festivities.



Carlos Aguilar '13 holds his and alumna Rosanna Napoleon '13's son on his shoulders during the Berea Fest activities on Saturday afternoon.



Adam Gilpin '08 and Anna Rose '09 enjoy popcorn and fellowship at Berea Fest, as Gilpin awaits taking his 15-year reunion picture.



Deborah Byrd Thomas '80 and husband, Carl Thomas '78, surrounded by alumni from various class years, show off their dancing skills at the Black Alumni After Party.



Philanthropy Officer Ariq Skinner (right) greets Steven Goodpaster '03 (left), joined by his wife, Jennifer Goodpaster '03 and their daughter, at the Great Commitments Society Mocktail/Cocktail event.



President Cheryl Nixon talks to alumni about their ideas for a better, bolder Berea as part of her Reaffirming the Heart of Berea tour to help her gather information about Berea's strengths, weaknesses and aspirations.



Alumni from multiple generations join in the Black Music Ensemble performance in Union Church.



Two alumni greet each other with a hug after reuniting at their reunion class photo.



Black Music Ensemble Director, Dr. E.J. Stokes '08, leads the BME during its annual Homecoming concert in Union Church.



Members of the men's basketball team celebrate as the men's team erased a 20-point deficit to defeat Spalding University, 81-80.



Brooklyn Kenney

Back row (l-r) Samuel Asem, Dustin Owens, Curtis Barkley Next down: Jenny Begley Ceesay, Emmanuel Cheo, Dawayne Kirkman, Robin (Beck) Smith
Third row: Lauren Earles, Barbara Cromer Earles, Chris Lakes **Second row** Tracy Burgess III, Kami Brown Corcoran, Matthew Perkins Coppola, Angela Collard, Trina Unrue Randall, Joe White, Maggie Freeman **Front row:** Heather White Garland, Christina Ryan Perkins, Jalen Gore, Bonnie Underwood



Brooklyn Kenney

Back row (l-r): Alan Connor, Paul McPherson, Adam Gilpin **Third row:** Orion Baker, Maggie Park, James Rittman, Dee Gram **Second row:** Lindsey Hagedorn Baker, Megan Ruhl, Rebecca Duley Scott **Front row:** Rei Sterling, Amanda Ingold, Kimberly McPherson, Christopher McKenzie, Grace McKenzie



Brooklyn Kenney

Back Row (l-r): Charles Baldwin, Paul Clawson, Hazel Branham, Maggie Lawentmann, Miranda Bean **Third row:** Jeannine Roe, Steve Goodpaster, LaShaundra Thedford Adley, Mary Cathy Weaver, Brenda Overstreet **Second row:** Lindsey Bashford Myers, Kara Stewart, Luke Sulfridge **Front row:** Katy Sulfridge, Abbie Tanyhill Darst, Faith Calhoun-Louden, Veeke Lucas, Rashaad Abdur-Rahaman



Brooklyn Kenney

Back row (l-r): Terry Slaughter, Rachel White, Rhonda Bell, Joel Zarders, Nicholas Bauer, Steve Homer **Fifth row:** Willa Dawn Bayne, Ben Kirkpatrick, David Payne, Collis Robinson **Fourth row:** Horton Li, Megan Jones, Carlos Aguilar, Sean Litteral **Third row:** Ivan Titaley, Stella Welsh, Stacey Roberts-Ranta, Lara Zavalza, Rosanna Aguilar Napoleon, Jamie Oleka **Second row:** Dan Sinkel, Jeremy Hart, Paige Boling, Karim Monem, Sarah Dean, Nick Boysel, Ashley Flanders **Front Row:** Jonas Hollon, Will Mendoza, Wayne Cox, Rita Yalda, Samuel Marshall, Daisy Packard, Tiffany Pope, Seth Hutchins, Kelly Kusumoto, Senora May Childers



Brooklyn Kenney

Back Row (l-r): Marion Galloway, Jerry Galloway Jr., Fahim Baig, Albert Artiles **Third row:** Aaron Nottingham, Tyler Harris, Jacob Mondine, Khawla Nasser Aldeen, Julie Gusman **Second row:** Kendal Fletcher, Jennifer Newsom, Jess Cox **Front row:** Will Carr, Elle Keys, Kelly Farley, Micah Egana



Brooklyn Kenney

Katie Bister, Jaedyn Rawson, Zen Dean, Hannah Hisle



Triplets graduated from Berea at the Mid-year Recognition service in December 2023. M, Christopher and Julia Meadors began their Berea College journey in fall 2019, navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and graduated together.

Crystal Wyle '05

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 from Summer 2023 issue: Carolyn Grace is the class of 2015, not 1973.

1958

James Powell Fd. '54, '58, Hon. '06 earned three degrees from Berea College. He attended Knapp Hall and the Foundation School, and he earned a bachelor's degree in Geology and an Honorary Doctor of Science. He has published two books, “Deadly Voyager: The Ancient Comet Strike that Changed Earth and Human History” and “Unlocking the Moon's Secrets: From Galileo to Giant Impact.” Both are available on his website and on Amazon.

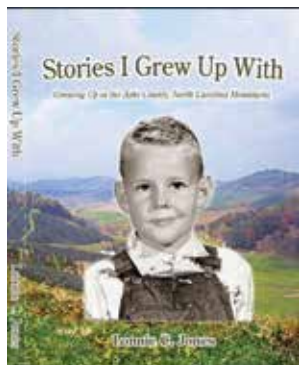
1970

Ron Reed and **Teresa Combs Reed '71**, have donated four audio tapes to the Hutchins Library Digital Archives: a 1967 spring recording of the Chapel Choir, a spring 1968 recording of the spring Polynomen concert, a spring 1969 recording of the Pearson Trio concert and a spring 1970 recording of the Pearson Trio concert. These tapes have been downloaded and can be accessed for listening.

1971

Lonnie Jones retired from the North Carolina Employment Security Commission as manager of the Boone Local Office in 2007. He has been pastor of Welcome Home Baptist Church since August 1998. As president of the Ashe County Museum of History Board of Directors, he has

recently published a book titled, “Stories I Grew Up With,” concerning local history and stories about the area. He is married to the former **April Ramsey '72**. They have three children and seven grandchildren. The book may be ordered from: www.starroutebooks.com



1973

Andrew Baskin was awarded one of the six 2023 Black Appalachian Storytelling Fellowships. The recipients receive a cash award of \$5,000 to support their practice as Black Appalachian storytellers and culture bearers with opportunities to examine, research, develop and perform and/or document the Black Appalachian storytelling tradition. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3S6QSLz>

1978

David Bartlett retired August 9, 2023, from Duke Energy/Progress after 44 years at the Brunswick Nuclear Plant in Southport, N.C., as a nuclear operator.

1979

Priscilla Kiteck Cahoon from Manteo, N.C., retired as an elementary school teacher assistant in 2017, now enjoying grandparenting and playing pickleball (PB—the fastest growing sport in America). She has medaled in several local PB tournaments, and qualified for North Carolina Senior State games and the National Senior games (Division III) in mixed doubles with her husband. “On our last few visits to Berea we were disappointed to not find any pickleball courts available, so we marked off our own court at a family gathering to introduce others to the game,” she said. Cahoon can be contacted at pkcahoon@yahoo.com, or on Facebook.



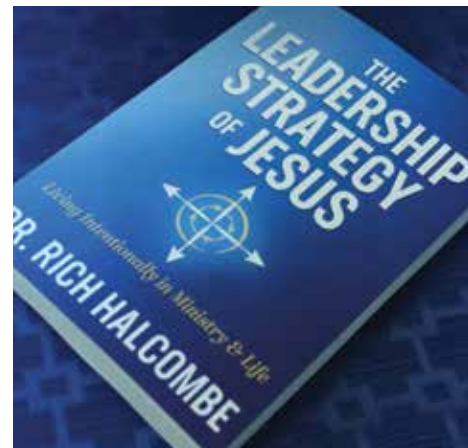
Dr. Anthony Hackney has been appointed the Fulbright-Saastamoinen Distinguished Chair in Health Sciences at the University of Eastern Finland. He will be working in Finland over the next two years along with his duties at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Dr. Joseph “Rocky” Wallace has authored, co-authored or edited 12 books on servant leadership and organizational health in the school

setting with Rowman & Littlefield Education. Wallace is a professor of Education at Campbellsville University and can be reached at jfwallace@campbellsville.edu. Dr. Wallace and his wife, Denise, have two daughters and two grandchildren, and reside in Midway, Ky.

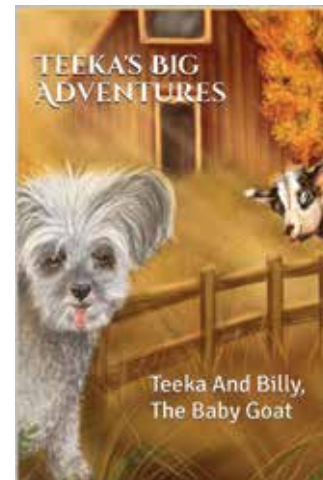
1984

Dr. Richard Halcombe Jr. published his first book “The Leadership Strategy of Jesus,” through Morgan-James Publishers in May 2023. Using Christ's example pulled from the pages of scripture, the book shows how one can achieve increasing kingdom results personally and organizationally using Jesus' model. Dr. Halcombe developed a model that has helped each church become more effective in carrying out its mission in the local context through the strategy of Jesus and other tools found at www.leaderincrease.com.



1985

Will Gray published a children's book entitled “Teeka's Big Adventures: Teeka and Billy, the Baby Goat.” The book is available as an e-book in the Kindle store on Amazon. All profits from the sale of this book are donated to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) dedicated to the welfare and protection of animals.



1987

Dr. Dewey Hensley retired from Frankfort Independent Schools in Kentucky after 30 years of teaching. During his career, he served Kentucky's children as an award-winning high school English teacher, principal and the chief academic officer for Jefferson County Public Schools (the 26th largest school system in the U.S.). He also served schools as a highly skilled educator, helping struggling schools improve, and as an associate commissioner at the Kentucky Department of Education. Since retiring, he founded an educational consulting business (Poverty Considerate Schools) helping school districts with high-poverty populations improve instruction, curriculum, assessment and leadership. Also, Dr. Hensley carved out time to write his first novel. “Secrets and Blood” is a suspense/horror book



published by Hydra Publishing. It's the story of an Appalachian county sheriff tasked with defending her small coal mining community against evil from the past and present. Berea College and the mountains play an important role in the story. Dewey can be reached at dhensle9@gmail.com. Read more: <https://bit.ly/490DFKf>

Shawnda Valandingham Wilson retired from Shadwell Farm, LLC in March 2023. She worked as financial controller for the international thoroughbred horse farm in Lexington, Ky., for 36 years.

1988

Rodney Griffin was inducted into the Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame located in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., as a singer/songwriter after being in Gospel Music full time for 32 years. He has written 20 No. 1 songs through the years and has been the recipient of the Singing News Fan Award “Songwriter of the Year” award 23 times. In December 2023, he celebrated 30 years as a member of the gospel group, Greater Vision, based in Morristown, Tenn. Learn more: www.greatervisionmusic.com



1990

Shannon Blankenship Steffey was appointed the director of the Lonesome Pine Regional Library System. This public library system includes the counties of Dickenson, Lee, Scott and Wise in Virginia, along with the City of Norton, Va.



1993

Maria Gaines retired from Lexington Fayette Urban County Community Corrections in April 2023 after 20 ½ years of service.

1994

Dickie Chapin designs music software for Red Room Audio and tabletop games for Frown Clowns Games, both companies he founded. He lives in Downey, Calif., with his wife, Jodi, and daughters, Phoebe (12) and Lorelei (9).



Tim Lawson graduated from Life Pacific University (San Dimas, Calif.) in May 2022 as part of the inaugural cohort of the Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree. He graduated with a 4.0 GPA and was inducted into the Delta Epsilon Chi Honors Society. Lawson pastors the River of Life Foursquare Church in Berea, Ky., where he lives with his wife of 25 years, Anne.



1997

Marcia Elizabeth Goss Franklin was recently accepted as one of 15 educators into the 12th cohort of Art21 Educators. Art21 is the world's leading source to learn directly from artists of our time. A nonprofit organization, the mission of Art21 is to educate and expand access to contemporary art, producing documentary films, resources and public programs. Art21 Educators is an intensive, year-long professional development initiative and learning community. Participants in the 12th cohort attend a week-long intensive session over the summer at Columbia University's Teachers College in New York City, followed by continued mentorship and collaboration with Art21 Educators alumni. Franklin has taught secondary visual art at Sacred Heart Academy on Ursuline Campus in Louisville, Ky., for more than 20 years and is currently serving as department chair. Sacred Heart Schools is one of seven K-12 international baccalaureate programs in the nation.



2007

Rebecca Wiltberger Wiggins joined the U.S. Department of State (DoS) as an office management specialist after a long five-year process. She is looking forward to using her administrative and communication skills in support of American interests abroad and having many international adventures with her spouse, Stephen Wiggins '03, and their toddler daughter, Margaret. If any current students or alumni are interested in talking about the process or work of DoS, please don't hesitate to connect with her on LinkedIn (Rebecca Wiltberger Wiggins, Ph.D.).

2009

BIRTH: a son, Finn, born April 2023, to **Kimberly Osee Russell Collins** and her husband, Case Collins.



Ashley LeAnn Daniels resides in Ewing, Va., with her husband of 12 years, Nathaniel, and their two children, Zander and Clay. She works at Lincoln Memorial University in the registrar's office using the knowledge she gained from Berea to help make current students' college experiences smooth and positive.



Anna Singleton Rose graduated in May 2022 with a Doctorate of Nursing Practice—Adult Gerontology Clinical Nurse Specialist from the University of Kentucky. She is board certified and practices at the Lexington VA Medical Center, where she is working to revitalize cancer care for veterans.

2010

Ashley LePage Doss started a private practice as a licensed professional clinical counselor in California in August 2023. Additionally, she is a registered art therapist. She went to Berea with art on her mind, and she majored in studio art and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Studio Art. However, while she was there, she was also a Bonner Scholar and fell in love with service. The combination of these passions, art and service, led to where she is today. Now she participates daily in her practice, assisting her clients with mental-health and overall wellness, using her creativity and zest for paying it forward. Since last giving a class note, she had another son during COVID. She also is married. She says she is blessed with her family, husband Ronnie, and two sons, Josiah and Cameron, as well as a career that truly embodies who she is and her passion for life. She wouldn't be here without the experiences she had at Berea



Dr. Megan Rodgers Good is executive director of the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at James Madison University.

2011

Valerie Wilcox is the new vice president of strategic finance/controller at Service One. In this position, she is responsible for key aspects of financial management and accounting including asset and liability management, budgeting, forecasting, liquidity, investments and capital planning. Read more: <https://bit.ly/45ErGPC>

2013

Amanda Luff earned her Ph.D. in Epidemiology from The Ohio State University on May 7, 2023. Amanda has started a new role as a staff scientist with Advocate Health and lives in Milwaukee, Wisc., with her husband, Duncan, and their cat, Leo.



Daryl Mangosing (they/he/she) walked in the University of California Berkeley School of Public Health Commencement on May 15, 2023, for the degree of Doctor of Public Health. They are working throughout the summer to complete their dissertation titled "Sexualized Drug Use Among Sexual and Gender Diverse People in the Context of HIV/STI Prevention: A Counterpublic Health Perspective." Mangosing has resided in the Bay Area since 2015 after moving from Boston, Mass., and is currently located in San Francisco, Calif.



2014

BIRTH: a second daughter, Annette Siobahn Vaughn, was born to **Dr. Cody N. Vaughn** and **Mackenzie Endres Vaughn** in July 2023.



2015

Matthew Cape graduated from Campbellsville University, in Campbellsville, Ky., on May 6, 2023, with his Master of Social Work degree. He was also inducted into the Phi Alpha Honor Society of Social Work during the hooding and pinning ceremony at Campbellsville University on May 5. Cape was approved for a Licensed Master of Social Work in Maryland on June 15, where he plans to be a therapist working with individuals who have substance-use disorders.



Weiss Mehrabi is assistant professor of politics at Centre College and one of 13 new full-time faculty. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3Qouxbj>

2016

MARRIED: **Rosanna Diaz** and Johnathan Selby on July 11, 2022, in Knoxville, Tenn. In December 2022, they were able to have a celebration of their wedding with family and friends in the beautiful Smokey Mountains. Their wedding was Christmas themed, since both love Christmas. She and John met in 2016, while she was still attending Berea. He is originally from Richmond, Ky. The couple lives in Knoxville while she finishes her doctoral dissertation in sociology at the University of Tennessee. They don't have any children yet but do have three pets, Maxie, a small, crazy beagle, and two sweet kitties, Luna and Minerva.



2021

Michelle Atkinson is employed by Mavi Jeans US in eCommerce and content creation for Instagram and Tik Tok. She is working in the Manhattan Garment District, living in the Sunset Park neighborhood in Brooklyn. Her page focuses on travel, food, TS13, K-pop, fashion, creative director, family and friends. See more: <https://bit.ly/3tBkpD3> and here: <https://bit.ly/493nhJ2>



Correction:
James David Hill, spouse of **Janet Dishner Hill '74**, is alive and well.

Staff & Faculty
Dr. Charles F. Haywood '49
Trustee (1981-1996)
Aug. 13, 2023

Wanda Himes
Custodian (1996-2008)
June 10, 2023

Loyal Jones '54
Director of the Appalachian Center (1970 – 1993)
Oct. 7, 2023

James Morgan
Auto mechanic (1978-2003)
June 30, 2023

Mr. Orville Powell
Broomcraft
Aug. 28, 2023

1940s
Myrtle Bowman Judy Acad. '38, '42
Feb. 7, 2021

Carter Hamilton Ward '42
Aug. 6, 2021

Vina Calmes Chapman Acad. '43
Jan. 4, 2023

Dorothy Tate Dickinson Fd. '43
Dec. 13, 2021

J. Kenneth Frye '43
Jan. 17, 2022

Lida Kidwell Hail '43
June 7, 2023

Sarah Stone Martin '43
Aug. 3, 2021

Doris Louise Swain '43
July 7, 2023

June C. Surface '44
Nov. 10, 2021

Mary Guffey Campbell '45
Sept. 26, 2022

Curtis Waltman Crockett Acad. '40, '45
Aug. 28, 2021

Dr. Louise Young Gossett '45
May 14, 2023

Emma Woodard Marcum '45
March 31, 2023

Ruth Mae Allen Tabor '45
Dec. 25, 2022

Franklin S. Hall '47
July 12, 2023

Dorothy Hyde Varner Acad. '47
Sept. 1, 2019

Irene Robbins Gaines '48
June 8, 2023

Faye Black Koloch Fd. '48
Sept. 5, 2023

Lawrence C. Montgomery
Spouse of **Anne Hayes Montgomery '48**
March 14, 2021

Harvey G. Rodge '48
May 31, 2021

Reva McMillion Crabtree '49
April 16, 2023

Dr. Charles Haywood '49
Aug. 13, 2023

Peggy Hamilton Morrison '49
Aug. 30, 2023

Dr. Herman F. “Pat” Patterson '49
March 9, 2023

1950s
John Edward Basham '50
July 5, 2023

Jeanne Jones Gianneschi '50
May 23, 2023

Dr. Steele F. Mattingly '50
Sept. 2, 2023

James D. Miller Jr. '50
Dec. 22, 2022

Joline Vickers Nakamura '50
June 11, 2023

Frances Collawn Rickard '50
March 11, 2021

Evelyn Hammons Buchanan '51
May 31, 2023

Dorothy Talbott Greenawalt '51
April 26, 2023

Cecil L. Haycock '51
June 21, 2023

Barbara Williams Richardson '51
April 27, 2023

Mary Jones Rubio '51
Aug. 13, 2023

Dorothy J. Alexander '52
Aug. 25, 2023

Wilma Adkins Barck '52
Jan. 27, 2022

William K. Allen '53
June 19, 2023

Lola Aaron Hazelwood '53
May 25, 2023

Ulrike Gaebler Hoja '53
April 20, 2023

Juayne Hall Parsons '53
Obituary unavailable

Dorothy King Sutton '53
Aug. 29, 2023

Rev. Ronald K. Walthall '53
Nov. 25, 2022

Loyal Jones '54
Oct. 7, 2023

Mabry Runyon McCloud '54
Obituary unavailable

Thomas Charles McCloud '54
Dec. 6, 2022

Reva Wilmoth McDevitt '54
Aug. 30, 2023

Anna McGee Watts '54
Sept. 3, 2023

Jessie Reasor Zander '54
Oct. 3, 2023

Dr. Frank H. Catron '55
Obituary unavailable

Donald Wade Hutcheson '55
May 2, 2023

Dr. Charles C. York '55
March 27, 2023

Donald F. Austin '56
Sept. 16, 2023

Faye Horne Harris '56
May 27, 2023

James Harold Hill '56
March 4, 2023

Ruth Cole Montgomery '56
July 6, 2023

Margaret Holbrook Penney '56
April 21, 2023

June Davis Hicks '57
May 25, 2023

Violette Morris Pleasant '57
July 12, 2023

Paul Bedford Allen '58
Dec. 19, 2021

Georgia Gatliff Brumley '58
July 4, 2020

Dr. Joan Fox Clark '58
July 15, 2023

Dr. Ralph F. Coleman Fd. '51, '58
April 19, 2023

Ella Lois Dawson '58
April 22, 2023

H. Thomas Gabriel '58
April 13, 2022

Phares Allen Lewis Fd. '58
March 19, 2022

Dr. Joe H. Maltby '58
May 4, 2023

Royce Brown Miller Fd. '53, '58
Sept. 10, 2023

Norman C. Aich '59
July 21, 2023

Doris Conley Arms '59
May 17, 2023

Herman Dowell Jones '59
Dec. 1, 2021

1960s
Larry Lee Landrum Fd. '60
July 21, 2023

Linville C. Robinson, Ph.D. '60
July 16, 2023

David R. Dodrill '61
July 15, 2023

E. Ronald Elswick '61
Obituary unavailable

Robert E. Hottel, Sr. Fd. '61
Sept. 3, 2021

Charlotte Crummett Kuykendall '61
Aug. 30, 2023

Gloria Janelle Sells '61
Oct. 27, 2021

Phyllis A. Combs '62
May 1, 2023

Terrold Waldon Fox '62
June 1, 2023

Joan Blevins McCall '62
May 1, 2023

Earl S. Trent '62
July 9, 2023

Jackie Edwards Underwood Fd. '57, '62
Aug. 21, 2023

John S. White
Spouse of **Dr. Valerie Bauhofer '62**
Jan. 29, 2023

Paul Edward Cassity '63
Sept. 6, 2023

E. Ray Cope '63
Aug. 30, 2022

Josietana Segar Hill '63
May 28, 2023

Dr. Linda Hall Jackson '63
April 24, 2023

Amie Jean Lamb Rodgers Fd. '63
July 30, 2023

Hazel O. Dooley Aguirre '64
Feb. 6, 2020

Tommy Bledsoe Fd. '64
July 2, 2022

William Harold Doan '64
April 3, 2023

Hazel Slagle Hottel Fd. '60, '64
Aug. 30, 2022

Kenneth Kavanaugh Fd. '64
Sept. 7, 2023

H. Carol Miller Langhurst '64
Aug. 22, 2023

Robert Bayes '65
Aug. 16, 2022

David Lee Reber '65
Feb. 13, 2023

Stephen E. Wilson '65
June 22, 2023

Dr. Judy F. Burroughs '66
Aug. 24, 2023

Margaret McClintic Childress '66
Aug. 11, 2023

Dr. Delmar D. Dingus '66
Aug. 20, 2023

Mary Campbell Hopper '66
May 14, 2023

Frances Gwynn Sumner '66
March 15, 2023

Cynthia Fowler Barber Fd. '67
March 27, 2022

Randy Bates Fd. '67
Jan. 21, 2022

Faye E. Lutz '67
July 8, 2023

Josephine Causey Meggett '67
May 9, 2023

Catherine Mauck Nooney '67
Aug. 4, 2023

Grayson L. Deel '68
March 17, 2022

James Hamrick Jr. '68
Aug. 26, 2023

Dr. JoAnn Chappellear Himaya '68
May 16, 2023

Patricia Thoma Hobson Fd. '68
Aug. 4, 2023

Sandra Sweet Young '68
July 11, 2023

Dr. R. Louise Floyd '69
Aug. 11, 2023

1970s
Dr. George Thaddeus Fain Jr. '70
June 10, 2023

Karen Moran Powell '70
June 10, 2023

Nell Turner Black '71
July 28, 2023

Clyde Douglas Frazier
Spouse of **Jane Adams Frazier '72**
Aug. 30, 2023

Cleta Mavity Gibson '72
June 18, 2021

Ronnie R. Anderson '73
June 3, 2022

Elizabeth Ann Rose Fd. '65, '73
Dec. 3, 2022

Curtis A. Williams '73
Nov. 8, 2019

Robert L. Williams '73
April 24, 2021

Patsy Williams Boyce '74
July 7, 2023

Cecilia Diane Peters '75
May 29, 2023

Nevada Darnell '76
May 21, 2023

Sheila A. Bryan '77
April 24, 2023

A. Michael Chasteen '77
Aug. 29, 2023

Anna Leavell Harrison '77
April 25, 2023

Larry Ross Sweeney '77
July 27, 2023

David Moss '78
Dec. 21, 2020

1980s
Tyler David Taylor '85
June 1, 2020

Ralph David Campbell '88
Feb. 14, 2019

1990s
Fred Kates Banks '90
April 17, 2023

Elizabeth Renaker Dalzell, Ph.D. '91
May 6, 2023

P. Jason Hannigan '91
May 15, 2023

James Richard Kincaid '92
Aug. 18, 2023

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





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