

# BEREA COLLEGE

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2024 Volume 95 Number 1

## Committed to Kinship

*Exploring Berea's holistic approach  
to recruitment, admissions and  
student support*



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

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03, Brooke Donley '26, Luke  
Hodson '02, Jessica Klanderud, Dwayne Mack, Jason  
Lee Miller, Sree P S '24, Derek Shorkey '26

#### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS:

Berea College Special Collections and Archives, Anita  
Chukwu '23, Desiree Dunn '21, Jose Espinoza '24, Nay  
Kaw '23, Brooklynn Kenney, Jason Klanderud, Jayla  
Leavell '25, Breana Lovins '25, Jalen Prater '21, Tyler  
Rocquemore '22, Ehku Say '26, Crystal Wylie '05

Cover photo: Brooklynn Kenney

#### COLLEGE ADMINISTRATION

Cheryl L. Nixon, President  
Jeffrey S. Amburgey Hon. '10, Vice President for  
Finance  
Chad Berry Hon. '20, Vice President for Alumni,  
Communications and Philanthropy  
Gus Gerassimides, Interim Vice President for  
Student Life  
Phillip Logsdon, Chief Information Officer  
Dwayne Mack, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and  
Inclusion  
Eileen McKiernan-González, Associate Provost  
Collis Robinson '13, Dean of Labor  
Matthew Saderholm '92, Dean of the Faculty  
Derrick Singleton, Vice President for Operations and  
Sustainability  
Scott Steele, Provost  
Teri E. Thompson, Chief Strategy Officer  
Judge B. Wilson II '78, General Counsel and Secretary

#### CORRESPONDENCE AND REPRINTS

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

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

#### AT YOUR SERVICE

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



Berea College Magazine (ISSN 1539-7394) is pub-  
lished quarterly for Berea College alumni and friends  
by the Berea College Marketing and Communications  
Department. Periodicals postage pending at Berea,  
KY, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to Berea  
College Advancement Services, CPO 2216, Berea, KY  
40404 or email [magazine@berea.edu](mailto:magazine@berea.edu).

Berea College is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization  
under federal guidelines.



Prospective students are encouraged  
to share parts of their story and  
background that help Admissions  
staff select the best students  
to succeed at Berea and  
one day become Notable  
Bereans.



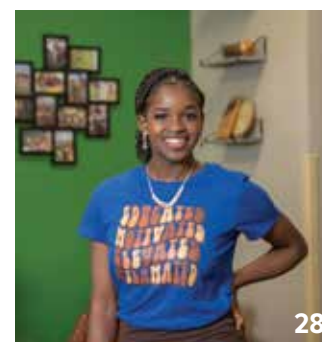
Crystal Wylie '05



Crystal Wylie '05



Photo submitted



Breana Lovins '25

## CONTENTS

### FEATURES

- 6 | Holistic Recruitment and Admissions: Staying the Course**  
By focusing on the whole student and everything each one brings to the table, Berea has continued its rich history of recruiting and admitting a diverse and well-rounded first-year student class.
- 8 | Tell Me About Yourself**  
Berea's application checklist was designed over many years to allow prospective students to paint a complete picture of who they are and who they want to become. View answers from this year's student self-inventory to better understand the backgrounds of the fall 2024 first-year class.
- 10 | Embracing a Great Commitment to Change When Change Was Needed**  
Dr. Dwayne Mack, vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion, explores Berea's history from its founding to the present and identifies the ways in which the College has been committed to diversity, inclusion, justice and equality for nearly 170 years.
- 12 | The Value of Seeking the Kinship of All People**  
In 1904, Kentucky legislators targeted Berea College by prohibiting interracial education throughout the state. Dr. Jessica Klanderud explores the law's creation, its devastating effects on the South's first interracial college and the tragic outcome of *Berea v. Kentucky* at the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 14 | Bringing It Full Circle**  
Dr. Kiki Ramsey '02 returns to Berea College to lead staff, faculty and students in Empowering DEI with Positively Diverse Leadership.
- 16 | Hitting the Road**  
Every other year the College takes faculty and staff on a Civil Rights Seminar and Tour, exploring various places in the history of civil rights and connecting staff and faculty to the areas from which Berea draws many of its students.
- 20 | Committed to Kinship**  
After the June 29, 2023, U.S. Supreme Court's decision to abolish consideration of race in college admissions, the Department of Education provided higher-education institutions a guide for creating or maintaining diverse student populations. Learn how Berea College's recruiting and admissions practices line up with national suggestions.
- 22 | Recruiting for Success**  
Berea is intentional in its recruiting practices, offering pathway programs that encourage diverse and first-generation students to explore Berea College in their junior year and apply.
- 24 | Berea College Student Fact Sheet**  
Berea College's full-tuition scholarship offers unparalleled access to higher education for Pell Grant-eligible students, who are able to graduate with little-to-no student loan debt.
- 26 | Never Alone**  
Creating a campus where students belong and have the resources they need to be successful in college is key to retention and graduation.
- 28 | Centered: A Community of Belonging**  
Berea College has 11 centers committed to enriching the experiences of Berea's students. Meet three students whose Berea journeys have been extensively shaped by their involvement in one of Berea's centers.

### DEPARTMENTS

- 34 | In the News**  
**36 | Alumni Awards**  
**38 | Summer Reunion**  
**44 | Class Notes**  
**46 | Passages**



# ACHIEVE THE Return of a Lifetime

WITH A GIFT ANNUITY AT BEREA COLLEGE

**Guaranteed payments for you.**

**Guaranteed opportunities for our students.**

Invest in a charitable gift annuity at Berea College and earn the return of a lifetime: guaranteed payments for life and a legacy of providing a tuition-free college education to high-achieving students of limited means.

Learn more at [bera.giftlegacy.com](https://bera.giftlegacy.com)

Photo taken by Tyler Rocquemore '22. Tyler was a student photographer in the Marketing and Communications department as her work assignment in Berea College's Labor Program.

## BEREA COLLEGE

**CONTACT THE OFFICE OF PLANNED PHILANTHROPY AT [GIFTPLANNING@BEREA.EDU](mailto:GIFTPLANNING@BEREA.EDU) OR CALL (800) 457-9846.**

SAMPLE ONE LIFE RATES	AGE	RATE
Rates are set by Berea College and informed by the American Council on Gift Annuities.  Effective January 1, 2024	55	4.8%
	65	5.7%
	75	7.0%
	80	8.1%
	90+	10.1%

### Trustees and Councils

Cheryl L. Nixon, President

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Stephanie B. Zeigler, Chair of the Board  
Samantha S. Earp, Vice Chair  
Vicki E. Allums '79  
Vance Blade '82  
Anne Berry Bonnyman  
Joseph John Bridy  
Stephen Campbell  
Dwayne Compton '01  
Charles Crowe '70  
Bill Daugherty '76  
Donna J. Dean '69  
John E. Fleming '66  
Michael D. Flowers  
Yoli Gallardo  
Jodi D. Gentry '87  
Scott M. Jenkins  
Glenn R. Jennings '72  
Shawn C.D. Johnson  
Brenda W. Lane '79  
Eugene Y. Lowe Jr.  
William L. Robbins  
Dennis R. Roop '69  
Charles Ward Seabury II  
David B. Sloan '72  
Tyler S. Thompson '83  
Megan Torres '09  
Rocky S. Tuan '72  
Emmanuel A. Tuffuor '88

#### HONORARY TRUSTEES

James T. Bartlett  
Martin A. Coyle  
M. Elizabeth Culbreth '64  
William R. Gruver  
Donna S. Hall  
Nancy "Nana" Lampton  
Elissa May-Plattner  
Harold L. Moses '58  
Betty Olinger '69  
Douglas M. Orr  
Thomas Phillips '65  
R. Elton White '65  
Dawneda F. Williams  
Robert T. Yahng '63

#### ALUMNI EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (AEC) 2024-25

Mahjabeen Rafiuddin '97, President, Florida  
Robert Phillips '90, Past-President, Virginia  
Dr. Cheryl Nixon, President of Berea College  
Dr. Chad Berry Hon. '20, Vice President for Alumni, Communications and Philanthropy

#### AEC MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Shawn Adkins '01, Ohio  
Alonzo (Lonnie) Allen Jr. '84, Kentucky  
Raymond Crenshaw '12, Washington, D.C.  
Chaka Cummings '02, Kentucky  
John Graham '85, Alabama  
Adam Howard '93, Maine  
Jarel Jackson '02, Tennessee  
Sue Hairston Jones '72, Kentucky  
Layla Lee '15, North Carolina  
Angie Li '16, Tennessee  
Talina Mathews '89, Kentucky  
Elizabeth (Libby) McCord, Esq. '73, Ohio  
Sandra Moore '80, Kentucky  
Ajay Nanda '91, New Jersey  
Brandon Pollock '19, New Jersey  
Vestena Robbins '90, Kentucky  
Rachel Rosolina '06, Indiana  
Harry Tsiagbe '17, Virginia  
Elyor Tukhtasinov '19, Georgia  
Carlos Verdecchia '91, Kentucky



### LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

## Dear Berea Alumni and Friends,

Several months ago, I came across a prayer that read, “help me celebrate the uniqueness and diversity with which You created us. You created us for unity, not uniformity.” What a beautiful vision and understanding of the world the way God created it—full of unique, diverse, beautiful, multi-faceted people who are meant to play into each other’s strengths and support each other’s weaknesses to create one strong, unified world.

Unfortunately, that is not the vision we’ve seen in our world, our country, our state and sometimes even our homes. What we do see is pockets of people who do long for that vision and challenge and encourage each other to get closer to it.

I see Berea as one of those places.

In its Fifth Commitment, the College commits to “...understanding and equality among Blacks and whites as a foundation for building community among all peoples of the earth.” Building true community—true belonging—is a foundational part of the Berea experience—not just for students, but staff and faculty as well.

I grew up as a biracial kid in the early 1980s, but I was blessed to be a part of a military family. My white mom and Black dad met on a base in Minnesota. By the time my brother and I came along, they had been relocated twice and were in New Mexico. But my early upbringing, in Japan and Oklahoma, was sheltered in a bubble of diversity with mixed-race families being very common and little emphasis being placed on race, color or ethnicity from friends or teachers at school. It was a diverse and accepting community—it created a sense of home in a lifestyle where your address could change every few years.

By the 1990s, that bubble would burst as I moved to South Carolina and lived outside a military base for the first time—in the aftermath of the Gulf War and the middle of the Rodney King verdict and ensuing riots. I was forced to see a much uglier side of our world—one that did not coexist well in community, but that’s what I still believed in and longed for.

Coming to Berea in 1999 allowed me to find that kind of community again. It was a rich mixture of people and backgrounds, races, religions, skin tones, ideas and perspectives. No, it was not perfect, but the overall feeling was belonging, acceptance and the desire to celebrate the uniqueness of every person.

Berea College has a long and unique history, and just like the rest of the world, we haven’t always gotten everything right. But from our founding principles of one blood, all peoples, to fighting the Day Law that changed the College’s racial landscape for half a century, to the most recent U.S. Supreme Court’s decision that many feared would change the way we select our unique student body, Berea’s mission has always guided us in the right direction. For that, I am grateful and proud of this institution, the clarity of its mission and its intentionality in maintaining the diversity that is the “foundation for building community among all peoples of the earth.”

Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03  
Editor



# Holistic Recruitment and Admissions

## *Staying the Course*

By Luke Hodson '02

When the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on considering race in the admissions process was announced on June 29, 2023, it gave us an opportunity to better appreciate and further deepen our existing recruitment and admissions practices that will continue to lead us to mission-aligned and interracially committed students. Our vibrant and diverse community derives from our mission, which was established long before the debate about the use of race in college admissions.

Berea College's mission and size are such that we can consider every aspect of each prospective student's personal journey, perseverance, commitment and ability to take advantage of every



A group of senior women share a laugh at the President's House during a reception to honor the soon-to-be graduates.

Crystal Wylie '05

opportunity that Berea offers. We seek to balance students' successes with their stories and consider the level of "grit and fit" they bring to campus.

This is often referred to as holistic admissions. Holistic admissions is a flexible framework that is aligned with an institution's unique mission and assesses each applicant's contribution to the campus on a range of factors that usually fall into two categories: academic and non-academic. The primary goal is to deeply understand the whole person, not just numbers on a piece of paper or a set of checkboxes.

As you can imagine, a holistic review process takes time and is no easy task. I have jokingly said over the years, "I wish someone would invent a crystal ball so we would precisely know who will commit, take full advantage of the college experience and graduate."

However, it's no joking matter when we are talking about changing someone's life trajectory and redefining future generations.

Our application checklist and set of optional electives have been intentionally designed and shaped over many years to allow a prospective student the opportunity to paint a complete picture of who they are today and hope to become in the future. For example, we require standard components such as a transcript and financial information, but for many years we have offered applicants a chance to complete an interview or conversation with an Admissions staff person. Teacher recommendations have always been part of our application process, but this year we developed a student self-inventory, which allows applicants to select from a variety of statements that most describe them.

Personal essays often are included in an applicant's file but newly added this year was the opportunity for students to complete a short statement in response to a prompt: *Berea College was created 168 years ago and became the first interracial and coeducational college in the South. Please tell us in 168-ish words or less, how this is meaningful for you in the context of your personal experience.*

Whether it's an appreciation for longstanding application components such as teacher recommendations or the excitement around a newly added elective like the short statement, the goal is the same—to get to know the whole person at the deepest level possible. An applicant is more than just numbers on a piece of paper. An applicant is more than just the checkboxes they may select. At Berea, each applicant is a unique individual who is worth more than the tuition they can afford. Selecting students is both an art and a science, requiring us to be deliberate and discerning with every admissions decision.

The College has a unique pursuit in American higher education: to stay grounded by our commitment to coeducation and interracial education while exclusively serving the underserved. Thankfully, these well established holistic practices have us in a good



Crystal Wylie '05

Members of the Bluegrass Ensemble perform at the Great Commitment Society's Day of Appreciation. Music groups are another way for students to be involved and find community on campus.

position to continue serving future generations of deserving Berea students. [B](#)

*Luke Hodson is Berea College's associate vice president for Admissions.*

**RIGHT:** Berea students have internship opportunities, often paid for by the College. After their internships are complete, many participate in poster presentations like this one for Computer Science.



Breanna Lewis '25



Athletics plays a role in the recruitment and retention of students. Kire '25 was recruited to play baseball, giving him an instant community in which to belong.

Brooklyn Kemney



Crystal Wylie '05

Student chaplains work for the Willis D. Weatherford Jr. Campus Christian Center and thrive on getting to know and serve their fellow students on campus.



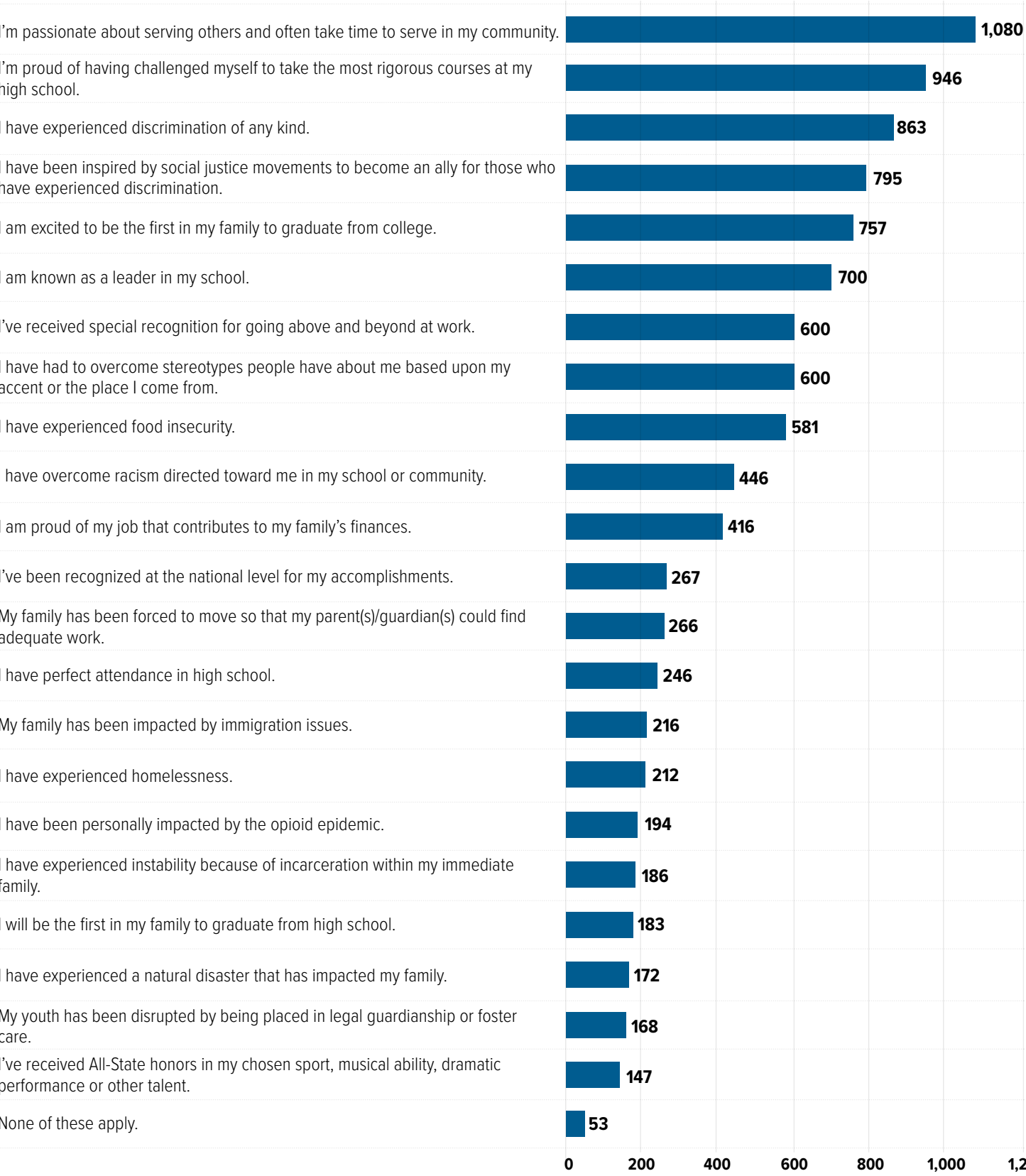
Crystal Wylie '05

Students from all backgrounds live, learn and work together during their time at Berea.



# Tell Me About Yourself

Applicants for the 2024-25 academic year were given the opportunity to complete a student self-inventory as part of the application process. The graph below shows a selection of the inventory statements and how many applicants identified with each statement, shedding light on individual and collective experiences among prospective students.



**GIVING DAY**  
**August 29, 2024**

Giving to Berea is not just an investment in our students; it's an investment in a higher standard of higher education.

CPO 2216 ★ BEREА, KY 40404 ★ 800-457-9847 ★ [WWW.BEREA.EDU/GIVINGDAY](http://WWW.BEREA.EDU/GIVINGDAY)



# Embracing a Great Commitment to Change When Change Was Needed

By Dr. Dwayne Mack

Berea College's founder, Rev. John G. Fee, was born into a wealthy slaveholding family in Bracken County, Ky. During his theological training at Lane Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, Fee's fundamental grasp of Christianity was in direct conflict with the enslavement of human beings. Along with other Berea College founders, Fee argued that opposing slavery without challenging the American caste system would continue to perpetuate social inequality. Thus, in 1855, Berea College was founded—a unique institution promoting an interracial and co-educational learning environment against the horrific backdrop of slavery and caste in the antebellum South. His spiritual conviction drawn from Acts 17:26 that “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth” remains the College's guiding motto today.

Creating a safe space for interracial education in a slaveholding state was courageous. During the postbellum period, Berea College reaffirmed this commitment to its founding values. From 1865 to 1892, the College intentionally enrolled an equal number of Black and white students and provided each a work assignment on campus to support their educational expenses and to dignify labor at a time when physical labor in the South served as a painful reminder of the former system of slavery.

When Kentucky State Representative Carl Day visited Berea College in 1904 and witnessed Black and white students



Dr. Dwayne Mack has served as the Carter G. Woodson Chair in African American History since 2006. He has authored or co-authored seven books and contributed to a number of articles and publications.

learning and working together, he introduced a Jim Crow bill to segregate Kentucky's schools aimed directly at Berea College, the only integrated college in Kentucky and in the South at the time. Despite opposition from Berea College and other advocates of interracial education, the bill was signed into 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 during this period of forced segregation.

When Kentucky made integrated education possible, Black students would return home to Berea four years before *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Upon their return, Berea continued to make history on a state and national level, especially during the racial upheaval of the 1960s. During this decade, the College adopted Eight Great Commitments. None was more meaningful and relevant to the decade of the 1960s than its Fifth Commitment: “To assert the kinship of all people and provide interracial education....” Through interracial education, the College did not exist in a sociopolitical vacuum but instead contributed in a meaningful way to the civil rights struggle when America needed social change.

When the Prince Edward County School District in Virginia closed its schools in the late 1950s because of its refusal to follow the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and integrate its school system, Berea, in the early 1960s, opened its doors to Black students from that county and enrolled some students in the Foundation School and College.

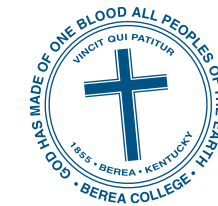
Along with its support of the Court's desegregation decision, Berea was involved in the statewide campaign to challenge racial injustice. Blacks and whites from campus joined forces with other activists to end Jim Crow in public accommodations in the Commonwealth. A large contingent of Bereans participated in the 1964 March on Frankfort with

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jackie Robinson, Georgia Davis Powers and thousands of activists from throughout Kentucky to petition Gov. Edward Breathitt to support and pass a public accommodations law. The College's action contributed to the eventual passage of the Public Accommodations Act of 1966 and the dismantling of a significant aspect of explicit racism throughout the state.

Another example of Berea challenging social injustice through interracial education is best remembered in its participation in the Selma to Montgomery March in 1965. Another diverse group of Bereans went to Selma, Ala., to support John Lewis and help other activists get into “good trouble.” They traveled from far and wide to hear Dr. King speak in front of the Alabama capitol building in a peaceful demonstration with banners advocating for social justice and American flags. They listened to him speak about how “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice.” Berea occupied a unique historical space in the Black Freedom Movement, belying its humble origins as a small institution in the oft-overlooked Appalachian region. Berea's activism in the Selma March contributed to President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Berea's 169-year history is a complex tapestry of struggle and triumph, conflict and resolution—all emanating from the belief that through interracial education in Kentucky and throughout this land, students gain from purposeful inclusion, harmoniously learning, working and residing together. Berea continues to be courageous and progressive because of its motto and Great Commitments. As Berea's 10th and first female president, Dr. Cheryl Nixon eloquently stated, “the Great Commitments continue to serve as Berea's North Star, our inspirational principles. Through the Great Commitments, we know who we are and the ideals we serve—and this sense of greater purpose guides us every day.”

Dr. Dwayne Mack is Berea College's vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion.



## BEREA COLLEGE The Great Commitments

Berea College, founded by ardent abolitionists and radical reformers, continues today as an educational institution still firmly rooted in its historic purpose “to promote the cause of Christ.” Adherence to the College's scriptural foundation, “God has made of one blood all peoples of the earth” (Acts 17:26), shapes the College's culture and programs so that students and staff alike can work toward both personal goals and a vision of a world shaped by Christian values, such as the power of love over hate, human dignity and equality, and peace with justice. The environment frees persons to be active learners, workers, and servers as members of the academic community as citizens of the world. The Berea experience nurtures intellectual, physical, aesthetic, emotional, and spiritual potentials and with those the power to make meaningful commitments and translate them into action.

To achieve this purpose, Berea College commits itself

- To provide an educational opportunity for students of all races, primarily from Appalachia, who have promise and limited economic resources.
- To offer a high-quality liberal arts education that engages students as they pursue their personal, academic and professional goals.
- To stimulate understanding of the Christian faith and its many expressions and to emphasize the Christian ethic and the motive of service to others.
- To promote learning and serving in community through the student Labor Program, honoring the value and utility of all work, mental and manual, and taking pride in work well done.
- To assert the kinship of all people and to provide interracial education with a particular emphasis on understanding and equality among blacks and whites as a foundation for building community among peoples of the earth.
- To create a democratic community dedicated to education and gender equality.
- To maintain a residential campus and to encourage in all community members a way of life characterized by mindful and sustainable living, health and wellness, zest for learning, high personal standards, and for the welfare of others.
- To engage Appalachian communities, families, and students in partnership for mutual learning, growth and development.

First articulated in 1962, the Great Commitments represent the historic aims and purposes of Berea College since its founding. The Great Commitments were originally adopted by the General Faculty and the Board of Trustees in 1969; they were revised and similarly approved in 1993 and most recently in 2017.



# The Value in Seeking the Kinship of All People

By Jessica Klanderud | Photos from Berea College Special Collections and Archives

The folklore surrounding the beginnings of the Day Law that forcibly segregated Berea College tells of Carl Day witnessing a farewell embrace of two Berea students at the train station: one student white, one student Black. This innocent moment seized him with a fear that the interracial education students at Berea received was actively harming the white students of Kentucky. Day, who hailed from Breathitt County, defended his proposed legislation, saying it had been introduced "...for the purpose of preventing the contamination of the white children of Kentucky." Those in

favor of the bill expressed their fears that interracial marriage and social equality would be the result if Berea College continued in an interracial manner. *The Courier-Journal* reported, "It was brought out in the Committee's investigation today that white and colored girls and boys associate together in classrooms, dining halls, in dormitories and on playgrounds, as well as in social entertainment given by President [William] Frost and others." Frost and other supporters of Berea tried to quell this fear of interracial marriage and mixing by stressing how "free from scandal" Berea College was, but this fear



A diverse group of female students gathers in the dining hall at Berea College near the turn of the century.

reemerged in the ruling of Kentucky's Court of Appeals, which upheld the Day Law, in part, because the State Constitution already segregated public schools and prohibited interracial marriage.

Berea College challenged this ruling by appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court on both First Amendment (freedom of assembly) and 14th Amendment (due process) challenges. The Supreme Court upheld the ruling of the lower court and stayed consistent with the precedent of *Plessy v. Ferguson* that established "separate but equal" as the law of the land. The majority opinion argued that the State of Kentucky could alter the charter of any private school as it saw fit. This decision allowed for the segregation of all schools in Kentucky, both public and private. In his dissenting opinion, Justice Harlan alluded to the idea that the 14th Amendment represented the idea that the U.S. Constitution was colorblind. This appealing idea, that the



A group of African American students from Berea College at Knoxville College in 1905.

Constitution does not make any distinction between the races, forms the basis for later decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka Kansas* and recently *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard*.

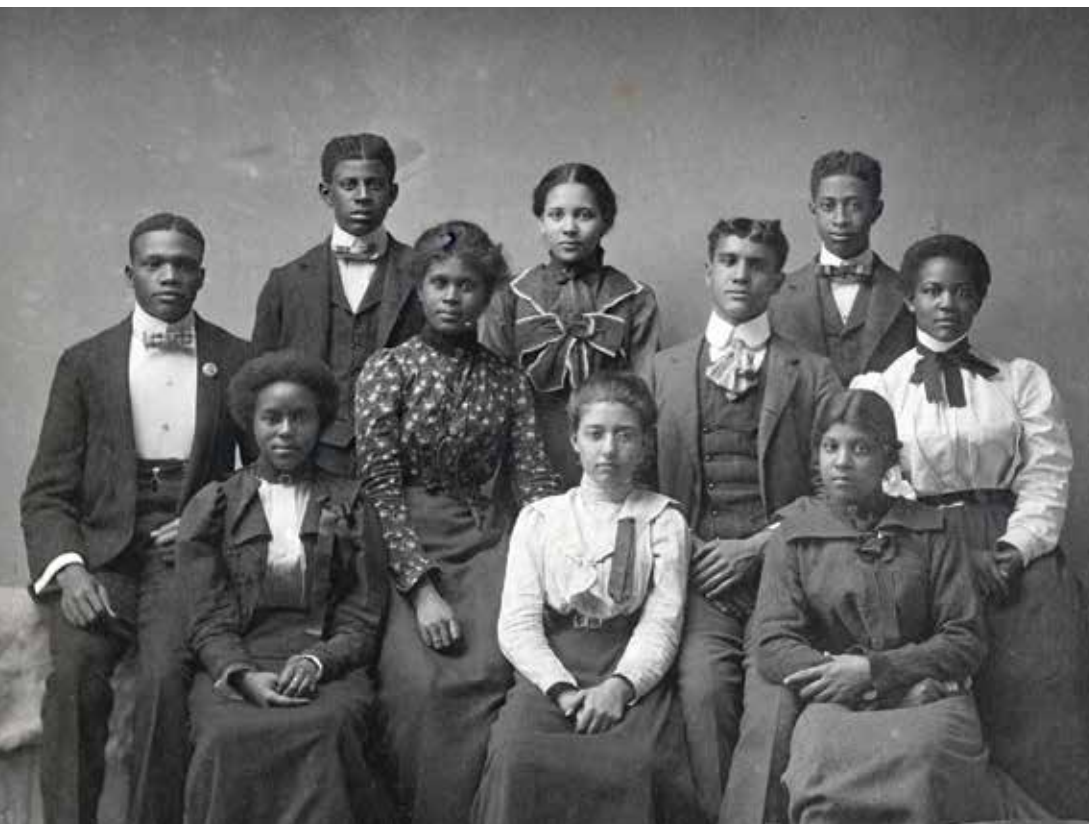
In the time of the Day Law, rumors swirled that efforts to segregate Berea College were politically motivated, originating from outside of the state. Outsiders wanted to control how Berea College educated students and to dictate how we lived out our Great Commitments. Today, as we navigate this new educational landscape where the Supreme Court has argued that race-conscious admissions violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment, we must ask ourselves what is the value of interracial education? Now, 120 years later, we are again facing a challenge. The answer to that fear is holding fast to the common humanity of all people. Our motto, "God has made of one blood all peoples of the Earth," is more central now than it has been recently. Carl Day's failure to see the impartial love and kinship in the embrace he witnessed does not have to be our failure, too. By learning to embrace all the humanity of Berea College and to truly learn together as a



African American female students learning to sew.

kinship of all people, we can break down the walls that divide us. It is in this learning to see the kinship of all people through interracial education that helps us truly live our mission as Berea College. [B](#)

Jessica Klanderud is the director of the Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education and an assistant professor of African and African American Studies at Berea College.



In Berea College's early years, African American students made up about 50 percent of the student body.



# Bringing It Full Circle

By Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03 | Photos by Crystal Wylie '05

Last December, we introduced you to Dr. Kiki Anderson Ramsey '02, the CEO of the Positive Psychology Coaching and Diversity Institute, a group of 30 coaches who work with women, especially women of color, who sit in high positions in large companies and organizations across the country.

Ramsey's inspiring story has allowed her to thrive in a business where she has the opportunity to meet, coach and positively affect lives through both one-on-one coaching sessions and large group presentations.

In March, Berea College's BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, persons of color) Staff and Faculty Advisory Committee partnered with the office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, the Labor Program Office and the Alumni, Commu-

nications and Philanthropy division to bring Dr. Ramsey back to her alma mater to lead a workshop on Empowering DEI with Positively Diverse Leadership™ (PDL). In the workshop,

Ramsey led participants through an energizing, interactive session that showed them how to apply their character strengths in leadership roles. Ramsey's research-based methodology offers a blueprint for building meaningful organizational relationships and strengths-focused communications around issues of DEI and leadership. She was able to illustrate how PDL highlights the significance of embracing diversity and showcasing its tangible results.



Dr. Kiki Anderson Ramsey '02 listens while participants discuss one of her thought-provoking questions at the Positively Diverse Leadership™ workshop. The discussions allowed attendees to think deeply about challenging issues and learn to better understand their colleagues at the table.

Ramsey hosted two sessions, one for faculty and staff and a second for students. In her session for staff and faculty, she explored three areas on which empowered leaders should focus: purpose and belonging, relationships and communications. By asking a series of thought-provoking and self-examining questions, followed by round-table discussion and large group perspective sharing, Ramsey helped the group figure out how to identify their purpose while supporting the purposes of others, learn to be their authentic selves in the workplace and seek to receive and provide healthy feedback.

Focusing on a healthy understanding of DEI, Ramsey reminded the group that "DEI is a human issue," and it requires us to focus on all aspects of diversity, not just race. She pointed to ideology from Isabel Wilkerson's book, "Caste," where she compares America to an old house; when we move in, it's our job to help fix it, Ramsey summarized.

At the end of the session, Ramsey's three main takeaways were:

- 1) **Everyone wants meaning and purpose and to belong.**
- 2) **Relationships matter over everything.**
- 3) **Communication changes lives.**

This leadership and DEI workshop is just one example of programming Berea's BIPOC committee creates for members of the campus, specifically those who fall within the BIPOC community. The BIPOC committee has hosted events from bowling nights to trivia nights to outings at Comedy Off Broadway to support an alumnus comedian. These events work to increase belonging and build community among the Black and brown members of Berea's faculty and staff.

For Ramsey, leading the workshop felt full circle. "I am so grateful," she said, "for the opportunity to teach in a place that taught me so much." ■

## BEREA COLLEGE

# LIFETIME GIVING SOCIETIES

Berea College's lifetime giving societies recognize our most generous donors for their remarkable commitment to Berea's mission.

- .....
- John G. Fee Society **\$1,000,000**
  - Carter G. Woodson Society **\$500,000**
  - Matilda Fee Society **\$250,000**
  - Loyal Jones Society **\$100,000**
  - Julia Britton Hooks Society **\$50,000**
- .....

LEARN MORE AT [WWW.BEREA.COLLEGE/GIFTCLUBS](http://WWW.BEREA.COLLEGE/GIFTCLUBS)



Dr. Kiki Anderson Ramsey '02



# Hitting the Road

## Civil Rights Seminar and Tour

Photos by Crystal Wylie '05

The Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education and Berea College pay for faculty and staff to participate in biennial Civil Rights Seminar and Tour. Their partners and spouses are even allowed to attend if space allows. The tour includes a week of travel to various locations associated with the Civil Rights movement, including stops in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and, in 2023, Washington, D.C. Along the way, the group toured the home where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born; attended church service at Faith Chapel in Birmingham, Ala.; and visited Civil Rights institutes and museums in Birmingham, Montgomery and Selma (Alabama) and Jackson, Miss. The tour often features a special stop at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the site of the Selma-to-Montgomery marches.



Buttons collected at locations along the Civil Rights Seminar and Tour.



Slave Mart, Charleston, S.C.



Berea College faculty and staff tour participants, Charleston, S.C.



Replica of jail cell that held Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Lorraine Motel, Memphis, Tenn.



Interactive exhibit, National Museum of African American Music, Nashville, Tenn.



Exhibit, Southern Poverty Law Center's Civil Rights Memorial Center, Montgomery, Ala.



National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, Ala.



Journeys for the Soul with JoAnne Bland, Selma, Ala. Bland is the co-founder and former director of the National Voting Rights Museum in Selma, Ala. Bland was an active participant in the Civil Rights Movement and was the youngest person to be jailed during any civil rights demonstration during that period.



Lorraine Motel, Memphis, Tenn. The wreath marks the location where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.



JOIN THE EXPERIENCE

Scan QR code with your smart device to see and hear the 2023 tour participants' experiences, or visit [www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE5D7xEQsnk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XE5D7xEQsnk)





*“It’s one thing to sit on the sidelines and offer support or work on building community, but it’s an entirely different sort of work that I’m interested in taking on to help build coalition. I’m excited to take this mindset back to my office and see how we can help build coalition among my colleagues....”*

Zack Thompson, Marketing and Communications

*“This tour was life changing. I believe that this tour should be a MUST for all faculty and staff to truly understand what it means to serve the College’s students.”*

LeAnna T. Luney '16, Ph.D., African and African American Studies

*“We must realize that Black History is OUR history and that it is only by allowing ourselves to fully comprehend what has occurred and to give ourselves the space to talk about it, wrestle with it, learn about it, share about it and to truly listen with our whole hearts is integral. I know that this trip allowed us to do just that.”*

Denessa McPherson '05, Admissions

*“I also recognize that unjust discrimination against Blacks continues in today’s America. Because of this, I have a responsibility to take action from my privileged position to help improve the standing of Blacks as equals in American society.”*

Davey King, Appalachian Fund and Government Grant Services

*“I hope that these lessons will help me listen more compassionately and carefully to others, without jumping to judgment and without minimizing personal experiences, historical trauma and potential sources of fear.”*

Megan Morgan Hoffman, Biology

Maurice J. Hobson, associate professor of Africana Studies and historian at Georgia State University, speaks to the group in Atlanta, Ga.



Exhibit in the Lowndes County Interpretive Center, Hayneville, Ala.



Mural in Selma, Ala.



The Contemplative Court is one of the signature spaces in the National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. It features a glass oculus that allows natural light to filter in through a cascading waterfall, resulting in a quiet reflection.

# NOMINATE

## STUDENTS TO BEREA COLLEGE



**We are and have always been an institution unlike any other.**

Now more than ever, Berea College is needed, and we are best equipped to serve and support students for post-secondary success.



*Do you know high school students you’d like to nominate?*

We want them to have a chance at Berea College, but we need your nomination today.



# Committed to Kinship

On June 29, 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. President and Fellows of Harvard College* and *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina* decided to limit the ability of institutions of higher education to consider an applicant's race in and of itself as a factor in deciding whether to admit an applicant. In September 2023, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) released a guide for colleges and universities to increase diversity and opportunity in light of the Court's decision. The DOE report reviewed strategies that institutions can implement to advance diversity in higher education, such as:

- Establishing targeted outreach programs.
- Reimagining holistic admissions to give greater emphasis to considerations of adversity and resilience and less to considerations of privilege.
- Increasing investments in need-based aid and in institutions that serve diverse students.
- Expanding completion and campus climate programming.

Berea College's holistic recruiting and admissions process, along with strategies for enhancing student experience, has been actively engaging in these strategies for decades, putting Berea in a positive position after the Supreme Court's decision was made. The following articles touch on each of the recommended areas and showcase Berea's distinctive recruitment and admissions process through the experience of Berea's students.

"For higher education to be an engine of equal opportunity, upward mobility and global competitiveness, we need campus communities that reflect the beautiful diversity of our country," said Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona. "The strategies in this report can enable institutions to advance equal opportunity and the promise of social mobility."

Scan QR code with your smart device to read the U.S. Department of Education's report or visit <https://sites.ed.gov/ous/files/2023/09/Diversity-and-Opportunity-in-Higher-Education.pdf>





# Recruiting for Success

## *Berea's answer to diverse recruitment*

By Abbie Tanyhill Darst '03

Nationally, the number of students attending college after high school is in decline, according to the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). As stated in the DOE's September 2023 report, titled "Strategies for Increasing Diversity and Opportunity in Higher Education," these trends are more profound among students from underrepresented and low-income backgrounds. In 2021, 58 percent of Black and 57 percent of Hispanic/Latine high school graduates immediately enrolled in college, a 7 percent gap compared to white graduates. In addition, the report showed the gap in college enrollment between high-income and low-income high school graduates has remained persistently large. While 79 percent of high-income graduates enroll in college, only 48 percent of low-income students do.

Considering the Supreme Court's decision to abolish consideration of race in college admissions, the need to combat these decreases and close equity gaps only grows. The DOE suggests colleges and universities implement recruitment strategies that target graduates of color from lower-income households, in keeping with research showing "that early engagement with potential applicants, such as higher education institutions building relationships with underserved students in K-12 schools, can increase the likelihood of enrollment."

So, what would this sort of recruitment look like? Well, this is an answer Berea has had for more than 40 years. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Berea placed Carl Thomas '78 in its southeast-

ern territory to help talented students of color from Appalachia learn about and attend the College. In those 40 years, the Birmingham, Ala., native split time between Berea and his hometown and recruited more than 850 students from Alabama to attend Berea College. As the associate director of Admissions and the coordinator of minority services, Thomas' recruitment work was central to the College's Black student enrollment increasing from about 7 percent in the 1980s to its current level of 27 percent.

After Thomas' retirement in 2018, Berea hired two more assistant directors of Admissions focused on Black and Latine recruitment—Frank Polion '89 and Kahlil Baker '96.

"Finding the right students takes being intentional about where we are building relationships," Baker said about his recruitment efforts in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Building relationships allows the students Berea recruits to be seen and considered holistically, based on many facets of their background and experiences. Baker said he starts with figuring out which schools he should spend his time in and be in communication with, looking at factors like diverse population, financial standing and percentage of students graduating who go on to college.

"As our focus is on recruiting Black and Latine students that will qualify and succeed at Berea," Baker explained, "Frank and I don't spend as much time connecting with schools that don't have significant numbers of students of color, serve more affluent populations or



Kahlil Baker '96

whose students typically choose options other than college."

Once he is in the right schools, Baker focuses on building relationships not just with students, but with the influencers in their lives. "It is a lot easier for parents, teachers and counselors to push students to Berea than for me to pull them," he said.

By building relationships with the people in students' lives every day, Baker can best educate them about Berea, its mission and the benefits to students who apply and are admitted into the College. These individuals know students in their schools better than Baker, and they often are the first voices to introduce the idea of Berea to the best potential students.

### MEET KAHLIL

Scan QR code with your smart device to hear Kahlil Baker talk about recruiting for Berea College.



### Pathway Programs

Berea also has two pathway programs to help identify and recruit high-achieving, low-income students. The Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Dr. Samuel Hurst Scholars programs award exemplary juniors who are active in their community, school, civic and/or church organizations; demonstrate financial need; have resilience, perseverance and grit; and have a cumulative (unweighted) high school GPA of 3.4 or higher.

The Dr. Carter G. Woodson Scholars program, named after the "father of Black History" and a 1903 Berea College alumnus, is geared toward students who demonstrate outstanding character, academic achievement and leadership—as exemplified by the life of Dr. Woodson. Berea has offered Woodson Scholar awards for nearly 15 years. New in 2024, the Dr. Samuel Hurst Scholars program—named for the inventor of resistive touch-screen technology and a 1947 Berea College alumnus—was created to target first-generation students who will be the first in their family to earn a college degree.

For those students who are selected as Woodson Scholars, their admissions counselors are intentional with communication throughout the summer, and then students are invited to a Woodson Preview Day on campus in October. In addition, they receive a "celebration in a box" alerting them they have been selected. The blue ticker-tape stuffed box is filled with a glass or acrylic engraved award, a Berea College hoodie and an announcement of the award stating Berea's No Tuition Promise Scholarship worth \$190,000 over four years, which is available to all Berea students.

"I tell counselors, 'Even if your student never looks at Berea

College, if we can celebrate their accomplishments up to that point and it helps them in their confidence to believe they can go to college, we are still being true to our mission,'" Baker said. These pathway programs and awards build affinity for Berea and support the College's First Commitment "to provide an educational opportunity for students of all races, primarily from Appalachia, who have great promise and limited economic resources."

Berea's history of targeted outreach and pathway programs is directly aligned with the DOE's recommendations for higher education institutions to maintain or expand recruitment of diverse pools of capable students applying and being admitted to their institutions. For Berea, this approach is not new and has been affording the College exceptional students for decades. [B](#)



Graduates of the class of 2024 gather on the steps of Union Church for their class photo and one last chance to enjoy each other's company before graduation.



# Berea College Student Fact Sheet

**56%**  
Students  
graduating  
with zero  
debt

**\$0**  
Tuition

National average private college  
tuition 2022-2023: **\$38,768** per  
academic year

Source: <https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-college>

Fall 2024 incoming first-year  
students paying \$0 for tuition,  
housing, meals and fees **77%**

National average cost of room and board  
for private four-year college in 2022-2023:  
**\$12,111** Source: <https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-college>

Percentage of first-generation  
students (2022-2023) **53%**

Domestic  
students who  
are Pell Grant  
recipients

**95%**

Nationally:  
**32%\***

\*<https://nces.ed.gov>

Students from  
In-territory  
Appalachian  
Region and  
Kentucky

**66%**

## Racial/ Ethnic Identities

### Berea College

- White: **53%**
- African American: **20%\***
- Hispanic/Latine: **16%**
- Asian: **4%**
- American Indian/Alaska Native: **1%**
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: **0.3%**
- Two or more races: **10%**

### Nationally

- White: **53.4%**
- African American: **13.1%**
- Hispanic/Latine: **20.6%**
- Asian: **7.6%**
- American Indian/Alaska Native: **0.7%**
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander: **0.3%**
- Two or more races: **4.3%**

\*27 percent of students chose Black or African American alone or in combination with another race

Source: <https://educationdata.org/college-enrollment-statistics>

# 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.  
[plannedgiving@berea.edu](mailto:plannedgiving@berea.edu) • 800-457-9846 • [berea.giftlegacy.com](http://berea.giftlegacy.com)

**BEREA COLLEGE**

GREAT COMMITMENTS SOCIETY

Photo by Crystal Wylie '05



# Never Alone

## College Transition Stories

By Brooke Donley '26

Transitioning from high school to college can be a daunting task for any student, but it is exceptionally more difficult when students do not know where to turn for support once they arrive. Involvement on Berea's campus is what makes students feel like they have a network they can count on.

Jasiella '25 faced challenges before she even entered college. Before coming to Berea, she was experiencing homelessness and "living paycheck to paycheck." When she was a first-year student, it was school policy that first-years could not have cars, which presented a problem for her as she had nowhere to keep her car.

Then, she met Gus Gerassimides,

interim vice president for Student Life, who worked with her to bring her car in the fall.

Coming to Berea was an adjustment for Jasiella as well because new places and directions have always been difficult for her. "The first few weeks, I would get lost every single day just going from class to class," she said.

Her teammates from the track and field and cross-country teams would help her through the confusion, and she would arrive to class almost on time. Being a part of a team made Jasiella instantly feel connected to the campus. Teammates were a large part of that, but another aspect of support for Jasiella was

her coach, Michael Thomas '13.

"Any time I have had a bad day or need advice on something, Coach Mike is always there for me," she explained, remembering when she was not able to get to dining before one of her classes. Coach Mike made sure she had access to food through the Athletics nutrition center, a room stocked with nutritional snacks specifically for student-athletes.

Other students on campus have found the help they need through the Office of Student Success and Transition, which aims to help students with the many choices they make in their first couple of years. Sophomores are faced with the creation of their curriculum plan, which can be daunting for many, including Ayden '26.

"When I was trying to map out the next four semesters, all the classes swirled together until I sat down with someone," he said.

Ayden's plan became more complicated when he found out he would need surgery over the summer. The following semester would need to not be as academically strenuous, and he needed an extension of term. Ayden worked with his advisors, Disability Services and the Registrar's office to get the accommodations he needed.

"Having a network of people who care was the best possible outcome for me because I needed all the help I could get in order to keep my majors," explained Ayden, a double major in Business and Education. "They wanted me to graduate on time and only do one of my majors, but it would not have worked for me because I want to teach high school business."

Ayden was granted his extension of



Anita Chukwu '23

Ayden '26 found a network of people to help him succeed at Berea, including Disability Services, the Registrar's Office and his advisors.

term to complete both of his majors and stay on track with his career aspirations.

James '27 realized during his first week on campus that Berea was going to be a challenge. "I came in with no expectations because no one from my county in southeastern Ohio had been to Berea in more than 10 years," he said.

James found his sense of community and support at Berea by getting involved in campus social life.

"Everything was so busy my first couple of weeks on campus. But I wanted to make a group of friends, so I went to every event I could."

Campus centers also played a large role in how James began to feel at home at Berea. Since he's from the Appalachian region, he was placed in a program called the Appalachian Male Initiative (AMI) with Professor Bobby Starnes. The AMI was created when Appalachian male retention reached a low point. The program helps young men from the region adapt and finish college. This began a new avenue of self-discovery for James. He had never thought about being Appalachian in his hometown.

"We never really thought about ourselves being Appalachian, but when I thought about all the people I knew, they fit many of the characteristics we discussed in class. It is important, too,

"Everything was so busy my first couple of weeks on campus. But I wanted to make a group of friends, so I went to every event I could." – James '27

that I continue to discover myself through avenues that Berea affords students such as me."

Being able to help students find themselves and helping students navigate the business of being a college student is important to the College.


The school has put systems in place for students to become the best version of themselves while learning who they are and facing challenges as adults. 



Photo Submitted

Jasiella '25 (far left) poses with her cross-country teammates at a regional championship meet in 2023.



Eljhu Say '26

Cross-country and track and field coach, Michael Thomas '13, serves as a mentor for his student-athletes, ensuring they have every opportunity to be successful in not only their sport but in the classroom and campus community.



# CENTERED

## A Community of Belonging

By Derek Shorkey '26

At Berea, 11 centers focused on building community and promoting retention are fundamental components of campus life. These centers represent unique and diverse groups that comprise an equally unique community.

While promoting diversity and understanding through the sharing and teaching of cultures, there's another part to each center's purpose: belonging. On Berea's campus, with everyone busy with classes and work, sometimes it can be difficult to make social connections, build relationships or find a group of friends who make individuals feel they belong. The centers excel in building uniqueness and diversity on campus, as



MG '24 enjoyed her time in the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center talking to people about the area.

they often help students find their place in the world by giving them a space to be themselves and meet other like-minded people.

The centers include the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center (LJAC), Black Cultural Center, Carter G. Woodson Center for Interracial Education, Espacio Cultural Latinx, Francis and Louise Hutchins Center for International Education, bell hooks center, Willis D. Weatherford Jr. Campus Christian Center, Center for Excellence in Learning through Service, Center for Teaching and Learning, Nontraditional Student Center and Forestry Outreach Center. All are geared toward creating belonging, encouraging retention and service to community.

Students can find belonging through these centers as active participants or through work positions that give them learning and leadership opportunities in the spaces, as well. "As a Bonner Scholar, the places I can work for my labor position are limited," said Izzy '26, who works at LJAC and is Appalachian. "I knew I wanted to work a community-based position, so I reached out to the Appalachian Center and worked out a situation where I could work with Appalachian non-profits."

Beyond providing an opportunity to

learn about and meet others from Appalachia, Izzy's work has reinforced her sense of belonging on campus by providing a space for her to study her home region, talk with other Appalachian people and contribute to the community through research.

"Coming to Berea, seeing the Appalachian Center and finding my hometown on their map really created a sense of belonging for me and for other people I know," she said.

Even those without a background in Appalachia still

find their way to the center. LJAC serves as a space for people, Appalachian or otherwise, to hang out, study, work on homework or otherwise enjoy the company of people. That sense of belonging is important, especially on a college campus.

"As college students, we're all away from what we know, so it's important for a campus to have that sense of belonging," Izzy said.

That welcoming nature carries over not just in the Appalachian Center's daily operations, but in the big events the center hosts on campus as well.

"People from different academic disciplines across campus come to attend pretty much every event offered, MG '24 said. "People who are into the

“Coming to Berea, seeing the Appalachian Center and finding my hometown on their map really created a sense of belonging for me and for other people I know.” – Izzy '26



Izzy '26 works in the Loyal Jones Appalachian Center, working with Appalachian non-profits. This position has given her opportunities to meet people from all across the region and has fostered a sense of belonging on Berea's campus. The LJAC space gives Izzy a space to contribute to the community, which ties into her involvement with the Bonner Scholar Program.

particular craft happening that week will come in for the craft night, folks who want to hear about the certain art form or community work the speakers are discussing will come, and students from all across campus will come to see their friends' work displayed in the center."

Events and groups aren't the full story, though. Another way centers help students feel like they belong is by elevating their individual experiences and letting their voices be heard. Appalachian voices can easily be drowned out in the larger conversations happening across the country, and the Appalachian Center's welcoming atmosphere helps significantly to bridge that divide.

"Not only have I felt secure in my identity in an academic way, but it's so fun to have a place on campus where I can talk about being Appalachian both with people also from the area and people interested in the area," MG continued. "Spending time in the center and attending events there makes me feel like what I have to say about the region and as a person from the region really matters."

“Not only have I felt secure in my identity in an academic way, but it's so fun to have a place on campus where I can talk about being Appalachian both with people also from the area and people interested in the area.” – MG '24

Much like the inclusive atmosphere of the Appalachian Center, the Black Cultural Center (BCC) strives to provide services and programs for not only Berea's Black and African American students on campus, but for the rest of the campus community as well. Allison '25, who works at the BCC works with the center to help engage the community.

Events like Kula Kusoma, where the Center invites alumni to campus to present about their careers after Berea, and the Students United to Create Cultural and Educationally Successful Situations (S.U.C.C.E.S.S.) Program, where incoming first-year African and African American students can receive assistance in navigating life in Berea,

“One of my friends introduced me to the Black Cultural Center, and it was there that I was always able to go after school, socialize and meet people, and it has truly helped me.” – Allison '25



help facilitate an encouraging atmosphere and help students get acclimated.

The BCC, on top of holding its own events, collaborates with other centers as well. For Allison, the collaborative nature of Berea's centers adds to the campus sense of belonging and helps her and students like her to broaden their involvement on campus by interacting with each other. She hopes to further this work through programs like the Appalachian Center's visit to the BCC and some of the collaborations done with other centers and departments on campus.

"We collaborated with the Espacio Cultural Latinx a lot this year, and I'm working on reaching out to other centers to start collaboration programs next semester," Allison said.

In addition, Allison recalled how the BCC became a place for her to get involved in the community, catch up on schoolwork and really find a place to fit in in the Berea community.

"At the start of my freshman year, I was really behind on my schoolwork, and I didn't have anywhere to go after class where I felt like I could get the support I needed," she said. "One of my friends introduced me to the Black Cultural Center, and it was there that I was always able to go after school, socialize and meet people, and it has truly helped me." 📖



Breana Lovins '25

**TOP:** Allison '25 works in the Black Cultural Center as a program coordinator. Originally from Birmingham, Ala., Allison has found community in her involvement with the BCC and the Berea College cheerleading squad.

**BOTTOM:** Allison '25 assists with the ribbon cutting on the Black Cultrual Center's Black hair care vending machine, the first of it's kind in the state on a college campus.



Crystal Wylie '05



## THESE CHAIRS ROCK

by Jason Lee Miller

When Katie Bister '23 finished her engineering technologies and applied design degree, she didn't have to go far to find a job. She had spent four years in the woodcraft department of Student Craft, and now she had the chance to make things full time. Among the items she builds is the People Collection Rocker, which she designed her senior year.

"That whole semester, every week, we made a new chair. We built eight or 10 prototype chairs. We didn't really like any particular one, so we said, 'Well, what about a rocking chair?'"

It was important to Bister that the chair be armless so a person can be active while sitting in it.

"The lack of arms allows you to play an instrument or do some crocheting or knitting or carving without the arms getting in the way," she explained.

By the end of the school year the design was finalized and joined ceramic bowls, mugs, and wooden stools as the newest addition to Student Craft's People Collection. The People Collection was originally designed by ceramicists Zoe Cowley '20 and Rachel Bates '20.

"The People Collection represents the diverse and eclectic community at Berea," Bister said. "They wanted to celebrate that by forming this collection."

The People Collection is bright and colorful, and the Rocker is no exception. Made with a blend of ash and cherry woods, it comes in nine different finishes. Each is engraved with the Student Craft logo.

If Katie doesn't have other items to work on, like the dust pans she's already known for, she and Rob Spiece, Woodcraft director, can make about four per week.

## EVERY PIECE TELLS A STORY

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

**BEREA COLLEGE STUDENT CRAFT**

**859-985-3220**

[bcstudentcraft.com](http://bcstudentcraft.com)



BEREA COLLEGE IS

# BRAVE. BOLD. BOUNDLESS.

Since 1855, Berea College has made a high-quality, debt-free education a reality.

## BEREA COLLEGE IS

**the state's highest-ranked institution.**

Only Kentucky institution among 54 nationwide with a **5-star rating** from *Money* magazine :: #1 for educational access (*New York Times*, Sept. 7, 2023) :: #1 among National Liberal Arts Colleges for lowest student debt (*U.S. News & World Report*, 2024) :: #2 National Liberal Arts College (*Washington Monthly*, 2023)

## BEREA COLLEGE IS

**invested in students of high potential and limited resources.**

Free tuition :: No-loan package for funded housing and meals :: Free medical and dental clinic :: Free laptop :: Paid internships :: Professional clothing funds :: Subsidized study abroad :: Gift of \$500 upon graduation to begin post-college life.



[www.berea.edu](http://www.berea.edu)

Ad Sponsored by Tallgrass Farm Foundation :: photo by Anna Joines '17

A Berea student dances in the Kinetic Expressions dance exhibition presented each spring. Kinetic Expressions brings together student, faculty and staff dancers from different dance groups on campus to perform beautifully choreographed pieces for their peers.

Crystal Wylie '05



## Barton Honored with Hall of Fame Induction

In March, Theatre Associate Professor Adanma Onyedike Barton was inducted into the Southeastern Theatre Conference Hall of Fame. SETC, the largest network of theatre practitioners in the nation, created a Hall of Fame in 2015 to recognize persons, living or deceased, who have made major contributions to the organization. These contributions may be administrative, artistic and/or financial and have made a significant impact on SETC's success over a sustained period. The hall of fame commemorates inductees' achievements and celebrates their meaningful contributions to the organization.

Barton is the first African American female to serve on the executive committee of SETC, and she was the first African American president of the Kentucky Theatre Association.

Barton came to Berea College from Richmond, Va. While in Virginia, she taught both the Speech for Business and Professionals and the Black Theatre course at Virginia Commonwealth University. Barton simultaneously taught at the School of Performing Arts in Richmond Communities (SPARC) and the Henrico High School Center for the Arts. In addition, she has taught at the Virginia



Julien Prater '21

Governor's School of Visual and Performing Arts and the Acting for Non-Majors course at the University of Virginia.

The SETC network connects members to training, jobs and resources at all experience levels including collegiate auditions and interviews, professional hiring companies, grants, scholarships, awards, online and in-person training, design and performance competitions, conferences and networking opportunities.

## Senior Receives Red Foley Award

Charity Gilbert '24 received the Red Foley Award in recognition of her musical contributions to the social life of the campus community and beyond. Gilbert has been at the heart of the Berea musical community since she arrived as a first-year student. Her involvement in the Bluegrass Ensemble and Folk Roots Ensemble and her contributions to the Celebration of Traditional Music and weekly chapel services have left a deep and lasting impact on students, staff and faculty. She also writes and performs her own profound and beautiful songs such as "Imaginary Train" and performs in a two-woman band with Sophie Delaney '23 called Branchwater Belles.



Tyler Rocquemore '22

## Taylor Fellow Awardee Receives \$40,000

Thanks to generous Berea College donors, F. Chapman Taylor and Grace Boey Taylor, recent graduate Matheus Bender '24, an international student from Brazil who majored in sociology, has been awarded the second annual Berea College Taylor Fellowship from the Taylor Family Post-Graduate Fund for Immersive International Experiences. He will use this award to explore his proposed Watson project, "Global Journey on Altruism: What is Generosity Worldwide?" After graduation, Bender will use \$40,000 to visit Indonesia, Thailand, Australia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Jamaica and Colombia. During his year, he will collaborate with local non-profits and learn first-hand what leads different people to act generously around the world.



Jose Espinoza '24

## Two Berea Students to Study Abroad as Watson Fellows

Graduates Lola Bauer '24 and Noah Vargas '24 were awarded prestigious Watson Fellowships from the national Thomas J. Watson Foundation. This \$40,000 award gives students the opportunity to explore a topic of personal, passionate interest during a year spent abroad post-graduation. Berea College is one of only 41 nominating Watson institutions in the country.

Bauer, an English education major, titled her project "Environmental Poetry: Coastal Connections." She will visit Indonesia, the Philippines, Mozambique, Chile and the Maldives.

"Working alongside developing coastal communities, I will use a variety of poetic forms to tell their stories and expand my scope of the ocean and what threatens it," she said.

Vargas, an agriculture and natural re-

sources major, describes his project, "Indigenous Communities and the Impact of Climate Change," as an opportunity to explore how the climate crisis is impacting indigenous communities in six diverse cultures and discover what one can learn from their resilience. He will travel to Tuvalu, New Zealand, Taiwan, Brazil, Peru and Morocco.



Elhu Say '26

Lola Bauer '24



Photo submitted

Noah Vargas '24

## Berea Student Wins Emmy Award

Berea College senior, Sean, from Whitesburg, Ky., won an Emmy Award from the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences (NATAS) Ohio Valley Chapter Awards celebration in July. Sean '25 won in the "Diversity/Equity/Inclusion—Short or Long-Form Content" category for a film he assisted in producing titled "Visit Ashland—C.B. Nuckolls Community Center & Black History Museum." It was his first-ever Emmy submission.

The short vignette, produced by Visit Ashland and Team Kentucky, celebrates the impactful contributions of Bernice Henry and her nephew, Darrell Smith, who founded

the C.B. Nuckolls Community Center & Black History Museum in Ashland, Ky., in 2022. The video highlights the museum's growth through generous contributions, showcasing new exhibitions and artifacts. It serves as an invitation for viewers to engage in meaningful conversations and visit the museum to explore the rich stories of Black Appalachians. Sean worked on the film along with former Berea College Director of Digital Storytelling Justin Skeens, founder of In Cahoots Films, LLC., and contract producer, Eric Sanders.

For more on Sean's story visit [www.berea.edu/news](http://www.berea.edu/news).



Photo submitted

LEFT TO RIGHT: Eric Sander, Justin Skeens, Sean '25 at the NATAS Emmy Awards night.



## BEREA HONORS FOUR ALUMNI FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS

By Jason Lee Miller

### Dr. Daniel Lee '84 Distinguished Alumnus Award

As a student, Daniel Lee was already an award-winner. He won the T. J. Wood Achievement Award for Men, the Academic Student-Athlete Distinction Honor and Wilson Evans and Ellen Best Evans Labor Award. Lee's success continued after Berea, graduating with distinction from the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. He completed his training in neurology at Washington University in St. Louis, where he received the prestigious Irwin Levy Prize in Neurology and Neurological Surgery. Dr. Lee completed his fellowship training at Stanford University School of Sleep Medicine.

Lee led the development of groundbreaking treatments for restless leg syndrome, gaining approval of the use of both ropinirole treatment and non-dopaminergic treatment with gabapentin enacarbil by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Dr. Lee has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals and served on various editorial boards and the National and International Scientific Advisory Board on Restless Leg Syndrome Research. His publication in the Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine led to the FDA mandating label changes for all dopamine agonists in November 2019.

He has received numerous teaching awards at Washington University Brody School of Medicine and the University of Kentucky. Lee also received the National Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society Faculty Teaching Award. He has presented at various national and international conferences including at the Peking Union Medical College in Beijing, Mayo Clinic, Case Western Reserve and the International Congress of Parkinson's Disease and Movement Disorders in Paris.

Dr. Lee returned to Kentucky wanting to give back what the Commonwealth had generously given him. He has served as medical director of the Kentucky Neuroscience Institute at the University of Kentucky, president of the Kentucky Sleep Society, and vice president of Kentucky Neurologic Society. With his busy

schedule of teaching and research, he has also set up neurology clinics to provide neurologic care to rural Kentuckians in Morehead and Frankfort and volunteered at indigent clinics and medical missions. He is also the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award presented by commendation of the 2020 Kentucky Senate.

### John Combs '69 Alumni Loyalty Award

A Madison County, Ky., native, John Combs was first known as the son of Berea College's legendary sports equipment manager, Elvin Combs, for whom the recently completed Elvin Combs Fieldhouse was named. John carried his father's love of sports through college and into a storied sports career of his own.

Combs graduated from Berea College with a degree in business administration. As a student, he worked as a teaching assistant for the department of Physical Education and for baseball coach C. H. "Monarchy" Wyatt. Committed to the advancement of Berea athletics, particularly baseball, he served as an intramural umpire and referee. He also maintained the baseball field and was a scorekeeper and statistician for baseball and basketball, continuing that position after graduating.

After Berea, Combs worked in Kentucky state government for 30 years, serving in various capacities for state parks, travel and tourism, economic development and revenue, and transportation. He also was a sport official and assignor for more than five decades for softball, baseball and basketball. Later, Combs became commissioner for Kentucky ASA/USA Softball and was umpire-in-chief for USA Softball for more than three decades. During this time, he officiated 43 national softball tournaments as umpire and 15 national tournaments as umpire-in-chief. For many decades, he has served as chairman of the board and president of the Kentucky Softball Hall of Fame, and was inducted to the Hall of Fame as an umpire in 1999. In 2003, he received the National Indicator Fraternity, the highest honor awarded to an umpire.

In addition, Combs is the owner of John Combs Properties in Berea.

### Linda Houston Graham '59 Distinguished Alumna Award

Over the course of her career, which began in the late 1950s, Linda Houston Graham navigated the uncharted waters of women in business. Beginning as secretary at pest-control company, Rollins, Inc., she worked her way up into upper management.

She then joined Dwoskin, Inc., the nation's largest wholesaler of wall coverings. In 1987, Houston Graham became vice president of RPC, Inc., which had spun off from Rollins to become a diversified holding company with interests ranging from oil and gas to recreational powerboats. In 2001, Houston Graham took on the role of vice president at Marine Products Corp., a Rollins, Inc., company that makes fiberglass powerboats, until she retired.

A native of Knoxville, Tenn., Houston Graham graduated from Berea in 1959 with a degree in English. During her time at Berea, she met another Berea student, David Graham '59, and upon graduation they married in Danforth Chapel. The couple moved to Atlanta so that David could attend Emory University College of Dentistry. David spent a long and successful career in practice, while Linda made a home and a career.

The couple was very philanthropic throughout their lives, and though David passed away in 2017, Linda decided to increase her giving. She began by supporting the dental clinic at Berea College, offering a host of free services for Berea's students.

Linda and David are a true Berea love story, sharing love for each other, love for their alma mater and love for students, as they once were.

### Sandra Reynolds '79 Distinguished Alumna Award

The storied career of Sandy Reynolds in information systems and software development began with her Berea College labor assign-

ment as a computer operator and assistant office manager. She leveraged that experience into a job at Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a consulting company of more than 40,000 employees, where she worked for more than 25 years.

At SAIC, Reynolds led software development and managed programs for a wide range of government and commercial clients. Her work included leading the development of the Long-Term Pavement Performance Information Management System that is currently managed by the Federal Highway Administration. This large research project serves as the

primary source of research data for evaluating pavement performance.

As a division manager, she established organizational goals and directed efforts for software quality and improvement for her 100-person software development division. This led to her division becoming one of the first in the world to achieve the Capability Maturity Model Integration Institute's Maturity Level 5, the highest level possible.

She ended her career at SAIC as a corporate vice president, providing executive oversight, client relationship management and strategic planning. After leaving SAIC,

Reynolds provided consulting services before joining SeKON Enterprise, Inc., as a content strategist. Her role included developing winning information technology proposals worth more than \$3 billion in government contracts.

Reynolds has also been heavily involved in volunteer activities, including serving as chair of congregational care at her church and supporting Bridge Refugee Services. As a volunteer for Bridge, she has received recognition for her service in setting up homes, transporting clients to appointments and providing tutoring and mentoring to youth and young adults.





## SUMMER REUNION

Summer Reunion brought home alumni and guests to campus June 14-16 to celebrate many special reunions from 1949 to 1994. Mark your calendars for Summer Reunion 2025, scheduled June 13-15.



James Hicks '76, Leslie Graham Sulfridge '78, President Cheryl Nixon, Debby Noble Edwards '78 and Leslie Porter '78 have fun celebrating at Taste of Berea.



The band Superfecta performed at the Taste of Berea event, keeping the audience entertained through the evening.



Virgil Burnside '74 and Tonya Mounts Lester '91 enjoy the fun atmosphere of the Taste of Berea.



Sharyn Mitchell '65 and Pam Thompson Sowder '69 share a hug and catch up at Summer Reunion.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Lana Lambert Stohl '74, Jackie Grisby Burnside '74 and Linda Lambert Gaddie '74 enjoy time to talk before their 50th reunion photo.



Ronnie Kern '70 and Charlotte Beason '70 reunite at the picnic, where classes gathered for reunion pictures.



Ann Greer '79 and trustee, Brenda Guy Lane '79, dance together at the Taste of Berea.



Alumni from different classes danced the night away at the Taste of Berea reunion party.



Allen McLaughlin Fd. '65, '69 makes his way up to the Hutchins Library for his class of 1969 photo.



A group of alumni pose for a picture during the reunion picnic on the Quad.



Members of the class of 1974 gather on the steps of Hutchins Library to commemorate their 50th reunion.



Members of the class of 1984 prepare for their 40th reunion picture with fun antics and big smiles.



Alumni couples enjoy the sweetness of a slow dance at the Taste of Berea.



Distinguished Alumnus award winners John Combs '69 (red shirt) and Dr. Daniel Lee '84 (center) mingle with guests at the awards ceremony.



President Cheryl Nixon greets attendees at the Great Commitments Society Cocktail event.





Brooklyn Kenney

James Dowdy



Brooklyn Kenney

John 'Kenny' Gwinn



Brooklyn Kenney

**FRONT ROW:** Effie Beavers, David Nickel, Elizabeth Culbreth, Charlayne Stewart Allan **SECOND ROW:** Noah Perry, Delphia Rawlings Hampton, Brenda Stepp Brown **THIRD ROW:** Jo Hardin, Jerry Hardin **FOURTH ROW:** Burnett Cook



Brooklyn Kenney

**FRONT ROW:** Judy McGuire Fitzwater, Sandra Carter Toussaint, Janet McKinney Tracey, Peggy Sisson Gilbert, Nancy Pickle Isaacs, Sharon Lakes Buckingham, Mary Ann Buck Smith, Catherine Scott, Linda Farmer, Janet Rader Burke, June Coots Hunt, Anna Melle Hicks, Paul Lyda **SECOND ROW:** Larry Fitzwater, Marie Tychonievich, Linda Crawford Kenney, Patricia Woodward Barrier **THIRD ROW:** Carolyn Garrison, John Mast, Bill Melton, Emory Mills, John Cecil Callebs, Ann Hamlett Robertson, Linda White Moore, Brenda Stuart Harris, Jerry Harris, Raymond Norton, Jan Hill Reid, Yvonne Jones, Emma Brashear Smith **FOURTH ROW:** Bruce Garrison, Dianne McDonald, Betty Olinger, Ronnie Kern, Tony Blair, Linda Stevens Madden, Donna Dean, Linda Hellenson Appanaitis, Denver Pochodzay, Charles Stines **FIFTH ROW:** David Olinger, Lonnie Kern, Will Hoskins, Beth Swan Duncan, Kay Smith, Joanne Graves, Dianne Gibson, Pam Sowder, J. Pat Seabolt **BACK ROW:** Phillip Gatton, Jerry Tracy, Helen Hassler, Tommy Reynolds, Ken Gilbert, Larry Rawlings, Allen McLaughlin, Mary McLaughlin, Joe Sowder, Catherine Stewart Johnson



Brooklyn Kenney

**FRONT ROW:** Regina Poynter Hoskins, Loeta Johnson Raper, Linda Lambert Gaddie, Lana Lambert Stohl, Elizabeth McKnight McCullough, Jackie Grisby Burnside **SECOND ROW:** Fidelis Ovuworie, Don Stewart, Larry Pruitt Sr., Anita Quinlan, Paula T. Logan, Carmen Carico Logan, Judith Austin **THIRD ROW:** Laetha Quinlan, Esther Whitley, Janice Yearout-Patton, Michael Patton, Carolyn Tolson Hanson **FOURTH ROW:** Jimmy Miller, Bill Olinger, John Sparkman, Benny Kennedy, Tim Whitley, Bill Johnstone, Vicki Thompson Mullenex **BACK ROW:** Gene Evans, Jack Blaker, Carl Howerton, Larry Bruner, Eddie Yeary, Darrell Logan, E. G. Thompson, Ann Barricklow Thompson





**FRONT ROW:** Larry Sulfridge, Cynthia Hairston Hicks, Ann Thompson Greer, Vicky Fritz Hamilton, Willie Canty **BACK ROW:** Brenda Lane, Judy Rafson, Sandy Reynolds, Sue Johns



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Carol Baker Skeese, Robert Cunningham, Jeannie Robinette King, Davey King, Donna Conway-Moscicki



**FRONT ROW:** Valerie Blade Thomas, Alonzo 'Lonnie' Allen **SECOND ROW:** Daniel Lee, Kay Manchester, Karlene Kincaid, Ivy Bush Sheehan, Teresa Kash Davis **THIRD ROW:** Mary White, Anita Caron, Kimberly Sommerville, Laura Lee Earles, Danny DeVers **BACK ROW:** Tony Belcher, Bruce Lawson, Herman Manakyan



**LEFT TO RIGHT:** Janet White, Bobbi Jo Boggs, Jason Cody, Lori Allen Eaton



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](http://www.berea.edu/alumni/classnote)

## 1954

**John Ken Gwinn**, with his spouse, Lynette, flew to Qatar for two weeks in February to visit with their grandson who works at the U.S. Embassy in Doha. The presence of their two great-granddaughters made the trip extra enjoyable.

## 1960

**Veda Webb Davis** lives in western North Carolina. She has written three children’s books. Her first book “Kazuko and the Gardens of Manzanar,” is available on Amazon. The other two illustrated books should be available soon. “Tenny and the Big Move” has a main character who ultimately attends Berea College and “The Gentle Hunters” is about pre-colonial Native Americans in western North Carolina.

## 1964

**Raleigh** and **Rita Johnson** have been married 61 years. They met at Berea College in 1960. The Johnsons are retired. Their address is 4510 Cypress Pond Court, Houston, TX 77059

**Dr. Larry E. West** and his wife, **Suzanne**, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in September 2023. The couple married in Danforth Chapel at the beginning of their senior year.

## 1965

**Kattie Deel Blankenship’s** husband, Alvin, passed away June 18, 2022, which was 20 days shy of their 55th wedding anniversary. She thanks everyone for their prayers.



**Edith Elmira Vance** is a retired RN. She served in the Air Force and as a county health nurse in Bakersville, N.C.

## 1967

**Dr. Essie P. Knuckle** presented her second book “Slate Hill-1949: My Five-Year-Old Memories of Family and Slate Hill, A Community in Roanoke, Virginia,” at the 21st annual Virginia Festival of the Book. Read more: <https://bit.ly/44KCpJv>

## 1970

**Carolyn Coffey Pennington** has a poem in the February 2024 issue of Kentucky Monthly that won the Penned Literary Contest. The poem is “Appearance,” on page 34 of the magazine. Pennington also has five short poems in the anthology “Red Lick Valley Press: Coming of Age,” writing and art by women 60 and older.

## 1984

**Gaitley Stevenson-Mathews**, who served as a guest artist/visiting assistant professor of theatre from 1996-1997, is a Long Island-based voice and speech coach and is also president and founder of the Tribute and Honor Foundation, a non-profit organization with a mission to honor and support veterans and their families. He is pictured presenting a citation on behalf of the foundation to Korean War veteran Ben Farnan as board members look on. Learn more about the foundation at [www.TributeAndHonorFoundation.org](http://www.TributeAndHonorFoundation.org).



## 1998

**Dr. Chris Lakes** is the new associate dean for student affairs at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine. This comes after 23 years of professional service to the amazing students at Berea College.



**Ricky Eugene Kirk, II** recently was promoted to senior dining services director for ATLAS Senior Living. He has been an integral part of developing standards in ATLAS Senior Living communities. He hosts monthly dining calls, onboards new directors of dining services and provides support to communities in need of additional resources to excel. Kirk has more than nine years’ experience as a chef. He began his ATLAS career at Legacy Reserve at Fritz Farm in Lexington, Ky. He currently serves as dining services director at Lake Howard Heights in Winter Haven, Fla. Kirk will continue to support his home community in his new role.



## 1999

Celebrating 25 years at Homecoming 2024.

## 2002

**Bobi Conn** published a novel called “Someplace Like Home” in May. Conn grew up outside of Morehead and is now based in Berea; this is her third book. Conn’s 2020 memoir, “In the Shadow of the Valley,” recounted her upbringing with unvarnished honesty—from the boundless beauty of her family’s holler to the horrific violence of her abusive, addicted father. Its publication led Conn into a surprising dialogue with her mother and a desire to give voice to this woman she had so long struggled to understand. The resulting novel, “Someplace Like Home,” is inspired by her mother’s story and brings the reader on a journey to the outskirts of Morehead alongside three generations of strong women. As Conn explores her characters’ perspectives, she raises questions about our origin stories, the fraught nature of memory and the ripple effect of trauma through generations.



## 2004

Celebrating 20 years at Homecoming 2024.

## 2009

Celebrating 15 years at Homecoming 2024.

## 2014

Celebrating 10 years at Homecoming 2024.

## 2019

Celebrating five years at Homecoming 2024.

## 2023

**Ozemeyi “Oze” Egre** writes,

“Hello fellow Bereans! I am writing this class note to encourage you and remind you of the greatness inside of you. I graduated from the Berea College Nursing Program, and I am class of 2023. I am now working my dream nursing job as a post-partum nurse in Georgia. I was once in a place where I questioned everything. Am I smart enough to be here? Am I good enough to be a nurse? What if I don’t make it to graduation? The imposter syndrome was something and it was quite crippling. I am here to tell you if I can do it, you definitely can, too. You are here for a purpose and there is a reason Berea College chose you to attend this prestigious college. They saw greatness in you, and it is important that you see it in yourself. Specifically, to my nursing students:

*I want to let you know I am proud of you whether you just declared your major to it being your final semester. I need you to just remember that success is possible, you are capable, and to be unstoppable. P.S. Don’t forget to massage the fundus. LOL. Sending all my love, prayers and support.*

Yours Truly, Ozemeyi ‘Oze’ Egre RN, BSN.”



## 2024

Celebrating its first reunion at Homecoming 2024.





## Correction

**Ruth Cole Montgomery '54** passed away on March 22, 2009, not July 6, 2023.

**G. Sharon Hamilton '65** passed away Dec. 5, 2023, not G. Shannon Hamilton.

In the Spring 2024 issue, **Roberta Irene Larew-Smith '83** was listed as deceased. She is alive and well.

## Staff & Faculty

### Rev. Gail Bowman

Director of the Willis D. Weatherford Jr. Campus Christian Center (2012-2016)  
Feb. 18, 2024

### Dr. Roswell David Cox '66

Professor of Child and Family Studies (1970-2005)  
Mar. 10, 2024

### Margaret Sandifer Reppert

Nurse (1978-2004)  
April 6, 2024

## 1940s

**Harriet L. Melhaff Acad. '43, '47**  
Dec. 20, 2023

### Virginia Denham '48

Jan. 31, 2024

### Jessie Crutchfield '49

Jan. 22, 2024

### Betty B. Freeman '49

Feb. 4, 2023

### Virginia Wood '49

Aug. 13, 2019

## 1950s

**Betty Parker '50**  
Feb. 13, 2024

### Effie Strong '50

Jan. 20, 2024

### Nell Porter '52

April 2, 2024

### Dorothy May Schmidt Obi '53

March 4, 2024

### Raymond C. Tackett '53

March 3, 2024

### Masiel Ayers '54

Nov. 13, 2023

### Doris Musser '55

March 6, 2024

### Patricia Wright Baker '56

Feb. 6, 2024

### Dr. Darell Crase '56

July 6, 2023

### Jo Ann Marsh '56

Obituary Unavailable

### Jean B. Musser White '56

Feb. 20, 2024

### Sadie York '56

Obituary Unavailable

### Nancy Maria Ball '57

Oct. 16, 2023

### Sammy Ray Bryant '57

Jan. 31, 2024

### John C. Owen '57

Oct. 21, 2023

### Thelma Wilson, RN '57

March 9, 2024

### Basil Borders '58

April 1, 2024

### Grace Harness '58

Jan. 26, 2024

### Dan P. Blalock Jr. '59

Nov. 8, 2023

### Shirley White '59

Dec. 27, 2022

## 1960s

**Dr. Robert N. Compton '60**  
Feb. 27, 2024

### Dr. Larry G. Keeter '60

Jan. 19, 2024

### Darlene Carr '61

March 7, 2024

### William Donald Miller '61

Jan. 10, 2022

### LeBron Free, II, Esq. '63

March 23, 2024

### Frederick C. Beddingfield Jr., USAR Ret. '64

March 5, 2024

### Eddie Elswick '64

March 18, 2024

### Betty Nanney '64

April 7, 2024

### Clark W. Nanney Jr. '64

Jan. 26, 2024

### Mary Velten '64

March 20, 2024

### Wayne E. Hambright '65

Feb. 1, 2024

### Dr. Roswell David Cox '66

March 10, 2024

### Iverson Louis Warinner '66

Jan. 25, 2024

### Carolyn Lois Keith Brazill '67

Feb. 26, 2024

### Jewell Patricia Morgan '67

Jan. 20, 2024

### Barbara Jane Johnson '68

Oct. 18, 2023

## 1970s

**Victoria Williams '70**  
March 26, 2024

### Carl G. Pittman

Spouse of **Patricia O. Pittman '72**  
Oct. 2, 2023

### Rev. Sanford K. Hill '79

Feb. 13, 2024

## 1980s

**Freddie Dale Noe Jr. '89**  
March 20, 2024

## 1990s

**Vadim Kornilov '99**  
Jan. 2, 2024

## 2000s

**Mohammed Humed Yusuf '10**  
Jan. 24, 2024

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



# MARK YOUR CALENDARS *Plan a trip home!*



## HOMECOMING NOV. 15-17, 2024

### Honoring the 25th Reunion for the Class of 1999

As well as milestone years for  
2004, 2009, 2014, 2019 and 2024.

**BEREA  
COLLEGE**  
ALUMNI

photo by Ehku Say '26



**BEREA** COLLEGE MAGAZINE  
Periodical postage paid at Berea, KY and  
additional mailing offices. Send address changes  
to Berea College Magazine, c/o Berea College  
Alumni Association, CPO Box 2203, Berea, KY  
40404.

