

BECKI SALZMAN ON RUNNING THE ILLINI UNION

Lou Henson Comes to Town | The Orange Krush Story

ILLINOIS ALUMNI

Winter 2025

A portrait of Charles L. Isbell, Jr., a Black man with a grey beard, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking upwards and to the right. The background features red and blue vertical stripes with the letter 'I' on them.

MEET THE CHANCELLOR

Charles L. Isbell, Jr., shares
his vision for the U. of I.



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LOU HENSON COMES TO TOWN

Fifty years ago, the Illinois men's basketball program finished last in the Big Ten and had a brand-new coach. But Lou Henson had a plan. In this *Memory Lane*, Ryan A. Ross chronicles the first season of Henson's illustrious tenure.

24

FROM THE TOP

New U. of I. Chancellor Charles L. Isbell, Jr., shares his goals for the university's future, his belief in being a good ancestor, and his love of *Star Wars*.
By Mary Timmins

34

ALUMNI INTERVIEW

Atari's creative director, **Tim Lapetino**, '00 MEDIA, on his obsessions with storytelling and design, and his efforts to breathe new life into one of gaming's most iconic brands.
As told to Kevin Cook

36

2025 ALUMNI

AWARDS

The UIAA honors nine outstanding Illini, including an animal behaviorist, a retired Marine Corps colonel, an underwater filmmaker, a banker, a massage therapist, and *Sesame Street*'s musical director.
By David A. Scott

ON THE COVER CHANCELLOR CHARLES L. ISBELL, JR., HAS A BOLD VISION FOR THE U. OF I.'S FUTURE. PHOTO BY MICHELLE HASSEL

DEPARTMENTS



AROUND THE QUAD

- 13 Morrow Plots Cultivate Fresh Look**
The campus landmark undergoes a revitalization, including a new landscape design, for its 150th anniversary.
- 15 Informed Source**
Engineering Professor Katy Huff on the logistics, challenges, and potential of bringing nuclear-generated electricity to the Moon and beyond.
- 17 Ingenious**
A Carle Illinois College of Medicine team studies clothing that can detect future heart problems and other illnesses before they strike.
- 19 In Class**
Michael LeRoy, '78 LAS, MS '81 LER, MS '83 LAS, professor of labor and employment relations, on advocating for employees, the country's changing labor needs, and giving up control to students.



ILLINI SPORTS

- 20 The Opener**
Mexico City native Matilda Garcia makes waves as a member of Illinois' swimming and diving team.
- 22 Legends**
Wrestler **Lucas Byrd, MS '25 BUS**, wins the 2025 NCAA championship in a thrilling overtime victory, becoming the 25th national champion in Illinois history.
- 23 Student Athlete**
Gymnast Tali Joelson on dietetics, choosing the U. of I., and the importance of parkas.



ILLINI NEWS

- 41 Union Leader**
Illini Union Executive Director **Rebecca "Becki" Salzman, '94 LAS, EDM '07**, invites you to come on in, make yourself at home, and stay awhile.
- 43 Your UIAA**
UIAA launches the University of Illinois Pride Alumni Network, a club dedicated to supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ alumni and their allies.
- 53 My Alma Mater**
Brian Costello, '98 MEDIA, on the lessons he learned covering politics for *The Daily Illini*.
- 56 Illini 411**
What happened to the Illini Union's alumni portrait gallery, and what became of the local band One Eyed Jacks? Deputy Editor Ryan A. Ross has the answers and more.



ILLINOIS

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Doing well, doing good

A FEW MONTHS into my new job, I am happy to report that I have learned the lyrics to the Alma Mater, cheered with the students in Block I, visited the Morrow Plots, played racquetball at the Activities and Recreation Center, thrown a Frisbee on the Quad, and may have even befriended a few squirrels.

Now that I've crossed those things off my checklist of essential Illinois experiences, I suppose it's time to tell you a bit about my vision for this great university.

I can pretty much sum it up with a simple idea. I want Illinois to influence every important social, political, and technological discussion of the 21st century and beyond. Educators, innovators, researchers, policymakers, community leaders, and everyone else should approach every challenge and opportunity with the thought, "What are they doing at Illinois?"

Whether it's solving climate change, improving health outcomes, advancing artificial intelligence and quantum computing, or promoting economic mobility and social wellness—everyone's first reaction should be to ask, "What are they doing at Illinois?"

I truly believe we have all the ingredients to make this happen. Illinois is one of the nation's leading research institutions. We have a comprehensive academic portfolio, a globally felt reach, a public engagement mission we believe in, and an unmatched interdisciplinary culture. There are very few institutions that can claim such a profile and potential for impact.

Importantly, our land-grant mission obliges us to lead initiatives that deliver real, practical improvements in the lives of everyone in the state of Illinois and, by (ahem) extension, our nation and the world. This is our responsibility, and one that we are privileged to bear.

Look no further for proof of point than **Omar Yaghi, PHD '90 LAS**, who recently won the Nobel Prize for his work in metal-organic frameworks that are changing the way we approach challenges around the climate and clean water, just to name a very short list.

This is not a time to be Midwest humble. Humility is not about hiding one's light; rather, it is about understanding what one can do and living up to what one must do. We must be ambitious and influential, and we need to show everyone that they are a part of our shared success. When Illinois succeeds, everyone wins.

And when they ask, "What are they doing at Illinois?" we'll respond the same way we have for 158 years and counting: We're doing good.

Sincerely,



Charles L. Isbell, Jr.
Chancellor



Email: chancellor@illinois.edu
Instagram: [@illinichancellor](https://www.instagram.com/illinichancellor)



Passing the torch

IT'S WITH MIXED EMOTIONS that I inform you of an upcoming changing of the guard within *Illinois Alumni*.

For the past 14 years, the magazine has been led by **Hugh Cook**, '81 UIC, MBA '83 UIC, under whose editorship *Illinois Alumni* has earned more than a dozen editorial and design awards and become one of the nation's premier alumni publications.

Hugh has announced his plans to retire this coming spring after 23 years with the UIAA. He will be leaving behind some very large shoes to fill.

Thankfully, that's where **Ryan Ross**, '08 LAS, MSLIS '10, will be stepping in.

In April 2026, Ryan will become *Illinois Alumni*'s editor-in-chief.

Ryan joined the Alumni Association's staff in 2015 and has been on the communications team since 2020. He currently serves as deputy editor of the magazine, director of our History and Traditions Programs, and curator and collections manager of the Richmond Family Welcome Gallery at Alice Campbell Alumni Center.

Ryan was promoted from associate editor to senior editor in 2022. His exceptional eye for detail, in-depth knowledge of the university's history and culture, and strong writing and editing skills made him a perfect fit for that promotion—and now for stepping into a leadership position with the magazine.

As senior editor, Ryan produced many popular, award-winning cover stories, including *Legacy Builder* (Spring '25), a profile of Illinois wheelchair racing coach **Adam Bleakney**, '00 LAS, MS '02 MEDIA; and *Hangouts* (Fall '24), a retrospective on alumni's favorite campus bars, restaurants, and other haunts—which set an *Illinois Alumni* record for unique viewers of a single digital article.

This past June, *Hangouts* won a 2025 Circle of Excellence Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education—the main professional organization for alumni associations and university advancement staff. And in October, *Legacy Builder* won Best Profile at the 2025 Folio: Eddie Awards, one of the most prestigious honors in the magazine publishing industry.

While we will sorely miss Hugh Cook's tremendous leadership, vision, and editorial acumen, we are thrilled to see Ryan Ross take over as editor-in-chief—thus assuring the continued high quality that been a hallmark of Hugh's tenure.

Please join me in welcoming Ryan into his new role!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David Bambrey".

David Bambrey

President,

*University of Illinois
Alumni Association*

“Great piece on REO!” (*The Nine Lives of REO Speedwagon*, Fall ’25)

Brian Krumm, ’93 MEDIA Chicago

ILLINI REPLY



REO Speedwagon and its road crew take on the staff of student radio station WPGU in a charity basketball game.



REO Speedwagon

I enjoyed reading your cover story, *The Nine Lives of REO Speedwagon* (Fall ’25).

During my years at Illinois (1977–81), I was very involved at radio station WPGU, which had close ties to REO and its music. In Spring 1980, REO had a concert scheduled in Charleston, Ill., at Eastern Illinois University. REO’s management called the station and said the band wanted to challenge WPGU’s staff to a charity basketball game. I arranged for the use of Huff Gym, found a local charity to receive the proceeds, put a together a WPGU team, and contacted U. of I. Athletics for guest celebrity referees from the Illinois basketball team—who turned out to be Fighting Illini greats **Eddie Johnson, ’83 LAS**, and **Levi Cobb!** In addition to refereeing the game, they gave a slam-dunk demonstration at halftime. In front of a large crowd, REO and WPGU put on an entertaining game, which the station broadcast live. REO prevailed in the final score (there were some very talented basketball players in the band and

Letters Policy

Readers are welcome to submit letters sharing their ideas and opinions about the content of *Illinois Alumni* and other topics pertaining to the university and/or the University of Illinois Alumni Association. Letters must be signed and are edited for length and clarity.

Editor, *Illinois Alumni*
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on its crew), but we had a good time. It was one of many highlights of my time at WPGU and the U. of I.

Phil Priest, ’81 LAS Rolling Meadows, Ill.

ROCKIN’ WITH REO

Ryan Ross’ article on REO Speedwagon was killer. So well done on so many levels. Heck, it’s as if he was there living it at the time. What a fine piece of journalism. Bravo!

It also got me to thinking: What was the best year for live music at the U. of I.? Although we are all self-absorbed in a sense, I think my sophomore year—1987—was it, as I remember seeing U2 (with BoDeans opening), R.E.M., Peter Gabriel, REO Speedwagon, the Robert Cray Band, Whitney Houston (whom I did not see), Huey Lewis and the News, and some other big-time acts at what we then called Assembly Hall—each for about \$15. Top that! Plus, Bono swung by the Tri-Delts’ house in the wee hours afterwards and played its piano.

William Choslovsky, ’90 BUS Chicago

I am a lifetime member of the University of Illinois Alumni Association, and I want to compliment you on your excellent magazine. I love all of the various sections, and it’s a very nice visual production as well.

Not to make a bad pun, but the Fall ’25 issue hit a chord because of its feature on REO Speedwagon. From 1967 to 1968, I dated a fella who was in REO. He didn’t graduate from Illinois, as he transferred to another university. The band didn’t always have a place to practice; I lived in Bromley Hall, which had a nice basement, so they held some of their practices there until the complaints started about the loud music!

Diann Lubbock Gordon, ’68 ED Carbondale, Ill.

ILLINI REPLY

ROGER AND US

I was thrilled to read your article about **Roger Ebert, '64 MEDIA** (*At the Movies*, Spring '25).

I grew up in Chicago, and my family and I were regular viewers of the Siskel and Ebert program on Chicago's public TV station, WTTW. Ebert, my husband Larry, and I were contemporaries as undergraduate U. of I. students in the 1960s.

Larry and I have been devoted members of the Alumni Association and the University of Illinois Foundation, after spending nine years at Illinois earning our collective four degrees. We were at a function, I believe in Chicago, to honor outgoing

University of Illinois System President Stanley Ikenberry. Ebert was the evening's featured speaker. After ample plaudits of Ikenberry for his services, Ebert was summoned to the podium. He told us that his mother could never really understand his job when all he did was go to the movies.

Ebert grew up in Urbana, and his young life was intertwined with the U. of I. He had really wanted to go away to college to have new experiences, but his father, who was a lead electrician at the university, would always say, "Roger, you're going to go to Illinois," which he ultimately did and never regretted. Ebert told the following story to the audience's collective nods.

"One night," he recounted, "in the wee hours of the morning, a huge thunderstorm rolled across the cornfields of the plain that was home to the U. of I. A massive lightning bolt struck some delicate electrical equipment, and the whole university plummeted into darkness." Ebert's father woke him and said, "Get up, Roger. We have to go to the university." Ebert then continued. "We drove through rain-slicked streets with only the headlights of the car to show us the way to a building on campus. When we arrived, my dad unlocked the building's door, and we stepped inside by the light of his flashlight. He stood me by the door and told me not to move. And

HONORING AN IMPACT

Keith Slaughter ('75) honored colleague Bonnie Anderson Seiler's impact on him while he attended Illinois by establishing the *Bonnie Anderson Seiler Scholarship Endowment*. This supports undergraduates in the CS + Education program at Illinois, with a preference for Illinois students, and echoes her contributions to computer-based elementary math education.

Slaughter makes annual gifts through a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) from his IRA, a planned giving vehicle that allows donors over age 70½ to make tax-advantaged contributions directly to a charitable organization.

To learn how you can use a QCD to establish a charitable gift annuity that pays you income for life (some restrictions apply), contact a UIF gift planning professional at 217-244-0473 or email GPIinfo@uif.uillinois.edu.



“

Bonnie taught me good computer-based education lesson design principles, along with how to work as a member of a professional team.

—KEITH SLAUGHTER ('75)

"I enjoy *Illinois Alumni*—and kudos on a job well done!"
Eileen Meyer, 82 BUS, Fernandina Beach, Fla.

then he threw a switch, and the whole university lit up." Ebert then pointed his finger at the retiring president, leaned into the microphone and said to roaring laughter and thunderous applause, "And you, sir, I'll bet you don't know where that switch is!"

He was a good man. We're proud to call him an Illini!

Katherine (Niven) Howell, '65 LAS
Larry James Howell, '66 ENG, MS '68
ENG, PHD '70 ENG *Royal Oak, Mich.*

AWARD WINNING CONTENT

Illinois Alumni received four national awards in 2025. In June, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)—the main profes-

sional organization for alumni associations and university advancement staff—recognized two *Illinois Alumni* articles with its highest honor, the annual Circle of Excellence Award. Contributing Editor Kristin Baird Rattini's *Field Guide* (Spring 2024), the cover story about **Jaap Hoogstraten, '84 LAS**, head of exhibitions at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, received a Gold citation in the Best Profile (1,000-plus words) category, while Deputy Editor Ryan A. Ross' *Hangouts* (Fall 2024), a highly popular overview of alumni's favorite bars, restaurants, and other campus haunts, earned Silver for Best News/Feature Story (1,000-plus words). In

October, the magazine won in two categories at the annual Folio: Eddie and Ozzie Awards, one of the most prestigious honors in the magazine publishing industry. Ross' *Legacy Builder* (Spring 2025), the cover story about **Adam Bleakney, '00 LAS, MS '02 MEDIA**, the university's longtime wheelchair racing coach, won an Eddie for Best Profile, defeating, among others, an *AARP: The Magazine* cover story about Samuel L. Jackson. Senior Art Director Jen Dahlgren's layout for *His Dream Job*, a profile by Monica Fountain about the National Civil Rights Museum's president, **Dr. Russell Wigginton, PHD '01 LAS**, won an Ozzie for Best Feature Design, besting *AARP: Bulletin*.



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THE BONEYARD IN WINTER

BONEYARD CREEK—the 3.3-mile-long waterway that flows through the Engineering Campus and provides drainage for Champaign-Urbana—has meant different things to different generations of Illini. Early students knew it as a notorious site of hazing, where upperclassmen tossed freshmen in the middle of the night. To later students, it was a disgusting eyesore—filled with trash and debris—which would flood Green Street and campus buildings after a heavy rain. But for students today, the Boneyard is one of the most beautiful parts of our campus, a peaceful place to sit and watch the world go by—regardless of the season.

Photograph by
FRED ZWICKY



Alumni

Our Illini spirit shines year-round—and you can help shape next year's limited-edition design! **Help us select** the next iconic campus landmark, Illini tradition, or piece of history to be featured in the 2026 Snow Globe. Share your idea and help us create the next cherished Illini keepsake.



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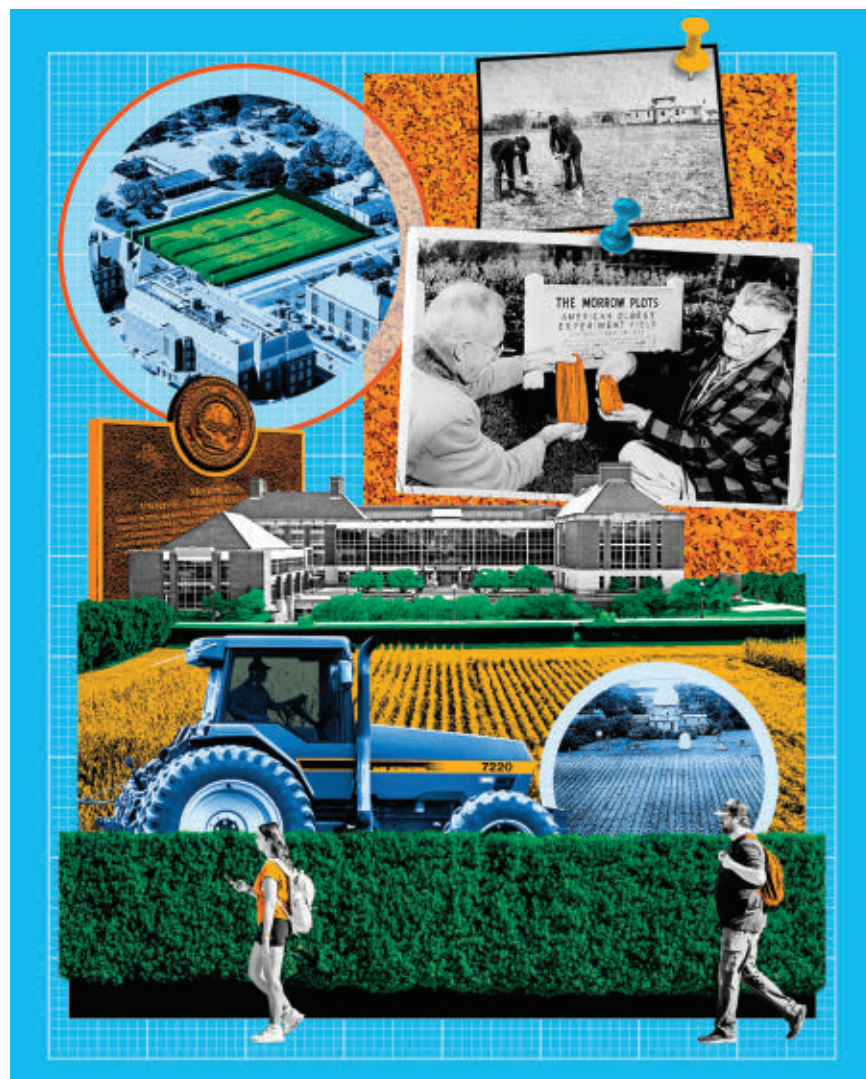
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AROUND the QUAD

INFORMED SOURCE 15 | INGENIOUS 17 | IN CLASS 19



PHOTOGRAPHY: U. OF I. STRATCOM; U. OF I. ARCHIVES; UJAA

ACES

Morrow Plots Cultivate Fresh Look

Bayer funds a makeover for the landmark's 150th anniversary
BY CLAIRE BENJAMIN

THE BAYER CORPORATION

THE BAYER CORPORATION is underwriting the revitalization of the Morrow Plots, the oldest experimental agricultural field in North America. Established in 1876, the plots are located in the heart of campus between the Main and South Quads and have been recognized as a National Historic Landmark since 1968.

"This revitalization honors the extraordinary legacy of innovation that has defined the Morrow Plots," says Germán Bollero, dean of the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences. "We are deeply grateful to Bayer for joining us in ensuring these fields remain a source of discovery and inspiration for generations to come."

To date, overgrown shrubs that had surrounded and obscured views of the plots have been removed to make way for a new landscape design by Cliff Garten Studio, in collaboration with Site Design Group. A live webcam will document the revitalization's progress.

"The Morrow Plots are more than fields; they're part of our identity as Illinois graduates and as agricultural innovators," says **Mike Graham, PhD '93 ACES**, and head of research and development for Bayer Crop Science. "When I was at ACES, all the doors were open to explore and learn, and I'm proud that Bayer can help provide that same inspiration for future generations."

Work will continue throughout the Morrow Plots' 150th year to be completed in time for its sesquicentennial celebration in 2026.



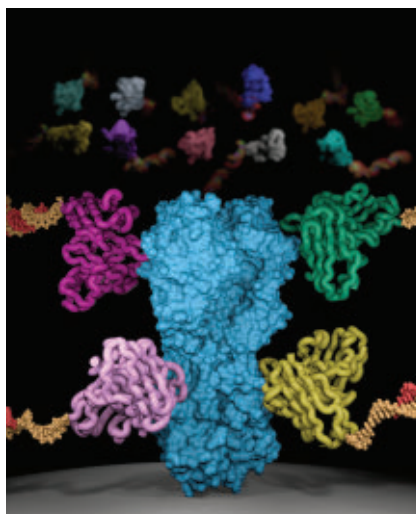
ENDANGERED PLANTS UPDATE

SCIENTISTS FROM the Illinois Natural History Survey (INHS) and the Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources have updated the state conservation status ranks, or S-ranks, of threatened and endangered plants in Illinois. The update includes some plants not recorded in the state for decades, and has found many that, while still threatened, are thriving more than previously thought. Brian Charles, a visiting INHS scientific specialist who led the multiyear initiative, notes that the 331 plants on the list are as fascinating as they are rare. They include carnivorous species such as sundews, pitcher plants, and bladderworts, as well as 18 types of orchids. —DIANA YATES

EXPONENTIAL ANTIBODY POTENTIAL

New testing method scales up immune system research

RESEARCHERS AT ILLINOIS have developed a new high-volume method for rapidly building and testing large numbers of antibodies at once. Dubbed the “oPool+ display,” the method aims to hasten antibody research and the development of new antibody-based treatments, immune therapies, and vaccines, says Professor Nicholas Wu, leader of the study. Antibodies had been individually synthesized and studied, a daunting task. “Instead of analyzing one antibody at a time, this approach lets us evaluate thousands of antibody-antigen interactions in just a few days,” Wu says. —LIZ AHLBERG TOUCHSTONE



ADVANCED AI

ADDITIONAL LAB FUNDING

MMLI receives \$15 million

THE U.S. National Science Foundation has renewed its support of the U. of I.’s Molecule Maker Lab Institute (MMLI) with a five-year, \$15-million award. During its first five years, in collaboration with Pennsylvania State University and the Georgia Institute of Technology, the lab focused on developing artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the discovery and synthesis of molecules for applications in medicine, energy, and other industries.

Going forward, the collaborators will continue that work, advancing AI-enabled discoveries and further developing catalysts, drugs, and materials.

“We are most excited about the next-generation AI tools that we will develop in this next chapter for molecular discovery and synthesis,” says Professor Huimin Zhao, director of the MMLI.

The NSF Molecule Maker Lab Institute is an interdisciplinary initiative with leaders in AI and organic synthesis collaborating to create frontier AI tools, dynamic open-access databases, and fast and broadly accessible small molecule manufacturing and discovery platforms. —LAT

ENGINEERING

Powering Up Outer Space

Engineering Professor Katy Huff on the logistics, challenges, and potential of bringing nuclear-generated electricity to the Moon and beyond **BY MAEVE REILLY**

Q&A **NASA'S FISSION SURFACE POWER (FSP) program**—targeting deployment of a 100-kilowatt nuclear reactor to the Moon by 2030—aims to accelerate the establishment of a reliable power source for future space explorations.

Q: Is a reactor on the Moon a good idea?

A: Nuclear energy is uniquely suited for supporting sustained lunar and Martian missions. To deploy a fission reactor on the lunar surface in support of scientific discovery is a noble task. If this milestone can be achieved, it will be the result of precision engineering, rigorous safety planning, and sustained institutional investment. If it succeeds, it will offer an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate clean, stable energy in the most remote and extreme environment yet.

Q: How would one construct a nuclear reactor in space? Could we even get the materials there?

A: The reactor should be fully assembled and fueled on Earth, transported via rocket to the Moon or Mars, and deployed at the landing location with minimal setup. Transporting a nuclear reactor involves overcoming significant mass and size constraints. With careful systems engineering, these constraints can be managed.

Q: Is the 2030 timeline feasible?

A: It doesn't align well with recent budgetary trends. NASA's

funding has remained static, raising concerns about whether adequate support will remain for its broader portfolio of missions. Accelerating the FSP program could come at the expense of other critical priorities, including Earth science, climate observation, and space-based weather forecasting.

Q: How would the power be used or stored?

A: The reactor would rely on uranium fuel to sustain a

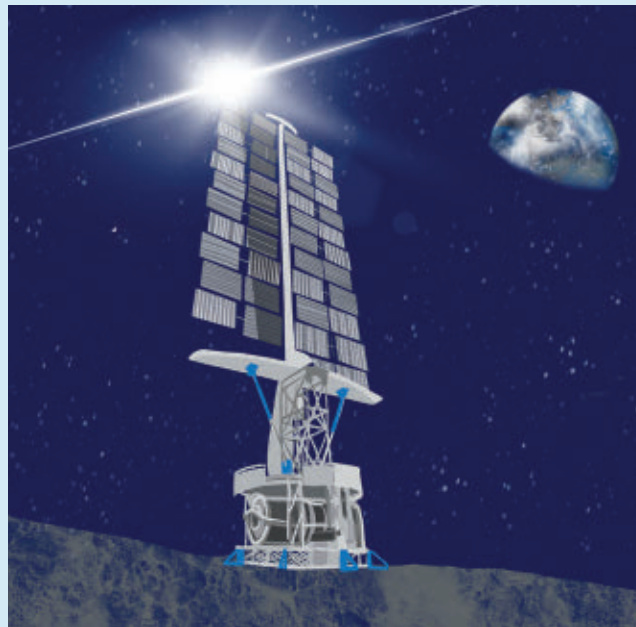
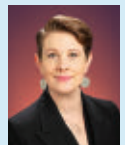
nuclear chain reaction, producing thermal energy. This heat would be converted into electricity using a closed Brayton cycle power conversion system. The generated electricity could be distributed via cable to lunar infrastructure.

Q: What are the safety implications?

A: During rocket launches, there is always a risk of failure. If a rocket carrying a reactor were to explode or fall back to Earth, it could potentially disperse radioactive material. To mitigate this, the reactor would launch in an un-ir-

radiated state, using fresh uranium fuel that is only weakly radioactive. Once on the Moon, the safety focus would shift to shielding, containment, and autonomous control.

Katy Huff, professor of nuclear, plasma, and radiological engineering, is the former assistant secretary for nuclear energy in the U.S. Dept. of Energy. Read her "In Class" interview at <https://go.illinois.edu/InClassHuff>



WYMER HALL OPENS

State-of-the-art learning center embraces student-centric design

ON OCT. 10, 2025, the U. of I. and the Gies College of Business dedicated Steven S. Wymer Hall. At nearly 100,000 square feet, the building is a shared campus resource that will offer expanded hybrid learning opportunities, as well as a range of gathering spaces. "Everything was designed with learners in mind," says Gies Dean Brooke Elliott. "It offers flexible classrooms, collaboration areas, content production studios, team workspaces, and welcoming lounges." The building's lead donor, **Steven Wymer, '85 BUS**, an equity and high-income division portfolio manager with Fidelity Investments, says he wanted to "invest in a school that's been a big part of my life. It gave me the confidence to move forward in the business world."

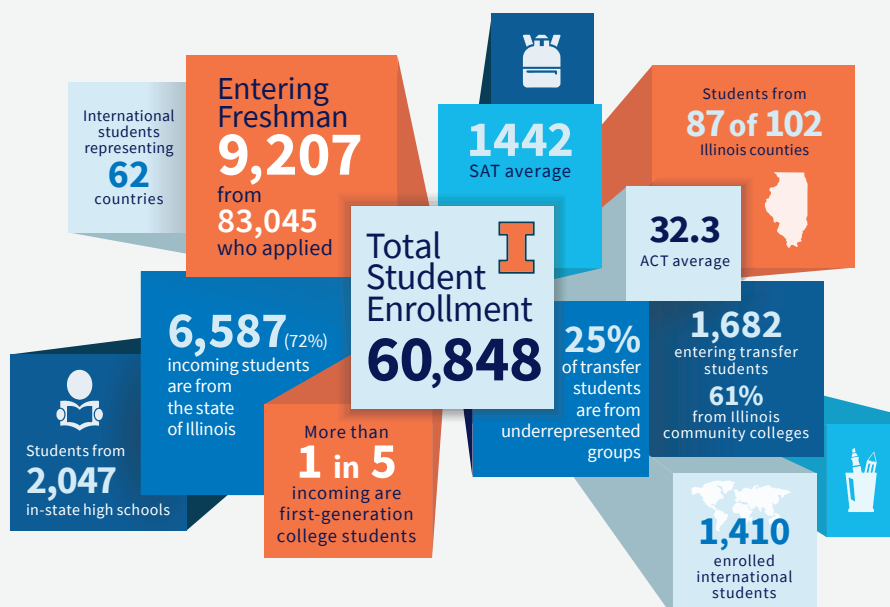


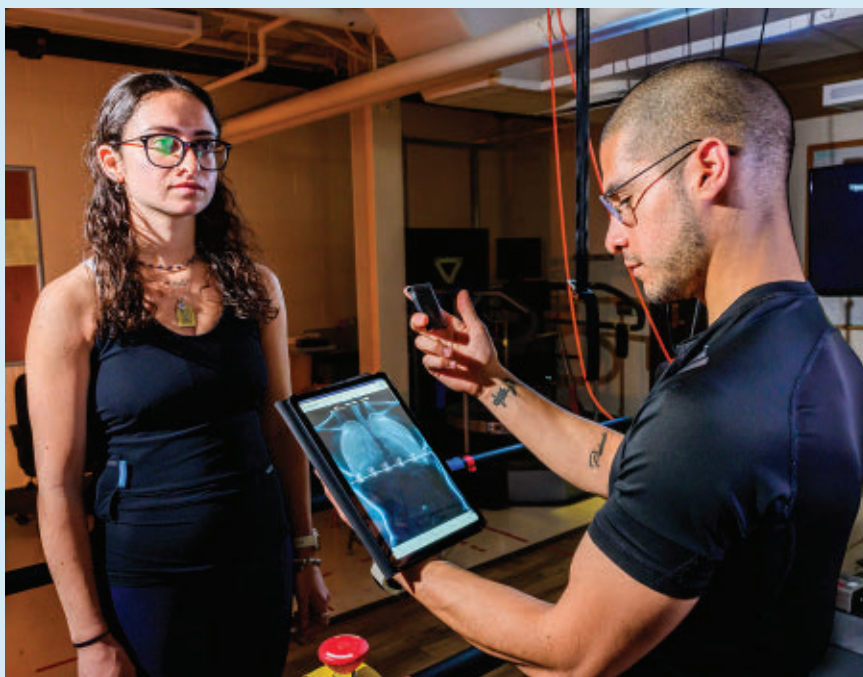
ENROLLMENT

CLASS OF 2025 U. of I. breaks records

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign welcomed a record-breaking enrollment of 60,848 students for the Fall 2025 semester. The 2025 freshman class tallied 9,207 students (compared to 9,008 in 2024) and had an average ACT score of 32.3 (compared to 32.1 in 2024) and an average SAT of 1442 (1440 in 2024). Applications rose to 83,045 in this admissions cycle, an increase of 9,303 (12.6 percent) over last year.

Source: U. of I. Strategic Communications and Marketing





The smart shirt can obtain a single-line electrocardiogram recording of a person's heart.

HEALTH SCIENCES

Smart Shirts

Tailor-made for measuring cardiovascular fitness

BY DOUG PETERSON

THE SHIRT on your back might just save your life. At the very least, it could provide warning signs that might prevent a cardiac event from striking out of nowhere.

A Carle Illinois College of Medicine team has been studying “smart shirts” since 2021 and has found that they are highly effective at measuring heart rate recovery—that is, how much a person’s heart rate lowers one minute after strenuous exercise.

“Heart rate recovery is a critical indicator of cardiovascular fitness and autonomic nervous system function,” says Manuel Hernandez, teaching associate professor of biomedical and translational sciences at Carle Illinois College of Medicine. He adds that abnormal heart rate recovery has been associated with heart failure, diabetes

mellitus, coronary artery disease, hypertension, and sudden cardiac death.

Hernandez has been conducting the smart-shirt research with Richard Sowers, professor of mathematics and industrial and enterprise systems engineering, along with several Illinois graduate students.

In the first 2021 study, 38 participants, ranging from 20 to 76 years old, walked on a treadmill at varying speeds and inclines, while wearing a commercially available smart shirt, the Hexoskin, from Montréal-based Carré Technologies. Study participants were classified as high risk if their heart rate went down by only 28 beats per minute or less, one minute after they stopped exercising.

To collect electrocardiogram data, the Hexoskin shirt has a conductive element embedded across the chest. A second band of elastic material by

the wearer’s navel monitors respiratory rate. A third sensor, tucked into a pocket near the hip, provides information about walking gait and balance.

Illinois researchers have been gathering gait and balance data for some time from several types of wearable sensors to track motor impairment in those with Parkinson’s disease. Smart-shirt data has additionally shown promise in detecting symptoms associated with anxiety disorders.

Although cardiovascular feedback also can be obtained from a Fitbit or a smartwatch, “The great thing about the smart shirt is it allows us to get a single-line electrocardiogram recording across your heart, as well as your respiratory rate,” Hernandez says. “It also has an embedded recorder that allows all the data to be captured throughout the day.”

Smart-shirt data are higher quality than data from smartwatches, he adds, and the shirt can be washed, once the non-washable components are detached. So far, its only major drawback is its limited capability to fit a range of body types.

Nevertheless, considering that the traditional way to evaluate heart health usually involves costly tests and equipment, smart shirts continuously monitor an individual’s heart rate as they go about their daily activities.

“People have a way of avoiding the doctor, especially in middle age,” Hernandez says. “And by the time [they] do get to the doctor, it could be something urgent. Smart shirts focus on prevention and early detection.”



QUAD ANGLES

► Bring us our figgy pudding! For decades, the U. of I.'s Madrigal Singers—a score of student vocalists selected from the University Concert Choir—presented their annual Christmas Madrigal Dinner at the Illini Union, entertaining as many as 1,500 guests over a five-night run. The event, which was often themed, featured a feast followed by singing and dancing. For the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976, the program honored Benjamin Franklin. This past fall, its performers returned to campus for a reunion, where attendees reminisced and sang favorite songs from their repertoire, conducted by **John Silantien, AMUSD '80**.



Chuck Bleck

► Updates to the university's Delta Upsilon fraternity house bring new luster to a building that dates back to 1909. DU alum **Chuck Bleck, '92 FAA**, served as project architect and oversaw a complete makeover of the house, even driving a truck to Tennessee to pick up the student rooms' doors, according to fellow DU alum **Steve MacGregor, '74 FAA, MARCH '76, MBA '77**.

► Champaign has renamed a section of John Street as Dean Clarence Shelley Way to honor the beloved late administrator who oversaw Project 500, the U. of I. program that increased Black student enrollment in the 1960s. Shelley passed away in 2022.

KRANNERT ART MUSEUM

THE RAREST OF THE RARE

Exhibit explores how art prints shaped European society's beliefs

THE KRANNERT ART MUSEUM presents "Imagination, Faith, and Desire: Art and Agency in European Prints, 1475–1800," an exhibition of more than 100 works that illustrate how prints dramatically shaped European society as its first form of visual mass media.

Exhibit organizer Maureen Warren, the museum's curator of European and American art, notes that the prints are borrowed from private collectors, offering a rare opportunity for the public to enjoy "some of the most important European prints ever made, the rarest of the rare."

Six thematic sections examine artistic excellence; imagination and creativity; how prints transmitted artistic styles and ideas across space and time; images of everyday life; religious prints; and how prints spread ideas about sexuality and gender.

Warren says many of the prints have a religious theme because the Catholic Church was an important arts patron. The exhibition's timeline also spans the Protestant Reformation and Counter-Reformation, both of which aggressively used images as propaganda, she adds.

Exhibit highlights include three self-portraits of Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, Albrecht Dürer's "Adam and Eve," and Jacques Callot's "The Temptation of St. Anthony."

"Imagination, Faith, and Desire: Art and Agency in European Prints, 1475–1800" is on view at Krannert through Feb. 28, 2026. —JODI HECKEL



Detail from Albrecht Dürer, "The Four Horsemen," 1498. Woodcut (proof). Private collection.



AROUND THE QUAD IN CLASS

LER Professor Michael LeRoy created a course on collective bargaining in sports and entertainment.

I had been studying labor unions and teaching labor law, mostly in traditional industries, including steel, automobile, and tire manufacturing. The new class offers a way to explore areas where unions are still vital. It has become hugely popular.

► **I divide** the students into small groups to discuss current events, then we come back together for a conversation. As an instructor, this means giving up control. The irony is that the more expert you become, the harder it is to turn the class over to a group of 22-year-olds. But you have to trust them—and I do.

► **I approached** these new classes as though I had the opportunity to be a student again. I tell my students that I'm not an expert—I'm an advanced student. We're going to go on this journey together, and we'll learn together.

► **My father** was a survivor of a Nazi concentration camp. He was a forced laborer—working under armed guard. My faith and my people experienced the worst treatment because of who they were, including forced labor. That has given me passion and conviction for my work.

► **Recently, I ran** into a former student who said, "Professor LeRoy, you haven't aged a day." I told her, "I get to come to work and think in a new way every day." Once you embrace the idea that you have autonomy and freedom to create, you can stay forever young and keep growing. ■

Edited and condensed from an interview conducted on Oct. 13, 2025

LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS

Labor Backer

Michael LeRoy on advocating for employees, the country's changing labor needs, and giving up control to students
AS TOLD TO MONICA FOUNTAIN

I **HAVE THE GOOD FORTUNE** to be a graduate of Illinois as well as a long-time faculty member here. For the past 30 years I have taught foundational courses in employment law. These classes are important. I'm equipping people to be advocates for employees and to follow the law. That's a lot harder than you might think.

Mid-career, I proposed three new classes in labor and industrial relations, and I have gotten to teach all of them. One is on immigration and employment. As tensions around immigration have increased, it has become more and more important to understand how employment and labor law intersect with the changing labor needs of the nation.

► **My son**, who was in the Campus Honors Program at Illinois, guilted me into teaching a class for undergraduates. It's on immigration, race, and the inequality of labor.

► **I also created** a class on collective bargaining in sports and entertainment.

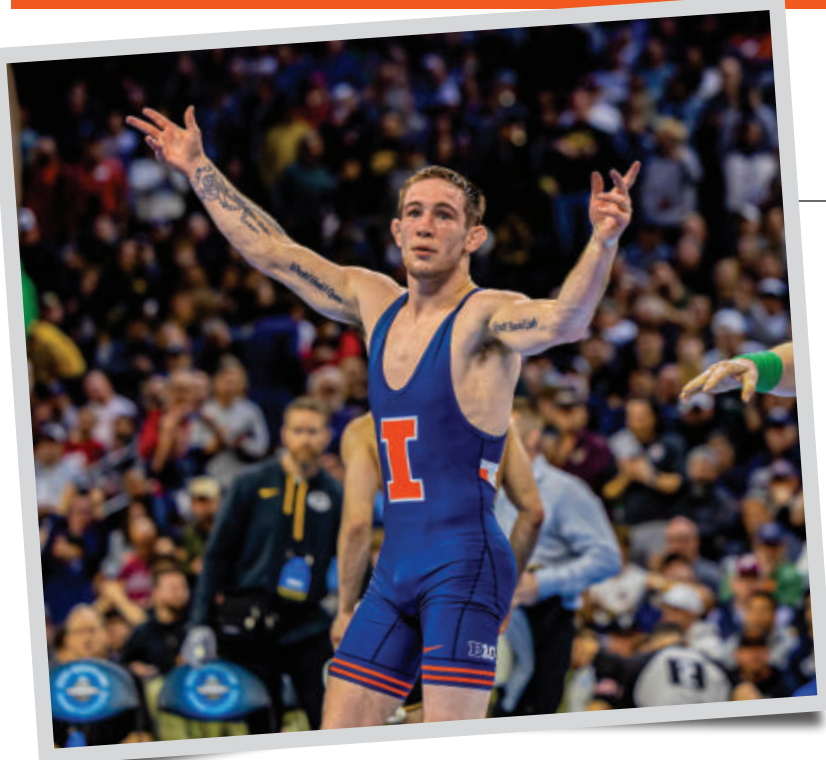
ILLINI SPORTS





THE OPENER

MATILDA GARCIA'S THREE-METER PIKE started her third season with a big splash—a silver medal on day one of the Fighting Illini swim and dive team's dual opener against Iowa State in October. Awarded a score of 305.20 points, hers was the eighth-best three-meter dive in U. of I. history. Twice named to the Academic All-Big Ten, the junior advertising major is from Mexico City where she was a two-time high school Junior Nationals bronze medalist. Garcia first learned about Illinois in a Zoom recruitment call with head diving coach Tricia Grant. She chose Illinois because, she says, "It has great academics and sports. And I also wanted to compete in the Big Ten." On Oct. 24, Garcia's score of 300.75 captured the three-meter dive championship at the House of Paign Invite, hosted by the U. of I., against Southern Illinois and Illinois State. —DAVID A. SCOTT



Lucas Byrd became the 25th Illini to win a NCAA national championship title. “Winning a title is something every wrestler dreams of,” he says.

WRESTLING

Byrd Soars

In a 2025 overtime win, Lucas Byrd joins an elite group of Illinois NCAA Wrestling Champs **BY BOB ASMUSSEN**

A LIFETIME of effort by **Lucas Byrd, MS '25 BUS**, culminated in a stirring overtime victory at the NCAA Wrestling Championships on March 22, 2025, in Philadelphia.

His title at 133 pounds was the first for an Illinois wrestler since program legend **Isaiah Martinez, '17 LAS**, won his second title in 2016.

Months later, Byrd has vivid memories of his arm being raised in triumph at the Wells Fargo Center in front of family and friends.

“It’s just a huge feeling of relief and accomplishment,” he says. “Winning a national title is something every wrestler dreams of.”

In the final, Byrd defeated Iowa’s Drake Ayala 3-2 in overtime. It was

their third match of the season. Earlier, Ayala won in a dual meet, and Byrd pinned Ayala for the Big Ten title.

Byrd won Illinois’ 25th national title. “They don’t come by very often,” he says.

In the wrestling room at Huff Hall, a plaque hangs on the wall above the mats, listing the national champions by weight class. Byrd is the first at 133 pounds. Photos of the champions also fill the space.

“I’m leaving a marker for incoming guys who are like, ‘I want to do what Byrd did,’” he says.

The best part for Byrd is that he can do it all over again in 2026. And join fellow Illini Martinez, the late **Joe Sapora, 1930 LAS**, **Bob Norman**, and **Jesse Delgado, '15 LAS**, as two-time NCAA champions.

Conveniently, the 2026 NCAA meet is in Cleveland. Byrd is from Cincinnati and figures to have plenty of fans in attendance. His mom Myra, dad Jeff, and older brother Max are part of his support system, along with his girlfriend **Ellie Holzman, '23 AHS**, who played volleyball for the Illini and now is a nurse in Philadelphia.

Byrd, 25, is in his seventh season competing at Illinois. He redshirted in 2019–20 and took a medical redshirt in 2023–24. If he reaches the NCAA meet—a strong possibility—Byrd will become a rare five-time national qualifier.

Byrd wasn’t always sure he was going to come back for the current season. “I had to figure out if that was something I wanted to do,” he says.

With input from his parents and family, girlfriend, and coaches, he decided in April to give it one more try.

“I’m looking forward to getting to wrestle again,” Byrd says. “There are different challenges. My body doesn’t recover like it did when I was 18 or 19.”

Byrd has earned a master’s of science and is working on a certificate in crop science. His career plans after wrestling lean toward the physical.

“I want to fight,” he says. “I want to chase the goal of being an Ultimate Fighting Championship champ.”

Beyond the mat, what does Byrd want as his legacy?

“I want people to remember me as someone who went out and had fun and just let it fly,” he says. “I also want people to know that I was a good person. That’s a big thing.” **I**

TALI JOELSON

The gymnast on dietetics, choosing Illinois, and the importance of parkas

WHEN IT CAME TIME to pick a college, Tali Joelson wanted a place with strong academics and a family-like feel. The Seattle native found it in faraway Champaign-Urbana. Boasting a 3.9 grade point average, Joelson will graduate in May with a degree in dietetics.

► **How did you end up at Illinois?** I really just felt at home here. I thought there would be more opportunities for me to grow and learn. I definitely wanted an adventure.

► **What does Illinois offer that you don't have back home?** The education is top-tier. I couldn't ask for anything better. I definitely like less traffic. And it's been fun to have the distinct four different seasons. The first winter took me by surprise. But with the parka, it wasn't too bad.

► **Tell me about your post-graduation plans.** I'm going to go to grad school and become a registered dietitian. Illinois is one of the best in the country for dietetics. I'm on the executive board of my dietetics club. It's an awesome experience and brings me closer to the people in my major.

► **What are your goals and hopes for the season?** We want to win a Big Ten championship. Personally, I want to keep up my involvement in the [gymnastics] community, lifting everyone up. One of our team's biggest goals is to just have everyone stay healthy. —BA





BY MARY TIMMINS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MICHELLE HASSEL

From THE Top

At the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester, as autumn flowed into the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign along with the largest freshman class ever, *Illinois Alumni* sat down to talk with Charles L. Isbell, Jr., the new chancellor, about his perceptions of the university, his life, and his hopes for higher education

WELCOME AND CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR NEW POSITION. CAN YOU SHARE SOME OF YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF ILLINOIS?

I've always known that this is a great place with great bones. When I was a young professor at Georgia Tech in the early 2000s, I was part of a project with folks at Illinois who were doing climate modeling. They needed some computing and machine learning people on the team, so I came up here multiple times over several years. I have a lot of fond memories of working with people here. U. of I. has always had a warm place in my heart.

WHAT MADE YOU SAY, "I'M GOING TO TAKE THIS POSITION"?

There are a small number of universities in this country that are well placed to lead conversations about where higher education needs to go. These conversations are twofold—conversations about the environment we're currently in and generational conversations about the proper role of an elite public research university. For the past 20,

30, 40 years, higher education has been moving in one direction, and it's time to start talking about what we need to be doing next. And I just love the idea of being part of a university that can lead that kind of conversation.

WHERE DO YOU THINK HIGHER EDUCATION NEEDS TO BE GOING?

We need to be moving into more interdisciplinary research and interdisciplinary education. Working on big problems is going to require lots of different perspectives and lots of different ways of thinking. We also need to figure out how universities can have a dialogue with all their constituencies. Not just with students, faculty, staff, and alumni, but also with people who will never set foot on the campus of a university like this, but who are, nonetheless, part of the community we serve. I further believe that Illinois should embrace its role of being a giant, top-tier public university, with strong humanities and social sciences, strong STEM, and growing efforts in the health sciences. And let's not overlook our land grant charter. We need to ask what it

means to bring all of those things together and live up to our mission in the middle of the 21st century.

WHAT IS THE HARDEST PART ABOUT THIS JOB?

It's very easy for people to see me as an abstraction. I'm not a real person. I'm a title. I'm an entity that's very, very far away. And people can think or say anything about me that they want to because I'm not real. Not seeing others as real is the root of a lot of bad things that happen in the world. So, let me emphasize that I am a real person. I watched *Star Wars* seven times in the first couple of months after it came out in 1977. I even have a light saber in my office. I own 22,574 comic books. I play racquetball and ultimate Frisbee. I listen to Chicago blues while I'm doing interviews—like now. I have experiences, and I have beliefs about the world. I am a person, and I would like for people to see me that way. And I promise that I will return the courtesy of seeing them as individual people as well.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE ABOUT RACE RELATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY?

I have a real strong sense, as do my parents and my children, of what it means to be Black growing up in America. I was raised in a Southern Baptist tradition, and it influenced a lot of the way that I've seen the world. I've experienced prejudice and hate. I hope those experiences help me to have sympathy and empathy for the experiences of others. Empathy, I think, is the most important thing—the ability to put yourself in others' shoes and see into their life and what they've been through and how they feel.

WHAT DREW YOU TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY?

Early on in my life, when I was as young as 8 years old, I knew that I wanted to be a professor, and I wanted to do computer science, although I didn't know what either of those things really meant. After graduating from high school, I stayed in Atlanta, went to Georgia Tech and had a wonderful time. I was a computer science major from day one, but I minored in Spanish as an undergrad as well as

history and psychology. Three minors. You could do that sort of thing at the time if you didn't realize you were taking too many classes. I wrote plays and poetry in Spanish, and I even had a rap that was half in Spanish that I would sometimes perform. Somewhere along the way, I became an orator. I would give speeches, which taught me how important it is to be able to connect to groups of people.

TELL ME MORE ABOUT GROWING UP. I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE BORN IN TENNESSEE, BUT WOKE UP AS THE MOVING TRUCK PULLED INTO ATLANTA.

Yes, I became sentient when I landed on Washington Road at the age of three-and-a-half. My childhood in Atlanta was wonderful. I'm the eldest of three boys. We went to public schools. Moved around quite a bit, lived in various parts of Atlanta. Changed schools four times. There was lots of support from my younger brothers and the people around me and my parents. My mother and father were divorced when I was eight-and-a-half. But they've stayed friends, and I remain connected with my father. He moved back to Chattanooga and started a barbecue business. The best barbecued pork in all of Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. And he's won the awards to prove it.

LET'S TALK ABOUT THE ROBOT YOU BUILT IN HIGH SCHOOL.

It really wasn't much of a robot. But it was about asking myself, "How do I take these motors and these wheels and put them in an encasing? What kind of device can I build to control the robot?" And I fell in love with the idea of being able to create something that was intelligent, something that could play with me. That's when it really solidified that I was interested in AI (which for a long time was known as machine learning)—creating something intelligent that can understand you, can be a lifelong partner.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THE GROWING CONCERN OVER THE EVOLUTION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE WORLD?

Amara's Law says that we overestimate the impact of technology in the short term, and we underestimate it in the long term. When technology is new, we imagine all kinds of things it can do, and they almost never happen. But decades later, the world is a radically different place because of that technology. Take the internet. It's been around since the 1960s. In the early 1990s, with the creation of the

"We need to be moving into more interdisciplinary research and interdisciplinary education. Working on big problems is going to require lots of different perspectives and lots of different ways of thinking."



Mosaic browser (which, of course, came out of this university), it became popular. People were talking about how everything was going to change in the next three years. There were predictions about how file-sharing protocols like FTP and Gopher were going to change everything about science. Most of that didn't happen, certainly not in the next two or three years. The vast majority of people in 1991 did not foresee the impact of the internet on journalism. But now journalism is in a completely different paradigm. Nor did they predict the impact the internet would have on education, with MOOCs [massive open online courses] and other online education options now available to, essentially, everyone in the world. We've also now got ubiquitous social media, a completely different way for people to interact with one another, both for good and for ill.

The evolution of AI is comparable. Twenty years from now, the world is going to be a radically different place because of AI. And our job—all of our jobs—is to figure out what that world might look like and how to shape AI so that it benefits the greatest number of people.

THAT'S A TALL ORDER.

We've done it before.

WHAT CAN ALUMNI DO TO FURTHER THE MISSION OF THIS UNIVERSITY?

We want alumni to talk to us. Let us know about the real concerns that they see out there, and what they are hearing. And give us—students, faculty, staff, the administration, everyone—ideas about how we should be thinking about the world. We also want alumni to talk to the world about what this university is doing and what this university is capable of doing. Alumni are our best ambassadors because they can speak from the heart and from their own experiences to the kind of institution we are. We need our alumni to help us communicate with people who've never interacted with us, never been a part of this place. The role of alumni is to be a liaison, an ambassador to the outside world and to the university itself.

“This university should be able to influence every single social, political, and technological decision in the world. We're big enough, we're broad enough, we're powerful enough. We're deep enough.”

ABOUT THE CHANCELLOR

Accolades for work in artificial intelligence, and a commitment to education in computer science

ON JULY 17, 2025, Charles L. Isbell, Jr., became Chancellor of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and vice president of the University of Illinois System. Previously provost at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Isbell holds a bachelor's degree in information and computer science from Georgia Institute of Technology, and master's and doctoral degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

A long-time faculty member and administrator at Georgia Tech, Isbell built his academic career as an esteemed teacher and mentor, an administrator committed to computer science education, particularly for underserved communities, and a storied researcher in artificial intelligence. Isbell's work in AI, in his own words, focuses on “how to build autonomous agents that must live and interact with large numbers of other intelligent agents, some of whom may be human”—a complex problem space known to exist in hundreds of thousands of dimensions. He has received numerous accolades, including fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He and his wife, Sheila, have two children, Cody and Joni. —MT

WHAT WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH AS CHANCELLOR?

Here's what I believe fundamentally. This university should be able to influence every single social, political, and technological decision in the world. We're big enough, we're broad enough, we're powerful enough. We're deep enough. It should be the case that with anything that anyone is doing out in the world that has import, anything that matters, big or small, someone asks: “What is Illinois' position on this? How has Illinois worked on this? How can Illinois help us to think about this?” And it may be the role of the chancellor at Illinois to answer those questions. It may be the role of an Illinois faculty member. Those may be questions for alumni of Illinois or friends of Illinois. But Illinois should be top of mind when people are thinking about ways





“We want alumni to talk to us,” Chancellor Isbell says. “Let us know about the real concerns that they see out there, and what they are hearing.”

to frame the world, to understand problems about the world, and to solve those problems.

TELL ME ABOUT THE “FAMILY TREE” OF YOUR ACADEMIC ANCESTORS THAT HANGS OVER YOUR DESK.

On the genealogy chart of my academic ancestry, I am there at the very bottom. Above me are my two Ph.D. advisors. And above them, their advisors. And then their advisors. And their advisors and their advisors and their advisors, going way, way back. Galileo’s in there somewhere, Copernicus is in there somewhere. Also Jacobi and Hess, which is impressive, particularly to an engineer or mathematician. There are a lot of Americans, a lot of Germans, a lot of Italians, a lot of French. The chart describes the world of research and academia over the last

several centuries and how I and others are connected to that today. There’s all of this brilliant work that predates me and anything that I ever did. I am just a part of a long story going back.

Remember, we’re all someone’s ancestor. We all want to be good ancestors. We want it to be the case that 25 years from now, 50 years from now, 158 years from now [*Editor’s Note: The U. of I. was founded in 1867*], those who come after us will look back and say, “This set of people, perhaps in very challenging times, made good decisions. They tried to do what was right, and we are in a better place because of the work that they did.” The future will be built on the way this university thinks of itself. And we want the people who come after us to look back and see us wave to them and say, “Hi.” And know that we did the very best we could. ■



Coach Lou Henson, left, and assistant coach Tony Yates, right, at Henson's first press conference, 1975.

MEMORY LANE

LOU HENSON COMES TO TOWN

Fifty years later, Illini basketball fans look back on the beloved coach's first season at Illinois

BY RYAN A. ROSS

IT WAS A COLD APRIL DAY in 1975, the crisp, clean smell of winter still in the air, and in the Varsity Room of Memorial Stadium an eager crowd gathered to meet the next Illinois men's basketball coach.

The basketball program was then at a low point, with two consecutive last place finishes in the Big Ten, attendance in a precipitous decline, and the sudden departure of head coach Gene Bartow after only one season.

Two days earlier, Bartow had left for UCLA—then the most coveted coaching job in the nation, following the legendary John Wooden's retirement—and his resignation had Illini fans reeling. "We'd been counting on him," says **Peter Korst, '76 ENG, MS '78 AHS**, "and we felt like he abandoned us."

Fortunately for Korst and the Illini faithful, Athletic Director Cecil Coleman had a plan.

Less than 48 hours after Bartow arrived in California, Illinois had hired a new coach, and as Coleman stepped

to the microphone to introduce him, there was an air of excitement among the press conference crowd of reporters and players, who were hopeful that a new regime might signal a change of fortune for Illini basketball.

Virtually everyone in the room expected the new coach to be Don DeVoe from Virginia Tech. In fact, newspapers from all over the Midwest had already reported on his hiring in their morning editions.

So, it seemed to be nothing more than a formality when Coleman stood before them and announced that the new head coach of Fighting Illini men's basketball would be...Lou Henson from New Mexico State.

The crowd gasped—genuinely shocked—not only because the press had gotten it wrong, but also because so many of those present were unfamiliar with the 43-year-old Henson—despite his track record, which included a 1970 Final Four appearance, five NCAA tournament teams, and 11 winning seasons.

“I was in the room,” says retired photojournalist **Michael Smeltzer, '72 LAS, MS '83 MEDIA**, “and the initial reaction from some of the players was, ‘Lou who?’ [But] the more they listened to Lou talk, the more they warmed up to him. By the time the press conference was over, everybody in the room was on board.”

Just as Coleman knew they would be, He had worked closely with Henson years earlier, when they were both athletic directors in the Missouri Valley Conference. Coleman knew exactly who, and what, he was getting by hiring Henson. It would be the most consequential hiring in the history of Illinois basketball.

Over the next 21 years, Henson would prove his mettle over and over again, with 19 winning seasons and 12 NCAA tournament appearances, and Illini fans would come to love him—not only for his success on the court, but also for his integrity, sincerity, candor, and humor, which often put the people around him at ease.

Those qualities were apparent at his first press conference. Whereas many new coaches would overpromise or talk with zeal about the great season ahead, Henson was realistic. He made no bones about the challenges he faced. “I think Illinois can be a national power,” he said, “but I realize that it’s not going to happen overnight.”

Henson had been in this situation twice before, taking over a failing college basketball program and turning it into a winner. Hearing him talk, the audience felt confident that he could do it again—this time at Illinois.

Privately, Henson understood just how difficult this job would be, later writing about the “general apathy”



In his first season at Illinois, 1975–76, Lou Henson’s trademark “Lou-Do” hairstyle was in full effect, but he had yet to discover his famous orange sportscoat. Forty years later, the U. of I. renamed the court at State Farm Center in Henson’s honor.

fans and the university then felt about the basketball team, as well as the U. of I.’s inability to recruit in-state high school players (especially from Chicago), who weren’t even willing to make official visits to campus. What’s more, to the vast majority of Illini basketball fans, Henson was an unknown quantity. And an outsider in Illinois, which made his job even harder.

Henson knew that to succeed, he would have to change

Lou Henson's passion for basketball, competitive nature, and devotion to his players was obvious to anyone who saw him on the sidelines.



those things. And his first step towards meaningful change was in talking to people.

"That first year, Lou and his staff visited more than 400 high schools [in Illinois]," says the *News-Gazette* sportswriter **Loren Tate, '53 MEDIA**. "They wanted to form as many relationships with coaches as possible." Over time, all those hours on the road paid off, and throughout the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, Henson's teams featured elite players from throughout the state who would later play in the NBA, including **Eddie Johnson, '83 LAS**, **Nick Anderson**, and **Kendall Gill, '93 LAS**.

But his first season at Illinois would be rough, and he spoke openly about it.

"One day, Lou was talking to a class of students," recalls then-*Illio* sports editor **Ken Dunwoody, '76 MEDIA**, and he said, 'Do you see this table in front of me? It could get around most of our players!'"

But, jokes aside, Henson took that 8-18 team from the year before and led them to a winning record (14-13).

How? "Lou's teams controlled the ball," says Tate, "and they played outstanding defense."

For Illini fans, after the down years and the departure of Bartow, Henson's early results were encouraging.

"It was great to see the progress," says **Al Pacer, '71 BUS**. "That was the second year in a row Indiana went undefeated in Big Ten play, but after Lou took over, the disparity between the two programs quickly narrowed." Even against that all-time great Indiana team (which would go on to win the national championship, with a 32-0 record), Henson's Illini kept the score close on the road, losing by only 10 points.

"We knew we didn't have a good team that year," adds Korst, "but we also felt like Lou was keeping us in

most games."

Sometimes, Henson did that by surprising the opposition. Famously a proponent of man-to-man defense—driving around campus, he would even roll his window down and shout "play man-to-man" at playground pick-up games—Henson upended Nebraska's scouting report by starting out in a zone. "Lou almost never played zone," says Tate, so the tactic was jarring, and it worked: Illinois won the game, 60-58.

Slowly, but surely, Coach Henson turned Illinois into one of the nation's best college basketball teams by recruiting players that fit into his system, preparing for each game as if it were the national championship, and forming strong relationships with his student athletes, who wanted to make him proud, both in basketball and in life.

But winning is not the only thing that endeared Henson to Illinois basketball fans.

They also loved him for the respect he showed to his players. In post-game radio interviews, Henson was not shy about pointing out what he saw as the team's mistakes or things they needed to work on, "but he would not pick out an individual," says Tate. "Everything was about the team. 'We didn't play defense, we didn't pass the ball,' and so on. He would never call out a specific player." His deep respect for and kindness towards his players was obvious to anyone who listened.

For many alumni, that kindness was among Henson's defining qualities. Whether he was talking with a new recruit, a reporter, a fan on the street, or an undergrad on campus, he treated everyone the same: with respect and genuine courtesy.

"When I met Coach Henson, I was 21 and newly mar-

PHOTOGRAPHY: MICHAEL SMELTZER



ried,” says **Alan Solow, ’76 LAS**, who worked at Henson’s summer basketball camp and became a lifelong friend. “He was the first adult who treated me as an equal. If he asked me a question and I gave him an answer, he treated it seriously. What that did for my self-confidence, at that age, was transformative. It changed my life.”

For those who knew him, Henson’s success was not at all surprising. “If you spent 15 minutes with him,” says Solow, “you knew he was going to succeed. He had tremendous confidence. He had a track record that he really didn’t brag about. And he had a clear basketball philosophy that he could articulate. He gave you the sense that he knew what he was doing. He was also one of the most competitive people I’ve ever known, and I mean that in a good way. He didn’t like to lose. He played to *win*.”

When Henson retired from Illinois in 1997, he left behind a legacy that most college basketball coaches aspire to: a school record of 423 wins, a 1989 Final Four team (boasting a roster made up entirely of players from the State of Illinois), one Big Ten title, and hundreds of former student athletes whom he guided both on and off the court, with one main goal: to help them grow into good humans and responsible adults.

In 2015, the university recognized Coach Henson’s central place in Illinois basketball history by naming the court at State Farm Center in his honor. Lou and his wife Mary—who’d been his confidant and sounding board for his entire career—were on the floor, both decked out in orange and blue, beaming, with a sell-out crowd on its feet. It was a fitting tribute to one of the true giants of college basketball, and you can rest assured that no one present was asking, “Lou who?” 🍊

ORANGE KRUSH

How I helped Coach Henson create the nation’s greatest cheering section

BY WILLARD BROOM

IN THE SUMMER of 1975, I was a young assistant dean of student programs and services. One day, I received a call from the basketball office asking if I’d have lunch with Coach Lou Henson, who had an idea and needed some help.

Coach had convinced the Assembly Hall to add 150 seats to the floor for a student cheering section as a way to bring more energy to the arena. But he needed help finding students to sit there. That would be my task, and I readily agreed. How hard could this be?

Almost impossible, as it turned out!

Student interest in basketball was at an all-time low, and I couldn’t give the tickets away. Eventually, I found a core group of 20 undergrads who felt confident that they could fill the seats.

I asked Coach Henson if he could tell the students about his idea himself, and a

couple weeks later, we went to his house. Mary Henson made snacks, we had a nice visit, and Coach did an inspiring job of explaining what he wanted them to do.

“I would like for you to stand at the beginning of the game and cheer the team’s defense! In fact, stay standing until the other team scores!” he said, in what would turn out to be an iconic instruction.

Coach’s enthusiasm sparked an already-excited group, and they easily found enough students. The group called itself “Orange Crunch.”

Over the past 50 years, Orange Krush (as it’s now called) has grown into one of the nation’s best-known cheering sections. Today it still begins each game by cheering on the Illini defense, standing until the opponents’ first made basket—just like Coach Henson wanted. And they cheer for our offense, too!



Alumni Interview

TIM LAPETINO

The Atari creative director on how playing video games fueled his passion for storytelling and design, and led him to his work on one of gaming's most iconic brands

AS TOLD TO KEVIN COOK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLAYTON HAUCK

A

S A TEENAGER, I spent long hours in Chicago playing *Pac-Man*, *Space Invaders*, and other classic video games. The games themselves were thrilling, but for me the experience went deeper than gobbling up dots or shooting at aliens. I was entranced by the imaginary worlds behind the games, including their artwork. Ever since then, I've followed twin passions: storytelling and design.

After serving as managing editor of the school newspaper at Buffalo Grove High, I majored in journalism at the U. of I. What an eye-opening place for a teenager in 1996! To this day, I quote Professor Walt Harrington, who told J-school students that we needed to know a little something about everything. "A good reporter should be able to talk intelligently about any subject," he said, "for five minutes."

I dove right into working at *The Daily Illini*—first as a page designer, then night editor, and finally writing a weekly entertainment column about comic books, which probably had more column inches than readers. I also audited a handful of design classes in the U. of I.'s School of Art and Design. With help from journalism professor Eric Meyer, I learned how to create data-filled news graphics, cutaway illustrations, and interactive maps. That knowledge helped me get an internship at the Chicago suburban *Daily Herald*. When I graduated in 2000, I had an opportunity to do the same kind of work at *USA Today*, but turned it down because I wasn't ready to specialize yet.

For a while, I worked as a web designer at Horizon Hobby, a Champaign-Urbana-based company that made radio-controlled cars and planes. Then, with a partner, I launched a small design agency of my own called Hexanine (gamer-ese for 999,999, the highest score you can achieve before an arcade game rolls over to zero).

Design work kept me going, but I never forgot Atari, the company that made the great games of my youth. During its 1980s heyday, Atari had one of the most recognizable logos in the world—up there with Apple, IBM, and the Nike swoosh. After doing two years of research, I wrote the 2016 bestseller, *Art of Atari*, which featured interviews with founder Nolan Bushnell and others, and told the stories of unsung creatives like Atari Creative Director George Opperman, designer of the

company's iconic logo.

Working on the book opened doors to new worlds: corporate design, fine art, licensing, packaging, and other corners of pop culture. Soon I was doing design work for Target, Tower Records, and Sanrio, the Japanese company behind Hello Kitty. I designed packaging for an Ozzy Osbourne LP and an Apple smartwatch wristband shaped like Han Solo frozen in carbonite! I also continued to write and edit several more books, including one on *Pac-Man*.

But the best was yet to come. I'd done some freelance art direction for Atari, whose CEO Wade Rosen was determined to refocus on Atari's strengths:





"As Atari's creative director, I lead a team that helps market, design, and bring to life a new generation of retro video games that capture our ethos of 'easy to learn, difficult to master,'" Tim Lapetino says.

innovative retro video games done well, infused with a healthy dose of nostalgia. It was a place I was uniquely suited for and I joined the team, ultimately picking up the mantle of George Opperman, whose work first inspired me decades earlier. Today, as Atari's creative director, I lead a team that helps market, design, and bring to life a new generation of retro video games that capture our ethos of "easy to learn, difficult to master."

Atari's new 2600+ console plays cartridges from the 1970s and '80s and connects to modern TVs for maximum nostalgia. It has landed with new and old fans, and has propelled us into new products, audiences, and ways to delight fans. I've also brought back some of the old guard, like '80s Atari artist Hiro Kimura, who returned to create new illustrations for our 2600+ *Pac-Man Edition* after creating our first *Pac-Man* illustrations more than 40 years ago.

"Instead of saying 'No' or 'Stick to your major,' my professors urged me to push boundaries and go down rabbit holes."

Tim Lapetino, '00 MEDIA

This all traces back to my game-playing days and four heady years at Illinois, where film and graphic design classes enhanced my J-school studies. Instead of saying "No" or "Stick to your major," my professors urged me to push boundaries and go down rabbit holes.

My current job doesn't leave much time for playing video games, but you will find an old *TRON* arcade game in my den. My brother and I found it on the curb near our parents' house in Buffalo Grove. It took both of us to save it from the garbage truck—the thing weighs 700 pounds. But I couldn't let a fun example of video-game history get left behind, could I? **I**

2025 Alumni Awards

The UIAA celebrates nine
outstanding individuals

BY DAVID A. SCOTT

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

DOUGLAS NELSON

Co-creator of the U. of I.'s Art of Science

Working with Gene Robinson, director of the Carl R. Woese Institute for Genomic Biology, Douglas Nelson created Art of Science to showcase images of research as art. The initiative, now in its 15th year, melds aesthetic design with informative text to explain the science and convey its importance and application.

"My greatest passion is to shine a light in an understandable way on the work [being done] at the U. of I.," Nelson says. He came to understand the power of this approach when he overheard a viewer remark, "They're working on stuff that *mat-ers!*" Nelson says, "That has been the goal all along—to draw people in through the art and then enlighten them through the science."

Art of Science exhibitions have enlivened spaces across campus, including the Alice Campbell Alumni Center, Illini Union, and State Farm Center. Nationally, they have appeared at the National Institutes of Health Library, and the National Academies of Engineering, Medicine, and Science.

Science is central to Nelson's work. In 1982, he founded BodyWork Associates in Champaign. There, he practices Precision Neuromuscular Therapy, a technique he developed to address musculoskeletal pain.



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION AWARD

TRACY & STEPHANIE CAMPBELL

Youth gymnastics program founders

Tracy Campbell, '01 AHS, and Stephanie Campbell, '77 LAS, are founders of KiDsGyM USA (KGU), a nonprofit that uses gymnastics to help children/youth develop healthy habits, school readiness skills, and the confidence to be positive role models in their school and community. KGU also enables kids to pursue competitive gymnastics, if they desire.

KGU's athletes, formerly known as TopGun Tumblers, have performed at NBA, NCAA, and NFL sporting events, as well as at the White House, Walt Disney World, and the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. In 2025, KGU received the "Good Troublemaker" Neighborhood grant from the John and Lillian Lewis Foundation.

KGU traces its origins and its rigor back to the U. of I. As a running back for the Fighting Illini football team, Tracy first became involved with gymnastics when he answered an ad to train with Men's Gymnastics Head Coach Yoshi Hayasaki and learned the power of gymnastics for preschoolers. Coach Tracy taught Stephanie how to teach, and today they both train instructors from across the globe. To develop KGU's evidence-based curriculum, the Campbells worked with the late **Stafford L. Hood, PHD '84 ED**, founding director of the Center for Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

TEMPLE GRANDIN

Animal behaviorist and autism activist

As a young girl, **Temple Grandin, PHD '89 ACES, HON '04**, came to understand how cattle saw the world in terms of visual distractions, including shadow and light, open space, and confinement. It mimicked her own perceptions, something she calls visual thinking. “My memory is like little cell phone pictures,” she explains. “When I search my memory, it’s like going through my picture files. I’ll find pictures that are associated with each other. That’s how my mind works.”

She used her insight to develop more humane slaughterhouse techniques, such as moving the animals through a center-track conveyor restrainer system, which leaves them feeling contained and supported. Grandin developed handling systems that help keep cattle calm. Another innovation was the development of a scoring system for evaluating animal welfare in slaughter plants.

“I was one of the first scientists to report that animals are sensitive to distractions in handling facilities, like a dangling chain or a cowboy’s jacket on a fence rail,” she told *Illinois Alumni* in a 2019 interview. “The cattle’s fear causes them to panic, which leads to injuries and losses.” Her ideas revolutionized the meat-packing industry and have informed her for three decades as professor of animal science at Colorado State University.

By openly addressing that she is on the autism spectrum, Grandin serves as a champion for those who think differently. Her best-selling books include *Animals Make Us Human*, *Calling All Minds*, and *Visual Thinking: The Hidden Gifts of People Who Think in Pictures, Patterns, and Abstractions*.

In 2010, she was selected as one of *Time* magazine’s most influential people, and *USA Today* named her among its 2025 Women of the Year. Her life story was filmed for HBO as *Temple Grandin*, starring Claire Danes; it won seven Emmy Awards and a Golden Globe. “They did a really good job of showing visual thinking accurately,” Grandin says.



ILLINI COMEBACK AWARD

PAUL RUDOLPH

The Muppets’ music man

Paul Rudolph, '89 FAA, is a music director, composer, and instrument builder. Since 2008, the Normal, Ill., native has been the vocal arranger and music director for *Sesame Street*, where he received Emmy nominations for music direction in 2009 and 2013, and won three consecutive Emmys for sound editing from 2016 to 2018.

Rudolph’s percussion performance art group, GLANK, has been entertaining audiences since 2002. The group takes its name from a percussive piece that he wrote and first performed in the Krannert Center parking garage, in order to take advantage of the structure’s amazing echo. “We ‘played’ on the parking signs, heating grates, and pipes,” he says. Rudolph even had a fellow musician drive into the garage, get out of a car, plug into an amp, play one note on a guitar, and then drive off.

Rudolph eventually joined *Muppets Tonight* as its assistant music director, where he met his wife, Leslie Carrara-Rudolph (*Sesame Street*’s Abby Cadabby). The couple have co-produced a CD for Carrara’s children’s play, *Wake Up Your Weird*.



ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

BRADLEY HARMS

Former Chief of Staff, White House Military Office

Colonel Bradley Harms, '95 LAS, retired from the U.S. Marine Corps in June 2025 after a 30-year career of distinguished service, one that earned him numerous honors, including the Legion of Merit. He was the longest serving commander of Marine Helicopter Squadron One, flying as the nation's 32nd presidential helicopter pilot. Harms also directed the Marine Corps' largest aviation unit, leading more than 1,000 personnel to provide global helicopter transportation for President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and other world leaders. As a pilot, he flew combat missions during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Most recently, Harms oversaw White House military operations during the Biden administration, directing more than 4,100 personnel in support of the president, vice president, and first lady. His command included Air Force One, Marine Helicopter Squadron One, and Camp David, as well as communication, transportation, and medical and food services.

The task was "high stress and no-fail, but we had the right people and resources to make it happen."

Harms believes military service instilled in him a strong code of personal ethics. "I'm a Marine, and we place a lot of value in our shared history and accomplishments," he says. "Each of us bears a responsibility to the generations that have gone before to uphold standards."

As an Illinois student, Harms received the national Navy ROTC Distinguished Naval Graduate Award. He is proud to be part of an Illini family succession that dates back to his grandfather, Dr. Alfred G.

Harms, Sr., who taught at Illinois. Both his parents are Illini—his mother

Mary L. Harms, '71 LAS, and his father, **Alfred G. "Al"**

Harms, Jr., '71 LAS, who is a retired U.S. Navy vice admiral and received the Alumni Achievement Award in 2005.

Harms attributes his hometown as integral to who he has become, noting that Champaign-Urbana is his family's "center of gravity. I get my values from here."



ILLINI COMEBACK AWARD

ANNIE (CRAWLEY) KEFFLER

Underwater filmmaker and author

Annie (Crawley) Keffler, '90

MEDIA, a.k.a. "Ocean Annie," is an underwater filmmaker, photojournalist, and author whose career spans more than three decades. A Chicago native, she has become a driving force for ocean literacy, exploration, and conservation through education and advocacy.

After discovering scuba diving after college, Keffler charted a bold course—becoming a Coast Guard captain, scuba instructor, and Women Divers Hall of Fame inductee. Her award-winning books and films, such as *Plastic Ahoy!*, *Planet Ocean*, and *Ocean Life From A to Z*, have reached global audiences.

"I take big issues and break them down," she says, and she works to fill her messages with "inspiration, hope, and love for the ocean."

Keffler leads a youth scuba diving team in the Pacific Northwest, and she recently created ocean-themed visual compositions for symphonies with renowned composer Dr. Stella Sung that merge science, music, and art to spotlight pollution. Keffler's latest documentary, *The Island of the Shark: Guardians of Malpelo*, documents illegal fishing in Colombia.

Keffler stresses the need to act urgently when it comes to maintaining our life-sustaining waters. "The ocean will recycle itself in 1 million years, so [it] will be fine without us," she says. "We, however, will not be fine without the ocean."



LOU LIAY SPIRIT AWARD

LOUIS MARGAGLIONE

U. of I. booster, volunteer, and committee chair

Louis Margaglione, '92 FAA, turned an interest and education in the arts into a rewarding career in ... banking. To explain this disconnect, he quotes Oscar Wilde: "When bankers get together for dinner, they talk about the arts. When artists get together for dinner, they talk about money!"

Margaglione—whose 23-year banking career began at Bank of America and ended with Bank of Montréal—notes that "people like to have bankers on committees." He has chaired the Chicago Illini of the Year Award selection committee and the Urbana Campus Alumni Advisory Board; served on the Dept. of Intercollegiate Athletics Board; and sat on the UI System Advocacy Committee.

He is a returning alumni fellow at the Cline Center for Advanced Social Research, and for the University of Illinois Alumni Association, he served on its Board of Directors and chaired its Audit Committee.

When looking at schools, Margaglione recalls coming back from a trip to a university with a beautiful campus. "I told Dad about it," he says. "I'll never forget his response: 'Some universities have beautiful campuses. But a university is not a collection of great buildings. It's a collection of great minds.'"

A Fighting Illini booster, Margaglione co-founded the Illini Guardians, which helps U. of I. athletes harness possibilities created by Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) legislation. In its first year, the Illini Guardians entered into NIL contracts with more than 170 athletes across every varsity program, and in 2022, it funded 100 student athletes to take a day off from social media in support of mental health awareness. The Illini Guardians were the first such organization to provide NIL funds in return for service in the community and the first to find ways for international students to participate in NIL opportunities.

Margaglione also serves as director and development chair of the U.S. Treasury Historical Association in Washington, D.C., and directs the Campaign for Alexander Hamilton's Treasury. Not coincidentally, he also owns Bookster Tweed, a tailoring company in England. "While generally understated, bankers are kind of peacocks," he says.

Of the former UIAA executive director and lifelong family friend whose name adorns this honor, Margaglione says: "I don't think I've been to an Illinois basketball game in the last 20 years where I didn't see Lou Liay in the stands. There must be three of him!"



YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD

ADHAM SAHLOUL

Foreign-policy advisor and U.S. Navy officer

As Adham Sahloul, '15 LAS, began his freshman year at Illinois, civil war broke out in Syria. "To a son of Syrian immigrants studying political science, the distance between international relations theory in the classroom and what was going on in the world was palpable," he says.

After graduation, he moved to southern Turkey to serve as an advocacy advisor. There, he addressed civilian protection issues. He next joined the Atlantic Council think tank, where he researched Middle Eastern human rights and transatlantic affairs.

Sahloul also volunteered as a foreign-policy advisor for Pete Buttigieg's 2020 presidential bid, and he advised the Biden-Harris campaign. In addition, he served as a presidential appointee in the Biden Administration at the Pentagon, and he worked on China policy at USAID. He now serves as an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a bipartisan defense policy think tank.

As an intelligence officer for the U.S. Navy Reserve, Sahloul was deployed during the 2024 Red Sea crisis.





NOMINATE YOUR
Fellow Alumni
FOR AN ALUMNI AWARD

[UIAA.ORG/ALUMNI-AWARDS/NOMINATION-FORM](https://uiaa.org/alumni-awards/nomination-form)

The deadline for the 2026 Alumni Awards nomination submissions is March 1, 2026.



Alumni



ILLINI NEWS

YOUR UIAA **43** | GALLERY **44** | CLASS NOTES **46** | IN MEMORIAM **54**

Union Leader

Becki Salzman keeps the “living room of campus” bustling ▶



T'S REBECCA

“Becki” Salzman’s favorite campus event of the year: the LateNighter. As executive director of the Illini Union, **Salzman ’94 LAS, EDM ’07**, marvels at seeing thousands of students pour into the “living room of campus” to celebrate the start of the fall semester. “The energy is off the charts,” she says.

Salzman is never happier than when the Illini Union is bustling. And it often is: Between 2.5 and 3 million people visit each year, to eat, nap, bowl, play video games, hear live music, and more.

Long before she joined its staff in 2006, Salzman already knew the Union intimately. It was the Mahomet, Ill., native’s second home on campus during her undergraduate days, when she was juggling her studies in political science with parenting her infant son. “It was so important to me being successful as a student here,” she says. “That’s one of the reasons why I ended up at the Illini Union, to ensure that [opportunity] continues for students well into the future.”

After college, Salzman spent nearly a decade as assistant to the executive director in the U. of I.’s Office of University Relations, where she worked with the president, Board of Trustees, and Office for Planning and Budgeting. That experience helped her learn “a lot about the political and financial landscape of working at a university.”

When the Union’s manager of parent and family programs position opened up in 2006, Salzman knew it was “where I was meant to be,” she says. In the 19 years since, she has worked on everything from conference services to retail operations to campus mail. “Always be open to opportunities,” she says. “If I hadn’t tried things outside of my comfort zone and scope of knowledge, I probably wouldn’t be executive director today.”

Since assuming the top role in 2021, she has given the Union an upgrade by listening to students’ requests: revamping the food court to feature more local vendors,



“The students are what have kept me coming back every day for 19 years,” says Becki Salzman, who first joined the Illini Union staff in 2006.

“We work really hard to make the Illini Union a welcoming, safe, and comfortable environment for everyone.”

**Rebecca “Becki” Salzman,
’94 LAS, EDM ’07**

updating the technology throughout the building, including a digital display of past Alumni Achievement honorees, and adding more weekday programming such as Trivia Tuesdays, Bingo Wednesdays, and Board Game Thursdays. She’s also whittling down a \$100 million backlog of deferred maintenance on the 325,000-square-foot, 84-year-old facility, starting with the roof.

Salzman’s other improvements—in response to feedback from the student-run Illini Union Board—include renovations to the lower level, which is being transformed to feature a sensory room, a meditation reflection space, and a full McKinley Health Center clinic—changes that align with Salzman’s current role as acting associate vice chancellor for auxiliary, health, and well-being.

A certified life coach, Salzman uses her training “to help others understand more about themselves,” she says. That has benefitted her in managing the roughly 300 student employees on her staff of 435, and helping them get through challenges so that they can fully perform, develop, and grow. “The students are what have kept me coming back every day for 19 years,” she says. “They’re so full of energy, so bright, and creative. They challenge me in ways that make me better, too.”—KRISTIN BAIRD RATTINI

CLUBS

ILLINOIS PRIDE ALUMNI NETWORK

UIAA launches a club dedicated to 2SLGBTQIA+ support

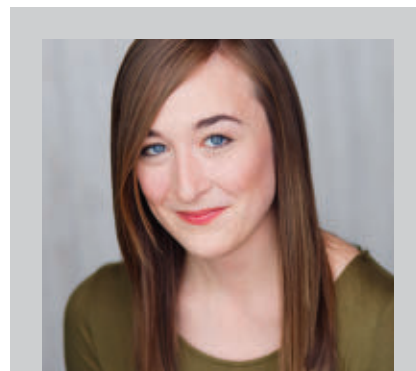
THE UIAA HAS LAUNCHED the University of Illinois Pride Alumni Network—a group that will support two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, and asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) alumni and their allies. The group is open to all who wish to join, says Tyler Gagai, UIAA director of alumni clubs and engagement.

Rev. Jason Carson Wilson, '99 MEDIA, serves as the network's board president. He believes that group members can be positive role models for students and alumni. "We're in a climate that calls for creating a sense of community and, frankly, letting people know we're here," he adds.

Fellow board member **Elvis Guzman, '11 LAS**, says that the group is far-reaching in membership potential. "We live in the age of Zoom and Teams, [which makes] the group accessible for folks who are not in Champaign or Chicago," he says. Their strategy is to recruit locally then more broadly as membership grows. "We want to start by making an imprint on the university by hosting events there," he adds.

The Pride Alumni Network has high hopes for success. "We feel confident in what we're doing and we believe there will be a lot of support," Guzman says. Wilson closes with a modified rallying cry made popular during the 1990s gay rights movement: "We're here. We're queer. And we're Illinois alumni."

Anyone wishing to join or support the group can register online at go.Illinois.edu/IllinoisPrideAlumniNetwork. —DAVID A. SCOTT



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

ILLINI LINK

Ellen Fred uses online platforms to bring alumni together, no matter where they are

AS AN Illinois undergraduate, Champaign-Urbana native **Ellen Fred, '15 FAA**, studied acting—learning not only about stage performance but also human behavior and how to connect with people. Today, as the UIAA's assistant director of online engagement, she uses that knowledge, plus a host of digital platforms, to connect alumni to the university, Alumni Association, and each other.

Fred oversees the IlliniLink, Alumni Book Club, and Speaker Series programs, all of which help Illini engage with their Alma Mater and attend UIAA events from the comfort of their homes—an accessible and inclusive option unthinkable a few years ago.

Fred, who returned to C-U in 2019 after several years performing in Chicago-area theaters, feels that she is "a natural fit" for her position. "It combines my interests in connection, creativity, and storytelling," she says. "And, as someone who grew up online, [it] allows me to build community in a space that feels both familiar and innovative. My role ensures that our community continues to grow more connected, and more inspired."

—DAS



The University of Illinois Pride Alumni Network is open to all who wish to serve as positive role models for students and alumni.



HOMECOMING 2025



1. Members of Champaign-Urbana's own REO Speedwagon returned to campus to take part in Homecoming Week events, such as serving as Grand Marshals for the Homecoming Parade.

2. The UIAA kicked off Homecoming Week on Sunday, Sept. 21, by hosting its annual Illinois Homecoming Run. Post-race celebrants enjoyed food, drinks, and the Marching Illini at the Alice Campbell Alumni Center.

3. This year's Global Talent Show, "Where Global Legends Take the Stage," drew an appreciative audience to Foellinger Auditorium on Wednesday evening to enjoy a night of entertainment with an international flair.

4. The Fighting Illini provided an exciting ending to their Sept. 27 Homecoming match against the USC Trojans. David Olano's 41-yard, game-winning field goal clinched a 34-32 Illinois victory.

5. Saturday was the perfect fall day for pre-game tailgating in Grange Grove. The Marching Illini gathered around the statue of the Galloping Ghost to provide a spirited soundtrack for the merriment.

PHOTOGRAPHY:
FRED ZWICKY

CLASS NOTES

1950s

Bernard D. Tauber, '50 BUS, retired from his career as a medical data entrepreneur to play golf in Arizona. He also enjoys competitive duplicate bridge, a game that occupied much of his time at Illinois. He fondly recalls playing matches against fellow residence hall mates **Hugh M. Hefner, '49 DSSWV**, and Hefner's roommate **Robert S. Preuss, '50 BUS**, who later served as *Playboy's* business manager.

1960s

Joseph Rank, '69 MEDIA, MS '73 MEDIA, was inducted into the Illinois Naval ROTC Hall of Fame in recognition of his distinguished military service and his dedication to the university. During his naval career, Rank served on destroyers and cruisers in the Vietnam conflict. He later taught naval science at Illinois. After retiring from active duty as a commander, Rank launched a second career as UIAA vice president (1995–2011). Rank now serves as a member of the advisory board of the university's Chez Veterans Center.

1970s

ACES College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences
AHS College of Applied Health Sciences
BUS Gies College of Business
CIMED Carle Illinois College of Medicine
ED College of Education
ENG Grainger College of Engineering
FAA College of Fine & Applied Arts



Oskee the Snowman—Illinois' own jolly, happy soul—wishes you the warmest of winter welcomes!

Sandra C. Seaton, '71 LAS, is a playwright and librettist whose work has been performed around the nation. Her play about Sally Hemings, *Sally: A Solo Play*, will be performed at the Wharton Center in East Lansing, Mich., in February 2026.

James A. Schraidt, '73 BUS, serves on the board of directors of ZERO Prostate Cancer, the nation's largest prostate cancer support, education, and advocacy organization. It offers free support and education services

to prostate cancer patients, and advocates for research funding and improved prostate cancer treatment. Schraidt also is active in leading support groups, advocating for improved patient care, and providing navigation for individual prostate cancer patients.

Martin W. "Marty" Parsons, '76 ACES, MS '80 ACES, oversees land management at Philmont Scout Ranch, Scouting America's largest national high-adventure base camp. The veteran forester leads forest restoration and thinning, and controlled burn management. Philmont recently received 3,000 ponderosa seedlings for reforestation of the area damaged by the 2018 Ute Park fire.

Joel K. Bankes, '77 LAS, published *Father's Day Marathon: A Memoir About Growing Up Fatherless* (Page Publishing, 2025). It recounts his challenges growing up in a low-income

household without a father and provides insightful guidance for others in similar circumstances. Now retired, Bankes previously served as director of domestic relations for the Arizona Administrative Office of the Courts, executive director of the National Child Support Engagement Association, and director of human services consulting for MAXIMUS, a government services company.

Jeffery P. Tarte, '79 BUS, was named by North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein to The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the highest civilian award granted by the state. Membership is afforded to those who have made significant contributions through exemplary service and accomplishments. Tarte previously served as a North Carolina state senator and an EY (formerly Ernst & Young) partner. Tarte and his wife, **Dr. Nancy Tarte, '81 LAS**, received the U. of I.'s Krannert Award in 2024.

1980s

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, MA '80 LAS, PHD '87 ED, published *Insurgent Visions: Feminism, Justice, Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2025). The book explores insurgent feminism as a means to contest and replace the imperialist, heteronormative, and racialized practice of violence grounded in gender relations.

Eileen Rajala Meyer, '82 BUS, published *Sandcastle* (Rey-craft Books, 2025), a rhyming children's book for readers ages 4 to 8. *Sandcastle* is illustrated by European mixed-media artist Manica Musil and celebrates creativity, teamwork, and the wonder of a day at the beach.

Vicki L. Chamberlain, '83 LAS, MD '87 UIC, and **Benjamin A. Hasan, '83 LAS, MD '87 UIC**, celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in September 2025. The couple graduated as pre-med students the same year, and met and married while studying at the UIC College of Medicine Rockford. The couple are on the medical staff of the Northwest Community Hospital medical system in Arlington Heights, Ill. An obstetrician and gynecologist, Chamberlain is a managing partner in an obstetrics and gynecology practice in Arlington Heights. Hasan previously taught and practiced family medicine and sports medicine. He is a traveling physician for the USA Triathlon team, and served as a U.S. team physician during the 2002 Winter Olympics. The couple has three children: Alexandra, Elizabeth, and Evan.

David W. Johnson, '84 ENG, retired from a four-decade

career in semiconductor development and venture capital. He helped design the graphics chips that powered the first CD-based gaming system and worked on the first direct-broadcast satellite TV system (Thomson/RCA). Johnson won the Presidential Award from Rockwell International in 1997 for his work on the first-ever single-chip Digital Subscriber Line transceiver, which made it possible for anyone to access the internet over a telephone line. Through his work with angel investment firms, Johnson mentored young entrepreneurs on converting their ideas into successful businesses. He is looking forward to writing fiction and traveling with his wife, **Donna (Frauenheim)**

Johnson, '87 BUS, and their family.

Daniel C. Adams, AMUSD '85, retired from Texas Southern University in December 2024 after serving on its music faculty for 36 years. He remains professionally active in both research and composition. His article, "Pitch, Rhythm, and Performance Technique as Formal Elements in Stephen Chatman's 'Quiet Exchange,'" was published in the Fall 2024 issue of *National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors Journal*. Adams also presented a paper titled "Explaining Formal Ambiguity, Pedal Tone Functions, and Nordic Folk Influences in Grieg's 'Norsk' through MACRO Analysis" at the Music Theory

I'S ON THE WORLD

HOLY SEE

ADAM DELGADO, '91 LAS, and his wife, Grace, traveled to the Vatican to pay their respects to Pope Francis and to "cheer for" Pope Leo XIV. Delgado describes the trip as "a humbling experience," noting that the new pontiff promises to provide outstanding leadership while inspiring devotion.

The Delgados live in Westminster, Md., and last visited the Eternal City in 2001. Delgado adds, "I am Illinois proud!"



Adam and Grace Delgado share their Illini pride with the crowds gathered at the Vatican to welcome Pope Leo XIV.

Pedagogy Workshop, sponsored by the Music Analysis Creative Research Organization on June 6 in Madison, Wis.

Michael J. Fleck, '87 LAS, teaches courses on trusts and estates, secured transactions, and commercial sales as a visiting practitioner in residence at Northern Illinois University College of Law. In July, he spoke on "Artificial Intelligence and Technology in Estate Planning and Administration—Pros and Cons of Access to Legal Services for the Disadvantaged" at the Athens (Greece) Institute's 21st Annual International Conference on Law. Fleck practices law in Huntley, Ill.

Karl E. Swanson, '88 ENG, testified at a hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship at the invitation of committee chair Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa). The hearing examined the Small Business Administration's 504 loan program and how it can be made to operate more effectively, particularly for small manufacturers. Swanson, who is president of PCT Ebeam and Integration, testified in support of The Made in America Manufacturing Finance Act of 2025, introduced by Ernst. It would increase the maximum loan size from \$5 million to \$10 million. PCT Ebeam, a manufacturer of industrial electron beam systems used in advanced medical materials and lithium-ion batteries, used the 504 loan program to help purchase and expand its manufacturing facility in Davenport, Iowa. Swanson is married to **Patricia (Haden) Swanson, '87 ED**.

Phillip J. Burton, PHD '89 LAS, published *Resilient*



Nancy and Ron Howell celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary in August 2025. The couple met on a blind date at a 1955 DKE pledge dance.

ILLINI COUPLE

THERMODYNAMIC DUO

Their romance got off to a strong start. Their schoolwork, not so much

IT WAS THE END of DKE Hell Week, 1955. The hazing outrages at the fraternity house had been crowned by a fire at the top of the staircase. **Ron Howell, '58 ENG, MS '59 ENG, PHD '67 ENG**, recalls how he and the other pledges had to douse the blaze with water that they carried mouthful by mouthful up the stairs. "And then," he says, "we had to sleep on the cold pile of ashes."

But Howell's luck was turning. His blind date for the pledge dance was **Nancy Anderson Howell, '58 ED, EDM '65**. At the dance, her earrings pinched her lobes. Could he just slip them into his pocket? He could. Next day, he brought them over to her digs at Evans Residence Hall and asked for another date. Three weeks later, they'd been together every night, and he was flunking thermodynamics because he hadn't turned in his assignments. Ron threw himself on the mercy of the professor, who relented, eventually awarding his errant student a C.

The couple married while still undergraduates. Ron went on to faculty posts at the Missouri University of Science and Technology and the University of South Florida. Nancy taught elementary school for 17 years and worked on a grant to help at-risk high school students. Since 2000, they have lived in Meridian, Idaho, near their children and grandchildren, including son **Timothy Anderson Howell, '81 BUS, MS '82 BUS**. A couple of years ago, Ron was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and now lives in a long-term care facility. Nancy remains in good health and still plays golf. In August, the couple celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary.

But to return to that first semester together, when Ron was tanking in thermodynamics, it's interesting to know that Nancy, too, went briefly south. "I got a D in geography," she says. And it's fascinating to learn that Ron's teaching and research career was grounded in—thermodynamics. "Thermodynamics was an interesting experience, and as I got further into my undergraduate work, I just kept on with it," he says.

"We both overcame our beginnings," Nancy says. "Maybe we inspired each other." —MARY TIMMINS

If you found true love at Illinois, we'd love to know! Email us at IllinoisAlumni@uillinois.edu.

Forest Management (Oxford University Press, 2025), his fourth book. Building on the principles of complex adaptive systems, *Resilient Forest Management* provides a roadmap for progressive forestry in uncertain times, supported by case studies. Burton is professor emeritus of ecosystem science and management at the University of Northern British Columbia, Canada.

Temple Grandin, PHD '89 ACES, HON '04, is the subject of *An Open Door*, a documentary that depicts how Grandin employs her experience with autism and visual thinking to champion autism rights, humane treatment of livestock, and inclusive neurodiversity. Distributed by Good Deed Entertainment, the documentary was written and directed by award-winning filmmaker John Barnhardt. The film has been accepted into 72 festivals and earned 27 individual awards.

1990s

Dustin Dumas, '90 BUS, brings her expertise in finance, media, and nonprofit leadership to international partners through her appointment to the Fulbright Specialist Program. A U.S. Dept. of State initiative, the program promotes mutual understanding and knowledge-sharing across borders. Dumas began her financial career at Danske Bank in Denmark and Dresdner Bank in Germany, where she gained expertise in corporate finance, treasury, and trading. She later transitioned into media, creating and hosting *Dustin's Kaleidoscope*, a long-running series showcasing stories of entrepreneurship, community

Todd S. Ballowe, '93 LAS, was promoted to head of engineering and artificial intelligence at Madison AI in Reno, Nev. In this role, he leads the engineering team and manages the

Sarah (Kennedy) Daley, '94
FAA, published her second
fantasy novel, *Wings of Steel
and Fury!* (Angry Robot, 2025).
Her previous novel, *Obsidian*
(Angry Robot, 2022), was a
finalist for the 2023 Compton
Crook Award.

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A collection of handmade accessories including a patterned scarf, a large orange bag, a small polka-dot bag, a blue bag, a blue cap, a necklace, and a blue bag with a red and white pattern.

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Working through global extension programs, Dr. Colby Silvert helps connect international farmers to resources that ensure livelihoods and profits.

ILLINI ACHIEVEMENT

GLOBAL EXTENSION EXPERT Colby Silvert earns prestigious award

DR. COLBY J. SILVERT, '14 ACES, works globally with small-scale family farmers to improve their livelihoods and help them use resources sustainably. In recognition of his efforts, he's received the university's 2025 Charles C. Stewart International Young Humanitarian Award.

An assistant professor of agricultural and extension education at the University of Maryland, Silvert first encountered small-scale farming while growing up in Yellow Springs, Ohio, a town of about 3,000, where he worked at a local, family-owned apple orchard. Studying horticulture at Illinois, he took courses abroad that introduced him to global food systems. That experience led him to become a Fulbright research scholar in Brazil. There, he investigated family coffee farmers' access to fair trade-certified markets. Later, he served in Sierra Leone for two years as extension coordinator on multimillion-dollar U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded aquaculture projects.

Silvert helped West African fishers develop a market chain for their local catch. The process included determining the most abundant fish stocks—in this case tilapia—and evaluating export options. He stresses the importance of co-creating solutions. "If we offer technology that doesn't align with farmers' cultures or values, they often won't accept it."

Silvert's efforts focus on ensuring that the people he works with have a livelihood and make a profit, he says, "but also that they are using resources sustainably and protecting our planet."

With USAID now dismantled, Silvert's work has found a new funding partner in the Brazilian government. "There are a lot of other nations that see the value of internationalizing products and building bridges," he says. —DAVID A. SCOTT

Jason L. Busboom, '97 BUS, published *Sowing Discord: An Eric Buchanan Espionage Thriller* (Shrewsbury House, 2025), based in part on real events connected to the University of Illinois. Busboom is co-founder of Busboom Group, a Dallas-based real estate firm that manages more than 2,600 residential units.

Andrew Goldberg, '97 LAS, was named executive director of the Ballet Memphis, and is the first person to hold that role in the Tennessee dance company's 39-year history. He recently completed a four-year tenure as senior director for external affairs at Ballet West in Salt Lake City, overseeing all fundraising, marketing, and patron services. At Ballet West, he helped increase the company's annual budget by 50 percent, making it one of the nation's 10 largest ballet companies.

2000s

Isaac R. Holze, '02 ENG, and The Deep End, his New York City street basketball team, made the Kenny Graham West 4th St. Pro-Classic summer tournament playoffs in 2024 and 2025.

David P. "Dave" Walden, '02 BUS, '02 BUS, creates picture books to show his 5- and 7-year-old children the towns where he's lived. He started with Ithaca, N.Y., where he earned an MBA at Cornell University. He recently completed *Lukas & Caelyn Go Explorin' Champaign-Urbana*. The independently published book features Illini football and basketball, as well as the university, Quad, area parks, and Campustown. Print-on-

demand copies can be ordered from Amazon.com.

Jasmine D. Scott, '03 ACES, MS '23 MEDIA, is an ambassador for We Give Blood, Abbott Laboratory's collaborative blood drive initiative with schools in the Big Ten Conference. Participants are encouraged to donate blood to save lives, with the winning school receiving \$1 million to advance student or community health. Scott is senior strategic marketing product manager with Chicago-based Abbott.

Daniel B. Heidtke, '09 LAS, is a partner at Duane Morris where he serves as co-chair of the law firm's Insurance and Reinsurance Division of the Trial Practice Group. He represents clients in complex business disputes and insurance coverage litigation, and handles antitrust, trade secret litigation, internal investigations, and white-collar criminal defense matters. Heidtke litigates across the U.S. in state and federal courts, and he is licensed to practice in California, Illinois, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

Jaclyn Lennox, '09 LAS, received a national Milk-en Educator Award for her work as assistant principal of curriculum and instruction at Bolingbrook (Ill.) High School. She is a member of the Illinois Principals Association and a published author.

2010s

Megan Smith Mackinson, '10 FAA, is honored in *Crain's Chicago Business*' "40 Under 40" Class of 2025. Mackinson is national workplace strategies lead for JLL, a strategic real

estate advisory company.

Yuxi Tian, '12 LAS, published *All the Way Around the Sun* (HarperCollins/Quill Tree, 2025) under the pen name XiXi Tian. The young adult (YA) novel explores grief, diasporic identities, and the deep-buried secrets that haunt people. Her debut YA novel, *This Place Is Still Beautiful* (HarperCollins/Quill Tree, 2022), touches on sisterhood, family, and the pernicious legacy of racism.

Richard J. "Cody" Chalkey, '13 BUS, serves the White House as special assistant to the president for legislative affairs, most recently working on passage of the 2025 tax and spending policies known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. During President Trump's first term, Chalkey served as associate director of the National Economic Council and then as associate director of the Office of Legislative Affairs. Prior to that, he worked as director of coalitions and policy for the Premium Cigar Association.

Sean D. Madison, '13 FAA, and **Bradley D. Topol, '09 ENG**, are working to improve bicycling in Chicago. Madison is general manager of Divvy, a national bike-sharing program. Topol is coordinating engineer for the Chicago Dept. of Transportation's Complete Streets Program, designing and implementing Chicago bikeways. While joining Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson to celebrate Complete Streets' Milwaukee Avenue bike corridor improvements, the two discovered that their shared interest in cycling had its origins at Illinois. Both had participated in the student-run Illini 4000, a cross-country cycling trek

that raises money for cancer research and patient support services.

Dina E. Monk, '15 FAA, played the role of Elizabeth in *Gaslight* (*Angel Street*) at Oil Lamp Theater in Glenview, Ill.

Kurtis H. Duemler, MS '18 ENG, received the Young Civil Engineer of the Year award from the American Society of Civil Engineers' Central Illinois Section (ASCE CIS) this past September. He joined Hanson Professional Services in 2019 as a water resources engineer at the company's Springfield, Ill., headquarters. He provides services for water resources projects, with a focus on hydrologic and hydraulic modeling. Duemler previously served as president of ASCE CIS.

Timothy M. Swartz, MS '18 ACES, joined McDaniel College in Westminster, Md., as assistant professor of environmental studies. An ecologist, he applies his expertise in community, restoration, landscape, urban ecology, and biodiversity conservation and restoration to understand how ecosystems and the biodiversity they support respond to human activity.

Mea Donnelly, '19 LAS, joined the Phoenix, Ariz., law office of Ogletree Deakins as an associate. She specializes in employment law.

Joseph B. "Joe" Freeman, MS '19 BUS, obtained his Illinois Realtors license in January 2022, and began working with property management groups. In October 2024, he became an independent, full-time real estate broker, leading a new development project of four large condominiums in Chicago's

Lincoln Park neighborhood.

2020s

Michael G. Lustig, '20 MEDIA, JD '23 UIC, joined the law firm of Foran Glennon in its Chicago office as an associate. Lustig specializes in civil litigation, with a focus on medical malpractice defense. Prior to joining Foran Glennon, he was an associate at Donohue Brown Smyth where he successfully defended healthcare professionals and systems against medical malpractice and institutional liability claims.

Dillin E. Randolph, EDM '20, EDD '25, received a 2025 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. Randolph teaches English at Niles West High School in Skokie, Ill.

Roberto D. Martinez, MBA '23, is senior manager of merchandising at Piggly Wiggly Midwest, where he oversees all bakery and deli operations for the 92 Piggly Wiggly grocery stores in Wisconsin.

U.S. ARMY RESERVE PROMOTIONS

Kelsey M. Forsythe, PHD '99 LAS, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel.

Brett M. Schmidt, '99 ENG, MA '00 ENG, JD '08, MUP '08, was promoted from lieutenant colonel to colonel.

Christopher P. Tung, '02 LAS, was promoted from lieutenant colonel to colonel.

David C. Tess, '03 ENG, MS '06 ENG, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel.

James C. Coghlan, '05 LAS, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel.

Dennis M. Gibbons, '07 BUS, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel.

Evelyn Blanco Hawran, JD '10, was promoted from major to lieutenant colonel.

Justin P. Peebles, '18 LAS, was promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Austin I. Kim, '20 MEDIA, was promoted from first lieutenant to captain.

Nathan Decety, MS '22 BUS, was promoted from first lieutenant to captain.

Won K. Emmanuel, '23 LAS, was promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Jared T. Fligelman, '23 ENG, was promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Jacob T. Fuss, '23 ENG, was promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Brandon S. Kim, '23 FAA, MS '25 BUS, was promoted to second lieutenant.

Michael S. Nelson, '23 ENG, MS '25 ENG, was promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant.

Ameer A. Samy, '24 ENG, was promoted to second lieutenant.

Delania F. Sigman, '24 ACES, MS '25 ACES, was promoted to second lieutenant.

Carter R. Evans, '25 LAS, was promoted to second lieutenant. 

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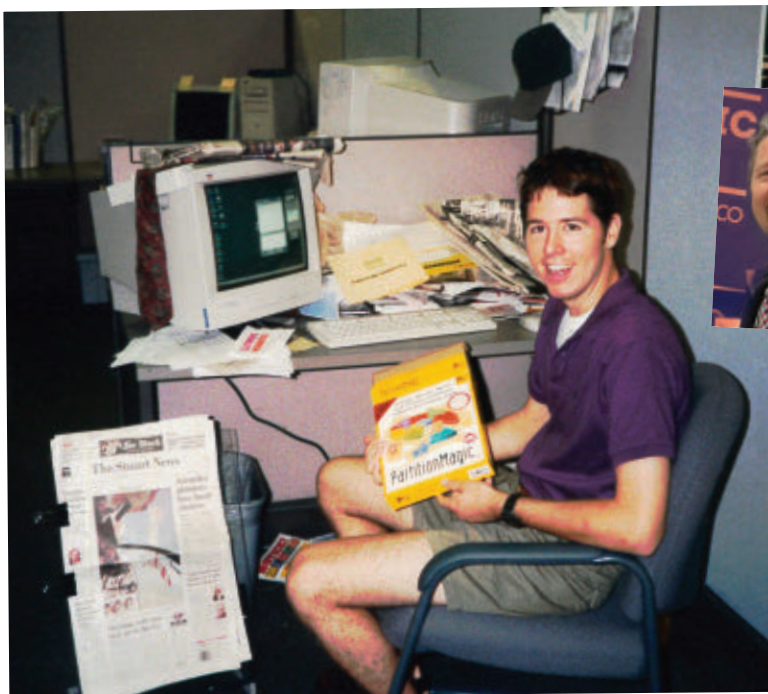
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Alumni



Brian Costello learned how to cover politics as a reporter at *The Daily Illini*. Left: Costello at the *DI*, ca. 1998. Right: At the 2019 Democratic Presidential Candidate Debate.

BRIAN COSTELLO, '98 MEDIA

Press Corps

Covering politics taught me to roll with the changes

EDITED BY RYAN A. ROSS

SEN. AMY KLOBUCHAR (D-Minn.) was all smiles, looking at the PBS cameras, checking her mic, and making final preparations for that night's debate. "Who's playing my husband?" she joked, as I introduced myself and shook her hand.

It was Dec. 19, 2019, and we were getting ready for the Democratic National Committee's Presidential Candidate Debate at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. As coordinator of the debate's media center, I had direct access to all the candidates, including Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg, Bernie Sanders, Tom Steyer, Elizabeth Warren, and Andrew Yang, and I got to ask them questions and sit in on their post-debate interviews with

anchors from CNN, MSNBC, PBS, and local affiliates.

That level of access was the polar opposite of my first experience covering presidential politics: the Jan. 28, 1998, visit to the U. of I. by President Bill Clinton.

As a senior reporter and member of *The Daily Illini's* editorial board, I had interviewed political luminaries (including Dick Durbin, during his first Senate run), and I expected Q&A time with President Clinton. But just days ahead of his appearance, news reports began to surface regarding his alleged affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. Clinton's visit to campus suddenly took on international importance, and media outlets from all over the world flocked to Champaign-Urbana. It seemed that the local press might get crowded out by the bigger names. Nevertheless, every major TV station in Chicago descended on *The*

Daily Illini's headquarters—a one-time stereo shop on Green Street with a façade of translucent plastic—wanting to know our plan of attack.

However, in the end, no one from the local press was allowed to interview Clinton.

As the *DI* reporter assigned to the presidential motorcade, I made up for that hole in our story by covering scene-setters of students' and local residents' reactions, including a funny sign in front of the Shurts House Bed & Breakfast that read, "Bill Clinton Did Not Sleep Here." And I focused on the star-studded array of national reporters who covered the visit, including ABC's Sam Donaldson, who was cheered by students everywhere he went.

Though Clinton's visit did not teach me how to interview a president, it did teach me to be prepared for anything when covering politics. That is a lesson I have applied again and again throughout my career, whether I'm interviewing governors, senators or, more recently, so-called Nazi hunter Eli Rosenbaum [about his pursuit of Russians in America who were accused of genocide against Ukrainians]. In the process, I've learned to be adaptable, to be light on my feet, to know when to press, and when to back off.

I learned those skills because of my time at the U. of I., and they've never steered me wrong. **I**

Brian Costello was a four-year staffer of The Daily Illini. He is director of marketing and communications at Loyola Marymount law school.

Share your campus experience!
Email: illinoisalumni@uillinois.edu

IN MEMORIAM

1940s

Katherine (Lichliter) Colman, '40 ED. Sept. 19, 2025, Burlingame, Calif.

Frederick C. Ford, '48 BUS, MS '49 BUS. July 14, 2025, Chicago.

Iris Kaplan, '49 LAS. March 1, 2025, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

1950s

Richard W. Larson, '51 ENG. April 9, 2025, Saline, Mich.

James A. Scheeler '51 FAA, MARCH '52. Sept. 23, 2025, Brunswick, Maine.

George M. Smith, Jr., '51 BUS. July 29, 2025, Elizabethtown, Pa.

Fern (Hodge) Armstrong, '52 FAA. Aug. 23, 2025, Rockford, Ill.

Ronald A. Keehner, '52 BUS. Sept. 22, 2025, Houston.

William J. Rutter, PHD '52 ACES. July 11, 2025, San Francisco.

Ralph D. Butler, '53 BUS. Feb. 3, 2025, Monmouth, Ill.

James S. Acheson, '55 BUS. July 14, 2025, Champaign.

Paul L. Myers, '56 ACES. July 26, 2025, Greenfield, Ind.

Jack Waaler, '56 LAS, JD '59. Aug. 5, 2025, Urbana.

William E. Britz, '57 VM, DVM '59. Aug. 12, 2025, Wheatland, Wyo.

Carl H. Johnson, '57 FAA. Sept. 10, 2025, Galena, Ill.

Robert L. Munneke, '57 LAS. Sept. 19, 2025, Loveland, Colo.

Ronald J. Patun, '57 LAS. Aug. 7, 2025, Latrobe, Pa.

Raymond F. Borelli, '58 ENG, MBA '76. July 24, 2025, Mercer Island, Wash.

Nolan W. Mitchell, '58 ACES, MS '65 LAS. Aug. 22, 2025, Omaha, Neb.

Betty (Hoffman) Brainerd, '59 ED, EDM '62. July 17, 2025, Mansfield, Ill.

Joseph L. Daw, '59 LAS, MD '62 UIC. July 24, 2025, Westmont, Ill.

George M. Gazda, EDD '59. Sept. 11, 2025, Athens, Ga.
Steve Smandra, '59 ENG. Aug. 30, 2025, Niles, Ill.

1960s

Donald E. Arnold, MS '60 AHS. Sept. 22, 2025, Champaign.

Dale C. Brinkmann, '60 ENG. July 18, 2025, East Peoria, Ill.

Fred E. Johnson, '60 AHS, EDM '62. Aug. 19, 2025, Shell Lake, Wis.

Roger L. Stoughton, MS '60 ENG. Sept. 1, 2025, Carmichael, Calif.

John R. Wilson, '60 ACES. Aug. 26, 2025, Fithian, Ill.

John R. Boyer, '61 ACES, MS '66 ACES. Aug. 5, 2025, Heyworth, Ill.

Robert W. Hindsley, '61 FAA, MS '62 FAA. Aug. 26, 2025, Orland Park, Ill.

David E. McDowell, '61 ENG. Aug. 7, 2025, Lakewood Ranch, Fla.

Ronald E. Boyer, '62 LAS. Sept. 19, 2025, Watseka, Ill.

Gaila (Grubb) Ross, '62 LAS, EDM '67. June 23, 2025, Monticello, Ill.

Donald W. Sibrel, '62 ENG. Sept. 25, 2025, Huntington Beach, Calif.

Richard A. Sturgeon, EDM '62. Sept. 14, 2025, Louisville, Ky.

John G. Fraser, '63 LAS, MA '65 LAS, PHD '68 LAS. Sept. 5, 2025, Milwaukee.

Stephen K. Derwelis, '64 VM, DVM '66. June 21, 2025, Los Ranchos, N.M.

Marilynn (Kemp) Seits, '64 FAA. Sept. 30, 2025, Asheville, N.C.

Paul Tschampel, PHD '64 LAS. Sept. 7, 2025, Ossining, N.Y.

James A. Bauer, '65 LAS. Aug. 29, 2025, Lake Forest, Ill.

Donald J. Leverenz, '65 ENG, MS '66 ENG, PHD '69 ENG. March 8, 2025, Springfield, Va.

Richard B. Schultz, '65 BUS, MAS '66. July 22, 2025, San Francisco.

Lois (Kretzer) Solomon, '65 ED.

U. OF I. CHANCELLOR



Michael T. Aiken, HON '19, who served as the U. of I.'s sixth chancellor, died on Aug. 25, 2025, in Cody, Wyo. He was 93.

An internationally recognized sociologist, Aiken specialized in organizational theory, a background that served him well as chancellor from 1993 to 2001. His leadership led to the development of the U. of I.'s Research Park, the New Student Convocation, community-building

initiatives, increased graduate student and faculty support, and a record-breaking \$1 billion fundraising campaign.

Aiken initiated a comprehensive study of the university's needs that grew into "A Framework for the Future," a strategic plan designed to strengthen undergraduate education and maintain competitive salaries for faculty and graduate students. Those efforts brought more graduate fellowships, endowed chairs, and professorships to the U. of I., and bolstered student admissions from underrepresented groups.

Aiken also strengthened relations with the cities of Champaign and Urbana by establishing the Campustown 2000 Task Force. The initiative worked to improve the safety and physical appearance of the Green Street area, laying the groundwork for future Campustown improvements.

Upon his 2001 retirement, the Michael Aiken Chair was established to honor the former chancellor for his dedication to enhancing Illinois' quality of teaching, research, and service.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS ICON



Stephen P. Long, Stanley O. Ikenberry Endowed University Chair of Crop Sciences and Plant Biology, passed away on Sept. 9, 2025, in Urbana. He was 75.

Long was one of his generation's most cited plant researchers, authoring more than 400 publications on photosynthesis, plant physiology, and the impact of climate change on agriculture. He was a founding faculty member of the Carl R. Woese Institute

for Genomic Biology and helped launch the U. of I.'s Energy Biosciences Institute. In 2012, he established the university's Realizing Increased Photosynthetic Efficiency (RIPE) initiative.

In 2025, the World Food Prize Foundation honored him with its Top Agri-food Pioneer Award for his groundbreaking research on engineering-improved photosynthesis in crops.

JAPAN HOUSE FOUNDER



Shozo Sato, HON '99, professor emeritus and founder of the university's Japan House, passed away on May 4, 2025, in Champaign. He was 91.

Sato introduced Japanese arts and aesthetics to generations of Illini and the community at large. He first came to campus as a visiting artist in 1964 in the university's Dept. of Dance, and went on to become an artist in residence at the newly opened Krannert

Center for the Performing Arts in 1969. He is best remembered there for his Kabuki theater productions.

In addition to theater and dance, Sato offered courses and workshops in traditional Japanese arts, including *shodo* (calligraphy), *sumi-e* (black-ink painting), *ikebana* (flower arranging), and *chado* (tea ceremony). He founded Japan House in 1976 to create a dedicated space for teaching those arts in an authentic environment.

Sato and his wife, the late Alice Ogura Sato, as well as his brother-in-law, the late Dr. George Ogura, provided extensive financial support for Japan House, now an immersive campus hub of Japanese culture and community.

SUPERCOMPUTER SCIENTIST



Duncan H. Lawrie, MS '69 ENG, PHD '73 ENG, died on Nov. 26, 2024, in Pagosa Springs, Colo. He was 81.

Lawrie was a professor emeritus of computer science who served as chair of the U. of I.'s Dept. of Computer Science from 1990 to 1996. With a deep interest in supercomputer software and architecture, Lawrie was an integral part of the university's ILLIAC IV computer project. He worked on a

parallel supercomputer programming language called GLYPNIR, and contributed to the design of the Burroughs Scientific Processor, as well as Cedar Fortran, a specialized multiprocessor language. Through his service and leadership on numerous policy committees—including his tenure as president of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Computer Society—Lawrie helped shape the direction of modern computing.

In recognition of his many contributions and longtime service to what is now the Siebel School of Computing and Data Science, the Duncan H. Lawrie Leadership Award for computer science undergraduates was established in 2009.

Sept. 11, 2025, Brookline, Mass.
Mildred B. Griggs, EDM '66, EDD '71, JD '03. July 28, 2025, Champaign.

Steven M. Still, '66 ACES, MEXED '68, PHD '74 ACES. July 10, 2025, Hilliard, Ohio.

Sara E. Sumner, JD '66. Aug. 18, 2025, Chicago.

John H. Bieritz, '67 ENG, MS '69 LAS. Sept. 5, 2025, Willowbrook, Ill.

Eldon L. Haab, '67 LAS, MS '68 LAS. June 24, 2025, Bloomington, Ill.

Lowell F. Smith, '67 MEDIA. July 9, 2025, Marion, Ill.

Robert F. "Bob" Wrobel, '67 BUS, JD '70. July 30, 2025, Lakewood Ranch, Fla.

William B. "Bill" Black, EDM '68. Sept. 9, 2025, Danville, Ill.

Kenneth W. Blan, '68 MEDIA, JD '71. July 17, 2025, Crystal Beach, Fla.

Linda Shirk, '68 ED. Sept. 6, 2025, Rancho Mirage, Calif.

George R. Flynn, JD '69. Aug. 31, 2025, Bloomington, Ill.

Jo Ann (Frank) Kenny, MS '69 LAS. Aug. 9, 2025, Madison, Wis.

MBA '01 BUS. Sept. 17, 2025, Snellville, Ga.

Kim D. Prentice, '73 FAA, MARCH '75. Oct. 1, 2025, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Annette (Buntin) Jackson, '74 ACES. Aug. 1, 2025, Champaign.

Sally G. Hoskins, '75 LAS. July 24, 2025, New York City.

Gordon R. Knowlton, '75 ENG. Sept. 26, 2025, Port Byron, Ill.

Charlotte N. Mabrey, '75 FAA, MMUS '77. Sept. 7, 2025, Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

Deborah (Smith) Olien, '75 LAS, EDM '79 ED. July 22, 2025, Williamsburg, Va.

Kathleen J. Hermann, '76 ACES, MS '77 ACES. Aug. 7, 2025, Baltimore.

Betty (Simantel) Crossland, '77 LAS. Sept. 28, 2025, Indianapolis.

Keith A. Whalen, '77 ENG. Sept. 10, 2025, Zebulon, N.C.

Joseph G. Lateer, '78 BUS. Sept. 22, 2025, Carlsbad, Calif.

Brian J. Meginnis, JD '78. June 6, 2025, Peoria, Ill.

Rick A. Neuhaus, '78 FAA, MARCH '81 FAA. Aug. 19, 2025, Edwardsville, Ill.

William M. Hand, MS '79 ENG. Aug. 23, 2025, Brookfield, Wis.

1970s

Ruth A. Burkybile, '70 BUS. Aug. 29, 2025, Urbana.

Barney R. Cargile, '70 BUS, MAS '73. Aug. 25, 2025, Northport, Ala.

Patrick T. Kane, '70 ENG. Sept. 7, 2025, Geneva, Ill.

John R. Gillespie, '71 ENG, MS '76 BUS. Aug. 16, 2025, Champaign.

Kenneth B. Garverick, '72 LAS, MA '74 LAS. Sept. 28, 2025, Champaign.

Steven L. Lucas, MS '72 ENG. Sept. 8, 2025, Redondo Beach, Calif.

Laird W. Salisbury, '72 LAS, JD '74. Aug. 15, 2025, Sturgeon Bay, Wis.

Lisha (Glass) Banks, '73 LAS,

1980s

James K. Kogut, '79 ED, JD '83. Sept. 17, 2025, Burr Ridge, Ill.

Evis M. Brown, '80 AHS. July 24, 2025, Tucson, Ariz.

Judith (Rachuy) Decker, MS '80 ENG. July 12, 2025, Stockton, Ill.

Bruce A. Grahl, '80 ENG. Aug. 13, 2025, Greenville, Texas.

Karl M. Grisso, PHD '80 ED. Sept. 2, 2023, Charleston, Ill.

John M. Ehrhardt, '81 VM, DVM '83. July 17, 2025, Wenona, Ill.

Joseph Halliday, '81 ENG. Sept. 19, 2025, Flossmoor, Ill.

Margaret (Post) Niederer, '81 ED. Aug. 24, 2025, Springfield, Ill.

Wendy L. Harrington, '87 BUS. Sept. 7, 2025, Austin, Texas. 🇺🇸



Q: Whatever happened to the local band One Eyed Jacks?

—Paul Fardy, MS '64 AHS, PHD '67 AHS



A: Founded at the U. of I. in 1966 as a Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity band, the “Jacks” quickly became one of the Midwest’s most popular live acts, opening for iconic bands such as The Doors and Jefferson Airplane. However, they had trouble translating their live success into a hit record. Blaming the problem on frontman Budd Carr’s singing, the Jacks replaced him with future REO Speedwagon singer, Mike Murphy, in 1969. But the band never really broke through, and it disbanded in 1973. Carr would go on to a long career as a music supervisor in film and television, and a manager for acts such as Carole King and Kansas, while guitarist Tom Kelly would go on to write some of the biggest hits of the

1980s for other artists, including Madonna’s “Like a Virgin.”

Q: What percentage of the campus is in Urbana versus Champaign?

—Dale Ratermann, '78 MEDIA

A: It’s almost an even split. Keeping in mind that the dividing line between Champaign and Urbana is Wright Street, it breaks down like this: Champaign, 52.7 percent; Urbana, 47.3 percent.

Q: What happened to the alumni portraits displayed at the Illini Union?

—Steve Kraus, '82 LAS

A: The portrait gallery in the Union’s east corridor honored recipients of the Alumni Achievement Award, which the Alumni Association has sponsored since 1957. A few years ago, the gallery ran out of wall space, and the UIAA and the Union began removing the earliest portraits to make room for the newest honorees. The UIAA recognized that was not an ideal solution, and in 2018, it created a digital exhibit in the university’s heritage museum, the Richmond Family Welcome Gallery at Alice Campbell Alumni Center, which includes all of the portraits, as well as short biographies of the recipients. In 2025, the Union installed a duplicate exhibit and removed the physical portraits, which the Alumni Association will donate to the recipients’ families. Please stop by the Welcome Gallery or the Union to check out the digital exhibit! 📺

Ask Illini 411

Do you have a question about the U. of I.? Write to Illini 411 at rross2@uillinois.edu. The most delectable questions will be selected for future publication.



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Pictured: Students gain research experience in a pathobiology lab at the College of Veterinary Medicine where they study infectious diseases in humans and animals. (Photo by Fred Zwicky / University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign)

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