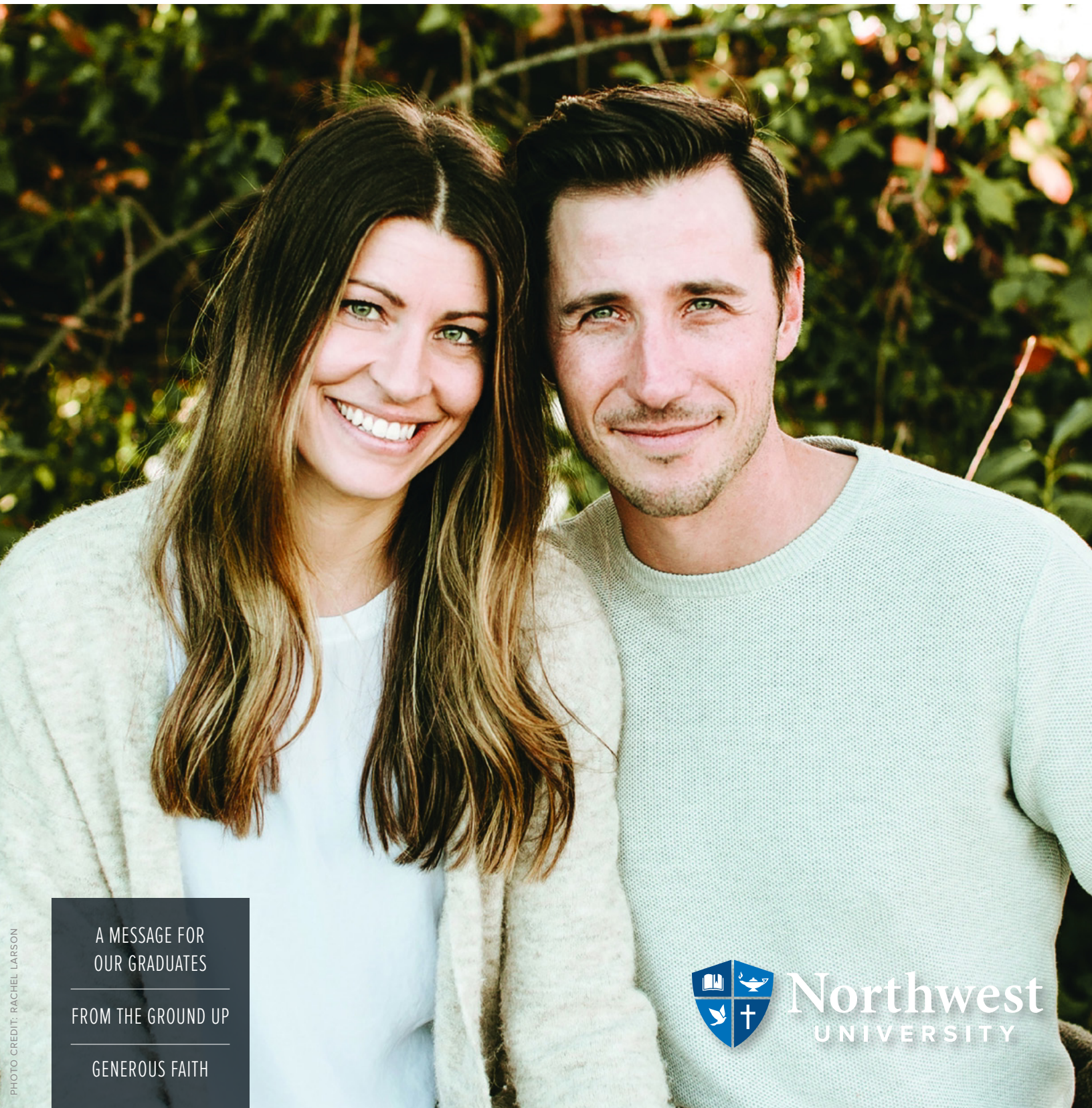


# NORTHWEST PASSAGES

FOR FRIENDS AND ALUMNI OF NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY | SPRING 2020



A MESSAGE FOR  
OUR GRADUATES

FROM THE GROUND UP

GENEROUS FAITH



Northwest  
UNIVERSITY

## The New M.O.

After months of dealing with the global pandemic, everyone, everywhere, is ready for the “new normal.” As I have written on my blog, it is impossible to begin the new normal until we have fully accepted the loss of the old normalcy. The harder we work to re-establish the old patterns of behavior, the more we delay establishing a new *modus operandi* (M.O.). Yet we have no choice but to re-establish some semblance of the old order even as we labor to help the new one fully emerge.

Recently, we had a fascinating formal discussion with a friend at one of the world’s largest companies. He told us about how his company sees higher education as one of the last major industries that stands ripe for disruption, and they have already begun investing serious money in research and development to speed that disruption and get ahead of it. If the coronavirus has not sufficiently disrupted us at NU, it should rest assured that industrial cavalries have already set out to help it!

As leading Christian thinker Andy Crouch has written in his collaborative article, “Leading Beyond the Blizzard: Why Every Organization Is Now a Startup” in *The Praxis Journal* ([journal.praxislabs.org](http://journal.praxislabs.org)), “The priority of leaders must be to set aside confidence in their current playbook as quickly as possible, write a new one that honors their mission and the communities they serve, and make the most of their organization’s assets—their people, financial capital, and social capital, leaning on relationship and trust.”

I want to assure you, as a friend and supporter of NU, that we have long ago begun the work of accepting and even abetting the disruption

of our normal. In 2010, we adopted a new business plan called “The Flip,” designed to convert our student body from 75% traditional students to 75% non-traditional students (mostly online). We have passed the 60% mark in non-traditional students, and adopting online education has changed the way we teach in the classroom. The future will undoubtedly push us further down the track of integrating technology and teaching. At the same time as we have grown online, we have experienced a small amount of increase in our traditional student population—those who take daytime undergraduate classes at our Kirkland campus. Admittedly, the pandemic, combined with population trends, will probably eliminate the small growth we have achieved in traditional students.

**Here’s a preview of the new normal as we conceive it: across the university, faculty and staff have begun work on a project I call the “Ready to Work Initiative.”** We will be rethinking everything we do to focus the university’s curriculum and culture on the formation of skilled young professionals who will leave NU with all the tools they need to contribute to the success of their employers on their first day of employment. We have included in that project new majors in technology fields such as User Experience Design, Computer Science, Data Science, Video Production, and other areas of study that the current employment market prizes. Our culture will feature more and more elements that foster the soft skills that make first-rate professionals. And the ways we teach and the technology that we employ will change as well. Stay tuned. More news will follow soon.



At the same time, we believe that residential Christian liberal arts education will *not* go away in the future. We believe the answer to the multiple-choice question about the future of higher education is “All of the Above.” Accordingly, you can count on Northwest to achieve greater excellence, even as we become less exclusive. We will remain a “college with the soul of a church,” just as our founders intended. You can count on a commitment to increased diversity in our student body and staff, even as we see the church and the nation around us growing more diverse. We will continue to pour out financial aid into worthy students who deserve a chance to experience the spiritual vitality, academic excellence, and empowered engagement with human need that characterizes our endeavor. Everything that has marked our best will remain indelible.

And we will think like entrepreneurs. To the degree possible, we will act like a start-up. We will find a new M.O. even as we seek to create “Big Mo”—the momentum that will pick us up like a wave and push us forward onto the shores of new and improved solid ground. We know it won’t happen automatically. A great deal of work lies ahead. Lots of uncomfortable change awaits us. We can’t wait to reconvene our residential student community in the fall as we keep working to discover the new M.O.

Sincerely,

Joseph Castleberry, EdD  
President



# Northwest UNIVERSITY

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## NU MISSION

We, the people of Northwest University, carry the call of God by continually building a learning community dedicated to spiritual vitality, academic excellence, and empowered engagement with human need.

Northwest University is accredited by:



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# To Our Graduates:

We are disappointed that the end of your last semester with us didn't look the way we hoped it would. We want you to know that even though many things have changed, our belief in the class of 2020 has not. We are so proud of you. You have accomplished a lot, and you have big things ahead. We are honored to be part of your journey, and we are praying for your varying next steps. We hope that these few glimpses from the last school year remind you just how much your NU family loves you. We can't wait to see you again soon at our alumni and upcoming events.



*The class of 2020 on their first day of Orientation in 2016*



*Bingo night in the Caf*



*Dorm room check-in in Perks lounge*



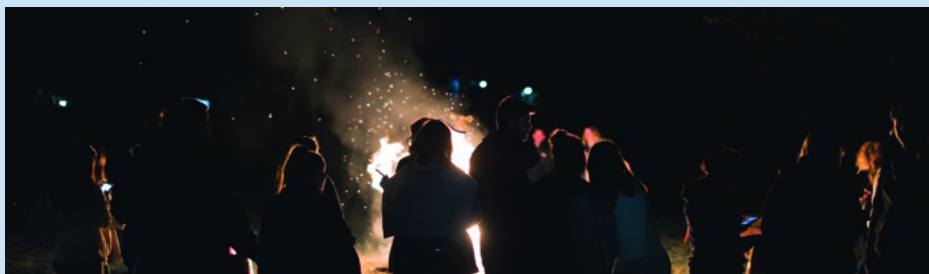
*Black Student Fellowship event*



*Instrumental concert*



*Christmas Traditions 2019*



*Bonfire during Orientation*



*Alumni of the Year, Kevin Geer*



*Christmas Pursuit 2019*



*Welcoming new students at Orientation*



*Welcome Back Bash 2019*



*The annual Christmas tree lighting*



*Lunch on the Eagle athletic Fields*



*Homecoming and Family Weekend 2019*



*Choralons at the President's Banquet*



*The annual color run event, Color Chaos*



*Mr. Northwest 2020*



*Orientation 2019*



*Screaming Eagles Week 2019*



*from  
the*

# GROUND UP

**We believe in a creative God. The book of Genesis tells us that the Lord made the entire universe with His own hands—including human beings. Since we were created in the image of the ultimate Creator, it's only natural that we would share His affinity for building new things.**

At Northwest University, our goal is to equip students to use the gifts the Lord has given them for building and furthering the Kingdom of God. For some, that means starting a business. For others, it means planting a church. No matter the skill set, we believe it's crucial to invest in all kinds of people as the Lord uses them for His purposes.

The pages that follow are filled with stories of alumni who became *entrepreneurs*, *church planters*, and *creatives*. Though their chosen mediums vary, they are all creators and developers, working to build something good from the ground up. We could not be more proud to be a part of their story.

# ASPEN PLUMMER

## *photographer*

Shortly after Aspen graduated from NU with her bachelor's degree in 2016, she launched **Aspen Jeanné Photography**, a business specializing in wedding photography that serves clients all around the world.



COURTESY OF ASPEN PLUMMER

### **HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?**

I started my business almost by accident. I started to second shoot weddings for a friend of mine and just kept working weddings! Before I quit to go full-time in January of 2018, I worked a full year at a nonprofit while getting my business up and running.

### **WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH?**

I love to travel! Photographing weddings is an awesome way to travel and see new places! Plus, there's nothing quite like being your own boss. It's an incredible experience to

build something that people believe in that is also an artful expression of who you are.

### **HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?**

One of the best parts about NU is the fact that it's in the PNW! As a California native, the location of NU gave me a great segue into life up North. In addition to this, many of my professors were either entrepreneurial themselves or had partners that had also followed the path of owning their own business. My professors were always very supportive of finding a meaningful career path!

### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AS YOURS?**

My advice would be to find a mentor, and conduct as many informational interviews as possible. It's so important to invest in yourself. Having a degree is a great start, but you can add to your personal development by learning from seasoned professionals. Starting a business is absolutely not as easy as people make it look, so surround yourself with people who have walked the walk.





# ZAIN PALOALTO

## *business owner*

Zain graduated from NU in 2010 with his bachelor's degree. He started his business **Back2Basics Cleaning Service** as a student in 2007 and has since become a member of the Alumni Board.

### HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?

Back2Basics started by complete accident. Now that I look back though, it was God guiding my steps. As a sophomore at NU in 2007, I was not able to make ends meet financially. I saw an ad on the Eagle website where someone was looking for a student to detail their boat. Growing up in Lake Chelan, my summer job there was as a boat detailer, so I felt that I could do that job. I went to meet the family and detailed their boat. The wife saw my work and asked if I could clean their home too. I had no idea that this would be the launching point of a business where we now have 10 team members working to make us the premier cleaning service in the Puget Sound area.

### WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH?

I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, and I was fascinated with trying new things and working with people. What motivated me were my parents. Remembering my dad working two to three jobs at times to make ends meet. My mom cleaning homes and bringing me with her as a young child. My parents bringing me here to the states. We crossed the Rio Grande while I was on my dad's shoulders. I was going to make sure I did everything possible to make them proud.

### HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?

My time as NU was incredibly valuable. I was a communications major. This helped with learning

how to communicate effectively with customers and employees and create a great culture within my company. Being a leader on campus allowed me to learn lessons of being a leader and working with people. NU has so many opportunities where you can be involved and grow as a person, and I took advantage of those opportunities.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AS YOURS?

The advice I would give is that in everything you do, do it to the best of your ability. Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." Even if it means scrubbing toilets and washing floors. You give it your all, and the Lord will open up doors.

## EVAN KIRKPATRICK

### *financial planner*

Evan attended NU from 2002-2006 and has since become a member of the Foundation Board of Trustees. Shortly after graduation, he started **Wendell Charles Financial**, a wealth management company focused primarily on serving the entertainment industry.



#### **HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?**

I started WCF 10 years ago after beginning my career at a Fortune 100 financial firm and working as a senior investment consultant at a Seattle firm for four years. At age 26, and being a little naive, I decided wealth management was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, so I thought I might as well get started. The journey has been a lot of fun and has taken me from my condo in Kirkland to providing financial advice to high net worth individuals, writing for Forbes about philanthropy, speaking at the United Nations, and negotiating financial contracts with A-list Hollywood agencies and management companies. My first desk 10 years ago was a cardboard printer box in my bedroom and I remember praying that God would just show me the way and that I truly could do all things through Him who gives me strength.

#### **WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH?**

Structurally, I knew exactly what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it. I could see the exponential impact we could have and couldn't justify not getting started. It was a very clear vision and feeling that this is what I was supposed to do. Creatively, there is an art to business, and a blank canvas with the ability to choose all of the colors was very appealing.

#### **HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?**

I credit NU professor John Mohan with helping me get started investing and making connections that led to my first job in finance. The extra time on campus after injuries derailed my basketball career was valuable in the sense that I got to study business, theology, history, and even youth ministry.

NU gave me a well-rounded education, forced me to get a lot done and organize my academic priorities, and most importantly, provided me space to develop my faith and goals for the future. I also made lifelong friends and remain close with many former teammates.

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AS YOURS?**

The entrepreneurial road is not as glamorous as it sounds. You have to be absolutely sure that you are called to it, as building and scaling a business is the challenge of a lifetime. It's also the most rewarding, but just prepare to have some rough days along the way. Pray for strength and perseverance every day.



# BRIAN MCCORMACK

*church planter | pastor*

Brian graduated from Northwest University with a bachelor's degree in 2005. He and his wife, Emilie, planted **Reach Church** in 2012 and have been serving the church as it grows ever since.

PHOTO CREDIT: JAKE CAMPBELL

## HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?

Emilie and I had been doing ministry in Texas, and we felt compelled and called to move back to Seattle. We knew that we were supposed to start a church for people who had never been to church, as well as people who had but wished they hadn't. So in the summer of 2012, we threw a big barbecue at Juanita beach park. We didn't have any money, but we had a high-level mission and four words: gospel, worship, community, and mission. Now it's been seven years, doing those four words over and over again.

## WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO START SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH?

It was actually while I was at NU that that idea really started. My professors were teaching the bible to young people in a culturally relevant way. That was the first time that I had ever

thought, "Whatever this is, my generation needs more of it." Not every Christian is called to plant a church, but every Christian is called to make disciples. Emilie and I felt that practical call—Seattle needs churches; Seattle needs more Christians winsomely living out their faith. Then it just became a question of willingness.

## HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP YOU PREPARE FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?

The Christian environments that I had been a part of before coming to Northwest really ingrained in me a passion for the principles and the promises of God. But I had never been in a place where the presence of God was a value. That's become a core element of my identity as a preacher and as a pastor at Reach. The other element was the community. I found the culture of NU really nurtured people who took initiative. Largely

because it's a spirit-led community, NU is a place where students that spontaneously want to take initiative to lead in ministry can get an opportunity. That was my experience and I'm really thankful for that.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE FOLLOWING A SIMILAR PATH?

The people who actually know how to make disciples and actually know how to build a team, those people will always have job security. If you can do those two things, you are worth your weight in gold. I have found good communicators are much easier to find than people who actually know how to follow Jesus, invite people to follow Jesus with them, and then mobilize people around them to a gospel purpose. Those are the folks that will never have a shortage of opportunity.

## BRITT ESPINOSA

### *big data specialist*

Britt graduated from Northwest University in 2016 with a business degree. After graduating, Britt founded **Tulu Systems**, which builds big data/internet of things devices for commercial buildings.



#### **HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?**

Since I was 16, I've toured in a rock 'n' roll band. Aside from playing music, one of my favorite parts was managing the business side of the group. I booked over 1,000 shows, did the radio pitching and sales, and ran the marketing campaigns for four releases. My senior year at college, I met my wife, Karesa, and I realized I needed another source of income. I interviewed at a company called Vital Mechanical, where I met a guy named Ron Blasser who was the director of sales and marketing. Long story short, we really connected and I started working with Ron. The company's main line of business was managing the HVAC equipment that cleans, heats, and cools buildings. We realized that every year, building owners spend around \$500 billion maintaining and repairing these systems. The amount of money being spent every year on an old and outdated process signaled that the

industry was ripe for disruption. In 2018, Ron came to me with a "back of the napkin" idea, and in January of 2019 I quit my normal job to work full-time with Tulu.

#### **WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD SOMETHING FROM SCRATCH?**

I've always been an entrepreneur and loved the thrill of "making my own thing." While it can be exhausting at times to be the person who "the buck stops with," it's also very rewarding.

#### **HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?**

What makes the NU College of Business so excellent is the personal relationship and interest professors have in your life. When contemplating leaving my steady job to go all-in at Tulu, I sought advice from various professors like Tom Sill and Todd Nelson. I don't think it's very common for professors to pour that kind of energy into a student

who has already graduated. Their insight was key in helping me make the decision to jump. They've been a huge support outside of business stuff as well; in fact, Todd Nelson performed my marriage ceremony!

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AS YOURS?**

Be obsessed with providing value. When you are an entrepreneur, there isn't anyone else telling you what to do or what to focus on. It's incredibly important to prioritize your time and always ask yourself if the task you are doing is valuable. This is also important for people who are working for an employer. Less than 35% of the workforce is actively engaged in their work. The other 65% are not engaged or are actively disengaged. Being obsessed with providing value to the company you work for is not only a great way to get ahead, but it's also a huge testament to how Christians are different.



# WILLIWU SIEFA JR.

*fitness instructor | gym owner*

Williwu “Wu” Siefu Jr. earned his bachelor’s degree from NU in 2012 and his MBA in 2014. Currently, Wu owns a gym in Kent, Washington, called **BigWu Fitness** that specializes in sports performance training, one-on-one personal training, circuit training, and kickboxing classes.

## WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD A BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN?

During my time at NU, I enjoyed interacting with the students and faculty as well as giving them tips about weight lifting. After graduation, I worked at a gym in Redmond, and I felt a sense of uneasiness because we were not allowed to share our faith. I remembered praying this prayer: “Jesus, if you give me a gym like this, I will make sure to honor you and point others to you.” A few months later, I quit working at all of those big gyms and opened up BigWu Fitness, along with my wife, on October 15, 2017. My passion for helping people pursue a relationship with Jesus Christ motivated me to open a training facility that focuses on strengthening the mind, body, and soul. We do this by praying

before and after every class, and we offer a free bi-weekly men’s Bible study, followed by a free workout. As my business expands, I would like to go back to Liberia and build an athletic training center for at-risk youth. A significant portion of the infrastructure in Liberia was destroyed during the fourteen years of civil war. Liberia and Africa need entrepreneurs to grow the economy and alleviate poverty.

## HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU’RE DOING NOW?

Without a doubt, Northwest University has prepared me to be a successful entrepreneur. As a result of my education at NU, I was able to write an effective business plan, do an accurate financial analysis, and conduct comprehensive market

research on my competitors as well as clients. Most importantly, while attending NU, I was able to draw closer to Jesus Christ and establish a lifelong relationship with him. Northwest University exemplifies the definition of a thriving and Christ-like community and serves as a beacon of hope to its many students.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS AS YOURS?

The advice I would give anyone who wants to start their own business or pursue a dream is to put Jesus Christ first. As John 15:7 states “if you abide in me and my words abide in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted.” An intimate relationship with Jesus Christ is the source of every dream and vision.

# DREW AND LEANNE KONZELMAN

## *counselors*

Drew and Leanne started a counseling center called **Novo Life Counseling** after graduating from NU with master's in counseling psychology degrees in 2014. Leanne has since become a member of the Alumni Board. Novo means to renew, to refresh, or to begin again in Latin. Novo Life Counseling is a boutique practice that provides mental health counseling, coaching, and neurofeedback therapy. Drew and Leanne have grown their practice to include an experienced team of licensed mental health counselors who work with couples, teens, and adults, specializing in pre-marriage and marriage counseling, postpartum and trauma care, behavioral issues, ADHD, work-life balance, anxiety, and depression.

### **HOW DID YOU START YOUR BUSINESS?**

We started Novo Life Counseling after having graduated together from the MACP program at Northwest University in 2014. Leanne was coming from the corporate world, having worked for the Seattle Seahawks, and I was coming from a career in the creative world of music and production. While the corporate world had its perks, we realized that what mattered most to us were people and

relationships. A big part of why we started Novo was to help other people live their lives to the fullest, and in doing that, we felt like we were able to live our lives more fully. A core value of our relationship is adventure and making sure that we live our lives to the fullest and help others do the same. This comes from Jesus in John 10:10 who said that the whole reason He came to earth was to help people live their lives more abundantly or to the fullest. We thought we'd hop

on that train too, and it has been a rad journey so far.

### **WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BUILD A BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN?**

I have always been an entrepreneur both relationally and in business. Outside of Novo, I have started brands and scaled businesses. Leanne is also a builder and likes to have control over the feel of the brand. We wanted to make every part of our client experience intentional. We also



PHOTO CREDIT: RACHEL LARSON

wanted to create a place where other passionate and talented clinicians could come and work with clients under the umbrella and inside the community of Novo Life. The idea is to build long-term working relationships with clinicians who want to focus on their clients rather than running a business. Our goal is to continue to help other people figure out how to live their lives to the fullest and to reduce the stigma around mental health. I believe that the bravest people are the ones who reach out for help in their journey. We have, and it has helped us grow immensely.

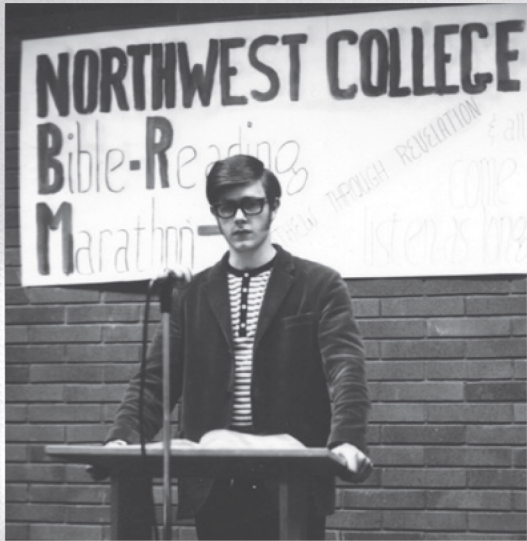
#### **HOW DID YOUR TIME AT NU HELP PREPARE YOU FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW?**

Our time at NU was growing to say the least. We had just gotten married, both had changed jobs, and were in full-time ministry at a local church in addition to full-time graduate school. The support from the staff and faculty of the program was exactly what we needed. There were many moments of growth for us as individuals and as a couple, and we valued our learning experience at NU. The multicultural aspects of the program prepared us for the work we are doing today. One highlight

was a cultural immersion trip that we convinced the faculty to let us take to work and live at an orphanage (and get some surfing in) in Costa Rica. The trip was eye-opening and formative for our work today.

#### **WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO SOMEONE WITH SIMILAR GOALS TO YOURS?**

I would say, get out and meet people. When we were getting the company off the ground, a mentor of Leanne's said that if you meet with 10 people, it's likely that three will have helpful information and one of them will become a lifetime friend or help in some way. That worked out for us, and Leanne did a great job building support and relationships in the community. We now have two clinics, our main clinic in Kirkland, and a campus in the South Puget Sound.



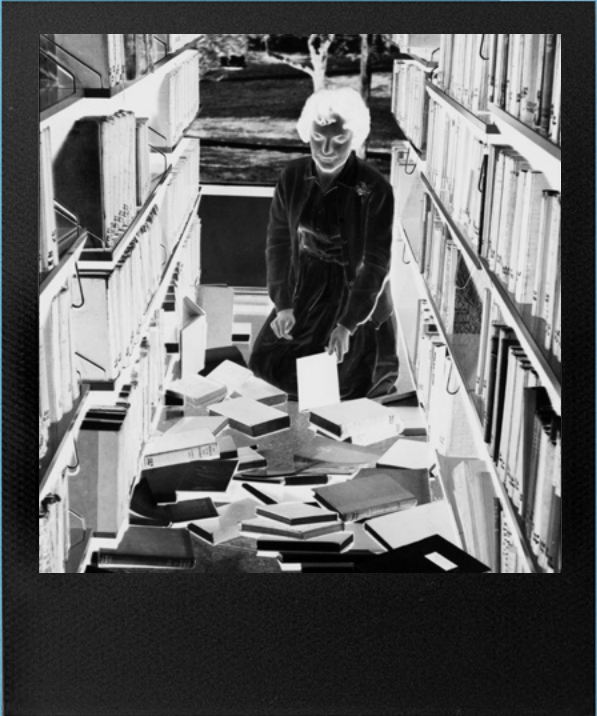
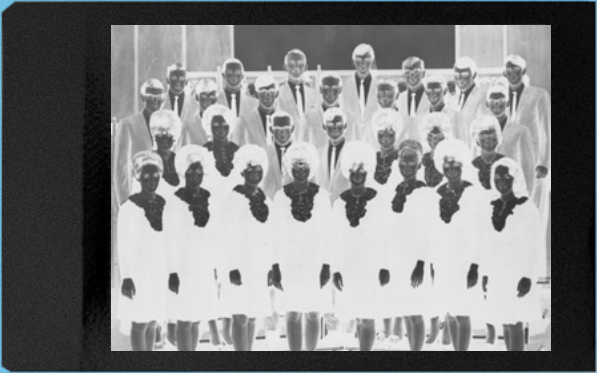




# SNAPSHOTS

NU THROUGH THE YEARS

Do you have any snapshots from your time at NU that you'd like to share with the community? If so, submit them to [passages@northwestu.edu](mailto:passages@northwestu.edu).



# STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



## A GIVING CAMPAIGN FOR STUDENT RELIEF

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The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted people in our community and around the world. For many Northwest University students, this virus means that they'll be unable to return to NU without additional scholarship funds. This breaks our hearts. That's why this year's giving campaign is going to look a little different. Many of you have asked, "How can we help?" By giving to our 2020 Strength in Numbers campaign, you can make a direct impact in our students' lives. Every dollar raised will go directly to our COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund, providing immediate scholarships for students who have been impacted by COVID-19 and are trying to return to school this fall.

While we may not be able to gather together in person, the strength of the NU family can still come together financially to make a significant difference for good. We are calling on our community members to participate and collectively further students' ability to carry the call on their life and further the Kingdom of God.

**All gifts, no matter the size, make a big difference when tallied together.** During this time of uncertainty, *together* we can help current students complete their degrees and help prospective students begin their studies. Thank you for being a friend to NU. We are grateful to partner with you, and to do so in community.

Help us reach our goal by going to [northwestu.edu/strength](https://northwestu.edu/strength) to give today!



# NORTHWEST UNIVERSITY LEGACY AWARD

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Every year at the President's Banquet, we take a moment to present a special honor called the Northwest University Legacy Award. This particular award, presented by President Castleberry, is an award given to an individual or a couple who have demonstrated exemplary service, generosity, and leadership in our community.

This year's Legacy Award recipient is John Butterfield, the son of Northwest University's second president, Charles E. Butterfield. John and his late wife, Jan, have contributed significantly to Northwest University and its mission. John is one

of the most consistent major donors in the history of NU, with lifetime giving exceeding half a million dollars.



*John Butterfield receiving the Legacy Award*

After graduating in 1954, John pastored several churches in eastern Washington and ultimately started a church in Lakewood, Washington, that served military families from Fort Lewis. The small church grew over time to sustain itself and John transitioned from full-time ministry to start his own businesses. While his vocation may have changed, John never lost his passion for Northwest University or his belief in the school's mission to equip students for Kingdom work.

Among other things, John is a businessman, a former pastor, and a Northwest University alumnus. His consistent heart for ministry and people has led him to serve in such countries as Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, and Korea, as well as in his own community. He is a faithful friend to the university and has become one of our greatest allies in regards to campus planning, fundraising, service, and much more. John is entirely deserving of this award, and we are so grateful for his guidance, leadership, support, and friendship over the years.

# *the* PRESIDENT'S BANQUET

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES



On Friday, February 21, we hosted our annual President's Banquet. While the President's Banquet is, of course, designed as a fundraiser, it typically doubles as a worship service and a celebration of God's faithfulness. Each year, this event continues to exceed our expectations both financially and spiritually. This year's banquet was no exception, as we raised our largest amount yet.

After an excellent meal and a warm welcome from the evening's host, Larry Snyder, the night began. President Castleberry followed Larry's introduction with an inspirational speech that encouraged attendees in the knowledge that their gifts would contribute to advancing the Kingdom of God. Following President Castleberry's speech, the Northwest Choralons sang about Jesus and trusting what the Lord says about us. After their performance, two NU students, Jacob Kicha and Holly Hollopeter, shared their testimonies. They both spoke of God's faithfulness and provision: how they have learned

to trust Him during their time at NU and how grateful they are for the scholarships they received.

Following their testimonies, it was evident from the thunderous applause that those in attendance were moved. With excitement and anticipation in the air, Larry Snyder returned to the stage to extend the opportunity to give.

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**The total amount received from this year's President's Banquet broke our all-time record with pledges and gifts totaling \$1,031,050!**

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We are completely blown away, and we are so grateful to everyone who gave. Crossing the million-dollar mark is a significant milestone, and we look forward to seeing what God does in the years to come as we steward this money to fund scholarships through the Opportunity Fund.



*Host for the evening, Larry Snyder*



*President Castleberry*



*Student Testimonies, Jacob Kicha and Holly Hollopeter, both class of '20*



*Prayer from Kevin Geer, Alumnus of the Year, class of '97*



*A wonderful performance by Northwest Choralons, directed by Brenda Rasmussen*



*President Castleberry and John Butterfield, recipient of the Northwest University Legacy Award*



*President's Banquet attendees: Kirsten Miller and her father Gunnar Lie.*

PHOTO CREDIT: JAKE CAMPBELL AND GARRETT HANSON

# GENEROUS FAITH

Every nonprofit relies on generous donors who want to champion the mission and vision of the organization. At Northwest, because of the faith-based nature and eternal implications of our work, we have found that **our financial partnerships often turn into lifelong friendships.**

The Reeces are one couple whose relationship with Northwest University has become an important friendship. *George and Norma Reece* met at Northwest University as students in 1969, back when it was still Northwest Bible College. They had assigned seats in chapel and were seated next to each other. One year later, they were married.

After the Reeces graduated and began their life together, George was asked to join the trustee board at NU. “I started to serve on the trustee board and a few years after that, I joined the board of directors and have held that position for nearly 20 years,” George recounted. “Norma continues to serve on the board of trustees. Our hearts have always supported Christian education [because we] know how much that created a foundation in our lives through nearly 50 years of marriage.”

Since then, George and Norma have become some of the most generous and faithful donors to Northwest University. Their belief in the next generation as our future and their commitment to helping young people contribute to the Kingdom of God is inspiring.

“Our hope is that these students will have a spiritual compass in life as they navigate through life and that they will carry





the call of Jesus in their occupation and ministry,” George explained. “We believe that when we invest our finances into the Christian education of students, we are planting seeds that have eternal consequences.”

When asked what they would say to encourage the next generation at NU, George said he would encourage students “to keep Jesus as the center of their lives, through the ups and downs of life, and to learn to live life with a generous spirit. God loves generous people, and we have personally been blessed in not only our finances, but in our health and every area of our life.”

Another lifelong friendship is that of *Marlene Ostrom*. Marlene’s late husband, Don, was a student at Northwest University. He was highly involved, and at one point he was the student body president. Because of this, Marlene became acquainted with NU early on. When it came time to decide where to invest, Marlene and Don had already decided that “this is a good Christian university.”

Since then, Marlene has become a member of the board of trustees and has seen two grandsons attend NU. “I wanted to stay involved with a university that will preach the gospel and change people’s lives. There’s not very many of those around.”

As of now, Don and Marlene’s legacy of partnering with Northwest University has extended 50 years. Even with years of generous giving under her belt, Marlene has every intention of continuing to empower the next generation.

“I believe that it is important because of the spirit and the atmosphere in the world today; it’s kind of getting further away from God. I have grandchildren that are growing up. Instead of me telling them everything, I can say, ‘Hey, there’s a good college over here that you can go to.’ And like I said, two of them have. They learned and received a foundation of truth. I don’t know of any other place like that right now.”

As we continue to move forward as a faith-based university, we are more and more grateful for friends like Marlene, who believe that faith and generosity go hand in hand. “Always use faith and speak God’s Word. But remember that the sower went forth to sow. I think any time we speak the Word of God into a person, a nation, a country, or a family, that’s like planting a seed. And then the university comes along and they water it and we go together. But that seed will bring forward a harvest. And I think that’s what we have to realize: this is just the beginning of something. You just have to plant the seed, and then God makes it grow. He gives the increase.”

“WE BELIEVE THAT WHEN WE INVEST OUR FINANCES INTO THE CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OF STUDENTS, WE ARE PLANTING SEEDS THAT HAVE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.”

- GEORGE REECE

# THE NEW FACES OF ALUMNI AND DEVELOPMENT

This year, NU gained some exciting new talent in our Alumni and Development department. Since these people will be responsible for interacting with alumni, parents, donors, and more, we wanted to make sure you had a chance to get to know a little bit about them. We could not be more excited about these fantastic additions to the NU team, and we can't wait for you to meet them in person.



Cole was born and raised in Olympia, Washington. He is a recent alumnus of NU. While he was a student, he studied Business Marketing and was heavily involved on campus with music, leadership, and intramural sports. After graduating, Cole worked in various industries including tech and retail before beginning his career at NU at the end of 2019. Cole attends church at Life Community Church in Kirkland, Washington, where he is the worship director.

**COLE HASTIE** | Director of Alumni Relations



Melissa is a California and Texas native who joined the NU community in 2012 as a transfer student. She attends Churchome in Kirkland and has led groups for young adults over the last two years. Melissa is a double alumna of NU, graduating from the College of Business in 2014 with her bachelor's degree in Marketing and then again in 2016 with her master's degree in Business Administration. She has a previous work background in retail management for Francesca's and Nordstrom and has been a part of the NU staff since 2017, starting as a project manager in the Alumni and Development office. Melissa has a heart for serving people and desires to bring the NU community even closer by providing new spaces for parents to engage with the university.

**MELISSA GILES** | Director of Operations and Parent Relations



Pa'lee has a vast background in higher education—ranging from directorship of MBA admissions at the University of Washington Foster School of Business to leading the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship at the Chicago Booth School of Business. Prior to her work in higher education, she helped re-open the Cambodian Embassy in Washington, D.C., working to re-establish Cambodian relations with both foreign and domestic diplomatic communities. Pa'lee helped open one of the first International Justice Mission offices in Cambodia to fight child trafficking and currently serves on the board of Providence Heights. Pa'lee holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Westmont College and studied Humanitarian Law and Refugee Policy at the University of Oxford. She is excited to begin cultivating relationships with stewards who are interested in partnering with and supporting the vision of NU.

**PA'LEE SHOWALTER** | Philanthropic Relations



# UPCOMING EVENTS

As of now, we are hopeful that we will be able to move forward with all of the events listed below as planned. That being said, there is a good chance that the impact of COVID-19 will continue to effect our ability to gather. We will be sure to keep you in the loop as these event dates and times are finalized.



## Summer Alumni Picnic | July 2020

Time TBD | Perrigo Park in Redmond, Washington

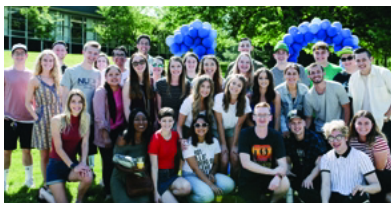
Gather together with your fellow alumni and friends as we enjoy the summer weather! Join us for a Chipotle lunch, prizes, a sand volleyball tournament, soccer games, and more!



## Elevate: Career Advancement Event | August 2020

Time TBD | Location TBD

Hear from leading experts within different fields of the business world, engage with fellow NU alumni, and be a part of breakout sessions that will give you the tools to help you elevate your career.



## Graduation Festivities | August 15, 2020

- New Alumni Breakfast
- 50th Reunion
- Commencement



## Homecoming & Family Weekend | September 25–26, 2020

Kirkland Campus in Kirkland, Washington

All alumni, parents, and families are invited to join us here at NU. We will have more events and activities than ever! A bonfire, tailgate, chapel, and class reunions are just the beginning.



## Golf Tournament | October 5, 2020

Registration Time TBD | Shotgun Start Time TBD

TPC Snoqualmie Ridge—Snoqualmie, Washington

Join us for a four-person scramble golf tournament to support NU Athletics and student scholarships through the Opportunity Fund.

Visit [northwestu.edu/events](https://northwestu.edu/events) for the most up-to-date list of Northwest University events.

## 1950s

**Ward Tanneberg ('58)**

Ward attended Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri, before he entered Northwest College newly married and in his junior year. Northwest was a meaningful time of growing and grounding for him. Ward completed graduate studies

at Western Evangelical Seminary/George Fox and Seattle Pacific University and earned a PhD in Theology from California Graduate School of Theology.

With his late wife, Dixie, he began active ministry in 1959. He later served as the AG Northwest District youth and men's ministries director, and, for three years, as Northwest University's public relations director. He pastored three churches: Forks AG in Forks, Washington; Valley Christian Center in Dublin, California; and Westminster Chapel in Bellevue, Washington. In his career he's been a lecturer, adjunct professor, writer, novelist, and nonprofit organization executive director.

Ward writes a weekly blog, *Perspective*, about living, learning, and leading in life's second half as a follower of Jesus. He's the author of several novels, including *Without Warning* (orig. *September Strike*); *Vanished* (orig. *October's Child*); *Pursuit*; *Redeeming Grace*; an allegory, *Seasons of the Spirit*; a history of the Pentecostal movement in the Pacific Northwest, *Let Light Shine Out*; and Dixie Tanneberg's memoir, *Sacred Journey*. He is currently working on a new novel.

## 2010s

**Melissa Poole ('14)**

Since graduating NU, Melissa has followed God's call for her life by teaching, specifically bringing music to the lives of many children, teens, and their families in the greater Snohomish County, as well as serving in her home church of

Canyon Hills Community Church in Bothell, Washington. She hopes to be an agent of restoration and hope to her students. She's thankful for the ways in which God used the professors and staff at NU to teach and prepare her for those "next steps" in life. While much of learning to teach happens on the job, as most teachers know, without that initial accreditation from NU, Melissa knows she would not have had the same open doors to carry the call in the ways she now enjoys. Melissa currently works as the director of choirs at Heatherwood Middle School in Mill Creek, Washington. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

## 2010s (cont.)

**Petrice Bokako ('18)**

Going into college, Petrice was a strong Christian believer with foundational beliefs and a sense of integrity, but NU reinforced those qualities. The faculty and students encouraged Petrice to develop a good work ethic, grow stronger in her beliefs,

and continue to walk with integrity.

NU taught Petrice how to be both a businesswoman and a Christ-follower. These two characteristics are often disjointed, but she is able to make both a part of her identity because of the teaching and examples at NU. She works at Microsoft in recruiting, but takes the time to build authentic relationships with the people she interviews and learn about who they are. The NU community allowed Petrice to understand her purpose and the way God wanted her to walk. She believes everything happens for a purpose. At NU, she had the opportunity to meet the man who eventually helped her get a job at Microsoft. Without her time at NU, she may never have connected with him. Petrice's network of people from NU is unlike anything else—they are a community that is irreplaceable.

**Julia Olsen ('18)**

Learning from and being mentored by the professors in the Creatio program at Northwest University was a career-shifting and life-altering decision for Julia. The mentorship from Steve Smith

and the professors in Creatio stretched her into the professional she is today; whether she's working with an artist or talking with a CEO, she is confident in what she's learned and able to do.

Since graduating, Julia released original music and has worked in a variety of roles with artists: the vocal producer and recording engineer for Jeremy Rosado's (from "American Idol") upcoming album; the sound engineer for events featuring recording artist Steven Malcom and even CEO Steve Forbes; the recording engineer, co-producer, and the co-mix engineer for Dr. Ron Cole's upcoming jazz record. She also co-managed rapper and author XOLA and worked with Save the City Records in association with adjunct professor Derek Hoiem. Julia also leads worship and performs for churches and events.

This year, Julia attended Winter NAMM and Women's Audio Mission Conference in Nashville and LA and visited iconic studios and venues, such as Ocean Way Studios, The Tracking Room Studio, Dolby Atmos Laboratories, and YouTube Space LA.

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

**Dr. Renee Bourdeaux** (Assistant Professor, Communication Studies) presented “Communicating Love in Relationships: Taking Relationships From Surviving to Thriving” as a short course at the National Communication Association’s National Conference. She also presented “What Does a Good Mother Look Like? Surviving Beyond the Rhetorical Performance of Good Mothering” in NCA’s Women’s Caucus Division and talked about her book during a webinar for the Communication and Christianity Studies Network. She also presented “What Behaviors Should We Be Focusing on in Our Marriages?” for Off Script with Debbie ([vimeo.com/371252287](https://vimeo.com/371252287)) and “Communicating Love in Relationships: Theory, Research, and Pedagogy” for a Christianity & Communication Studies Network webinar ([vimeo.com/374739906](https://vimeo.com/374739906)).

**Dr. Charlotte Easterling** (Assistant Professor, Biology and Physics) presented “Evidence of Power Amplification and Thermal Robustness in Salamandrid Feeding Mechanisms” at the Society of Integrative and Comparative Biology.

**Chrystal Helmcke** (Assistant Professor, Communications and Theatre Arts) and **Dr. Bourdeaux** were co-authors of “Immigration Encounter: Relevance of Emotions in Communication” in *Discourse: The Journal of the SCASD* ([openprairie.sdstate.edu/discoursejournal/vol5/iss1/6](https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/discoursejournal/vol5/iss1/6)).

**Joseph McQueen** (Assistant Professor, English) presented “Sacralizing Time In a Secular Age: The Liturgical Calendar and John Keble’s *Christian Year*” at the Modern Language Association convention.

**Dr. Joshua Meeks** (Assistant Professor, History) presented “From San Ildefonso to Manila: Revolutionary War on the Margins” at the Consortium on the Revolutionary Era and “Corsica and the Ruins of Empire” at the Western Society for French History. He also published *Napoléon Bonaparte: A Reference Guide to His Life and Works*.

**Dr. Jeremiah Webster** (Associate Professor, English) published “Rise of the Scops: Wonder After the Pandemic” in *Mere Orthodoxy* ([mereorthodoxy.com/scops](https://mereorthodoxy.com/scops)).

## COLLEGE OF MINISTRY

**Dr. Blaine Charette** (Professor, Bible and Greek) published “Restoring Righteousness to Creation: An Overview of Matthew’s Theology of the Spirit” in *Reading St. Luke’s Text and Theology: Pentecostal Voices*.

**Steve Mills** (Assistant Professor, Ministry) published *Church Planting Workbook* with Mel Ming.

**Dr. Bob Stallman** (Professor, Bible and Hebrew) led a session at the National Association of Professors of Hebrew and the Society of Biblical Literature titled, “Student-Centered Grammar Instruction in the Introductory Biblical Hebrew Class.”

## COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

**Dr. Edward Ewe** (Associate Professor, Counseling) presented “Fostering Ecosystems to Nurture Professional Identity Development of Doctoral Students in Counselor Education Programs” and “From Start to Finish: Navigate the Dissertation Journey” at the annual conference of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. He also presented a “Two Day Clinical Supervision Workshop” at Washington Mental Health Counselors.

**Dr. Jenny Harris** (Associate Professor, Psychology) and **Dr. Leihua Edstrom** (Professor, Psychology) presented “Amplifying Excellence in Your Training Program by Incorporating Cultural Immersion Trips” at the annual conference for The National Council for Schools of Professional Psychology.

**Dr. Matt Nelson** (Dean) presented on “Legal and Ethical Issues in Counseling Ministries” at the 2020 Northwest Ministry Conference.

## OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

**Dr. Ben Thomas** (Associate Provost) was a co-author of the paper “Act Six: The Institutional Perspective” that was published in the *Journal of Research on Christian Education*.



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## **A MESSAGE FROM THE NU ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:**

We want you to know that we are praying for you during this time. COVID-19 has, of course, affected all of us in some way or another. As we move through the uncertainty, we are asking God to provide His perfect peace for each member of our NU family. As it says in Isaiah 26:3 of the NLT,

**“You will keep in perfect peace all who trust  
in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!”**

We believe in an all-powerful God, and His grace and wisdom are sufficient for us, even in the midst of our current situation. If you have any specific prayer requests, please let us know by emailing [alumni@northwestu.edu](mailto:alumni@northwestu.edu) and we will be sure to lift up your needs in prayer.