Viterbo Graduates Share Much More Than Alumni Status

The bond between long-time friends Sue (Buening) Steffek ’77 (right) and Tammy (Burrell) Schlagenhaft ’86 (left) recently became a little stronger when one of them gave of herself—literally.

Steffek was diagnosed with the kidney disease NgA Nephrothapy (Berger’s disease) when she was pregnant with her son 20 years ago. She had lived successfully with the disease for years, but recently things had taken a turn for the worse.

“I was doing fine until a year and a half ago,” said Steffek, when her kidney function began to drop, eventually hitting a low of 10 percent. “I began dialysis and needed a transplant.”

That’s where Schlagenhaft stepped in, donating her kidney in a January transplant at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. “As soon as she came forward, my thought was I’d help her if I could,” she said. “We were excellent matches, which is very rare for people who aren’t related. It was remarkable we matched so well. There was no hesitation from the doctors, and that made us feel really good.”

“She was on a mission,” Steffek said. “She never expressed any fear or hesitation.”

Their friendship can be traced back to the late 1970s, when Schlagenhaft was a student in Steffek’s eighth grade class. Steffek also taught Schlagenhaft’s twin brother and younger sisters.

“They were on a mission when I received a teaching job in the same school where she worked,” Schlagenhaft said. “We’ve taught together for 18 years. We’ve always had a special connection.”

Both are second grade teachers at St. John’s Catholic School in Marshfield, are members of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church, and are neighbors. They also both graduated from Viterbo University’s School of Education, Steffek in 1977 and Schlagenhaft in 1986. “My family considers her one of the family,” Steffek said. “We both share the same love for teaching and for children.”

Schlagenhaft was one of many friends and fellow teachers to submit blood tests to determine if he or she was a potential donor. A kidney transplant, like any transplant, is major surgery, and the risk of serious complications is always present.

“Even the parent of one of my students came forward to be tested,” Steffek said. “I felt very fortunate people were willing to do this.”
The transplant was a complete success. “The kidney began to work immediately when it was grafted into my body,” Steffek said.

Support from family, friends, and the Marshfield Area Catholic School System made the whole thing possible, both women said. “My dad is a physician and he never discouraged me, but I could see in his eyes he was very concerned, but very proud,” Schlagenhaft said. Her immediate family was also very concerned, especially her daughter. “In the end, everyone was fine. I had super support.”

“We had every meal delivered to our homes for weeks,” Steffek said. “There were huge get well banners from school signed by each of the 600 students. They made us feel like celebrities. This whole thing has been an important lesson for the kids, in both religion and science.”

Their Catholic faith is an integral part of their lives and it gave them and their families the courage to see the operation through, both said. Schlagenhaft’s brother, Fr. Jeff Burrill, used his sister’s story to inspire others. “He wrote the most beautiful homily about giving the gift of life,” she said. “He had his parishioners in tears. He admitted he initially selfishly wished I wouldn’t go through with the operation, even though he loves Sue. He told them how important it was to look beyond your insecure feelings and see the good you could do someone.”

People willing to help friends the way Schlagenhaft helped hers can indeed do a world of good. Both women have fully recovered. “My lifestyle hasn’t changed at all,” Schlagenhaft said. “That’s the word that needs to get out.”

By Anthony Slaby
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Leigh Neville-Neil Brings New Meaning to "Studying Abroad" in Iraq

Criminal justice major Leigh Neville-Neil earned her degree from literally halfway around the world.

Neville-Neil finished her final 17 credits by independent study while serving in the military in Iraq. She is a member of the 79th Military Police Company of Rochester, Minn., an army reserve unit that was stationed in the Middle East from March 2003 to April 2004. She is also one of 13 Viterbo students who have been called to active duty in the armed forces since Sept. 11, 2001.

For Neville-Neil, 23, earning her degree certainly wasn’t easy. Textbooks and other course materials were mailed to her in Iraq, and she was able to communicate with her professors via email. Neville-Neil spent most of her spare time studying. “I even studied on the plane coming back,” she laughed. “I wasn’t excused to do less work. I studied by flashlight in a Humvee at night.”
“She told me she was ‘reading a lot of books, and that she could be reading textbooks’ when she visited while on leave from Iraq,” Wojciechowski said. “She was certainly a bright enough student, and the classes she needed to graduate were only offered in the spring. So the question was ‘how do we get this gal graduated?’”

While she was a diligent student, of course the mission came first, she said. She served as the “eyes and ears for the team and the vehicle” as the gunner on a Humvee, armed with a M249 SAW machine gun and a Mark 19 grenade launcher. Her unit, which she joked stood for “multi-purpose” instead of military police, was assigned with providing security for convoys, the physical security of generals, perimeter security of bases, and dealing with prisoners, including several considered high profile. And yes, she saw combat “many times.”

“It was a smoother transition into combat for us because we were initially in southern Iraq where it is relatively peaceful, and by the time we moved north, we were already hardened,” Neville-Neil said. “We knew what we had to do to stay alive and we did it.”

The roadside bombs were the biggest danger, she said. “They’re hidden in animal carcasses, water boxes, potholes--they’re everywhere. And then after a bomb hits a vehicle in a convoy, everyone is shaken up and looking to see where the bomb came from, and meanwhile there are people on both sides of the road shooting, who were waiting for your guard to drop to attack.”

Thankfully, Neville-Neil and the other soldiers in her unit escaped harm. “We were really, really, lucky,” she said. “We were usually right before or right after something really huge. The unit that replaced us suffered 15 casualties. It was just by God’s grace nothing happened to us.”

Leigh had joined the military for several reasons--she planned to pursue a career in federal law enforcement where military experience is preferred, it offered money for college, and for the training. “When I enlisted, I knew being called to active duty was always a possibility, but I hoped it would be after school and that it would be somewhere peaceful,” she said. But that’s the risk of joining the military.”

She enlisted one month before the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. After the events of that fateful day, she said she was “very glad” she had enlisted, because she felt an obligation to serve. Her unit was a “highly deployable one,” and it was called to active duty in January 2003. She spent two months with her unit training at Fort McCoy, time, she found out later, that didn’t count toward her year rotation. But, “our real training came when we got to Iraq.”

In addition to the enemy, there was also the suffocating heat with which to deal. Neville-Neil said one day someone in her unit placed a thermometer in the shade, and it broke when it hit its limit of a mind-boggling 150 degrees. “We would drink seven to nine one-and-a-half liter-bottles of water a day, and never have to go to the bathroom,” she said. “You wouldn’t even see much sweat, just salt stains on your shirt.” To make matters worse, not only was it hot, she said, but the sand blew non-stop.

Neville-Neil doesn’t want to have a political discussion about the reasons for going to war, but she said she believes in the American military and their mission in Iraq. “When we got there, we knew we had to be there,” she said. “We talked to people about the prisons, torture
chambers, and the 20,000 people killed in one day." One of the high points of her experience was distributing school supplies to Iraqi children. “To see the looks on their faces when they got this stuff, something that is so basic to us, it made their year,” she said. The most difficult times were spent in the hospitals with the guilt that comes with seeing wounded comrades.

Neville-Neil was rotated with her unit to the United States April 9 and has returned to her career as a Juneau County Sheriff’s Deputy. She graduated from Viterbo with more life experience than most students can imagine, and with the pride that comes with doing something noble, both for your country and your fellow citizens.

“I’ve learned a lot about myself,” she said. “It’s made me grow up a lot and appreciate what I have here a lot more. Before I left, it was so easy to complain how bad you supposedly have it or how much of a struggle life is with working and going to school. Then you go over there and live so primitively and have nothing besides each other. Yet we had it better than the Iraqis.”

Neville-Neil said she wished to express her appreciation to Wojciechowski, her advisor and criminal justice professor Marlene Fisher, Jane Eddy, and Earl Madary for their help in making her “study abroad” experience successful. It is the Viterbo community who should express their appreciation to her, Wojciechowski said.

“Her story is heartwarming,” Wojciechowski said. “It is also a tribute to the other soldiers from Viterbo serving our country.”

By Anthony Slaby
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"Completing the Circle" Inspires Alumna Gift

“Coming full circle” is a wonderful way to describe how a 1962 graduate made the decision to designate Viterbo as a lead beneficiary in her estate in an amount that currently represents the largest single alumni gift in the history of the university.

The gift will benefit many future generations of students in the form of financial aid. That thought alone is enough to put a smile on the face of this graduate.

She graduated with a degree in Biology and went on to enjoy a very successful career in healthcare administration, helping hospitals and other healthcare facilities organize into systems and other kinds of innovative plans which were new to the medical sector during the 70s and 80s. She was instrumental in bringing about an HMO merger in the West and later a large healthcare system merger. Her career path included stops in Wisconsin, Washington D.C., New Jersey, Idaho, Missouri, Utah, and Nebraska, with stints as vice president and CEO of several major healthcare entities.

She stayed connected with Viterbo in a number of ways. She served on the university Board of Trustees (1987-91) and currently is a member of the Viterbo National Advisory Council.
After retiring in 1996, she got to thinking about how she wanted to structure her will and plan for her estate. She then contacted Viterbo with the news that the university was to be the largest charitable beneficiary to be included in her will. President Bill Medland described the decision as “a remarkable affirmation of the power of education to change lives.”

She made her intentions known quietly and wanted no recognition. However, thinking that others may be willing to make a similar move, she eventually and reluctantly agreed to share what went into her decision to make Viterbo the primary charitable beneficiary of her estate, but asked to remain anonymous.

“I decided on Viterbo because this is where it all started for me,” she said recently in an interview which took place just after she toured the newly opened Reinhart Center.

“I have had a very successful career but I don’t want to take credit for it. Everything was in place because of the great education I received. I came from a little town in Iowa at a time when women had few choices in life. When I came to Viterbo, the FSPA--my teachers--were real role models for me.”

“They were strong, wonderful women. They were so mature and so intelligent and they wanted you to learn so badly. Essentially I learned that as women, we were as capable as anyone and could do whatever we put our minds to. If I hadn’t been exposed to that kind of culture at Viterbo, I would never have progressed in my career as I did.” She was never to forget what those early years and the self confidence she gained, would mean for her later in life.

In fact, the move to making a substantial donation, started years earlier, when she would remember Viterbo with an annual gift. The relationship grew from there. “I even had Viterbo in the will very early on. Eventually, I decided I wanted a substantial part of my estate, at least half, to go to Viterbo to support my belief that we all have an obligation to that institution that makes us successful.”

She decided on this route after participating in a program called LifeSpan Planning Process™ offered by her attorney, who is a member of the National Network of Estate Planning Attorneys. She was in the habit of giving up to 20 percent of her net income to charitable causes, but soon realized it didn’t take long to come up with a full-page of worthy causes. She decided to concentrate her efforts and narrow her giving to reflect her highest priorities.

The LifeSpan process is based on the Network’s Three-Step Strategy™ for creating an estate plan that will achieve all of the client’s personal goals as well as legal and tax goals: working with counseling-oriented advisors, participating in an ongoing maintenance and education program, and securing appropriate assistance for the family to ensure that the client’s wisdom is passed on along with the client’s wealth. The process is a cocreative one which systematically integrates the expertise and efforts of the family, the LifeSpan attorney, and the client’s financial advisor, tax accountant, current cotrustee, and successor trustees, with any major beneficiaries participating as appropriate. The comprehensiveness of the LifeSpan process helped her clarify and narrow her priorities. “In the end, I decided, to make it simple and give half to Viterbo, and half to my family.”
As important as the process appeared on the surface, she learned much to her surprise, that many Americans avoid any kind of estate planning. Seven out of ten individuals don’t have a will, and even for those who do, 30 percent have not looked at it in 10 years.

Her advice to others? If you haven’t started thinking about making a gift to your favorite non-profit organization or institution, do it now before it’s too late. “We really need to get people to start thinking this way. This generation that is living now will be involved in the greatest transfer of wealth in history.”

“It all began here, and at least my thinking is, that what I want to give the next generation is a future. And for me, that meant it was time to step up to the plate.”

President Medland, for one, is glad she did. “This gift will help students years from now, who will earn their degrees from Viterbo and go on to make a difference in this world, and in turn, will then perhaps share a gift of their own with Viterbo. It’s an unbroken circle that makes higher education so rewarding and worthwhile,” Medland said.

Meanwhile, the Viterbo alumna who included the university in her estate, said the process can be relatively simple, but it must begin with some conscientious planning. “I’m not a whole lot different from others who find themselves in similar circumstances. Perhaps others who are successful at what they do will consider a plan like this. I worked hard, and through the course of my career, I accumulated financial resources. It’s important for me to know that what I have done in my life can be shared with others--in my case, future Viterbo students. That’s a powerful thought and it’s the one that grabbed me.”

For more information on estate planning, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at 608-796-3070.
By Pat Kerrigan
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Viterbo and Boys & Girls Clubs Break Ground for New Facility
The Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education

Viterbo University and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse broke ground on the nation’s first collaborative building project between a club and a university, the $7.5 million Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education, at a special ceremony in June.

“This is such a ‘win-win’ proposition,” said Viterbo President Bill Medland. “Our students, and the youth of the neighborhood, all need space and programs, which promote physical, intellectual, and social well-being. The Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education will offer some unbelievable possibilities, such as Viterbo students mentoring and tutoring the youth.”

The project will alleviate overcrowding in Viterbo’s Student Activity Center, which was built in 1987 when enrollment at the university was half of what it is today. It will also allow the Boys & Girls Clubs to more effectively serve the youth of La Crosse’s south side. The building will include three collegiate-size gymnasiums, a teen center, a cardiovascular fitness room, a
1/8-mile walking track, game rooms, a free weight strength center, a computer room, and an art room.

Fundraising for the project began when the project was announced in July of 2003 and has included a $100,000 challenge grant by the La Crosse Community Foundation, a large city-wide raffle, and significant private donations. “I have been pleasantly surprised at the groundswell of support,” said Terry Erickson, executive director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse. “It's really rewarding to know that people see the need and have so much confidence in Viterbo and the Boys & Girls Clubs to do this project well and do it right.”

The building is scheduled for completion in July of 2005. It is named for Amie L. Mathy, who founded Mathy Construction in 1945. An engineer by trade, he served on a number of local, state, and national boards before passing away in 1987. Family members have been involved in a number of activities at both the Boys & Girls Clubs and Viterbo University. His son Chuck served on Viterbo’s Board of Trustees, and his grandson Scott is a board member and an alum of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse.

Keep up to date on the progress of the Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education.

ON CAMPUS

Viterbo Names Teacher of the Year

Joyce Heil, a veteran member of the nursing faculty known for her dedication and her commitment to her students and profession, was named Viterbo University's 2004 Teacher of the Year.

Heil, an assistant professor of nursing, has taught at Viterbo from 1978 to 1986 and again from 1997 to the present. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Viterbo in 1972 and her Master of Science in Nursing degree from St. Louis University.

Other Viterbo employees receiving recognition were:
- Jennifer Anderson-Meger, social work, received the Alec Chiu Award for her work to "recognize, foster, and stimulate faculty members’ efforts to engage students in scholarly activities."
- Marilyn Jaekel, university nurse, was presented with the Fr. J. Thomas Finucan Award for her exceptional contributions to furthering the mission of Viterbo.
- Mary Hassinger, Dean of the School of Letters and Sciences, received the Sr. Helen Elsbernd Distinguished Service Award. The award is presented to an individual who has served the university for more than 20 years, typically in more than one capacity.

Pope John XXIII Award Winners

Marge Reinhart, a successful businesswoman known for her quiet philanthropy, and the Reverend Dennis Dease, president of the University of St. Thomas, were named recipients of the 2004 Pope John XXIII Award for Distinguished Service presented at Viterbo in April.
Recipients were selected by the Viterbo Board of Advisors and the award represents the highest non-academic honor conferred by the university.

Marge Reinhart is the Chairwoman and Chief Executive Officer of Reinhart FoodService. The business and philanthropic interests begun by her and her late husband, D.B. Reinhart, continue to this day under her watchful stewardship.

Father Dennis Dease has been president of the University of St. Thomas since 1991. Under his leadership, St. Thomas has expanded significantly its reputation, programs, and facilities, adding several major buildings to its St. Paul campus and establishing a Minneapolis campus for its College of Business, School of Education, and newly reopened School of Law. St. Thomas is now one of the largest Catholic colleges in the nation and at 11,000 students, it is the largest private college in Minnesota.

Students Help Fight Cancer

College students from Viterbo University, UW-La Crosse, and Western Wisconsin Technical College collected over $41,000 for the American Cancer Society at the Second Annual College Relay For Life in April.

There were 37 teams and 550 people participating in the relay. Viterbo President Bill Medland spoke to the participants and led the cancer survivors in the first lap of the relay. The money raised at events like the Relay For Life goes to support the mission of the American Cancer Society of fighting cancer through research, education, advocacy, and service.

FSPA Recognized in New York Times

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration were the subject of an article in the nationally read New York Times. It was published Jan. 10, 2004. The article recognized the Sisters for their over 125 years of perpetual prayer, believed to be the longest uninterrupted prayer in the country. It also recognized their other work and the many prayer requests per day they receive from around the world. The FSPA mission of perpetual prayer has been gaining wider recognition. The order was also recently featured in the popular St. Anthony Messenger.

Ashes to Easter Raises $2,057

The Ashes to Easter program at Viterbo raised $2,057 during Lent for World Vision, an organization that provides food, clean water, and medicine to some of the world’s poorest people.

“The Ashes to Easter project was very successful this year,” said Emily Dykman, campus minister and religious studies instructor. “We would like to thank those who gave so generously to the project and also the students who helped to coordinate the project this year. Their hard work and creativity was very instrumental in the success of the project.” The Ashes to Easter program challenges every member of the campus community to contribute $1 or more a week during Lent.
Dr. Scholl Pre-Professional Scholarship Winner

Danielle Quinette of Cedarburg was named this year’s winner of the Dr. Scholl Pre-Professional Scholarship. Quinette received the honor after competing with 24 other finalists in testing and interviews. All finalists have expressed an interest in health care or science. Quinette has a 4.0 GPA and is a member of the National Honor Society. She will major in pre-med. The scholarship covers complete tuition costs for up to four years, and is valued in excess of $60,000.

Viterbo Author Stays Busy

Carl Koch has been busy. In addition to his duties directing Viterbo’s Master of Arts in Servant Leadership program, Koch is an accomplished author who has had two of his recent works published. The first book, Journalkeeping: Exploring a Great Spiritual Practice, examines the different ways of journaling and opening avenues of spiritual growth. He was asked to write the book by Sorin Books of Notre Dame.

“I’ve been journaling for 30 years and I am convinced journalkeeping is a wonderful way of exploring my own spiritual growth,” Koch said.

The book will also interest people for its historical insight. Each chapter deals with a different way to keep a journal and includes excerpts from famous journals throughout history. Koch also edited and wrote the introduction (along with F.S.C. Brothers Jeffrey Calligan and Jeffrey Gros with a preface by Thomas H. Groome) for John Baptist de la Salle, the latest addition to the prestigious Classics of Western Spirituality Series. The book features the writings of John Baptist de la Salle, a French priest and educator whose reforms changed education forever.

Humanities Symposium Explores "Who Owns Nature"

For Viterbo science student Chad Gonczy and many others like him, the 2004 Humanities Symposium presented the opportunity to hear and ask questions of a variety of experts.

The two-day symposium “Who Owns Nature? Genetics and Ethics at a Crossroads,” Feb. 3-4 examined many of the issues surrounding ethics and genetics in the wake of recent scientific breakthroughs and featured a list of presenters with outstanding credentials.

“Overall I thought it was really positive,” said Gonczy, a junior from Maple Grove, Minn. who plans to become a doctor. “It made people think about the controversial topics involved with cutting-edge technology.”

Attendance at the symposium registered 2,400 with 250 people coming from the community. “The response has been overwhelmingly positive,” said religious studies professor Bill Reese, who served as symposium committee chairperson. “Our Humanities Symposium is designed to foster critical thinking. We wanted the speakers not to fill people with buckets of information, but rather to light fires and excite people to go out and learn more. The speakers did that.”
Reese said the speakers presented their information “without preaching” allowing the audience to “wrestle with the issues from their own perspective and world view.”

Father Kevin Fitzgerald, a Jesuit Priest with doctorates in microbiology and bioethics, capped off the event with a presentation in the Fine Arts Center Main Theatre.

“We raised the bar with this symposium, and it’s not going to be lowered,” Reese said. “What a good face it put on the university. We wanted to promote Viterbo as a university that deals with front-burner issues and cutting-edge concerns, ethically as well as scientifically.”

**Totem Pole Dedicated**
A contemporary totem pole was dedicated in the commons area of the Reinhart Center during an April ceremony. The pole was created by students in the Art 320 Sculpture: 3D Art class. “The contemporary totem pole is a ceramic sculpture intended to represent our current time in history, using the traditional totem pole as inspiration,” said Gerard Ferrari, art professor.

The totem pole has six stacked sections representing technology, religion, time, entertainment, relationships, and nature.

**RSB Receives Honors**
Viterbo’s Resident Student Board (RSB) received major honors at the state meeting of the Wisconsin United Residence Halls Association held at UW-Eau Claire in February. The RSB was awarded with the “Golden Shoe” Philanthropy Award, the Best Display Award, and the Small School of the Year Award. Viterbo senior Mark Conroy of La Crosse was also honored at the meeting for his service as president of the WURHA for the past year.

Viterbo was also named as the host of the WURHA state meeting in February of 2005, the first time a school with a more modest enrollment has been named to host the event. Over 350 student delegates and advisors from the state and private institutions of higher education will be at Viterbo for the three-day conference.

**Viterbo Students Help Others in Kansas City**
Forget your typical spring break destinations. Kansas City, Mo. was the place to be this spring break for 12 Viterbo students. The students spent their week helping people less fortunate than themselves in the inner city during the annual Spring Break Service Trip. Group members stayed in two homeless shelters, helped prepare and serve meals to homeless and needy people, helped prepare the community gardens, helped with cleaning and painting projects, toured the city’s food pantry, and learned about the Good Samaritan Project which ministers to families dealing with HIV/AIDS.

“I think the experience really opened the students’ eyes,” said Emily Dykman, Viterbo religious studies instructor and campus minister who went on the trip. “Most students returned to La Crosse with a new perspective on the problem of poverty in our society.”
President for a Day
What is it really like to be President? Edward Rodenkirch, a senior, pre-med major from Fond du Lac, found out first hand when he and Viterbo President Bill Medland swapped jobs during the annual President for a Day.

Rodenkirch enjoyed the perks and pressures of seven scheduled meetings and activities while Medland attended Rodenkirch’s chemistry lab. Rodenkirch also spent his day reviewing case studies, checking mail, and taking a tour of the campus.

Campus Renovation
Murphy Center room 417, the large lecture room, underwent a much-anticipated major structural update over the summer.

The teaching platform was raised, the existing seating was replaced by loose platform seating, sight lines were improved, the room was carpeted, and the acoustics were improved. The “new” room 417 was completed in time for fall classes and seats 60-70 students.

Murphy Center Rich with Architecture
Completed and ready for students in 1942, Murphy Center once housed everything from a gymnasium to classrooms to dormitories. Although the interior of the building has gone through numerous changes over the past 50 years, the front entrance and exterior details have remained relatively intact. Studying the detailed carvings and statues of Murphy Center, in fact, reveals much of Viterbo’s history.

The grand front entryway, remarkable for its three-tiered ornamental carvings, also displays then-Viterbo College’s motto: “Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge,” Ps. 118, V. 66. Above the motto is a carved medal of the Order. To each side of the medal are carved symbols of the rose and lily, which represent obedience and chastity. The names Jesus and Maria are carved slightly higher and to each side of the flowers.

Three statues reside in the front entryway, all carved from Indiana limestone and donated by the workmen who constructed the building. On one side is St. Anthony; on the other, St. Bonaventure. In the tower atop the building is St. Rose. This statue was hoisted into place Nov. 9, 1941 and weighs over 1,000 pounds. At the base of this niche is a carved stone panel of the Franciscan cross arms and to each side are carved panels of the Christian virtues.

Above the fifth floor windows of Murphy Center are fourteen small, carved panels of the arts and sciences. Although many have been worn down, it is still possible to make out images. For the arts, images of a lyre, the lamp of knowledge, and a palette are discernable. For the sciences, images representing astronomy and math are also visible.

Murphy Center’s cornerstone, housed in the northwest side of the building, contains many historic photos and documents: the history of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, photos of Bishop McGavick and Bishop Griffin, a picture of Mother Seraphine Kraus, the

Discover more about the history of Viterbo University by taking a trip to the University Archives, housed in the Todd Wehr Memorial Library.

University Archives documents used for research:

“Viterbo College: Designed in Simplicity,” by E. Brielmaier & Sons, published in Church Property Administration, March-April 1944.

“Diary, SRCA,” by Sister Mileta Ludwig, in A Chapter of Franciscan History.

**Nursing Students in Belize**

Pictured are some Viterbo nursing students who got the most out of their clinical experiences by spending three and a half weeks in Belize. The undergrads worked at two maternal child clinics and the graduate students taught at the University of Belize and held an in-service education program for public health nurses. “It went very well,” said Rose Kreutz, the nursing professor who accompanied the students on the trip. “The students worked hard and also gained an understanding of cultural diversity.” She also said the students gained a depth of experience they couldn’t have gotten in La Crosse. The students and Kreutz stayed with host families while in Belize, a special experience in itself. Kreutz taught full-time at Viterbo for 32 years before semi-retiring in May of 2002. The trip was planned by Beth Moore and the office of Global Education.

**PHILANTHROPY NOTES**

**Reinhart Center Dedications**

Viterbo was honored to dedicate room 201 in the D.B. and Marge Reinhart Center for Ethics, Science, and Technology to Franciscan Skemp Healthcare for their support of Viterbo.

To honor the memory of Dr. John Bacha, the late husband of Viterbo alumni Jane Bacha, the Chair of the Chemistry Department’s office was named for Dr. Bacha, an international authority in fuels chemistry, and a consulting scientist for Chevron.

**Parent Phonathon**

Over $14,000 was pledged in this year's parent phonathon. The money was used for campus lighting and landscaping projects.
New Scholarships
The Sr. Madonna Steines Art Scholarship was recently established in memory of Sr. Madonna Steines to assist students majoring in art. She became a sister in 1935. She had a degree in Fine Arts and taught art and social studies in several parochial schools, including nine years at Aquinas. During that time, she also taught summer art classes at Viterbo.
The Xcel Energy Scholarship for Women in Science will provide two female students studying chemistry or math with $2,500. The scholarships are made possible by a $5,000 grant from the Xcel Energy Foundation.
The Rev. Dennis Dease MBA Scholarship will provide funds for an individual pursuing an MBA at Viterbo. Rev. Dease, president of the University of St. Thomas, was named one of the recipients of the 2004 Pope John XXIII Award for Distinguished Service.

Grants Received
- The Corrine Zielke Baseball Fund awarded a grant of $1,419 for batting cages at Viterbo's Student Athletic Complex.
- The FSPA Ministry Fund awarded a grant of $5,000 for CARING, INC. The mission of CARING, INC. is to provide accessible health promotion and health education services to a medically underserved population through an ongoing collaborative partnership involving Viterbo, the La Crosse County Health Department, and the Salvation Army.
- The Liberace Foundation awarded Viterbo a grant of $3,000. The Liberace Foundation scholarship is given to only 4050 college juniors enrolled in a course of study leading to a career in the arts. This year’s recipient of the scholarship is Andrew Waffenschmidt of Holmen.
- The Emory T. Clark Family Foundation awarded a $25,000 grant to Viterbo for scholarships for inner city Milwaukee teachers to attend graduate classes at the West Allis campus.
- The Paul E. Stry Foundation awarded Viterbo a grant of $2,000 for author Terry Tempest Williams to speak at the Ethics Across the Disciplines Conference in April. The title of her presentation was Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place.
- The ASIA Network/Freeman Foundation awarded a grant of $12,000 to Viterbo. The ASIA Network/Freeman Foundation awards funds to colleges throughout the nation that have a desire to establish or expand their overseas study program.

Franciscan Circle Reception
Members of the Franciscan Circle gathered in May at the D.B. and Marge Reinhart Center to honor current members, welcome new members, and honor those who have recently died. The Franciscan Circle is a group of individuals who have made a gift to Viterbo University in their will. The monies received help offset the rising cost of a college education for future students.

Scholarship Luncheon
Scholarship winners enjoyed lunch with President Bill Medland and benefactor Marion Elliott in the Fine Arts Center lobby at the annual scholarship luncheon. Approximately 100 individuals attended the event.
The annual Scholarship Luncheon was held March 18 in the Fine Arts Center lobby. The luncheon gives students an opportunity to meet, have lunch with, and personally thank the benefactors of their scholarships. Sheila Garrity, executive director of the La Crosse Foundation, spoke about the importance of providing students with scholarship money, and student Shannon Loomis spoke about the important impact that receiving a scholarship has made in her life.

**Florida Reception**

Friends of the Viterbo and Franciscan Skemp Healthcare communities gathered for an afternoon of Franciscan fellowship in March at the Stonebridge Country Club in Naples.

Dr. Phil and Monica Utz and Dr. Don and Gloria Comin were sponsors for the event.

**Alum Says "Thanks" with Scholarship**

Greg Lind hasn’t forgotten the help he received from the late Sr. Grace Clare Beznouz getting into the Viterbo nursing program. Now he’s expressing his appreciation by creating an endowed scholarship for a third or fourth year Viterbo male nursing student.

“Endowing a scholarship is a rewarding way to share my success,” he said.

Lind certainly has plenty of success to share. Since graduating from Viterbo in 1976, he went on to earn his masters and doctorate degrees from the University of Missouri at Columbia and the University of Kansas, respectively. He was an assistant professor at the University of Washington for three years before starting his own independent nursing practice, the Lake Serene Clinic, in 1990. The business has grown to employ eight nurses and a staff of 15 who serve a patient population of over 20,000. He and his wife, Diane, were married in the Maria Angelorum Chapel during semester break in 1974, and have two daughters, Brie and Karie.

“As my success has grown, I have increasingly felt the importance of giving back to the institution largely responsible for my success,” Lind said. “Viterbo instills solid theoretical and practical foundations in its students and the student-teacher ratio was ideal for personalized education. I also feel the Franciscan philosophy of Viterbo helped make my experience there rewarding, both educationally and spiritually.”

The scholarship is unique in that it is for men only. He also gives an annual scholarship for men in the nursing graduate program at the University of Missouri.

“I’ve specified my scholarships for men only because I think nursing schools could benefit from the improved perspective brought on by greater gender parity,” Lind said, “just as medical schools are benefiting from an increasing percentage of women.”

Being a male nursing student in the 1970s was a rare occurrence (about 10 percent of Viterbo’s nursing students were men), but it wasn’t a problem for Lind, especially at Viterbo. “It was easier than one might think,” he said. “My female nursing colleagues, as well as all the doctors, gave me a tremendous amount of respect and recognition. As a gender-role experiment, I remember going into patient rooms with female physicians, allowing the
patient to lead the conversation, and invariably they would talk to me as if I was the doctor and vice versa.”

Now, 28 years later, the scholarship created by Lind will help other male nursing students follow a similar career path through Viterbo.

**In Memory**

An altar table (left) and ambo (right) were given in memory of Floyd and Betty Kramer, parents of Alumni and Parent Relations Director Sally Emerson, and Joseph Steingraeber, father-in-law of nursing instructor Jane Steingraeber.

The altar table and ambo were designed and built by John Steingraeber, the son of Jane Steingraeber, and are made of Pennsylvania Ash.

They were blessed on Easter Sunday by Father Tom O’Neill.

**SPORTS CORNER**

**Viterbo Names Athletes of the Year**

Basketball player Vince Ruger and softball and basketball player Charlotte Koski have been named Viterbo’s 2004 Athletes of the Year.

Ruger, a junior guard from Spencer, was selected to the Midwest Classic Conference First Team this past season after leading the V-Hawks in scoring (11.7 ppg) and free throw percentage (81%), while he was second on the team in three-pointers (41), and third in assists (1.8 apg) and steals (32). He bumped his scoring up to 15.3 ppg in MCC play, posting a career high 31 points vs. Mt. Mercy, after a 30-point game a week earlier against Iowa Wesleyan. He was also awarded the MCC’s Player of the Week honor for the week ending Dec. 21, 2003.

Koski, a senior from Oconto, was among the MCC’s top pitchers this year, and has completely re-written the V-Hawk record book. She is now the career leader in strike-outs (386), victories (35), and innings pitched (475), while she has set the single-year mark for strike-outs (138) and victories (14) in 2004. Her ERA of 1.53 is also easily on pace to set the single-season benchmark in the V-Hawk softball program. Koski is also one of the V-Hawks’ top hitters, leading the squad in average (.378), RBI (21), doubles (8), and home runs (2). In fact, this season she set the career record for doubles (30) and RBI (104). A power forward for the V-Hawk basketball team, Koski also averaged 8.6 ppg, 4.2 rpg, and shot 81.4 percent from the foul-line on the hardwood.
Nicki Robinson: A Woman for All Seasons

What is your favorite sport? Basketball, volleyball, or softball?
It is a question Nicki Robinson hears a lot. And the answer? Well, that depends on what season it is.
Robinson graduated from Viterbo this past spring as a three-sport athlete. She wasn’t the first to do so at Viterbo; Stacy Jankowski played three sports a decade ago and Sarah Olson did the same during the 1997-98 season. But Robinson was arguably the most well-rounded student-athlete ever to wear a V-Hawk uniform. Not only did she set records both on the volleyball court and softball diamond, but she also picked up the V-Hawk Scholar-Athlete award for earning the highest cumulative GPA of any senior varsity athlete. She earned a 3.9 GPA while working on a double major in management and marketing.

Robinson came to Viterbo after an outstanding prep career at Eau Claire North High School. There, she was an all-state selection in softball, was named the Big Rivers Conference Player of the Year in volleyball, and earned second team all-conference honors in basketball. When it came time to select a university, she had plenty of choices, both in colleges and sports.

“I was contacted by a lot of schools,” said Robinson. “I wanted to stay close to home. Coach Helixon (Viterbo’s softball coach at the time) had talked to me quite a bit and I visited in the winter. I really liked the city and campus, plus it was close for my parents.”

“I had originally planned on trying to play two sports, and Viterbo was unique in that they encouraged me to do that. A lot of the bigger schools didn’t really let athletes play more than one sport. I wasn’t sure at first about how things would work out, but I thought that I could give it a year and if I didn’t like things, I could always transfer. But once I got here, I never gave another thought to going to a different school.”

Robinson moved on to campus a few weeks earlier than most students to join her new volleyball teammates in pre-season conditioning. She said this early association with a team really helped her to feel comfortable and a part of the campus, plus she was able to form some early friendships. On the court, she became an immediate starter and wound up leading the V-Hawks in kills and digs in her rookie campaign.

On the diamond she was also an instant success, finishing her freshman year batting .439 while leading the team in both home runs and stolen bases.

But during the winter between those sports, she realized something: she missed basketball a lot. Women’s basketball coach Bobbi Vandenberg knew Robinson could hold her own on the hardwood, and had been communicating with her about playing hoops. Robinson had also signed up to room with two basketball players during her sophomore year. She talked with her volleyball coach at the time, Lynn Sirianni, who told Robinson to go for it, which really cemented the idea for Robinson to attempt the trifecta.

“The Eau Claire paper, when I announced I was going to Viterbo, asked if I would play three sports. They were actually the first people to bring up the idea. But I wasn’t ready for that my freshman year because it is quite a transition from high school to college. Starting basketball my sophomore year was really like coming in as a freshman because I had so much to learn.”
During her junior year, Robinson went back to just volleyball and softball because of the hectic schedule, but during her senior year, she got a call from Vandenberg, who had a player leave the team mid-season. Robinson jumped at the chance to get back on the team.

“It was a cakewalk this season compared to my sophomore year,” said Robinson on the adjustment to playing basketball. “It only took about a week to remember all the drills.”

Plus there was another nice benefit to joining the squad. This past season, the V-Hawk women’s basketball team had a mid-season tournament scheduled for Florida. The trip included two games, then a 3-day cruise to the Bahamas. A few weeks later, Robinson joined her softball teammates as they traveled to a spring break tournament in Tucson.

Robinson’s playing days may now be over, but she leaves Viterbo as one of the school’s most decorated athletes. On the volleyball court, she holds the career record for most games played at 430 and digs with 1,306, while she is second all-time in kills with 970. During her softball career, she became the all-time hits leader, with 165, while earning First Team All-MCC recognition. However, she doesn’t plan to end her association with Viterbo athletics any time soon.

“My body is ready for a rest. I am looking forward to some time off. But next year, I’m hoping to help out coaching with the volleyball team.”

In fact, Robinson’s plans include enrolling in the Sports Administration graduate program at UW-La Crosse next fall. Then, armed with her master’s degree, she hopes to stay involved with sports, either in the capacity of an athletics director, or perhaps to move into the NCAA Division I or professional sporting ranks.

Whatever she ends up doing, she will certainly make time for her passion for sports. And after a hectic college career, she knows how to manage a schedule that can fit it all in.

Sports Notes

Oakland A’s catcher and former V-Hawk Damian Miller(center) is pictured with plans for the new Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education, which is scheduled for completion in July of 2005. Pictured with Miller are Viterbo Director of Athletics Barry Fried, left, and Terry Erickson, director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse. Miller spoke to young people about making the right choices in life before signing autographs at the Boys & Girls Club “Catcher for Kids” event Feb. 3. Miller also spoke to members of the Viterbo baseball team.

The Viterbo baseball team was victorious in the inaugural Copeland Cup game with cross-town rival UW-La Crosse in May. The V-Hawks won the game 20, but not everything went as planned. The game had to be moved to Logan High School because of near-constant rainfall and the rally held at Copeland Park by President Bush. Junior Andy Kreidermacher was the star of the game with a 1 hit, 15-strikeout masterpiece. He finished the season with 102 strikeouts, a school record.

Another record-breaking pitcher--Charlotte Koski--struck out a record 180 batters on the softball diamond. The softball team recorded 22 victories, also a record. Koski was named MCC Pitcher of the Year. Staying on the topic of record setting athletes, Krystal Check and Dustin Hundt set new marks for stolen bases in a season, swiping 36 and 24 bases for their respective teams.
Sports information director and assistant basketball coach Nels Popp was accepted into the doctoral program at the University of Louisville where he is pursuing a Ph.D. in sports administration.

Mark Brandenburgh has stepped down as the men’s soccer coach to become Viterbo’s director of Campus Recreation, Education, and Wellness program, where he is chief supervisor for the school’s Amie L. Mathy Center for Recreation and Education.

Joe La Mere and Sheldon Wagner, the Viterbo Athletics Department trainers received Servant Leader Awards in recognition of their hard work. Former V-Hawk pitcher Ben Moore is playing for the Tampa Bay Yankees, the Single A affiliate of the New York Yankees. Fans can follow his progress on the team’s website www.legendsfieldtampa.com.

Kirstin Monroe earned her nursing degree in four years while playing basketball each season. She is the first women’s basketball player to do so in 12 years. Volleyball player Amber Juris participated in an ROTC military marathon last spring. Her five member team, which included 3 Viterbo and 2 UW-L students, ran 26.2 miles in military uniform in 80 degree heat through the desert terrain of New Mexico. Her team finished in just over six hours, taking 11th place out of 34 teams. Basketball player Becky Arndt has been accepted into the Physical Therapy doctoral program in the Duke University School of Medicine.

ALUMNI NOW

Class of 2004 Pledges $21,000

The Class of 2004 has pledged $21,000 over the next five years as their class gift to Viterbo. Once established, the endowment will be used for mentoring programs by Viterbo students with neighborhood youth through the Amie L. Mathy Recreation and Education Center. Whether it be in the area of nursing, education, dietetics, or athletics, these funds will facilitate the educational opportunities for our students while at the same time enhancing the experience of our neighborhood children.

Homecoming to Remember

A number of Viterbo University alumni returned to campus in February to celebrate Homecoming 2004 and take part in the annual Alumni Basketball Games. The women’s game included above: (l-r): Kim Hendricks ’01, Heidi Behnke ’01, Kara Brandau ’02, Darcy Vacek ’01, Missy Tricker ’99, Darcy Remker ’95-’97, Bobbie Jean Miller ’99, Jackie Gumz ’98, Sandy Christoffel ’01, Sarah Olson ’01, Nikki Hall ’98, Ellie Junker ’01, Lisa Saluzzi ’02, and Jill Brandt ’96.

Troy Wagner '95, Hilton Riggins '00, Dan Riley '96, Mike Brudos '02, Eric Brieske '92, and Pat Sullivan '02.

Homecoming 2004 was one to remember--the Wall of Fame induction of Jill Brandt '96 and Chris Lee '99 (posthumously), the women’s and men’s alumni games, in addition to the varsity games versus William Penn College, topped off with a post-game celebration at the Recovery Room complete with karaoke, and the liturgy on Sunday. Homecoming 2005 is set for Feb. 5.

Viterbo Graduate Wins Fulbright Scholarship
Viterbo University graduate Margaret Elvekrog of Waunakee has won a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to conduct chemistry research at Stockholm University in Sweden for the 2004-2005 academic year.
Elvekrog graduated from Viterbo May 8 with a degree in chemistry and will seek her Ph.D. from Columbia University upon her return from Sweden. Viterbo chemistry professor Michael Collins describes Elvekrog as “simply one of the most talented people I have ever known in my 32 years of higher education and one of the kindest people I have ever met, period.”

During her career at Viterbo, Elvekrog has interned at the University of Puerto Rico and Columbia University. “I thought a Fulbright Scholarship would be a great opportunity to be abroad learning about a different culture and conducting research,” Elvekrog said. “It’s important to learn how research is done in other countries because the science community is so global.”

“We’ve only had two Fulbright Scholarship winners in the history of Viterbo,” said Viterbo University President Bill Medland. “This is a very prestigious honor. In all my years of higher education I can’t remember a Fulbright Scholarship winner so young.”

Elvekrog said she was “pleasantly surprised” to win the scholarship. Established in 1946, the Fulbright program is sponsored by the United States Department of State and provides funds for students, scholars, and professionals to undertake graduate study, advanced research, and teaching while promoting mutual understanding between peoples of the United States and other countries.

Liberace Scholar to Attend Manhattan School of Music
Suzanne Flater, a two-time Liberace Scholar who graduated from Viterbo in May with a degree in music performance, has been accepted at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music in New York.

Flater, who grew up in the La Crosse area and graduated from G-E-T High School, plans to earn a master’s degree in classical vocal performance and then pursue a career as a professional opera singer. She said she has “always been a singer,” giving her first public performance in church when she was 4 years old. She learned in eighth grade her voice was best suited to classical singing, although opera certainly wasn’t her favorite at that age.

“I really fell in love with opera when I was cast as Dorabella in the opera Cosi Fan Tutte my freshman year at Viterbo,” Flater said.
Flater studied with Professor Daniel Johnson-Wilmot during her time at Viterbo. She would like to teach at the college level when she is finished singing professionally.

In addition to dazzling audiences with her voice, Flater stays busy by composing contemporary Christian music and teaching in the Viterbo preparatory school. She enrolled at the Manhattan School of Music in August and isn’t intimidated in the least.

“I’m really excited about New York,” she said.

CLASS NOTES

1970
Richard Loewenhagen ’73 is a Wing Chung Kung Fu Master, and has co-authored a new martial arts history and science book, Mastering Kung Fu: Featuring Shaolin Wing Chun. Richard is currently working on five additional martial science texts that will be released to the world within the next two years for advanced student training. He has dedicated more than 30 years to the study and practice of martial arts and combat leadership. During his 21-year career as a commissioned officer in the United States Air Force, he taught Wing Chun Kung Fu and Shaolin Kam Na to combat and security personnel. Today, as a professional martial science teacher, he owns and operates the largest full-time Wing Chun Kung Fu school in North America with over 300 adult students. It has been twice recognized by the Martial Arts Business Association as one of the top 200 martial arts schools in the world for quality instruction. His school is located in Chandler, Ariz. Richard is also an inductee into the Martial Arts Hall of Fame with special recognition as Martial Arts Writer of the Year.
Linda Layer ’75 is currently working for the Cassville School District as 7112 principal and activities director. She lives with her son, Joey, 9, in Cassville.
Linda Gleason ’79 received a Presidents Award of Honor at the Wisconsin Dental Association’s Annual Pyramids of Pride Awards Program Nov. 7, 2003. The award recognizes individuals and organizations for contributions and activities that reflect great credit on the dental profession. Linda’s award was for her work with a mentor program which is jointly sponsored by Marquette University School of Dentistry, the WDA, and the Pierre Fauchard Academy.
Laura Collins ’75-’77 was recently chosen for inclusion in the 24th edition of Marquis Who’s Who of American Women, 2004-2005.

1980
Carla (Craig) ’83 and Terry Steffen ’83 were married Nov. 2000 in Las Vegas. Terry is employed by the United States Post Office. Carla is employed by Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, La Crosse, in Information Systems as a systems analyst.
Laura (Ketchum) ’86 and Ahmet Ciftci celebrated the birth of a son, Tarrik Ahmet Duran Ciftci Nov. 28, 2003. He joins his brother, Tayyib, 2.
Eilene McCormick ’87 married David Peters May 10, 2003 in Caledonia, Minn.
Cathy (Cook) ’89 and Mark Buttell celebrated the birth of a daughter, Rose Marie Feb. 5, 2004. She joins her sister, Claire, 1.
Craig Gralapp ’89 recently accepted a position as Network and Conferencing Services Manager for Video Guidance in Eden Prairie, Minn.
1990
David Bezold ’90 was named head coach for the men’s basketball team at Northern Kentucky University April 2004.
Lisa (Espelien) Bohn ’90 received a Master of Science in Nursing degree with a focus in Education from Viterbo University July 2003. Lisa currently works as a nurse manager on a medical cardiovascular unit at Saint Mary’s Hospital/ Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.
Claudia Grosz ’90 and Jim Chilsen celebrated the birth of a son, Maxwell Grosz Chilsen, Dec. 7, 2003. Also celebrating Max’s arrival is his aunt and godmother Pat (Hageman) Chilsen ’79, former housing director at Viterbo University.
Suzanne Konicek ’90 was cited in a recent issue of In Business, southwest Montana’s business journal. She was named one of 40 people under the age of 40 who are making a difference in Butte and southwest Montana.
Cindy (Strong) ’90 and Scott LeBuis celebrated the birth of a daughter, Emily Mae, Dec. 10, 2003.
Melissa and Jonathan Atkinson ’93 celebrated the birth of a daughter, Olivia Rose, Jan. 18, 2004. She joins her sister, Madison.
Teresa (Freiberg) ’93 and William Conroy celebrated the birth of a son, Zachary David, Nov. 6, 2003.
Audra Martine ’93 received a double master’s degree from St. Mary’s University-Minneapolis in Management and Health and in Human Services Administration.
John Rich ’93 is a board member of the University of Northern Iowa Lutheran Student Center, which uses spring break for a mission trip to Mexico and Guatemala. During these trips they work closely with several religious and civic groups to help children, families, and elderly with some basic living condition improvements.
Ledys (Canas) ’94 and Derek Updike celebrated the birth of a son, Kaden Vernell, Jan. 2, 2004. He joins his sister, Kiara, 3.
Amber (Finney) Lehner ’94 received a master’s degree in Curriculum Instruction with an emphasis in Literacy Development in 1999 from Lesley University in Cambridge, Mass. She currently teaches first grade in the Clark County School District in Las Vegas where she has been teaching for 8 years.
Allison Hetzel ’94 completed her Master of Fine Arts degree in Theatre Pedagogy with concentrations in acting, voice, and movement from Virginia Commonwealth University in May 2003. She joined the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in August 2003 as Assistant Professor of Theatre.
Angela McCurdy ’94 was promoted to a clinical value analyst, RN position at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn. and has been accepted part-time into the Carlson School of Business.
Julie (Fromm) ’95 and John Falkers celebrated the birth of a son, Joseph Martin, Nov. 11, 2003. He joins siblings, Rachel Anne, 3, and Andrew John, 2. Julie has been a stay-at-home mom since the birth of their first child.
Bridget (Kennedy) ’95 and Brian Ideker celebrated the birth of twin daughters, Megan Rose and Julia Pearl, Nov. 11, 2003. They join their brother Will, 2.
Laura Weissman married Dan Hale '96 Aug. 24, 2002. Dan graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Medical School in 2000 and is now completing his pediatrics residency training at Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital in Portland, Maine. He is a licensed pediatrician and will be the chief resident at BBCH for one year.

Kris Connors '97 was recently employed as an art teacher by Daniel Hand High School, Madison, Conn. He and his wife and two children reside in Old Saybrook, Conn.

Tanya (Gardner) '97 and Gary Meyer celebrated the birth of a son, Aceyn Jon, on Sept. 19, 2003. He joins his sisters, Scout, 9 and Readie, 7 and brothers, Zaide, 4 and Extin, 2.


Ann (Geraty) '98 and Chris Sepersky '99 recently moved back to Wisconsin after four years in Iowa. Ann is employed by St. Francis Hospital, Milwaukee as a registered nurse in women’s health, and Chris teaches elementary music for the South Milwaukee School District. They live in South Milwaukee.

Mary (Writz) '98 and Luke Lukaszewski '00 celebrated the birth of a daughter, Taylor Ann, Dec. 10, 2003. She joins her brother, Damon.


Jill Becker '99 married Anthony Rosenthal Sept. 13, 2003. Jill was recently employed by Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis as a registered nurse.

Gram Cotton '99 has been accepted into the Mayo Health Related Sciences Nurse Anesthesia Program in Rochester, Minn. He began in September 2003.

Jessica Kuehn '99 is teaching English as a Second Language for two years in Asia for the Peace Corps.

Tammy (Schofield) '99 and Joel Klink '99 celebrated the birth of a daughter Caitlin Elizabeth, June 17, 2003.

Lisa Davis '01 married Kevin Biondo '99 Sept. 6, 2003 at Norskedalen Nature and Heritage Center, Coon Valley.

Rick Hewitt '99 is a captain in the U.S. Army. He was deployed to Iraq February 2004.

Carri Folks married Michael Zehentener '99. Michael is employed by Claassen Engineering as a data technician. They reside in Waterloo, Iowa.

2000

Jennifer Drexler '00 received a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine degree from the University of Des Moines May 29, 2004.

Heidi Mullikin '00 married Shawn Stevenson '00 Oct. 4, 2003. Heidi is employed by Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and Shawn is employed by the La Crosse Tribune. They live in La Crosse.

Dana Pukrop '00 received a Master of Divinity degree from Luther Seminary, St. Paul May 23, 2004.

Alexander Bobrov '01 will attend medical school at University of Health Sciences in Kansas City, Mo. starting in August 2004.


Grace Hanson '01 married Nicolas Gonzalez Aug. 9, 2003 in southern California. She accepted a commission from the U.S. Army and was deployed to Iraq January 2004 with the 67th
Combat Support Hospital.
Chad Hrdina '01 received a master of science degree from Georgetown University May 2003.
Katie (Petersen) '01 and Kyle DeVries '01 celebrated the birth of a daughter, Madeline Elizabeth, Oct. 5, 2003.
Teresa Stankowski '01 married Quinn Sanford Dec. 28, 2002 in Mosinee. They currently reside in Tucson. Teresa is attending graduate school for family nurse practitioner and Quinn for optical engineering. Teresa is currently employed by Tucson Heart Hospital.
Jolene Swanson '02 was promoted to first lieutenant in the U.S. Army. She is currently pursuing her master’s degree in public administration.

In Memorium
The Viterbo University community joins in prayerful remembrance of those who have died. Eternal rest grant unto them, Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.
Dorothy Beranek, April 29, 2004, sister of Mary Rohlik, FSPA '45.
Francis Zerwas, Feb. 5, 2004, brother of Mary Philip Zerwas, FSPA '45.
Clarice Kleinheinz, FSPA '48, Jan 7, 2004, sister of Lucille Kleinheinz, FSPA '44.
E. William Freed, Dec. 3, 2003, brother of Patricia Freed, FSPA '47.
Harvey Jostad, April 14, 2004, father of Joyce (Jostad) Dolle '49-'50.
Claire Miller, Feb. 11, 2004, sister of Mary James Ramaekers, FSPA '53, and LaVerne Ramaekers, FSPA '58.
Floyd Unser, April 20, 2004, brother of Carlene Unser, FSPA '53.
Joseph Newbrough, April 18, 2004, husband of Lorraine (Green) Newbrough '54.
Francis Schlosser, April 18, 2004, brother of Blanche Marie Schlosser, FSPA '55.
Patrick Daugherty, Dec. 12, 2003, brother of Betty Daugherty, FSPA '63.
Rosina Brantner, Jan. 5, 2004, sister of Marian Bauer, FSPA '64, mother of Diana (Brantner) Halsey '72-'73.
Mary Lou Finley, Feb. 11, 2004, mother of Kay (Finley) Thorson '71.
Ann Mann, Jan. 28, 2004, mother of Caroline Mann '68 and Kathleen Mann '73.
Irene Banasik, Dec. 17, 2003, aunt of Pamela (Bye) Jensen ’72, Madonna (Banasik) Daley ’76, and great-grandmother of Kelly Doering ’03.
Margaret Winder, March 8, 2003, mother of Ruth (Winder) Standley ’75.
Laurence Burke, Dec. 6, 2003, father of Mary (Burke) Christianson ’79.
Thelma Richardson, Nov. 25, 2003, mother of Karen (Richardson) Miller ’79.
Thelma Dunnum, grandmother of Linda (Dunnum) Hofler ’80.
Jean Serum, Jan. 27, 2004, father of Amy (Serum) Detrick ’81.
Val Chilsen, Feb. 8, 2004, father of Joel Chilsen ’84 and Claudia (Chilsen) Grosz ’90, and father-in-law of Pat (Hageman) Chilsen ’79.
Dr. Edward Vig, Dec. 20, 2003, father-in-law of Laura (Langhus) Vig ’87.
Gertrude Radloff, March 9, 2004, mother of Linda (Radloff) Couch ’89.
Dorothy Cobb, March 27, 2003, mother of Clayton Cobb ’93.
Iris Hanson, Feb. 1, 2004, mother of Bradley Hanson ’94.
Austin Thomas Leis, March 10, 2004, infant son of Shelly (Slominski) Leis ’00.
Barbara Ann George, Jan. 12, 2004, mother of Timothy George ’01.
A FINAL WORD

Advice on Living (well) to 100 and Beyond
By Pat Kerrigan

Sr. Celestine Cepress, nearing age 100, still reads and writes with vigor and ponders the wonders of everyday life.

“Sr. Celestine, you are the second oldest member of your FSPA community. What can we learn from you about growing old and living well? It’s been years since you retired, English Professor Emeritus, from Viterbo University. Yet, as you approach your 100th birthday, January 22, I expect you will exceed the 300-plus cards you received last year from well-wishers, including legions of former students. You were the one who awakened those young minds, proving that good literature and poetry could be exhilarating and exciting, especially when you presented it with all the passion you could muster.”

This is how I mentally prepared for my formal interview with Sr. Celestine Cepress. Instead, I no sooner walked through the doors of Villa St. Joseph than she caught me off guard. Crisply announcing, “You know, I’m no longer working. I’m retired,” I was able to quickly reassure the wary, soon-to-be centenarian that I simply wanted to hear her thoughts on growing old—about approaching the century mark, a plateau shared by only 50,000 other Americans at any given time.

Busy, as usual, she managed to squeeze me in for an interview. She works the daily crossword and cryptoquip; stays current with what is happening in the world by reading the likes of Newsweek, Sierra, Scientific American; and she still possesses a voracious appetite for any “good reads” recommended by others. Never reluctant to offer a critique, she most recently finished The Story of Pi (“I like the relationship between Pi and the animals. That was wonderful.”), and The DaVinci Code. (“I felt smothered with all the characters and intrigue.”) Even young-at-heart Harry Potter fans can include Sr. Celestine among their numbers. (“I like the ingenuity of the author in creating something like this.”) Her only complaint is that her eyes aren’t as good as they used to be, but still she tries to finish a book every week or so.

“Time just flies. I never thought I’d see 100, but I still feel good. I still like to read, and there’s more that I would like to know, for instance, about the Jews and Islam,” the ever-curious Sr. Celestine said, complaining that her current studies of the religions of the world were beginning to seriously infringe on her reading time.

Over the years, Sr. Celestine has seen a lot. She was born at home in Wisconsin Rapids the eldest of the seven children of Joseph and Anna Cepress. Teddy Roosevelt was president, and on that same day in history, far from Wisconsin, Russian demonstrators were fired upon by the Czar’s troops.

The Cepress family would eventually move to a farm in Auburndale. Her career as a teacher would come later, but when she first joined the convent, she didn’t have high expectations. “Me! Eventually getting a doctorate?” she says incredulously. “I thought I was going to cook’s school. Then, I started reading. It was all those books that got me going in another direction,” which provided opportunities to see the wider world as she pursued her studies.
She was in Washington D.C. attending Catholic University and was in the city the day they buried Franklin Delano Roosevelt. “I remember the funeral procession,” she said. “The last vehicle was a car that carried his dog Fala, in it. I enjoyed FDR, and thought it was wonderful listening to his Fireside Chats.” And, as the years add up, so do the memories. “One time I looked up the list of popes and presidents who have served during the time I have lived, and the number of wars I have seen. It’s quite a bit when you think about it,” she said.

Sr. Celestine is philosophical about the death she knows will inevitably come, but until then, she is not going to idle her time away. “God must be saying, ‘If you like it so well, then stay.’ I guess I have just been going on and on,” she says. “I still feel pretty good although I can’t walk the way I want. My eyes are gradually going. My hearing is going. I don’t have taste buds. I can’t sing anymore. Now I know what it means to die. You just lose all of those things gradually.”

Many of her friends have preceded her in death. “I belonged to a class of twenty. We got our veils July 23, 1924, and we made our first profession two years later. I’m the only one left. They went one by one. I used to give a little talk when each would die and I would always end with, ‘We’ll meet at the gate.’ Now I’m the only one left outside of the gate,” Sr. Celestine said in a way, and with a look that reveals that she knows full well that time is measured and the clock continues to tick away.

Even though each day invariably brings her one step closer to the gate, Sr. Celestine plans to take her time getting there. In fact, she warns, there’s a chance that on her hundredth birthday, she might not even be at Villa St. Joseph.

“I told people before my 99th birthday. Don’t come and celebrate. Wait until I’m 100, because that’s when I’m going back to my hometown of Auburndale.”

So if you are planning a visit to say, “Happy Birthday,” it’s best for you to call before you visit. After all, this is a woman on the move.

Before I concluded my visit, I asked Sister if she had any favorite passages, memorable poems, or keepsake prayers. I was curious; she has inspired so many people during her long earthly journey. What and who inspires her? She handed me a red, dog-eared, Mead spiral that looked like it cost the sum total of sixty-nine cents. Pasted in it were holy cards, retyped poetry, some birthday cards, prayers and reflections—an anthology of wisdom compiled by a woman who never ceases to be awed by God’s creation and creativity.

I photocopied a number of items and I plan to keep them close to me as I get older. If you are curious to know the contents, send me a self-addressed, stamped envelope and I’ll mail you a copy. Sr. Celestine would probably be gracious enough to do this little chore herself, but as you know, she has warned us that at age 99, she is no longer working.