



SPRING 2026

V I T E R B O M A G A Z I N E

LIFE OF IMPACT

*Golden Anniversary
Celebrating 50 Years of
Nutrition and Dietetics*

Viterbo graduate student and
Green Bay Packers intern
Isabelle Fuerst



Also inside

Beautiful Music
Dr. Katelyn Bouska '08

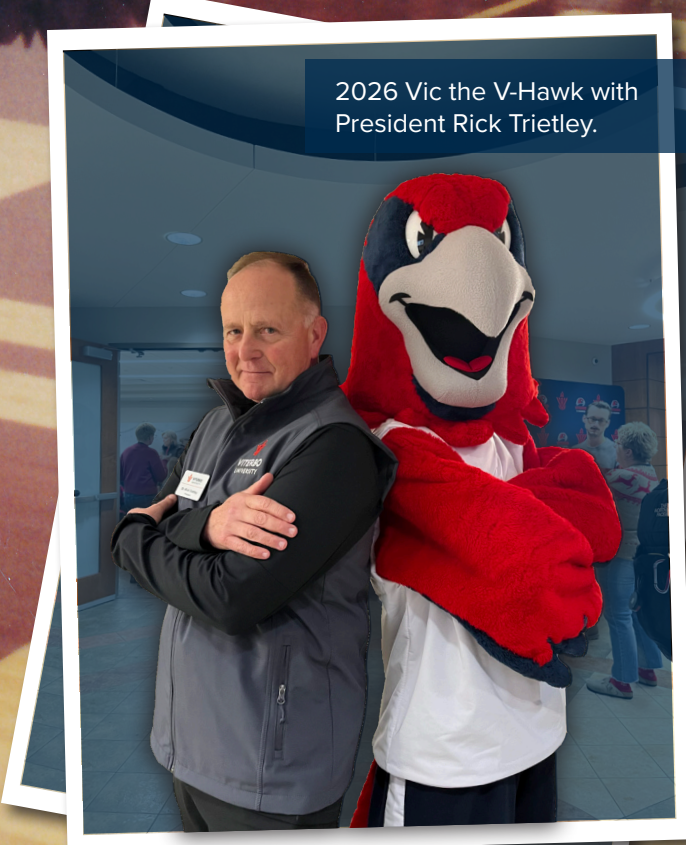
Dancing through Life
Anna Luz

An Incredible Legacy
Dr. Connie Delaney

CONTEMPLATION HOSPITALITY INTEGRITY STEWARDSHIP SERVICE



Vic the V-Hawk at the Alumni Cup circa the early 2000's.



2026 Vic the V-Hawk with President Rick Trietley.

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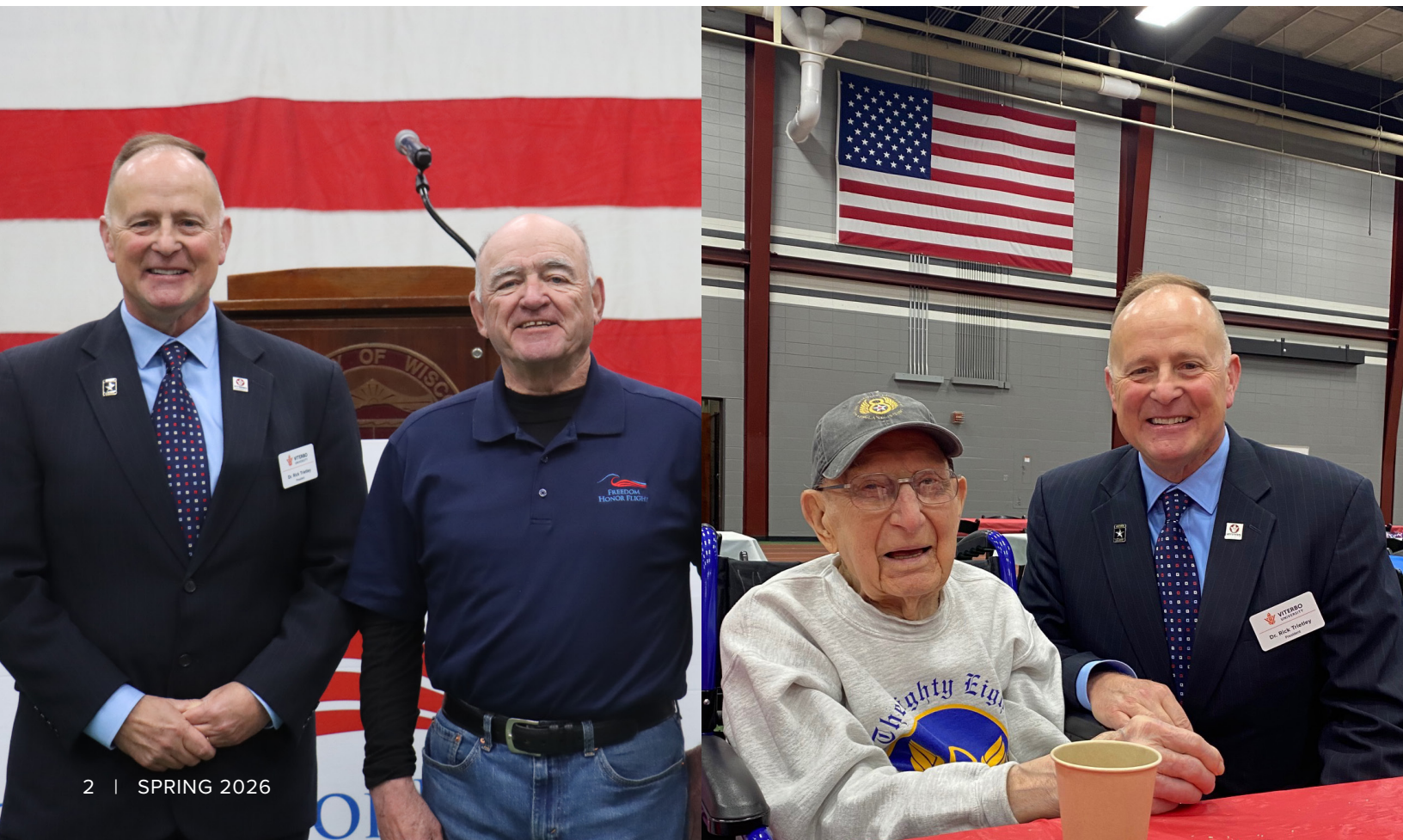
From the President

The Viterbo Effect

The power of Catholic higher education is often discussed at colleges and universities across the country, but at Viterbo we take special pride in putting it into practice by living out our mission and Catholic Franciscan identity in all that we do. This was especially true for the 11 students, staff, and me as we participated in a spring break service immersion trip to Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II near Lima, Peru. Sponsored by the Diocese of La Crosse, Casa Hogar orphanage is home to 64

youth, almost all of whom have suffered from extreme poverty, despair, and neglect.

Our visit included immersing ourselves in the daily lives of the young people and performing service and missionary work. Two favorite highlights were accompanying a well-known local “angel of mercy” as she delivered powdered milk, rosaries, and kind words to the poor and sick, and



walking the stations of the cross up the hill to the grave of Fr. Joe Walijewski, who founded Casa Hogar in 1986.

“We went up just as the sun was setting, holding the kids’ hands and praying the rosary,” said participating student Alessia Eckelaert. “It was such a beautiful moment.”

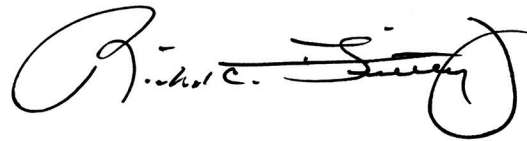
Words cannot convey the impact of an educational and life experience like this, but Alessia’s come close. Students gained new insights into humanity and Catholic values and social teachings. They also came away with a greater appreciation of God’s blessings and all the opportunities they’ve received. I know I did.

Continuing the theme of unique and compelling educational opportunities, please join me in celebrating 50 years of the nutrition and dietetics program at Viterbo University. Many alumni and others are familiar with the major, but what you may not know is that our program provides future registered dietitians with incredible opportunities all over the country. I invite you to read about five students and alumni who are doing amazing things in the field. Congratulations to our incredible nutrition and dietetics faculty who are making it happen.

To all V-Hawks past and present and friends, thank you for the difference you make in your profession, your community, and in the lives of others. I hope you enjoy reading about all the good that’s happening at Viterbo University. It truly is a very special place.

Pace e Bene

Peace and All Good,



Richard C. Trietley, EdD

President

Photos from the annual Veterans Day Breakfast hosted by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Far left: Viterbo President Dr. Rick Trietley and Pat Stephens, a past Freedom Honor Flight board president. Stephens, a pillar of the La Crosse community known for his positive attitude and commitment to service, passed away in February. Left: President Trietley met 104-year-old World War II veteran Henry Devine of Onalaska. Below: President Trietley, a U.S. Army veteran, served as the keynote speaker.






SCHOOL OF NURSING
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Driven to DiscoverSM

“There are a lot of ways to care for people; at the end of the day, I needed to be able to survive on all dimensions.”

—Connie Delaney on her Viterbo experience.

Legacy



If you would like to learn more about how to support Viterbo with a gift of life insurance or other charitable giving opportunities, contact Josh Gates, assistant vice president of advancement, at **608-796-3077** or **jrgates@viterbo.edu**.

Connie (Barr) Delaney, PhD '75 was entering her senior year at Viterbo as a nursing and math major when a personal crisis threatened her plans. "I told Sr. Grace Clare that I needed to drop out of school to support my son," Delaney explained, "She wouldn't hear of it." Sr. Grace Clare found the funds for Delaney's tuition, and Delaney completed her programs successfully.

The encouragement and support Delaney received all those years ago was not lost on her. "When Sr. Grace Clare said that I was not dropping out, that was a defining moment for me personally and for my future career," she said.

She has enjoyed an expansive career and professional accomplishments spanning decades. As a nurse, teacher, leader, author, and with expertise in nursing/health informatics and a certificate in integrative therapies and healing practices, Delaney remembers her Viterbo roots with fond appreciation. "Viterbo is absolutely core to me." She shared how Viterbo's Franciscan values and emphasis on care for the whole person encouraged her commitment to holistic health care.

With deep gratitude, Delaney first established the Connie White Delaney Family Nursing Scholarship in 2009. The scholarship honors her parents and their passion for learning, and shares Delaney's belief in nursing and its power to transform people's health.

Now, Delaney has chosen to make a bequest to Viterbo. The bequest is written in her will and is an ongoing means of charitable support that leaves a legacy.



viterbolegacy.com

Celebrating 50 Years of Nutrition at Viterbo University

There are many reasons for the success of the nutrition program at Viterbo University since it began with the launch of the community medical dietetics major in the fall of 1975, but one attribute probably sums it up best.

“We have a long history of being unique,” said faculty member Maria Morgan-Bathke, chair of the department and director of the dietetic internship program.

Today, that uniqueness means being the only nutrition and dietetics program in the nation that allows students to complete their required supervised practice hours to become a registered dietitian anywhere in the U.S.

“That was by design, and because of that flexibility, we started getting master’s degree students from all over the country,” said Morgan-Bathke. “It has also led to our rise in the field of sports nutrition. We currently have students in Hawaii, California, Colorado, Florida, and Washington, D.C. There are pockets from which we get quite a few students, and that’s been great for word-of-mouth marketing.”

Finding those internship and supervised practice locations for every student in their area of interest (eating disorders,

oncology, weight management, sports nutrition, etc.) is one of the other factors that sets the program apart.

Viterbo has 600 partners nationwide at which students are placed, eliminating the stress and inconvenience of securing a location on their own.

“Our program also offers the one-on-one support for which Viterbo is known,” Morgan-Bathke said. “The graduate admissions staff will respond right away, and despite the distance of many of our students, we actually get to know them.”

Viterbo also offers an incredible study abroad opportunity to Spain. Students in the university’s Sports Nutrition and the Mediterranean Diet class travel to southern Spain where they work with chefs to prepare traditional Spanish

meals, give educational presentations to elementary school students, provide competitive athletes with nutritional counseling and meal plan preparation, and visit important cultural sites.

In the spring of 2026, there are 85 students enrolled in Viterbo’s nutrition and dietetics programs, which includes the nutrition sciences 4+1 program that allows undergraduate students to earn a master’s degree and complete the required 1,000 hours of supervised practice in five years, to different graduate program options. The program celebrated its 50th anniversary with a Sports Nutrition Symposium in March.

Program faculty Morgan-Bathke (weight management and sports nutrition), Jamie Weber (clinical and community nutrition), Kelsey McLimans (medical nutrition therapy), and Tiffany Lein (food science and culinary skills) bring their own different areas of expertise to the program as well.

“I am very proud of the program, especially when you see the amazing things our alumni are doing and have accomplished,” Morgan-Bathke said. “We will continue to stay ahead of the curve in providing our students with the knowledge and skills they need to excel in the profession.”



Seville, Spain.

Lizzy Kaul

“Hey, I saw you on TV,” isn’t a text or verbal greeting many people receive from friends and family. Then again, many people weren’t on the sidelines with the Minnesota Vikings during home games at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis like Lizzy Kaul.

Football fans were able to catch glimpses of Kaul during NFL broadcasts as part of her work as a Vikings nutrition and dietetics intern from July 2025 to January 2026.

This great opportunity was made possible through Viterbo University’s dietetic internship program, which provides students with more than the minimum 1,000 hours of supervised practice required to become a Registered Dietitian.

The many things Kaul learned ranged from the processes required to run an entire nutrition department, meal planning, large group catering, and nutrition counseling to more sports-specific knowledge like nutrition’s role in injury recovery, proper nutrition pre and post-surgery, concussion protocols, anti-inflammatory diets, and optimal nutrient intake timing for workouts.

Kaul laughed in the affirmative when asked if some of this knowledge would have helped her as a soccer player at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She earned a degree in biology from UW-L and master’s degree in nutrition from the University of Minnesota. Suffering from a

stomach malady that was only helped through diet when she was in high school sparked an interest in the field. She originally planned to work researching gut health, but many hours spent in the lab helped her realize she wanted a more people-focused career. A love of sports and a volunteer internship with the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers football team as a graduate student put her on her present career path.

The internship with the Vikings had been arranged by Viterbo faculty member Jamie Weber, who has extensive contacts throughout the industry. Viterbo University’s dietetic internship program offers rotation placement throughout the entire U.S.. All sites are arranged by university personnel, making the process much easier for students.

“I plan to stick with sports,” Kaul said

of her post-licensure career plans. “I really like football, but I’m open to all sports and going where the jobs are.”



“I’m so grateful,” Kaul said. “I’ve gotten to know people in the organization and that combined with everything I’ve learned will really help me in the future.”

Isabelle Fuerst

A course in foundational nutrition as an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin sparked Isabelle Fuerst’s interest in the field. A job as a nutrition student worker with the Badgers athletics department confirmed her decision to make it her career.

“I am fascinated by the role nutrition plays in optimizing athletic performance and recovery,” Fuerst said. “I enjoy helping athletes use nutrition as a tool to perform at their highest level.”

And what better place to do that than with your favorite NFL team? That was the case for Fuerst, who served as an intern with the Green Bay Packers from the start of training camp in July 2025 through January 2026 as part of the supervised practice portion of the Viterbo Master of Science in Nutrition and Dietetics program.

“It was an incredibly valuable experience,” said Fuerst of her internship with the Packers. “I worked alongside registered dietitians and food service staff in a fast-paced, professional sports environment and gained hands-on exposure to

performance nutrition at the NFL level. I learned how a professional sports nutrition department operates as a team. I also enjoyed meeting and interacting with a lot of amazing individuals such as staff and players. Green Bay is truly a very welcoming environment where everyone supports one another.”

Fuerst’s responsibilities included assisting with daily food service operations, supporting fueling strategies for players and staff, collaborating with registered dietitians, and contributing to menu planning and food preparation.

“I especially enjoyed creating weekly salad and sandwich specials for players and staff as I brainstormed menu ideas, selected ingredients, and helped execute meals that were both nutritious and appealing,” she said.

“The internship helped me grow both personally and professionally, and definitely prepared me for future roles in both sports and clinical nutrition settings.”

Fuerst chose Viterbo’s online master’s degree program because it offered her the flexibility to pursue her interests anywhere in the U.S. She plans to move to Denver to complete her clinical nutrition rotation.

“I am also very excited to participate in the study abroad program in Seville, Spain,” she said.

Fuerst earned a Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Sciences and Dietetics with a minor in global health from the University of Wisconsin. She plans to graduate from Viterbo in May and continue to gain experience in sports and clinical nutrition as a registered dietitian.

“Long term, I would love to own a private practice working with athletes and active individuals to help them reach their performance and health goals,” she said. “I also enjoy creating nutritional education content and healthy recipes for social media to inspire others.”

“I am fascinated by the role nutrition plays in optimizing athletic performance and recovery,” Fuerst said. “I enjoy helping athletes use nutrition as a tool to perform at their highest level.”



Laura Weidemann

Sometimes the most valuable education in the world is just some good motherly advice. That was the case for Laura Weidemann '22 when she thought about applying for a clinical dietitian position at the world-renowned Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.



“As my mother reminds me often, ‘the answer is always no unless you ask,’” Weidemann said. “It’s important to apply even if the position seems out of reach.”

Mom was right, and it turned out the position wasn’t out of reach after all. Weidemann learned on the initial phone call that her impressive food systems research and volunteer experiences made her stand out from other applicants. She believes her willingness to say “I don’t know, but this is how I would find the answer” demonstrated her ability to solve problems independently. She landed the job, beginning her duties in June 2024.



Service Saturday at Place of Grace garden.

“I have many clinical dietitian responsibilities at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, including assessing malnutrition, calculating tube feeding orders, and providing nutrition therapy for individuals with chronic diseases or experiencing acute conditions,” Weidemann said. “Each shift, I need to be prepared to float to any unit, from an oncology floor to GI surgery. I am most fulfilled when I have engaging education sessions with patients and families. I also find it rewarding to calculate tube feeding orders because it’s one of the most tangible ways we support patients.”

The research experience crucial in her being hired came during her time as a student at Viterbo University. Weidemann undertook summer research projects on food systems ethics, morals of eating, and a visual ethnography (the study of individual peoples and cultures) of an Iowan agricultural town. These projects even led to her and faculty member Dr. Matthew Bersagel-Braley working together to develop the first food ethics course at Viterbo, “Just Food—Putting Ethics Back on the Table.”

“Viterbo was an excellent choice for me,” Weidemann said. “My clinical and community internships gave me the

hands-on experience I needed to succeed as a beginning dietitian. I really enjoyed my time at the university, especially my involvement in the honors program. My favorite experiences included creating art to submit to *Touchstone*, attending an interfaith conference, cultivating community gardens, and engaging professors in thought-provoking questions.”

Weidemann is now a student in the Master of Science in Public Health in Human Nutrition program in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She has always been interested in community nutrition and food systems, but as a result of this graduate program, she also wants to learn more about nutrition policy and urban planning.

“I think dietetics is an amazing field because there are so many careers one can work toward,” Weidemann said. “After earning my graduate degree, I see myself teaching nutrition, leading a research team, and writing a children’s book about food systems. One day, I envision myself starting a nonprofit organization to improve food access, provide nutrition education, and support local food distribution.”

Madeline Belaustegui

Maddy (Podmolik) Belaustegui '15 saw numerous cases of chronic, but often preventable, illnesses such as diabetes and kidney disease during her work as the director of dietetics at an acute care hospital.

She decided to do something about it and founded the company Desert Dietitians.

“My goal was to ensure preventative health care was available to people in my community,” said Belaustegui, who resides in Las Vegas with husband Pierce Belaustegui '14 and their two children. “And I wanted to make sure those same people knew they could use their health insurance to see a dietitian.”

Desert Dietitians has grown into a dietitian staffing agency connecting its dozen independent dietitians in five states with health care facilities. The

outpatient practice continues to fill a significant need for services such as nutrition consulting and meal planning, metabolic testing, weight loss, blood work, peptide and vitamin injections, oncology, and other medical nutrition, and workplace wellness.

“The business helps solve problems and bridge gaps in services,” she said. “With my health care leadership experience, I have an in-depth understanding of the needs and pain points of the industry. I am able to help health care facilities provide excellent nutrition care and follow federal guidelines. I have a passion for health and preventative medicine. Empowering dietitians to be the best they can be and helping others is the most rewarding part for me.”

Belaustegui was recognized for her achievements with the Nevada Outstanding Dietitian of the Year award in 2023. She also served as the President of the Nevada Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics from 2020–23.

As a young child growing up on a farm, Belaustegui experienced the peak of farm-to-table. Eating meals that her family grew and hunted gave her a

special passion for food. Her mother, Amy, is a registered dietitian who had gone to grad school with Viterbo faculty member Dr. Carol Klitzke and recommended Viterbo’s coordinated program.

“I was beyond happy with my experience at Viterbo,” said Belaustegui, who now provides internship opportunities for Viterbo students.

“It is my vocation to be a dietitian, and there is no better place to study it than Viterbo.”

Everyone at the university was so supportive, especially when my future husband and I became young parents. Viterbo will always be a very special place for us.”

While she still sees clients occasionally, managing Desert Dietitians has given Belaustegui the passion for the management and administration of a business. She has earned an MBA and is currently studying for the nursing home administrator licensure exam and plans to expand her career in hospital administration.



Maddy Belaustegui is the founder of Desert Dietitians in Las Vegas.

Jake Blattner

Jake Blattner '15 was working for Agropur in La Crosse in his first job after graduating from Viterbo when he received a call out of the blue from Florida State University. The person on the phone offered him a position as a sports dietitian in the athletics department.

Being a sports dietitian in Florida just happened to be Blattner's dream job and location at the time, so after quickly recovering from the initial surprise, he accepted. The whole thing was finalized in a matter of hours.

“Viterbo played a huge part in my getting that job,” Blattner said.

“As a student, I had an internship at Princeton University, and the dietitian there knew the dietitian at Florida State.”

Blattner worked for the Seminoles for three years and earned a master's

degree in exercise physiology while employed there. He then accepted a position at the University of Nebraska, where he has served since 2018.

“The University of Nebraska is the mecca of sports nutrition,” Blattner said. “We have been the national leader in the field since the profession was essentially created here in the mid-1990s.”

Every student-athlete at the University of Nebraska is fed three carefully designed meals a day and each team has its own sports dietitian. Blattner works primarily with the men's basketball team, traveling everywhere with them and managing the players' nutritional needs and intake. Nebraska sports dietitians do advanced practices such as scientific sweat analysis, breaking down what athletes are losing during practices and competitions.

“I love what I do,” said Blattner, who also noted the University of Nebraska's state of the art facilities. “It's incredibly rewarding, and I am very fortunate to be in my position.”

The field of sports nutrition has experienced tremendous growth in the past decade.

“When I started at Viterbo in 2011, there were maybe 10 full-time sports dietitians in the country,” Blattner said. “Now there are that many just at the University of Nebraska.”

A wrestler and three-sport athlete in high school, Blattner was always interested in sports nutrition. The wrestling community was a close one, and he got to know the son of Viterbo faculty member and dietetics chair Karen Gibson, which led him to the university. He earned a degree in community medical dietetics, and greatly appreciated that the Viterbo program was designed for students to complete their supervised practice hours before graduation.

“I had no idea at the time how fortunate I was to attend Viterbo,” he said. “And the La Crosse community was great.

I've traveled to places like Italy and Spain for work with the basketball team and dined in five-star restaurants, and now I go to La Crosse on vacation.”

Blattner now also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Viterbo, teaching a course in sports nutrition each summer.

“The reason I do that is to give back,” he said. “I want to help the next generation know what it takes to be successful in the field.

Those connections with other professionals are important and are often the key to getting your foot in the door.”



Jake Blattner holds the championship trophy of the College Basketball Crown tournament won by the University of Nebraska men's basketball team in Las Vegas in April 2025.

More than a Coach:

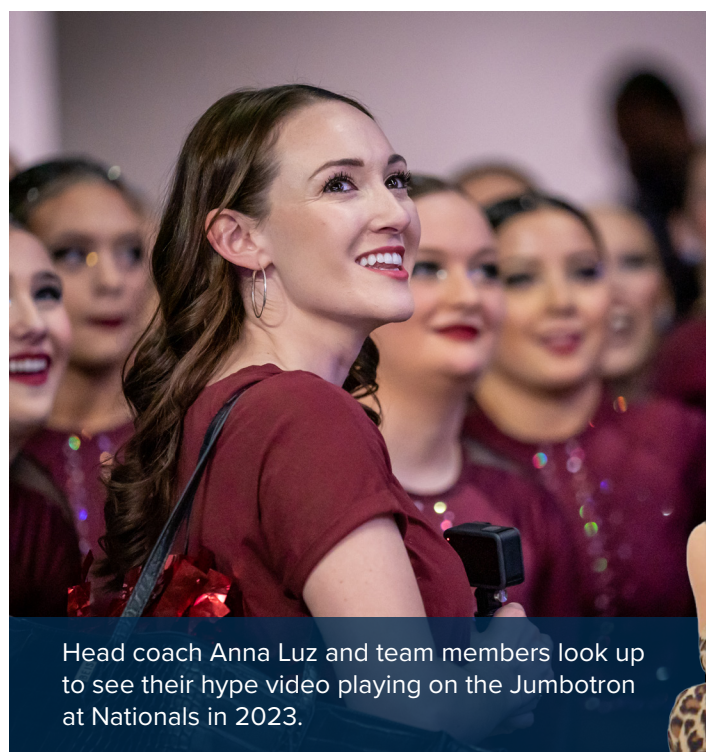
Anna Luz Leads Team to Success on and off the Dance Floor

Dance has been an integral part of Anna Luz's life for almost as long as she can remember. She began taking lessons at Jan's School of Dance in Hastings, MN, at the age of four. By nine, she was competing. She was a member of her high school team and a dancer and choreographer on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Hip Hop Team. After college, she joined the La Crosse Showtime's Show Stoppers Dance Team for their inaugural season.

"Dance is a mix of athletics and art, and that's what makes it different from other sports," Luz said. "When you're performing, you can just be a different person."

But much as she enjoyed it, being a dancer doesn't even compare to what she is doing now.

"I'm having way more fun coaching than I ever did dancing,"



Head coach Anna Luz and team members look up to see their hype video playing on the Jumbotron at Nationals in 2023.

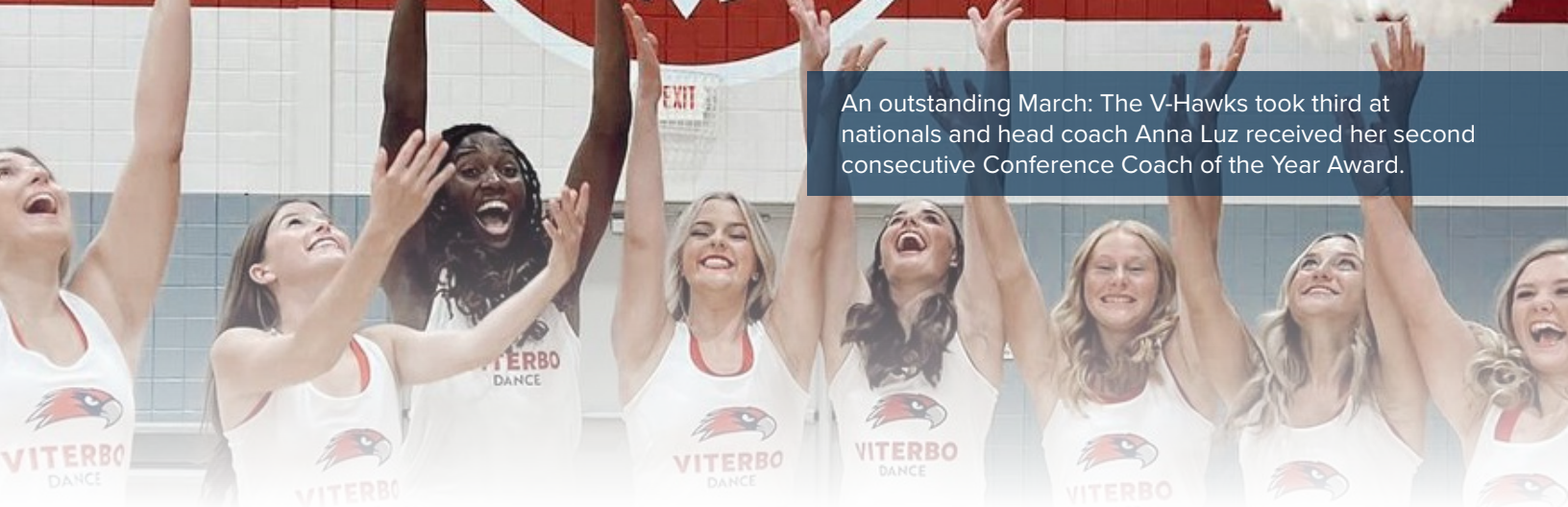
said Luz, the head coach of the Viterbo University V-Hawks Dance Team. "I've wanted to be a coach since I was 12 years old, and I love nurturing this age of young adults. I also know my coaching IQ and abilities far exceed my talent as a dancer."

Hired to start the Viterbo athletics varsity co-ed dance team in 2018, Luz has quickly built the V-Hawks into a perennial contender. The V-Hawks have made the NAIA national championships five years in a row. Luz has done it in a way some might consider slightly unorthodox—through an emphasis on team culture and good people.

"A great team culture is like a precious little gem and that is so important to us," Luz said.

"Potential recruits can see from the posts and comments how much our dancers are enjoying themselves and their teammates. We're looking for genuinely nice people and good role models."

"This job is very important," said Luz of being a collegiate coach. "I have the ability to change lives, and that is so much more impactful than a dance competition."



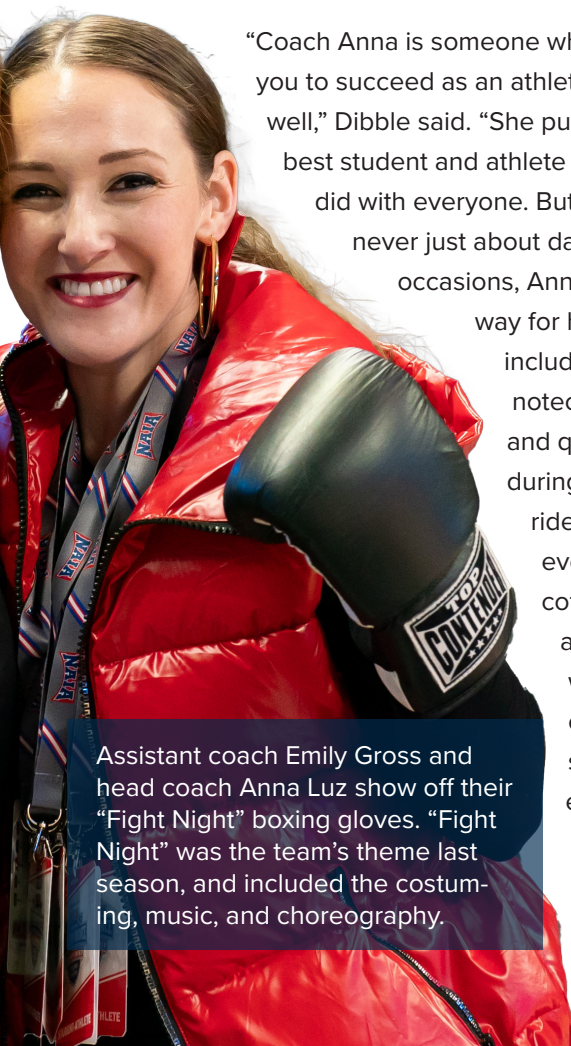
An outstanding March: The V-Hawks took third at nationals and head coach Anna Luz received her second consecutive Conference Coach of the Year Award.

Luz's goal for the first year of dance as a varsity sport was for everyone to have a good experience. Ambitions quickly intensified the next year however, when freshman phenom Nyah Brooks '23 joined the team. Brooks would go on to be the best dancer in program history, earning NAIA Co-Dancer of the Year, first-team All-American, Viterbo Female Athlete of the Year, and numerous other accolades.

"Talent attracts talent, and with videos of Nyah and the team on social media demonstrating their skills, recruiting really took off," Luz said.

One of those top recruits was eventual two-time NAIA first team All-American Maddie Dibble '25.

"Coach Anna is someone who not only wants you to succeed as an athlete, but in life as well," Dibble said. "She pushed me to be the best student and athlete I could be, as she did with everyone. But for her, it was never just about dance. On numerous occasions, Anna went out of her way for her athletes, including creating notecards for their class and quizzing them during an 8-hour bus ride, meeting with every athlete for coffee to check-in and see how life was going, organizing team study halls so everyone stays on track with assignments, and even setting up



Assistant coach Emily Gross and head coach Anna Luz show off their "Fight Night" boxing gloves. "Fight Night" was the team's theme last season, and included the costuming, music, and choreography.

a day to help the team with organization for when the season starts getting overwhelming."

Dibble is now a graduate student in Viterbo's speech-language pathology program.

"My time spent on the Viterbo dance team will truly be some of the best years of my life," Dibble said. "This team is the definition of 'family' and has impacted my perspective and outlook on life. It has taught me the importance of discipline, how to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth, and to view 'failure' as an opportunity to learn. There is truly something so special about the team dynamic and environment."

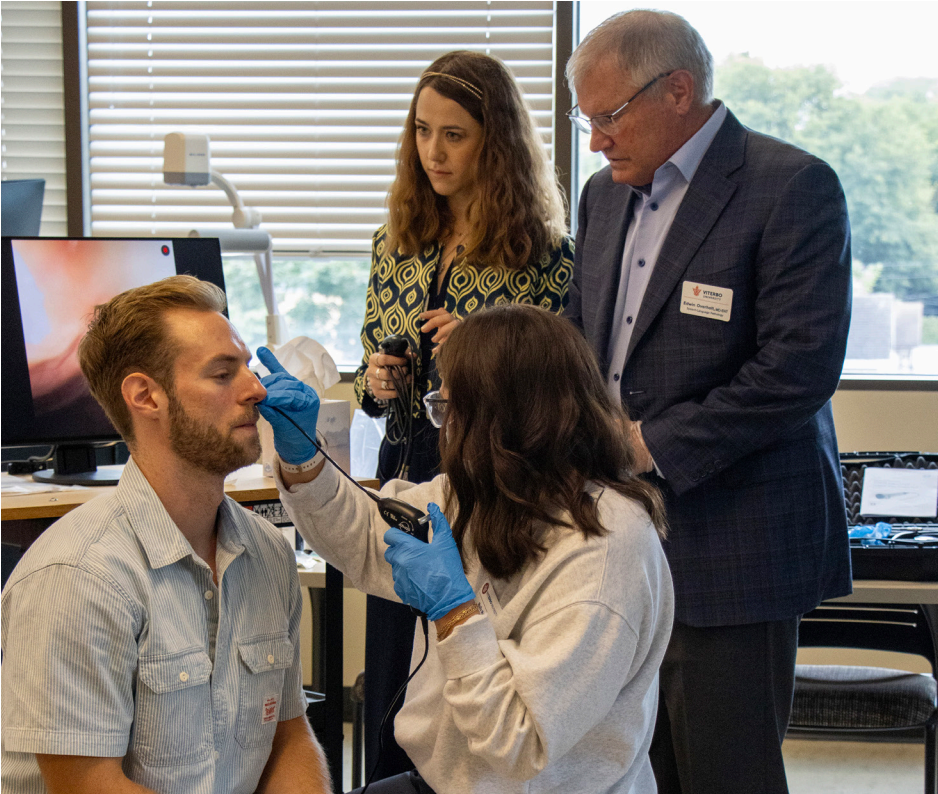
The tremendous success of the dance program is another factor that has led to its growth over the years, and the 20 current members (including two men) compete on both the NAIA varsity team and the Hip Hop team. From choreography that increasingly includes more aerials, back flips, and other moves requiring even greater athleticism, the bar for collegiate dance continues to be raised, Luz said. Her eventual goal is for the V-Hawks to win a NAIA National Championship. It is attainable because of the tremendous support the program receives from the university, a fact she shares during recruiting season.

"It is quite uncommon that dance is a varsity, rather than club sport, at colleges,"

said Luz, whose head coaching post is a full-time position. "Dancers are athletes here and our budget and resources are the same as the other sports, and that's really rare."

Luz is extremely proud of her student-athletes. She loves seeing them develop as people from freshmen to 22-year-old seniors and going on to accomplish their professional and personal goals.

SLP Students Provide Voice Health and Function Screenings



Members of the public received a unique wellness screening thanks to students in Viterbo University's speech-language pathology graduate program.

The students conducted three sessions of free voice health and function checkups under the leadership and supervision of Viterbo faculty members, including Dr. Theodora Nestorova and Dr. Edwin Overholt. Performed with the use of a flexible naso-pharyngo-laryngoscopy (FNPL), the minimally-invasive screenings covered general vocal health and could detect allergies, reflux, and potentially more serious problems such as nodules and other lesions.

"There are often long wait times to see a specialist at traditional medical providers, so we were happy to offer this service," Nestorova said. "This is a safe, quick, and fascinating way for participants to see their vocal folds in action, and it is great practical and clinically relevant experience for our students."

Inspired by Home

Camille Olson's senior art exhibit, *Evergreen*, showcased paintings and drawings inspired by the Driftless landscape and her rural Wisconsin roots. An art education major, Olson hopes to share her passion for creativity with her future students.





Netting for Macro

Junior biology major Chelsie Paulsen holds up a small bluegill while netting for macro invertebrates and algae from a canoe at Pettibone Park.



Electro Fish for Trout

Students electro fish for trout as part of efforts to determine the overall health of the stream.

The World is Your Classroom

Gabe Holderby considers being outdoors and enjoying the beauty of nature to be one of life's most enjoyable experiences. So, when the Viterbo biology major and future dentist needed an additional upper-level science course, he thought Conservation Biology (BIOL 321) would be perfect.

Turns out he was correct. Containing numerous hands-on field experiences such as analyzing the water chemistry and trout population of Mormon Creek, measuring the number and type of insects in different plant clusters at Holland Sand Prairie, and examining the biodiversity of the backwaters of the Mississippi River, Holderby and his fellow classmates are putting science into practice—and having some fun—in a course that feels quite different than the

traditional class.

“I think the biggest thing I’m taking away from the class is a new appreciation and understanding of why conservation is important,” said Holderby, a senior from Normal, Ill. whose favorite class activity has been nature photography. “Before I always enjoyed nature and being out in the elements, but learning the science behind the environment has given me a greater knowledge of the ‘why.’ I am really enjoying it.”

Each student in the class also completes a semester-long research project, which can be tailored to their personal interest or future career field. In Holderby’s example, there are discussions in Madison about removing fluoride from drinking water because of concerns about its effect on the environment. Dentists, not surprisingly, recommend keeping it. Holderby is taking water samples near the water treatment plant and other sites to measure the amount of fluoride. So far, the amount is safely below recommended levels.

Holderby will graduate in May 2026

and attend dental school in the fall. He has been very happy with his Viterbo University experience, from the close relationships and in-depth conversations with professors to growing and learning through the well-rounded education he has received.

“All my professors just love what they do, and that helps me get excited about what I’m learning,” he said.

Taught by Dr. Ted Wilson, Conservation Biology is a 4-credit class in which the time of enrolled students is split evenly between the classroom and the field. It has proven to be very popular, with many of the same students also taking Wilson’s Limnology (the study of inland water bodies) course.

“They absolutely love it,” Wilson said. “Most of our science students at Viterbo are pre-health majors, but we also hope to instill an understanding and passion for ecological and environmental sciences as well.”



Gabe Holderby looks through a sweep net for insects at Holland Sand Prairie.

High Earning Graduates

Viterbo University ranks among the top five Wisconsin colleges producing the highest-earning graduates, according to the U.S. Department of Education. The data highlights median earnings for graduates four years after completing their degrees.

“Viterbo graduates are prepared not only to enter the workforce but to excel in their chosen careers,”

said Dr. Tonya Wagner, vice president for academic affairs and institutional effectiveness. “This recognition reflects the dedication of our faculty and the quality of our students, who leave here equipped with the skills, confidence, and ethical foundation to thrive professionally and personally.”

The Department of Education’s new earnings indicator, featured on the FAFSA application, allows prospective students to compare schools based on post-graduation earnings. Viterbo’s placement in the top five underscores the university’s commitment to

delivering a transformative education rooted in Catholic, Franciscan social teachings that prepares graduates for real-world success.

Viterbo University continues to focus on small class sizes, personalized mentoring, and hands-on experiences that help students stand out in a competitive job market. Graduates leave the university not only with strong academic knowledge but also with a deep foundation of ethics and practical skills that translate into meaningful careers across the tri-state area and beyond.



Never Again

Participants explored the history of antisemitism, the rise of the Nazi party, and the implementation of the Final Solution as part of the “Shadows of the Holocaust: Understanding Genocide, Hate, and History—Then and Now” lecture series sponsored by the D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership.

“This series built upon the long history of Holocaust education at Viterbo University by bringing an in-depth look at the history and context of the Holocaust and linking it to contemporary concerns about genocide today,” said Rick Kyte, director of the D.B. Reinhart Institute for Ethics in Leadership.

“Shadows of the Holocaust” was facilitated by Jon Reiner, an in-demand speaker who specializes in Holocaust education. Reiner earned a master’s degree in Holocaust and genocide studies from Gratz College and is the founder of the Holocaust education company 6M and the creator of the Holocaust Essentials podcast.



Beautiful Music

The Conservatory for the Performing Arts hosted its inaugural Seven Rivers Choral Festival. The concert was conducted by Viterbo's Dr. Michael Sauer.



I Love You Because Lights Up the Black Box

The musical love story *I Love You Because* entertained audiences with excellent singing, acting, and

plenty of 1990s nostalgia. It starred Conservatory for the Performing Arts students Sony Vassor and Annie Voss, back, and seated, Tucker Mensen, Zachary Buhl, Abbey Messing, and McKenzie Russ.



Story of Survival

Holocaust survivor Irene Miller, pictured with Darryle Clott and students, held a book signing following her presentation in the Fine Arts Center Main Theatre. Miller is the author of *Into No Man's Land: A Historical Memoir*.

Music and Memories

It's her dream come true. After years of traveling to the Czech Republic to research and study the rich history of Czech music, pianist Katelyn Bouska '08 recently made Prague, her full-time home.

"Since I began to focus on Czech music as my research and artistic focus about 10 years ago, I've traveled there three to four months of each year." Bouska has family roots in Prague and South Bohemia.

Music is a common thread through generations of the Bouska family. "Amateur music-making was an integral part of my immediate and extended family," she shared.

"We have violins that my Czech ancestors brought with them when they immigrated to the U.S. Those humble and well-loved instruments always gave me a sense of belonging in music," Bouska added. "Packing a musical instrument might have meant more practical belongings were left behind. I am proud to continue in my ancestors' traditions."

Her mother was her first piano teacher and often played for her children

before school. As Bouska advanced, her mother took notes and kept up. "She assisted in my home practice. Now, she is my piano student, taking weekly lessons from me online," Bouska said. "Music, and the piano specifically, is a lovely bond for us."

Viterbo's Close-Knit Community Helped Her Grow

Growing up, her family attended productions at the Fine Arts Center, and Bouska studied piano with teachers who would one day become her college professors. "Attending Viterbo was a natural segue for me," she explained.

Bouska thrived in the close-knit Viterbo community where students and faculty cared for and inspired one another. "I never had a class with Jerry Benzer," Bouska said. "But his studio door was next to my locker, and we talked in between his lessons and my classes. His extensive knowledge of vocal literature and passion for diction is clear in my mind, 20 years later," she added.

She reflected on music history classes with Tim Schorr and theory and

"Viterbo was a nurturing space that allowed me to grow and explore musically and academically. I was challenged to build the experience and confidence I needed, to know that I was on the right path."



composition with Mary Ellen Hauptert. “They both gave me a peek into how deep the musical world really could be,” Bouska said. “I have been going deep into it ever since.”

Bouska wanted the contrast of a larger setting for graduate school and selected Temple University in Philadelphia, studying under pianist Charlie Abramovic. She earned her Doctor of Musical Arts. Bouska has taught for Temple University and held a music studies faculty position with the Curtis Institute of Music (where she now teaches remotely). She performs, teaches private lessons, and conducts workshops.

Inspired to Share the Stories of Czech Composers

For her dissertation, Bouska wrote about Czech composer Miloslav

Ištvan, who was active in the 1960s–1980s Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. She found some of his manuscripts while she was on a summer research grant in Brno.

“Ištvan had never heard some of the pieces performed due to the censorship of the regime behind the Iron Curtain, and that jolted me. Seeing his handwriting and reading his story, that is where the research, advocacy, and writing bug certainly became embedded in my artistic process,” she reflected.

She is finishing her upcoming book, *Czech Women in Music*, which celebrates the rich legacy of Czech music. “The topics somehow animate into their creatures and self-propagate,” Bouska said. “The type of writing I do most often centers around some type of advocacy for forgotten

or overlooked composers,” she added.

“I love writing in the same way I love recording a new piece of music. The preparation tests you, pushing one past their physical, emotional, and intellectual limits,” Bouska explained. “And through it, one has an invitation to explore and discover oneself more deeply.”

Bouska shared how visual art is an important inspiration to her. She has curated specific programs to match exhibits in museums. “Last year, I played a recital at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., where I paired repertoire with various pieces on display throughout the gallery,” she said. “To play a recital with the only Leonardo da Vinci in the Americas just behind my shoulder, was truly thrilling.”



Pianist **Katelyn Bouska** presented a recital that explored women composers in Czech music whose contributions have enriched and shaped the country's vibrant musical heritage. Bouska offered fresh perspectives on the development of Czech music, presenting both newly discovered and revived manuscripts.

CLASS NOTES

1990

Hope Clements '97, '20 has joined Aptiv as the director of development and community engagement, La Crosse.

2000

Jessica Allen '01 has recently released her first three books on Amazon's KDP platform under the pen name of TJ Monroe.

Jamie (Bettesworth) Schloegel '06 is the new executive director for the Women's Fund of Greater La Crosse.

Jennifer Tucker '06 earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice in Health Innovation and Leadership degree from University of Minnesota in December 2025. She is the health services coordinator for South Washington County School District, Cottage Grove, MN.

Charles '07 and **Jayne (Armstrong) Brannen '07** were selected as the 2025 festmeister and festmeisterin for the Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest celebration.

Bo and Jennifer (Pintz) Drew '09 welcomed a daughter, Josephine Renee, Nov. 8, 2025. Josephine joins her brother, Jameson.

Ed Smudde '09, '10 joined Organic Valley as the Total Rewards Manager in November 2025.

2010

Jeremy Lambrecht and Jennifer Betthausen '10 were married Aug. 8, 2025.

Neal Zygarlicke '11, '12 and **Whitney Hegseth '14**, welcomed a son, Monroe Gordon, on Oct. 1, 2025.

Idriss Mbodj and Rachel Madary '13 were married Sept. 18, 2025.

Brittany (Cincoski) Do-McKenzie '15 started as a physician assistant with Aurora Health on Aug. 25, 2025, Neenah, WI.

Scott Stene '16, '17 started a new position as director of accounting compliance with Fincantieri Marine Group, Marinette, WI in October 2025.

Klint and Katie (Mormann) Wales '16 welcomed a daughter, Kora Mary, Dec. 17, 2025.

Heidi Huebner '18 was promoted to associate athletic director/CFO with the University of Louisville athletic department.

Taylor (Schreier) Forshee '19 has been promoted to director of human resources with Innovia Consulting.

2020

Julia Harlo '22 is making her acting debut at Griffin Theatre, Chicago, in the performance of *The House without a Christmas Tree*.

Wolfgang and Grace (Rohde) Reineke '24 welcomed a son, Lewis Allen, on Sept. 7, 2025.

Eric Taylor '24 and Kirsten Southworth '24 were married Aug. 9, 2025.

Shana (Zenke) Wieser '25 has joined Winona Health as a Doctor of Nursing Practice and Family Nurse Practitioner.

IN MEMORIAM

1940

Mary (Ziegler) Schorn, SFSN '49, Dec. 27, 2025

1950

Glenice (Metcalf) Mathews, SFSN '50, Sept. 21, 2025

Rosemary (Maule) Bennett, SFSN '52, Oct. 10, 2025

Mary Lou (Baier) Droster, SFSN '53, Oct. 30, 2025

Joan (Sheridan) Sartori, SFSN '54, Dec. 9, 2025

Ardis (Volden) Bolstad '55, Dec. 17, 2025

Mary (Paulus) Herold, SFSN '56, Jan. 24, 2026

Lois Rita Spence '57, sister of Shirley Morrissey, FSPA '79, Jan. 15, 2026

1960

LaVonne Wernimont, sister of Cormarie Wernimont, FSPA '60, Jan. 25, 2026

Jane (Caspers) Derleth, SFSN '61, Jan. 7, 2026

Margie (McNamara) Doyle, SFSN '62, Nov. 16, 2025

Molly Corcoran, sister of Cecelia Corcoran, FSPA '63, Oct. 8, 2025

Mary Louise Mutch, FSPA '63, Dec. 19, 2025

Phyllis Etringer, sister of Marguerite Bruening, FSPA '64, Sept. 18, 2025

Rita (Boddicker) Johnson '64, Dec. 28, 2025

Juanita Hytry, FSPA '66, Dec. 17, 2025

Mary Rausch, sister-in-law of Jean Ann Rausch, FSPA '66, Sept. 5, 2025

Judi (O'Brien) Anderson '69, July 19, 2025

Allen Trapp, spouse of Lynette (Chapiewsky) Trapp, SFSN '69, Feb. 7, 2026

1970

Irene Kershnik, sister of Mary Ellen Huebsch, FSPA '70, Dec. 22, 2025

Lela (Schaub) Wenig, SFSN '70, Feb. 14, 2026

Theresa (Heil) Wysocki '70, Jan. 16, 2026

Jean Michael Treba, FSPA '72, Dec. 6, 2025

Susan (Jorgenson) Ecklor '74, mother of Michelle Ecklor '02, Feb. 19, 2026

Jim Juedes, brother-in-law of Carolyn Heil, FSPA '73 and Roselyn Heil, FSPA '75, Sept. 3, 2025

Kathleen Simons, mother of Sarah (Simons) Reed '75 and Mary (Simons) Vea '76 and sister of Mildred Tigges, FSPA '62, Nov. 29, 2025

Larry Nottestad, brother of Linda (Nottestad) Thies '77, Sept. 20, 2025

Cynthia Vieth '77, Oct. 31, 2025

Lila Zogg, mother of Deb (Zogg) Kappmeyer '79, Jan. 22, 2026

1980

Norma Steffen, mother of Terry Steffen '83, Feb. 9, 2025

Herb Steffen, father of Terry Steffen '83, Sept. 30, 2025

John Allen, father of Nancy Allen '84, Feb. 13, 2026

Phyllis Henkelmann, mother of Laura (Robertson) Harrigan '85, Oct. 22, 2025

Margaret Ritzer, mother of **Rebecca (Ritzer) Lowery '85–'87**, Sept. 13, 2025

Eric Voter '86, Oct. 15, 2025

Kathleen Krueger, mother of **Jeff Krueger '87**, **Julie Krueger '89**, and **Scott Krueger '95**. Mother-in-law of **Doreen (Brown) Trapp '89**, **Sara (Craig) Krueger '05** and **Jane (Eckendorf) Krueger '91**, Aug. 30, 2025

Donald Stuttgen, brother of **Kathleen Stuttgen, FSPA '87** and **Jon Stuttgen '88**, Nov. 10, 2025

Darlene Larson, mother of **Shelly (Larson) Tully '89**, Feb. 1, 2026

1990

Judy Rogness, mother of **Jeff Rogness '93**, Oct. 11, 2025

Ellen Mellick, mother of **Michael Mellick '94**, Sept. 6, 2025

Goodwin Hass, father of **Carmen Hass-Michel '95**, Dec. 14, 2025

Sherrian (Brown) Williams '95, Dec. 15, 2025

Mary (Muller) Bowman '98, Nov. 29, 2025

Robert Bush, spouse of **Melanie (Schwichtenberg) Bush '99**, Nov. 21, 2025

Wayne Hoppmann, father of **Mary (Hoppmann) Sorenson '99**, Oct. 6, 2025

2000

P. John Whitsett, father of **Jaelyn (Whitsett) Morris '03, '20**, Oct. 28, 2025

Mary Rasmussen '04, Oct. 9, 2025

Dorothy Wolf, mother of **Irene TenEyck '06**, Nov. 7, 2025

Steven Fuchsteiner, spouse of **Judith (Steidl) Fuchsteiner '07** and brother-in-law of **Jane (Fitzpatrick) Steidl '72**, Dec. 15, 2025

Thomas Batell, father of **Mark Batell '09**, Jan. 31, 2026

2010

Cherie Robert-Cannon '14, Dec. 27, 2025

Tiffany Morrell '15, Dec. 20, 2025

Penny Toay '16, Jan. 2, 2026

Susan Hines, mother of **Abby (Hines) Hoover '17**, Feb. 14, 2026

2020

James Kadlec, grandfather of **Amy (Kadlec) Jore '23**, Dec. 27, 2025

Kadin Ahler '25, Sept. 22, 2025

We want to hear from you!

New job?

New home?

New baby?

Update your info
and share your latest news—big or small.



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visit bit.ly/VU-AlumniUpdates

UP CLOSE WITH JAMIE WEBER

Returning to her alma mater as an adjunct a little more than decade ago, associate professor Jamie (Sebion) Weber '02 today places nutrition and dietetics students in clinical sites all over the country through an amazing network of contacts and opportunities.

Associate Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics Jamie Weber and students.



Did growing up on a dairy farm inspire your interest in food and nutrition?

Absolutely! My dad was an organic dairy farmer who carefully used crop rotation and soil testing to ensure the soil had the right nutrients for everything he grew. Watching how closely he connected soil health, farming practices, and the quality of food we produced helped me understand that nutrition begins long before food reaches the plate. Those early experiences sparked my curiosity about how food systems and nutrition are deeply interconnected.

What is special about Viterbo that makes you want to teach at your alma mater?

When I began teaching as an adjunct in 2015, I was surprised by the immediate and powerful sense that I had come home. It wasn't anything specific that someone said or did, but rather the culture, values, and sense of community I felt simply by being on campus and engaging with colleagues and students. Nearly 11 years later, that feeling hasn't changed. Viterbo continues to feel like a place where I truly belong, which is what makes teaching at my alma mater so meaningful to me.



How were the university and program different when you were a student?

The program looked very different from what it is today. It was a bachelor's-level program, and at that time a bachelor's degree was all that was required to become a registered dietitian. My cohort was small, with just eight students, and all our classes were face-to-face, with supervised practice completed entirely in the La Crosse area. Today, Viterbo offers a distance master's program, and students can complete supervised practice across the country in experiences that are intentionally tailored to their individual interests and career goals.

How did you build such an impressive network of industry and internship site contacts?

Building a strong network of internship sites has been an evolving process, especially as the program expanded with the addition of a distance master's option. In the early years, much of my work focused on establishing new contracts with organizations willing to serve as preceptors, and because our students complete supervised practice across the country, new partnerships are continually being developed. Today, we have more than 460 sites and over 600 preceptors in our database, which reflects both intentional outreach—often through tools like LinkedIn and online searches—and a commitment to relationship-building. Sustaining these partnerships ultimately comes down to trust, clear communication, and responsiveness, so I prioritize being transparent, supportive, and reliable in every interaction.

Where does your positive attitude and well-known philosophy of “whatever happens will work out!” come from?

At the core, my positive outlook comes from a strong foundation in faith and a deep trust that things ultimately

unfold as they are meant to. I believe that even when the path looks different from what I would have chosen, there is purpose in the process, and choosing to trust that perspective helps me stay grounded, hopeful, and open to growth.

Have you always been a fan of the outdoors?

Yes, I've always loved being outdoors and find a lot of peace and grounding in nature, whether it's hiking, walking, or simply spending time near the water. I didn't start downhill skiing until I was 30, but it quickly became something I wanted to share with my kids. Watching them grow into confident skiers has been incredibly rewarding. In the summer, you'll often find us on the Mississippi River, where boating has become one of our favorite ways to spend time together and recharge between busy schedules.

What else do you do for fun?

I love going to my kid's events—downhill skiing, soccer, volleyball, and baseball. It brings so much joy watching your kids do what they love. Our family also loves the Milwaukee Brewers. We try to squeeze in a few games in between my son's baseball games and river time. Spending as much time as I can with my family and kids brings me so much joy.

What's one thing about you that might surprise people?

People are often surprised to learn that I'm actually quite introverted. While my role requires me to be outgoing and highly engaged, which I genuinely enjoy, I also need quiet time to recharge and learning to prioritize that has been an ongoing goal for me. Another unique fact is that I've been a high school gymnastics judge for over 20 years, a role that allows me to stay connected to a sport I loved as a gymnast in high school.



Please tell readers about your appearance on Live with Regis and Kelly

Haha! Back in 2010, my friend and I took a trip to New York, and while she toured The Juilliard School, I decided to find something fun to do. We went to the *Live with Regis and Kelly* studio the day before and learned how early I'd need to arrive to have a chance at getting in. The next morning, I showed up around 6 a.m., stood in line for three hours, and ended up sixth in line. About five minutes before the show started, I walked in, and a producer complimented my dress and asked if I wanted to be the travel trivia dancer. Of course, I said yes, but being the introvert I am, I was shaking like crazy. The funniest part? It all happened so fast, I didn't get a chance to call my mom, who was watching at home with my sister, and suddenly there I was dancing on live TV! And no, there's no video online if you try to find it!



Flashback

The Steinway pianos are part of the history of Viterbo's nationally acclaimed music programs, and they play a key role in vibrant experiences and futures.

We Saved Our **STEINWAYS**

Thanks to a rewarding partnership between Viterbo and the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra and the generosity of supporters of the fine arts, the cherished Steinway concert grand pianos will be restored to peak performance earlier than planned.

The last Steinway restoration project was about 25 years ago. With the hundreds of performances that take place every year at the Fine Arts Center, it's no wonder that it was again time to Save Our Steinways 2.0.

In Tune with Viterbo Values

The process requires carefully transporting each of the nearly 1,000-pound pianos to a Steinway-certified tuner in Illinois. The pianos are stripped of all their keys and parts and comprehensively overhauled. It is a six-to eight-month process to restore just one piano. Not to miss a beat with scheduled performances and concerts in the Fine Arts Center, one piano goes out at a time.

Restoring the Steinway concert grands is more cost efficient than buying new and aligns with Viterbo's values of practicing good stewardship with resources.

Cornerstones and Crown Jewels

Viterbo University and the La Crosse Symphony Orchestra have partnered for more than 50 years, bringing the community together to enjoy beautiful symphony music in a premiere venue. Audiences are entertained, educated, inspired—and diversity of the arts culture is enhanced.

Did You Know?

- The La Crosse Symphony Orchestra got its start in the late 1800s. It evolved over the years to become the 70-musician orchestra that it is today, with a music director/conductor and a board of directors that oversees operations.
- Every music student at Viterbo has either played one of the two concert grand piano Steinways—or an accompanist has played while the student performs.
- Singer Ray Charles is among the national performers who have delighted audiences while playing the concert Steinway grand piano at Viterbo.
- Viterbo is fortunate to have a number of Steinway pianos, with other models in practice rooms. The two concert grand pianos, Steinway Model D, are the

pianos undergoing restoration. The Model D is considered the pinnacle of concert grand pianos. According to Steinway and Son's website, "It is the overwhelming choice of the world's pianists and for anyone who demands the highest level of musical expression."

- One of the campus Steinways was an original to the Fine Arts Center when it first opened its doors in 1971.
- A baby grand Steinway was located for many years within Murphy Hall, the first campus building. Chapel services were held there, and perhaps the baby grand was played during theatre productions that were also held in Murphy.

History of the Steinway Piano

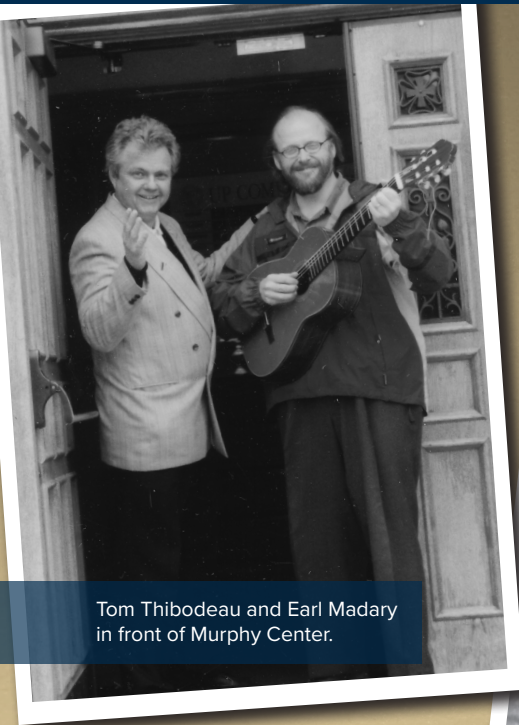
In the 1800s, Steinway's company founder, Henry E. Steinway and his sons set out to rival their competition and build the best piano possible. Their technical and manufacturing innovations and savvy marketing led to their success.

Steinway pianos are known for their rich tones and superior sound quality. It takes nearly 300 craftsmen close to a year to build one Steinway piano. A brand-new Steinway concert grand can exceed \$200,000. The restoration project covers both Steinway concert grands for less.





The Viterbo University community prepares students for faithful service and ethical leadership.



Tom Thibodeau and Earl Madary
in front of Murphy Center.

Have a fun
memory like
this?



Hog Wild Weekend (now Courtyard Carni) featured an air band contest. The "Salty Pepper" group included Laurie Petit '91 and Tricia Goldberg Murtha '91.

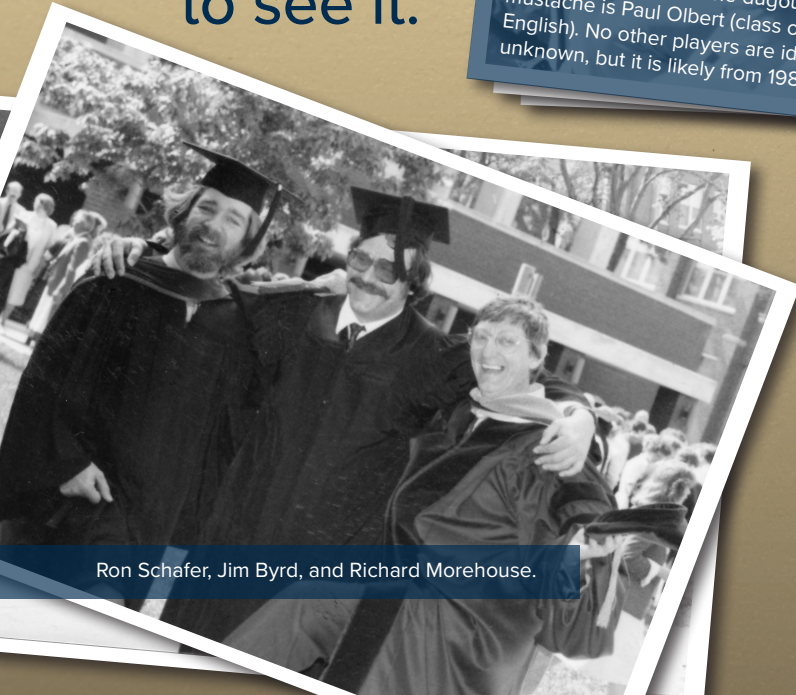


The baseball team in the dugout. The player with the mustache is Paul Olbert (class of 1991, bachelor of arts in English). No other players are identified. This image's date is unknown, but it is likely from 1987 to 1991.



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We'd love
to see it.



Ron Schafer, Jim Byrd, and Richard Morehouse.



Students paint the home economics apartment where they rotated living while they studied home management. On the floor are Lillie O'Leary Robinson '56 and Sister Ramona Hytry.