POWER Combination
President-elect
Jorge G. Gonzalez and
Suzie (Martin) Gonzalez ’83
Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Kalamazoo College or the editors. LuxEsto is published in the spring and winter by Kalamazoo College, 1200 Academy Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49006 USA.

WHAT’S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS?
Planning a visit to Kalamazoo College? Check the Kalamazoo College news website for the latest information about campus events. Calendar listings are regularly updated at kzoo.edu/news/calendar-of-events.

CORRECTIONS
In the masthead of the Fall 2015 issue we misidentified the season. We misspelled the possessive “President’s” in the jump headline on page 2. On page 3 we referenced Dr. Stavig’s obituary on page 44. In fact, the obituary appeared on page 48. We apologize for these errors and thank our readers for informing us about them.
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Inspire City Stay

“[Let’s] bring the concept of study abroad to the local level by allowing Minnesotans of all colors and creeds to live with a new Minnesotan family from a different culture.” Meet Julie Knopp ’10, and welcome to City Stay.

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A new multi-use pavilion at the 140-acre Lillian Anderson Arboretum will enhance the educational potential of this special place, a dream with roots 100 years old.
Dear Alumni, Families of Students, and Friends of Kalamazoo College:

Transition has been much on my mind of late.

June 30, 2015, will be the final day of my 11-year tenure as president of Kalamazoo College, and the parting for me will be sweet sorrow. The very next day, July 1, Dr. Jorge G. Gonzalez will begin his duties as the institution’s 18th president. Sope and I extend our warmest congratulations to K’s new leader, and to Kalamazoo College. The search committee did an outstanding job, and we should all be thankful for their work. Dr. Gonzalez and K are an excellent fit for a future that is full of light. Lux esto!

Transitions are a time to say thank you, to celebrate the work that transpires at K, to express my faith in the kind of education that the College embraces and shares, and to look forward to the next chapter of an institution I have come to love so deeply.

More than a decade ago, as I transitioned into the presidency at K, I invoked the image of the Sankofa, a word from the Twi language of Ghana that translates as “go back and get what is at risk of being left behind.” One image for this concept is a bird with feet firmly forward-planted and her head turned backward to take an egg from her back.

On the occasion of my inauguration, and several times since, I used the image to suggest that the best future of the College must be informed by the best of its past. More recently I have thought more deeply about the image of that egg, for which the bird reaches back in order to bring it forward into a changing future. The egg’s issue will be wholly unique and individual and yet at the same time have tendrils (double helix or otherwise) in the past from which it was carried. Sankofa reminds us that new generations of innovation are vital to the future well-being of a college. Change is indispensable to the future of Kalamazoo College, and so is tradition.

This image crosses cultures. In the Roman myth, Janus, the god of beginnings and transitions, looks forward and backward. In a parable about the kingdom of God, Jesus describes “the householder who can bring forth out of his treasure room both the new and the old.”

Transitions often inspire anxiety. What will change? How will those changes affect me and what I love? Will—and if so, how will—a new presidency alter the direction of the College? No doubt such questions arose 11 years ago, as they do with any leadership transition. What makes such transitions successful, exciting even, is the Sankofa, with her feet forward and her head reaching back to save what’s best from behind to help make what will be new ahead.

Kalamazoo College has survived and often thrived for more than 175 years, a span that includes nearly a score of leadership changes. How does one account for that success with transition? Throughout her history K has stood unwaveringly for certain values and advanced them in new and innovative ways. Those values are the liberal arts, experiential education, a charter of service to humanity and continual learning. The College also has embraced new commitments consistent with those values: commitments to a more diverse and inclusive campus community and to a more engaged focus on social justice. K’s success with transition derives from her genius with Sankofa—that seeming paradox of tradition and change.

And all her tradition and changes uphold her belief that the purpose of a great education is to offer to all students access to the opportunity Ta-Nehisi Coates calls “that singular gift of study, to question what I
see, then to question what I see after that, because the questions matter as much, perhaps more than, the answers.” Liberal arts study is so beautifully entwined with that distinctly human impulse to inquire “why?” and “why?” and “why?” again. In the e.e. cummings fairy tale that he wrote for his daughter, the old man who so annoyed the universe with his continuous questioning falls “until, just as he gently touched the earth, he was about to be born.” If I could coin a single word for this “singular gift of study” that new word would combine the meanings of joy, struggle and usefulness.

The outcomes of that gift are evident in the stories shared in this issue. I see such constant questioning in the dreaming of the arboretum, in the vision of a City Stay program, in the collaboration and mutual instruction between a blind student and a music professor hungry to learn new things, in the entrepreneurship of a theatre arts-baker-businesswoman all rolled into one, in the courage of Shannon Milan and of Carla Kupe-Arion—the courage to leap before (too much) looking into the “deep end” of K, and the courage to join a struggle toward a solution to a problem that confronts us all.

For more than 10 years I have been blessed to be involved in the way K helps contribute to such outcomes...blessed to be part of what is, I daresay, a miracle. Thank you, everyone. Thank you, Kalamazoo College, for making new, each day, your past, your community, your values. Such re-creation is hard and fraught (and hard-fought) work, and it is a blessing; it is a miracle.

Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran, President

TO THE EDITOR:

It was with an odd combination of delight and somber reflection that I read the “In Memory” section of the last issue of LuxEsto, regarding the passing of Richard Stavig—delight for the loving tributes extended to him and reflection upon his influence in my professional and personal life, and the lives of so many K students, faculty and friends of the College.

I was not privileged to be one of his classroom students, but I am the beneficiary of the foreign study (Erlangen) experience he helped to create and led for so many years. Growing up in a middle-class family in small-town Michigan, I could never have anticipated how much that foreign study would broaden my view of humanity and influence both my professional and spiritual outlook.

It was a great honor to be part of the hospice team that cared for Doctor Stavig in the last months of his life, and to see him again after so many years. Although the disease process prevented me from thanking him in a way he could outwardly understand, in consciousness, I know there was a grateful connection.

Thank God for the intellectual integrity, courage and perseverance which he embodied.

George E. Drake ’69, M.D.
Study Abroad and Study Away

Inspire City

BY MAGGIE KANE '13
PHOTOS BY KEITH MUMMA

Julie Knopp in
El Paso and
Minneapolis

(facing page)
Julie Knopp ’10 expected to experience culture shock when she studied abroad in Thailand her junior year. She was even excited about the prospect; after all, international opportunities were part of what had drawn her to Kalamazoo College.

What she did not expect was to experience culture shock closer to home. Before her year abroad, Knopp decided to apply to the Border Studies program, one of K’s domestic study away offerings located, at the time, in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and El Paso, Texas.

“I applied because friends were applying,” Knopp said. She decided to do her homestay with a family in Ciudad Juárez. She had spent time visiting family in Texas before, and wanted a new experience.
Julie’s junior-year study abroad in Thailand was an important influence on her vision for City Stay.

“Some part of me thought I was familiar with the culture of Texas,” she said. “I expected that being in Mexico would be much more foreign to me, that I would be speaking Spanish a lot more. That was not the case.”

Knopp worked for a nonprofit based in El Paso, and took classes at universities in both cities. She crossed the border often in her travels between home, work and schools.

“Most of the neighborhoods I was in, I would have never known I had crossed the border had I not just crossed the border,” Knopp said. “I didn’t expect to feel like a foreigner in El Paso because I thought I knew what the U.S. experience looked like in many parts of the country; it turned out I didn’t know.”

And that realization stuck with Knopp, particularly after returning from study abroad in Thailand and reflecting on both experiences. She wondered if she could use an immersion model to help others learn about their communities in the United States, and how much they might not know about those communities. A few years after graduation, Knopp started a nonprofit called City Stay to make her dream happen.

Based in Minnesota in the Twin Cities, City Stay offers residents the opportunity to do a homestay with local families of Hmong, Somali and Latino cultural backgrounds. In addition, the program offers workshops and trainings to local nonprofits and other groups. Knopp hopes to foster relationships and build trust across communities in the area.

“Kalamazoo College is a huge experience in exploring new cultures and exploring some of the
Busker days in Juárez.

Julie (left) sells jokes as a street performer.

Crossing the border into Texas.

The “study” in Study Away occurred at University of Texas-El Paso.

Julie overlooking El Paso.
Students from Minnehaha Academy participate in City Stay.

injustices in our country and around the world,” she said. “I felt a connection between wanting to have those cultural experiences locally and wanting to find solutions to some of those injustices. In addition, if we knew our neighbors, we would have less mistrust.” A good starting point for finding solutions.

So far, City Stay has hosted mostly high school students. Knopp says that for most participants, the homestays reveal an aspect of their community that is unfamiliar. “They have this idea of what their community looks like, and it’s not any of the people that they see [through the program],” Knopp said.

The experience also allows for learning on the part of the host families. In surveys host families note new things they learned about the culture of their hosted students. The number of families interested in hosting students has been growing, particularly as previous hosts share their experiences with friends and neighbors.

“When we were starting, we had a lot of people asking if we had buy-in from the immigrant communities,” Knopp said. “The families who have hosted students are really excited about our mission.”

Knopp hopes to keep growing the program so it can reach more people. Last year the program hosted six students. Knopp plans to engage more students by introducing different ways to get involved, like shorter homestays and student-facilitated workshops.

“When a one-day program was proposed, that seemed way too short,” Knopp said. “But having students for even a couple of hours can help them be more open to having those cultural experiences for the longer term.”

When talking about her goals for the future of the organization, Knopp keeps an open mind.

“Every year we set goals and yet it always ends up so different than we ever imagined,” she said. “There are always new opportunities that arise at the last minute.”
Julie with a City Stay host family. The Hmong culture values extended family, and many members live under the same roof.
“You know Indigo’s family is from Michigan,” said Mehjabeen Noor, some four years ago as her 18-year-old daughter Ahmarin (Rani), prepared to leave Bangkok, Thailand, for her first year of study at Kalamazoo College. “What if you meet her there?”

“Mom, that’s not going to happen,” said Rani, as she thought about Indigo McCollum, her best friend from first through fifth grades at the Ruamrudee International School in Bangkok. Indigo’s parents, Lon and Rachel McCollum, international school teachers, had been teaching in the school.

All those long years ago Rani and Indigo were in the same class, took ballet lessons together and had frequent sleepovers. Then, at the end of fifth grade, Indigo’s parents moved to Myanmar (Burma) while Rani and her family remained in Bangkok. “I still remember the night that she was leaving,” Rani recalls. “Her mom and her family came over to my house. They had an early morning flight and my parents said, ‘We’ll drop you off at the airport.’ Her mom said, ‘I hate goodbyes, and so you’re not dropping me at the airport.’ That was our goodbye. It was like I didn’t have a best friend anymore.”

There were tears as the two friends
parted, but life went on. Rani entered middle school with their same group of friends (less one), while Indigo was off to start a new life in Myanmar, where cell phones, emails and most websites were banned.

“I didn't have a phone or a way to contact anyone,” Indigo says. “Facebook wasn't a thing back then. I fell off the face of the planet when I was in Burma. It’s pretty isolated within itself.”

Indigo did return to Bangkok about a year later for a visit, and it was like nothing had changed between her and Rani, she says. They hung out together as usual, but when she went back to Myanmar, the two friends lost touch with each other.

After the tenth grade, Indigo's family moved to Poland, where Indigo graduated from high school and planned to attend college in the United States. Her uncle, who had attended Western Michigan University, told her Kalamazoo College would be a good fit, so she applied and was accepted.

“Kalamazoo College was perfect,” she says. “It was small. It’s a pretty diverse community. It offered all these classes I liked. I didn't have to choose my major right off the bat because I didn't know what I wanted to do.”

Rani's decision to attend Kalamazoo College resulted from a visit by a College representative who made a presentation at her school in Bangkok.

“My parents were okay with me applying to schools in Michigan only because I had family here, so they wouldn't be as worried if I was halfway across the world,” she says.

Unbeknownst to each other, Indigo and Rani, members of the class of 2015, arrived on the Kalamazoo College campus.

Rani arrived first for International Student Orientation. Then she went to Stetson Chapel for a talk by David Finkel, the summer reading author, who wrote the book, The Good Soldiers.

Sitting in one of the back rows, she saw Indigo walk into the chapel. “At first, I was really confused because there was someone who looked just liked Indigo,” she says. “After just a second, I said, 'That is Indigo.' I walked up to her and tapped her on the shoulder and said, 'Indigo.' She said, 'Rani.' We cried a little.” When the tears dried, she texted her mom, “Guess who's here?”

Indigo remembers that moment very well, too. “I had my back turned and I remember turning around and being so shocked,” she says. “It was totally unexpected. She looked the same as when we were in elementary school.”

The two can take you to the very spot where they reconnected after all those years—the last column on the left side of Stetson Chapel.

So they began renewing their friendship, reminiscing about their childhood in Thailand, laughing about the time Indigo's mother substituted in their class for a couple of weeks and they got into trouble because they talked a lot. Their classmates were upset, too, because Indigo's mother was stricter than their regular teacher.

Then there was that one big fight they had. Neither can remember exactly what it was about, but it was over the following day and they were friends once again. “Rani is one of the nicest people I've ever met,” says Indigo. “She's bubbly and happy all the time. We just had a lot of fun. We played a lot. The fight was about something really stupid.”

Together again, they began adjusting to college life and life in the United States. Indigo had been in the States
before, when her family visited relatives in Lansing, but it was Rani's first time in the country.

“The hardest thing about adjusting to life in the U.S. was living by myself without the sheltered roof and the prepared meals my parents spoiled me with growing up,” Rani says.

But having Indigo's family nearby helped with the transition. The family had relocated to Michigan from Poland not long after the girls began their K experience.

“Having Indigo here meant I had family to turn to when I needed them,” Rani says. “They were very welcoming, and I remember spending Easter and Thanksgiving with them when they moved here.”

For Indigo, being a 12-hour plane ride away from her parents before they moved to Michigan was hard, but having Rani nearby helped.

“It was very nice to have someone with a shared experience go to K with me, especially someone I am so close to,” she says. “Being an international student, sometimes I feel like I just don't fit in. A lot of times I don't get some of the cultural references and just can't relate, but Rani and I get each other. There's less of a cultural difference.”

Through their years at Kalamazoo College, Indigo and Rani haven't roomed together, but they are at each other's place all the time, they say.

They even share a major—psychology. Indigo earned a theatre arts minor and an environmental studies concentration, and Rani earned a second major in chemistry.

For extracurricular activities, both were active in K Desi, a cultural organization for South Asian students on campus. Rani was the president and Indigo the secretary. Indigo played on the ultimate Frisbee team and did a lot of backstage work in the theater. Both were active in the campus dance company, Frelon, a student-run organization which choreographs and presents a dance program each year.

When it was time for study abroad, the two friends went separate ways, Indigo back to Thailand, and Rani to Scotland.

Friends teased Indigo about returning to the country where she'd lived for six years, but this time she was in Chiang Mai instead of Bangkok, she says. “It was nice for me because it was almost like going home a little bit,” she says. “I got the time to get outside of my parents' bubble. I learned the language, and it was great.”

Rani chose Scotland because the program offered more freedom of choice in classes so she could take some psychology classes to add to her major. “I think Scotland is beautiful, and I always wanted to go to the United Kingdom,” she says.

Each did her Senior Individualized Project on a subject related to education. Indigo's project explored how theater can be used as an educational and developmental tool, based on interviews with people who work in theater with children. Rani's project was about inclusive education for children with learning disabilities, based on interviews at the Academy for Counselling and Education in Navi Mumbai, India.

After graduating last June, they again went in different directions.

Indigo's family has a tradition of taking a gap year after college, so she planned to travel and stay with different family members, including time with her father, who is teaching in Vientiane, Laos.

She may also start working on getting a teaching degree. “My parents are teachers, and they both love it,” she says. And she might just move back overseas, possibly Thailand.
Rani applied for Optional Practical Training (OPT), a program through the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, which allows international students to work for a year to get practical training in their fields.

“I want to go either into counseling or teaching,” she says. “I think it would be really cool if I could teach chemistry, someplace where I can make use of both my majors somehow.” After that year in OPT, Rani might consider graduate school.

“Eventually, I want to move back [to Thailand], but I don’t think I’m ready to move back yet,” she says.

Dr. Karyn Boatwright, associate professor of psychology, had both Indigo and Rani in class, and expects both will enter a field where they are helping children, adolescents, families or communities.

“They are both unique women with their diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but are also very similar,” she says. “Both are patient, nonjudgmental, authentic, earnest, altruistic, humble, achievement-oriented, warm, sensitive, politically intuitive and brilliant women with a desire to help others.”

Their time at Kalamazoo College was great for them and not just because of their renewed friendship.

“I feel like I’ve grown so much as a person,” says Indigo. “I learned a lot in the classes, but mostly I learned a lot about myself and who I am. I think I’ve become who I really am.”

For Rani, the College has allowed her the chance to get out of herself and to grow. “A lot of my psychology classes have taught me about authenticity and how to be myself,” she says. “I had a pretty sheltered life back in Thailand. Coming here, I’ve learned to maintain friendships.”

While the immediate future had Indigo and Rani going their separate ways, they do plan to stay in touch.

“Maybe I can convince her to come with me to Thailand,” says Indigo. “Today, with emails, Facebook and Snapchat, it’s easier to stay in touch. Even if we fall out of touch, we’ll still maintain our friendship.”

Dr. Boatwright was surprised when she heard Rani and Indigo’s remarkable story in her class. “Rarely do you hear this type of heartwarming Hallmark Movie story in real life,” she says.
Different Path

BY PHYLLIS ROSE

Shannon Milan ’16 and her husband, Jason
Sitting in her first class at Kalamazoo College two years ago, Shannon Milan was so nervous she couldn't breathe, probably like many of her classmates. “I thought somebody from admissions would pull me out of class to say, ‘We put your application in the wrong pile,’” she says. “I thought, ‘What am I doing here?’”

Shannon had many reasons to feel nervous. After all, she was 36 years old, worked full-time as owner and stylist at The Milan Style Shop in downtown Kalamazoo, and was a transfer student from Kalamazoo Valley Community College.

Her road to Kalamazoo College was definitely not the traditional one. In 1995, she graduated from Gull Lake High School (Richland, Mich.) and entered Michigan State University to study fashion merchandising or communications. She came home after a year. “It wasn’t the right time,” she says. “I probably should have listened to my mom when she said, ‘I think it’s going to be too big of a school for you,’ but I didn’t.”

She planned to transfer to Western Michigan University (WMU), but then heard about an apprenticeship program to become a hair stylist. “I talked to the owner of Tromblay Salon in downtown Kalamazoo,” she says. “He offered me a two-year apprenticeship program to learn the trade and the business. I thought, I’m going to go for it. College will always be there if I decide to go back.”

She considered attending Western part-time during the apprenticeship, but she didn’t. Finishing the apprenticeship, she worked for Tromblay for a while, moved to another salon and then she and her husband, Jason, opened their own salon in 2004. “We found a teeny little spot down by the Blue Dolphin,” she says. “It was only 800 square feet. It was just me and two other stylists and my husband working the front desk. He was going back to school at the time for an education degree. He finished and thought he would go and teach, but he fell in love with the business and it all started to work out.”

Several years later, a client told her about a building for sale on the Kalamazoo Mall across from Gazelle Sports. She resisted the idea initially, but then she and Jason looked at the site and loved it. So in 2008 they moved to that building, which had been known as The Style Shop since the 1940s.

“It was a wedding dress shop,” she says. “We’ve had a few people come in and say, ‘I remember when I bought my wedding dress here.’ We loved the character and history of the building.”

Things went well at the new salon, but then something happened which caused her to reconsider her bucket list. In 2012, her husband’s brother died at age 43 after being diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. “Going through that journey, you start to have those conversations—what would you do if you weren’t scared?” she says.

Shannon wished she’d finished her degree. That ship has sailed, she remembers thinking. “There was no way I could go back to school. I’ve been gone for so long from that environment.”

But Jason encouraged her to enroll at KVCC. “What is it going to hurt?” he told her. “If it goes badly, that’s fine. You haven’t lost anything.”

He’d been through something similar since he’d gone back to WMU to earn his elementary education degree after a 10-year hiatus from formal education. “It was challenging for me going back and being older,” he says.
“I talked with her about that.”
She registered for math and writing classes at KVCC, the two classes she was most nervous about, wanting to get them over with.

“I loved it,” she says. “I loved the classes. I loved the school. I did well. I was surprised at how well I was doing and how much I loved it.” She was surprised because in high school she had been an average student who really didn’t apply herself, she admits.

Her confidence got a big boost through the positive feedback of one KVCC professor in particular. “His class just gave me so much more confidence,” she says. “Even after taking those two classes in the summer, I was nervous about being in the classroom, and was so quiet and so reserved. When I’m at the salon I’m in my comfort zone. College was so out of my comfort zone.”

So her new life plan was to get her associate’s degree and transfer to Western to study communications. But one day at KVCC she noticed that Kalamazoo College was hosting a campus visit. She was interested but thought it wouldn’t work because of her age. Nevertheless, she signed up for the visit, thinking it would be a short, 10-minute meeting followed by a campus tour.

On campus she met Suzanne Lepley, senior associate director of admissions, and they just clicked, Shannon recalls. Lepley invited her to the Friday morning community reflection in Stetson Chapel, which that day was about campus athletics. There something happened that seemed like a sign that K was the right choice.

“A client of the salons was the golf coach at K, and he had just passed away,” she says. “I wasn’t even thinking about him. This student went up to speak about him. I woke up and remembered the connection. I even came home and said to Jason, ‘They talked about Steve. This feels like such a sign.’”

Lepley admits she was surprised when Shannon showed up for the college visit, not realizing she was a nontraditional student. “She surprised me all along in terms of her steadfast determination to have a Kalamazoo College education,” says Lepley.

Being nearly the same age, the two quickly developed a friendship. Lepley was quite honest with Shannon about what awaited her at K. “I’m sure at one point I said, ‘OK, sister, let’s be honest. Is this really what you want to do?’” she recalls. “And it was clear that it was what she wanted to do.”

Lepley arranged for Shannon to meet another nontraditional student who had graduated a couple of years earlier, and that student cautioned Shannon on how challenging it would be.

Undaunted, in 2013, Shannon applied and was accepted.

“Then, I’m sure like any 18 year old, when I got the acceptance letter in the mail, I was jumping up and down,” she says. “Still, I was really, really scared to accept.” But her husband and family encouraged her, emphasizing that fear wasn’t a good enough reason to turn down K.

Now, in her senior year, she’s reflecting on her K journey.

“To be honest, it’s 10 times harder than I thought it was going to be,” she says. “It’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done besides opening the business. Purchasing the building and everything seems like a piece of cake now.”

During her first term at K, she thought about quitting, not knowing if she could make it through three more years.
“It’s all-consuming,” she says of the academic load. “When I talk to other students, they say, ‘I worked until three in the morning.’ Not being 19 or 20, I can’t do that. I’m working full-time. I’m in bed by nine.” Time management helps her to deal with the academic load and her work at the salon.

“I have to be extremely organized, and once I get the syllabus I have to organize my time,” she says. “My family has been supportive. There were birthday parties and family get-togethers that I couldn’t attend.”

Her college self is so unlike its high school counterpart, to whom a social life had been much more important. “I’ve now turned into this neurotic, type-A student who wants to get all A’s and graduate with honors,” she says.

During the school year, she gets up at 5:30 a.m. and works on homework. Then, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, she attends classes, comes home for lunch and then does more homework. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, she works at the salon from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. “Saturday and Sunday are homework days,” she says. “I’m locked in an office. That’s it. It’s like I jump in the water and hold my breath, and 10 weeks later I come out.”

She’s never expected that professors would cut her some slack because she works full-time. In fact, she doesn’t usually tell them about her situation.

“If the expectation is for the students to have a lab from six to eight, then I have a lab from six to eight,” she says. “I have to figure it out. I never wanted to bring attention to it.”

Her classmates, at first, think she’s a teacher’s assistant. Once they find out she’s a business owner working full-time they are very supportive.

Of course, technology is a bigger part of the educational experience today than it was in her high school years, which often led to calls to her niece and nephew to ask about certain technological terms such as “Google.docs.” “But now I feel comfortable enough with the students to say, ‘OK, you guys, you are going to have to help me out,’” she says. “They’ve been really great.”

Shannon is one of the few students in class taking notes with paper and pencil, highlighting things in her textbooks while most of her much younger classmates are doing everything electronically.

Besides her husband, family and fellow students, Shannon credits the staff and her clients at the salon for making it possible for her to do what she’s doing. “We have such a great staff,” she says. “I feel so fortunate. If it weren’t for the salon and the business right now, I wouldn’t be in this position where I could step back and focus on school and
have this opportunity later in life to make a career change."

Her clients have adapted to her schedule, which has been dramatically reshaped by her school commitments. Some clients she’s had for nearly 20 years. “And all my clients have been really supportive,” she says. “They are always asking, ‘Have you had your exams yet? Did you get your grades back? I’m sure she got all A’s!’ It’s been fun for them to go on this journey with me.”

But more has changed than just her schedule. “I used to always think I was so socially aware and was involved in a lot of things in the city, but K has opened me up on a much deeper level than that,” she says. “It has awakened passions in me that I didn’t even know that I had.”

Her K learning experience has opened her eyes to the possibility of working with children who face socio-economic challenges, she says. That may lead to a master's degree and a career change after graduation. She’s considering a Master of Arts degree in social work at Western or another university.

With a psychology major, she’s also looking at some graduate programs for school psychologists. “Never in a million years did I think I would be sitting here at 38 saying, ‘Yes, I’m looking at master’s programs,’” she says. “I had a SIP [Senior Individualized Project] meeting with my professor yesterday. Afterwards, she said, ‘Just go get your Ph.D.’ I didn’t even think I was going to be able to get my bachelor’s.”

No matter what happens after graduation, the salon will always be part of her life. “Jason and I will always keep the business down here,” she says. “We believe really strongly in that. We are definitely committed to keeping the business here in Kalamazoo.”

Thinking about Shannon's approaching graduation in June, Jason says, “It will be a great day. I’ll be so full of pride. She’s put so much time into it with the business, the school and the challenges.”

Surreal is how Shannon describes the fact that she’s a senior and anticipating graduation. “It’s been the best thing I’ve ever done, the hardest but still the best thing I’ve ever done,” she says.
Transfer and nontraditional students make up only a small percentage of Kalamazoo College’s student body, but they make important contributions to learning on campus.

The College actively recruits transfer students mainly from honors programs at community colleges around the state, says Suzanne Lepley, senior associate director of admissions. Because of an agreement with four-year institutions, she cannot recruit their students, but can work with them if they contact Kalamazoo College first.

To recruit students K attends college fairs at community colleges such as KVCC, Washtenaw Community College, Lansing Community College and Northwestern Michigan College, she says. The College receives about 70 applications each year from transfer students.

According to Lepley, the first challenge for transfer students is determining which courses on their college transcripts will count for credit at K.

“We have in recent years moved to a more transfer-friendly, transparent program. For some colleges, we have a course equivalency guide online, which is a huge step for a liberal arts college,” Lepley says. “A student from the University of Michigan (U-M) can look online and say, ‘OK this class at U-M transfers as this equivalent at Kalamazoo College.’ That program has been in existence for three years, and it represents a significant undertaking on the part of the admission office and the registrar’s office.”

Lepley advises students considering a transfer to think about the changes and challenges. “They are going to have to think about the emotional challenges of moving from a commuter campus to an on-campus, thriving student population,” she says. “We are a community of learners. We are a different mentality—less ‘I’m-here-to-take-classes-and-go-home’ and more ‘this-is-my-home-and-part-of-my-home-is-taking-classes.’”

The number of nontraditional students the age of Shannon Milan is even fewer than that of transfer students, numbering maybe three in recent memory, according to Lepley.

Lepley advises these students to think long and hard about whether K is the right choice and then to connect with the admission office. “I will always be honest with people about what challenges they have as nontraditional students at K,” she says. “I encourage them to do a lot of self-reflecting about whether this is the right step and right timing for them.”

Nontraditional students are important in the student body because traditional students can learn so much from their perseverance and life experiences, Lepley adds.

“We had another nontraditional student, and he would sit in class and people had no idea he was a nontraditional student,” she says. “He looked young and just blended right in. Then he opens his mouth and people realize he has a young child, a full-time, 40-hour-a-week job. You could see the students’ eyes opening up like, ‘Oh my gosh, this guy is doing all that I’m doing and he has a family and a full-time job!’”

Lepley values the presence of nontraditional students. For example, “Shannon Milan has the most genuine, take-it-as-it-comes attitude,” she says. “I wanted people on our campus to be influenced by her because she’s such a phenomenal human being.”
Students often attest to the influence teachers have had on their lives, whether it’s getting them on the right track, introducing them to new subject matter or giving them confidence. Sometimes it happens the other way around. For Kalamazoo College’s Professor Emeritus of Music Lawrence R. Smith, Ph.D., a student changed his life, setting him on a course to a secondary and a retirement career he had never imagined.

That student, Nancy Stevens ’83, was the only blind student Smith ever had in class. Their relationship changed their lives in ways neither anticipated.

Born blind, Stevens had never let that condition stand in her way, thanks to her parents, Ron and Eleanor Stevens. “When I was growing up, my family encouraged me to try whatever I wanted to try,” she says. “I’m very lucky in that regard. They didn’t say you can’t climb a tree or ride a bike.”

When her sister outgrew her bike, it was handed down to Nancy, who, with her dad’s help, painted it yellow. When she wanted to ride her bike to school, her parents bought a tandem bike for her and her younger sister.

In school, she had an itinerant teacher who worked with her and her teachers. They would order her braille books or books on tape. Teachers or other students would read tests to her. She took notes with a braille writer or a slate and stylus.

“The teachers were quite accommodating all through school,” she says. “If I needed extra help when I didn’t understand math the way it was being presented, I would work with a teacher after school.”

As graduation from Portage (Mich.) Northern High School approached, her parents encouraged her to apply at Kalamazoo College. While she didn’t think she was smart enough for K, she wrote her essay, toured the campus, applied and was accepted.

The small classes, foreign study component and the off-campus internships offered at K appealed to her.

She wasn’t sure about her major, but she knew it would not be music. “That’s kind of what blind people are expected to go into,” she says. “[People think] you’re blind, you must be a good musician.”

Then she took Dr. Smith’s music history class and her thinking changed. “He played Bach’s ‘Brandenburg Concerto’ and I thought, I have to learn more about this stuff,” she says.

By the time Stevens enrolled in his music history class, Smith had been teaching for 20 years. But he had some concerns about how to help Stevens...
make the most of the class.

“I didn’t follow a textbook all the way through the course,” he says. “I built the course around a choice of scores, and I wondered how she was going to have access to those things. I thought at least I could learn enough of how braille works that I could do little things—handouts that you do in a class weekly and quizzes and things like that that I could do for her in braille.”

Smith eventually connected with the country’s braille music expert, Bettye Krolick, and began a correspondence course to get certified as a braille music transcriber.

Braille music is significantly different from print music, he says. Print music is graphic with staffs, notes and other symbols, while braille music is narrative. The transcriber has to write not only the note names, but the values, key signatures and performance directions.

Blind musicians read the braille music transcription and then memorize it so they can play the music, Smith says. For example, pianists read a measure in the right hand and then play it to help them memorize it. Then they play the left hand and then put the two together, measure by measure and phrase by phrase. “The term for that is ‘assembling’ it,” he says. “They assemble the music in their heads.”

When Stevens was in his class, Smith was just beginning to learn braille, and even though she read braille, she did not know braille music. So they began collaborating.

“When he started working on his braille skills, he told me to turn in my journals in braille, in order to give him practice reading braille,” she says.

He would read her journals and then provide her with feedback and also a list of words she needed to learn to spell, such as “Baroque,” words she had heard in her books-on-tape but never had needed to spell. In return, she would proofread his braille assignments before he sent them in for his correspondence course.

Stevens was amazed with Dr. Smith’s desire and persistence. “I had never had a teacher or a professor say they wanted to learn braille,” she says. “I thought this is pretty amazing. He wasn’t just saying it. He invested a lot of his time in addition to teaching all of his classes. This was extra.”

Smith brailled music pieces for her so she could perform with groups on campus, including the summer he directed a brass ensemble in a performance of “Fanfare for the Common Man.”

“He brailled out the percussion part, and I got to play the gong,” she says. “I always wanted to play percussion in something. I got to do that. He gave me a lot of opportunities to participate in things that I might not necessarily have done otherwise.”

Smith also brailled the recorder pieces she performed for her senior recital and the music for the children’s choir she directed for that recital. “It was a fabulous experience putting the recital together,” she says.

Her experiences in Dr. Smith’s class, the discovery of how much she loved music, and her work with children at a children’s home in Indiana led Stevens to declare a music education major.
But when she did her student teaching, she found she didn’t like the large class sizes of 30 or more students. “It wasn’t the same experience I had had working with the kids at the children’s home where I got to know each student a little better,” she says.

So after leaving K, Stevens went to Colorado to become a ski bum for a while, she says. Then she worked at a community school, teaching beginning guitar and German to small groups of adults. She also started a motivational speaking and disability awareness training business, where she often used music in her presentations.

Athletics also played an important part of her life after K. She came from an active family of cross country skiers, and when she was in high school she started downhill skiing in Colorado.

She connected with someone who was starting a competition program for people with disabilities. That led her to become a downhill ski racer, and she competed for four years as a team alternate. She also raced with a cross-country ski team for six years.

She competed in the Paralympic Games in Nagano, Japan. She also competed at the cross country skiing worlds in Norway and Sweden. “That was pretty exciting to do that,” she says. “While I was racing, I also helped teach clinics to help people guide skiers.”

When she was 40, Stevens began competing in triathlons, eventually participating in events around the world. She earned three gold medals in the International Triathlon World Championships in the visually impaired division. She also organized two Tri-It Triathlon Camps for blind athletes and sighted guides.

“I got a grant from the Women’s Triathlon Commission to show other women how to guide and to teach more women who are blind how to do triathlons,” she says. “Organizing and teaching that camp was probably one of my favorite things I ever did. When I get to teach people, it’s a way for me to give back.”

Now retired at age 54, she continues to teach music, to ski and bike, and to give motivational speeches.

Meanwhile Smith was continuing his work with braille music transcription.

After his retirement in 1996 he asked for more transcription assignments from the Library of Congress and attended conferences of the National Braille Association (NBA).

He eventually was named to the NBA music braille committee, later becoming chairperson of the committee and then president of the NBA for two years. He also was appointed to the music braille committee of the Braille Authority of North America (BANA), the body that decides about the braille code for the United States and Canada, he says.

Because of his expertise, Smith, now 83, has become what he calls the “braille music guru for our country.” He’s the one who answers the questions posted on the NBA’s website under the “Ask an Expert” link.

Smith continues to transcribe music for blind readers through the Library of Congress. Because of his work with braille transcription, he recently received the lifetime achievement award from the National Braille Association.

Smith and Stevens have kept in touch periodically over the years. When the NBA was having a conference in Colorado Springs, Smith invited Stevens to come and speak, giving the two a chance to reconnect.

“For quite a while, her parents lived in Kalamazoo, and when she came to see them, she’d drop into my office and we’d have a little chat,” says Smith. “She’d call me when she was excited about something.”

Of Smith’s lifetime achievement award, Stevens says, “In the braille-reading community, we are all very lucky
that he decided to have this as a second career. We really appreciate all of his efforts over the years to learn braille music.”

GERMANY AND SKIING: NOT IMPOSSIBLE!

Kalamazoo College’s foreign study program was a key attraction for Nancy Stevens ’83 when she was applying to colleges. Her older sisters had toured Europe following their high school graduations, so Stevens thought it would be neat to study overseas. She had to fight for the opportunity.

At the beginning of her sophomore year, she went to the foreign study office to let them know she was starting a German language class in preparation for going to Germany. “Impossible! You can’t do it,” was the response.

“Yes, I can,” she said. Then, every month she returned to the office to show them her grades in her German class.

Finally, they began to relent, saying they would need to find a family with a blind person. Eventually, they located a family in Hannover, Germany, where the father was blind.

After being given permission to go, Stevens was told she couldn’t travel while in Germany. “Are you going to stop me?” she recalls saying. “Because I’ve already bought a Eurail pass.”

And off she went to Germany to study, travel and ski.

“It was great,” she says. “My host family lived about 10 minutes from the bus that went to the university. I learned how to get there.” They taught her where the sidewalks were, how to catch the bus and the location of the train station. Her language skills were good, and she could ask for help when needed.

Then came the next roadblock. “I wanted to go skiing, but the director of the program said, ‘We’re not letting you go skiing,’” says Stevens. “I just waited until I was traveling and then I went skiing.”

She traveled with other students in the program, including her friend, Cheryl. But one time Cheryl wanted to go to Spain while Stevens wanted to go skiing in Austria. No problem, Stevens went to Austria on her own.

Since then, athletic competitions have taken Stevens all over the world, including Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and even back to Germany. In 2007, she went to the world championships for Olympic distance triathlon in Hamburg, Germany. Her host family from Hannover traveled to Hamburg to visit with her.
From Benefactor to “Father”

Gerhard Fuerst, who attended Kalamazoo College during the 1958-59 academic year, sorts through piles of clippings and photographs stacked high in front of him. There's more, he says. Much more. Fuerst lives a short five-minute walk from campus, in the house on Academy Street that he inherited from the man he considers a second father, and the nooks and crannies of the house, from attic to basement, burst with the memories of the man who lived there before him: Knox W. Wicks '29.

“This is a story of incredible coincidences,” Fuerst says. “It is a story of major miracles.”

The two men met in Dinkelsbühl, Germany, in 1956. Fuerst, his then-dark hair slicked back in glossy waves, stood on the doorstep of a historic hotel, on break between helping tourists check in and check out, carrying luggage and directing them to points of interest nearby. He had a summer job working as a bellhop at the hotel, hired for his excellent English language skills. He watched as two American tourists pulled up in a Mercedes-Benz limousine.

“Knox Wicks was traveling the world with his longtime friend, George Monroe. The two of them had been in West Berlin waiting for a visa to travel to Russia,” Fuerst says. “The visa never came. So instead they decided to hire a car and driver to travel through the western parts of Europe.”
Fuerst laughs at the memory. Monroe stayed in the room, inconvenienced by travel discomfort, while Wicks had a beer and sat on the front steps of the old hotel, talking to Fuerst. They struck up an instant friendship. Fuerst shared with Knox that he was about to graduate from secondary school in Dinkelsbühl with an Abitur degree. Wicks shared with Fuerst that he was a graduate of an excellent school in faraway Kalamazoo, Michigan, and that it was called Kalamazoo College.

When Fuerst was done working for the day, he gave the two American tourists a tour of the historical sites in Dinkelsbühl. He heard more stories about the excellent school in Kalamazoo, and he was intrigued. Wicks gradually became interested in the idea of bringing the bright young bellhop to the United States. During subsequent months, after Wicks had returned to the United States, he and Fuerst kept up a fairly regular correspondence, and Wicks eventually sent Fuerst an invitation to attend Kalamazoo College as a student.

“I showed the letter at the American Consulate in Munich to apply for a student visa,” Fuerst says. He was informed that his desire to simultaneously go to school and hold a job in the U.S. made him ineligible for a student visa. Fuerst was not so easily deterred, and he learned that he could request an immigration visa instead.

“I had to do a bit of explaining to my family when a stack of papers arrived at home from the consulate. ‘Just inquiring,’ I said. My godfather even hired a
detective agency to find out who this man Knox Wicks was, and he found him to be an honorable man.”

Fuerst immigrated to the United States in May 1958, with the blessing of his family as long as he agreed to return within two years. It was a condition he would eventually fail to fulfill. By fall of that year, Fuerst was registered as a student at Kalamazoo College.

Fuerst was 22 years old when he first stepped onto K’s campus, but he was enrolled as a freshman. Other freshman, learning his age, pleaded with Fuerst to buy them beer and to throw beer parties where he lived, with the Wicks family, on Academy Street.

Students then were as full of fun and pranks, Fuerst recalls, as in any other era. “I was a bit of a scoundrel,” Fuerst smiles. “I looked like a hippy compared to other male students, most of whom wore butch haircuts. Nelda Balch liked my long hair. I didn't have to wear a wig for a part in one of her plays. And I got my first car. Some students lifted it up on logs and moved it onto the Quad, and I got a ticket for illegal parking.”

Fuerst’s bonds of friendship with Knox Wicks grew stronger during the time he resided with the Wicks family. He learned more about his mentor, whose father, Howard Wicks, operated a creamery in the small town of Hopkins, located at the halfway point between Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. The Wicks family eventually moved to Kalamazoo, where Knox’s father in due course became a part owner of the Kalamazoo Creamery Company. Wicks' mother’s lineage reached back to the Knox family of Knox Gelatin fame.

At Kalamazoo College Wicks majored in economics and was especially known for his athletic prowess. He was named to the all-MIAA football team and participated in shotput and javelin events on the track team. He became vice president and general manager of the Kalamazoo Creamery Company, but later assumed ownership of the Wicks Insurance Agency, previously owned by a paternal uncle, where he would work until his retirement. He was a charter member and first president of the Kalamazoo Optimist Club, and was a member, too, of many professional and business organizations. He served in the Pacific during World War II. In profound gratitude for the assistance Wicks provided him, Fuerst later established a sports scholarship, the Knox W. Wicks Memorial Fund, at Kalamazoo College.

“Knox was a lifelong bachelor,” Fuerst says. “But he certainly had his share of girlfriends,” he adds. “He was a very eligible bachelor, a great dancer, and so the ladies were drawn to him. When I was married in December 1966, and when Marianne and I had our four children—three daughters and a son—Knox was like a father to us and a grandfather to our kids. We became his family.”

The stories that compose his lifelong bond with Knox Wicks, Fuerst says, could fill a book. He sorts through his stack of clippings, photographs and notes, and sets aside new stacks that he is in the process of donating to local libraries in Hopkins, in Martin (where Wicks' mother's family lived) and in Plainwell. At the many turns in Fuerst's life, Wicks often played a guiding role.
“After my first year at K, I continued my studies at the University of Michigan,” Fuerst says. “Back then, my focus was on civil engineering. I was vacationing with Knox at Boyne Mountain when I broke my neck in a pool. My neck injury and the time I spent in rehab prevented the movement required in engineering so I had to leave that field.”

Instead Fuerst followed a different interest he shared with Wicks—political science—at a different school, Western Michigan University (WMU). He also continued to develop his skills in languages. And he decided that he could put his interests to practical use by becoming a teacher.

“I'd done some teaching at K and in Erlangen in Germany,” Fuerst says. “So I convinced my father in Germany that I could become a teacher. Both of my grandfathers were teachers.”

In 1965, Fuerst added a teaching certificate to his WMU bachelor's degree in political science and social sciences. He eventually earned a master's degree in international and area studies from WMU. He also completed special course work at the Technical University of Munich (Germany), la Universidad Autonoma de Mexico, the University of Oxford (England), the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Germany), the University of Nairobi (Kenya), St. Mary's College (Notre Dame, Indiana) and Harvard University.

Unsurprisingly, Fuerst says, “When I applied for teaching jobs, I was told I was overqualified.”

Schools overcame that initial reservation, and students benefited. Fuerst had found his bliss in teaching. He taught for nearly 38 years at the junior and senior high school levels in the Kalamazoo Public Schools. For 19 years, he taught American government, American and world history, world geography and humanities at Kalamazoo Central High School. He has taught adult education courses and been a part-time instructor and adjunct professor at WMU.
The bellhop days
Gerhard Fuerst
“Even when I was teaching social studies, I stressed correct grammar and spelling,” Fuerst says. “At one of my junior high school classes, my students wrote a booklet, collecting essays and poems, to submit to a competition sponsored by the Freedom Foundation in Philadelphia. We were past the deadline, so I drove from Kalamazoo to Philadelphia to hand deliver the booklet.”

It was too late, Fuerst was told by officials at the Freedom Foundation. He had taken time and great care with his students to put the booklet together. He wanted his students to express their own opinions, not just memorize facts and figures. He managed to convince the foundation to accept the booklet. It won the George Washington Honor Medal for a student publication.

“The most important lesson I wanted my students to learn was about citizenship,” Fuerst says. “Get involved. Do community service, whether it is raking a neighbor's leaves or shopping for the elderly. I gave extra credit for students who registered to vote.”

Fuerst is also a great believer in collaboration, the kind that happens in liberal arts education. Many of his projects brought together art teachers to work with English teachers, math teachers to work with language teachers.

“My father used to say, 'Gerhard, stay focused!'” he says. “You have too many interests!” But when students are just beginning, I tell them not to focus too early. Too many people focus on one thing and end up getting bored. Learn as widely and as broadly as possible!”

Following his own advice, Fuerst has continued to spend much of his life traveling the world. He has visited more than 45 countries across five continents, and returned to Europe more than 30 times, pursuing one new interest after another.

“When I retired, I didn't want to just sit around watching TV,” he says. “My time is not over!”

A revived interest in mosaics took Fuerst to Ravenna, Italy, to view the work of well-known mosaic artists showing their work there. His host was the great American mosaic artist Jerry Carter of Silver Spring, Maryland.

Fuerst writes poetry in English as well as in German. A poetry collection was published late last year. He takes ceramics classes at the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, an avocation which fascinates him.

“This is what I’m doing, these many crazy things,” Fuerst smiles. “That's why I've started working on Knox Wicks' archives. He gave me an education here, in Kalamazoo. He helped me come to the United States. He gave my family his home. Now, most deservedly, I want to honor his memory.”

Knox Wicks was a lonely man in his last years, Fuerst says. With no family of his own, he called Fuerst son. The two traveled to Germany together at one point so that Wicks could meet his foster son's family there.

“My parents accepted him as my guardian in America,” Fuerst acknowledges. He and his wife Marianne cared for Wicks when the elderly man grew severely ill and was incapacitated by emphysema.

The former bellhop and the tourist were now surrogate son and second father in the latter's final days. Wicks died at age 69, with Fuerst by his side. So many of his adventures, Fuerst says, were made possible by the generosity and kindness of that American tourist who opened up his home. “Wicks represented the very best,” says Fuerst, “of this most hospitable and welcoming of countries!”
n an early fall morning the intersection of Kercheval Avenue and Parker Street in West Detroit slowly warms with dawn's light. Amidst the quiet, a group of people gathers outside a red brick storefront. Behind its glass windows, Lisa Ludwinski ’06 bakes delectable concoctions in the gleaming kitchen of her new bakery, Sister Pie.

In the week leading up to Thanksgiving, eager customers line up for one of Ludwinski’s culinary creations. It’s been three years since she returned to her parents’ kitchen in Milford, Mich., to cook up her pie plans in earnest. At that time Ludwinski produced pie, her favorite
dessert, in a home kitchen because of Michigan’s cottage food law, which allows for individuals to sell their wares as long as they do so directly to the customer. As her menu of pies grew from a handful to many, so too did her vision of a delicious and conscientious business.

Now, after winning the prestigious Hatch Detroit award for entrepreneurs, launching (and participating in) a fund-raising 24-hour dance-a-thon, and putting in countless hours, Ludwinski is selling out her pies only a few hours after opening each morning. Her rise to success in the food industry began in New York City, where she moved after her graduation from Kalamazoo College to pursue a career in theater.

“I hadn't really been in a situation where I had to cook for myself,” she remembers. “I was getting really excited
about food in general, and started doing a comedy cooking blog/video series.” Funny Side Up, her cooking blog, married her long-standing passion for theater with her growing interest in cuisine. She also measured, mixed and studied in the kitchens of some famous New York eateries, like Momofuku Milk Bar.

Cooking on the cutthroat and already inundated East Coast turned Ludwinski’s mind to the possibilities of baking closer to home. “I began thinking about Detroit a lot,” she says. “I was excited about what I could potentially do here.” She felt inspired by the local food markets, such as Avalon International Breads, as well as the cornucopia of Michigan harvests. Ludwinski is quick to point out that Michigan has the second highest amount of variety in crops, following California.

“Pie is the best way to highlight the agricultural diversity of the state,” she explains. Ludwinski hopes to re-capture the humble pastry’s role in Michigan’s farming history as a dual treat (main course and dessert) at dinner. Her definition of pie is a sweet and savory meal using whatever ingredients are in season and on hand. “We want to celebrate and respect the people who work hard all year to make these ingredients,” she says.

The proof is in the pie. Customers are applauding the range of flavors and goods that Sister Pie produces. Favorites include buckwheat chocolate chip cookies, salted maple pie and the bakery’s signature savory hand pies, featuring seasonal produce. One week, the savory, flaky delicacies might hold sweet potatoes, black beans and feta, while the following week could present a delicious blend of broccoli, cheddar and buckwheat groats.

If some of these ingredients sound unexpected, then Ludwinski is accomplishing one of her Sister Pie objectives.
“I am trying to challenge myself and stay inspired and creative,” she says of her approach to baking. “I want to take something people love and take risks with it.”

These risks have yielded great rewards, such as the popular peanut butter paprika cookie. “My dad had the idea for it,” Ludwinski remembers. “We needed a peanut butter cookie and he jokingly texted, ‘How about paprika?’ I responded, ‘The paprika is going in.’ People love them: the spice makes it unique but doesn’t overwhelm.”

Like many K grads, Ludwinski takes the spirit of experimentation and execution seriously. “I think you fall into it when you are actively seeking and open to everything around you.” She is constantly on the lookout for innovative flavors, seasonal inspirations and fresh takes on classic recipes.

Ludwinski is working to foster an environment that delights customers, and is equally conscious of her staff. Especially important to her is a lesson she learned at Kalamazoo College. “Because of so many historical and social situations a lot of women are trained not to have confidence, and I’m hoping I can create a space where our employees have ownership and confidence,” Ludwinski says. She credits theatre arts professor Karen Berthel for making her a feminist. “I was in a play she directed,” Ludwinski recalls, “and I became a more woman-centered person. That was for sure something I wanted to build when I was creating Sister Pie.”

Indeed, the employees of Sister Pie (the majority of whom are women, because, as Ludwinski notes, “we attract more female applicants”) are having a good time, as evidenced by the prolific and celebrated videos of staff dancing and singing in the Sister Pie kitchen. Since the beginning, Ludwinski has emphasized that a business would not be a successful one unless the staff enjoyed themselves, felt challenged and worked hard.

“It was always exciting to think I could create a place where people are excited to work. I am trying my best to serve my employees and make sure we have a very strong work ethic, a strong sense of hustle—working hard to get much done in a day and do it with integrity.”

On the surface, it might not seem that Ludwinski’s background in theater would necessarily aid in her present gastronomic pursuits. But she sees a clear connection.

“In theater you make things and deliver them to people, and it’s the same in business. At K, I learned I am an ideas woman. For my SIP [Senior Individualized Project], I created all the elements for a play, from the costumes to the sound. This is Sister Pie—having to manage a bunch of parts to create one vision.”

While piecrust will always create her foundation, Ludwinski hopes to grow her business in a few different directions. Teaching cooking classes, writing a cookbook and creating more staff positions with benefits and good salaries top her to-do list. Above all, she wants to keep the pie alive.

“I want to work on making this corner the best corner in Detroit,” she says.

From her employment standards to her ingredient sourcing and use, Ludwinski displays K’s commitment to excellence, innovation and civic engagement. This inspiring woman has baked K’s qualities into all her pastry.

“Kalamazoo College completely changed my whole self,” Ludwinski says. “I knew that the business had to have some aspect of social impact. That is a strong part of the fabric of our education—how do we play a role in the world to make it a better place? That stayed in the back of my mind; I needed to do something working toward that.”
The oldest of six children, Jorge G. Gonzalez, Kalamazoo College’s 18th president, was born in Monterrey, Mexico, where he lived for most of his youth, not counting his short residencies in Palo Alto and East Lansing while his father was attending graduate school at Stanford and Michigan State University, respectively.

As a boy growing up in Mexico, Gonzalez saw the poverty that characterized portions of his homeland, and his youthful vocational dream was to learn the causes of that poverty and to help make changes to ameliorate it.

“I felt I needed to understand economics,” he says. “So my plan was to earn a Ph.D. in that field and then begin a career in public service. Becoming a politician I thought would be the most effective way to make the changes that would reduce and eliminate poverty.”

Toward that end Gonzalez earned his bachelor’s degree from the Monterrey Institute of Technology (ITESM), graduating first among the school’s economics class in 1984. His undergraduate junior year was seminal because of study abroad, an experience he describes as “life changing.” So epiphany number one came right out of a K-Plan counterpart, with a U.S. foreign study at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, a kind of transnational mirror to the foreign study program at the Midwestern liberal arts
college he'd be called to lead some 30 years later.

“International study matters because it awakens and strengthens inquiry and empathy,” Gonzalez says. “On study abroad everything you’ve assumed becomes open to question. I learned more about the world, and I learned more about Mexico from studying outside of Mexico. I also came to admire and respect Midwestern values, particularly the kindness I experienced.”

According to Gonzalez, by living in a new culture one discovers that different ways of behaving represent the broad diversity of human potentialities, and that realization is fertile ground for the growth of empathy. “Strange” morphs to “different,” and the concept of our human family expands. “You learn, for example,” explains Gonzalez, “that a fine and robust intelligence will occasionally struggle with fluency and accent. You learn that everyone in fact has an accent. And you come to realize and appreciate the extraordinary courage of immigrants.”

Gonzalez' second epiphany would occur a few years later when he was in graduate school.

“I considered a doctorate in economics essential to my prospective career in Mexican politics,” he says. He earned his master’s degree and Ph.D. from Michigan State University in the fields of international economics, political economy and development. (At MSU he also met his future wife, K alumna Suzie (Martin) Gonzalez ’83, a fellow MSU graduate student at work on her doctorate in educational psychology. More on that story to follow.)

In the fourth year of his Ph.D. program Gonzalez was asked to teach an undergraduate class. He initially resisted, preferring to concentrate entirely on his own studies and research. But the additional income would come in handy, “so I eventually agreed,” he says. “From the first day I fell in love with working with students, and I discovered I cared as deeply about teaching as I did about research. It was a ‘Eureka! This-is-who-I-am!’ moment, and I knew I needed to give the idea of becoming a professor a chance.”
For the 21 years after he completed his Ph.D. (1989) Gonzalez “had the time of my life” teaching at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

“Economists talk about a multiplier effect,” he says. “A professor can affect change in society through each student he teaches.” Fundamental to that effect, though, is the liberal arts. The startling accomplishments (and capacity) of humankind is better reflected in diverse disciplines as well as multiple cultures. “For that reason a liberal arts learning experience with international and multicultural components constitutes an educational power combination unlike any other,” adds Gonzalez. “And that power is further multiplied with every experiential opportunity that allows students to engage with the world and draw upon and apply their liberal arts learning.”

At Trinity, Gonzalez organized and helped develop many such opportunities, including: summer travel-study programs related to economics coursework in Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg; summer student internships in Madrid, Spain; a travel-study program in Vietnam; and a partnership between the Tec de Monterrey (Mexico) and Trinity University. “If my class is focused on the economics of the European Union, how better to augment the classroom than with experiences in the countries themselves,” says Gonzalez.

He also helped create a “Languages Across the Curriculum” program in which courses are taught in the language most germane to the content. A course about the French Revolution, for example, is taught in French; one on Latin American economics in Spanish.

Given his success in the classroom and with experiential “multipliers,” it’s not surprising Trinity University encouraged Gonzalez to explore his potential for higher educational administration. He was awarded a prestigious American Council on Education (ACE) fellowship and spent the 2007-08 academic year observing and participating in various administrative roles at Pomona College (Claremont, Calif.). During that year he observed and learned from administrators at some 30 other colleges and universities throughout the country.

He returned to Trinity as an educational hybrid, one foot in the classroom, the other in administration.
“I continued teaching a reduced load of economics classes and also served as special assistant to the president,” says Gonzalez. “Frankly, I was torn. I loved the classroom, but I also saw the multiplier effect of administration. A professor can help make change through the students in his classes; an administrator undertakes that potential through every student in the institution.”

In 2010 he left Trinity for Occidental College (Los Angeles, Calif.). There he planted both feet solidly in the administrative sphere as Occidental’s vice president for academic affairs and dean of the college. Well, sort of solidly. Gonzalez spent a portion of last winter break—just prior to the January 2016 announcement of his presidency at K—traveling in Japan on an educational seminar with Occidental students. There’s still a lot of teacher in the administrator.

“I love Occidental for the same reasons I love K,” he says. “Both institutions take strong stands for the liberal arts combined with experiential applications, and both are committed to social justice learning and leadership, in the classroom and in the community.”

SUPERIOR VALUE; CRITICAL CHALLENGE

According to Gonalez, the power combination of liberal arts and experiential education is the most effective way to “enrich a life.” Part of that enrichment has to do with career preparation (or, more accurately, careers preparation). And, arguably, the more important part has to do with the cultivation of the soul—what Ralph Waldo Emerson (a visiting lecturer at K) defined as the “vast background of our being.” Not a function or a faculty, he wrote, “but a light” (lux esto). Emerson believed the “vast background” was the essential “germ of intellectual growth. Those who are capable of humility, of justice, of love, of aspiration, are already on a platform that commands the sciences and arts, speech and poetry, action and grace.” Similarly, contemporary writer and thinker Marilynne Robinson associates the soul with “the dignity of a human life and of the unutterable gravity of human action and experience.”

What do the liberal arts have to do with that? The answer may be ineffable, but it certainly has to do with balance, with broad continual study, and with living well in each moment. “The way you look at a painting is a critical skill applicable to many different situations in a career and a life,” says Gonzalez. “So the art history class is indispensable to the engineer or accountant.

“An engineer with the time to visit the Prado’s Goya exhibition will achieve a joy that would otherwise be absent from her life,” he adds. “The same goes for the accountant who sees ‘Horus in Roman Military Costume’ in the British Museum. He can also ponder the ethics and justice of artifacts that appear in permanent
collections other than those of the artifact's country of origin."

And who's to say the engineer and accountant will be in those jobs five or 10 years after their life-enriching museum visits? “Most students today will retire from a profession other than their first,” says Gonzalez. “Because the liberal arts develop analytical skills, critical thinking and communication so effectively, a liberal arts education is the best preparation for one's first and last professions, and everything in between. That is an extraordinary value over time.”

Making evident that superior value to prospective students and families—especially students who will be the first in their families to attend college, and low- to middle-income families for whom college represents a challenging financial investment—is critical to a healthy future for liberal arts colleges like K. “We have to be very explicit about how the education we provide prepares for an enriched life, only one element of which (but a very important element) is employment and employment transitions,” says Gonzalez.

And effective communication is not enough. “We must be sure that we are accessible to a wide range of students from a variety of educational and financial backgrounds.”

**TRANSNATIONAL MIRROR AND KALAMAZOO CONNECTIONS**

“I feel that my life up to now has been preparation to be president of Kalamazoo College,” says Gonzalez. And he views the office not so much an end but rather an opportunity to do what the role allows: continue the K community's stand for the liberal arts and the multiplier effect of experiential programs like study abroad, career internships, the Senior Individualized Project, and social justice and civic engagement leadership development. Such advancement, missionary work on behalf of the K-Plan, is what Gonzalez relishes.

One of the most important milestones in his life preparation for the presidency of K turns out to be the choice of his life partner. “Marrying Suzie has given me a three-decade familiarity with the College,” he says. “She embodies the values of K and the K-Plan.”

“Suzie” is Suzanne (Martin) Gonzalez '83. Their lives before they met mirror one another. On some occasions when Jorge's family was living in the United States while his father attended American universities, Suzie's family was living in Mexico City or Puerto Rico (her father is a retired pharmaceutical company executive who worked at the company's
subsidiaries in both places). Suzie matriculated to K from Puerto Rico. She majored in psychology and studied abroad in Madrid, roughly the same time Jorge was majoring in economics at ITESM and studying abroad in Wisconsin. Suzie currently works for the El Monte City School District as a school psychologist.

“Ours is a story of a Mexican national and an American national who, unbeknownst to one another, shared a very transnational life,” says Jorge.

Friends at MSU introduced the two graduate students, in part because of their shared fluency in Spanish and in English. They were married in 1989, smack dab between the defense of their dissertations (his in economics, hers in counseling psychology). “The timing meant we were far too busy to really worry too much about wedding ceremony details,” smiles Jorge.

The couple has two children. Their daughter Kristina is a recent graduate of the University of Southern California. She majored in international relations and currently works in commercial real estate in Los Angeles. Their son Carlos is a computer science major at Rice University (Houston, Texas).

Do Jorge and Suzie have any trepidation about Michigan’s colder climate, relative to San Antonio and Los Angeles?

“I’ve been to Kalamazoo,” he says. “Suzie’s family helped us with wedding planning in 1989. I visited The Upjohn Company and even attended a Kalamazoo Wings hockey game with my father-in-law and some of his work colleagues.

“As far as winter is concerned, one can focus on the cold and difficulty, but I love the change of seasons and the beauty of that first snowfall.”

His wife’s family owns a cabin on Torch Lake in northern Michigan, and Suzie and Jorge enjoy spending time there in all seasons.

“Of course,” he laughs, “if winter came once every three years instead of annually. Well, that might be nice.”
For anthropologist Margaret Mead the true test for subject mastery was one’s capability to explain the subject to a child. Her exact quote: “If one cannot state a matter clearly enough so that even an intelligent 12-year-old can understand it, one should remain in the cloistered walls of the university and laboratory until one gets a better grasp of one’s subject matter.”

Mead’s assertion is one reason Kalamazoo College’s 18th president believes so strongly in combining liberal arts classroom learning with experiential opportunities to apply that learning—the better able to explain a matter so a child understands. Or, better yet, to prompt great questions from the child.

For fun, LuxEsto asked Professor Gonzalez how he would explain international economics to a 12-year-old.

“I would ask her or him to look at the tags on their clothing and devices,” he says, “the play station, pens, television. Make a list of where they are made, where they come from. What we do every day is tied to the actions of people around the world. Is this good?

“If this situation changed, would the changes favor your daily life or someone else’s? Whose? And if it favors the lives of others, does that benefit you as well? If so, how so?

“Perhaps, together, the 12-year-old and I would conclude that it is important to study these questions so that people can change or control (for the benefit of people) forces that would otherwise happen in uncontrolled and potentially more harmful ways.”

Welcome home, Professor Gonzalez! Home being a place dedicated to the liberal arts and experiential applications, a.k.a. the K-Plan.
Freddie Gray in Baltimore. Michael Brown in Ferguson. Twelve-year-old Tamir Rice in Cleveland. Eric Garner in New York. The mere mention of these names triggers intense debate over police misconduct. In two very different capacities, Carla Kupe-Arion ’02 has placed herself on the frontline of that very heated topic. That she almost daily deals with what is a particularly American problem may seem a bit surprising, given that she lived in Europe until her senior year in high school.

During her workweek she puts in long hours as an attorney for the City of Chicago in the Federal Civil Rights Litigation Division, defending police officers sued for alleged misconduct.

“I’ve taken two to jury trials,” she says. She won them both. “All of the other cases were either dismissed by the court, or we settled them.”

During evenings and weekends, however, she approaches the problem from a very different perspective—as a volunteer for the local chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). Serving as its director of community relations, Kupe-Arion works to improve officer-citizen relations. Her efforts, she hopes, will change the negative attitudes that young people may have about the police, as well as those the officers may have toward those they are sworn to protect.

That task became more difficult with the release of the video showing 17-year-old Laquan McDonald being shot 16 times by a Chicago police officer who was eventually charged with murder.

“His death was painful and tragic,” says Kupe-Arion. “But it motivates me to want to be at the forefront of a reforming and restorative process that will make such tragic events less likely in the future.”
With 12,000 officers, Chicago has the second largest police force in the country. Given the number of interactions those officers have with the city’s 2.7 million people, it is hardly a surprise that claims of misconduct are commonplace.

“Police officers certainly make mistakes,” she acknowledges. She recalls an incident in which one of the officers who arrived on a scene opened fire on a car occupied by several teenagers before he fully understood the problem that created the need for the officer.

“I didn’t represent the officer in that case, but I remember wanting to ask him, ‘What were you thinking?’”

But such acts are the exception, she says, not the rule. “Police misconduct happens, but it is not pervasive. Of the complaints with which I’m familiar some 15 percent have merit.”

The steady stream of complaints that are filed against the police, Kupe-Arion believes, has an adverse effect on officer morale.

“Some officers become jaded. They’ve been sued so many times, or they know colleagues who have, that they get discouraged. Many retire early as a result. They say that years ago the uniform meant something. People would never get in their face the way they do now. When I meet with them there are times I have to give them a pep talk.”

Her role with NOBLE provides Kupe-Arion the opportunity to improve the police-citizen dynamic.

“We go into schools and teach what we call ‘Law Literacy’ so that young people know their rights and responsibilities, what is and isn’t a crime. At first we worked with high school kids but we’ve decided that timing is too late, so now we deal with grades five through eight. We try to help the kids stay out of trouble by telling them that whom they surround themselves with makes a difference. If their friends are known troublemakers, officers are bound to pay more attention to them, attention they don’t want.

“We hear contradictory things. Some community members want more officers who are black; others confront our black officers with the question, ‘How can you possibly be a policeman?’ as if they’re on the wrong side.”

Do officers need attitude adjustments? Some do, she replies. “It is important that the officers see each person as an individual instead of just as a member of a group or a gang.”

To accomplish its goals, NOBLE offers a program, which Kupe-Arion created, called Stronger Together. It creates opportunities for officers and youths to get together in a casual setting, such as playing video games together.

“We want people to see each other as human beings. It doesn’t have to be us versus them.”

Chicago would seem like an unlikely destination for Kupe-Arion, given where she started life, and even more so, given where her parents started their lives.

“My mom and dad were born in the Democratic Republic of Congo [known at the time as Zaire]. They both moved to Germany to attend college and then get married. That is where I was born.”

When she was seven, her family moved to neighboring Luxembourg, where they lived for the next decade. Her father worked for General Motors. As Carla was finishing her junior year in high school he was offered a chance to relocate to Grand Rapids. He agreed, so the Kupe family (which, by then, included four younger siblings) crossed the Atlantic and began a new adventure.

Coming to America created some challenges for Kupe-Arion. “At that time, German and French were my main languages, along with Luxembourgish as well as two African languages. I knew English but it was the ‘Queen’s English.’ I had to learn expressions and slang. People didn’t know what to make of my accent.”
Another adjustment was food. “We were all amazed at how large the servings were at restaurants. We asked each other, ‘Do people actually eat this much?’”

They obviously did, and soon enough so did Carla’s family. “We all gained weight,” she admits.

When she began her senior year at Forest Hills Central High School she was encouraged to start thinking about college. Having just arrived in the country, she had no idea where she wanted to go, or even what her options were.

“My high school counselor suggested K. At that point not only had I never heard of K, I’d never even heard of Kalamazoo. I thought, ‘What a weird word.’ But we drove down for a visit and I fell in love with the place. When I saw the trees and the brick road and Stetson I said, ‘It’s so beautiful!’ The campus is still my favorite place in the fall. When I go back there and drive over those bricks and feel the bumpiness, I know I’m home.”

One interaction that helped her feel at home was meeting with David Barclay, the Margaret and Roger Scholten Professor of International Studies. Because he is fluent in German, Kupe-Arion says, “he and my dad got to talking so much I kind of had to say, ‘Hey, I’m here, too!’”

There was, however, a feature of attending college that took some getting used to—having to pay tuition. “In Germany and Luxembourg, college is basically free. I couldn’t believe how expensive it was here.”

Kupe-Arion looks back on her K years “as the best four years of my life.” She was in all of the choirs, served as Student Commission president her senior year and had lots of friends. Her ability to mix freely with almost any type of group, however, created a bit of a rift with her minority friends.

“A few of them gave me a hard time for having so many white friends. That they would feel that way was eye opening for me. But growing up in Europe and then in Grand Rapids, I’d always had white friends.”

She didn’t go on foreign study at K (“I figured that being at K was my foreign study”), but she did meet her future husband, Mason Arion, there. He also graduated in 2002, with a degree in economics. He now works as a derivatives...
After K, Carla and Mason moved to Boston, where she enrolled at Suffolk Law School. She struggled there, which came as a surprise to Kupe-Arion. “I’d never failed at anything. I thought, ‘Are you kidding me?’”

She took two years off and then moved to Chicago, where she enrolled at Loyola Law School. Starting from scratch, things went much better. She became a U.S. citizen in 2007 and graduated from law school the year after. “Loyola is like K. There is a lot of camaraderie and community spirit.”

Her first position with the City of Chicago was in its Building and Licensing Division doing code enforcement. “To me that’s not real exciting work, but it could be satisfying. I did things like make landlords provide electricity to their tenants, who were using candles for light. At that point, because of the economy, I was just happy to have a job.”

Three years later she asked for and received a transfer to the division that defends police officers.

And yet it has been her involvement with NOBLE that might be life-changing for Kupe-Arion. Among that organization’s goals is increasing the number of minorities in law enforcement. Toward that end, it offers workshops for those who hope to be hired by the Chicago Police Department. When Kupe-Arion was first involved in that process, she was helping others pursue that career path.

Then she experienced a bit of an epiphany: maybe she should become a police officer.

“I’ve always thought it would be cool to be a police officer, so I submitted my application. It was a bit half-heartedly, but the more I got involved with NOBLE the more I thought I could do more for the community on the law enforcement side than as an attorney.”

Though not fully committed to the idea, she took and passed both the strength test and the psychological assessment stage.

More recently, though, several things, including the Laquan McDonald shooting, have caused her to reconsider becoming a police officer. “I definitely want to be involved in law enforcement policy and procedures, but maybe I can do that as an advisor or consultant.”

Kupe-Arion admits that it is impossible to know exactly what job she’ll hold a few years from now. What is clear, however, is that it will involve law enforcement and the community.

She, Mason and their four-year-old daughter Layla have recently moved from the north side of Chicago to Hyde Park. “This is really the first time in my life I’ve lived in an area where there are a lot of black people. Part of the reason for the move was because we thought it was important for Layla to experience that, especially to see educated, middle-class blacks.”

While Kupe-Arion is a bit uncertain what her future holds, her daughter knows exactly where she’s headed—to K! “Layla has already told me that’s where she’s going to school. She loves chasing squirrels in the Quad and really cheered on my sister, Johanna ’13, when she was on K’s volleyball team. If she does go to K, Layla would follow in the footsteps not just of Mason, Johanna and me, but also Mason’s sister Hannah, who graduated in 2008.”
When walking through Kalamazoo College’s 140-acre Lillian Anderson Arboretum, it is hard to imagine that as recently as 1960 much of the property was farmland. But in the decades since, nature has slowly reclaimed the area, converting it into forest, meadow and marsh.

Turning the property into a preserve, with trails, benches, steps and signs, has also taken years. But the dedicated efforts of a small group of people have gradually made the ‘Arb’ fully accessible to those who enjoy the out-of-doors. Foremost in that group has been Paul Sotherland. Before his recent retirement he served as K’s coordinator of educational effectiveness, but when he first explored the wild and largely trail-less expanse more than two decades ago he was a much beloved biology professor.

“We dreamed the Arb into existence,” Sotherland says. That dream has recently taken a huge step forward with the construction of a multi-use pavilion at the preserve, which fronts M-43, about six miles west of the College’s campus.

Active in the design of the improvements has been current K biology professor, Binney Girdler, who also serves as the Arb’s current director.

“When we’ve taken classes out there in the past there hasn’t been a good place to meet or talk or even get out of the rain,” says Girdler. That will change with the addition of the pavilion, which was funded with a grant the College received from the Irving S. Gilmore Foundation.

The building will be located due south of the parking lot, far enough from M-43 so that road noise is minimal, and situated where there had been a clearing, so few trees will have to be cut down. The main support beams for the structure, however, will be made from red pines from the Arb’s stand of “Magnificent Pines,” a short distance away.

To make the use of heavy machinery unnecessary, oxen hauled the logs to the construction site.

“Part of the pavilion is open air, so it will always be available to
visitors,” Girdler explains. “The other part is enclosed, with one room being large enough for a class, and two rooms for storage. Nearby we will have two self-composting toilets, which is nice because we’ve never had any bathrooms out there.

“We wanted the facility to be off-grid, so the only electricity is what its solar panels will generate. There will be a display screen to show how much power is available and how fast it is being used. When the meter hits zero, the lights go off. We hope that will help people develop a better idea of how electricity is used.

“There’s water available but you have to use a hand pump to get it. And the rooms won’t be heated.” With a smile she adds, “But rustic is okay.”

The Arb’s connection to K first began, in a sense, more than 100 years ago, in 1903, when Lillian Anderson was born on the property. Her parents had purchased the land in 1890, and for the rest of their lives they farmed it, growing alfalfa, corn, rye and potatoes. The family lived in the white clapboard Greek Revival-style house that still exists, just east of the Arb’s parking lot.

Lillian’s mother, a school teacher, encouraged her only child to pursue her education. Pursue it she did, graduating from Kalamazoo Central High School (1922) and from Kalamazoo College in 1926. A few years later she earned a master’s degree in library sciences from Columbia University.

Lillian returned to Kalamazoo and for the next 42 years worked for the Kalamazoo Public Library. Never married, she lived in the family home until the 1970s, when she moved to Friendship Village, a retirement community. In 1982 she donated the 104-acre family farm property to K.

Even though Sotherland first met Lillian when she was quite elderly, he was impressed. “She was a real dynamo, a fireball. She’d spent most of her life out there and really loved it. She was the one, when she was about 30, who planted all of the pine trees that are out there. It was supposed to be a Christmas tree farm but it got out of hand.”

Even after K took title to the property there was no guarantee it would be kept natural, or even kept at all. Sotherland was among those most determined to make sure, on both counts, that it was.

“The first time I saw the property was a few years after I came to K in 1985, when Paul Olexia took my son and me out there to fish on Bonnie Castle Lake. Up to that point the land had just sat idle; I’m not sure the College knew what to do with it.

“Then in the mid-90’s I went out there with a map and a compass and figured out where the actual boundaries were. I thought, ‘Wow, this place is bigger than I thought!’ That’s when I started to make some trails.”

He did a lot of chain sawing and brush trimming at first, following the few paths and game trails that existed. New trails were created so that hikers could get to as many different areas as possible.
“Once trails existed I'd borrow a big lawn mower from Maintenance to keep the wider trails clear,” Sotherland added, “I had students walk in front of me to remove box turtles and scare away anything that might have been in the grass. We kept the narrower trails clear by hand.

“We put in a ton of work out there, partly with the thought that if we kept making it nicer and more usable, it would make the decision to sell it more difficult for the College.”

Among the early users of the Arb were K’s cross country teams, which led to the naming of some of the trails. Gathje Hill Trail, for example, was named after the men’s coach, Pete Gathje. The “Magnificent Pines Trails” moniker came after one of the female runners exclaimed that the trees were, well, “magnificent!”

A less impressive stand nearby drew the tongue-in-cheek toponym, “Not-So-Magnificent Pines Trail.”

Even as trails were being created, the preserve’s enthusiasts remained apprehensive about its future. “For a long time I told myself not to get my hopes up,” Sotherland admits. “The College could have sold it at any time. But I argued that we needed a field station for our biology and chemistry classes that we could call our own. We’d used the Kalamazoo Nature Center, and still do, and that’s a nice place, but it isn’t ours.”

Finally, in 1998, K made a long-term commitment to the preserve by officially dedicating it as the Lillian Anderson Arboretum.

“Lillian died three years later,” Sotherland says, “but she was able to attend the dedication ceremony. She was obviously very pleased.”

Another person who loved the area was a childhood friend of Lillian, Nella Langeland. She’d grown up nearby, then moved into the white house after Lillian moved out. Nella lived there for more than 30 years. One of her favorite resting spots in the Arb, near the entrance to the Magnificent Pines, is commemorated with a bench bearing a plaque in her honor.

Coincidentally, one of Nella’s children, Jim Langeland ’86, is today Kalamazoo College’s Upjohn Professor of Life Sciences.

“I was in high school when our family moved out there,” he recalls. “I missed not living in a neighborhood anymore, but I spent a lot of time hiking that area and taking our dog for walks. I really credit living there with fostering my sense of connection with the natural world.”

When K decided the Arb needed a formal director, Sotherland was the obvious choice. One way he promoted the preserve was by taking others for hikes there. One such person was Ann Fraser, associate professor of biology, who accompanied Sotherland to the Arb shortly after she arrived at K in 2003. Tagging along with the two biologists was
Fraser’s husband John. The two men became friends and often worked together on projects, such as the construction of the wooden bridge that spans Batts’ Pond.

John Fraser’s role dramatically increased when he was chosen to succeed Sotherland as the Arb’s director. He held that position for six years, until he went with his wife on her sabbatical to Cornell University.

“I was the director, but the title was a bit inflated because I pretty much just directed myself,” Fraser says with a smile. “I didn’t have a budget so if I needed something, like a chain saw, I had to ask for money to buy one. But I loved the job. It was great. The only reason I stopped was to go with Ann to Ithaca.

“Well, that,” he adds, after a moment’s pause, “and the fact that I was getting older. It’s a physically demanding job.”

While Fraser worked hard to keep the trails clear, he made a point of letting things grow wild just off the paths.

“That’s a good way to keep people on the trails.”

One person Fraser credits with helping is Paul Manstrom, associate vice president for facilities management. “Paul is one of the unsung heroes of the Arb. Whenever I needed some help or some equipment, he always came through.”

The size of the Arb has grown since Lillian’s initial 104-acre donation. The first addition came in 2000, when K purchased from Western Michigan University the 31 acres that lay between the Anderson property and the Oshtemo Township property to the east. The driving force for that acquisition was, not surprisingly, Sotherland.

“I’d caught wind that Western was thinking about selling its property and I thought we should buy it. I knew the challenge would be to come up with the money so I asked the administration if I could approach Lew and Jean Batts about making a donation.” Lewis Batts ’43 was a long-time (28 years) biology professor at K before retiring in 1978.

“I got the go-ahead,” Sotherland continues, “so I sat down with the two of them and made my pitch.” The Battses agreed to donate a significant gift for the purchase. As a small token of K’s appreciation, the preserve’s pond was named in their honor.

The second addition to the Arb came a few years later when the College acquired the Anderson home and its five acres. Thanks to a grant from the Van Dalson Foundation, the house was renovated last summer.

Built in 1861, the house is now occupied by Sara Stockwood, K’s assistant director of outdoor programs and the Arb’s on-site manager. As such, she oversees the maintenance of the trails, much of which is performed by K students who are paid for their efforts.

“The students and I have a system so that every trail gets walked at least twice a week,” Stockwood explains. “But I’m out there almost every day. And almost every time I see something new, something I hadn’t noticed before. That is especially true in the wetland area because of the new boardwalk we had installed last summer.”

Sotherland agrees that the boardwalk is a valuable addition.

“That area is similar to a fen; it was probably a small lake years ago. Without the boardwalk it would be inaccessible without waders.”

Another notable feature of the preserve is a grove of American chestnut trees. They are a rarity because almost all of America’s chestnuts have been killed by a blight that first appeared 100 years ago.

On K’s website is a link dedicated to the Arb (https://reason.kzoo.edu/arboretum/). It includes a list of wildlife known to inhabit the area, such as blue-spotted salamanders, pileated woodpeckers, coyotes, hog-nosed snakes and Blanding’s turtles.

With the steady improvement of the trails and their signage, and the construction of the pavilion, Girdler is confident the Arb’s use will increase.

“We’re starting to see classes other than biology and chemistry, like music and art, going out there. Having the pavilion will make doing that a lot more practical.”
Great Sharer

BY JOAN HAWXHURST,
DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR CAREER
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Art explores and explicates human experience, and to do that it requires engagement between artist and audience—in other words, sharing. Like a great artist, arts administrator Bethany Whitehead ’98 believes in sharing. She has hosted Kalamazoo College student externs in multiple organizations since 2004, and this summer will be no exception.

“Mentoring a K student extern is a summer highlight for me,” says Bethany. “The time commitment [typically a week or two] is minimal. And in that span of time I have some very deep and significant conversations with the student at home and at work.

“I am always impressed by K externs,” she adds. “They are far better positioned to be successful in their career goals and the workplace than students I host from other schools.”

Bethany provides a candid and honest look at what it’s like to choose a career in the arts. “We talk salary, loans, job competition and difficulties associated with working in the nonprofit world. We also share the great joys and the rewards that come with working in a field where you nourish passions on a daily basis.”

What do YOU need to know about hosting an extern? Says Bethany: “It’s easy and rewarding. And talking about the nuts and bolts of having a job, paying a mortgage, networking and balancing family with work is just as important to the experience. We alums can model what life after K can be like in a very tangible way.”

The Center for Career and Professional Development is already seeking externship hosts for summer 2017. To learn more about how you can host a student through the Discovery Externship Program, see kzoo.edu/ccd/programs/externships/sponsors/.

Bethany Whitehead ’98 (center) is flanked by some of the externs she has hosted (l-r): Christian Van Houten ’15, Eeva Sharp ’13, Hannah Daly ’13 and David Landskroener ’14.

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3. Mentor a student or recent graduate.
5. Make a charitable donation.
As the head of an independent school in Washington, D.C., I know the specific challenges of private education. Each year, try as we may, there is never enough funding from tuition alone to meet financial aid goals, award salaries commensurate with the quality of faculty and look to the future with initiatives reflective of the need to educate for a new and different world. The leadership at Kalamazoo College faces the same hard choices with its operating budget. But with generous, unrestricted gifts to the annual fund, K’s leadership can be true to K’s mission and support the students and programs that make it a standout among liberal arts colleges. I have great respect for the leadership of Kalamazoo College, and I want the institution to have the discretion and financial ability to select which programs are most valuable.

For me the experiential offerings of Kalamazoo College set it apart from other colleges. Guided by my advisor in the economics department, I spent my junior spring engaging in self-directed research on a Native American reservation. It was my first foray into a community other than my own. I remember well my missteps and my victories; they continue to shape me today. Take a moment today to reflect on your experience with K. No matter your connection, I believe you will find it has had a tremendous impact. So why give back? I give back each year because I know the heart of a K education lives on in me, in other K alumni and in current students.

Future designers, researchers and global leaders are made at Kalamazoo College, just as they were in our generation. These are the people who are going to tackle the world’s most complex issues, just as we saw our generation grapple with the issues of our times. I cannot think of any better use of my philanthropy than to create opportunities for current K students to grow. I want these students to have the kinds of experiences that foster richer, meaningful conversations and formative moments and to be as well equipped as possible to live and thrive in the world.

I want students to be able to do more. I want to do more for them. Please join me in giving to the Kalamazoo College Fund this year. Gifts of all sizes make a difference for K students, who go on to make a difference in our global community.
On the occasion of Homecoming 2015 the Kalamazoo College Alumni Association honored four persons with Distinguished Alumni Awards and inducted four individual student-athletes and two teams into the Hornet Athletic Hall of Fame.

Alumni award winners included **JOHN HOWELL ’61** (second from left, flanked by Alumni Association Executive Board (AAEB) President Alexandra Altman ’97 and Kalamazoo College President Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran), **CARA MARKER DAILY ’96** (second from right) and **ELIZABETH GARLOW ’07**.

Howell received the Distinguished Achievement Award. He dedicated his career to teaching anatomy and physiology at California State Polytechnic College, the University of Pittsburgh and the Ohio University College of Osteopathic Medicine. He focused his research on skeletal muscle and its neural control, exercise-induced injury and responses to osteopathic manipulative treatment. He also is a tireless social justice advocate, active in the Religious Society of Friends, the Appalachian Peace and Justice Network, Democracy Over Corporations and many local initiatives to protect water resources from fracking and on behalf of monetary reform to advance justice and environmental sustainability.

Garlow won the Young Alumni Award. The political science and Spanish double major studied abroad in Chile and, for her Senior Individualized Project (SIP), spent three months in Brazil and Argentina researching corporate social responsibility and workplace democracy practices. During her K years she was a member of the Hornet swim team and Athletic Leadership Council, she served as a bilingual classroom instructor at a local school, and she worked as a research assistant in the psychology department. After graduation she worked for a business cooperative in Italy, completed an internship at the United Nations and then joined AmeriCorps VISTA, where she worked with Accion, a microfinance organization based in Boston. Garlow currently lives in Detroit, where she helped found the online microfinance initiative, Kiva Detroit, and helped launch Michigan Corps, which supports new businesses in the city and across the state.

Daily received the Distinguished Service Award. She is a pediatric psychologist and president and training director of Daily Behavioral Health, which specializes in assessment,
consultation and treatment of autism, anxiety and disruptive behavior disorders. For the past 10 years she and her family have hosted Kalamazoo College summer interns (more than 40!) in their home for periods ranging from two weeks to an entire summer. The students shadow Daily at her practice and get hands-on therapy experience at the practice’s camp and treatment program for children with autism. At K, Daily majored in psychology, was a member of the Hornet volleyball team and played flute in the orchestra. A critical part of her K-Plan was an internship at Croyden Avenue School, where she first worked with students with special needs.

**PAUL MANSTROM**, winner of the Wiemer K. Hicks Award, helped make K’s campus—literally. For the past 25 years he's been in charge of all campus maintenance and construction. He began his career at K in 1977 as an HVAC technician and supervisor. Later he became director of buildings and grounds, director of facilities management and, currently, associate vice president for facilities management. Building projects with which he has been involved include construction of the Dow Science Center; renovations and expansions of Olds/Upton Science Hall, Hicks Center, Light Fine Arts Building and the Upjohn Library Commons; and the construction of the athletic fields complex and the social justice leadership building. The highlight among those, he says, was the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership, an architectural and construction project that required extraordinary creativity and technical building skill as well as great patience.

**JOHN BRUMMET ’71** (left, pictured with Hornet tennis teammate Bill Struck ’70) was one of four individual inductees into the Kalamazoo College Athletic Hall of Fame. Brummet majored in economics at K and studied abroad in Aix-en-Provence, France, an experience he credits, in part, for a long career in international affairs that involved travel to more than 100 countries. Brummet’s tennis prowess was formidable. He won eight MIAA singles and doubles championships and five GLCA singles and doubles championships. He was a four-time all-conference selection and the MIAA most valuable player in 1971.
Also inducted into the College’s Athletic Hall of Fame was **Paul Ellis ’10** (holding plaque and pictured with, l-r, President Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran, swimming teammate Daniel Kovacs ’09, and AAEB President Alexandra Altman ’97). The Hornet swimmer made the all-conference team four years, served as team captain four years and was named team MVP every season and MIAA MVP his senior season. Ellis was the NCAA champion in the 100 backstroke and a two-time NCAA record holder in that event. He was part of the Hornet men’s swimming team’s best NCAA finish (fourth place) in K’s history. Ellis majored in biology and studied abroad in Madrid, Spain. He teaches at Troy Athens High School and coaches at Bloomfield Hills High School.

New Athletic Hall of Fame member **Margaret Howrey Ferris ’90** (right, pictured with her swim coach Lyn Maurer) majored in math, studied abroad in Madrid and based her SIP on her student teaching at El Colegio Americana in Mexico City. In swimming she won five MIAA championships, served as team captain two seasons and earned all-conference honors three seasons. She holds school records in the 400 individual medley and the 200 butterfly and earned honors for both swimming and academics. After K she earned a master’s degree in math education (Florida International University) and then began her long career as a high school math teacher. She currently teaches at the Episcopal School of Dallas.

Two Hornet teams were inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame. The **1991 Women’s Soccer Team** posted a perfect league record (12-0) and an overall record of 15-2-1. That team qualified for the NCAA Division III playoffs and lost in the opening round to California Lutheran University. The **2002 Men’s Swimming and Diving Team** finished first in the MIAA, set five school records and took sixth place in the NCAA Division III National Championships. That team’s conference record was 5-0, and it posted an overall record of 8-2.

Also inducted as an individual hall-of-famer (but unable to attend the ceremony) was Hornet standout soccer goalie **Amy Burgardt Morinelli ’00**, whose honors included all-MIAA first team, all-region first team and all-American second team, as well as Kalamazoo College records for career goals against average, career saves, career shut-outs and consecutive shut-out minutes.
This week, I connected with a prospective student in my current town to set up a time to grab coffee and talk about what it’s like to be a Kalamazoo College Hornet. It’s one of the easy things I can do as an Alumni Admission Volunteer (AAV), which is one of a variety of bites (kzoo.edu/alumni/association/alumni-bites/) we alumni can take on behalf of our alma mater. How big a bite, how many bites, is up to us. My fellow AAEB member Pam Gavin ’74 wrote a wonderful article (kzoo.edu/belight/article/take-a-bite/) on the Alumni Bites program.

People have asked me why I do things like AAV. “What drives you to connect with these people?” “What do you get out of it?” For me, the answer is simple. I know what it’s like to be in the other person’s shoes.

I’m a first-generation college student, and my parents were quick to remind me that they had no idea how to conduct a college search. Despite the fact that I attended an affluent high school, I didn’t know how to start one either.

I selected schools that sounded interesting—and K fits that description—and from that point relied heavily on admission department personnel. Unlike admission representatives from larger schools, K’s Jess Fowle ’00 always answered my questions and helped me understand what I needed to know to make the right choice.

And yet probably most of us have second guessed our own decisions—including which college, which programs when we’ve made that call, which career path after college. That’s why I like to make myself available to current students and prospective students who might learn from my experience and decide if K or a particular program or activity at K is the right fit for them.

Of course, bites (of various sizes) don’t stop there. This past summer was my first as a host for the Center for Career and Professional Development’s externship program. For three weeks, Juli and I shared our home with Emily Kowey ’17 as she experienced a day in the life of an organizer at the Sierra Club.

I wanted to step up as an externship host because that program has helped me and so many others figure out pieces of our career paths. I spent a couple of weeks during the summer of 2009 with attorney Jack Lundeen ’69 and decided that I did not want to pursue a career in law, a very valuable discovery for me. (Thank you, Jack!)

While being an extern host is certainly a bigger bite than just grabbing a coffee, it’s an incredible way to connect with current students and hear about how much can change in just a short time. The experience gave me a greater appreciation for my Kalamazoo College education and the incredible nuances of my career path as well.

Being an engaged alumnus is more than giving back. It’s also the lifelong learning and reflection we mean when we say “More in Four. More in a Lifetime.”

Last year, I joined our Alumni Association Executive Board because I wanted to work with fellow graduates making bites on behalf of K. I invite you to join me as an engaged alumnus. Think about what you want to contribute to K and feel free to connect with me or any member of the AAEB to learn how you can join us. The menu options are marvelous.
George Lindenberg '66 and his wife, Mary, took a one-week cruise on the Danube River in early September. The trip started in Budapest, Hungary, and ended in Nuremberg, Germany. Nuremberg isn’t far from Erlangen, where George did his foreign study in the spring of 1965. In fact, the boat docked in Erlangen, where George followed through with a “family reunion” plan just a few weeks old. “In 1965 I had lived with the Rolf Lehmann family,” he explained.

“There were two children: Annette who was about 12 at the time, and Joachim who was about 10. I had had no contact with them for the past 50 years, but I was able to locate Joachim through an online city directory a few weeks before we left for Europe. Both he and his sister still live in the area; their parents had both passed away.

“We had a wonderful visit, which included a visit to the house where they—and I for that one spring—had lived (it is still owned by Annette and Joachim, who now rent it out.) Our tour of the city also featured the university where I attended classes, visits to the homes of both Annette and Joachim. The latter hosted a wonderful lunch. Annette, 62, teaches school, is married, and has two daughters. Joachim is a successful business owner, and his son, whom we met, works with his father in the business. Sadly, Joachim had recently lost his wife to cancer. During our tour we had the pleasure of visiting his schnapps (he makes his own) cellar and tasting his wares. It was quite delightful. His next project is to start his own brewery, and he and his son are in the process of purchasing a facility and equipment.” In the photo George is flanked by Joachim Lehmann and Annette Grandke, whom he had last seen at the ages of 10 and 12, respectively. George earned his bachelor’s degree from K in economics and business. He also was a standout football Hornet. He earned an M.B.A. from the University of Michigan. He retired in 2006 as senior vice president of Comerica Bank.

1977

David Preston married Sidney Aldridge Bonnet on October 3, 2015, and several fellow Kalamazoo graduates attended the festivities. Pictured are (l-r): Sidney Preston, Clint David ’77, Kurt Roscow ’78, Ann Oswald Benett ’80 and David.
Transfer Funds from Your IRA

New legislation allows those at least seventy-and-a-half years of age to make a tax-free gift to the College from a traditional Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

THE FINE PRINT

- You must be at least 70 ½ before executing the tax-free transfer from your IRA.
- To qualify as tax-free, funds must be directly transferred from your IRA account to Kalamazoo College.
- The gift must be made by December 31 to qualify for that tax year.
- Up to $100,000 per calendar year can be transferred tax-free from your IRA to approved charities.
- The transfer generates neither taxable income nor a tax deduction, so you will receive the benefit even if you do not itemize your tax deductions.
- The IRA transfer may qualify—in part or in whole—for your yearly-required minimum distribution.
- The IRA transfer may be made in addition to your other charitable giving.

For additional information, contact Julie Wert in the Office of Development at 269.337.7319.

1981

Elisabeth Sydor (left) recently earned a master’s degree in oral history from Columbia University, while working full time(!) in communications for a center of Columbia’s Earth Institute. This past spring she held a staged reading of her thesis (interviews with New York City carriage drivers) performed in the city by her and her interviewees. Bob Gilbo ’82 stage-managed and Diane Richoz Barclay ’79 attended. Completion of a degree, full-time work and a staged reading of her thesis represent a lot effort. A little rest and relaxation followed when, this past October, Elisabeth visited Katherine “Kitty” Boyd ’80 (right) and her husband Dave Alexander (middle) at their home in the Cayman Islands. She would love to hear from friends at esydor@gmail.com.

1983

FisherBroyles, LLP, is pleased to announce that Suzanne Kleinsmith Saganich has been named to the 2016 edition of Best Lawyers in the areas of banking and finance law, financial services regulation law and real estate law. Saganich was also voted Lawyer of the Year in the area of financial services regulation law.

1989

Many Michiganders (and more) have walked the five-mile Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day, an annual event. The bridge spans the Straits of Mackinac. On Labor Day 2015 the 65,000 bridge walkers might have looked down to see 84 Straits swimmers. And one of those swimmers was Sarah Colegrove. Sarah’s swim was part of a fund-raiser for Habitat for
Humanity. The swimmers raised more than $325,000 for Habitat’s neighborhood revitalization program. Twelve teams, each with seven swimmers, attempted the crossing. “The water was not as cold as expected,” said Sarah, “but the wind, strong current and rough water conditions made the swim very challenging.” Sarah swam in tandem with the walkers (north to south) and finished on the shores of the Straits at Fort Michilimackinac in the Lower Peninsula. “Not all swimmers finished,” added Sarah, “and one group required more than eight hours to complete the swim.” Sarah’s group swam the distance in just under three hours. “It was an epic swim for a great cause!”

1991
Move over, Chaucer! Kalamazoo College has its own “Miller’s Tale,” that of Alisa Crawford, who recently won the state history award from the Historical Society of Michigan for her book De Zwaan: The True Story of America’s Authentic Dutch Windmill. Alisa is the resident miller at the De Zwaan windmill, which is located in Holland, Michigan. Achieving qualifications for that job was no “run of the mill” effort; nor was piecing together the origins and history of the mill she operates and loves. After many years learning to speak Dutch, study, apprenticeship and testing, Alisa became a Dutch-certified miller. Then after more testing, she was admitted to an elite Dutch guild of professional grain millers. Through that process, she came to know a number of mill historians in the Netherlands. Together they dug through dusty archives there, interviewed people connected to the mill and crawled through the windmill searching for archaeological clues.

“De Zwaan began its career far from North Holland and does not have a ‘purebred pedigree,’ as originally presumed,” says Alisa. She indicates that it was assembled from the parts of several mills much later than 1761. However, that lineage, she writes in the book, “is what makes De Zwaan unequivocally authentic. Windmills were and continue to be working machines. When they break, they are repaired. When they become outmoded, they are repurposed. When the parts wear out, they are replaced.”

1997
Chris Kennelly is a world traveler, sports enthusiast, entrepreneur and family man. He employed a wicked backhand to become a three-time All-American tennis player at K. He earned his B.A. in economics and business and studied abroad in Bonn, Germany. Chris is a founding partner and president of Bluewater Commercial Real Estate and owner and president of Northfield (Minn.) Construction Company, which he purchased in 2014. He also helped form the Northfield Real Estate Fund in 2011. He is a 15-year veteran of the commercial real estate industry and has experience in every asset class of real estate, including office, industrial, retail, condominiums, multi-family and hospitality.
George Williams ‘41 died on November 18, 2015. He was 95 years old. George majored in English at K. He was a member of the 1940 men’s tennis team, which was elected to the Kalamazoo College Athletics Hall of Fame in 2007. George also received a Citation of Merit Award (2002) from the College’s Emeritus Club. He earned a master’s degree from George Washington University and worked briefly for Fairchild Aircraft (Hagerstown, Md.) before beginning a long and distinguished career in international higher education. He moved to Istanbul, Turkey, in 1942 where he taught and worked in administration at Robert College. He also worked at colleges in Libya, Washington, D.C., and Monterey, Calif. While at Robert College he traveled extensively throughout the Middle East and also drove through Europe many times on family vacations. He remained active in athletics—swimming and basketball as well as tennis—and oftentimes swam from Europe to Asia and back again across the Bosphorus. He was married for 71 years to Mary (Hosford) Williams ‘43, who survives. They have two children. Their daughter, Janice Kies, is a member of the class of 1972. George also is survived by his brother Owen ‘48 and his sister Mary Danielson ’50.

Jean Folz Riser ‘41 died peacefully in her home with family present on the night of July 20, 2015. Born and raised in Kalamazoo, Jean earned her B.A. from K in biology. Later, while attending the University of Michigan’s summer graduate biology program at Douglas Lake, she met Nathan (Pete) Riser, her future husband. After completing her M.A. (zoology) at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, she studied and became a certified medical technologist at Bronson Hospital in Kalamazoo. During World War II she worked in a pathology lab near Lansing, Mich. Her enthusiasm for that work was evident in her stories and detailed knowledge of pathogens. Before moving to Damariscotta, Me., Jean spent more than 50 years in the Boston area, as a hospital pathology lab volunteer, a college anatomy instructor, a Girl Scout troop leader, a conservation advocate and a docent at the Peabody-Essex Museum of Salem, Mass. She was a lifelong learner, an avid naturalist, birder, photographer and hiker. Past 90 she was still able to walk two miles and to enjoy identifying fauna and flora. Jean was a world traveler, who took great pleasure in attending international scientific meetings with her husband. She also enjoyed living in New Brunswick and in New Zealand during sabbatical years, as well as participating in an East African ornithological safari and a South Seas sailing adventure. Throughout her life, Jean maintained detailed records of natural history, family health, travel and other events of interest. In addition, she possessed encyclopedic knowledge on a great variety of topics.
from Asian art to Wagnerian opera to European history to scientific discoveries. Her daughter once said, “She was Google before Google.” Several of Jean’s relatives have K connections. Her mother, Ruth Desenberg Folz, attended K for a year; Jean’s first cousin, Samuel Folz, was a member of the class of 1947; and Jean’s daughter Claire graduated in 1967. Jean was predeceased by her husband and is survived by her three children, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Russell Becker ’44 died on August 25, 2015, after a short illness. He was 92. After obtaining his bachelor’s degree (psychology and religion) from Kalamazoo College in 1944, Russell received a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in 1945 and a doctorate in psychology and religion from the University of Chicago and Chicago Divinity School in 1951. He was an ordained minister in both the American Baptist Church and the United Church of Christ.

Russell met Dorothy Jane Kiefth ’44 while at Kalamazoo College. They married in 1945. Dorothy passed away after 59 years of marriage.

In 1952 Russell returned to Kalamazoo College as assistant professor of psychology, dean of chapel and dean of men. During that fateful year, he found an unflattering portrait of himself in the local paper calling him the “Red Dean” because he had signed a petition to President Truman in 1949 asking the President to grant amnesty to leaders of the U.S. Communist Party who had been convicted under the Smith Act. Becker had signed the petition not because he was a Communist or Communist sympathizer but because he was a stalwart defender of the principle of free speech. With the McCarthy hysteria at its peak, the College declined to renew Russell’s contract.

He continued his teaching career at Wooster College in Wooster, Ohio, and Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Conn. During his tenure at Yale, he wrote two books, *Family Pastoral Care* and *When Marriage Ends*.

Russell was also called as pastor to churches in Rochester, New York; Mount Eaton and Wilmot, Ohio; Glenview and Glencoe, Ill.; New Haven and Orange, Conn.; and Barstow, Moreno Valley and San Dimas, Calif. For the past 27 years, he has been a resident of Claremont, Calif., and a member of Pilgrim Place.

He is survived by two sons to both of whom he conveyed his love of Kalamazoo College. Jonathan Becker ’73 lives in Lawrence, Kan. Kurt Becker ’80 lives in Bellevue, Wash. Russell is survived by five grandchildren, Mark ’04, Drew, John, Katherine and Elizabeth.

Bill Atkinson ’63 died on November 22, 2015, after a long battle with cancer. Bill majored in biology at K and was a member of the Hornet cross-country team. Following graduation he worked as a high school math and biology teacher. He then joined The Upjohn Company and worked in the company’s research, clinical research and regulatory affairs divisions. He was awarded the company’s prestigious Upjohn Award. Bill enjoyed singing, working with golden retrievers, traveling and summers by Lake Michigan.

Carol (Spiro) Barger ’68 died on June 28, 2015, in Columbus, Ohio, following a brief illness. She earned her B.A. at K in religion and studied abroad in Caen, France. She had recently retired from a 30-year career teaching first grade at Rosehill Elementary School in Reynoldsburg, Ohio. She is survived by her two sons, Kyle and Kurt, and their spouses, Tayah and Christianne.
Stephaine (Parrish) Taylor '74 died on November 21, 2015. She was born and raised in Pittsburgh. At K she majored in philosophy and studied abroad in Nairobi, Kenya. After graduation she settled in Portland, Ore., where she became a distinguished state and national leader in vocational rehabilitation. Her work created opportunities for people with disabilities, including psychiatric disabilities, to live and work independently. She also was an award-winning quilter. She designed, sewed by hand and exhibited many of her beautiful creations. She loved to travel and had visited India, Egypt and China among other countries. She also loved to cook and preserve her family’s history. When she died she was in the process of completing a family cookbook titled “Food is Memory.”

**Teacher and Engaged Citizen**

Former Kalamazoo College Professor of Economics and Business Sherrill Cleland died of natural causes at the age of 91 on October 26, 2015, in Sarasota, Fla. He was an outstanding teacher and educator, a leader and innovator in higher education and an accomplished economist.

Professor Cleland was born in 1924 in Galion, Ohio, to Fred and Doris Cleland. He was a decorated World War II veteran with a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. He earned his degrees in economics from Oberlin College (B.A.) and Princeton College (M.A. and Ph.D.).

He joined the faculty at Kalamazoo College in 1956 as an assistant professor of economics and business and chair of that department. Within three years he had achieved the rank of full professor and served in that role until 1973. He also served as dean of academic affairs and vice president. Among other subjects, he was an expert in Middle East studies and on the integration of courses on consumerism into college curriculums.

Professor Cleland was known for his optimism, encouragement, curious mind and his interest in others and in the world. He was widely admired for his creativity, his commitment to mentoring others and for promoting equal rights and opportunities for women.

He left Kalamazoo College in 1973 to serve as President of Marietta College (Marietta, Ohio), a position he held until 1989.

Professor Cleland’s acumen as an economist was recognized near and far. In 1962 former Governor John Swainson named Cleland to a five-person advisory committee on the Michigan economy. Internationally, through the Ford Foundation, Professor Cleland worked as an economic advisor to Jordan, and he helped create the country’s first infrastructure development plan in Amman (1963-64). Later he led the creation of the world’s first master’s program in development economics at the American University of Beirut in Lebanon (1967-69). In 1965 the Great Lakes Colleges Association and the U.S. State Department appointed Professor Cleland to a team of educators who visited various colleges and universities in six African nations to study possibilities of faculty and student exchanges.
His civic engagement while a resident of Kalamazoo was exemplary. He served as chairman of the Kalamazoo Employment Advisory Council and president of the Kalamazoo County Chapter of the United Nations Association and the Kalamazoo Chapter of the American Association of University Professors. He also worked as the Democratic civil rights coordinator for Kalamazoo County.

Professor Cleland remained active in retirement, serving as chairman of the Student Loan Funding Corporation and on the board of directors of KnowledgeWorks, Tuition Exchange, and AMIDEAST.

He is survived by his wife of 27 years, Diana Drake Cleland, and his children Ann Feldmeier, Doug Cleland, Sarah Allen, Scott Cleland, Cynthia Rush, Allison Abizaid, Linda Wiener, Carol Abizaid, Amanda Abizaid Plonsky and Richard Abizaid. He is also survived by 19 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He was widowed by his first wife of 39 years, Betty Chorpenning Cleland.

Sherill Cleland loved Kalamazoo College, and that love was a legacy he passed to his family. His daughter Ann and son Scott are graduates (1972 and 1982, respectively) as is his granddaughter Amy Houtrow ’96.

**PROFESSOR AND POET**

*Carlos Bousoño* died in Madrid on October 24, 2015. He was 92 years old. Bousoño was an award-winning poet, literary critic and theoretician, master teacher, member of the Royal Academy of Spain for 35 years, a leading figure in Spain’s postwar literary circles and for many years professor of Spanish literature in Kalamazoo’s program at the International Institute in Madrid.

Among his many honors he was awarded the Prince of Asturias Prize in letters in 1995, one of Spain’s most important literary recognitions. He was also a recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Turin and a member of the Hispanic Society of America. During his tenure as professor at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid he was repeatedly voted best lecturer by the students. In addition to his volumes of poetry, he was author of a number of publications and was widely regarded as Spain’s most important literary theoretician. Bousoño was also a close friend of the Nobel Laureate Vincente Aleixandre and the executor of his literary estate.

Kalamazoo College was fortunate to have him on our faculty at the Institute because of his friendship with our former director there, Dr. José Vidal. Bousoño is survived by his wife, Ruth, and two sons. *(Obituary by Joe Fugate, professor emeritus of German, director emeritus of foreign study)*

**FRIEND TO STRASBOURG STUDENTS**

*Madame Odile Gollé*, widow of M. Maurice Gollé, who for many years was director of Kalamazoo College’s foreign study program in Strasbourg, died on October 18, 2015, in Strasbourg at the age of 92. She frequently interacted with and came to know many Kalamazoo students over the years because of her warm, outgoing and easily approachable personality. She had a wonderful sense of humor and could always be counted on to have an interesting joke or humorous story to relate. She liked to entertain, was an excellent cook (as anyone who enjoyed the hospitality of her home would confirm), and was a passionate dog lover. A wonderful wife, mother and friend, she was preceded in death by her husband and one son and is survived by two sons and the deceased son’s wife and their families. *(Obituary by Joe Fugate, professor emeritus of German, and director emeritus of foreign study)*
Thank you, Eileen and Sope

Last April, when President Eileen B. Wilson-Oyelaran announced her intention to retire at the end of the current academic year, the alumni relations department and the Alumni Association Executive Board commissioned a poem to thank her and her husband, Olasope, and to honor their work of 11 years on behalf of Kalamazoo College.

The poem was read at last Homecoming’s alumni awards ceremony and is reprinted on the following pages. Its format borrows from a poem by Langston Hughes, “Daybreak in Alabama,” a fitting echo because Eileen’s father, when he was young and growing up in New York City, met and knew Langston Hughes.

The ghostly drum of Langston Hughes persists until the last four lines of the poem, which call to ear W.H. Auden. Combining the voices of the Harlem Renaissance jazz poet and the ex-pat British formalist seemed strange at first, then appropriate, given the work of Eileen and Sope that helped us make a campus where different poets could learn and sing together. “Poets”—meaning not so much writers of verse but instead people (in the spirit of the Greek root poieses) with the will to make, to create, to transform.

The poem’s title comes from an email written by current sophomore Kalkidan Amare, who came to K from Ethiopia by way of Seattle. The entire line from the email reads, “Praise God! He’s been stirring up a mighty work on this campus for some time,” and “stirring up a mighty work” sounded right for a tribute to the achievement of Eileen and Sope.

Finally, a word about the reference to Sojourner Truth and her return. Truth visited K’s campus in the mid-19th century, guest of Lucinda Hinsdale and James Blinn Stone, a fact Eileen considered a sign when she decided to accept the job of president at K. Sojourner Truth has long been a hero and role model for Eileen.

And so Eileen brought her back to K, in spirit, in commitment to a place safe for liberal arts learning...a place for a great education (which may result in a better job and which will yield a better life), where students open themselves up to new and interesting viewpoints...where students discover their charters of service to humankind, often a fraught and risky struggle.

Thank you, Eileen and Sope.
One day, when I get to be a composer, I'm gonna write me a song
about Eileen and Sope at Kalamazoo College.
And I'll put things in there that shout LIFE-right-out-loud.
There'll be learning in it, and the mist that rises off learning
as if the struggle and joy of new knowledge
were creation itself in its first morning's light.
And students will be in the song, with their hands joined to faculty hands
and other student hands in the fecund, stubborn soil of mystery.

And I'll put in the sound of car tires on wet Academy Street stones
And the bell-embraced light of Stetson tower,
And shade and sun racing in the grass on the Quad
under trees where students toss Frisbees or
sit reading books or talk or laugh or cry or make out. Remember?

And most of all I'll put in the great changes,
the changes made by the elementary school girl who colored the Pilgrims black,
to the snickering of her classmates (black and white), and to the wellness of her own
strong and healthy soul, who became the woman who became the president who brought
Sojourner Truth back to K's campus.

And I'll put in the changes made by the boy from the village of Ajaawa,
Ajaawa—that name with vowels like water—where many mothers
raise children, and many fathers raise them too
and aunts and uncles and cousins, an entire village
so close you can't see between them,
and the boy's paternal great-aunt who says: "Go,
go into the world and bring back what you learn to
AJAAWA." OH, YES,
that young man is a pilgrim!

And to my song I'll add the way Eileen and Sope make homes
all over the world, in L.A. and France,
in Nigeria and Winston-Salem
and so, too, for a too-short while, in Kalamazoo.
And I’ll put in their gift—their hard work!—of helping us make K a fit for black students and Hispanic students and white students and international students from rich families and poor families and single-parent families and nontraditional families, for gay students and straight students and transgender students, for Christians and Moslems and Buddhists and Jewish students and atheists all taking hands and sometimes refusing to take hands then joining together and then marching apart shouting at each other before coming back together to embrace for a moment. Or moments. I’ll add a drumbeat of moments, a drum to free what’s in our hearts and dance to. A drum to mix our voices which are the world’s voices—distinct and together.

Together I’ll put Eileen and Sope in my song, at pep rallies, and plays, at fund-raisers and donor dinners, at Frelon, at funerals. My song sings them in the stands at the new athletic complex, in the curve and welcome of social justice. And there they are, together, at the Alumni Awards, at the Kalamazoo Marathon, at lectures in the Olmsted Room, at building dedications, in chapel gatherings and then, some slow spring evening, sharing a Hodge House dinner with graduating seniors.

Yes, when I grow up to be a composer, in my song I’m gonna put in all of K’s beauty and contentiousness, the Quad’s first dawn snowfall and the thunderheads that darken the sky at commencement.

Oh, stop the clocks, Eileen is leaving. Our thoughts grow sad, our hearts are heaving. She posed the questions about our place that helped us make a welcoming space.
Pie! And not just any pie—
cardamom tahini squash pie!
The kind of pie one
might expect from a
liberal arts
entrepreneur.