

An aerial photograph of the Millikin University campus in Decatur, Illinois. The image shows a mix of historic red brick buildings with gabled roofs and modern structures. A large parking lot filled with cars is visible in the middle ground. The campus is surrounded by lush green trees, and a road with a yellow school bus is seen in the lower right. In the background, a large body of water, likely Lake Michigan, stretches across the horizon under a blue sky with light clouds. The text 'MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY' is in a white box at the top, and 'COMMUNITY' is written in large white letters across the center.

**MILLIKIN**  
UNIVERSITY®

# COMMUNITY

MILLIKIN MAGAZINE // VOL. XXXIX // FALL 2023



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COVER DESIGN: ASHLEY WINOWIECKI  
COVER IMAGE: RICHARD NDEMBE



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Phone: 217.424.6383


[alumnews@millikin.edu](mailto:alumnews@millikin.edu)  
[millikinfund@millikin.edu](mailto:millikinfund@millikin.edu)

### FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

**Millikin Magazine**  
Millikin University  
1184 West Main Street  
Decatur, Illinois 62522-2084

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The mission of Millikin Magazine is to engage alumni, friends, parents and other constituents in the life of the University, to communicate the high quality of Millikin Performance Learning and to reflect the University's mission and values.

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**COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATION COORDINATOR:** JEREMY COULTER, CLASS OF 2000  
**PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR:** MATTHEW FLATEN  
**UNIVERSITY PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER:** RICHARD NDEMBE  
**UNIVERSITY WRITER:** KENDALL ROBISON, CLASS OF 2013, MBA CLASS OF 2024  
**ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS:** JERRY JOHNSON, CLASS OF 1982; DEB HALE KIRCHNER; ASHLEY WINOWIECKI

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# Jim Reynolds

President, Millikin University

## Dear Millikin Alumni and Friends:

As we continue highlighting the Strategic Initiatives in our new Strategic Plan, this issue of the Millikin Magazine focuses on our desire to invigorate our partnerships within the greater Decatur community and beyond. As a Decatur native, this has personal meaning to me.

I remember fondly my connections with Millikin growing up here. I had student-teachers in my classrooms who were Millikin students seeking to become educators because they loved the profession. I spent a lot of time in Griswold playing basketball and swimming in the pool. My Mom and I came to Vespers and other shows at Kirkland.

But what I didn't know about – and what I want us to commit to doing more – is all the ways in which we are a good neighbor to local and regional organizations. We have amazing faculty and staff who offer their expertise to solve problems in a myriad of organizational settings. We have wonderful students who add value as interns and entry-level professionals to their place of employment. We have a campus community that is open to all who seek to be educated.

Our Millikin is filled with caring professionals who know the power of service and giving back. Being in community with local and regional partners is a linchpin to our success as a University and speaks to our mission and core values. Bottom line – invigorating our partnerships with our local and regional community is a vital element for the future of Millikin. When we help others be better at what they do, we get better as an institution.



My hope as you read this edition of Millikin Magazine is that you will see our commitment to becoming a more connected part of Decatur and the region. Each day, we are blessed with the possibilities that come from being in closer relationship with those around us. For that, as a Decaturite, I am very proud to be a part of Millikin.

As always, I'm grateful for the support you have provided to Millikin during the past year and look forward to building on that support in the future.

With respect for you all,

Jim Reynolds, President

# 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

## ENROLLMENT

TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE : 1,708

GRADUATE PROGRAM : 99

TOTAL ENROLLMENT : 1,807

FULL-TIME FACULTY : 139

## FY23 ANNUAL REPORT

TOTAL DONORS : 2,671

NEW DONORS : 279

ALUMNI PARTICIPATION : 7.02%

TOTAL RAISED: \$12,335,000

AS OF JUNE 30, 2023  
END OF FISCAL YEAR

ENDOWMENT/INVESTMENTS: \$103,441,142

99% STUDENTS RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID

\$47.1M STUDENT FINANCIAL AID GIVEN

99%

## POST-GRADUATE SUCCESS RATE

Millikin's 99% Success Rate means students move into jobs or post-secondary education within six months of graduation, compared to the 71% national average.

540

## EXISTING NAMED/ ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

Through the years, generous donors have established scholarships to help students achieve their dream of a college degree. Endowed scholarships offer reliable financial support to eligible students based on established criteria. Scholarships can be named in honor or memory of a loved one, faculty member, class/team or others. The minimum gift to endow a scholarship is \$20,000 and can be paid over a period of three to five years. Visit [millikin.edu/endowed-scholarships-and-funds](http://millikin.edu/endowed-scholarships-and-funds) to learn more.

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## NEW NAMED SCHOLARSHIPS/FUNDS

One of the new scholarships, the Cherie Kiepura Garza Education Scholarship, was established by Cherie's MU classmates. Cherie, Class of 2003, died due to COVID complications in 2021. An Elementary Education major, she taught for almost two decades in the Chicago suburbs. She changed many students' lives as a reading specialist. More than anything, though, Cherie taught kindness to her students, including forming a club to encourage students to give generously to others. The scholarship in her name will be first awarded in 2024 to Millikin Elementary Education majors with demonstrated financial need.

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## NEW ESTATE COMMITMENTS MADE

Create a will at no charge and define your legacy choices at [freewill.com/Millikin](http://freewill.com/Millikin)

## ALUMNI INFO

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## ALUMNI EVENTS

Events of all sizes were held near and far, including on-the-road Cookie Parties! Stay in the know at [millikin.edu/alumni-events](http://millikin.edu/alumni-events) or connect with Millikin University Alumni on Facebook and [@millikinalumni](https://www.instagram.com/millikinalumni) on Instagram

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## REGIONAL ALUMNI CLUBS

View club info at [millikin.edu/regional-clubs](http://millikin.edu/regional-clubs) and email [alumnews@millikin.edu](mailto:alumnews@millikin.edu) to start a club in your area or get involved.



# PUTTING THE MU *in* COMMUNITY

Millikin is Invigorating Community Partnerships through Engagement, Service



This issue of Millikin Magazine is one in a series of four dedicated to spotlighting the University's four strategic initiatives. These initiatives are part of the University's Strategic Plan, "The Millikin Difference, 2023-2027."

In these pages, we focus on how Millikin invigorates – and is invigorated by – community partnerships. From our role as "Decatur's University," to the global connections forged every day by our extraordinary students, faculty and alumni, we see the life-changing benefits of building communities wherever we go.

When we partner with businesses and nonprofits, members of the Big Blue gain real-world experiences and one-on-one mentorship while contributing to the success of those partners. When we engage with PK-12 students and their families, we provide fresh perspectives and

## ARTS PARTNERSHIP

### Decatur Area Arts Council's PASS Program

WRITTEN BY: JERRY JOHNSON, CLASS OF 1982 &  
DAAC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Each school year, the Decatur Area Arts Council (DAAC) collaborates with Kirkland Fine Arts Center and Millikin University to offer a series of performing arts shows through a DAAC program called the Performing Arts Series for Students (PASS). Serving more than 5,000 children each year, PASS is designed to open doors to learning through the performing arts.

A big part of what makes PASS so special is that it provides an opportunity that many kids may seldom get:

- the chance to see an entertaining and educational show,
- provided by professional performing artists,
- in a world-class theater, and
- on a university campus.

DAAC books the shows, selected with young students (Pre-K to sixth grade) in mind to ensure they will have an entertaining, educational experience. Shows can be theatrical, musical or dance, presenting topics ranging from storybooks, history, science, math and more. One consistent element is a performance by a Millikin-related symphony group, compliments of the Symphony Orchestra Guild of Decatur.

Since its construction in 1970, Kirkland Fine Arts Center has donated the use of the theater to the Arts Council for the PASS program. Millikin University staff are integral in managing the arrival and departure of busloads of children.

Because of the support of generous foundations and sponsors, DAAC has been able to offer ticket scholarships to children whose families can't afford to pay, as well as a limited number of transportation scholarships to help schools cover the cost of a bus.

LEARN MORE

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[decatuarts.org](http://decatuarts.org)

innovative tools for envisioning their future, while also learning a thing or two from them. When we connect with local audiences through our arts and athletics programming, we give them access to championship Division III athletics and world-class entertainment – and give us all a reason to root for the outstanding talent in our community. All while strengthening our community and its economy.

But the value of these partnerships isn't just expressed in dollars and cents – their true value is expressed in the commitment to service that they instill in each of us. When our graduates leave the Big Blue and embark on the next chapter of their lives, they carry these values with them, enriching the next community with what they've learned on Millikin's campus.

For Millikin students, this experience starts with the annual Day of Service each August. Junior Elementary Education major Isaiah Watson distinctly remembers his first Day of Service.

*"For the Day of Service my first year, we were out at the James Millikin Homestead volunteering. That moment made me feel like I was really a part of the community," Watson said.*

"I moved here from three hours away, and I didn't know what the community was like. Allowing us to come and beautify Decatur and make it our own made you feel like it was a place you wanted to be."

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6





**BUSINESS & NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS**

## HSHS St. Mary's Hospital

Millikin University's School of Nursing recently received a generous donation of six hospital beds from Decatur's HSHS St. Mary's Hospital. The donation is another step in a strong relationship between the School of Nursing and HSHS – Millikin's on-campus Health Clinic is run by HSHS, and St. Mary's CEO Theresa Rutherford '90 is a School of Nursing alum.

"HSHS and Millikin Nursing have a long-standing collaborative relationship, and we value our partnership with HSHS. St. Mary's and St. John's (in Springfield) are among the community agencies we rely on for outstanding clinical experiences for our Nursing students," Millikin Interim Director of the School of Nursing Dr. Teresa Gulley said.

The beds will be used in the Nursing program's Health Assessment Lab and the Campbell Family Nursing Simulation Lab in the Health Sciences Center.

## Macon Resources, Inc.

Millikin's Women's Basketball Team got a chance to return to the basketball court after their stellar 2022-23 season, hosting a scrimmage game as part of Macon Resources Inc.'s Annual Field Day.

Decatur's Macon Resources, Inc. (MRI) has been serving individuals with developmental disabilities since 1957, and the Field Day events give the residents a chance to spend time outside and enjoy a picnic lunch, ice cream, a scrimmage game with the members of the Big Blue's Women's Basketball Team and a community kickball game.

"It turned out perfectly today," CCIW All-Conference First Team selection Bailey Coffman, Class of 2023, said. "Getting to see the same faces and hang out with them. We know their names, and they know ours. It's a great cause to come out and have this Field Day."

## PUTTING THE MU IN COMMUNITY CONTINUED

For this year's ADM/Millikin Day of Service event held in August, Isaiah served as a Student Experience Ambassador and led a group of first-year students to their service location.

"This year, I had the chance to be at the Salvation Army, where we were packaging up clothes, food and things for the community," he said.

*"Now, being a student leader and seeing these new students take part in the Day of Service, it is full circle for me and it just keeps going. Decatur and Millikin are one and one; they are the same."*

This year's Day of Service was a collaboration between ADM and Millikin, thanks to a grant from the ADM Cares charitable organization, which sustains and strengthens ADM communities by funding organizations that drive meaningful social, economic and environmental change.



"The Day of Service brings Millikin and ADM together to collaborate and give back to the community. It also helps the new students that are coming in and shows the opportunities that are there for them in Decatur and ADM," ADM Vice President and Corporate Controller Molly Strader Fruit '99, MBA '14 said.

**CONTINUES ON PAGE 8**

**ARTS PARTNERSHIP**

## Children's Museum of Illinois

Millikin University's School of Theatre & Dance students completed a unique Performance Learning collaboration between Design and Production students and the Children's Museum of Illinois. Students gathered specifications, brainstormed possibilities, consulted with museum staff, sourced materials within budget and constructed original furniture and toy elements for the museum.

Millikin professors Jana Henry Funderburk and Brendan Greene-Walsh supervised the collaboration, which gave students a direct, entrepreneurial experience while they applied their creative skills to enriching a beloved gathering place in the community.





**BUSINESS & NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIP**

## Hickory Point Bank & Trust

Tabor School of Business students took advantage of a networking reception held by Hickory Point Bank & Trust in September. The afternoon event held at ADM-Scovill Hall brought together students, leaders from Hickory Point Bank and Millikin alumni who have previously participated in the bank's professional development programs. Millikin alumnus Ryan Dobey '19, MBA '20, took part in the Hickory Point Bank's Commercial Banking program and is now a Commercial Banking Officer there.

"I did a year of credit analysis where you learn how to underwrite loans and how to analyze the risk of companies. Then you move into a role where you learn from an actual lender. Afterward, you go into a lending role and manage clients," Ryan said. "Performance Learning was exactly why I wanted to go to Millikin. I was taking steps and going in the right direction to where I wanted to be."



**PUTTING THE MU IN COMMUNITY CONTINUED**

*"It is an amazing opportunity for ADM, and I'm proud that ADM is a part of it. I'm a two-time graduate from Millikin and so it is really great to see the collaboration."*

More than 350 Millikin students, staff and ADM employees, many of whom

were Millikin alumni, participated in service projects around Decatur. Volunteer locations included Decatur Public Schools, Children's Museum of Illinois, Good Samaritan Inn & Mercy Gardens, Northeast Community Fund, Salvation Army, Beautify Decatur and the James Millikin Homestead.

"When I was a little kid, my mom would say to me, 'The gift is in the

giving.' You gave us a gift today and you gave the City of Decatur a gift today," Millikin President Jim Reynolds said, addressing the students at a lunch get-together at Fairview Park.

"I'm proud of that and I appreciate all your good work. It is the first of many opportunities this academic year to connect with Decatur and I want to thank ADM and the ADM Cares Foundation for their support."

**EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS**

## Annual Summer Chemistry & Biochemistry Camp

When Lily Monigold put on her lab coat and took part in Millikin University's annual summer Chemistry & Biochemistry Camp, she enjoyed freedom in the lab that she hadn't experienced in high school.

"A lot of time in the high school lab, you are given a list of procedures and the exact experiment you have to do. You have to follow these steps

and have a limited amount of time," Lily said. "Here, we get some general instruction to base things on, but then we can really change it. After we do that test, depending on how it went, we can change variables and we have a lot of wiggle room to try cool things."

The camp is overseen by Dr. Anne Rodriguez, Millikin Associate Professor in the School of Chemistry and Physics.

## Tomorrow's Teachers Conference

More than 100 Central Illinois high school students who plan to have a career in education came to Millikin on Oct. 7 to learn more about the field at the Tomorrow's Teachers Conference. It was the first Tomorrow's Teachers Conference since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The popularity of this event speaks to the value Millikin provides to the community with quality learning opportunities," Director of the School of Education Dr. Chris Cunnings said. "It is important to share the student perspective to get a good understanding of what education is about."

Breakout sessions were led by Millikin faculty in a wide range of fields. The keynote speaker was Dan Cox '98, Superintendent of Rochester School District, who spoke about how teaching is the noblest profession.





# GROUNDBREAKING HELD FOR MILLIKIN'S NEW DAVID J. AND DEBRA C. RATHJE ATHLETIC CENTER



of Millikin Athletics but will benefit the University's enrollment efforts and the entire community."

### The building floor plan includes:

- A weight room named in honor of former Big Blue Football Coach Carl Poelker '68 and Jim Perryman '83, a former NFL player.
- Locker rooms to accommodate Junior Varsity and Varsity Football, and Men's and Women's Track & Field.
- A training room, conference room and team meeting room for multipurpose use.
- Football Hall of Fame, retired jersey and team recognition area.
- Offices for Football, Men's & Women's Soccer, Men's and Women's Track & Field Coaches and the Athletic Director.

*"We very much believe in giving back to our community, which is one of the reasons why we chose to support this building project," David Rathje said.*

"As someone who was born and raised in Decatur, we want to see the community and Millikin University thrive. We believe that the addition of on-campus athletic facilities aids in the recruitment of student-athletes and also increases the enjoyment of campus life for all students."

A ceremonial groundbreaking was held on Millikin University's campus on Friday, Sept. 15, as the first step in construction of the new David J. and Debra C. Rathje Athletic Center.

The groundbreaking was led by the Rathjes, Millikin President Dr. Jim Reynolds, Board of Trustees Chair Ron Branch '81, Vice President of Alumni and Development Gina Bianchi '93 and Athletic Director Dr. Craig White. The new Athletic facility will be completely funded by donations, including generous lead gifts from David '58 and Debra Rathje, Jim Perryman '83 and the Perryman family.

The estimated \$10.2 million, 17,555-square-foot facility will be located immediately south of Frank M. Lindsay Field and west of Griswold Physical Education Center and is expected to be completed by late 2024. The architectural partner for the project is BLDD, a Decatur firm.

"This initiative continues Millikin's forward-thinking momentum and will add to the outstanding physical transformations we have seen on campus over the last few years, including the Workman Family Baseball Field and the Center for Theatre & Dance," Reynolds said. "Millikin Athletics programs serve as a great source of pride for the University, the surrounding communities and beyond. The support we have seen from alumni and friends of the University for this initiative not only shapes the future



## Millikin Tuition Promise + Big Blue Pledge: Illinois Free Tuition Program Announced

As college-bound students and families investigate their higher-learning options, published tuition rates are a critical factor in deciding where to apply, but without a complete financial aid picture, the total cost of attending can be unclear. To address that confusion, Millikin University, as a leader in affordability and transparency, is proud to announce the Millikin Tuition Promise and Big Blue Pledge: Illinois Free Tuition Program, effective Fall 2024.

The Millikin Tuition Promise provides a reduced tuition rate of \$26,000 for all full-time traditional undergraduate students. This represents a 36 percent reduction from the current rate.

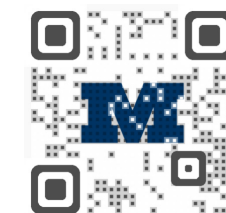
"As part of our Strategic Plan's commitment to 'The Millikin Difference,' we have pledged to expand access to Millikin's distinct brand of education, Performance Learning, through new affordability

initiatives," Millikin President Jim Reynolds said. "Research shows that an institution's published tuition rate, which is typically significantly higher than what students actually pay, often results in students and families ruling out institutions before they fully understand their out-of-pocket costs. Once students apply to Millikin, they discover that our competitive, personalized financial aid packages significantly reduce their actual cost – but students who choose not to apply based on published tuition price never find this out."

This initiative is an expansion of Millikin's highly successful Macon Promise program, which was announced in October 2020 and provided a reduced tuition rate of \$26,000 for those students who live or attend school in Macon County.

In conjunction with this tuition reduction, Millikin is launching the Big Blue Pledge: Illinois Free Tuition Program for new students. This pledge represents an investment in Illinois students who may lack the financial options necessary to pursue a private college education and will cover 100% of their undergraduate tuition with Millikin grants and scholarships filling the gap after available state and federal grants.

Millikin continues to offer competitive scholarship opportunities with awards up to full tuition that recognize academic success, talents in the arts, commitment to diversity, scientific excellence and more. In addition, they will continue to work one-on-one with students, providing competitive aid packages tailored to fit their needs.



LEARN MORE

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT

[millikin.edu/tuitionpromise](https://millikin.edu/tuitionpromise)



## Millikin Welcomes New Members of Leadership Team

Effective July 1, **Dr. Wallace Southerland III** has been named Millikin University's Vice President of Student Affairs. In his new role, Southerland will be responsible for developing and advancing the student experience on Millikin's campus.

Southerland has more than 30 years of experience in higher education leadership, and he comes to Millikin after serving as Special Assistant to the President at Michigan Technological University (MTU), where he researched and recommended global campus strategies for promoting student success and engagement.

Also effective July 1, **Todd Ray** has been named Chief Human Resources Officer, replacing longtime Millikin Director of Human Resources and Title IX Coordinator Diane Lane. Ray will

serve as the lead Human Resources officer, advisor and strategic partner to Millikin's administration.

Ray is originally from Decatur and has deep family connections with Millikin. Ray's grandfather worked in the Maintenance Department, and he recently had two nieces become Big Blue graduates. Ray has more than 25 years of experience in Human Resources and comes to Millikin after serving as the Vice President of Human Resources at Decatur Foundry, Inc.

**Meg Richtman** has been named Millikin University's Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing & Communications, effective Sept. 1. She has served as a Marketing Consultant at Millikin since June and worked closely with the Marketing team and campus leadership. Richtman will oversee the development of Millikin's strategic marketing and enrollment plans, including outreach and advertising to attract and recruit students, and work collaboratively with the campus

leadership to strengthen internal and external communications.

Richtman has over 25 years of experience in higher education leadership and last served as the Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing & Communications at Iowa Wesleyan University, where she also previously held the positions of Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Vice President of Development and Alumni Relations.

In addition, **Dr. Elizabeth Gephart**, Millikin University's Director of Nursing and Associate Professor, has been appointed Interim Dean of the College of Professional Studies at Millikin University, effective July 1, 2023.

In the College of Fine Arts, **Jessa Wilcoxon**, Director and Associate Professor of the School of Art and Creative Media, was also appointed Interim Dean. She is taking the place of **Laura Ledford**, who will now serve as Millikin's Director of International Programs/Partnerships.



**DR. WALLACE SOUTHERLAND III**



**MEG RICHTMAN**



**JESSA WILCOXEN**



**TODD RAY**



**DR. ELIZABETH GEPHART**



**LAURA LEDFORD**

## Millikin Ranked Among Best Regional Colleges in the Midwest

U.S. News & World Report has recognized Millikin University as a leading institution in higher education in its 2024 "Best Colleges" guidebook, released in September 2023. Millikin is ranked No. 15 in the Best Regional Colleges in the Midwest category, making Millikin the second highest-ranked college in Illinois on the list.

Millikin was recognized for distinction in several categories, including Best Value Schools in the Midwest at No. 22 and Top Performers on Social Mobility at No. 36, both improving three places from the 2023 list.

"It is always an honor to be ranked among the very best Midwestern



institutions of higher learning by U.S. News & World Report. Millikin's ranking this year places us among the top three schools in Illinois for Best Value and the top five for Social Mobility, demonstrating that Millikin is a university where students from any background or financial need

can succeed," Millikin President Jim Reynolds said. "As we continue to advance our mission at Millikin to prepare students for professional success, democratic citizenship and lives of meaning and value, these rankings remind us of the importance of that work."

## New Master of Science in Athletic Training Program Announced

Beginning in the fall semester of 2024, Millikin University's College of Professional Studies will launch a new Master of Science in Athletic Training program (MSAT) that will prepare students for a rewarding career at the intersection of sports and healthcare.

Candidates can enter the MSAT program in two ways. They can take

advantage of the Athletic Training (3+2) program in which students complete the first three years in the Exercise Science major and then can be eligible for a secondary admission process to complete the MSAT program. Students selecting this path will graduate with a master's degree in five years.

For students with a bachelor's degree, the Graduate-Level Entry option allows candidates with a completed bachelor's degree in Exercise Science, Athletic Training or a related field at another university to apply for admission into Millikin's MSAT program.



# HOMECOMING HONORS OUTSTANDING ALUMNI

Alumni, friends, and family of Millikin University traveled back to Decatur for Homecoming weekend on Sept. 29-Oct. 1.



ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

## David J. Rathje '58

David J. Rathje studied Engineering at Millikin before transferring to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. David founded Rathje Enterprises, which currently

includes Bodine Electric, the largest full-service electrical company in the Midwest, and The Kelly Group, which provides general contracting in four states. David and his wife, Debra, live in Decatur. David's generous, decades-long support of Millikin has most recently taken the form of the David J. and Debra C. Rathje Athletic Center (see page 10 for more).



MERIT AWARD

## LeeAnn Bailey M.D. '96

Dr. LeeAnn Bailey earned her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry. While at Millikin, LeeAnn was part of Alpha Phi Omega, the Black Emphasis Association,

American Chemical Society and Hospitality Corps. Currently LeeAnn serves as the Chief of the Integrated Networks Branch of the National Cancer Institute's Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities and lives with her husband, Lourell, in Germantown, Md.



FACULTY/STAFF AWARD

## Dr. Jan Devore

Dr. Jan Devore was an integral part of Millikin University during her 35-year tenure. While at Millikin she served as Resident Director, Dean of Students and Director of

Alumni Relations. Along with these roles, Jan participated in multiple University Choir tours and coordinated annual trips that helped connect alumni across the country.



MERIT-LOYALTY AWARD

## Michael Halbert '79

Michael Halbert earned a Bachelor of Arts in both Political Science and Philosophy. Michael lives in Washington, Ind., with his wife, Angela, where he serves as

the Chief Legislative and Policy Director and Chief of Staff for Alderman Michael Scott Jr. He has supported the University through the development of the LJ and Melva Halbert Family Memorial Scholarship for underrepresented individuals.



YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD

## Joel Kim Booster '10

Joel Kim Booster is a Hulu- and Netflix-starring actor, writer, producer and comedian. Joel, who graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Theatre, has been widely

recognized as a rising star in the entertainment field, being named to the "Time100 Next List." In 2022, he returned to campus to headline the Goodheart Event and teach a masterclass to current Millikin students.



LOYALTY AWARD

## Sue Vaughan Nelson '66

Sue Vaughan Nelson earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. Currently, Susan lives in Indianapolis, Ind., with her husband and serves on the Alumni Board.

Sue also shows her ongoing support of Millikin through donations to the Millikin Fund, Class of 1966 Scholarship and New Horizons Unrestricted Endowment Gifts.

# 2023 MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



## Devin Crews '18

BASEBALL

In 2018, Devin Crews had a .372 batting average with 10 doubles, 11 home runs and 30 RBIs. During his time at Millikin, Devin

set the record for most hits in a season with 67. He also holds the record for most stolen bases in a single game at four and has tied other Big Blue records – the most at bats with 180, most runs scored in a game with five and most home runs in a game with three.



## Kelsy England Wasmuth '12

VOLLEYBALL

Kelsy Wasmuth played volleyball for four years while at Millikin and had a very notable career

as a student-athlete. During her time at the Big Blue, Kelsy was co-captain and team MVP in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Kelsy also was named to the CCIW All-Conference First Team in 2009, 2010 and 2011. She ranked third all-time in career digs (1737), third all-time in career kills (1978), third all-time with kills in a match (29) and sixth all-time kills in a season (564).



## The Undefeated 1961 Football Team

The legendary 1961 Big Blue football team went undefeated, finishing the season 8-0 and outscoring

their opponents 305-79. The Big Blue defeated Illinois State University 22-16 to open the season and then won seven successive conference games to win the conference title, Millikin's first undisputed title since the 1942 football season. Don Shroyer, a 1950 Millikin graduate, coached the 1961 team. He later coached at Southern Illinois University and for the St. Louis Cardinals in the National Football League. Co-captains of the team were halfback Jerry Domescik '62 and tackle Ryan Jorstad '62



## Bryan Marshall '85

FACULTY-STAFF AWARD

Bryan Marshall is a 1985 Millikin graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. He joined the Millikin staff in 2000 as

Media Relations Director after spending 15 years in television broadcasting. Marshall has been married to Millikin graduate Shannon Black Marshall '06 since 1996 and their son, Nathan, graduated from Millikin in 2020, and their daughter Taylor Black Butler and son-in-law Garrett Butler both earned their MU degrees in 2013. After serving as Millikin's Assistant Athletic Director for Sports Information and Athletic Communication since 2008, Bryan Marshall transitioned into the role of Assistant Athletic Director for Internal Operations this August.



## DR. DAN MONROE TO LEAD SEARCH FOR ILLINOIS STATE HISTORIAN

Millikin University Associate Professor of History Dr. Dan Monroe will lead the search committee tasked with finding candidates for the position of Illinois State Historian.

In the past, the position was a permanent post held by a state employee who was an Abraham Lincoln expert. Now, the appointment will last two years and can go to anyone with the proper credentials, no matter where they work or their historical focus.

Monroe specializes in American History and is the author of three books. He is also the former President of the Illinois State Historical Society and is a member of the board of the Abraham Lincoln Association. He also serves as the Illinois Historian on the Board of Trustees of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.



### ACADEMIC NEWS

#### College of Arts & Sciences Restructured

Effective Aug. 1, 2023, Millikin University's College of Arts & Sciences has been restructured into five schools: The School of Writing, Languages & Cultures; the School of Social Sciences; the School of Biological & Environmental Studies; the School of Mathematics & Computational Sciences; and the School of Chemistry & Physics.

Dr. Julie Bates is the Director of the School of Writing, Languages & Cultures, which encompass English and Modern Language.

Dr. Brian Mullgardt is the Director of the School of Social Sciences, which includes History, Political Science, Philosophy (Pre-Law), Psychology, Sociology and Criminal Justice. Dr. Jen Schroeder serves as the Director of the School of Biological & Environmental Studies, which includes Biology and Environmental Studies. Dr. Joe Stickle, Class of 1993, serves as the Director of the School of Mathematics & Computational Sciences, which includes Mathematics and Computational Sciences. Dr. Tim Guasco is the Director of the School of Chemistry & Physics, which includes Chemistry and Physics.

## Dr. J. Mark Munoz Runner-Up in Male Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year Competition

Millikin University Tabor School of Business Professor Dr. J. Mark Munoz finished as the runner-up for the 2023 Male Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year (Education Champion) Award at the Triple E Awards hosted by the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial & Engaged Universities (ACEEU). Members of the Millikin community supported Munoz's bid

and propelled him to be named the People's Choice winner by receiving the most votes in the public voting portion of the competition.

The Male Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year (Education Champion) Award recognizes a man who has demonstrated outstanding leadership performance in the development of an institution's entrepreneurial profile.



## Global Citizenship: Millikin's Performance Learning Takes Students Around the World

The Big Blue Community not only includes Decatur, Central Illinois and all 50 states – through the extensive study-abroad experiences Millikin offers as part of its Performance Learning curriculum, the University's community is truly global in its reach.

### "Politics of Borderlands" Summer Immersion Takes Students to Eastern Europe

With the end of the 2022-23 academic year behind them, nine Millikin University students and two faculty members packed their bags and headed abroad to take part in the Politics of the Borderlands course – a summer immersion to the Baltic States in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia – and returned with some fantastic memories and a better appreciation of how to be a global citizen.

The group, led by Associate Professor of Political Science Laura Dean and Assistant Professor of History Danielle Alesi, made stops in Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and Finland. Along with many politically focused stops – the group visited the parliaments of the Baltic States and met with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs – they also completed a volunteer project with Common Ground, an organization helping Ukrainian refugees who were forced to relocate to Latvia following Russia's invasion of the country in February 2022.

### Performance Learning Takes Students to Costa Rica

A group of 27 Millikin University students and three faculty and staff members packed their bags and grabbed their passports to take part in a trip to Costa Rica in March. The group, comprised mostly of School of Nursing students, also featured a diverse collection of majors, including Business, Psychology, Education, Biology and Criminal Justice, on the part Performance Learning and part Central American sightseeing trip.

The trip was led by Nursing faculty members Gail Fyke and Julia Auton and Center of International Education Coordinator Athena Pajer. While there, students visited a local clinic and witnessed the challenges of delivering healthcare to the more remote areas of Costa Rica.

### Millikin Students, Faculty Perform in Brazil

Millikin University Associate Professor of Music Mark Tonelli built a strong network of connections at his host institution during his Fulbright Scholar trip to Brazil in 2022. Less than a year later, Tonelli returned with four Millikin students and another Millikin faculty member to get a first-hand 10-day Brazilian music experience trip in March 2023.

The group, known as the Millikin University Brazilian Ensemble, represented the Jazz Educators Network and Guitar Club student organizations and included School of Music Adjunct Professor Dr. Emma Taylor '18, Kyle McMillen, Lorimer Arteaga, Dane Edwards and Jaden DeLay.



# THE MISSION GRABS YOU



Class of 2006, MBA Class of 2016  
Management & Organizational  
Leadership Major

## Amber Kaylor

CEO, Ronald McDonald House  
Charities of Central Illinois



When Millikin University graduate Amber Kaylor '06, MBA '16 introduces herself as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois, she often finds that a personal story quickly follows.

The Ronald McDonald House Charities provide a place to stay for families with a seriously ill or injured child who is in a hospital. The Central Illinois chapter operates houses in Springfield and Peoria, and their services are provided free of charge to aid those going through some of the most challenging moments of their lives.

“When I accepted this position, people would come up to me left and right saying that they had stayed in

a Ronald McDonald House. We are talking 30 years ago, and they are talking about it like it was yesterday,” Amber said. “It is an honor to be a part of a family’s story, and to have an impact on a family at that time is a tremendous privilege. The thing about what we do is that people never forget. Nobody forgets that feeling of their child being ill, and it drove home for me what a privilege it is to be a part of that journey. You have a lifelong impact with these families.”

Growing up in Decatur, Millikin was a part of Amber’s life, and when she attended Millikin, she took part in Millikin’s Flexible Learning, formerly known as PACE, for individuals who are looking for a variety of paths to

earn their degree. Classes take place in various formats, including online, in-person, and during the daytime, evenings and weekends.

*“Millikin is a staple in the community. It was something you knew about because you engaged with it. As far back as grade school, I remember going to plays there and taking my ACT on campus,” she said.*

“I was in one of the first cohorts for the PACE Program, and it was a wonderful opportunity. I had a full-time job then, and I was getting involved in the community, so I didn’t want to lose that momentum. I was able to mesh all of those things together, and be part of campus and have the college experience.”

Before returning as a graduate student, Amber worked as an Admission Counselor & Coordinator for Multicultural Recruitment at Millikin, where she got to share her love of the University with prospective students.

*“I was able to talk about Millikin and advocate for the community. It was an opportunity for me to cheerlead for Decatur, especially being from here,” she said.*

“In that role, you have to balance a lot of things, and the Admission Counselors are the unsung heroes at many institutions.”

As Amber considered her future career path after working for United Way of Decatur & Mid-Illinois as Director of Resource Development, the love of nonprofit work continued to ignite her passion.

“The mission is what grabs you, that is what I tell people. The mission is what gets you. Everyone has hobbies, and I think that people are my hobby. Being a part of someone’s story and being a part of the solution for what people are going through is hard to walk away from,” she said. “The mission is what hooked me with nonprofit work, and going through the MBA program, you are immersed in all parts of the business. You come out feeling well-rounded as a leader.”

After getting her MBA, Amber became the CEO of the Children’s Museum of Illinois. She had previously interviewed there before earning her graduate degree and felt the difference between the experiences was night and day.

“I felt so much more confident and prepared. I felt that I was in a different place professionally,” Amber said. “It was interesting to have those two opportunities to interview for the same position and get it the second time. It was exactly how it was supposed to work out.”



Amber became the CEO of the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois in 2020 and oversees an operation with 30 employees that can serve 700-800 families a year. In 2022 alone, they accommodated 8,300 overnight stays. As she leads the charity into the future, she hopes to expand the group’s in-hospital services and possibly remodel and expand the Springfield location.

“My job is to be five years down the road with strategy and vision and building connections. Where are we as an organization today and where do we need to be?,” Amber said. “Our environment changes constantly and the needs of our families change constantly. I’m looking ahead and setting the direction and the path of how we will get there.”





DR. RANDALL RENTFRO, LEFT, WITH HIS HUSBAND, DR. RON LENNON.

Class of 1978  
Accounting Major

## Dr. Randall Rentfro

Millikin University Board of Trustees  
Emeritus Member

Dedicated, Longtime, Major Capital  
and Scholarship Donor

Long before Dr. Randall Rentfro became a dedicated alumnus and major capital project and scholarship donor, he was deeply inspired by both the arts and community experiences available in his hometown of Decatur, Ill. Visits to Millikin's Kirkland Fine Arts Center with his friends from MacArthur High School exposed him to the campus and helped the University shape Rentfro's life.

"I was awed by Kirkland," Dr. Rentfro said. "Even then, I could appreciate how lucky we were to have a facility like that in our hometown."

In 1978, Dr. Rentfro graduated from Millikin University with a degree in Accounting. Along with serving on Millikin's Board of Trustees, Dr. Rentfro received Millikin's Alumni Loyalty Award in 2021. While he earned a Master's in Accounting from the University of Illinois and a Doctorate in Accounting from Florida Atlantic University, the arts were always a central passion, both in his life and the life of his husband, Dr. Ron Lennon.

# IT'S TIME TO PAY IT FORWARD

"The arts make us better people. We can experience the world through other lenses and see life from other perspectives," Rentfro said.

Rentfro's husband, Ron, earned a bachelor's degree in Theatre Administration from Long Island University, an MBA from the University of Baltimore and a Doctorate in Marketing from the University of Maryland. Together, they have put their efforts toward improving the arts and community around them.

Among their decorated history of giving and charity, their contribution to Millikin's Center for Theatre & Dance stands out both for its generosity and its aim to improve Millikin for generations to come. Dr. Rentfro and Dr. Lennon's involvement in the Center for Theatre & Dance project started in the planning stages, when the project was more vision than reality.

"I supported the project in every way I could from its inception, and Ron and I became donors to it," Dr. Rentfro said.

After witnessing the completion of the Manatee Performing Arts Center in their local community of Bradenton, Fla., they were inspired to see a similar community commitment fulfilled at Millikin University. "I was very excited about the prospect of a new facility for an area of the University that meant so much to me as a student."

Dr. Rentfro and Dr. Lennon's gifts allowed them the opportunity to name a faculty office and the office of the Director of the School of Theatre & Dance. Though they looked forward to the contribution to the arts that the Center for Theatre & Dance would bring to Millikin, Dr. Rentfro's conviction about the value of community and each individual's unique talents shaped his purpose for helping fund the facility.

"Millikin helped shape me, and in some small ways, I have helped shape Millikin. My varied experiences as a Millikin student, faculty member and trustee have taught me to value the differences I see in the people I encounter daily," he said. "We shouldn't be threatened by differences. We should celebrate them. We need to do the hard work of rebuilding a sense of community, which allows each person to feel included and able to contribute in a meaningful way."

Dr. Rentfro's meaningful contributions to the arts and community extend beyond financial support, as recently he has returned to his love of performing and acting. Nearly 40 years after performing in "The Lion in Winter" at Millikin, Dr. Rentfro performed in "Chaplin: The Musical," "Gypsy" and "Sunset



Boulevard" at his local community theater. Resuming his passion for acting and receiving enthusiastic support from his husband have reignited Dr. Rentfro's love and commitment to community arts. He hopes his commitment will carry over to Millikin University, which will benefit future students who not only study arts and performance, but who love these entities as well.

*"It's time for all of us who have benefitted from Millikin to pay it forward," he said. "Together, we need to guarantee that a financially stable Millikin will continue to shape the lives of students for generations to come."*



# Marie Jagger-Taylor

Director, Millikin Community Arts Academy



The history of stage and screen is filled with performers known as “triple threats” – singers who also dance and act, actors who produce and direct. The Millikin Community Arts Academy (MCAA) has its own “triple threat” in Director Marie Jagger-Taylor. And in the case of Jagger-Taylor, “triple” doesn’t even begin to cover it.

An award-winning actor, dancer, singer, choreographer and director, Jagger-Taylor has not only toured nationally on the stage, but has spent her life championing the arts as an educator, advocate and mentor in every community she’s called home – from New York City, to Chicago, to Central Illinois.

“There is nothing more fulfilling than seeing a student have that ‘aha’

moment when they believe in themselves and their choices,” Jagger-Taylor said. “Arts Education provides students an opportunity to find their voice, to be empathetic, to find confidence in themselves, to walk in someone else’s shoes, to work independently as well as with a group, to be something larger than themselves and to think creatively.”

This lifelong passion for the arts has its origins in Jagger-Taylor’s childhood, spending her Sundays singing, performing and playing piano with three generations of her family. Born in Pueblo, Colorado, the third oldest of nine children, she spent her childhood not only performing at home, but for members of her community. At a young age, she joined her grandmother Verlingia and sister Joni to bring performances to the residents of local nursing homes. Jagger-Taylor credits her family, especially her mother, for this drive.

“My mom is truly who I credit with shaping my love for the arts. My mom, Emma Olive (Molly), gave me a truly special gift sharing her passion of the

arts with me and my siblings,” she said. “My mom opened the door to thinking creatively, being creative and being courageous in thinking outside the box. She continues to be my role model as she tapped and did the splits into her 80s!”

Even with this background, Jagger-Taylor’s professional start in the arts came unexpectedly, after attending Colorado College with the aim of going on to law school.

“After graduation, the American Troupe of Players lost their choreographer and asked me to fill in. This took me to New York City, where I started teaching dance, choreographing and performing for off-Broadway companies,” she said. “While in NYC, I joined AEA [Americans Equity Association] and ... toured Canada and the U.S. with ‘A Chorus Line,’ ‘A Christmas Carol’ and the original ‘It’s A Wonderful Life.’”

After 10 years in New York City, Jagger-Taylor moved to Chicago, where she started a Youth Theatre Outreach Program and developed original works

for the Center Theatre. She also joined SAG-AFTRA (Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and enjoyed doing film and voice-over work.

While there, she met Seth Reines, Artistic Director for The Little Theatre On The Square in Sullivan, Ill. This precipitated a move to Sullivan, where she savored the opportunity to play some of her favorite stage roles – Kathy in “Singin’ in the Rain,” Marie in “West Side Story,” Brooke in “Noises Off” and Cassie in “A Chorus Line.”

It was also during this time that her arts advocacy took off in earnest.

“I served as the Education Director for the Little Theatre On The Square from 1998-2007 and then went to the Decatur Park District from 2007-20, where I served as the Cultural Arts Manager and continued to build community involvement, support and interests in the arts,” she said. “In 2020-21, I served as the Arts Education Specialist at the Decatur Public School District, where I advocated for equality in Arts Education and passed an Arts Education Policy for the Decatur Public School District.”

And with this work came recognition: In 2011, she received the Women of Excellence Award for her work in the cultural arts. In 2013, she received the Jennifer Song Community Spirit Award, and in 2018, the Excellence in Theatre Education Tony Award Honorable Mention. The Excellence in Theatre

## ARTIST, ADVOCATE, MENTOR

Education Tony Award was especially prestigious, honoring K-12 theatre educators across the nation who have demonstrated monumental impact on the lives of students while embodying the highest standards of their profession.

“However,” she adds, “my greatest achievements are those I share with my husband, Jody, and our three children, Caleb, Emma and Gabe.”

Jagger-Taylor joined the MCAA as Director in 2021, after serving nearly 20 years on-and-off as an adjunct instructor for Millikin’s School of Theatre & Dance. Under her leadership, MCAA has continued the Millikin School of Music’s 100-year tradition of connecting highly trained faculty and upper-level Millikin students with community members of all ages. MCAA’s wide-ranging arts programming fosters an appreciation of, and participation in, the arts while providing members of the surrounding communities with experiences they otherwise wouldn’t have.

As Jagger-Taylor continues to build on MCAA’s legacy in the community – “I would love to see an alumni component of MCAA where we utilize our area alumni to offer programming for the community through MCAA, including artist-in-residencies for area schools” – she has never lost sight of that passion passed down from her mom.



*“The opportunity to provide programming that keeps the arts alive, available and accessible to the community and students is what drives me,” she said.*

“I’m truly grateful for the opportunity to be a member of the Big Blue community and truly appreciate the support the faculty, students and community have given me through supporting MCAA and our endeavors.”

LEARN MORE

**THE MCAA PROVIDES COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMMING FOR ALL AGES, FOSTERING A LIFELONG APPRECIATION OF, AND PARTICIPATION IN, THE ARTS.**

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT

[millikin.edu/mcaa](http://millikin.edu/mcaa)



# College of Arts & Sciences



WATCH VIDEO



## Jake Shumaker

Class of 2024  
Computer Science Major

Millikin University's Jake Shumaker doesn't let an opportunity pass him by. The Computer Science major is entering his senior year this fall but has already built an impressive resume of activities in and out of the classroom that often fill his days from sunrise to sunset.

Early mornings are typically spent on the track as a Big Blue All-American runner, while his days could be spent on his coursework, serving as a Senior

Consultant for the student-run venture Millikin University Performance Consulting (MUPC) or at either of his two internships at State Farm Insurance and Boost Microgravity Treadmills.

"At first, when I came to Millikin, it was just about being involved in sports. Now it is being involved in a student-run business and having two internships," Jake said. "Now, it is helping the Pi Mu Epsilon Honors Society and making an impact on campus in a couple of different groups. I feel like I have made an impact all over campus, and I'm trying to be a leader for those around me."

Originally from Mount Zion, Ill., Jake initially came to Millikin to play soccer for the Big Blue. He did that for his first year and then made the move to run full-time for track and field, where he has excelled.

Shumaker set school records in the 800 meters at the 2023 NCAA Division III Indoor Championships in March, finishing fifth overall in the nation to become an All-American.

He was also critical to the landmark 2023 outdoor season for the Big Blue Men's Track & Field team. Shumaker

ran the anchor leg of the 4x400 relay that captured the gold at the 2023 College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The Big Blue finished second overall, their best team finish since 1963.

Academically, Shumaker has always been interested in engineering, be it civil or software, and he gets to put those skills to work in his Performance Learning experiences with MUPC, State Farm and Boost.

Shumaker's first project with MUPC centered around Decatur's PawPrint Ministries, a nonprofit group that brings registered therapy/comfort dogs to individuals in healthcare facilities, schools and senior homes. The MUPC project installed a new email system and a more vibrant website for the group.

*"Having the opportunity to work with an organization in the community gave me a sense of pride to know that this nonprofit is helping those around the community and helping with mental health," he said.*

# SMALL SCHOOL, BIG OPPORTUNITIES

"It was special to me to build that connection with the client, and it allowed me to get my feet wet and get into the IT consulting world."

At State Farm, Jake gained Performance Learning experience in software and app development focused on the user experience. His internship at Boost resulted from a perfect storm of ingenuity and a desire to improve athletically.

Boost treadmills can help athletes train and recover from injuries by creating a pressure-filled cage encompassing the runner from the waist down. Changing the pressure in the cage makes the runner feel like they are running in lower gravity.

"The sensation is almost like running on the Moon. The pressure on the hips allows you to lift up, giving you less pressure on your legs," Jake said. "We use it for training, and there is less impact on the ground, saving your legs and improving recovery time. For someone returning from an ankle injury or a tight knee, it allows them to go through the running motion without the pressure."

While using the device, Jake noticed a flaw in the design and decided to reach out to Boost to suggest a fix. It was another opportunity that Jake couldn't pass up.

"When the plastic cage is down, it is crinkled and can deteriorate

more quickly. When it is up, it is active and being used. I suggested an improvement to this to have a timer system. When there isn't any weight on the treadmill after some time, the cage would automatically rise, which extends the life of the cage," Jake said.

Jake contacted customer service about his suggestion, and after talking with a Boost engineer, he now has an internship with the company to continue to improve the design.

"It was a shot in the dark. They thought the idea was good and we set up a Zoom call with the inventor of the Boost," Jake said. "We talked about future projects they were working on and how I could fit into that role as an intern."

Just as he's succeeded on the track, the accolades have followed Jake in his academic pursuits. During the 2023 Honors Convocation, he was selected as one of eight student recipients of the Scovill Prize, the highest award for overall excellence at Millikin University. He also received the Podeschi-Landacre Management Information Systems Award, honoring a student that has shown excellence and leadership in Performance Learning experiences.

"Coming to Millikin, I didn't know about these opportunities. Internships had never crossed my mind. MUPC was something I never thought I would become a part of. I think I have leaned on my professors and mentors – be it [Millikin Track & Field Head Coach] Andrew Craycraft or [Assistant Coach] Ben Kuxmann – to show me that all of these things can be done," Jake said.

*"None of this would be possible on my own and I needed the support of my peers, professors and coaches. They have been super impactful and special for me to create this small school environment that has allowed me to do big school things."*





# Tabor School of Business

## Elyce Knudsen

Class of 2024  
Finance Major



WATCH VIDEO

Service over self. It's an idea that Millikin University senior Elyce Knudsen has built her college experience around, and it touches everything she has done in her three years on campus, including becoming one of the best NCAA Division III women's basketball players in the nation, maintaining a near 4.0 GPA and actively volunteering in the community.

Elyce's journey to Millikin began when Big Blue Women's Basketball Coach Olivia Lett became a regular fixture at her high school basketball games during her senior season. Coach Lett saw great potential in her, even though Elyce was more interested in playing

collegiate softball than basketball at the time. It was a reminder to never listen to your critics.

"In high school, I was told I was too small to be able to play at the collegiate level in basketball. So that was where my mindset was," Elyce said. "During my senior season, I broke the all-time scoring record at [Tolono Unity High School], and I thought basketball could actually be on the table for me. Then our softball season was canceled due to COVID, leading me to Millikin on the basketball path."

Knudsen's impact on the Big Blue program was felt immediately, leading the team to a College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) Tournament championship in her first year while averaging a team-high 18.5 points a game. The NCAA Tournament that season was canceled due to COVID, but the team has since made consecutive appearances.

During her three seasons, the Big Blue posted a combined 58-15 record, including an outstanding 37-6 CCIW record. Knudsen averaged 22.3 points last season, earning her the CCIW Lori Kerans Student-Athlete of the Year Award and a unanimous CCIW First Team selection for the second straight season.

The postseason awards kept coming as Knudsen became the first Millikin basketball player to win the Jostens Trophy, a national award recognizing the most outstanding men's and women's Division III basketball players of the year.

*"Millikin has put me in a position to be successful and find what I am really good at here. I don't know if I could get that at another school," Elyce said.*

"There's no way that I would have thought after high school that I would be competing at the level that I am competing at. That is due to Coach Lett and my teammates and just allowing me to be the best version of myself here."

While Knudsen's outstanding performance on the court has brought her a trophy case full of honors, she feels her teammates are just as responsible for those honors, and she wants them to know that.

"All of these awards go to my teammates and those here at the University who have helped me. It is also important for them to be congratulated," Elyce said. "I would not be able to get these accolades and be in my position without them. Sometimes I don't think they understand that, so I sent them a message about how the Jostens Trophy is their award too. I think that is very important for them to know and they are an amazing group of women."

Elyce began her Millikin studies as an Accounting major and went on to make a shift to Finance, which would position her better to get into sports marketing following graduation. Since then, Elyce has been getting firsthand knowledge of Central Illinois businesses.

"My favorite class has been Financial Management and we were able to present on Caterpillar and where their target price would be in a year," she said. "I was able to do that with five other students and we dug into the

company as a whole and what they sell."

This past summer, Elyce got a Performance Learning experience at JCG Midwest, a farming products business based in Moweaqua, Ill.

"I worked with JCG Midwest's Chief Financial Officer. I shadowed him and worked on projects myself," she said. "Coming into Millikin, I had an idea that it would be a lot of hands-on, real-world experience because that is what Millikin is all about. I was very excited about that because I want to apply what I've learned outside of the classroom right away. Many people don't get that opportunity."

Basketball serves as a bridge to Elyce's community service endeavors as well. Along with her Big Blue teammate Bailey Coffman, Knudsen founded a reading club at local Decatur-area public schools called "Book-it," which creates opportunities for Millikin student-athletes to go into schools two times each month to read to students and answer questions.

Twice a year, Macon Resources, Inc. (MRI), a Decatur-based nonprofit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities, hosts Field Day events for its residents, and the Women's Basketball team hosts a scrimmage. Many of the MRI residents are regular attendees at Big Blue games and it is an opportunity to connect with some of their favorite players.



For her senior season, Knudsen has big goals and after graduation, she is considering her graduate school options and a fifth year of basketball eligibility.

"I have thought about graduate school and about staying with basketball in coaching. I would love to give back within my hometown community [of Philo, Ill.], which has been very important to me my whole life."

*"My ultimate goal is to get this team to the Final Four and a national championship. We've got the assets to do that, but that starts with me taking that role as a senior leader. Developing leadership is another big goal of mine, and I'm always learning how to be a great leader and build on that. I want to get us to the top of the national level."*



# FINDING HER VOICE



WATCH VIDEO

College of  
Fine Arts

**Adriana  
Martinez**

Class of 2024  
Music Education Major

As a child, Millikin University senior Music Education major Adriana Martinez always hummed and sang, but the enjoyment of performing faded as they grew older.

“When I was little, I sang all the time, but when I grew up, I got really shy and stopped singing. I didn’t want to sing in front of anyone,” Adriana said. “But in my first year of high school, I did a musical, which I thought was a lot of fun. Ever since I’ve been in some kind of ensemble singing.”

Adriana’s path to Millikin became clear when they learned of the opportunity to combine a love of performing with teaching as a Musical Education major.

“My choir teacher in high school, Christopher Cherry ’04, was a Millikin alum, and as soon as I mentioned that I wanted to be a

teacher, he said that I had to go to his alma mater,” Adriana said. “He told me about the program and all they do in Music Education and that it is a great school. He helped me with the whole Millikin process.”

As Adriana has continued to step into the spotlight, their busy schedule is filled with opportunities that have pushed them into new areas of performing, including being a member of Millikin’s Treble Choir, University Choir, OneVoice Vocal Jazz Ensemble, BlueBop Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Dissonance A Capella.

“I’ve been in so many different ensembles and solo opportunities here at Millikin, and I enjoy creating a sound with others. I’ve pushed

myself out of my comfort zone in performing as a soloist,” she said. “That is something different that I wasn’t comfortable with when I first arrived. Now I’m excited to get a chance to do that and continue it when I leave.”

As Adriana prepares for their student teaching experience in the second semester of her senior year, they feel Millikin has prepared her well by providing bountiful experiences in the classroom.

“One of the great things about Millikin’s Education program is that they get you into schools immediately. My first year during COVID was observing videos online, but for my sophomore year, as soon as we got the OK, I was in schools all over Decatur, preparing and teaching some lessons,” Adriana said.

*“I am so excited to graduate and get straight into the classroom. I think a lot of people are nervous about it, but with the experience that I have had, I feel very prepared.”*

Adriana has also taken advantage of several Performance Learning opportunities at Millikin. Each Saturday, they co-teach a Music & Movement class through the Millikin Community Arts Academy, which is a music appreciation class for babies and preschoolers.

“We sing and play games, and the kids interact and play instruments. I love to do it,” Adriana said. “There is a lot of development that will happen with a baby’s brain that is amazing. They retain much of it, whether they can give it back to you or not. It is cool to see the kids grow, and the class is what I look forward to the most every week.”

As the President of the American Choral Directors Association chapter at Millikin, Adriana leads the annual Millikin Vocal Festival. The event brings Central Illinois high school

students to campus for a 48-hour singing competition.

“In less than 48 hours, they get brand new music, learn it and perform it. I was in charge of that last year, and I am doing the same thing this year,” Adriana said. “It’s a huge event and students can also audition with Millikin Music faculty while they are here.”

Starting their college career at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge, but as campus life returned to normal, Adriana made it a goal to make the most out of each opportunity and continue to build the Millikin community.

“Overall, I think I got the absolute most that I could have gotten here out of Millikin. I love being a part of things and being in leadership positions. I’ve had my moments where I’ve been in those positions, and I’ve had those moments where I’ve just been a team member,” Adriana said.

*“If there is anything else I can get out of Millikin, I will probably get it this semester. I’m excited to graduate and have a classroom to teach my kids and influence someone else to come to Millikin and pursue Music Education.”*





# College of Professional Studies

## D Galvan

Class of 2024  
Sports & Recreation  
Management Major



On the tennis court, D Galvan makes a tremendous impact as half of Millikin University's No. 1 Women's Tennis doubles team, but off the court, she hopes that her influence will be just as significant as a coach and mentor.

Although she came to tennis late when she found the sport in seventh grade, D dedicated her athletic life to it and hopes to coach the next generation of tennis players after her graduation from Millikin next spring with a Sports and Recreation Management degree.

"I was always into basketball and softball, and I did not know what tennis was. I wanted to try a new sport and I've been playing ever since," D said. "When I step out of college, I hope to get right into the

high school area of tennis coaching. I am passionate about coaching, and I feel like I can talk to kids very well and am a good leader. I have been trying to build up my resume to be a tennis coach."

D has already gained considerable experience in the local community through Performance Learning, serving as a coach for the Decatur Eisenhower and MacArthur High School tennis teams and continuing lessons with players privately.

"Last year, I was a tennis instructor at Fairview Park for the Decatur Park District. I met the MacArthur and Eisenhower head coach, who asked me to help with his teams. For about a year and a half, I was helping both the boys and girls teams," D said. "I was helping them learn the tennis

basics because many were new and didn't know the techniques. For the kids that knew, we were working on building up their skills."

D is originally from Levelland, Texas, a 14-hour drive from Decatur, and was on the recruiting radar of the Women's Tennis coaching staff during high school. D could only take a short virtual tour due to COVID-19 restrictions before coming to Decatur but felt Millikin was a perfect fit after meeting her tennis teammates.

"I talked with some of my teammates, and I felt like, yes, this is where I want to go to school," D said. "The team atmosphere felt right, and I told my parents that this is what I wanted to do."

## SERVING UP LEADERSHIP

D's impact on the team was felt immediately as she was named a team captain in her sophomore year and earned CCIW All-Conference honors in 2021 and 2022. Her power of positivity has also been a critical piece of the Big Blue's on-the-court successes.

"Being named a captain as a sophomore was scary. I think they saw me as a leader because of what I do, and no matter what I am doing, I want to support my team," D said. "[Recently, I was injured during a match], but I was hopping on crutches over to the other courts to cheer them on because we want to support each other."

At Millikin's 2023 Honors Convocation, D was one of the recipients of the Scovill Award, the most coveted award for overall excellence at Millikin, awarded based on academic achievement, demonstrated leadership and service, and scholarship.

*"I was very happy and surprised by winning a Scovill Award. All the work I put in didn't go unnoticed, and it was a great feeling to be nominated for one of the top awards at Millikin," D said.*

"Hearing my name called was pretty real, and I called my family from back



home. We did a mini-celebration over the phone."

Following graduation, D already has a job lined up teaching tennis with the Bloomington Parks and Recreation Department and hopes to continue branching out into high school coaching. She credits Millikin with preparing her to take those next steps.

"My time has gone by really fast, and I feel like my parents just dropped me off in my first year during COVID. It has

been really good and I'm excited to graduate," D said.

*"Not only has Millikin gotten me ready for the real world, but I owe a huge thank you to all of the faculty, coaches and professors. Without them and having the connections and being a role model, I don't know if I would be where I am today."*



# THE IMPACT OF GIVING



## Broadcast Your Support of Big Blue Radio

WJMU 89.5 “The Quad,” Millikin University’s award-winning college radio station now in its 52nd year, cannot be found on the FM dial and needs your help.

A severe storm in April 2023 destroyed the station’s transmitter tower on the roof of Shilling Hall, making it almost impossible to broadcast to the campus community and completely halting the station’s

ability to broadcast to Macon County and the surrounding communities. Most importantly, the damage keeps Millikin students from getting valuable hands-on live radio experience.

You can help get WJMU back on the air with live programming. A total of \$110,000 is needed for a powerful new broadcast transmitter and replacement of the damaged antenna. Help return the station and Millikin to full FCC compliance, solidify the station’s broadcast signal, and bring one of the nation’s best college radio stations back on air.

For more info, email Senior Director of Development Dan Baker at [drbaker@millikin.edu](mailto:drbaker@millikin.edu) or call him at 217.424.3757.

REACH OUT

HAVE A WJMU STORY TO TELL? SEND IT TO

[AlumNews@millikin.edu](mailto:AlumNews@millikin.edu)

## Your Legacy, Your Values

Developing a charitable giving plan that reflects your values and achieves your philanthropic goals at Millikin is easy. You can make a gift through your will or trust to benefit Millikin students for generations to come by using the following language:

*“I hereby give to Millikin University, located in Decatur, Illinois, \_\_\_% of my estate (or \$\_) to be used as its Board of Trustees may deem advisable (or for a specified use) for the benefit of Millikin University.”*

Don’t have a will? Millikin University is proud to partner with FreeWill to provide our Big Blue community with a complimentary tool to write a legal will. Alumni and friends all over the United States can now create a legal will (in 20 minutes or less!) completely free. Regardless of your age or financial situation, writing a will can protect the people you love, give you peace of mind and help you shape your legacy. To learn more or get started on shaping your legacy, visit: [bit.ly/LegacyMU](https://bit.ly/LegacyMU).

You may also complete a beneficiary designation form naming Millikin as the beneficiary of your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) fund and/or you can complete a transfer on death form at your bank or brokerage firm.

## One Man’s Legacy

WRITTEN BY: MATTHEW FLATEN

Estate gifts are not only a living legacy for the individuals who made them, they impact Millikin and its students in one or more vital ways. A generous gift from the estate of Charles Lugo ’50 recently received by Millikin will be used to support several projects and scholarship funds across campus.

“Mr. Lugo’s six-figure gift will support the Campus Renovation Fund, the Student Retention Scholarship Fund, the Annual Scholarship Fund and the new Nursing Simulation Lab,” said Dan Baker, Millikin’s Senior Development Director. “For his generosity, a new Nursing classroom in the Health Sciences West Building will bear his name.”

Charles, who passed away in 2021 at age 96, was a 1950 Millikin graduate and a resident of Quincy, Ill. A U.S. Navy veteran, he served in the South Pacific during World War II as a Radio Operator, Seaman 2nd Class. Following his



service to his country, Charles attended Millikin on the GI Bill, earning his bachelor’s degree in Banking and Finance and a minor in Salesmanship.

For several years after graduation, Charles managed the Washington Theater in Quincy. He then joined Quincy radio station WGEM in 1970, where he sold advertising and Muzak until his retirement. His legacy of giving will live on at Millikin University.

LEARN MORE

TO LEARN ABOUT DESIGNATING YOUR GIFT OR HOW THOSE GIFTS CAN PROVIDE YOU INCOME, VISIT

[millikin.edu/types-planned-gifts](https://millikin.edu/types-planned-gifts)

## Matching Gifts Can Maximize Your Giving

You can double, triple or even quadruple the impact of your gift to Millikin if you or your spouse work for or are retired from a company that has a matching gift program. To learn more about employer matching gifts and to determine whether your employer matches your donations, visit [millikin.edu/ways-give](https://millikin.edu/ways-give)

## Ways to Give

### SECURELY ONLINE

Go to [millikin.edu/give](https://millikin.edu/give). This is also the easiest way to set up recurring gifts.

### BY MAIL

Send a check made out to Millikin University and mail it to: Millikin Alumni & Development Office, 1184 W. Main St., Decatur, IL 62522

### OTHER TYPES OF GIFTS

Millikin accepts gifts of stocks/securities, IRA distributions, donations through a Donor-Advised Fund and other giving methods.

To learn more, call the Millikin Alumni & Development Office at 217.424.6383 or email [millikinfund@millikin.edu](mailto:millikinfund@millikin.edu)



1950

**Dr. George Masannat, Class of 1958**, is enjoying retirement from the Political Science Department, Western Kentucky University, where he was a full Professor of Political Science and received several awards. He also served as department head for 11 years and wrote, edited and/or published several professional books and articles.

1970

**Cornell C. Thomas, DDS, Class of 1974**, is a retired Professor Emeritus in Dentistry from SIU School of Dental Medicine. He served 44 years in dental education and 45 years in private practice in St. Louis. He remembers playing on the Millikin baseball team from 1970 to 1974, being active in the Black Student Union and serving as President of For Soul Only from 1972 to 1974.

1980

**Elizabeth Ryerson Allison, Class of 1988**, is a kindergarten teacher at Decatur's Hope Academy. Last June, she married Steve Allison, who works in sales at Bodine Electric.

1990

**Tony Obrohta, Class of 1991**, is a guitarist for the legendary rock band, Chicago.

**Heather Lee Corwin, Class of 1993**, was invited to the University of Tennessee to work with graduate and undergraduate students in a three-day mental health workshop in October 2023. Skills covered included conflict resolution, emotional management, active listening, compartmentalizing,

how to repair relationships and more. Dr. Corwin is co-founder and co-owner of Lake Behavioral Health Associates in River Forest, Ill. She holds a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a somatic concentration from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

**Denise Murphy Williams, Class of 1996**, is Vice President/General Market Manager at TJX Companies-HomeGoods, leading the HomeGoods buying team in the California office in Los Angeles. She previously served as Assistant Vice President/Market Manager for the company.

2000

**Megan Russell Noga, Class of 2000**, was named by Forbes as one of the "Top Women Wealth Advisors Best in State." Megan is a Wealth Management Financial Advisor at Merrill Lynch, where she is a founding member of The Theis Noga Group. In that role, Megan leads the team's planning efforts, helping individuals plan and prepare for financial circumstances they may or may not anticipate.

**Alex Leong, Class of 2004**, is a Royalties Specialist at Musicnotes, Inc., where he previously worked for eight years as a Digital Sheet Music Specialist. In 2023, Alex released an album of original music, "Trampled Radio," and he also recorded with Los Angeles songwriter Mike Maimone on The Studio Nashville EP.

**Lindsay Senalik, Class of 2004** and Doctor of Chiropractic for Atlanta Chiropractic, LLC, welcomed her first child, Jackson Aric Donker, along with her partner, Chris Donker, on June 28, 2022.

**Jessica May, Class of 2005**, is Sales & Marketing Manager for Entertainment Project Services (EPS) in Las Vegas, Nev. EPS is a bespoke design and build firm that specializes in supplying custom automated equipment for theme parks, immersive experiences and other factions of the live entertainment industry. Jessica also serves as President on the board of the Maestros Inc., a volunteer-led and operated 501c(3) nonprofit supporting Western Middle School for the Arts magnet programs in Louisville, KY.

**John Robert Miller, Class of 2007**, is Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at Loyola University Medical Center and Team Physician for Loyola University Athletics, including the Final Four basketball team. He says, "Millikin provided me the foundation to stay on track with my pre-medicine curriculum and prerequisites. I was given the guidance to succeed in achieving competitive MCAT scores and reach my dream of becoming a medical doctor. Dr. Cynthia Handler helped guide me through the pre-medicine process including preparing for the MCAT and practicing for medical school interviews. Millikin provides the opportunity to achieve your career and personal goals through a personalized approach. Millikin kept me on-track and focused on my academic aspirations while also providing an opportunity to play Division III golf."

**Catheryne Thomas Popovitch, Class of 2008** and Deputy Director at the Illinois State Archives, is the 2023 recipient of the Mark A. Green Emerging Leader Award from the Society of American Archivists (SAA). The award celebrates and

encourages early-career archivists who have completed archival work of broad merit, demonstrated significant promise of leadership and performed commendable service to the archives profession.

2010

**Haley Hogenkamp, Class of 2017**, is a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) for the U.S. Department of State, working as a politically coned generalist focused on interacting with foreign governments on policy issues and negotiating policy.

**Jenesi Moore, Class of 2019**, graduated from the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine with a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree in May 2023. The college is one of only 33 veterinary schools in the United States. Dr. Moore, recipient of the Genevieve B. McDonough Veterinary Medicine Fund and the Tanner Leong Memorial Scholarship, is

now an Associate Veterinarian at Fairview Hospital for Animals. Her daughter, Serenity, is 10 years old.

## Join a Regional Club!

Regional Alumni Clubs offer a great support system for all alumni, from recent Big Blue graduates entering their new profession, those already in their chosen fields and retirees wanting to reconnect to the alma mater they love. Regional Alumni Clubs host events supported by the local alumni, the Alumni Association and Millikin's Alumni and Development Office. Networking and social events for area alumni, parents, students, incoming students and friends serve as vital communication links between the University and MU alumni and friends in various locations. Learn more at [millikin.edu/regional-clubs](http://millikin.edu/regional-clubs) or reach out to Paul Lidy, Senior Director of Alumni Engagement, at [plidy@millikin.edu](mailto:plidy@millikin.edu) or call 217.424.3563.

Don't see a Regional Alumni Club in your geographic areas? We would love to hear from alumni who would like to form a Regional Club in their area!

**BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL**  
Seeking area volunteers/leaders

**CHICAGO**  
Rickey Copley-Spivey, Class of 2007  
Julia Witty Miller, Class of 2006  
Kelsey Carter, Class of 2014  
Nike Smyth Whitcomb, Class of 1966

**DECATUR**  
Stephanie Price, Class of 1993  
Veronica Logan, Class of 2019  
Jason White, Class of 2000

**INDIANAPOLIS**  
Miranda Lofgren, Class of 2014  
Megan Smith, Class of 2015  
Sue Vaughan Nelson, Class of 1966

**NASHVILLE**  
Seeking area volunteers/leaders

**ST. LOUIS**  
Lisa Mason, Class of 1993  
Steve Mathias, Class of 1967  
Jayma Proctor, Class of 1991

## Alumni Association Board Members

A.D. Carson, Ph.D., Class of 2004,  
Charlottesville, Va.

Matthew Holley, Ph.D., Class of 1998,  
Indianapolis, Ind. (Vice President)

Bruce W. Jeffery, Class of 2007,  
West Chester, Ohio

Julane Benton Kiermas,  
Class of 1992, Cary, Ill.

Levi Laws, Class of 2019, Bloomington, Ill.

Carrie Seymour Mail,  
Class of 2007, Moline, Ill.

Lindsay Quick, Class of 2015,  
Champaign, Ill. (President)

Alexis Rogers, Class of 2015,  
Tuscola, Ill.

Traccye Starling-Love,  
Class of 2005, Oak Park, Ill.

Eric Sorensen, Class of 1985,  
Oak Park, Ill.

Alex Tueth, Class of 2016,  
Bloomington, Ill.

SHARE

**TO VIEW THE COMPLETE LIST OF MILLIKIN CLASS NOTES AND MEMORIALS, INCLUDING THOSE FROM RECENT MONTHS, PLEASE VISIT THE MILLIKIN WEBSITE AT [millikin.edu/magazine](http://millikin.edu/magazine).**

**TO SUBMIT A CLASS NOTE OR OBITUARY, PLEASE EMAIL [alumnews@millikin.edu](mailto:alumnews@millikin.edu) or complete the form at [millikin.edu/share-your-news](http://millikin.edu/share-your-news).**





## Sir Edward “Kidd” Jordan

*Class of 1967, New Orleans, La., April 7, 2023*

Internationally acclaimed saxophonist Sir Edward “Kidd” Jordan, a master avant-garde jazz musician, performed for more than 50 years and was an educator for 34 years, retiring in 2006 as Chairman of the Jazz Studies program at Southern University in New Orleans, La. He also served as Artistic Director of the Louis “Satcho” Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp from its start in 1995 until 2019. A 2021 Millikin Alumni Merit Award recipient who completed his Master’s Degree in Music at Millikin, Jordan founded the Kidd Jordan Institute of Jazz and Modern Music. He taught hundreds of music students who went on to prominence, including Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Jon Batiste and other jazz legends. He also performed with many musical giants during his career, including Aretha Franklin, Ray Charles, Lena Horne and Big Maybelle. A recognized jazz pioneer who received two Lifetime Achievement Awards from Offbeat Magazine, Jordan was awarded the 2013 Jazz Hero award from The Jazz Journalist Association.

## Ann Haab

*Class of 1959, Decatur, March 23, 2023*

After Ann Geddes Haab earned her Education degree at Millikin, she taught at Decatur’s Garfield School. Once retired from teaching, she then served on the Board of Directors for Decatur Day Care Center and co-chaired the capital campaign for the Intergenerational Day Care Center at Decatur’s St. Mary’s Hospital. For her successful efforts in raising \$2 million for this project, she was recognized with the Woman of Impact Award in 1994. In addition, she volunteered at the DOVE Pre-School program and Decatur Memorial Hospital.

Haab also faithfully volunteered for numerous Millikin alumni projects, including serving on the Alumni Board and as Homecoming Reunion Chair. For their support of Millikin, she and her husband, Larry Haab, also ’59, are members of the Millikin Medallion Society and the Investors Society and are featured on the University’s Wall of Philanthropy.

## Richard Gray

*Class of 1946, Decatur, May 18, 2023*

After attending Millikin University, Gray served as Vice President of the Walrus Manufacturing Company from 1946 to 1972, and then joined Field and Shorb until his retirement

## John Noland

*Class of 1951, Decatur, June 1, 2023*

As a World War II veteran, John Arthur Noland served in General Ike Eisenhower’s headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany. After the war, Noland met his wife, the late Jo Ann Laws ’49, at Millikin and they married in 1949. He began his professional career with the Farm Credit System in Decatur, serving there from 1951 to 1980. In 1981, he joined the Farm Credit Bank in St. Paul, Minn., as a Vice President and later moved to the Farm Credit Bank of Wichita, Kan. He retired from the Farm Credit System in 1986.

Noland sought ways to help those with developmental disabilities. He served on local boards for Macon County ARC, Progress School, Lincoln State School, United Way and American Red Cross. For his volunteer efforts, Illinois Governor James Thompson presented Noland with the 1982 Jack Mobley Award for Volunteer of the Year for his service to the Illinois ARC. After retiring, Noland volunteered and served on the board of the Decatur Genealogy Society and authored a book about his family history.

in 1990. He was a licensed pilot, flying both for business and pleasure. He enjoyed fishing in Canada, and was an avid player of tennis, handball and golf.

Richard “Dick” Gray and his wife Jane Norris, Class of 1948, married April 27, 1946.

## Gary Lee Workman

*Class of 1965, Omaha, Neb., Aug. 23, 2023*

*“I was lucky enough to spend many years on the Millikin Board with Gary. I can say I came away from those meetings a better person due to the kindness and integrity Gary also showed.” – Doug Schmalz, Millikin Trustee Emeritus*

Gary Workman retired as a Senior Internal Auditor for United Parcel Service (UPS) after 33 years serving in a variety of positions, including in industrial engineering, human resources, accounting and auditing. He began his career with UPS as a part-time package handler while he was still a Millikin student and began working for UPS full time after graduating from Millikin in 1965.

## Roger “Lotch” Lotchin

*Class of 1957, Chapel Hill, N.C., Aug. 8, 2023*

*“My time at MU gave me not only a good foundation to study history, but also a good foundation to understand the world I lived in.”*

Known for his academic achievements, Roger Lotchin taught American History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for almost 50 years, with a particular focus on American urban history and the history of the American West. As an author, he focused on the history of 19th and 20th century California cities, more recently exploring the American city in the Gilded Age, the political empowerment in American cities of women and Hispanics, and the impact of World War II on California cities. He

Workman’s continued devotion to Millikin was apparent. He served 12 years on the University’s Board of Trustees and was named Emeritus Trustee for his service.

His love for Big Blue Athletics inspired Gary to provide Millikin with the Workman Family Softball Field in 2017 and Workman Family Baseball Field in 2019. For his dedication to MU, he was named 2019 Alumnus of the Year, received an honorary doctorate in 2020 and is listed on the Millikin Wall of Philanthropy for his support of his alma mater.

He clearly loved sports and passed that love along to all Workman family members. He followed the St. Louis Cardinals, Nebraska Cornhuskers and



the Millikin Big Blue. But his greatest love was his wife, Judy, whom he married in 1962.

was an active and passionate faculty advisor and mentor for generations of graduate students and aspiring historians.

Lotchin was also known for his athletic achievements. He played every sport possible while growing up in Shelbyville, but truly excelled in basketball. At Millikin, he became the third all-time leading rebounder for the basketball team with 867 and the sixth all-time leading scorer with 1,553 points. He still holds the Big Blue records for the most rebounds in a single game (39) and most rebounds in a single season (560). He was inducted into the Millikin University Athletic Hall of Fame in 1974 and into the Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 1994.

At the Big Blue, he majored in History, was a member of Delta

Sigma Phi fraternity and met Phyllis Jo “Smokey” Morris Lotchin ’59, his late wife. He pursued his graduate education at the University of Chicago and earned his Ph.D. in Western History from the University of Chicago.

Among his Millikin support and accomplishments, Lotchin served as Homecoming Reunion Chair for his class, received the Alumni Merit-Loyalty Award in 1985 and was also inducted into the Millikin Medallion Society in 2003.

His family has requested that donations in Roger’s memory may be made to Millikin’s Annual Scholarship fund. Donations can be made online at [millikin.edu/give](http://millikin.edu/give) or sent to the following address: Millikin University Alumni & Development Office, 1184 W. Main St., Decatur, Illinois 62522.





**MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY**  
1184 WEST MAIN STREET  
DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62522  
[millikin.edu](http://millikin.edu)

# Save the date!

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- April 1** Alumni Awards & Athletic Hall of Fame Nominations Due
- April 25** Honors Convocation
- April 26** Celebrations of Scholarship
- April 30** True Blue Day & Founder's Day
- May 10** Big Blue Golf Outing, *South Side Country Club, Decatur*
- May 19** Spring Commencement



**October 11-13**

## **HOMECOMING 2024**

[millikin.edu/homecoming](http://millikin.edu/homecoming)



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