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MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2025

THE DAVID J. & DEBRA C. RATHJE  
ATHLETIC CENTER

STALEY PLAZA

# INVESTING IN MILLIKIN



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# MILLIKIN MAGAZINE

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COVER DESIGN: KRISTA FOXX  
COVER IMAGE: RICHARD NDEMBE



This issue of Millikin Magazine marks the fourth dedicated to spotlighting the initiatives in the University's Strategic Plan. This issue highlights the work being done by the Big Blue community as they "Build a Sustainable Financial Model."

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1184 West Main Street  
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The purpose of the Magazine is to tell the Millikin story. Through the lives and work of our students, faculty, staff and alumni, the Magazine spotlights Millikin's distinct brand of education – Performance Learning – and its impact on the larger world. From the arts to business, from the sciences to sports, Millikin Magazine celebrates the inspiring stories of our Big Blue community.

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**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC & MEDIA RELATIONS:** MATTHEW FLATEN

**UNIVERSITY WRITER:** DANIELLE FIELDS '09/MBA '12

**SENIOR GRAPHIC DESIGNER:** KRISTA FOXX

**UNIVERSITY WEB MASTER:** MATTHEW CLARK

**ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTORS:** DEB HALE KIRCHNER, MIRANDA LOVETT, RICHARD NDEMBE

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# Ron Branch

Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Millikin University



## Esteemed Millikin Community Members:

Today, I find myself with the unique opportunity to share my thoughts with you from a special corner of the magazine, in a space ordinarily reserved for the University's President. As Board Chair and a proud Big Blue alumnus from the Class of 1981, I do not take this privilege lightly. It is my honor to continue to serve my alma mater and to share the good work of the institution and its people.

By the time you receive this issue, you will have likely heard that the Board of Trustees has unanimously confirmed the election of Dr. Dean Pribbenow as Millikin University's 17th President. In addition to my role as Board Chair, it was my pleasure to also serve as Chair of the Presidential Search Committee, helping to facilitate a thorough and inclusive search process that ensured that Millikin University is served by a dynamic, inspiring and collaborative leader who will embrace the University's mission, vision and values; communicate with transparency and integrity; and steer the institution toward success. I strongly believe that Dr. Pribbenow's breadth of knowledge and experience prove him to be that person, and I am thrilled to welcome him as our newest President.

Dr. Pribbenow comes to us from Elmhurst University, where he currently serves as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculty. I speak with Dr. Pribbenow regularly, and I am happy to report that he is just as excited to join us at Millikin as we are to have him as part of the Big Blue family. Dr. Pribbenow has over 20 years of experience in academic leadership, strategic fundraising, budget management and decision-making, and I am eager to see the positive impact he makes on our beloved institution.

With his energy and passion, a commitment to the University's strategic vision, and the united support of our full network of constituents, I am certain that Dr. Pribbenow will have the perfect tools to build upon the

University's historic foundation, strengthen our current position and propel us into a prosperous future.

Dr. Pribbenow succeeds Dr. Jim Reynolds, who stepped down from his position as Millikin's 16th President in early March, in advance of his previously announced retirement on June 30, 2025.

Under President Reynolds' leadership, Millikin devoted itself to nurturing the success of students, faculty, staff and the

Decatur community in new and innovative ways. The University created its newest strategic plan, "The Millikin Difference;" implemented the Millikin Tuition Promise and Big Blue Pledge: Illinois Free Tuition Program; streamlined the transfer admission process by creating articulation agreements with several community colleges; and developed several state-of-the-art facilities that have proven instrumental in nurturing student success.

Following President Reynolds' departure, as Chair of the Board of Trustees, I stepped into the role of Acting President until a longer-term appointment to the position could be made. After much discussion and contemplation, the Board settled on the individual we believe is best equipped to lead our University during this time of transition. Millikin will be in the very capable hands of Mary Black, who will serve the institution as its Acting President until President-Elect Pribbenow's arrival in July.

Mary has served as Provost and the University's Chief Academic Officer since December 2021, collaborating with faculty and academic staff to uphold Millikin's commitment to academic excellence. Her leadership will continue helping the institution meet its mission of preparing students for professional success, democratic citizenship in a global environment, and the personal pursuit of a life of meaning and value.

As Board Chair, it is my pleasure to thank President Reynolds for his commitment to Millikin University and for the work he has done. I eagerly look forward to seeing how Acting President Black and President-Elect Pribbenow build upon that good work as we look boldly into the future and prepare for the next chapter in the great story of Millikin University. Let us all remain steadfast in our commitment to deliver on the promise of excellence in education as we continue to provide the transformative experiences that empower our students to become leaders in creating a wise, just, equitable and sustainable society for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald Branch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Ronald Branch '81, Chairman, Board of Trustees

# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

## ENROLLMENT

TRADITIONAL UNDERGRADUATE = 1,504

GRADUATE PROGRAM = 92

TOTAL ENROLLMENT = 1,596

## FY24 ANNUAL REPORT

TOTAL DONORS = 2,301

NEW DONORS = 293

ALUMNI PARTICIPATION = 6.15%

## ENDOWMENT/INVESTMENTS

**\$93,784,699**

## TOTAL RAISED

**\$10.276 MILLION**

AS OF JUNE 30, 2024  
END OF FISCAL YEAR

**18**

New Named Scholarships/  
Funds

**4**

New Estate Commitments Made

**99%**

Students Receive Financial Aid

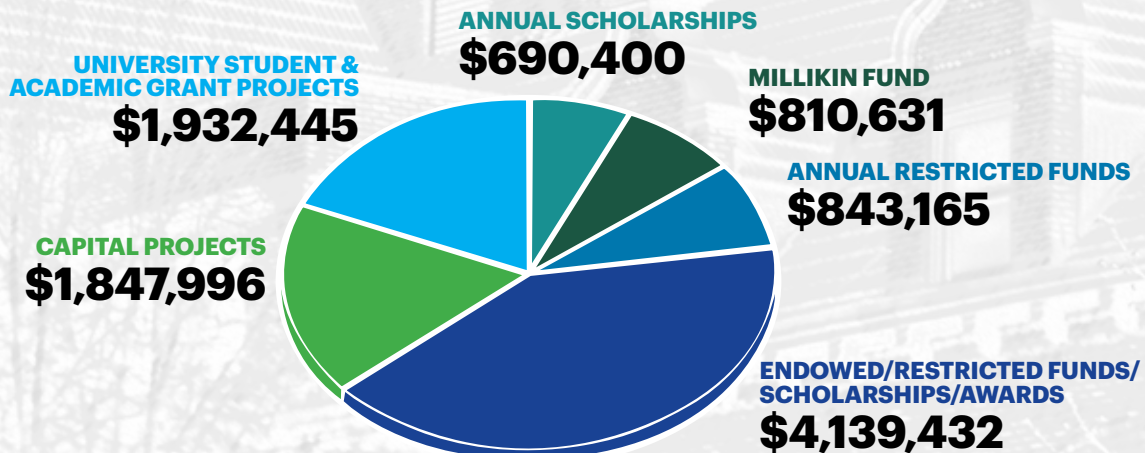
Make an immediate impact by giving to these areas of greatest need:

» **The Millikin Fund:** Closes the gap between tuition and the actual cost of providing a Millikin education. These unrestricted gifts sustain our daily operations by bolstering academic programs, preserving our campus and allowing us to address emerging needs.

» **Annual Scholarships:** Directly benefit current students who may otherwise be unable to afford a Millikin education. Each student at Millikin benefits from some form of financial aid, significantly reducing financial obstacles and empowering students to succeed.

**\$28.1M**

Student Financial Aid Given



**GIVE**

MAKE A GIFT AT [millikin.edu/give](https://millikin.edu/give).

To our 2023-24 supporters: Your gifts last year represented a belief in our mission and an investment in our students' futures. With hearts full of gratitude, we thank you.

**GO BIG BLUE!**



## FEATURE



# INVESTING IN MILLIKIN

*“Really Good People Doing Really Good Work”*

When Dr. James Reynolds returned to his hometown in the summer of 2020 to serve as Millikin University’s 16th president, it was during a watershed moment – not just for Millikin, but for the higher education industry as a whole. In addition to the obvious threats to global health and wellness, the COVID-19 pandemic created a very specific set of obstacles for colleges and universities, requiring them to pivot in ways that were – to borrow an instantly infamous word – unprecedented.

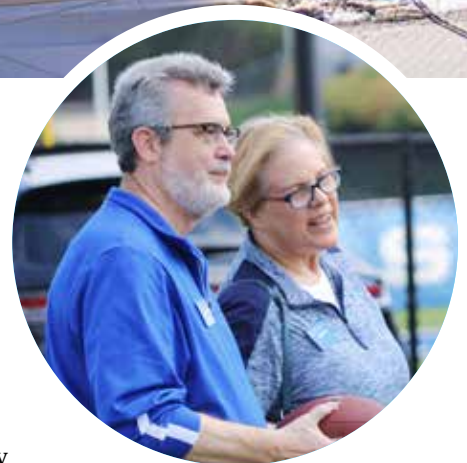
Rather than welcoming students back to campus rejuvenated by a restful spring break, many universities found themselves delaying the start of classes to allow themselves to strategize.

Rather than plunging headfirst into the back half of the semester, faculty were faced with the necessity to drastically shift instructional methods with virtually no warning.

Rather than bursting with the typical spring hubbub of student activities, campuses quieted to a whisper as their community members were sent to study and work from a distance.

And rather than preparing for the joy of a vibrant Commencement ceremony, institutions were forced to figure out just how to acknowledge the accomplishments of their students at a time when celebrating together seemed all but impossible.

By the time Dr. Reynolds took the reins from Dr. Patrick E. White in July 2020,



much of Millikin’s pandemic response plan had already been put into action. Millikin’s administration, faculty and staff worked tirelessly to create a safe learning environment for all members of the Millikin family while doing their best to continue to forge connections and provide students with the Performance Learning education for which the University is known. Upon his arrival, Dr. Reynolds noted that Millikin’s ability to adapt and change to meet the needs of its students even in a time of uncertainty was successful due to “really good people doing really good work.”

In hindsight, though, Dr. Reynolds acknowledges that while the pandemic provided Millikin with the opportunity to tangibly put its passion, creativity, strength and resilience into practice like never before, it also created unique challenges for an institution that thrives on community.

“The biggest challenge was not being able to do what Millikin has always done. That first year, we were unable to have musical or theatrical performances, we canceled all the athletic schedules, and we had to be isolated from each other,” said Dr. Reynolds. “Small colleges and universities are used to being in contact with people, and we lost a lot of that.”

Nearly five years later, as he prepares for his retirement, Dr. Reynolds is further able to view this particular era in the University’s history through a slightly different lens – one that brings into focus a paradigm shift that he believes has shaped Millikin for the better, causing the Big Blue family to look at one another with a bit more care, compassion and grace.

“That was a good evolution,” Dr. Reynolds said. “We can be more mindful of each other, recognize that not everyone’s always having a great day, and see if we can do something to help with that.”

Receiving this same focus and concern as a college student himself is part of what inspired Dr. Reynolds to pursue a career in higher education that has lasted more than 36 years. “I’ve always loved this profession because it means something to me. I know what going away to college meant to me, not knowing anything about higher ed,” he said. “The people at my alma mater took care of me and gave me the chance to be successful. I’ve benefited from a small university and caring faculty and staff who saw something

in me that I didn’t see in myself.” Dr. Reynolds has served alongside Millikin faculty, staff and administration with those same priorities, striving to carry that good work forward.

*“We know what the big picture is: helping students. That’s a really enviable strength,” he said. “I’ve been to four different institutions in my career, and while they’ve all said it, this is the first place that really lives that out.”*

“Our faculty have made some really good decisions about how students should progress through the curriculum on the road to graduation. I think the people who work here are another of our strengths. They’re caring and considerate and focus on the right things. I’m proud of them.”

While that focus is most assuredly student-centered and informs all he does as President, Dr. Reynolds has had to keep many other challenges and opportunities in his line of sight. Millikin’s difficult financial position – while certainly not unique to Dr. Reynolds’ tenure – has been a particular area of concern during his time at the University and has required a lot of focus from all corners of the institution. And just as was true of the pandemic, these difficulties are not unique to Millikin.

According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center, the landscape of higher education is changing drastically as the enrollment pipeline of traditional undergraduate students continues to shrink. Across the United States, four-year private institutions have seen first-year student enrollment decline more than 6%. Among four-year institutions with high shares of Pell-eligible students,

the decline has increased to 10%. This shrinking pipeline both creates financial challenges and makes student recruitment a more difficult task.

“Recruiting more students or retaining a larger proportion of students who come to us is going to be challenging demographically,” Dr. Reynolds said. “We’re behind the curve, because there just aren’t going to be as many high school seniors. That’s not just a prediction – you can look at birthrates and see that there’s a cliff.”

These ongoing concerns led Millikin administration to go back to the drawing board and reconsider how the University could best leverage its strengths and opportunities to become more attractive to prospective students. “The challenge was to talk about value and why Millikin would be the right place for students to come,” Dr. Reynolds said. “There are 150 colleges and universities in Illinois that all want the same group of students. What’s the value-add to come to MU?”



One of Millikin’s newest efforts in addressing these enrollment concerns and recruiting new students has been the inception of the Millikin Tuition Promise and Big Blue Pledge: Illinois Free Tuition Program. Announced



in October 2023 and effective for the 2024/25 academic year, the Millikin Tuition Promise reduced Millikin's full-time undergraduate tuition rate by 36%, bringing the University's new annual tuition rate to \$26,000 before the application of personalized scholarships and financial aid packages. The Promise also guaranteed a base tuition increase of only \$1,000 per year in subsequent years.

Furthermore, the Big Blue Pledge represents an investment in Illinois students who may lack the financial options necessary to pursue a college education by **covering 100% of students' remaining undergraduate tuition** with Millikin grants and scholarships, following the application of federal and state grants.

The tuition restructuring has begun to pay off for Millikin, as the University enrolled 343 new first-year undergraduate students in Fall 2024, 53% of whom were eligible for Pell grants. This equates to a 5% increase in the number of new first-year students at Millikin over the prior year, a successful metric when compared to the 10% decrease experienced by many similar universities around the country. Enrollment efforts also yielded 35 additional new transfer students, which is a 47% increase over Fall 2023.

While this increase in new student enrollment is a step in the right direction, there is additional work to be done to strengthen Millikin's financial position. Dr. Reynolds noted that the administration has been diligently working to tease out pertinent, data-driven information that is actionable and will allow the University to make the best decisions going forward.

That commitment to honesty and transparency has also led to improvements in shared governance through the creation of groups such as the Leadership Council and the Millikin

University Staff Advisory Council (MUSAC), which Dr. Reynolds notes have served as good communication vehicles and have given a broader group of employees the opportunity to be heard.

"Forming small groups around specific tasks and giving them a charge, scope of work and deadlines has helped a lot," he said. "Higher ed isn't always that way. We often say, 'We need to do this,' and hope someone takes up the mantle. We've been more intentional about that."

Millikin has also recently added a Staff Representative to the Board of Trustees, who joins the Faculty Representative and Student Representative in ensuring that all constituencies at Millikin are heard. "That's a huge change," Dr. Reynolds said. "Staff never got a voice before with the Board of Trustees. Having more people at the table has been really good."

When considering all that has been accomplished over the past four and a half years, Dr. Reynolds can rightfully feel a sense of pride in the good work of Millikin. The University launched "The Millikin Difference," its newest Strategic Plan; provided Performance Learning opportunities that are second-to-none; demonstrated academic excellence; displayed award-winning athletic prowess; developed state-of-the-art facilities, such as the Campbell Family Nursing Simulation Center and the David J. & Debra C. Rathje Athletic Center – and so much more.

Just as it does with every person who walks through its halls, Millikin has shaped Dr. Reynolds in significant ways. "This has been such a wonderful place for Sue and me," he said. "It has helped me to recognize that there are seasons in someone's life, and this is the end of my professional season. It's helped me to codify some things that are really important to me."

And just what are those things? What does this next big season of life – retirement – bring? Dr. Reynolds and Sue see themselves relocating to be near their daughter Amanda and her family, including their grandson Noah and a second grandson born in January.

"I'd love to be able to call them up and say, 'Come over for dinner on Thursday,' or be able to take my grandson to soccer practice on Saturday," he said. "I struggled with work-life balance for a long time ... I know that I could have been much better on the 'life' side of the balance sheet. Now, to use a golfing analogy, I'm on the back nine. I don't know if it's the 10th tee or the 18th green, but it's the back nine, and with whatever time I have left, I want to pay attention."

"I've always thought, 'Have I been able to improve the way people think about the institution? Have I taken good care of the students? Have I made it a place where people want to work?' Those are the most important things to me. I've given MU everything I had, and now it's time to let someone else do the same."







## Update on the Construction of David J. and Debra C. Rathje Athletic Center

As the sun begins to shine and birds start chirping on the Millikin University campus this spring, the construction progress of the \$12.3 million David J. and Debra C. Rathje Athletic Center continues to make significant leaps forward.

The future centerpiece of Big Blue Athletics on campus now has a roof, and the brickwork exterior is nearing completion for the new 17,655-square-foot facility. Work will continue for

several more months as the expected completion date of summer 2025 approaches.

Over winter break, the structure was covered with an exterior air barrier, allowing work to begin on the interior of the Rathje Center, located south of Frank M. Lindsay Field and west of the Griswold Physical Education Center.

Work now continues on the facility's interior structure, including hanging drywall, as well as installing the

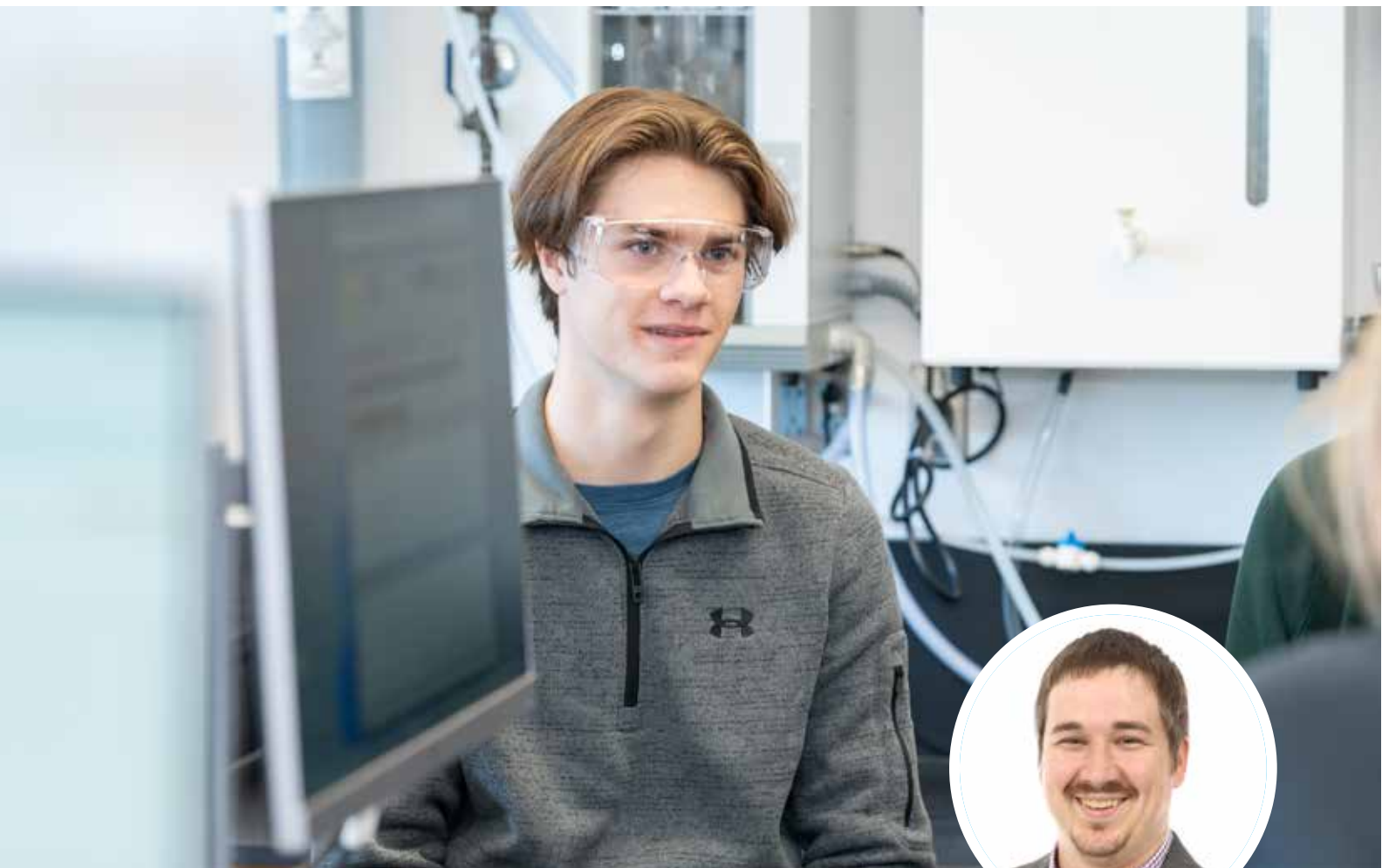
building's electrical and HVAC systems. Designs for the interior furnishings, including furniture, flooring/carpeting, and wall graphics, are also being finalized.

The project is the latest transformation on Millikin's campus, following projects like the Workman Family Baseball Field and the Center for Theatre & Dance. The project was funded by generous lead gifts from David '58 and Debra Rathje, Jim Perryman '83, and the Perryman family.



# MILLIKIN RECEIVES \$1M STEM GRANT

*Funding Covers Up to the Full Cost of Attendance*



Millikin University has been awarded a six-year, \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to establish the Big Blue STEM Scholars project through the NSF Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Program (S-STEM).

The Big Blue STEM Scholars project will begin this fall and provide, over its six-year duration, scholarships to at least 15 unique full-time first-year or transfer students who are pursuing bachelor's degrees in Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics or Physics.

The grant was prepared by Dr. Jenna Smith and Dr. Jennifer Schroeder

from the School of Biological & Environmental Studies, Dr. Emily Olson from the School of Mathematics & Computational Sciences, and is led by the grant's Principal Investigator, Dr. Kyle Knust, Director of the School of Chemistry & Physics.

"We hope to use this project to create a surge in STEM applicants, including students from groups underrepresented in STEM, to further strengthen STEM programs here at Millikin," Knust said. "The overall goal of this project is to increase STEM degree completion of high-achieving undergraduates with a financial need so these graduates may pursue STEM careers."

Students must meet Millikin's admissions requirements, be eligible for a Pell Grant and remain in good academic standing to receive the scholarship over four years. When combined with a typical financial aid package for Pell-eligible students, the Big Blue STEM Scholars project will significantly reduce the cost of attendance for qualifying students. Many students attending from Illinois will have the opportunity to receive full tuition, as well as housing, food and more as part of the scholarship.

**LEARN MORE AT:  
[MILLIKIN.EDU/STEMSCHOLARS](http://MILLIKIN.EDU/STEMSCHOLARS)**





## Millikin Wrestling Gets Facility Upgrade

When aspiring student-athletes get their first look at Millikin Wrestling's new facility, some can't believe it is a crucial piece of a very successful NCAA DIII program.

"They are blown away by it. We've had recruits who have been all over to Olympic training centers and Division I facilities, and they didn't have anything like this. They tell me

that this is incredible," Millikin Head Wrestling Coach Ryan Birt said.

The ownership of Millikin's previous wrestling facility changed hands last fall, and the team was forced to practice at alternate locations last season, including bringing the wrestling mats out to Frank M. Lindsay Field and the Workman Family Softball Field.

Former Millikin Board of Trustees member Ben Andreas '11, worked with Birt to find the Big Blue a new location, settling on a spot at the Fairview Shopping Center near Millikin's campus.

"We love it here. It gives us the opportunity to do what we do," Birt said. "Everything has its own place, and there is less congestion."



Millikin University has been awarded hosting responsibilities for the 2027 NCAA Division III Softball National Championships.

"We are extremely excited to be hosting the softball national tournament in 2027," former Millikin Athletic Director Dr. Craig White said. "When the Workman family made their generous donation, this was part of our plan and our hope. This is a credit to Millikin University and the City of Decatur."

## Millikin Awarded 2027 NCAA DIII Softball Championship Hosting Duties

The Workman Family Softball Field will serve as the venue for the NCAA Division III Softball Championships in May 2027. This will be only the fifth time the NCAA Softball Championships have been held in Illinois.



# MILLIKIN RECOGNIZED 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 2025 “Best Colleges” guidebook. Millikin is ranked No. 14 of 74 schools in the “Best Regional Colleges in the Midwest” category, making Millikin the second highest-ranked college in Illinois. It is a one-place improvement for Millikin over last year’s rankings.

Millikin was also recognized for distinction in several categories, including “Best Value Schools in the Midwest” at No. 22 and “Top Performers on Social Mobility” at No. 44. The “Best Value” ranking places Millikin as the fourth-best university in Illinois and sixth best in “Social Mobility.”

“Millikin is always pushing itself to be at the forefront of educational quality and value, and so we are delighted with our improved Best Regional Colleges ranking, which places us among the best Midwestern universities by the U.S. News & World Report,” Millikin President Dr. Jim Reynolds said. “Millikin’s outstanding faculty, our focus on Performance Learning and our magnificent facilities lead to remarkable outcomes for Millikin students.”



**#2** In Illinois  
Best Regional  
Colleges in  
the Midwest  
- U.S. News & World Report

## Elementary Education Program Receives “Exemplary” Rating for 4th-Straight Year

In January 2025, Millikin’s Elementary Education (ELED) program received an “Exemplary” rating from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in their annual evaluations of Illinois teacher preparation programs.

This is the program’s fourth consecutive year receiving the “Exemplary” rating, the highest rating the ISBE gives.

“Not only have we retained our ‘Exemplary’ Elementary Education

program rating for a fourth consecutive year, but we’ve managed to maintain our stellar level of exemplariness for a second consecutive year,” Director of the School of Education Dr. Chris Cummings said. “Since 2020 – which was the inception year of the state’s forward-facing and publicly published teacher preparation program grades – our ELED program ratings have gone as follows (from 2020 to 2024): 76%, 82%, 84%, 92%, 92%.”

The ISBE ranks programs on several factors, including the quality of the teaching candidates, knowledge and skills for teaching, performance as classroom teachers and contributions to state needs. Schools are designated “Exemplary” (earning 75% or more of the possible points), “Commendable” (50-74.9%), “Developing” (25-49.9%) and “Needs Improvement” (fewer than 25%).







# Millikin University Announces Community College Transfer Agreements

In the past year, Millikin University announced a number of transfer partnerships with Illinois community colleges. These collaborative partnerships – with Richland Community College, Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, Parkland College, Lake Land College and Lincoln Land Community College – serve to expand educational access for students, streamline the transfer process, minimize instruction duplication, and build upon community college and university learning experiences.

“For some students, the transfer process from community college to a four-year institution can be a complex and nuanced process,” President Jim Reynolds said. “These transfer agreements provide a clear and attainable path to pursuing a bachelor’s degree at Millikin University, with the benefits of our unique opportunities, including Performance Learning and access to our outstanding graduate programs.”

The agreements allow transfer students to complete their Millikin bachelor’s

degree in two years with full-time enrollment. Students are provided with a plan of study and, in most cases, automatic acceptance into a Millikin baccalaureate degree program upon successful completion of an Associate in Arts (AA), Associate in Science (AS), Associate in Engineering Science (AES) or Associate in Applied Science (AAS) with a 2.0 cumulative GPA.

Additionally, as part of the agreements announced with Richland, Parkland, Lake Land and Lincoln Land, students who have completed the requirements of the respective college honors program will be automatically accepted into Millikin’s James Millikin Scholars Honors program.

The transfer agreement with Richland was announced in April 2024, with agreements for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges and Parkland College following in October 2024, Lake Land College in November and Lincoln Land Community College in February 2025.





# UNIVERSITY WELCOMES NEW HIRES



## Jodi Foster Silotto '95 returned to Millikin in April 2024 as Vice President of Enrollment, Marketing & Communications.

As a student, Silotto earned a Human Services degree and was a standout on the basketball court. As a student-athlete, Silotto was an All-American, and in 2001, she was named to the Millikin Athletic Hall of Fame.

She first returned to Millikin in leadership roles in Marketing, including serving as Executive Director of Marketing & Communications until 2019. After leaving in 2019, Silotto helped shape the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's academic marketing and communications strategy as the Director of Academic Communications. In 2022, she became the Managing Director of Accounts and Public Affairs for DCC Marketing.

In her current role, Silotto provides vision, leadership and strategic direction in support of the mission of the University. As Vice President, she is responsible for leading and

implementing a unified vision for enrollment management, for the development and execution of strategies for internal and external marketing and communications, and for strengthening the brand identity of Millikin University. Silotto serves on the President's Council and works closely and collaboratively with other members of the Council and Board of Trustees to advance the overall strategic vision, direction and initiatives of Millikin.

### THREE NEW DEANS

Effective July 1, Millikin University welcomed three new deans – Dr. Andrew Smith, Dean of the College of Professional Studies (CPS); Cameron Jackson, Dean of the College of Fine Arts (CFA); and Maret Matthew, Dean of International Education.



As CPS Dean, Dr. Andrew Smith oversees the college's three schools: Exercise Science & Sport, Nursing and Education.

"I think we have a perfect balance at Millikin. Millikin has a history of being a liberal arts, fine arts and performing arts university, and we also have really strong professional programs," Smith said. "Particularly in CPS, they are helping professions. They are nurses, teachers, trainers, and it's important to highlight their work."

Smith holds a Ph.D. in History from Purdue University and comes to Millikin from Marietta College, where he was Assistant Dean of Outcomes Data & Accreditation and Instructor in the Education Department. He has also authored a book on legendary boxer George Foreman, titled "No Way But to Fight: George Foreman and the Business of Boxing."



CFA Dean Cameron Jackson oversees the college's three schools: Music, Theatre & Dance and Art & Creative Media.

"This is such an exhilarating time to become part of the Millikin community and to stand at the threshold of the next era of education at Millikin," Jackson said. "I have been honored by the welcoming environment I have found among the students, staff, faculty and administration, and I have been impressed with the history and tradition of Millikin's mission of being driven by doing."

Jackson is completing his Ph.D. in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Arts from the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom and has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Alabama, concentrating in Stage Management. He comes to Millikin after serving as the Production Manager of the Elm Shakespeare Company in New Haven, Conn.





As Dean of International Education, Maret Matthew oversees Millikin's Center for International Education (CIE), the recruitment process for international students and is responsible for fostering an organizational culture and climate that fully supports global education.

"I am very excited about this opportunity to help grow and expand Millikin's international student population. I hope to diversify the countries our international students come from, and I want to increase the support available to students and faculty who want to study and teach abroad," Matthew said.

Matthew is completing her Ph.D. in Student Personnel Leadership from the University of the Cumberland in Williamsburg, Ky., and has a Master of Science in Training and Development from Eastern Illinois University.

## PUBLIC SAFETY

Michael Martinsen was named Public Safety Director and Chief of Police in November 2024.

"Michael brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to campus safety," President Jim Reynolds said. "I'm confident that his leadership will ensure our campus community

continues to thrive in a safe and welcoming environment."



Martinsen joins Millikin with more than 20 years of experience in law enforcement, including tenures as Director of Campus Safety at Ohio University and Oberlin College. He has also held law enforcement positions in Cincinnati and Hamilton, Ohio.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

In June, Kirsten Hammer became the fourth Women's Basketball Coach in program history. Hammer came to Millikin after serving as Associate Head Coach at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, her alma mater.

"I think you want to surround yourself with people passionate about the University," Hammer said. "At Millikin, you have a tradition and a community that values women's basketball, making the job much more fun."



Following her graduation from UW-Whitewater in 2016, Hammer served as a Video Coordinator and Basketball Operations Intern with the Seattle Storm of the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) in the summer of 2016.

## MEN'S FOOTBALL

In December, Millikin named Decatur native Billy Riebock as the new Big Blue Head Football Coach.



Riebock comes home to Decatur with 18 years of collegiate coaching experience at all levels of NCAA football. Most recently, Riebock was the Offensive Coordinator and Quarterback Coach at NCAA Division II Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas. Highlights of his two seasons with the Mustangs include having the second- and third-leading rushers in the Lone Star Conference and three All-Conference performers in 2023.

"I am thrilled to welcome Coach Riebock to Millikin University. His proven track record of success and commitment to developing well-rounded student-athletes aligns perfectly with our values and vision for the program," President Jim Reynolds said.



## THEATRE & DANCE ALUMNI APPEAR IN NYC DEBUT OF “THE SPELL OF RED RIVER”

Last spring, Millikin students had the unique opportunity to be a part of the premiere production of an original musical, “The Spell of Red River,” getting a first-hand look at all the blood, sweat and tears it takes to bring a new production to the stage for the first time.

A little more than six months later, four Millikin alumni – Lauren Hartley ’24, Naomi Latta ’23, Gia Marino ’24 and Reagan Minnette ’24 – took part in the New York City debut of “The Spell of Red River” at the 54 Below Cabaret Club.

“The Spell of Red River,” written by EllaRose Chary and featuring music and lyrics by Brandon James Gwinn, was Millikin’s New Musical Workshop’s first commissioned original production musical and was first performed at Millikin’s Virginia Rogers Theatre in May 2024. “The Spell of Red River” was the culmination of several years of hard work and collaboration made possible



through the generous support of Charlene Callison and Larry Balsamo.

The musical is an intergenerational story about family, grief and finding your magic. When Vel, a witch who has a unique aptitude for psychometry, inherits a mysterious school building in her recently deceased mother’s

hometown, she goes searching for answers to questions about her family history that her mother took to the grave. Along the way, she meets a plucky technocoven of college students who help her solve the mystery of the Spell of Red River.

## Scovill Award Winner Olivia Swords Named Lincoln Laureate

Millikin University’s Olivia Swords has added another honor to her impressive resume.

The senior triple major in History, Philosophy (with a Pre-Law focus), and English (with a Professional Writing concentration) was named Millikin’s recipient of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois’ Student Laureate Award for 2024. Olivia, originally from Decatur and a Mount Zion High School graduate, received a monetary prize, a Lincoln medallion and a certificate of merit signed by Illinois Governor JB Pritzker.

Each fall, an outstanding senior from each of the four-year degree-granting institutions of higher learning in Illinois is awarded the Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement Award and becomes a Student Laureate of The Lincoln Academy of Illinois. In the spirit of Lincoln, Student Laureates are honored for their leadership and service in the pursuit of the betterment of humanity and overall excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities.

**FOR MORE ON OLIVIA, SEE HER  
PROFILE ON PAGE 30.**





## Tabor Global Scholars Program Unveiled

For Millikin University Tabor School of Business Dean RJ Podeschi '02/MBA '04, international travel has become an impactful part of his life, and he plans on making it just as important for some of the school's Business students through the new Tabor Global Scholars (TGS) program.

"When I look back at my college experience, the one regret I have is that I didn't choose to study abroad.

It wasn't something I thought was valuable or even possible until after graduation," Podeschi said. "A two-week backpacking trip with my college roommate transformed me. Since graduation, international travel has allowed me to be a more globally aware citizen, it has taught me that we have more in common than we have differences, and it's connected me to my family roots."

The program will provide a group of first-year Tabor students the opportunity to travel and study internationally. The program includes a paid international trip at the end of the student's first year as part of a spring course taught by Tabor School of Business faculty.



## Tabor Receives College-Ranking Honors

In 2024, the Tabor School of Business received two distinguished college-ranking honors from Research.com and UniversityHQ.org.

Research.com named the Tabor School of Business a "2024 Best Business Degree Program," while UniversityHQ.org named Millikin's Finance program the No. 5 Finance program among the 25 Illinois-based ranked programs.

*"Seeing the Tabor School of Business be recognized as a Best Business Degree Program is a testament to our commitment to providing all students with opportunities to engage in Performance Learning – ways for students to build their resume while in school,"*

*Podeschi said. "This connection between theory and practice allows our students to be successful professionally and personally after graduation. We're honored to be among this selective list of institutions."*



# BIG BLUE COMMUNITY CELEBRATES HOMECOMING 2024

Millikin University alumni and friends traveled back to Decatur to join current Big Blue students, faculty and staff for the 2024 Homecoming & Family Weekend on Sept. 27-29, 2024, reconnecting with friends, meeting future alumni and celebrating all things Big Blue.

Attendees enjoyed long-time traditions, such as the School of Nursing's Legacy of the Lamp ceremony and the Greek Step Show, along with newer traditions such as the Saturday night fireworks ceremony in the sky over the Workman Family Baseball Field.

Students kicked off the week's celebration by showing off their artistic talent during Chalk the Walk, where students decorated the sidewalk outside the University Commons.

On Friday evening, outstanding Big Blue alumni were honored for their good works and contributions to Millikin during the annual Alumni Awards Dinner. This year's honorees were:

## **Alumnus of the Year Award**

Douglas Basler '83

## **Merit Award**

Rear Admiral Darin Via '87

## **Loyalty Award**

Kendrick Tunstall '07

## **Young Alumnus Award**

Justin DeBo '18

## **Faculty/Staff Recognition Award**

Rick Bibb, Associate Professor  
Emeritus of Marketing

After a Friday evening event with the Black Student Union members, on Saturday, Black Alumni of Millikin (BAM) members met to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the organization's founding. The group held a breakfast and business meeting followed by a campus tour.

At the Workman Family Baseball Field, the Big Blue Baseball team celebrated their co-CCIW conference championship with a player ring ceremony, followed by an alumni baseball game.

The Jazz on the Quad performance by the BluBop, Jazz II and Electric Guitar Ensembles set the atmosphere as fans headed to the tailgating area next to Frank M. Lindsay Field, with the Big Blue facing off against Augustana College. At halftime, the members of Homecoming Court were featured and Isaiah Watson and Helena Hashimoto were announced as 2024's Homecoming King and Queen.

Saturday evening was filled with music and dance on and off campus. Millikin Choir Alumni held a concert at Central Christian Church, and faculty and alumni held a Jazz Jam Session at Decatur Brew Works. In the Center of Theatre & Dance, the "Big Blue: On Broadway" Homecoming Cabaret highlighted members of the

School of Theatre & Dance (SOTAD) Class of 2025 and featured songs from Broadway musicals in which Millikin alumni have worked. Following the Cabaret, a Sip & Sing event celebrated impromptu performances from students and alumni. At Kirkland Fine Arts Center, the organizations of the Multicultural Greek Council showed off their stepping skills at the annual Homecoming Step Showcase.

On Sunday, the Big Blue Athletic Hall of Fame inductees were honored in a lunch ceremony in the University Commons Banquet Room. The 2024 Induction Class included:

## **Men's Golfer**

Jim Butts '51

## **Women's Golfer**

Diane Imburgia Searce '04

## **Track & Field Athlete**

Steve Schmidt '82

## **Track & Field Athlete**

Brittany Sherron '12

## **Swimmer**

Kaley Wittrock Refenes '13

## **Former Swimming Coach**

Carl Johansson

## **Team Inductee**

1950-51 Men's Basketball

## **Team Inductee**

1985 Men's Golf



**PLAN TO JOIN US FOR HOMECOMING 2025, OCT. 3-5!**



## Faculty Members Receive Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Awards

Millikin University College of Arts & Sciences faculty members Dr. Jennifer Schroeder and Dr. Kyle Knust received the 2024 Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award.

The Love of Learning Award is designed to help fund post-baccalaureate professional development for active Phi Kappa Phi members, including graduate or professional studies, doctoral dissertations, continuing education, travel related to teaching and research, career development and more.

The honor, which includes a \$1,000 award, is given by the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, the nation's oldest and most selective collegiate honor society for all academic disciplines. Schroeder and Knust are two of 200 national recipients to receive the award.

Schroeder, Millikin's Director of the School of Biological & Environmental Studies, will use funds from the award to support thyroid cancer research being performed in collaboration with undergraduate students.

Knust, the Director of the School of Chemistry & Physics, also heads the Knust Research Group, an undergraduate research group that collaborates with the University of Notre Dame on the Distributed Pharmaceutical Analysis Lab (Project DPAL), which provides high-quality, validated chemical analysis of pharmaceutical samples from partners in the developing world. The funds will help expand their research on pharmaceutical ingredients.



Biology &amp; Chemistry Double Major

# Dr. Kemi Curry Price

Health Services Physician



By day, Dr. Kemi Curry Price '78 works as a physician to restore healing to underserved communities in southern California. But when her shift ends, she trades her stethoscope for DNA databases that help solve cold cases and ensure justice is served through her efforts as a genetic genealogist.

Dr. Price, of Whittier, Calif., began her journey into genetic genealogy a decade ago, following a lifelong interest in family history. After investigating her own family tree, including her DNA matches, Dr. Price found herself pondering how this

kind of research could be leveraged differently.

*“I remember thinking there should be a way to reverse engineer the relationships between DNA matches to help identify unknown individuals,” Dr. Price said. “Over time, I taught myself what is now known as genetic genealogy.”*

Genetic genealogy combines DNA testing with traditional genealogical research methods to identify biological relationships between individuals. After learning this new skill set, Dr. Price found herself in high demand.

“Once I taught myself how to identify unknown individuals, there was no end to the number of people who wanted my help,” she said. Dr. Price’s husband, Robin John Price, was her biggest champion and the source of a

connection that would soon point Dr. Price’s research in a new direction.

One of Robin’s friends reached out to Dr. Price in 2019, wishing to identify his paternal grandfather. As part of this effort, he uploaded his DNA to several match sites, including GEDmatch, opting to allow law enforcement access to his DNA matches. Dr. Price was listed as the contact in GEDmatch, leading to a very interesting string of events.

The friend’s DNA identified him as the distant cousin of an unknown perpetrator of a cold case in New Mexico. After conversations with law enforcement officials assigned to the case, Dr. Price was asked to assist with the investigation thanks to her experience with genetic genealogy.

The task set before her was particularly difficult, since she began her research

# DNA DETECTIVE

process with only a single DNA match, as opposed to several.

“I just had the one match, who happened to be the family friend. I identified his paternal grandfather’s family pretty quickly and built out the [family] tree,” Dr. Price said. “He matched the perp at the third cousin level, which means [the two shared] great-great-grandparents.”

The only details Dr. Price had about the case included where and when it took place, along with a general description of the perpetrator. When comparing the time of the crime with the presumed age of the perpetrator, she narrowed the birthdate to the late 1990s, which required her to build the family tree back to that era.

“I wound up with a tree containing 6,500 people,” said Dr. Price. “After eliminating sections of the tree that did not match both Robin’s friend and the perpetrator, she was able to identify a branch of the family tree that had witnessed significant violence in the home. It was at that point Dr. Price’s other career stepped in to help with the search.

“I had learned, as a physician, that children who grow up in abusive households can grow up to commit violence on others,” Dr. Price said. “I contacted the investigator and recommended that one of the surviving sons [be investigated as] the perp.”

Additional research into the family revealed that the youngest son lived a short distance away from the crime

scene, and his driver’s license photo bore a striking resemblance to a sketch provided by the victim.

Investigators were able to track down the suspect and intercept a discarded coffee cup for DNA testing. “I received a text the day after Christmas in 2019, letting me know there was a DNA match,” said Dr. Price. “Best Christmas present ever!” The perpetrator was subsequently prosecuted and convicted; he is now serving time in prison.

The case garnered a lot of attention, as it was the first cold case in New Mexico to be solved using genetic genealogy. Since that time, genetic genealogy has rapidly grown as a tool in the solving of cold cases, including that of the Golden State Killer, who was finally apprehended and convicted more than 40 years after his crimes.

Five years after playing such a significant role in solving the New Mexico case, Dr. Price was contacted in January 2024 by the producer of “Bloodline Detectives,” a documentary series that explores the power of

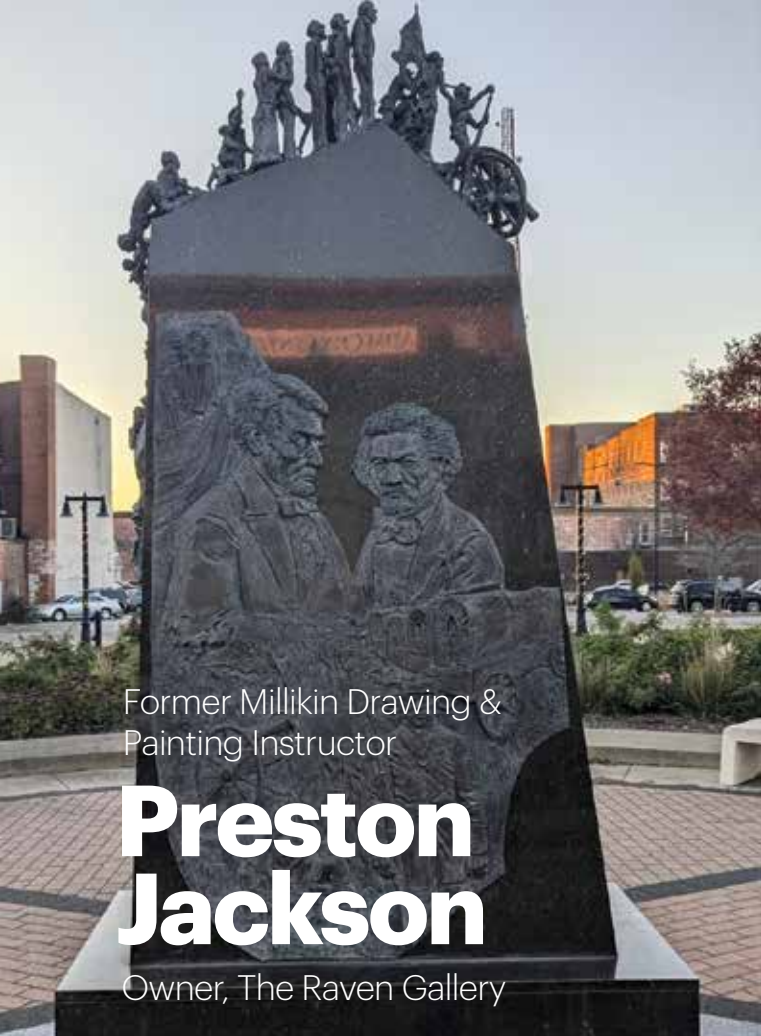
genetic genealogy and other forensic technology in bringing justice to unsolved crimes.

*“[The producer asked] me to talk about my work on the case. I agreed and found myself being filmed the following week,” Dr. Price said. “I readily admit I am more at ease working with facts and figures than with lights and cameras. I give a lot of credit to the producer, the cameraman and the sound tech for making the experience comfortable.”*

While Dr. Price enjoys her work as a physician and has found it very rewarding, her genetic genealogy research is one of her passions, and the unique nature of those tasks keeps her engaged. “Each case is different and may require a different approach for one reason or another,” she said. “That keeps things fresh.”







Former Millikin Drawing & Painting Instructor

# Preston Jackson

Owner, The Raven Gallery



Preston Jackson's long and prestigious career as one of America's leading sculptors of bronze and steel is the centerpiece of a new exhibition at the Metal Museum in Memphis, Tenn. Jackson was recently recognized as the 38th annual Master Metalsmith by the museum, the only institution in the United States devoted exclusively to the preservation, promotion and advancement of the art and craft of fine metalwork.

Jackson's exhibition is called "A Hidden Culture." It explores Jackson's Black southern roots and centers on the narratives of enslaved African Americans, particularly women, to offer an alternative view of American history. The exhibition ran Oct. 6, 2024-Jan. 25, 2025, and featured paintings and 17 large-scale sculptures, primarily cast bronze figures.

Jackson intends that the collection will reveal history buried, forgotten or deemed unimportant by society.

"It is not confrontational – but it speaks the truth about the treatment of African American people in this country. The purpose of the work is to preserve cultural history and explicate attitudes within and outside the African American community," he said.

"It helps one to understand the value in preserving the behaviors of people arising from a struggle such as slavery over hundreds of years and explains

how the aftermath still affects us today. The narratives accompanying the sculptures are a type of historical fiction, drawn from research and family memoirs."

Preston was born in Decatur, and after graduating from Stephen Decatur High School, he attended Millikin before transferring to Southern Illinois University to complete a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts.

"I was right out of high school, and Millikin was the school where I was physically right around the corner from where I lived on Sunset Avenue," he said. "It was the only place for higher education, and at the time, I was seeking higher education. I didn't think that I was well-prepared for the world, so I wanted to move on up to a higher area."

# MASTER METALSMITH

From 1971 to 1972, Jackson returned to Millikin as a Drawing and Painting Instructor.

*“That was a beautiful time. It was just wonderful to get the opportunity to teach and paint and do my own work,” Preston said. “I return to Decatur when I can, and my relatives still live there. In fact, they are on Sunset Street in the very house I was born in.”*

Jackson served as Professor of Art at Western Illinois University from 1972 to 1989 and then joined the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1989 as Professor of Sculpture. Since 1995, Jackson has served as owner of The Raven Gallery, home of the Contemporary Art Center in Peoria, Ill.



Around Decatur, Jackson’s bronze sculptures can be viewed at the Decatur Andreas Ag Academy and the Macon County Law Enforcement Training Center, featuring sculptures of scientist and inventor George Washington Carver and U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves. The City of Decatur named a downtown park in Preston’s honor in 2022, and the park features his work, “From the Cottonfield to the Battlefield,” which honors the African American soldiers who fought in the Civil War.

Preston continues to create art at an impressive clip and, on average, can complete three pieces a month. A future piece has been commissioned showing what Native American life looked like in Central Illinois that will be on display in Laura Bradley Park in Peoria.

*“This work requires good foundry work, and I supply that myself. My dad was a foundryman at Wagner Iron Casting in Decatur, and so that runs in my family,” Preston said. “I think of Decatur often and Millikin. Although my time at Millikin was a short period of my life, my memories are of love and beauty.”*







Big Blue STEM Project Principal Investigator

# Dr. Kyle Knust

Associate Professor of Chemistry  
Director of the School of Chemistry & Physics



Millikin University's Dr. Kyle Knust has loved science for as long as he can remember. For Knust, an Associate Professor of Chemistry, answering science's questions has been paramount from the beginning.

"I've always been interested in the why. Not just the result of things, but why things are happening, and chemistry was a natural fit for wanting to answer the why of those fundamental science questions," Knust said. "I was always interested in science in middle and high school, particularly when we had the opportunity to do experiments. That was why I chose to major in chemistry in college. I really didn't know specifically what I wanted to do or where I wanted to go with it, but I knew I enjoyed science."

Now, as Director of the School of Chemistry & Physics, Knust hopes to instill that passion for science in the next generation of students by leading the creation of the Big Blue STEM Scholars project, thanks to a six-year, \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation (see page 8).

The project will begin in the fall of 2025 and provide, over its six-year duration, scholarships to at least 15 unique full-time first-year or transfer students who are pursuing bachelor's degrees in Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics or Physics.

The grant was prepared by Dr. Jenna Smith and Dr. Jennifer Schroeder from the School of Biological & Environmental Studies, Dr. Emily Olson from the School of Mathematics & Computational Sciences, and Knust will lead as the grant's Principal Investigator (PI).

*"We hope to use this project to create a surge in STEM applicants, including students from groups underrepresented in STEM, to further strengthen STEM programs here at Millikin," Knust said. "The overall goal of this project is to increase the completion of STEM degrees for high-achieving undergraduates with financial needs so these graduates may pursue STEM careers."*

Knust is originally from Jasper, Ind., and attended the University of Evansville before moving to the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry. Coming to Millikin after graduation,

# INTERESTED IN THE WHY

Kyle was joined by his wife, Alyse DeSoto Knust, who now serves as Millikin's Assistant Vice President of Alumni & Donor Engagement. The couple have two children, Keagan, 6, and Calvin, 3.

Knust's research interests include electrochemistry (the study of chemical processes that cause electrons to move), microfluidics (the study of how to manipulate and process small amounts of fluids), and desalination (the process of removing salt from water to make it suitable for human consumption).

He continues that research alongside Millikin students at the Knust Research Group, an undergraduate research group he founded. Knust recently received a 2024 Phi Kappa Phi Love of Learning Award for the Knust

Research Group's collaboration with the University of Notre Dame on the Distributed Pharmaceutical Analysis Lab (Project DPAL), which provides high-quality, validated chemical analysis of pharmaceutical samples from partners in the developing world.

"The Knust Research Group is all about student professional development. We have a variety of research avenues, and the award will help support the Knust Research Group's work with Project DPAL so we can expand our research on pharmaceutical ingredients," Knust said.

While some Millikin programs can highlight their student's performance in concerts, theatre productions or on the athletic field, STEM students don't have that public outlet to highlight their research.

"We can't bring people in to watch what students are doing in the lab or some of the cool things our alumni are doing in STEM. Sometimes we work behind the scenes in STEM, so I think this is nice to remind, especially the regional community, that Millikin is a destination for STEM," Knust said.

*"We've got more demand for our Chemistry and Physics majors right now than what we have in supply. They're also being paid very handsome salaries locally and regionally in various industries, and our placement rates are essentially 100% for STEM students after graduation."*





# College of Fine Arts

## Corey Cebulski '25

Multimedia Communication Major



WATCH VIDEO

New Student Welcome Week is a defining time for Millikin students, as each incoming class kicks off their college career while making connections with friends that will last for years.

Another connection that those first-year students undoubtedly made was with Millikin senior Multimedia Communication major Corey Cebulski. As one of the Student Experience Ambassadors (SEAs) shepherding the group through Orientation, Corey is often featured as a face of Millikin through Big Blue social media videos. It creates a connection between the new students and Corey before they set foot on campus and meet him in person.

"As an SEA, we are essentially their main line of communication from students to staff, as well as the larger community on campus. We are often

the first upperclassmen they'll see when they pull up in their cars and move into their dorms. I still get nervous starting a new school year because there's 400-plus new people on campus that I'm going to get to know now," Corey said.

*"At Orientation, I introduced myself to someone, and he said, 'I know who you are, you're the guy in the videos.' I said, 'Oh yeah, I guess you do know who I am.' I would have never thought I would be on that level with other people. It can be very easy to be a number or just another face on campus."*

Corey felt precisely that way before deciding to transfer to Millikin. Growing up in Mahomet, Ill., he decided to enroll in Parkland College in the Nursing program but felt like he never quite connected with the program or his fellow students.

"I went through my experience at Parkland during COVID, and it was challenging to make friends. I would sit in my car and eat lunch by myself every day because I couldn't sit in the cafeteria," he said.

A random phone call from a former track coach brought Millikin to Corey's attention. His high school track and field coach, Carrol Whitehouse, joined Millikin's Track & Field staff and looked to Corey to help reestablish the Big Blue pole-vaulting program.

"I was about to transfer away from Parkland, and literally an hour before I signed up, I got a call from Coach Whitehouse," Corey said. "The coaching staff took me and my mom on a very personalized visit. We walked around campus, and I met some of the team, and I absolutely loved it."

Corey decided to focus on Multimedia Communication as his major, which would let him expand his love of storytelling.

# THE POWER OF THE STORY

“My favorite part about being a Multimedia Communication major is it’s not just set on one thing. It’s through all mediums, including storytelling, digital media, voiceover and film,” he said. “When you’re watching a movie, there’s the visuals, there’s the animation, the music, the voiceover. All those things come together. Each semester, I learn a different piece of that, which is super fun.”

Specifically, Corey sees his future career aspirations in voiceover work for video games, which he sees as the best medium for storytelling.

“If you are watching a movie and you doze off, the movie is going to progress whether you’re connected with it or not,” he said. “But if you’re playing a video game, the story only progresses if you do. When you walk through games like ‘Uncharted’ or ‘The Last of Us’ or even games like ‘Pac-Man,’ you can’t go

to the next level unless you are engaged with what you’re doing. It’s the best medium for storytelling because it’s interactive storytelling.”

Corey has a goal of meeting Millikin alumna Jodi Benson ’93, who has had an outstanding voice acting resume as the voice of Ariel in the Disney film, “The Little Mermaid,” and as Barbie in the “Toy Story” franchise.

*“For me, a big pull for Millikin was that one of the most famous alumni is Jodi Benson, and knowing how incredibly successful she was coming out of Millikin. She is an amazing performer, and seeing how incredibly successful she’s been, if she can do this, then I’m willing to take a gamble on that too,” Corey said.*

One interest of Corey’s that sets him apart from the average college student is that he possibly sees himself one day stepping into Christian ministry. As a member of Millikin’s chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), he has built a strong support network and has been able to use his gift of storytelling to share the message of his faith.

“Like when I first joined FCA, I thought to myself, ‘I’m going to say yes to this.’ But also, I’m walking into a room with 25 people I don’t know. It’s OK that nobody knows you, but that’s still nerve-racking. I get one first impression with all these people. But if I wasn’t willing to say yes, I wouldn’t have the friends that I have now, the community that I have now, the opportunities that I have now,” Corey said.





# College of Professional Studies

## Sheila Shamloo '21/ DNP '26

Registered Nurse Anesthetist



WATCH VIDEO

As a Millikin University Nursing student, Sheila Shamloo will never forget her first blood glucose draw during her clinical experience. It was a simple prick of the finger to test blood sugar levels, but at the time, it was a nerve-wracking experience for a new healthcare worker helping her first patient. It was also an important stepping stone for Sheila.

“We’d practiced it, and I knew what I was doing, but suddenly, I felt like I had forgotten everything. My instructor told me, ‘You know what you’re doing, just be confident,

introduce yourself, and you will get it done,’” Sheila said. “I walked in, and my hands shook while trying to get this blood sugar, but I got it done. It is so crazy to think that I was so nervous about doing something so small and then, fast forward a few years later, and now I’m practicing how to put epidurals in and how to put patients to sleep.”

Since then, Sheila has come a long way as her technical skills have improved. Graduating with a Nursing degree in 2021, she is back at Millikin as a graduate student in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program with a specialization as a Registered Nurse Anesthetist (DNP-NAP).

During her undergraduate studies, Sheila also worked in the Intensive Care Unit at Decatur Memorial Hospital (DMH), where she found an interest in becoming an anesthetist.

“I started at DMH as a patient care tech, and it was wonderful

making that transition from just an undergraduate student to a registered nurse. This was all happening during the height of COVID, and I got experience with very critical patients. I learned how to sedate patients, how to paralyze patients and keep them going while their body was healing,” she said.

*“Being in those critical moments and having to work quickly, knowing what you’re doing, and having their lives in your hands, inspired me to continue that important line of work.”*

That love of helping other people was part of the reason the Mount Zion, Ill., native initially picked healthcare as a profession and Millikin for her studies.

“When choosing what I wanted to do, I was always drawn to healthcare and not just in the sense that I want to help people or nurse people back to health, but in the sense that there’s such a gap

# ADVOCATING FOR BETTER HEALTH

between providers and patients. I feel like we can do so much more to educate patients, empower them, help them help themselves and be proactive in their health,” Sheila said. “People often think that they should only be involved in healthcare when something is wrong, but I love educating people and telling them what they can do before there is a problem.”

The DNP-NAP program is a 36-month full-time course of study done in conjunction with Decatur Memorial. Students have access to the Memorial Center for Learning and Innovation (MCLI), a state-of-the-art Simulation Center that allows learners to develop their skills through simulation and skills training.

“I’m in my first year and learning a lot. Right now, we’re learning about placing spinals and epidurals. We’ve learned a lot about everything that

could be wrong with the patient, all their health issues, and how that impacts our anesthesia for them,” Sheila said.

“As advanced practice nurses, we also have a leadership role to advocate for patients and advocate for better health for the community. I’m learning about everything that makes you a well-rounded practitioner. Millikin is giving me everything. It’s not just how to do the job but how to be an impactful leader in the community. I love that Millikin has given me that experience. I didn’t expect it, but I believe I’ll be a better provider once I graduate because of it.”

As a Millikin graduate student, Sheila often asks her Millikin alumni colleagues when they will return to campus, reminding her that being a Millikin Nursing graduate is like being a part of a great big family.

*“A fun thing about staying in the community and working at the local hospital is that I worked with many people who have gone to Millikin, and so whenever I see them, I ask, ‘When are you going to go back?’ I want to push them to go back and to do more because I know they’re capable of it,” Sheila said.*

“I know they can perform and do well coming back. I do like to recruit because I see that potential in them, and it just feels like a community that way. Taking care of people is a thank you to everyone who has helped me along the way.”





# Tabor School of Business

## Danny Lack '25

Finance Major  
Managing Partner, MUPC



WATCH VIDEO

Millikin University senior Danny Lack's Big Blue experience has been all about growing his skills and getting the opportunities to put those skills into action. His college adventure has been centered around the studies for his Finance major, which have, in turn, provided him with the skills to step out into the world of business as a leader and an entrepreneur.

"I came to Millikin with a strong passion for personal finance wealth management, and I wanted to be a financial advisor when I came into college. One of my favorite professors, Dr. Michael Osei, has many projects, including a financial management

project where we evaluate a company's present and future value using their cash flow statements and other financial statements," Danny said.

"That was a very nitty-gritty accounting side of Finance. I also built an investment portfolio within Dr. Osei's class. A lot of his projects have been super applicable (outside of the classroom) yet challenging and rewarding. To this day, I still use the portfolio tracker based on what we did in this class."

As a Managing Partner in Millikin University Performance Consulting (MUPC), Danny has gained firsthand experience managing projects, such as building web pages for Decatur-area nonprofits and businesses, and providing web hosting.

"One of my favorite projects was to build a data analytic dashboard for PawPrint Ministries and Workforce Investment Solutions. Using Google Data Analytics, we built these professional web-based data reports analyzing their traffic, their bounce rate, what landing page they are

going to, and how much time they are spending on each page. We organized that in a cohesive way, and we presented it to their board," Danny said. "Another great opportunity is that the Dean of the School of Business, RJ Podeschi, advises and supervises the venture, but it's up to the leadership team and the consultants in the team to drive forward, make it profitable and grow the business."

This past summer, Danny gained valuable wealth management experience while interning as an Associate Financial Representative at Northwestern Mutual in Chicago. He met with clients about financial planning, insurance and investments to aid in planning for their future.

Danny is originally from Champaign, Ill., and was already connected to Millikin through his older brother, Sammy Lack '18, who wrestled for the Big Blue.

"My brother Sammy was a Marketing major and had an excellent experience on the Wrestling team. He loved his student-athlete experience and Millikin

# WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE

provided excellent Performance Learning opportunities,” Danny said.

*“Millikin was also close to home, and I’m a big family person. I feel like it just fit all those boxes, and that’s what I was looking for.”*

Another critical piece of Danny’s college decision was to continue his baseball career, and he has enjoyed his four years on the Big Blue Baseball team, earning College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) Academic All-Conference honors twice.

“My experience has been great. I’ve been able to build many friendships and work hard at something,” he said. “I think everyone on the team is really focused on their goals to win, and being in that environment has been cool.”

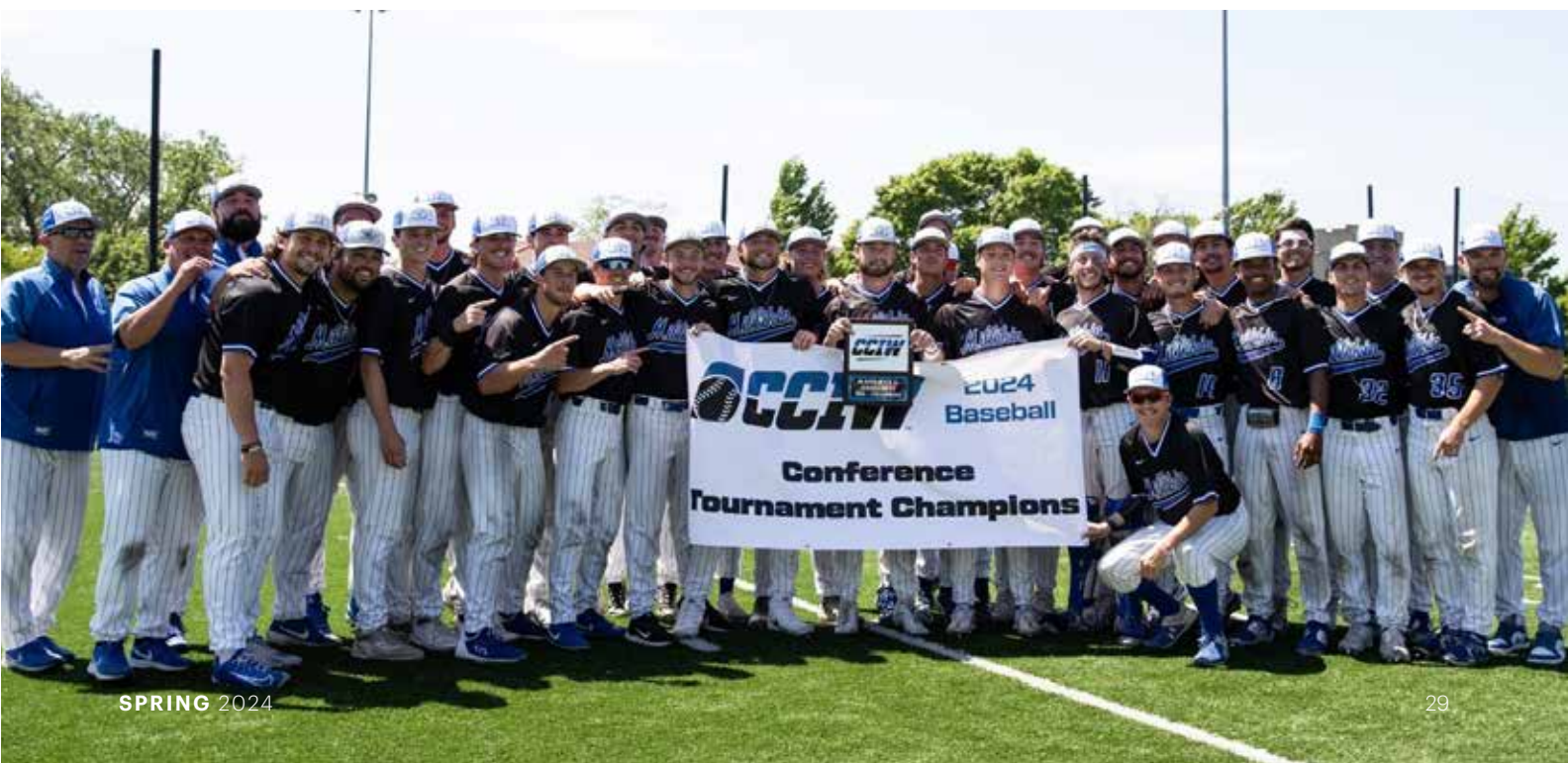
Last spring, Big Blue Baseball posted a 29-16 record, winning a share of the CCIW regular season title and making a trip to the NCAA DIII Tournament.

“Coming here freshman year, we won the CCIW conference the previous season, so that was our goal every year. As a team, we worked hard, and it was not something that had just happened overnight,” Danny said. “It took years to accomplish with so many different moving parts and so many different teammates working on their abilities, while also building a cohesive team. When we won, it wasn’t given to us. It was all hard work, and it was all earned.”

Danny has also combined athletics and business into his own company, Daniel Lack Productions, LLC, which produces video and social media content for several Big Blue teams.

“I came to Millikin having very little knowledge or experience with video editing; all I knew was that I just really enjoyed it. I was able to take a digital photography class, and I was able to gain more skills in video editing and filming. I would post my own videos that I would make based on my passions,” Danny said. “I was asked to film media day for the Softball team, and I thought, ‘Wow, this can be a market and a service I can provide.’ I got my own LLC for free through Millikin’s Center for Entrepreneurship, and it was a great opportunity.”

*“I think Millikin does a great job of giving you the athletic experience while also providing you with a great academic experience. Millikin provides so many Performance Learning opportunities, and there is so much to be involved in.”*





# College of Arts & Sciences

## Olivia Swords '25

History, Philosophy & English Triple Major  
Scovill Prize Recipient



WATCH VIDEO



Even as an elementary and middle school student, Olivia Swords had an interest in government and politics. For one particular project, she researched the Illinois State Supreme Court and decided to write a letter to court member and founder of the Special Olympics, Anne M. Burke.

“When I was 12, I reached out to Justice Burke because I was really interested in her career as an attorney, her history of advocacy for those with special needs, and then her career on the Illinois Supreme Court,” Olivia said. “She responded and was very kind. I got to go to the courthouse, and she gave my parents and me a private tour. Learning

about her career and experiences definitely sparked my interest in going into law.”

Now finishing her senior year at Millikin University, Olivia is preparing to attend law school after graduating this May. A graduate of Mount Zion High School in Illinois, Olivia has taken advantage of Millikin’s College of Arts & Sciences programs to prepare her for that next step as a triple major in History, Philosophy (with a Pre-Law focus) and English (with a Professional Writing concentration).

“Law school definitely requires a lot of reading and writing, so I have tried to take coursework that will serve as the best preparation for the rigors of law school at the undergraduate level. Having three majors allows me to delve into each of my passions,” Olivia said.

Olivia has put her skills into practice during Moot Court competitions and has argued mock cases in the Illinois

State Capitol, earning accolades the past two years. As a sophomore, Olivia was honored individually at the 2023 Model Illinois Government Moot Court Competition as the Most Outstanding Moot Court Attorney, which is the highest individual award given. At the 2024 competition, Olivia and her teammate, Millikin Political Science major Jadon Cox, won the Illinois state championship.

*“When we found out we had won, it was very exciting because Millikin had not won the overall championship since I had been a student here. While I was excited to win the award after all of our hard work preparing, I was even more excited about winning it for Millikin.”*

# MILLIKIN INVESTED IN ME

“Going into the evening, I did not expect that I was going to win the Scovill Prize. I was honored to simply be recognized and nominated amongst many of my peers,” she said. “My goal had always been, with three majors, to get an award in each major. I had already received one for English and one for the Pre-Law program previously, so I was honored to have History and Philosophy ones to add as well.”

Olivia has also challenged herself to tackle an inspiring Performance Learning project that is putting her creative writing skills to the test. After being inspired by watching the HBO documentary “The Vow” on the NXIVM self-improvement group whose leader was convicted of sex trafficking and racketeering, Olivia reached out to a former member who was featured. A friendship grew and led to a manuscript project that Olivia hopes will eventually be published.

*“For my Honors capstone project, I have been ghostwriting the memoir of a woman who was a former member and the first whistleblower of NXIVM. She was a very highly ranked member, having served on the executive board, and has an absolutely remarkable story of perseverance through extreme adversity,” Olivia said.*

“I found the story of NXIVM to be fascinating in understanding why

17,000 people enrolled in these courses, even earning endorsements and recognition from top global leaders including the Dalai Lama, and understanding how those in power preyed upon so many well-intentioned people. Her story, in particular, stood out to me as a Pre-Law student, seeing how the group truly weaponized the legal system against her after she began to speak out about her experiences. It’s an incredible case study in recognizing how the group used lawyers, the media and the judiciary to attempt to silence and shun former members who were speaking out and trying to do what was right.”

Olivia’s mother, Lizbeth “Liz” Mundy Swords, is a Millikin Class of 1988 graduate, and said that Millikin was always on Olivia’s radar as a college choice. After earning the Millikin Presidential Scholarship, Olivia’s choice was clear, and she challenged herself to make the most of her Big Blue experience.

“When I attended Dennis Lab School in junior high, we had a partnership

with Millikin that allowed me to come to campus often, so I got to know a lot of the students and felt like it was a vibrant and engaging community,” Olivia said.

*“I viewed the Presidential Scholarship as the University’s investment in me, and ever since, I have worked to maximize that investment. I never would have anticipated that I would go on to pursue three majors, but I truly attribute that flexibility to the Honors program and my professors for allowing me to take on that challenge. Getting to be involved on campus and pursue all of my passions – because I have a lot of interests in different areas – that’s definitely been beyond what I expected.”*





1950

**Shirley S. Simcox Parkinson**

'51 was presented the American Hackney Horse Association Distinguished Service Award by the United Professional Horsemen's Hall of Fame.

1960



**Allen Kaisor '64** has retired as a Director of Buena Vista National Bank. He began his banking career in 1960, becoming President/CEO of the bank and a member of its Board of Directors in 1986. In 2014, he retired as President/CEO but remained on the board until his December 2024 retirement.

**Allan Ferguson '66** is the author of "Route 36: Ohio to Colorado – America's Heartland Highway." As he describes it, he is "on a crusade to help American road-trippers discover or re-discover what he calls 'America's most important lost highway.'"

1970

**Roseanne Apyan '72** retired from nursing in 2016 after a 44-year nursing career. She became President-Elect of the Chattanooga Hamilton Place Rotary Club on July 1, 2024. She has been a Rotarian

for eight years, following in the footsteps of her father, who was dedicated to his Rotary Club in Wisconsin.

**Mark Neville '72** received the Association of Fundraising Professionals President's Award at the Southern Minnesota Chapter's National Philanthropy Day celebration. Mark served as Millikin's Vice President of Advancement from 1989-1991 following earlier positions in Alumni Relations and Advancement and also provided leadership in development for other institutions, including the Mayo Clinic.

1980

**Katrina A. Perkins '80** is a Customer Support Executive at E-Telequote, a GoHealth Company in Clearwater, Fla. She assists Medicare beneficiaries with any issues they have with their coverage.

**Chris Vela '85** has retired as an Accountant Supervisor after 37 years with the Illinois Department of Transportation. He hopes to do a little traveling in the future.

**Kathleen Beer Hammond '89** is a Music Director/Instructor of Voice & Piano at Waupaca Community Arts Hub in Waupaca, Wis. She also teaches voice and piano for a local nonprofit arts organization, is a general music teacher for the Tomorrow River Virtual Charter School and is a 12-year vocalist in Jazz Central Voices. In addition, she plays keyboard and sings for the classic rock band STEEM and is a member of K&J Duo with her husband, John Hammond.



**Captain William Roth '89**

recently retired from the U.S. Navy after a career of more than 30 years, including six years of active duty and 24+ years in the U.S. Navy Reserve. He served as a Nuclear Propulsion Officer on aircraft carriers during his active duty and as an Engineering Duty Officer (EDO) while in the reserves. As EDO, he supported maintenance and new construction for Naval Sea Systems Command, all four Navy Shipyards and several Supervisor of Shipbuilding commands. He was awarded the Legion of Merit following his retirement ceremony.

He retired from his civilian career at Procter & Gamble Company in 2018, working 20+ years as their Corporate Welding and Materials Engineer. He formed Welding Engineering Consultants in late 2018 and serves as its President. He and his wife of over 33 years, Janet (Palli), have retired to a lake home near Knoxville, Tenn.

**William "Bill" Tolone '89**

is the new Dean of the Graduate School at University of North Carolina Charlotte; he began his new role Jan. 1. Tolone was previously Associate Dean and Professor in the College of Computing and Informatics at UNC Charlotte. During his 30-year career, Tolone has authored more than 70 peer-reviewed publications

and holds two patents. He also helped the University achieve the National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance and Cyber Defense designation. Tolone's wife, Ellen (Tanis), is a member of the Class of 1989. His two siblings are also Millikin alumni: Laura Tolone, Class of 1995; and Bob Tolone, Class of 1999.

## 1990

**Amy Fritz Funk '93**, and colleague Peter Hussell launched consulting venture F+H Partners, a nonprofit development and strategic planning services firm focused on the specialized needs of arts and culture organizations. The firm is headquartered in Toronto and Chicago, and provides coaching, full-picture fundraising analysis, campaign work, strategic planning with revenue components, and board and staff training. Amy also continues in her role as Senior Vice President at TWB Fundraising, a full-service nonprofit consulting firm.

**Brandy Marie Roberts Stabler '96** is Director of Development at Compass for Kids in Springfield, Ill., where she serves as a fundraiser and community advocate for the nonprofit organization, which she notes provides "innovative after-school and summer programs that are opening doors and opportunities for kids who need it most."

**Scott G. Skinner '97** of Morristown, Tenn., published his first novel, "Displaced – Part One."

## 2000

**Joel Styzens '03** was recognized by The Guardian for having one of 2023's Top Ten Best Contemporary

Albums, "Resonance," which the publication described as: "Lush, comforting music that yearns and soothes."

**Caleb J. Keith '06** is Director of Research Strategy and Initiatives in the Office of Research, Indianapolis, at Indiana University Indianapolis (IUI). In this role, he provides support for the Office of Research, Indianapolis, including ad hoc strategic projects, initiatives, requests and activities assigned to the Office of Research, Indianapolis; provides fiscal and managerial oversight and coordination for research consortia at IUI; coordinates and convenes groups, councils and initiatives for the Office of Research, Indianapolis; monitors and reports on progress toward metrics of the IUI 2030 Strategic Plan; and serves as liaison for the Office of Research, Indianapolis, to campus-level committees and working groups.

**Brandon Stover '07** completed his Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology from the University of Colorado Boulder in May 2024.

## 2010

**Rebecca Ann Leach '10** is Business Analyst for the State Universities Retirement System in Champaign, Ill.

**Britteny Dunson Soto '10** is a People Operations Manager at Casechek.

**Justin Bledsaw '11** graduated with a master's degree in Science of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Eastern Illinois University. He continues to attend Eastern Illinois University to earn a second master's degree in Educational Leadership.



**John Blakeman, Ph.D., R.N., P.C.C.N. '13/MSN '16** is Associate Professor of Nursing in the Mennonite College of Nursing at Illinois State University, where he teaches and conducts research. His program of research is focused on cardiovascular disease and symptom science. He was awarded the Clinical Article of the Year Award in 2023. He and his wife, Elizabeth Olejniczak, were married Dec. 9, 2023.

**Stephanie Lexis '13** appeared on the Kelly Clarkson show to discuss her Broadway Body Positivity Project. Lexis founded the project to provide encouragement for plus-size, disabled and other under-represented actors in the theatre world who are sometimes excluded from playing certain stage roles. In 2024, she created another resource for actors facing these casting experiences by launching Shape of a Star. The photos and music videos feature six plus-size performers as ingénues, romantic leads and other roles from iconic musicals, all to help open doors for increased casting opportunities.

**Lauren Michelle Acton Bennett '14/MBA '19** married Merritt Bennett on June 1, 2024.



## MEMORIALS

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### 1940

Waneta Trick Moses '41 of Decatur, Feb. 1, 2024.

Margaret Gill Parkinson '42 of Bloomington, Ill.,  
Oct. 20, 2023.

Fred Bradshaw '47 of Auburn, Ill., Oct. 16, 2023.

Ellen Quinn Petty '49 of St. Louis, March 24, 2023.

Verda Figge Stewart '49 of Birmingham, Ala., July 28, 2024.

### 1950

John Albin '50 of Newman, Ill., April 20, 2024.

Russell Estes '50 of Santee, Calif., March 27, 2024.

Patricia Linsley Krumpeck '50 of Valencia, Calif.,  
April 23, 2024.

Julia Hudson Nash '50 of Peoria, Ill., Dec. 20, 2023.

James Norman '50 of Houston, Aug. 28, 2024.

E. Doyle Slifer Sr. '50 of Taylorville, Ill., July 21, 2023.

Phillip Wills '50 of Tuscola, Ill., Sept. 22, 2024.

Mildred Hawker Biggs '51 of Hazel Dell, Ill., March 20, 2024.

Dorothy Drysdale Gilbertson '51 of Winona, Minn.,  
March 2, 2024.

Betty Griffin '51 of Riverton, Ill., March 29, 2023.

Robert Kennedy '51 of Pensacola Beach, Fla., Jan. 27, 2024.

William Martin '51 of Pembroke Pines, Fla., Jan. 17, 2022.

Robert Scherer '51 of Statesboro, Ga., Aug. 20, 2024.

JoAnn Butt Bess '52 of Hendersonville, N.C., Feb. 20, 2024.

Lois Schrag Brown '52 of Cedar Falls, Iowa, Sept. 4, 2024.

Dorothy Appleman Burgener '52 of Fort Wayne, Ind.,  
Jan. 23, 2024.

Albert Freitag '52 of San Tan Valley, Ariz., May 11, 2024.

Evelyn Kashefska Logan '52 of Drummond Island, Mich.,  
June 30, 2023.

Gene Rigsbey '52 of Springfield, Ill., March 31, 2024.

Jacqueline Davis Kreker '53 of Chandler, Ariz., April 14, 2024.

Anita Perry Lowry '53 of Gainesville, Fla., Sept. 20, 2024.

Sven Ruetman '53 of Walnut Creek, Calif., Feb. 12, 2022.

Joy Smith '54 of Decatur, Sept. 13, 2024.

Patricia Wieland '54 of Bloomington, Ill., Feb. 4, 2024.

Alan Harrison '55 of Godfrey, Ill., April 21, 2024.

Barbara Davis Jesseman '55 of Bradenton, Fla., formerly of  
Lisbon, N.H., June 29, 2024.

Alynda Ryerson Stengel '55 of Decatur, Jan. 10, 2024.

Ruth Bug Grandcolas '56 of O'Fallon, Ill., Aug. 30, 2024.

James Howie '56 of Donnellson, Ill., formerly of Sparta, Ill.,  
Feb. 7, 2024.

Alice Gregory Krause '56 of Richmond, Ky., Dec. 28, 2023.

William Maddux '56 of Streator, Ill., April 15, 2024.

David Martenson '56 of Mesa, Ariz., March 4, 2024.

Donald McCann '56 of Loudon, Tenn., July 20, 2023.

Paul Moore '56 of Newton, Ill., Dec. 3, 2023.

Carolyn Fleming Perkins '56 of Decatur, Sept. 8, 2024.

Shirley Rawlings Thompson '56 of Clinton, Ill., Aug. 17, 2024.

Marda Hastings Young '56 of Decatur, April 17, 2024.

John Collins '57 of Decatur, April 6, 2024.

Harry Erickson '57 of Hinsdale, Ill., formerly of Crete, Ill.,  
May 9, 2024.

Betsy Branstetter Rude '57 of St. Charles, Mo., July 29, 2024.

Eugene Young '57 of Denver, Jan. 16, 2024.

Carol Montgomery Berg '58 of Bassett, Neb., March 29, 2024.

John Cross '58 of Mount Vernon, Ill., June 20, 2024.

Don Holler '58 of McHenry, Ill., Jan. 4, 2024.

Jimmey Kaiser '58 of Champaign, Ill., Aug. 25, 2024.

## MEMORIALS

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Nancy Griffin Massaro '58 of Rochester, Minn., formerly of Grand Rapids, Minn., March 7, 2024.

Ben Rinehart Sr. '58 of Edenton, N.C., April 15, 2024.

Jerry Royce '58 of Lake Milton, Ohio, Sept. 27, 2024.

David Smith '58 of Apex, N.C., Nov. 28, 2023.

Richard Allinson '59 of Elizabeth City, N.C., Dec. 6, 2023.

James Jolley '59 of Swansea, Ill., Nov. 13, 2023.

Gene King '59 of Champaign, Ill., Jan. 17, 2024.

John McClarey '59 of Decatur, Jan. 19, 2024.

Mack Mericle '59 of Lake Shawnee, N.J., March 5, 2024.

Sally Andrews Neely '59 of Salem, Ore., June 10, 2024.

Barbara Cannon Weaver '59 of Jefferson City, Mo., June 18, 2024.

### 1960

Charles Burns '60 of Bloomington, Ill., Oct. 1, 2024.

Thomas Golian '60 of Williamsburg, Va., Sept. 21, 2022.

David Larson '60 of Austin, Texas., April 10, 2024.

Norman Lents '60 of Phoenix, July 3, 2022.

Kenneth Probst '60 of Wasilla, Ala., Feb. 6, 2024.

Richard Allen '61 of McKinney, Texas, Jan. 2, 2024.

Charles Gustafson '61 of Springfield, Ill., Jan. 2, 2024.

Cleo Figley Ward Jones '61 of Friendswood, Texas, Sept. 26, 2024.

William Walden '61 of DeWitt, Ill., Nov. 22, 2023.

Rachel Koester Clifton '62 of Mustang, Okla., Feb. 20, 2024.

F. Elizabeth "Betty" Garrett '62 of Lake Villa, Ill., Jan. 13, 2024.

Carole Jewell Houchin '62 of Wisconsin Rapids, Wis., April 2, 2024.

Douglas Nichols '62 of Decatur, Dec. 13, 2023.

Donald Rice '62 of Lafayette, Colo., Nov. 4, 2023.

John Wolfe '62 of Decatur, Sept. 23, 2024.

George Beiderwieden '63 of Myrtle Beach, S.C., Feb. 18, 2024.

William Burgis '63 of Park Ridge, Ill., Jan. 16, 2024.

Edward Galapeaux '63 of Tucson, Ariz., Jan. 30, 2024.

Stanley Lee '63 of Denham Springs, La., May 17, 2024.

David J. Roth '63 of Grafton, Ill., June 24, 2024.

David Williams '63 of Oak Park, Ill., May 13, 2024.

Merton Ferguson '64 of Eureka, Mo., formerly of Decatur, Oct. 28, 2024.

David Miller '64 of Decatur, Aug. 28, 2024.

James Newbold III '64 of Cashiers, N.C., May 31, 2024.

Sandra Durning Bauer '65 of Springfield, Ill., Jan. 19, 2024.

Larry Henry '65 of Snohomish, Wash., Oct. 4, 2024.

Jonelle Reppenhagen Mades '65 of Dalton, Ga., Feb. 19, 2024.

Mary Hauff Munroe '65 of Mount Dora, Fla., Feb. 16, 2024.

Foster Nelson '65 of Decatur, Aug. 29, 2024.

William Wickline '65 of Assumption, Ill., Sept. 22, 2024.

Robert Wrigley '65 of Decatur, Aug. 19, 2024.

Robert Deimel '66 of Silver Spring, Md., April 17, 2023.

William Epperson '66 of Deatsville, Ala., July 21, 2024.

Constance Slotowski Ryan '66 of Algonquin, Ill., March 21, 2024.

Phillip Zeni Sr. '66 of Decatur, Oct. 14, 2023.

Jane Horn Buxton '67 of Dallas, May 2, 2024.

Christine Baltz Englebreton '67 of Millstadt, Ill., Nov. 15, 2023.

Richard Enslow '67 of Littleton, Colo., Jan. 9, 2024.

Sharon Fotzler '67 of Monticello, Ill., Dec. 12, 2023.



## MEMORIALS

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Victoria Helmuth '67 of Minneapolis, Nov. 7, 2023.

John Jarzembski '67 of Gainesville, Fla., Dec. 26, 2023.

Robert McQueen '67 of Forsyth, Ill., May 29, 2024.

Robert Sands '67 of Shelbyville, Ill., April 8, 2024.

Marilyn Thielsen Cannon '68 of San Mateo, Calif.,  
Sep. 6, 2022.

David Geibel '68 of Decatur, May 3, 2024.

Roberta Elwell Ortengren '68 of Rosewood Heights, Ill.,  
Sept. 1, 2023.

David Osborne '68 of Decatur, May 12, 2024.

Andrew Barber Jr. '69 of Dothan, Ala., and Brunswick, Md.,  
Jan. 13, 2022.

Jacob Bingaman '69 of Decatur, May 18, 2024.

Joyce Livesay '69 of Mahomet, Ill., Aug. 16, 2024.

Ronald Nickelsen '69 of Highland Park, Ill., Nov. 29, 2023.

Ralph Quade '69 of Albany, N.Y., Feb. 22, 2024.

Robert Stiehl '69 of Urbana, Ill., April 9, 2024.

Patricia Benson Unzicker '69 of Cape Girardeau, Mo.,  
July 16, 2023.

Eugene Velchek '69 of Decatur, Aug. 7, 2024.

### 1970

Derald Hartley '70 of Mount Zion, Ill., Feb. 8, 2024.

Michael Newland '70 of Forsyth, Ill., Oct. 6, 2024.

Cynthia Petty '70 of Mount Zion, Ill., July 14, 2024.

David Sodko '70 of Decatur, Sept. 9, 2023.

Ronald Reynolds '71 of Chandler, Ariz., Sept. 19, 2024.

Charles Eyman '72 of Greenville, Ill., Oct. 25, 2024.

Robert Moore II '72 of Decatur, Oct. 15, 2023.

Judy Harkins Widlowski '72 of Brevard, N.C., Sept. 11, 2024.

John Denton '73 of Mendham, N.J., Aug. 19, 2024.

Mark Dewalt '73 of Westchester, Ill., April 29, 2022.

Eric Kaylor '73 of Albuquerque, N.M., April 19, 2024.

Ray Steffen '73 of Corvallis, Ore., April 5, 2024.

Eleanor Difani Ivens '74 of Crystal River, Fla., Feb. 19, 2024.

Pamela Andriano Greening '75 of Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.,  
Dec. 28, 2023.

Kathleen Lowe-Arthur '75 of Monmouth, Ill., Dec. 13, 2023.

Barney Newberry '75 of South Boston, Va., Aug. 2, 2024.

Robert Northway '75 of Decatur, Jan. 21, 2024.

Otis Taylor '75 of Guyton, Ga., Sept. 26, 2023.

James Cherry '76 of Girard, Ill., Feb. 25, 2024.

Jeffrey Erdman '76 of Whitewater, Wis., June 11, 2023.

Bradley Jackson '76 of Mount Zion, Ill., Dec. 8, 2023.

Steven McNulty '76 of Venice, Fla., Nov. 10, 2023.

Earl Santy Jr. '76 of Rancho Santa Margarita, Calif.,  
Oct. 20, 2023.

Mary Gillespie Wiersema '76 of Naperville, Ill., Dec. 5, 2023.

Laura Sunkel Mahon '77 of Hurst, Texas, Sept. 2, 2023.

Brian Monti '78 of Hernando, Fla., June 2, 2022.

Timothy McFadden '79 of Decatur, Jan. 18, 2024.

Cheryl Peck '79 of Springfield, Ill., Nov. 21, 2023.

Carroll Webb '79 of Decatur, Dec. 20, 2023.

### 1980

Deborah Grenlund '80 of Sylvania, Ohio, July 12, 2024.

Wendy Crouse Hinman '81 of Dubuque, Iowa, May 20, 2023.

Anne Hostetler '81 of Decatur, Ill., June 10, 2024.

Janet Huss '81 of St. Louis, May 22, 2024.

Wilma Ekberg Stocker '81 of Lincoln, Ill., May 30, 2023.

Kevin Brown '83 of Woodstock, Ill., Nov. 24, 2023.

## MEMORIALS

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Dale Spires '83 of Sobieski, Wis., Feb. 4, 2024.

Elsebeth Jantzen Buckley '84 of Tinley Park, Ill.,  
March 19, 2024.

Lea Ann Brandenburg Davis '84 of Tucson, Ariz.,  
March 3, 2024.

Teresa Chappell '85 of Godfrey, Ill., March 19, 2024.

Clifton Strickland '86 of Round Rock, Texas, April 7, 2024.

Paula Lane '87 of Woodson, Ill., Sept. 29, 2024.

Anthony Karwatowicz '89 of Satellite Beach, Fla.,  
Aug. 7, 2023.

John Saylor '89 of Shawnee, Kan., March 23, 2024.

Garnet Varvel Woolard '89 of Decatur, July 11, 2024.

### 1990

Rebecca Walschleger Finley '90 of Sherman, Ill.,  
Aug. 3, 2024.

Nathan Lading '90 of Collinsville, Ill., formerly of  
Latham, Ill., Aug. 16, 2024.

Harry Orr '90 of Goose Creek, S.C., Oct. 13, 2024.

Anthony Rosetto '90 of Macon, Ill., Aug. 30, 2024.

David Forsythe '91 of Decatur, Nov. 15, 2023.

Diana Garver '94 of Decatur, April 24, 2024.

Kimberly Osterbur Walden '94 of Urbana, Ill., Sept. 4, 2024.

Michelle Sommer Maiers '99 of Elmhurst, Ill., June 2, 2023.

### 2000

Matthew Brashear '02 of Los Angeles, Nov. 5, 2024.

Jennifer Ketchmark-Liska '02 of Orland Hills, Ill.,  
July 30, 2024.

Jacob Ashcraft '03 of Pana, Ill., Feb. 15, 2024.

Matthew Vietti '03 of Goodlettsville, Tenn., Feb. 27, 2024.

Krista Schwartz '05 of Decatur, March 12, 2024.

Suzanne Kissinger Keller '06 of Decatur, Dec. 2, 2023.

Timothy Staffeldt '06 of Oswego, Ill., July 25, 2023.

Nicole Barclay '07 of Decatur, Feb. 24, 2023.

Christelle Brouck '08 of L'Aumone, France, May 21, 2024.

Sean Lipka '08 of Decatur, Dec. 8, 2023.

### 2010

Leslie Nailer '12 of Decatur, July 22, 2024.

Alexandra Miller Kamer '13 of Plymouth, Mich.,  
Oct. 28, 2024.

Hailey Polley Scott '15 of Cisco, Ill., June 7, 2023.

Amy Mazzotti '18 of San Antonio, May 16, 2024.

### 2020

Demetrius Marshall '24 of Kennesaw, Ga., May 7, 2023.

Mildred Jackson Velek of Decatur, April 15, 2024.

Barbara Redford of Venice, Fla., formerly of Forsyth, Ill.,  
April 4, 2024.

### SHARE

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