


April &  
May 2015

# AlumniTimes

Clarkson College Alumni Magazine

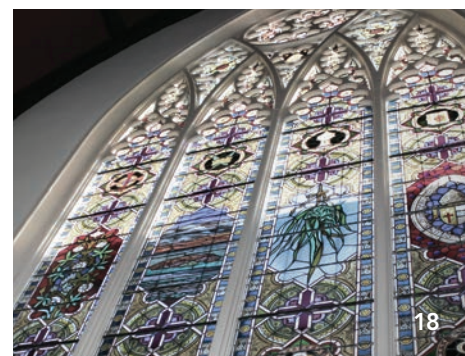
The background image is a photograph of a church interior. On the left, a large, tall, arched stained glass window with intricate designs in blue, red, and gold is visible. To the right, several white, fluted columns support the ceiling, with ornate lanterns hanging from them. In the foreground, the tops of dark wooden pews are visible. A semi-transparent blue box containing the text "Preserving our legacy & carrying on yours" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Preserving our legacy  
& carrying on yours





Take time to reflect upon your legacy and how it brought you to where you are today. Which moments stand out? What more would you like to experience and achieve? Perhaps the most spectacular moments of your legacy are those yet to be lived. There's no better time than now.



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The Alumni Times is a quarterly publication that is distributed by the Alumni Association of Clarkson College. Direct all story and photo submissions, changes of address or publication inquiries to Rita VanFleet, Alumni Coordinator, at [vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrta@clarksoncollege.edu), via phone at 402.552.3516 or via mail at 101 South 42nd Street, Omaha, Neb. 68131.



### On the Cover

The sanctuary of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. 18

PHOTOGRAPH BY Mikaela Yeager

## From the Alumni President

**We all have a story—a background of where we came from, the opportunities we sought, the mistakes we learned from and the decisions we made that brought us to where we are today.**

One of the most prized chapters of my story takes me back to my undergraduate years at Clarkson College. I was a feverishly determined nursing student eager to follow my mother and grandmother's suit and fulfill my lifelong dream of becoming a nurse. Alas, graduation came, and I could finally work those 12-hour shifts!

For the next five years, I poured my heart into caring for my patients and thrived off of the energy that pervaded the labor and delivery unit at Clarkson Tower of Nebraska Medicine. I took pride in my work, but I increasingly felt an impulse to move in a new direction. So, I turned in my scrubs, dug out my professional attire and began my next chapter as a nursing instructor at Clarkson College.

The transition from the bedside to the classroom took some adjusting, but I embraced that challenge and strived daily to pass on my knowledge to the students who sat in front of me. The gratification that comes with teaching is remarkable, but not even that could put out the perpetual flame of curiosity that exists inside of me. Three years later, in fall 2012, I took on my most recent role as Assistant Director of Undergraduate Nursing.

In my 14-year history with Clarkson College and Nebraska Medicine, I have grown in ways I never imagined and am forever grateful for the belief instilled in me over the years as a student, educator and leader. Now, I am excited to share that I will carry on all I have gained as I pursue a new opportunity as Chief Nursing Officer at an Omaha-based Select Specialty Hospital. This new role will allow me to continue my career in health care leadership while also providing a pathway to interact with patients and their families.

As I step into this new role, my heritage will not be left behind. I will take with me the many values I inherited throughout my time at Clarkson College, and I will also maintain my status as an active member of the Alumni Association—even after my term as president ends this coming June. If you are not currently a member, I encourage you to give joining some thought. We consider the Alumni Association to be a two-way support system, offering a host of social, educational and career advancement opportunities. The most rewarding part of my involvement has been giving back to our students. There are many ways we support students, and I'm positive you would enjoy being a part of these efforts.

Check out what becoming a member is all about on page 16. As your fellow alumnus, I can promise that maintaining that connection with the College will be a part of your own life's story you won't regret.

Wishing you the very best,

*Rachel Thompson*



Rachel Thompson, M.S.N., R.N. ('04, '12)

### Staying connected with our alumni

Don't overlook the special insert in this issue. Learn about membership and fall events, and offer your feedback in our annual survey.



## Share Your Experience

### Alumni Referral Program

Our alumni have a significant impact on students looking for a college to pursue their health care education. Through your conversations and sharing of your experiences, the College receives many inquiries from these prospective students. Clarkson College and the Alumni Association want to recognize you for the impact you have on referring students to our College. The Alumni Referral program is our way of saying thank you to our valued alumni.

For every student that lists you as an alumni referral on his/her application, the College will send you a \$25 gift card once the student begins his or her first semester of classes. Students can apply online at [ClarksonCollege.edu](http://ClarksonCollege.edu). If a print copy of the application is preferred, they may contact our Admissions office at 402.552.3100.

In addition to the gift card, your name will be added to a drawing for a mini iPad. The drawing will take place in the summer, and the winner will be announced in the October/November issue of the Alumni Times.

In order to receive the gift card and to be entered into the mini iPad drawing, we must have your current address on file, so please keep us up-to-date by contacting Rita VanFleet at 402.552.3516, [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu) or by visiting the Alumni section of the Clarkson College website. Thank you for your referrals and for helping continue our tradition of preparing the best in health care.



## Request for Information

Information is requested from graduates of the classes of 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985, 1990 and the Radiologic Technology class of 1995. This information will be used to compile a remembrance booklet distributed to each reunion class member at the Alumni Brunch held on Thursday morning, Sept. 17 in Howard Hall at Clarkson College. These booklets will contain class rosters, pictures, miscellaneous information and announcements submitted by each graduate. Announcements may include engagements, marriages, births, career honors received, work history, volunteer work, hobbies, travel, etc. Anything you would like to share with your fellow graduates is welcomed. A photo of yourself to accompany the information would also be appreciated and enjoyed by your former classmates.

Complete and submit the Memory Book Submission Form located in the miniature booklet included in your mailing titled "Let's celebrate your anniversary."



## Victories Abound at Bowling Tournament

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rita VanFleet & Mikaela Yeager

Forty-four members and friends of the College community made it out for the fifth annual Alumni Bowling Tournament, held at Scorz Sports Plaza in Ralston, Neb. on Saturday, Jan. 17. Making up the 11 teams were 20 alumni, eight staff members, and 11 faculty, eight of whom are also Clarkson College grads. Several family members and friends also joined in on the fun.

Each team bowled two games, and an awards presentation was held at the end. The "Lounge Lizards," consisting of Joan Blum ('81, '86), Mary Dishman ('85, '91, '09), Kassie McKenny ('07) and Renee Ruhkamp ('09), bowled a combined score of 603 and won the Last Place Champions Team award for the fifth year straight.

The same two rivaling teams of the last four years duked it out for the Grand Champions Team award. In the end, the "Holy Rollers," comprised of 2011 and 2012 champions Sarah and Brett Sobotka and Erin Jordan ('13) and

Brandon Jordan ('06, '13) snagged the win with their combined score of 1189. The arch-rival "Strikeasaurus" team, consisting of captain Carla Dirkschneider ('07) and her teammates Ellen Collins, Mike Dirkschneider and Matt Anderson, settled for runner-up with a final combined score of 1130.

For the second year, Laurna Hoss of Student Financial Services received the Highest Individual Women's Score award, bowling a combined score of 307. Matt Anderson took the Highest Individual Men's Score award, bowling a combined score of 375.

Taking the Best Team Name award was "Team Ebowl" with Adam Hardy, Nicole Bonk, Stefanie Skrdla and Mikaela Yeager, all of the Marketing department. Second place was "Jamaican Me Wanna Bowl," consisting of Student Services members Natalie Vrbka, Bailey Jorgensen, Becky Kemper and Alina Borkowski.

Costumed participating teams included:  
 1 / The Pinions. 2 / Holy Rollers. 3 / Team Ebowl.  
 4 / Jamaican Me Wanna Bowl. 5 / Wine Pins.  
 6 / Rolling Pins.  
 7 / Strikeasaurus.  
 8 / PTA program alumnae.  
 9 / Lounge Lizards.



# Annual September Events are Around the Corner

Each September, the Alumni Association hosts its annual Alumni Weekend events. During this celebratory time, the anniversary classes of 25, 30, 40, 50 and 60 years are also honored. Join your fellow alumni in renewing friendships, networking with other professionals and helping the anniversary alumni celebrate their milestones.

This year, a 20th anniversary celebration will be held for Radiologic Technology alumni. If any other class would like to have a 10- or 20-year reunion, contact Rita VanFleet at 402.552.3516 or [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu), and she will happily include your group in the anniversary plans.

## Thursday, Sept. 17: Alumni Weekend Kickoff

We're kicking off the festivities with our annual all-alumni brunch. Other activities planned for the day include the annual alumni meeting, bricks and boulders dedication ceremony on campus during the Heritage Garden Walk and an afternoon trolley tour of historic Clarkson School of Nursing and Omaha sites.

## Friday, Sept. 18: Continuing Education Event

This year's presentation will be "Are the Bugs Winning?," a discussion of the re-emergence of contagious diseases and the use and function of the Nebraska Medicine biocontainment unit. The annual alumni dinner will be held later that evening.

Refer to the miniature booklet titled "Staying connected with our alumni" included on pages 16-17 for more details regarding the September events, as well as information on how to register for those you are able to attend.



Team Ebowl captured another victory for Best Team Costume. The group wore white, hooded coveralls and accessorized with latex gloves, shoe covers, scrub caps and "Team Ebowl" nametags. Coming in second was "The Pinions," a spinoff of "minions," which are the small, yellow creatures that debuted in the movie Despicable Me. Kelly Jackson ('05), Kim Grimes ('12), Shaylee Dirks ('12) and Cindi Jackson were Pinion teammates.

Nine of the 20 alumni present were graduates of the PTA program. Chera Tremblay ('08), Tracy Roberts ('08) and Kaley Draper ('08) of "Battle Ready;" Karen Abboud ('05), Kinsey Staab ('11) and Valerie Combs ('10) of the "Rolling Pins;" and Kelly Jackson, Kim Grimes and Shaylee Dirks of "The Pinions" all enjoyed the evening out with their former classmates and instructors.

Other participants included Sue Leutzinger ('89, '09) and Ed Leutzinger, JJ Kassmeier ('72, '86) and Dale Kassmeier of the "Wild Turkey Baggers;" Denise Bojan, Megan Wickless-Mulder, Laurina Hoss and Sharon Mantz of the "Wine Pins;" and Tracy and Roger Ozzello and Jennifer and Duane Friend of the "Mommas and Daddies."



## Friendly Competition Served at Decorated Table Trivia Event

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPHY BY Rita VanFleet

Teapots from around the world, smoking brains, rock music, pots of gold, pearls and a referee with a green whistle were all present at the Alumni Association-sponsored Decorated Table Trivia Brunch held Saturday, March 7. What fun the table hostesses and invitees had in decorating and dressing to match their themed tables. Two new hostesses and their guests were welcomed to this year's event: alumna Susan Bristol ('78) and Bailey Jorgensen, College Financial Aid Counselor.

Jen Anderson ('10) and her Breakfast at Tiffany's-themed table gracefully claimed both the Best Decorated Table and trivia winner awards, earning a free table for next year's event, as well as Subway gift cards for her guests. Second place for Best Decorated Table was awarded to Susan Bristol and her Tea Party Around the World table. Rita VanFleet ('67, '94, '06) and the St. Pat's Leprechaun Ladies took second place in the trivia competition.

During the seven rounds of trivia, rivalry and laughter filled Howard Hall as each table battled for the highest trivia score. Test your own knowledge against a few of the trivia questions:

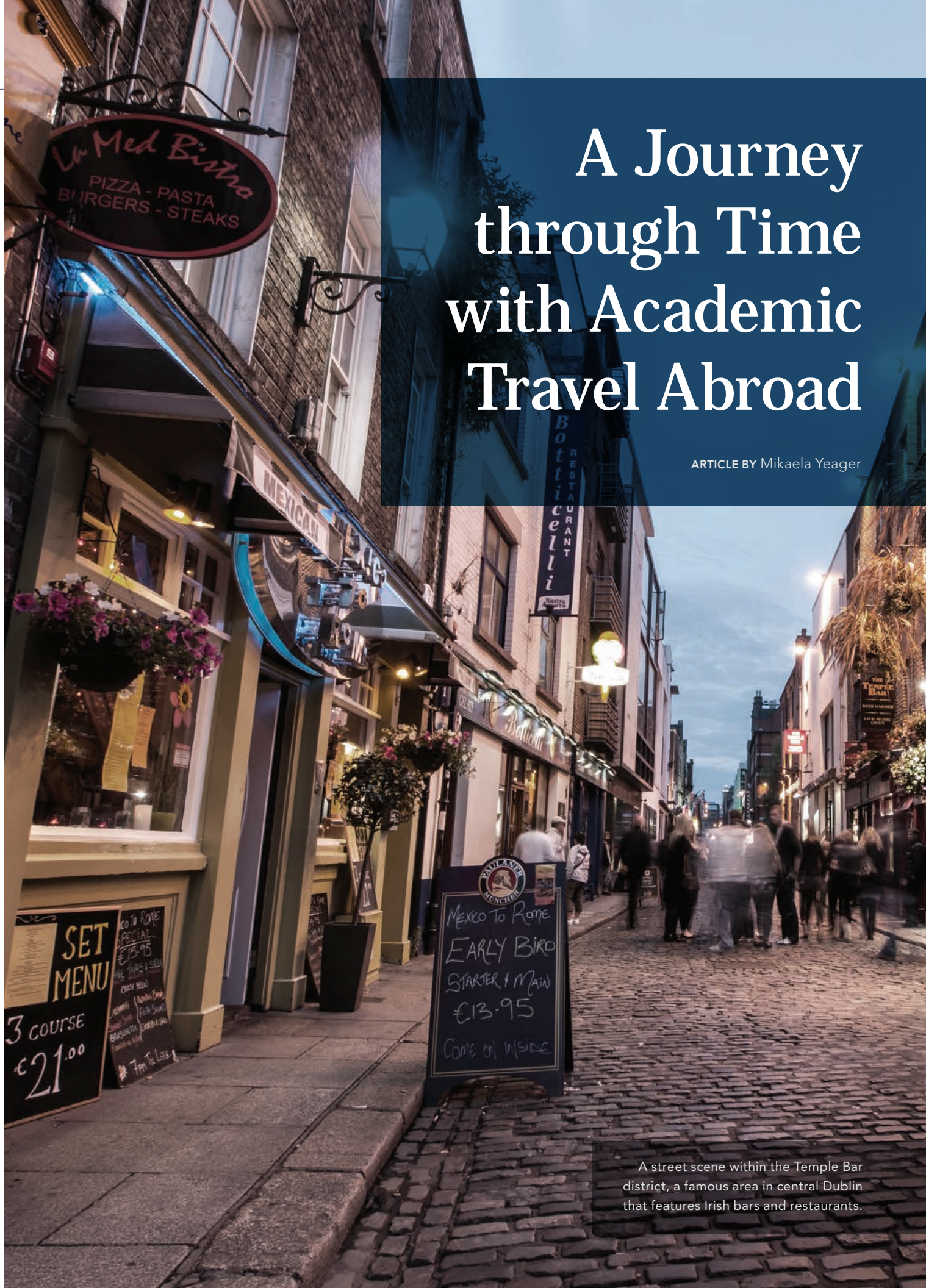
- › In a deck of cards, which king does not have a moustache?
- › What were the first names of the Joslyn's who built Joslyn Castle?
- › Name the reindeer from the movie "Frozen."

1 / Tea Party Around the World. Susan Bristol ('78).  
 2 / Go Team centerpiece. Trish Weber ('95, '08, '11).  
 3 / Breakfast at Tiffany's. Jen Anderson ('10).  
 4 / Rock 'N' Roll. Carla Dirkschneider ('07).  
 5 / Go Team referee and event emcee, Trish Weber.  
 6 / Brainstorm. Bailey Jorgensen. 7 / St. Pat's Leprechaun Ladies. Rita VanFleet ('67, '94, '06).  
 Trivia answers: Hearts; Sara and George; Sven



# A Journey through Time with Academic Travel Abroad

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager



A street scene within the Temple Bar district, a famous area in central Dublin that features Irish bars and restaurants.





We take our students to unfamiliar locations that prepare them for their role in a professional setting and for their place in the world.



So far, our adventures have taken us to Ireland, England, Scotland, Germany, France, Italy, Israel, Austria, Spain and Czech Republic.

The Clarkson College Academic Travel Abroad (ATA) program took its first plane ride across the Atlantic in 1999, with General Education Instructor Dr. Pat Brennan and Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Jody Woodworth, along with a contracted tour guide, leading a pack of 16 students on a 12-day excursion through Ireland and England. The first-time journey gleaned a bit of nervousness, but the flight back home—and the high-spirited travelers aboard it—were a sure-fire sign ATA had a future at the College.

Backpedaling to 1997, Dr. Brennan and Dr. Woodworth observed that study abroad programs were quite common at other colleges and universities. ‘Why not Clarkson College?’ they wondered. “We understood that niche colleges were not on the same level [as other higher education institutions], but there was no reason we shouldn’t have the same opportunities,” Dr. Brennan said. The two drafted a proposal to implement an academic travel program at Clarkson College and presented it to the executive leadership team. With little contemplation, their proposition was approved, and so began the planning of the first venture overseas.

The 1999 ATA trip was open only to students, but the program extended the invite to faculty for the trip the following year, which was also to Ireland and England. Unable to recruit enough travelers to compensate a tour guide, Dr. Brennan and Dr. Woodworth convinced themselves that their experience from the year before was enough for them to steer the ship this time around. “Dr. Woodworth and I had no idea what we got ourselves into,” Dr. Brennan said with amusement. “It was a comedy of errors, but we ended up making it through alright.”

To determine the destination for 2001, Dr. Woodworth and Dr. Brennan surveyed students for their input. England and Scotland came out on top, and spots began to fill. Plans took an unexpected turn with the tragic events of 9.11. “That was a defining moment for Americans who traveled,” Dr. Brennan solemnly shared. The reluctance to fly on an airplane caused travelers to withdraw from the trip.





Dr. Pat Brennan stands atop the Mount of Olives, overlooking the old walled city of Jerusalem and the Golden Dome Mosque during the 2014 ATA trip to Israel.

Dr. Brennan struggled to understand how fear could assume so much power. “To me, that did not represent who Americans are. We have to stand for something, and we can’t allow the rest of the world to undermine that.” With too few still willing to travel, the trip to England and Scotland was canceled.

By 2002, fears of traveling overseas had calmed, and there was enough interest to move forward with ATA’s first trip to Italy. From there on out, the program continued to evolve and opened up travel to Clarkson College staff, alumni and Nebraska Medicine employees. Additionally, each traveler could bring a family member or friend as a companion. The different backgrounds and personalities that attended each trip added a unique element to ATA.

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“We have something unique...and we’re happy to be able to share it.”

DR. PAT BRENNAN, ATA COORDINATOR

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In 2007, former CEO of Nebraska Medicine, Dr. Louis Burgher, became President of Clarkson College. Within a matter of weeks in his new position, Dr. Burgher signed a proposal that established ATA as a formal program at the College with an official coordinator to spearhead it. Dr. Brennan considers that vision and support “the turning point for ATA.”

Now an established program with a strong internal support system, opportunities to further progress ATA could only be found by looking externally. During a quarterly meeting held between the presidents of Clarkson College, Bryan LGH College of Health Sciences in Lincoln, Neb.,

and Nebraska Methodist College, Dr. Burgher proposed forming a partnership that would open up academic travel opportunities to students from the institutions of his counterparts. “We [Clarkson College] have something unique that we can be proud of,” Dr. Brennan said, “and we’re happy to be able to share it and give students from other colleges the chance to experience academic travel, as well.”

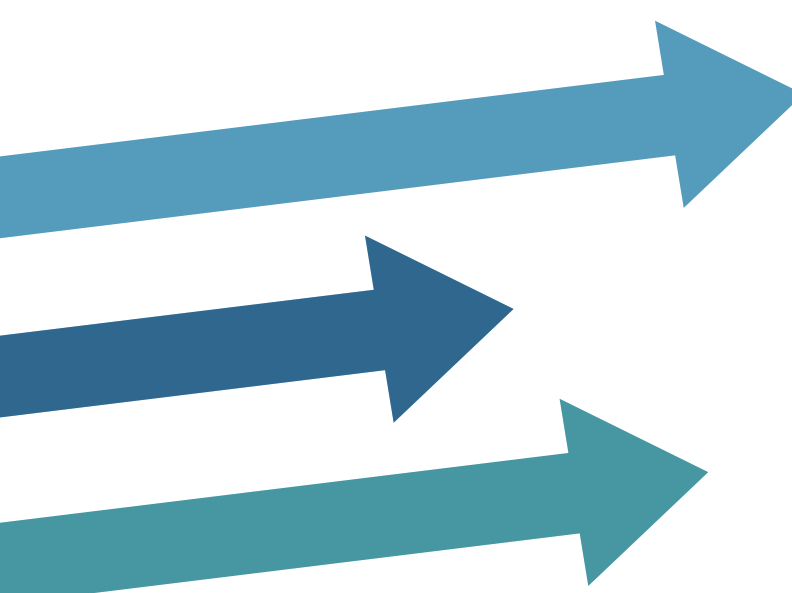
The first trip attended by all three colleges was in December 2011. Nine students from Bryan LGH and seven from Nebraska Methodist College joined the Clarkson College community on a 10-day trip to Ireland. Each December since, the colleges have continued the tradition. “Traveling together has strengthened the link between us,” said Dr. Brennan of the relationship between the three “competing” colleges. “We found that our students were all very similar, and what’s perhaps even more interesting is the thought of them working together someday.”

In Dr. Brennan and Dr. Woodworth’s 16 years of coordinating ATA trips, they have paved the way for hundreds of students, alumni, employees and friends to create memories that will last a lifetime. Dr. Brennan, herself, is also gracious for the opportunities she’s been given. “When we say we want well-rounded students, we’re acting on that by offering them these types of experiences. Getting them outside of their cultural, linguistic and geographic comfort zones and working with them as learners and explorers who are discovering themselves and the world is what excites me.” When asked how much longer she intends on continuing this role, Dr. Brennan says, “I do this because I believe in it. And every year, I believe in it more.”

Keep informed on upcoming trips by selecting “Resources for Alumni” at [ClarksonCollege.edu](http://ClarksonCollege.edu).

# MALE STUDENT PROFILE ON THE RISE

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPH BY Mikaela Yeager  
HISTORICAL IMAGE Clarkson College Archives



In 1990, Clarkson College had surpassed its 100-year milestone, and the Baccalaureate Nursing program was on the verge of celebrating 10 years as the first four-year, degree-granting program offered at the College. As classrooms welcomed more students, one observation was quite clear: those students were primarily all women.





In the 70s, male students compiled .05 percent of the student population.

Fast-forward to 2005. The introduction of degree programs in the realms of physical therapy, radiologic technology and health care business in the early 90's provoked a shift in the overall gender profile at the College. Male students accounted for 9.3 percent of the total student body and comprised nearly one-fourth of students enrolled in the Medical Imaging and Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) programs. Still, just 6.8 percent made up the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program. At this time nationally, 12 percent of BSN degree-seeking students were male according to the National League for Nursing (2005).

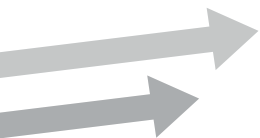
In fall 2007, the College experienced a noticeable increase in its male populace, which reached more than 10 percent for the first time in history. Furthermore, enrollment statistics gathered from fall 2005 to fall 2014 denote an average 12.4 percent male student body over the 10-year period, with a record 14.8 percent in fall 2013. The male presence on campus was stable and enduring, although, to this day, the dominant female population continues to prevail.

2011 BSN graduate Nic Delaney found being male in a predominantly female environment to be a bit of a double-edged sword. "If you work hard you can get noticed a little easier," he says, "but at the same time, I felt there was, at times, some proving I had to do to show why I wanted and deserved to be a nurse." Pros and cons aside, he never experienced any personal struggles with being "in the minority" and even developed close bonds with several of his female classmates.

Tolé Kounsivannarat, a current male student in the Radiologic Technology (RT) program, is not hindered by the prevalence of his female peers either. "After getting to know my classmates, it does not faze me at all," he explains. From Kounsivannarat's perspective, gender is irrelevant in terms of performance and success as a student, professional and member of society. "The desire to grow and learn as an individual is about willpower, attitude and overall perseverance.



Today, more than 12 percent of current students are male.



**"The desire to grow & learn as an individual is about willpower, attitude & overall perseverance. Males & females possess each characteristic. It is how they're applied that makes the difference."**

TOLÉ KOUNSIVANNARAT,  
RT STUDENT (PICTURED ABOVE  
IN PHOTO CENTER)

Males and females possess each characteristic, [and] it is how they're applied that makes the difference."

This concept of gender neutrality and diversity is becoming increasingly noticeable across various academic programs at Clarkson College. In fall 2014, male students made up 52 percent of the Nurse Anesthesia program; 50 percent of the Medical Imaging program; and 49 percent of the PTA program. While the 34 males seeking a BSN degree only accounted for 10 percent of the overall enrollment for the program in 2014, that is still a 41 percent increase from the 20 male students enrolled in the program in 2005.

Male students have also drawn some extra attention in recent years for their academic caliber. In fall 2014, BSN student Andrew Kummer received the Academic Excellence Award, presented to the graduate of each program who holds the highest cumulative grade point average. Several male students have delivered the student commencement address at graduation, and the current president of the Student Government Association is also male.

Though enrollment numbers and academic performance are creating an unprecedented awareness of male students at Clarkson College, the question of how this trend will evolve is in the air. According to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), the College should anticipate a continual and gradual increase in male enrollment for its nursing programs. "Nursing is seen as a more viable career option for many men these days," said Tony Forrester, Ph.D., R.N., ANEF, former professor at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey School of Nursing. "A profession noted for its good salaries, job security and opportunities for advancement is only becoming more attractive to the male population."





Dr. Jody Woodworth, Vice President of Academic Affairs at Clarkson College, also anticipates the numbers of males to increase as health care careers continue to be stable options for male students with advancement opportunities.

While Clarkson College enjoys and appreciates the added diversity a solidified male population brings to campus, the admission criteria and overall educational experience are equal for all applicants. The message the College will continue to push is that both women and men offer unique perspectives and skills, and Clarkson College is a place where all students can both thrive and fit in as aspiring health care professionals, regardless of gender.

Nic Delaney is a prime example of a male graduate who supports this stance, able to prove himself and his capabilities as a nurse almost instantaneously. "The large number of clinical hours and exposure to almost every area of nursing during my education played a large role in my success as a new graduate working in a trauma ED. I actually received a lot of comments from my charge nurses and management of how shocked they were that I was a new grad."

Delaney works in the Emergency Department at Houston Methodist Hospital (within the Texas Medical Center). It is the largest medical center in the world, and his skills have been put to the test with the countless number of extreme medical cases he has responded to in his two years at the hospital. He is challenged daily, shifts are taxing, and he witnesses pain and tragedy on an ongoing basis. While many would not survive such hardships, Delaney's closing statement is this: "I am proud to be a nurse."

## Male enrollment trends over the last decade

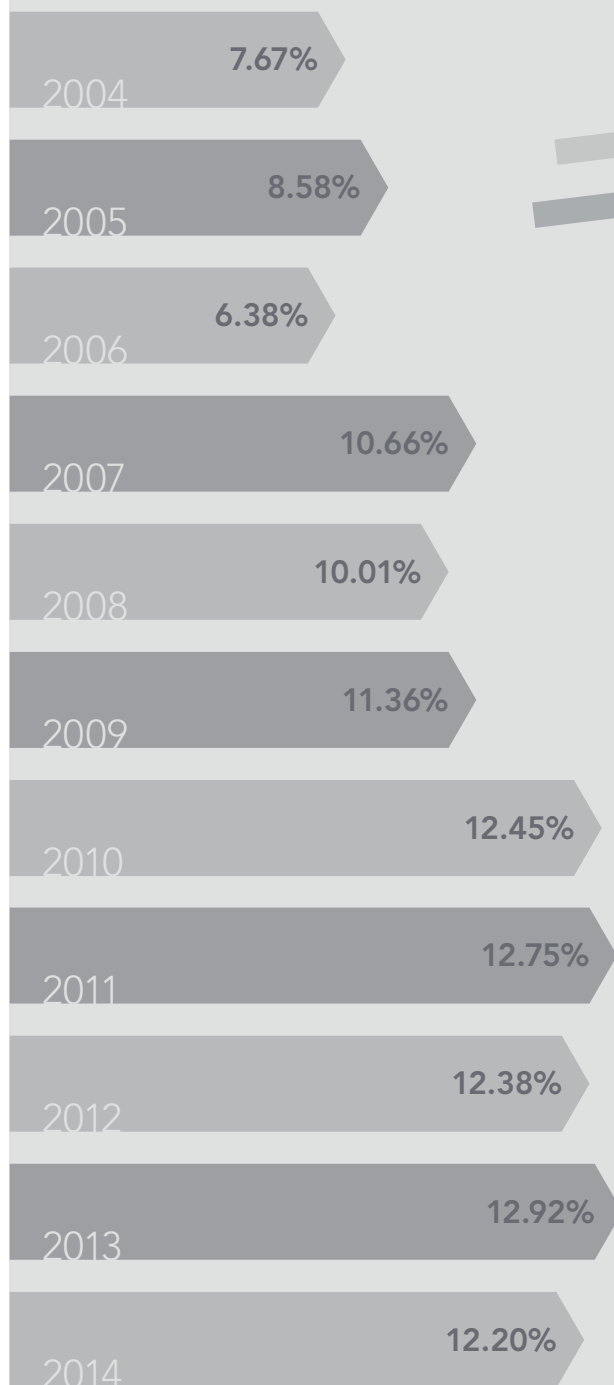


Chart percentages are based on fall enrollment numbers for each year shown.



College President  
Dr. Louis Burgher  
speaks during the  
2014 Heritage  
Garden Walk.



# WHY JOIN THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION?

ARTICLE BY Alumni Association Board PHOTOGRAPH BY Clarkson College





**Many may perceive joining an alumni association as a costly commitment or an obligation to participate in ongoing events and make annual financial donations. At Clarkson College, our Alumni Association has a far greater purpose.**

Let's take a quick look at our association and why becoming a member might be something to consider after all.

The Clarkson College Alumni Association dates back to 1910 when its constitution and by-laws were first established. At this time and here forward, the association has strived to serve as a link between Clarkson College, our alumni (you) and the greater community. While we welcome all alumni to participate in our events and make an occasional donation if compelled to do so, these are not the main objectives of our existence. Ultimately, we are here to preserve the pride you have for your Clarkson College education and foster a continuing relationship that you can benefit from socially and professionally.

Unlike some colleges and universities, we do not conduct calling campaigns requesting donations from our alumni. We do our best to be considerate and limit our outreach throughout the year to not become bothersome because we know how demanding your lives are on their own. When we do communicate with you through the Alumni Times magazine, e-mail and social media, we aim to keep you updated on College news, upcoming events and the good that comes from your \$25 annual membership fee.

Now that we've shared more about the underlying purpose of the Alumni Association and the expectations we have for our members, we welcome any questions you'd like us to address regarding membership. Please reach out to the Alumni Coordinator, Rita VanFleet through e-mail at [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu), phone at 402.552.3516 or mail (101 South 42nd Street, Omaha, Neb. 68131). We are proud of the Alumni Association and all it offers to Clarkson College students and graduates, and we hope you will consider becoming a member and sharing in its legacy.





# A Legacy Born on Block 85

The Clarkson College Story

ARTICLE BY Rita VanFleet HISTORICAL INFORMATION Jo Behrens PHOTOGRAPHY BY Mikaela Yeager





## Trinity Episcopal Cathedral shares more than 125 years of history with Clarkson College.

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Through its beautiful stained glass windows, that thousands of proud nurses were capped and graduates received their diplomas in solemnity of the church. For decades, first-year students sat in the original pews listening to the dean deliver his address during Convocation. So many Clarkson College alumni hold dear the memories of the times spent in this historic Cathedral, and it is only fitting that the its connection with the College, as well as the hospitals supported by the Episcopal Diocese, not be forgotten. Let's look at how those relationships evolved and how the structure now remains as one of Omaha's unique historical sites.

The Episcopal Church arrived in Omaha in April 1856 when Rev. Edward Peet of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Des Moines, Iowa, crossed the Missouri River to conduct the first services in the old territorial capital building. For the next 10 years, the small congregation of Episcopalians worshipped in a rented building at 9th and Farnam Streets.

On Nov. 15, 1865, Bishop Robert Harper Clarkson, Rector of St. James's Episcopal Church in Chicago, replaced Joseph Cruickshank Talbot as the Missionary Bishop of Nebraska and Dakota. Not long after Bishop Clarkson and his wife, Meliora McPherson, arrived in Nebraska Territory in early 1866, the couple moved from Nebraska City to Omaha.



The Clarksons were people of great faith and kindness. They were well respected and loved in Chicago, as well as in Omaha. Their devotion to church and community were of utmost importance to them.

Almost immediately after the Clarksons' arrival to Nebraska, leaders of the Episcopal Church in Nebraska began looking for a new site in Omaha on which they could construct a larger, more impressive building for Trinity Church. In late 1866, the vestry purchased a lot on block 85 of Omaha's original town survey. Unfortunately, the new building, completed in 1867, burned in November 1869. Until the present Cathedral was completed in 1883, the Trinity congregation used a small wooden structure on the same block 85. In May 1880, Bishop Clarkson laid the cornerstone for the present cathedral, which was

consecrated on Nov. 15, 1883. In 1974, the building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

When the Clarksons lived in Chicago, the women of St. James' had founded a hospital, probably the only free such facility in the city. The women of Omaha undertook the same venture, establishing the ecumenical Ladies Hospital in 1869. The institution, also referred to as the Good Samaritan Hospital, occupied a building at 23rd and Webster Streets. By 1871, the facility was floundering financially, and it needed repair. Knowing of the Clarksons' charitable hospital experience in Chicago, facility administrators approached Bishop Clarkson, seeking financial and administrative support from the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska. With diocesan assistance, upgrades were made to the hospital; most unfortunately, the building was destroyed by fire in 1877. Late in 1881, the diocese reopened its medical facility, renamed the Child's Hospital, in a one-story house at 1716 Dodge Street. In early 1883, the facility closed while a new building was constructed at the same site, reopening in late 1883. In an effort to expand its capacity and services, the hospital relocated to 2100 Howard Street in 1909 and was named Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital for Children. After nearly 25 years at the Howard Street address, the hospital purchased the more spacious Lord Lister Hospital in 1936, relocating



Bishop and  
Meliora Clarkson



A view of the garden, located on the north side of Trinity Cathedral.



again, this time to 26th and Dewey streets. The final move for Clarkson Hospital was in 1955 to another newly-constructed space at 42nd and Dewey Streets. The hospital continues to function in this location today as an entity of Nebraska Medicine.

Along with the need for a hospital in the growing city of Omaha, Bishop Clarkson identified the need for trained nurses capable of caring for the ill and injured admitted to the medical facility. It was through his vision that a nurses' training program was established at the hospital, although Bishop Clarkson did not live to see it materialize. He died from pneumonia on March 10, 1884, at his home on St. Mary's Avenue. His wife, Meliora, continued to supervise administration of hospital activities; in 1888, she oversaw establishment of the training program. Her actions marked the beginning of a long relationship between Clarkson College and the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska.

Between 1888, when the nurses' training program was initiated, until the early 21st century when the College activities outgrew the space, students celebrated their educational milestones at Trinity Cathedral. For 126 years, the Cathedral opened its doors to welcome students and their families, and College faculty and staff. Today, the College holds its celebratory events



Trinity Cathedral is built in the late Gothic Revival style, with rock-faced masonry walls, stone tracery and more than 43 stained glass lancet windows.



### The interment of Bishop & Meliora Clarkson

It was Bishop Clarkson's wish to be buried in the shadow of Trinity Cathedral. Both he and Meliora lay in eternal rest in a small, quiet garden on the north side of the Cathedral, allowing each passerby to learn of their legacy.

Here, Clarkson College President Dr. Louis Burgher pauses to reflect on the Clarksons' lives and vision.



elsewhere, but Trinity Cathedral remains a significant part of the history of Clarkson College. For decades, students sat reverently in Cathedral pews, awaiting the honors about to be bestowed upon them. They must remember the multi-faceted rays of colored light coming through the beautiful stained glass windows, the church architecture, the exquisite altar, the carved choir rail. Trinity Cathedral contains innumerable touchstones for Clarkson College students. Continuing with the strong connection to the Cathedral today, The Very Reverend Thomas J. Hurley presides as the Chairman of the Board for Clarkson College.

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### Stepping back into history

The Cathedral remains almost untouched by time. All architectural appointments memorialize some of Omaha's earliest residents and Bishop Clarkson's closest friends. For instance, a choir window was

dedicated to John Windsor, roommate of Bishop Clarkson during college. A window in the nave memorialized a soldier from Fort Omaha, a member of the Thornburgh family, who died in Colorado's 1879 Milk War with the Ute Indians. Another nave window honors Caroline Morton, wife of J. Sterling Morton of Arbor Day fame. The stained glass windows in the apse above the altar are all original to the church with the exception of the window that depicts St. Matthew. An exact replica was created and installed in its place.

The intense colors in the stained glass were created with metallic salts. For example, gold gives glass a rich ruby color, cobalt creates an intense blue and chromium is viewed as deep green; use of each is limited by the cost of the metals. Each window in the clerestory represents a parish existing in the Diocese of Nebraska at the time the Cathedral was built. Certainly, some of the students participating in ceremonies at the Cathedral looked up and saw a window that represented a church from their hometown.





The altar memorialized the first wife of Omaha and Episcopal Church pillar, James Mills Woolworth. The mosaics on the Sanctuary floor are original to the Cathedral. The mosaic floor in front of the altar honors the memory of Bishop Clarkson. It was installed shortly after his death and was, therefore, not included in the original building. The wooden railings, the intricately carved pulpit and the pews are also original pieces.

This beautiful Cathedral stands today as it did in 1883. Its walls have welcomed many of Omaha's influential citizens and witnessed many historically significant events. It is part of the pride that Clarkson College students remember as they, too, participated in some of their milestones after walking through its doors. Bishop Robert Harper Clarkson and Meliora Clarkson hold a significant place within the history of the College and the events leading up to its founding. If only these walls residing on Block 85 could talk, it's certain they would have amazing stories to share.



## There's No Prognosis for Health Care

**ARTICLE BY** Dr. Louis Burgher

**PHOTOGRAPH BY** Andrew Marinkovich

I am frequently asked "on the street" my opinion about the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the practice on medicine, health care education, job availability, future costs of care, quality of care and on and on. Frankly, I don't have a clue. One of the good things about a democracy is that things move slowly, so I am not holding my breath. One example: when I was in medical school, it was a foregone conclusion that Ted Kennedy would be our next President and socialized medicine was inevitable. Medicare was supposed to be the end of medicine as we knew it in 1965, and here I am signing up for Medicare!

I do have some hopes for the future. I hope our health care system will focus on quality, and that we will not compromise our principles in educating the right people for the right job. We are facing personnel shortages at all levels. The easy solution is to "dummy down" health care, as well as to ration it.

I can only speak for our little corner of the world. We continue to train Clarkson College students as we always have—focused on sick folks and offering compassionate care. I am proud of our graduates and their status in our health care community. That much has remained unchanged since the 1880s!

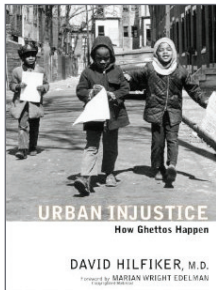
# Program Update: General Education

ARTICLE BY General Education Faculty

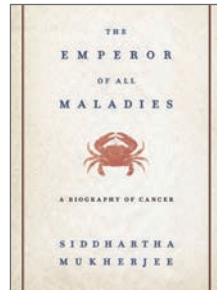
## Health Care Emphasis in English Composition

EN 101 Composition I and EN 102 Composition II prepare students to write in an academic arena. The courses are humanities-based, but they have a health care emphasis to them via the texts that students read and analyze through their writing. Course texts cover topics such as end-of-life care, provider-patient relationships, informed consent, and the history of cancer and cancer research. Thus, students read about these topics, then they use academic writing to explore the various complications and significances inherent in the topics. In short, they use academic writing as a vehicle for mining complex health care topics.

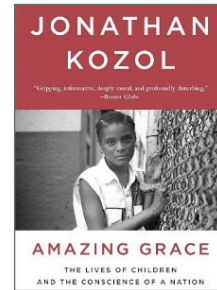
General Education students are reading fascinating books to facilitate their understanding of complex health care topics. We encourage you to read them, too. They're definitely worth your time!



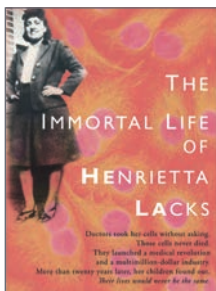
**"Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen"** by Dr. David Hilfiker reveals the precipitating factors that often condemn individuals to a life of poverty, as well as the complications in social services designed to help.



**"The Emperor of all Maladies"** by Siddhartha Mukherjee discusses the history of cancer and its research, showing the evolution of both the disease, as well as how we have grown in our understanding of it.



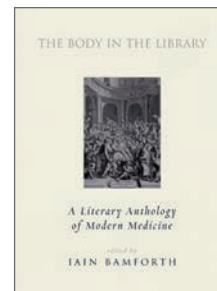
**"Amazing Grace"** by Jonathan Kozol is read by Core III students to facilitate understanding of health care ethics within a social context with an emphasis on populations-at-risk and issues of social justice.



**"The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks"** by Rebecca Skloot traces the rise of the immortal HeLa cell line that revolutionized health care while showing the problematic evolution of informed consent and human subject research.



**"The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down"** by Anne Fadiman showcases the clash resulting when health care understandings differ between cultures and how it impacts the patient, family and providers.



**"The Body in the Library"** by Iain Bamforth is a collection of literary pieces that deal with diverse health care topics, such as patient-provider communication, end-of-life care and health care during war time.



# Crowning Royalty at Casino Night

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager

PHOTOGRAPHY BY Student Activities Council



More than 70 students banked on their good luck and gutsy wagers to win big at the seventh annual Clarkson College Casino Night on Feb. 11. Ten walked away with big-money prizes; others left empty-handed; and two students marveled in their elected glory as the 2015 Mr. and Ms. Clarkson College.

In their button-up white blouses and black slacks, faculty and staff volunteers masqueraded Howard Hall as though they were croupiers at a snazzy Las Vegas casino. They served as dealers and attendants for popular casino favorites like Blackjack 21, Roulette and a host of other less daring games of chance.



To get the night started, students each received a plastic cup filled with the same fixed number of poker chips. They meandered from table to table and also stopped in between to enjoy some heavy hors d'oeuvres and live jazz music performed by local band Some Other Kids. Some gambled the full hour-and-a-half, while others cashed in their chips early.

In exchange for their poker chips, students received an equivalent number of raffle tickets to place in their choice of available prize buckets. Some of the prizes up for grabs included a Keurig® coffeemaker and K-Cups®, a "Movie Night" package, candy bouquet, the grand prize Apple TV, and a slew of gift cards.



To culminate the festivities was the crowning of the 2015 Mr. and Ms. Clarkson College. Steve Campbell, Macy Clark, Catie Faust, Kalen Knight, Joe McQueen, Laurie Pearson, Nicolas Phelps and Andrea Voss were this year's nominees. After tallying up the votes, the crowns went to Steve Campbell and Catie Faust.

*continued on page 26*

At left, students try their luck during the annual Casino Night held on campus in Howard Hall.

### Crowning Royalty at Casino Night

*continued from page 25*



Steve Campbell, Mr. Clarkson College

Steve Campbell is a native of Papillion, Neb. and enrolled in the Physical Therapist Assistant program in fall 2014. He stays active on campus through his involvement in intramural volleyball and represented Clarkson College in a joint volleyball tournament for the Nebraska Arthritis Foundation this past fall. Participation in the annual tournament included PTA students from the University of Nebraska Medical Center and PT students from Creighton University. Campbell also serves as an allied health representative for Student Government Association (SGA) and volunteers in the pediatric intensive care unit at Nebraska Medicine.

Outside of school, Campbell works as a PT tech at Foot & Ankle Specialists in Omaha. "I love the team so much that I plan to work as a PTA there immediately after graduation," he says. "However, my main interests are pediatrics and sports medicine, [so] I hope to experience both. My goal is to become part of the staff for a sports team or work at Children's Hospital."



Catie Faust, Ms. Clarkson College

Catie Faust is originally from Council Bluffs, Iowa and will graduate from the Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program this spring. She has been very active on campus in her nearly four years at Clarkson College. All four years she served as a Student Ambassador and was a member of the Student Nurses Association. She held three officer positions in SGA—secretary, nursing representative, and president. She was also a member of both the Clarkson College chapters of the National Society of Leadership and Success and the Omicron Epsilon chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing.

Faust has been named to the Dean's List every semester and was a recipient of the President's Platinum Scholarship and the Rita VanFleet Alumni Scholarship. Her fellow SGA members also elected her for the Excellence in Student Leadership Award. Upon graduation, she hopes to find a job in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. After a few years of clinical experience, she would like to return to school to pursue a master's degree [and doctorate] to become a family practice nurse practitioner. "Someday, I would love to work in a clinic and have the opportunity to work with all ages (infant through the elderly)," she says. "Also, I plan to continue to volunteer and do mission work and incorporate my skills as a nurse into these opportunities."

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*A special thanks to the following faculty, administrative and staff members who volunteered at Casino Night this year: Dr. Jody Woodworth, Bailey Jorgensen, Julie Lawlor, Cate Rongish, Trish Weber, Natalie Vrbka, Kris Smith and George Smith.*





## Mystery Photo

A snapshot of the people, ideas and events shaping our history

The Mr. and Ms. Clarkson College tradition traces back more than 50 years. Crowning distinction to whoever can name the royalty captured here.

Send your responses to Rita VanFleet at [vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu](mailto:vanfleetrita@clarksoncollege.edu).

### MYSTERY PHOTO REVEALED

## Sing some praise

Several alumnae vocalized their memories, serenading us with responses to our first Mystery Photo. The chorus of feedback and its cliffhanger conclusion has left us on the edge of our seats.



### Irene Gustafson Studenberg ('55)

The choir picture is the freshman class of 1953 who graduated in 1955.

### Barbara Lynch Young ('55)

It's a picture of the choir, class of 1955. Fun group. There were 42 grads, and we all passed boards.

### Elizabeth Petersen Beranek ('55)

This is the class of 1955 when they sang at the local television station, KMTV. This was before color television, and I remember the camera men had a fit because of the white uniforms.

### Patricia Patrick Wills ('55)

This is the last class of Bishop Clarkson before the new hospital was built.

### Joan Hoffman Carver ('54)

That is our class ('54) singing on TV. I remember the songs we sang: "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Whispering Hope." Diana Johnson and Sadie Hitt were two of our soloists.

### Ruth Hummert Muchmore ('53)

Rita, the picture is no mystery to me! It's my class—1953. I can't figure out where we were singing or why.

### Jessie Harris Swearingen ('55)

The picture is my class and must be around 1953. By then, we had exchanged roommates after our probie days, and we would usually stand together. I can't remember where we were singing.

### Ann Steinheider Lamberty ('63)

I believe this picture was taken after the class of '63 started school in 1960. I think there was a big dinner and celebration to honor the Kiewits for donating the funds to build our dorm, Kiewit Hall. We were excited because "the powers that be" let us wear our caps that night. We gave them back until we earned them!

### Joann Brown Morris ('54)

This was probably a mixture of girls from three classes. The director was Mr. Newbecker.



# RN to BSN Program Ranked 19th in the Nation

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager

PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Marinkovich

Early February, the national college-ranking website Bestcolleges.com listed the Clarkson College RN to BSN program 19th in the nation on the basis of acceptance, retention, graduation and enrollment rates.

The website compared only accredited colleges and universities that offer flexible online RN to BSN program options, and most offer anytime-anywhere, knowledge-based learning to nursing students. Four-year schools included in the survey had to offer at least one fully online bachelor's degree.

"The high caliber RN to BSN program Clarkson College offers demonstrates our commitment to quality nursing care for our community," said Dean of Nursing Dr. Aubray Orduña. "Our outstanding faculty, the quality of the curricula, and the support students receive through one-on-one advising in the program attest to the fact that this program is in alignment with the College Mission and Values of caring, learning, commitment, integrity and excellence."



The website noted the emphasis the Clarkson College RN to BSN program places on real-world scenarios and applications, so students are prepared to grow from the theoretical learning they undergo in online classrooms. Rolling admission, transfer credit allowance, class sizes of 25 students or fewer, and the usage and reliability of LearningStudio, the online learning management system used at the College, by 90 percent of Clarkson College students were also mentioned highlights.

The College undergoes an annual review process for all academic programs. The RN to BSN program utilizes that process and reviews professional trends, student feedback and accreditation standards to maintain its quality. "We continually evaluate and update the curriculum based on the feedback from industry leaders, as well as current research," Dr. Orduña said. "Clarkson College graduates continue to serve as our best referral tools. They attest to the credibility of the program through their professional competency, integrity and excellence."

Most students who already possess a current RN license are working full-time in their field. For that reason, many nursing programs—more than 400, according to the American Association of Colleges of Nursing in 2013—are offering their curriculum entirely or in part online.

The methodology used by BestColleges.com and the data presented on its site is compiled using the most recent information from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), a resource maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). All IPEDS data is reported by individual institutions to the NCES during survey years.



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# A Humble Ending to 12 Years of Service

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager   PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Marinkovich

In her 12 years as Director of Student Financial Services, Margie Harris has expressed her fair share of goodbyes to colleagues and students she has come to know and cherish at the College. Soon, she will once again bid farewell, only this time it will be on her own behalf.

This past February, the College announced Harris' forthcoming resignation, noting the decision comes with a plan to move to Port Saint Lucie, Fla. with her husband, Bob, sometime this summer or fall. Mr. Harris worked as the Director of Payroll at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) for 40 years and retired two-and-a-half years ago.

The Harrises are very fond of the Port Saint Lucie area, so much, in fact, they built a house there in 2003. "Bob's parents moved into that house," Harris shares. "We lost [his] dad several years ago, and Mom had to move to an assisted living facility last year. So, now it's time for us to be closer to her."

While Harris likes to think of this move as a means toward retirement, the self-sustaining side of her looks at it

as an extended vacation. "I am too young to collect retirement benefits, so I will have to get back to work before too long. I hope to find a part-time job at one of the local colleges or universities."

Harris has her reasons for wanting to stay in higher education—the first being her content familiarity within this setting. Before she was hired into her director position at Clarkson College in May 2003, she worked in various departments in the University of Nebraska system since 1981 and was the Manager of Student Accounts/Cashiering at UNO for seven years. Additionally, she finds great gratification in educating students and their families about financial aid options and setting them up for the most favorable financial situation possible.

Leaving Clarkson College does not come easy for Harris. She describes it as an "amazing organization and community... where people can grow, be accepted and have their voices heard. It's very empowering, [and] I am blessed with the opportunity to have spent the past 12 years working with the individuals who make this a great place."

Many Clarkson College employees hold a mutual respect for Harris and the impact she has made in her director role. Financial Aid Counselor Bailey Jorgensen has worked in the Student Financial Services at the College for the last eight years and attributes much of



Margie Harris, B.G.S.

her department's success to Harris' dedication and forward-thinking. "There have been a lot of changes in our industry in the last few years, and Margie has been very instrumental in making those changes go smoothly."

Jorgensen also appreciates having a supportive leader and role model to help her develop individually in her role. "Margie has always allowed me to 'think outside the box' and encouraged me to see if there are better ways we can do things to improve our processes. This has certainly improved my critical thinking skills and let me explore my technological side. She has also given me the opportunity to give various presentations on campus, boosting my confidence."

Harris requested a resignation date of June 30. The College is hopeful to hire a new Student Financial Services Director as soon as possible, allowing ample time for Harris to train her replacement and give her the reassurance that her department and the financial bearings of current and incoming students are in sound hands.

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"I am blessed with the opportunity to have spent the past 12 years working with the individuals who make this a great place."

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## Fall 2014 Excellence in Teaching Award Recipients Announced

ARTICLE & PHOTOGRAPH BY Mikaela Yeager

The Excellence in Teaching Award (also commonly known as the Apple Award) is sponsored by the Clarkson College Faculty Senate and is given to faculty members each spring and fall semester. The award was established to recognize faculty who strongly exemplify the "Seven Principles of Good Practice" (Chickering & Gamson, 1987), which are:

- › Encourages contact between students and faculty
- › Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students
- › Encourages active learning
- › Gives prompt feedback
- › Emphasizes time on task
- › Communicates high expectations
- › Respects diverse talents and ways of learning

This spring, Clarkson College congratulates award recipients Sarah Flanagan, M.S.W., M.P.A., Assistant Professor of General Education; Gretchen Jopp, M.S., Health Care Business instructor; and Jeri List, M.S., B.S., Assistant Professor of General Education.

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**Sarah Flanagan** began as an instructor at Clarkson College in June 2010 teaching Core 1, Core 3, and PY200 (Human Development). She has since developed two new courses in the Health Care Services program: Psychological and Social Aspects of Aging; and Crisis Intervention. Students praised Flanagan with the following comments in their nomination forms:

- › Mrs. Flanagan is an exceptional teacher and reflects the Clarkson College Mission and Values in her everyday teaching. She emphasizes that academic integrity is essential, and she has a commitment to education.
- › Mrs. Flanagan is a wonderful role model and always has a positive outlook on every situation. She communicates high standards for students and helps each student strive for academic excellence.
- › Although I haven't had Mrs. Flanagan as a teacher this past year, she still e-mails me to see how I'm doing!

Flanagan is grateful to those who nominated her for the Apple Award. "Hearing that students find the course material meaningful and relevant is wonderful. I view the most important part of my job as not only teaching but forming meaningful, supportive relationships with my students. I feel truly honored."



Fall 2014 Apple award recipients Sarah Flanagan, Gretchen Jopp and Jeri List.



# Dr. Orduña & Omaha Black Nurses Association Receive Volunteer Award

ARTICLE BY Mikaela Yeager

**Gretchen Jopp** has taught at Clarkson College for five years and is currently an instructor in the Health Information Management program. The following were just a few of the many comments submitted about Jopp:

- › She provides appropriate and supportive input to her students. This creates an atmosphere of active learning. I actually “like” coding because of her!
- › Providing a supportive, collaborative environment is essential, and Gretchen creates a sense of belonging—each student is an integral part of the group.
- › An exemplary educator is inspirational, kind, passionate, organized, professional, engaging, resourceful and dedicated.

“Receiving this award was a top 10 event for me,” Jopp says. “I am humbled by the kind comments [and] my heart is moved beyond words. I want to thank those who recommended me. To receive this recognition gave me new life and energy! They like me, they really like me!!”

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**Jeri List** has taught physiology and chemistry courses at Clarkson College since December 2010. Last fall, she received the Dr. Patricia Book Perry Faculty of the Year Award. A few nomination form comments include:

- › I don’t remember a day in class where we didn’t do some sort of a group project! It really helped to get all of our ideas together and learn from each other; it’s an experience I’ve never gotten from any other class.
- › She is so passionate about what she teaches that I couldn’t help but feel excited to learn every day I walked into her class. I not only learned an immense amount of information in her class but I was truly inspired by her.
- › I cannot say enough positive words about Ms. List. She has been the most outstanding teacher I have ever been privileged to learn from.

“This award is extremely meaningful because [of who] the nomination came from,” List says. She thanks the student(s) who took the time to acknowledge her. “The words written in the nomination will always be remembered!”

Dean of Nursing Dr. Aubray Orduña and alumna Shanda Ross ('13) proudly represented the Omaha chapter of the Black Nurses Association in their acceptance of the Volunteer Service of the Year Award from the Nebraska Kidney Association (NKA) on March 19. Each year, NKA grants this award to an individual or organization that has demonstrated exemplary service to the association.

The Omaha Black Nurses Association (OBNA) became a chartered member of the national association in 1994. Dr. Orduña, president of the Omaha chapter, commented that the award represents the commitment of the OBNA to carry out the mission of the NBNA, which strives to represent and provide a forum for black nurses to advocate for and implement strategies to ensure access to the highest quality of health care for persons of color.

“It means a lot for our chapter to receive this award,” Dr. Orduña shared. “We have a small membership, and this just shows what a difference a few committed people can make when they partner with other professionals. As president, it makes me very proud!”

For more than seven years, members of the OBNA have volunteered their services at various kidney early detection screenings (KEDS) throughout the Omaha area. The NKA began offering these free screenings in 2002 to help the more than 300,000 at-risk Nebraskans detect early signs of kidney disease. Without the assistance of volunteers from the OBNA, many of the free screenings would not have been possible.



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## Let's make plans to get together!

(Mark your calendar and watch for details)

- June** Wine tasting and live music with fellow alumni at Soaring Wings Winery in Springfield, Neb.
- July** Golf outing on July 10 at Pacific Springs Golf Course. Start rounding up your teams of four!
- September** Annual Alumni Weekend, featuring a historical Omaha tour, Alumni brunch and dinner, and a continuing educational event held Sept. 17-18.

