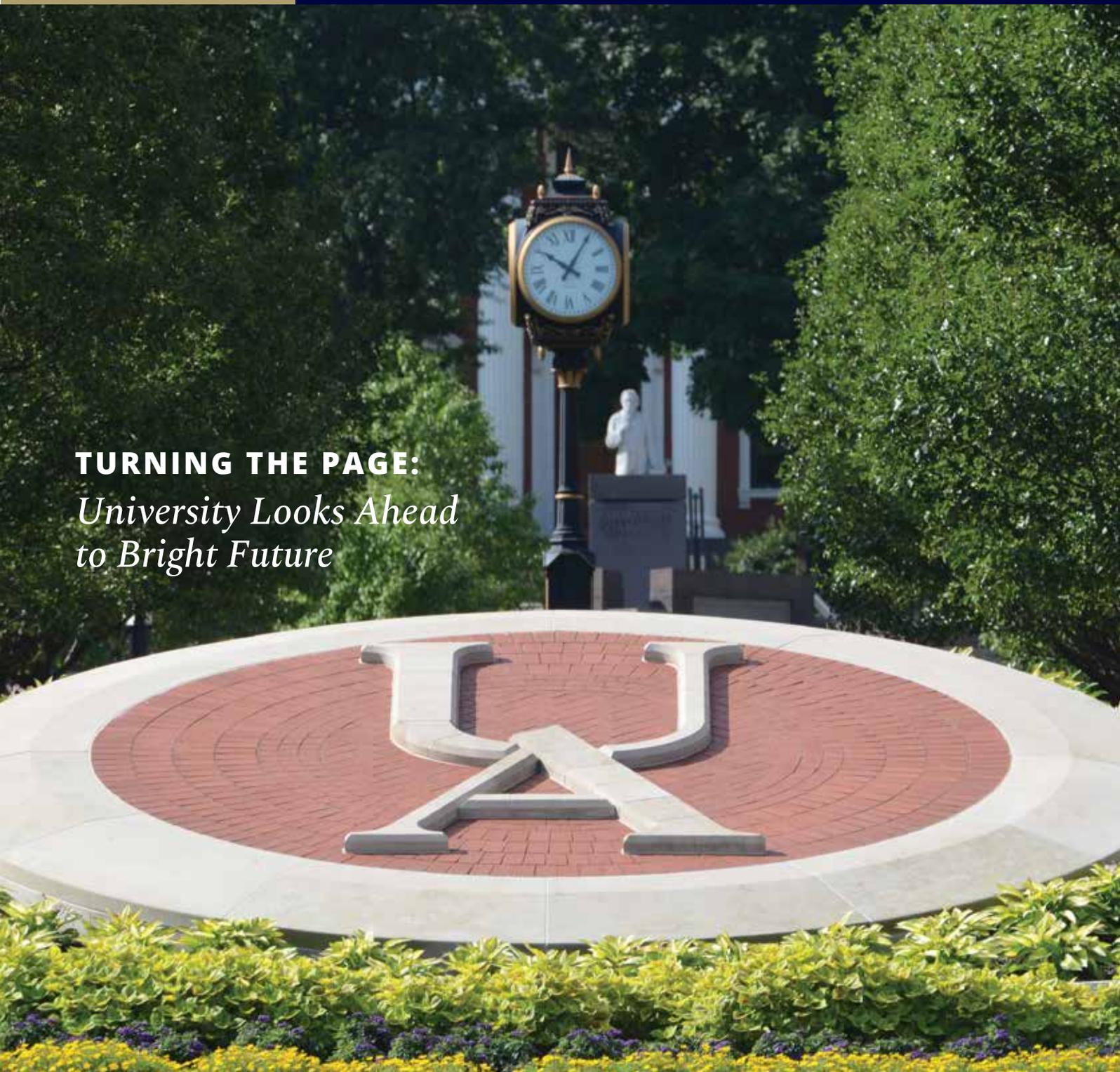


SPRING2022

THE
UNIVERSITY OF
AKRON
MAGAZINE

TURNING THE PAGE:
*University Looks Ahead
to Bright Future*



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Welcome to the premiere issue of our revived magazine—for and about The University of Akron.

The rebirth of this magazine, last published in 2015, comes at an incredibly important and positive moment for UA.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are exploring new opportunities to give people the chance to transform their lives through education, to support commerce and add value to our community, and to create new ways for people to interact for the common good.

The University of Akron Magazine will show how we are investing in these opportunities to create access to higher education and ensure student success, re-invent the University for the future, and use creative partnerships to advance both our mission and that of the City and region.

In this issue, you will read about how COVID touched nearly every corner of the University, and how we have tackled those challenges in ways that strengthened our community. You will read how our world-class faculty continued their research output—and doubled down on their commitment to students—despite the pandemic.

You will also find profiles of successful alumni who are transforming their communities thanks to the lessons they learned at UA.

We are so grateful to the University of Akron Foundation for making possible the funding for the magazine and other important initiatives including student financial aid, lectureships, professorships, chairs, instructional grants, equipment funds, landscape improvements and more. Please support the Foundation in its work to provide new opportunities for students and faculty to grow and excel.

Why bring back a UA magazine, especially one in a print format? For me, it's a tangible way to share our immense pride in what the faculty, staff and students working together have accomplished, and what we will continue to accomplish going forward. The resilience, creativity and grit displayed by faculty, staff and students during the last two years are reflected on these pages, and demonstrate that we have not only endured, but we have excelled.

And we will continue to rise together.

Gary L. Miller
President

Finally, you will learn about UA's recommitment to a safe community, and our bold plans to expand our arts programs into Akron's downtown.

The magazine will highlight exciting new faces around campus, including our new head football coach and our new deans in the College of Business, the School of Law and the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences.

CONTENTS

Features

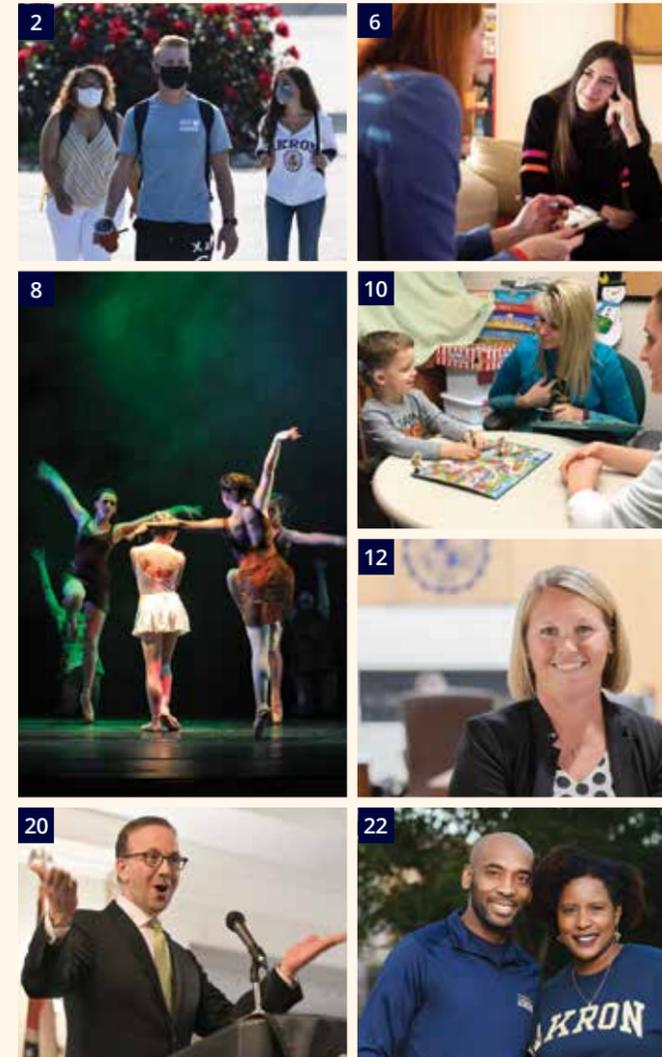
- 2** **Rising Above Pandemia**
Campus community unites in face of COVID-19
- 6** **Student Mental Health**
Zips find help during season of struggle
- 8** **A Thing of Beauty**
AkronArts project creates synergy
- 10** **The Sound of Silence**
Tackling hearing loss in kids

Campus News

- 12** **100 Years of UA Law and a New Dean**
- 14** **Athletics Updates**
- 16** **Patents, Polymers and Women's Earnings**
- 18** **Making Neighborhoods Safer**

Alumni and Giving Focus

- 20** **Business Dean Comes Full Circle**
- 22** **Cromes Give Back to Community**
- 24** **Matthew Cherry Rethinks Race**
- 25** **Alumni Connection**
- 26** **Women in Philanthropy**
- 27** **Gifts and Foundation News**
- 28** **Closing Shots**



PRESIDENT
Gary L. Miller

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING
Tammy Ewin, Vice President, Chief Communication and Marketing Officer

EDITOR
Janet Chismar Hardie '92, Publications Writer and Editor

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Cristine Boyd, Senior Director of External Communications
Alex Knisely, Marketing and Communications Specialist

Jessica Whitehill, Communication and Content Manager

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Tymcio Hoffman & Company

PHOTOGRAPHY
Scott Horstman

EMAIL magazine@uakron.edu

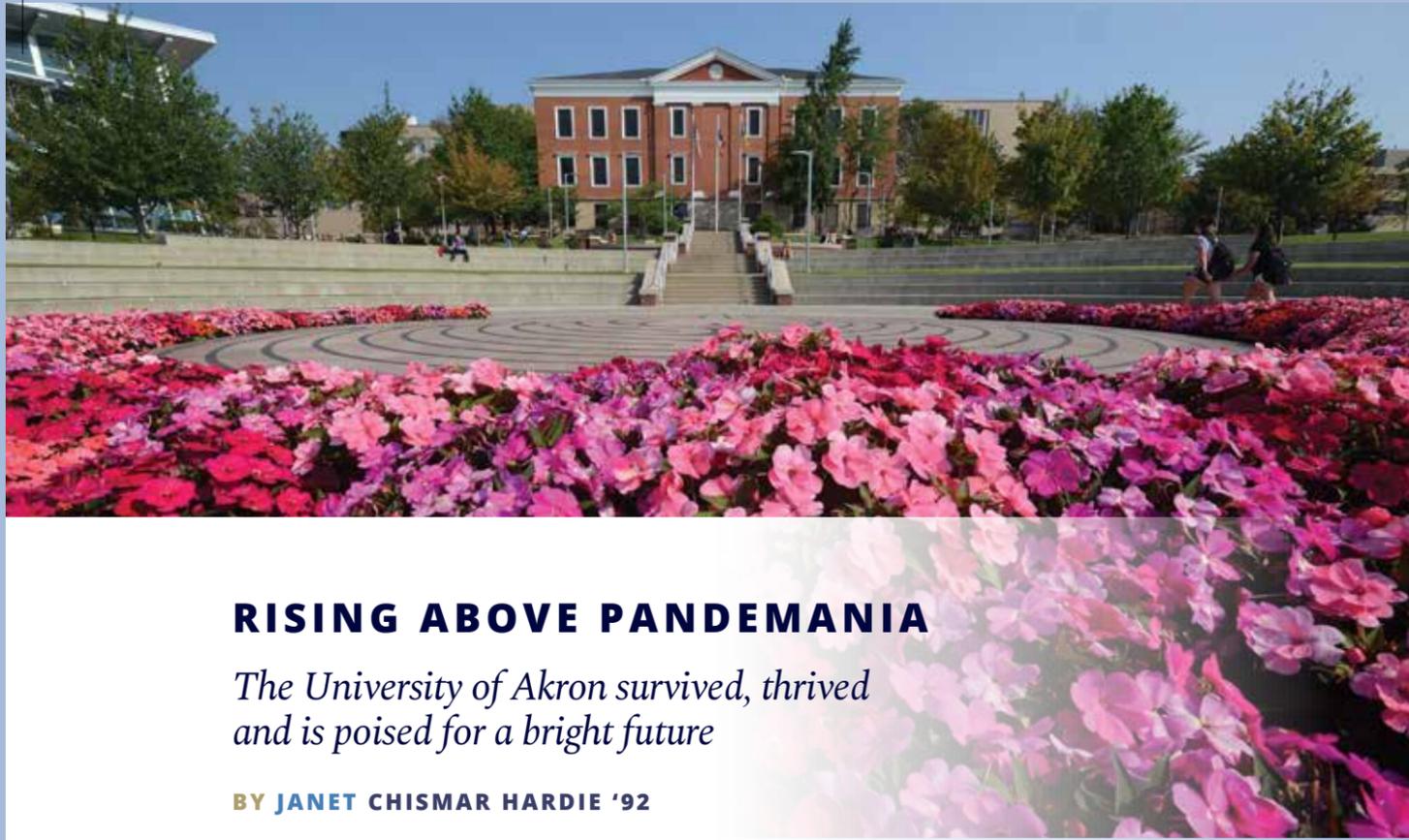
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RISING ABOVE PANDEMANIA

The University of Akron survived, thrived and is poised for a bright future

BY JANET CHISMAR HARDIE '92

When her iPhone chirped brightly at 7 a.m. on March 11, 2020, Sarah Wales hit “snooze” for the last time. “No need to get up now,” she thought. Her Wednesday morning class had been cancelled the day before when Gov. Mike DeWine asked all Ohio colleges and universities to shift to remote learning.

University of Akron (UA) President Gary L. Miller responded by cancelling all classes until March 30, when Spring Break would conclude. He wanted to give faculty and staff time to prepare and make sure students would be able to access online offerings.

Coronavirus. Pandemic. Quarantine.

The words were still new in 2020.

The concept of online learning? “Foreign and just a little frightening,” Wales recalled. She wasn’t sure if she had the self-discipline or patience to sit in front of a computer—alone—instead of interacting with her favorite professors and fellow students.

Across campus—and the nation—countless students wondered the same thing: “Is this the end of my college experience?” “Will I ever be able to graduate?”

Administrators had no idea how COVID-19 would impact the foreseeable future.

But on a chilly February morning just two years after closing campus, President Miller stood in front of The Akron Press Club and stated he was “proud to say, without reservation, that The University of Akron is strong and very well-positioned for the future.”



Leading a university through the twisted landscape wrought by a global pandemic is no easy task, but Miller met the challenge head-on.

“Great universities don’t just endure in tough times,” he reflected. “They find strength in their mission and create ways to move ahead. I could not be prouder to have served this University during this challenging time.”

There’s no doubt The University of Akron not only survived one of the most bewildering periods in recent history, but it is now thriving. From new student services and HR policies to unique enrollment pathways and everything in between, UA in 2022 is different—and better.

We asked a few members of the campus community, who witnessed firsthand the ripple effects, to share their stories—and their hopes for the coming days.

Oh, the Irony

Wendy Lampner, director of Online, Continuing and Professional Education, remembers the morning of March 10, 2020, vividly. “We were already planning to launch 11 new online undergraduate degree programs in the fall of 2020, so on March 10—the day they announced the University was going to go completely online—we already had a meeting scheduled.

“How ironic is that?” Lampner said, laughing. “The meeting was on a Tuesday morning and someone stood up and said, ‘Well, I guess now we have to talk about moving *everything* online.’”

She credits UA faculty for facilitating the process: “I have an amazing story to tell! Our faculty who knew how to do online teaching stepped up so much. It blew me away.”

The first day her team offered sessions on remote teaching, hundreds arrived. Lampner was pleasantly surprised to see “super advanced faculty who had been to every workshop I had ever had” show up.

Lampner looked at them and said, “You know how to do this. You’ve been teaching online for years.” But they were not there to learn. They simply wanted to help. “That’s how we were able to put thousands of courses online in three weeks,” she added.



Positive Ripples

Two years later, many of the innovations are still positively impacting education, said Lampner. “We had hundreds of faculty who learned how to use Brightspace and Microsoft Teams, and how to record their lectures. Students love this! Our athletes don’t have to miss class if they are on the road for a game.”

Lampner believes changes forced by the pandemic have permanently improved the student educational experience, even now when they are back in face-to-face classes, because groups like Undergraduate Student Government and other campus organizations can host meetings in Teams.

Perhaps most importantly, learning how to use virtual tools will help students when they interview with companies who prefer to hire for remote or hybrid positions. “Almost every employee that I know has a few virtual meetings every week,” Lampner said. “That’s the reality of work today and our students will be ready.”

The University of Akron is better in 2022, said Lampner. “We have dozens of students who are passionately talking about how happy they are that they’ve experienced online learning and, in some cases, how surprised they are by the experience.”

Speaking of Work

Sarah Kelly, vice president for human resources at UA, also remembers March of 2020—with a tiny shudder. “We were all at home, working very long hours. We realized quickly the pandemic would have a severe impact on the institution,” Kelly recalled. “I literally rolled out of bed in the morning, sat down at my computer, and didn’t move until midnight.”

The situation was complicated because, prior to the pandemic, UA employees did not work from home: “You came to campus. Period,” said Kelly. “As an institution, we didn’t know how to keep our staff updated or how to boost morale remotely.”

Microsoft Teams software was brand new, resulting in a learning curve, plus some employees did not even have home internet—or they had PCs instead of laptops. “There are a lot of things to work through when you change your mode of work over night,” said Kelly. “But things settled down. We got into a groove and we learned how to work in a different world.”



The acceptance of remote work has been a huge change in the UA culture, Kelly noted. "It's a win-win because our employees are taking less time off and, as an employer, we are getting more productivity."

As for the other aspect of HR—hiring—Kelly said there wasn't a total freeze on hiring during the pandemic: "It was more of a frost. Some critical positions needed to be filled and we did hire some people virtually."

The federal government helped by putting out guidelines that allowed HR to complete I-9s remotely. The department moved applications online and interviewed candidates via Teams.



The Silver Linings Playbook

Reflecting on the past two years, Kelly credits a number of key people who did tremendous work: "We are a closer community because of what we experienced together."

As a result of the pandemic, UA created a flex-arrangement policy that continues to allow for remote work and flexible schedules. Each department can determine what works best for them and their employees.

The changes have been "very well received," said Kelly. "We've gotten a lot of positive feedback on how proactive we were. Now in the spring of 2022, we are still getting constructive feedback that allows us to continue improving our policies."

Finally, Kelly noted, she is happy her team was able to interact with employees they don't usually encounter during their day-to-day operations: "We've been able to develop relationships with other folks on campus and make connections so we can collaborate better. I am excited for what the future will bring."

And speaking of the future: Sarah, our student who in 2020 was scared and uncertain? Well, she is now preparing to graduate. She feels better equipped to enter a virtual workforce and has learned she can push herself to succeed in the toughest of times.

GHOST TOWN GUARDIANS

They haunted the halls of Buchtel, Simmons and the Jean Hower Taber Student Union—to name a few. Quietly and meticulously, they sanitized, cleaned—and sanitized again. During a time when only a few souls stepped foot on The University of Akron campus, employees from the Department of Physical Facilities showed up in person seven days a week.

David Musser '85, executive director of the department, affirmed that his team didn't get to experience "working from home" during the pandemic. "We were all here the entire time the campus went remote," he recalled. "Enough people still came to campus that attention to cleaning and disinfecting was important, in addition to our usual emphasis on high-quality maintenance."



One advantage of the "ghost town" experience is that the University was able to cut back on utility spending because Musser's team could change HVAC schedules. "When most people weren't here, we could lower space temperatures and, in some cases, take systems offline."

Reflecting on how the pandemic may affect UA's physical footprint in the future, Musser believes the campus will continue to consolidate as part of the University's vision to reduce costs. "We'll be more efficient if we use certain classrooms more often, plus reducing square footage will greatly decrease utility usage."

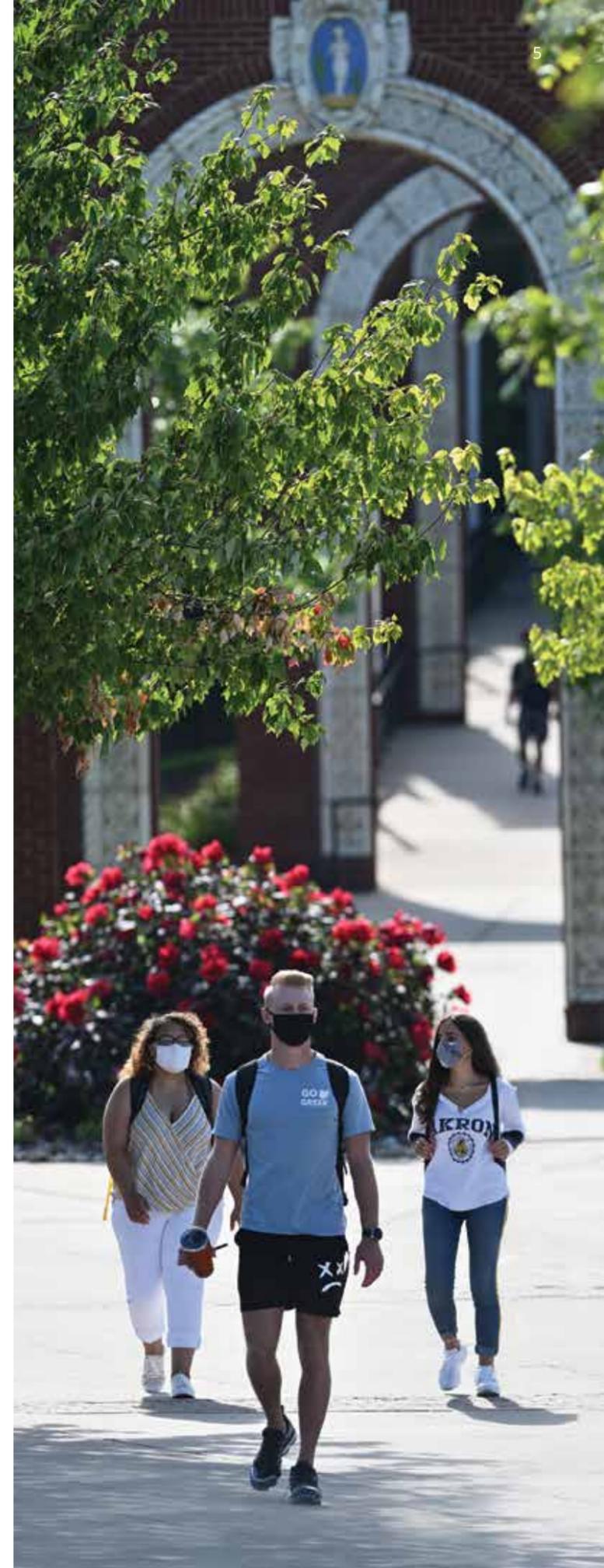
"Many students, including myself, have overcome huge obstacles in the last two years," said Wales. "I have friends who got sick, friends whose parents lost their jobs, and friends who dove headfirst into addiction to drown the pain."

But the UA community is what kept Wales going. "The community mindset—students and faculty and counselors—helped me despite everything the world has thrown at me. I am better for being at The University of Akron during the pandemic and coming out the other side." ■



"GREAT UNIVERSITIES DON'T JUST ENDURE IN TOUGH TIMES. THEY FIND STRENGTH IN THEIR MISSION AND CREATE WAYS TO MOVE AHEAD. I COULD NOT BE PROUDER TO HAVE SERVED THIS UNIVERSITY DURING THIS CHALLENGING TIME."

Gary L. Miller, President



CAMPUS MENTAL HEALTH: ZIPS PERSEVERE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

BY ALEX KNISELY

Even without a global pandemic, college life is stressful. In addition to coping with academic pressure, students struggle to pay bills, find affordable housing and eat on the cheap, all while trying to launch a career.

It's no surprise that many students experience the first onset of mental health and substance use problems—or an exacerbation of existing panic attacks or depression—during their initial years of college.

Add in the uncertainty wrought by the COVID-19 pandemic and it's no wonder campuses are seeing an increase in the use of their mental health services. The University of Akron is no exception.

“Considering all that has gone on in the world recently, mental health is such an important topic, especially among college-aged students,” said John Messina '11, Ed.D., vice president for student affairs at UA. “The approach higher education has taken toward mental health treatment and wellness with students has changed significantly, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

The results of a National College Health Assessment survey distributed to all UA students in November 2020 indicated that a quarter of respondents were experiencing major depression—and just under half indicated having some form of anxiety. More so, 30% of the students said they felt lonely or isolated during the pandemic.

As students continue to navigate through these challenges, UA is ensuring their needs are addressed. In fact, student referrals to mental health services increased from 438 in fall 2019 to 828 in fall 2020.

“Since the time of the survey, there has been an increased focus on identifying students in distress and offering them services,” said John Ellis, professor of instruction and addiction curriculum coordinator in UA's School of Social Work.

In keeping with its mission to develop enlightened members of society, UA has launched several campus-wide initiatives, many of them spilling into the Akron community.

One initiative that resulted from the survey is “Mental Health First Aid for Higher Education,” an evidenced-based workshop that teaches participants how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use disorders. It equips employees and student-peers with skills needed to recognize when someone may be developing a problem—and how to help the person find appropriate care.

Faculty members, in particular, are stepping up. The survey showed that 92% of respondents believe mental health training should be mandatory for professors, lecturers and instructors—the individuals who interact with students every day.

So far, more than 200 people have trained in the last year on how to help their friends and colleagues seek help.

ZipAssist also plays a vital role in improving mental health by helping students with almost anything that may negatively impact well-being. “From food insecurity to financial struggles, anything can affect the mental health of our students,” said Alison Doehring '07, '08, '10, director of ZipAssist. “We work closely with our community partners to make sure there is a system of care in place for each student's needs.”

Additionally, the Counseling and Testing Center started open intake hours for students to be assessed and referred to appropriate services—on campus or through community partners—without having to make an appointment. Psychologists offer individual counseling, workshops and group therapy in person, by video and by phone.

“This has been particularly helpful when students have been sick or diagnosed with COVID but feel well enough to keep their therapy appointment, have a busy schedule, or are in the state of Ohio but too far away to come in for an appointment,” said Juanita Martin, executive director of UA's Counseling and Testing Center.

When counselors and psychologists are not available, UA set up a 24/7 response service helpline through IMPACT Solutions to provide immediate care. And thanks to COVID-19 grant funding, UA purchased Kognitio—a virtual, interactive simulation for mental health training to aid student mental health, suicide prevention and to increase retention.

“As the pandemic subsides, we are equipped with the right tools to address any additional distress that students may experience,” said Messina. “As we know, almost anything can contribute to poor mental well-being. But the University is ready to address those concerns and the entire campus community is here to support everyone with any new challenge.

“As always, our students have proven resilient,” Messina added. “We've got groups of students who have emerged very well under the most unique of circumstances. As we say here, ‘At UA, We Rise Together.’” ■

🎁 Support students here: uakron.edu/giving

ALWAYS A FULL CUPBOARD

Back in 2017, years before anyone had heard of COVID-19, the Student Emergency Financial Assistance program set up an emergency grant to help Pell-eligible students experiencing financial hardship with one-time emergency support of up to \$1,000.

While most students used the funds for rent or utilities, one University of Akron employee heard about a different problem: hunger.

Alison Doehring, director of ZipAssist, said that in 90% of the conversations she had with students, food was a concern. Thanks to the University's community of donors and friends, Doehring and her team set up Campus Cupboard in 2018 to provide food and personal hygiene items to students facing immediate hardships.

In 2019, the Campus Cupboard program, which at the time included three grab-and-go cupboards and a walk-in pantry, distributed approximately 1,500 items monthly. With the double whammy caused by the pandemic and the closure of campus, the program exploded. Between March and November of 2020, approximately 24,000 items were shared.

It currently distributes approximately 5,000 pounds of items monthly.

One key to success has been the slow but steady process of destigmatizing help-seeking behavior. “We have been trying to create a community where it is OK to use these resources,” said Doehring.

She realizes that none of this would be possible without the generosity of the Zips community. “The University is one of Ohio's leaders in terms of its robust emergency aid and food insecurity support programs, and that's because of the kindness and willingness of people to help.”



A THING of BEAUTY

*AkronArts initiative creates
City-Campus synergy*

BY JANET CHISMAR HARDIE

When Georgia Nix Miller and her husband, UA President Gary L. Miller, arrived on campus in October 2019, they were looking forward to visiting the City's eclectic art galleries and becoming patrons of the Akron Symphony.

At the time, the couple already appreciated the "gritty creative look of Akron," recalled Mrs. Miller. "Even the City's murals were embraced as art, which I found inspiring."

Of course, thanks to the pandemic, their plans to delve into Akron's arts scene were put on hold for more than two years. But the time was not wasted. Instead, both Millers devoted their energy to creating a unique University-City initiative known as AkronArts.

"As we settled in, we saw a tremendous amount happening in the arts between the City and the County," Mrs. Miller said in tracing the steps leading to AkronArts.

According to the recent Akron Cultural Plan, a collaborative effort to identify and guide the City's cultural assets through 2035, "Arts and culture in

the Akron metropolitan statistical area is a \$1.4 billion industry. Opportunities for growth in arts and culture in Akron can help contribute to overall economic growth."

"We read this and then began looking at UA's wonderful programs in dance, art, music and creative writing," said Mrs. Miller. "But we observed there seemed to be more of a separation between the University and the City than we wanted."

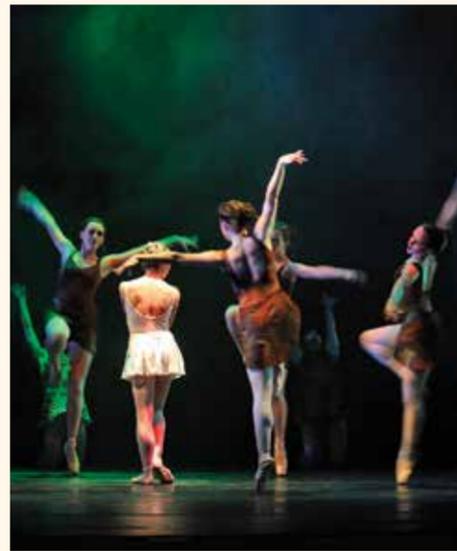
The Millers started to dream of ways this wealth of creativity could be unified, and they asked leaders from across campus to join them in the vision process. After forming the AkronArts Committee on Re-imagining University Arts Programs for Community Revitalization, the initiative was born.

A Sneak Peek

Among the wealth of ideas for the future, a few include brick and mortar. Plans are underway to adapt current facilities for new uses and ideas, including reimagining E.J. Thomas Hall and the Polsky Building.

A renewed focus will be placed on the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program and the work of The University of Akron Press. In addition, The National Center for Choreography at UA will be expanded to provide the community with more exposure to dance through its extensive national and international connections.

"None of this would be possible without the hard work of the committee, led by chairman Joe Urgo," said Mrs. Miller. "I celebrate each one of the leaders because it is normal for us to be very turf-oriented in whatever profession we are in. But everyone found ways to work together, and it was beautiful."



In addition, when the Millers began reaching out to community members to talk about the University and the arts, Akron Civic Theatre Executive Director Howard Parr became "an incredible advocate for us."

Now Parr serves as the president's special advisor for arts and culture. He noted that the "strength and vitality of downtown Akron, The University of Akron and the entire region are inextricably linked. By working together in a strategic way, we have the unique opportunity to leverage the existing and to create new programming that will brand our community in a way that could not otherwise be achieved.

"Simply put," he added, "the potential new whole of this collaborative approach is far greater than the sum of its parts."

An Academic Leader

Another key player in moving AkronArts forward is Mitchell S. McKinney, who joined UA as the dean of Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences in July of 2021. "I came on board to help develop our world-class offerings in performing, visual and literary arts," said McKinney.

"Our focus on fulfilling our urban research mission, and the access that we have here at The University of Akron to world-class programs, is to provide these offerings to enrich our community," he added.

One key piece of AkronArts is the economic development component. "This is what Howard Parr brings," McKinney explained. "How do we work more in tandem and collaboration with what is happening in the City of Akron, particularly the Civic Theatre, the Goodyear Theater and E.J. Thomas Hall?"

A major part of AkronArts will be the renaissance of downtown's Polsky Building. "This is a good example of revitalization and creating a space that will serve as the front door of the University," said McKinney. "The Polsky Building is a literal example of opening our front door to the community on Main Street and inviting them in to engage with our students and faculty and arts."

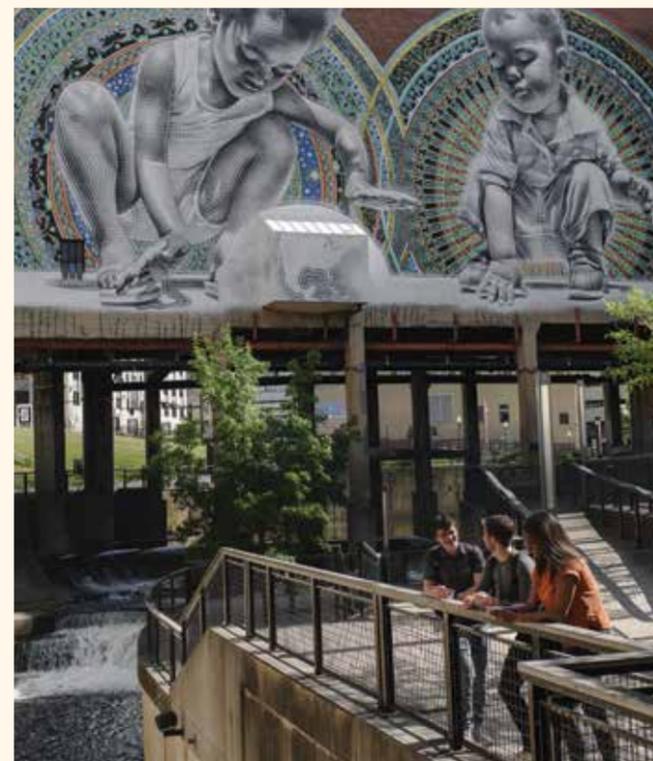
President Miller said he is confident this commitment to the arts will energize alumni in the same way the physical transformation of the campus did at the dawn of the 21st century. "It will speak to parents of prospective students as they evaluate the benefits of a regional university. And it will stimulate our student population as we invite them into a campus offering new opportunities for creative development, expression and engagement." ■

To learn more about the Polsky renaissance and meet Dean McKinney, turn to page 28.

📖 To support AkronArts, visit www.uakron.edu/development



Photo courtesy of Shane Wynn



Opposite page top: The UA Ballet, bottom: Akron Art Museum. This page left: Mural at Lock 3 downtown, right: Akron Civic Theatre.

TURNING OFF THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Grant provides much-needed training for students to tackle hearing loss in Ohio children

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

Cooper Ash is a typical 8-year-old boy. He's into video games and sports. His mother, Brandy, thinks Cooper might be a professional baseball player someday; he's already playing second base for a youth team.

If he does make it to the big leagues, Cooper—who was born with profound hearing loss in both ears—might be the first player to do so with bilateral cochlear implants.

And whether he plays professional baseball or ends up doing something else in life, The University of Akron's School of Speech Language-Pathology and Audiology in the College of Health and Human Sciences will have played a role in getting him there.

Cooper Ash is one of hundreds of children in Northeast Ohio who have benefitted from a project co-directed by Professor K. Todd Houston and Assistant Professor Alex Meibos, who work in the School of Speech Language-Pathology and Audiology.

The two colleagues received a \$1.25 million grant from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education to train graduate students in the use of data, the latest scientific evidence and clinical experience, to work with children who experience hearing loss.

The School of Speech Language-Pathology and Audiology has in the past 10 years received more than \$2.4 million in support of graduate-level training of highly sought clinical professionals who can provide speech, language and hearing interventions for these kids.

About two or three of every 1,000 children in the U.S. are born with a detectable level of hearing loss in one or both ears, according to Houston.

"When early identification, early fitting of hearing technology and enrollment in family-centered early intervention occurs, most of these children can achieve speech and language outcomes that rival their hearing peers," said Houston, who is also the director of the School's Telepractice & eLearning Laboratory (TeLL)."

Houston and Meibos' project, "Interprofessional-Hearing Early Access Response through Telepractice," is designed to allow graduate students to collaborate with other professionals in the area through in-person, telepractice and hybrid service delivery models.

Training stipends will be provided to students through the University to support approximately 40 graduate students during the five-year project duration. Houston and Meibos are also developing a certificate program.



Cooper Ash works with UA clinicians to develop verbal and game-playing skills.

Around 72% of Ohio counties do not have a dedicated early hearing detection and intervention center with specialized services. Houston and Meibos hope their project will put more trained workers into the state to work with children and families.

Currently, services are provided through the Cochlear Implant Program in the Ear, Nose and Throat Center at Akron Children's Hospital, where Houston and UA graduate students have been providing speech language diagnostic and therapy services to children with hearing loss for the past seven years.

Cooper Ash is one of them. He was diagnosed with bilateral profound sensorineural hearing loss—in other words, Cooper had little to no hearing in either ear—just weeks after he was born.

When his diagnosis was confirmed, Cooper's mother, Brandy, immediately took action, researching and connecting with UA speech-language pathologists who started doing auditory-verbal therapy (AVT) with Cooper when he was less than three-months old. When he turned 1, Cooper had surgery to insert cochlear implants.

"Early intervention is a huge key to success for these kids," she said. "The auditory nerve in your brain is like any other muscle in your body. If you don't use it, you lose it. He was two-and-a-half-months old, propped up, doing Blackboard Collaboration with clinicians. The earlier you start, the more successful they're going to be."

Blackboard Collaboration is an online, interactive teaching and conferencing tool that allows participants to collaborate through audio, video, sharing and recording capabilities.

When Cooper was about 3 years old, he grew somewhat frustrated with the computer, so Brandy began driving him to Akron for therapy sessions with UA clinicians once a week.

He is now in second grade, and Brandy feels that even though he was born with hearing loss and was a year behind, Cooper's speech is at the same level as or even ahead of other children his age.

"It's because of early intervention, and because the clinicians were always good about doing what works for each child," she said. "Even through all the telehealth and COVID challenges, they always found a way to interact."

Cooper recently started using a waterproof accessory for his cochlear implant processors and, for the first time, can get into a pool. He can now play Marco Polo, a game that is dependent on the participants being able to hear each other.

And if Cooper doesn't quite make it to professional baseball—a tough road for any child—his mother has another idea.

"I would love to see Cooper become the next Dr. Houston and train a new generation of students," Brandy said. "He has been a godsend to not just us, but to the community in general. The whole program has been a blessing for us. I don't feel we'd have the same success if we hadn't been working with The University of Akron." ■





100 years OF UA LAW

BY ALEX KNISLEY

For the last 100 years, The University of Akron School of Law students and alumni have contributed significantly not only to the school, but to jurisprudence, the legal and court systems and justice.

Akron Law graduates have served in the U.S. House of Representatives and in the legislatures of Ohio and other states. More than 200 have found distinction as members of the judiciary, including on the Ohio Supreme Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, the U.S. District Courts and the courts of at least 14 states.

More than 8,500 graduates have worked in large and small law firms, corporations, nonprofits and government agencies in 50 states and 14 foreign countries.

Founded in September 1921, the School of Law welcomed its first class of 30 part-time students in a handsome, but modest, three-story building that still

stands at 57 E. Market St. In 1959, the school merged with the then Municipal University of Akron, becoming what is now The University of Akron School of Law.

Celebrating its centennial anniversary during the 2021-22 academic year, Akron Law and its alumni, students, faculty, staff and friends have hosted several events for its stakeholders. You can find commemorative features on its webpage—uakron.edu/law—including an interactive timeline featuring milestones from 1921 to the present, and a short documentary of the School's history.

True to its founding mission, Akron Law continues to offer a legal education that is innovative, practical and affordable. With a strong base and a continuing emphasis on diversity, inclusion and equity, UA's School of Law is well-positioned for another century of service.



Akron Law Welcomes Its First Female Dean During Centennial Celebration

When Emily Janoski-Haehlen added her name to the candidate list to lead The University of Akron's century-old School of Law, she didn't fully appreciate the historic significance of that decision, even though she was serving as interim dean. Following a national search, Akron Law picked Janoski-Haehlen to permanently fill the post in December 2021.

"It is an honor to be the first female dean of the School of Law, which makes this position even more special to me," said Janoski-Haehlen. "When I look back on my deanship—hopefully many years from now—I will be proud to say that I shattered the glass ceiling for the women that came after me and hopefully inspired some to follow in my footsteps."

Janoski-Haehlen is no stranger to Akron Law's students and alumni. She previously served as associate dean of academic affairs and the law technology programs, as well as director of the Law Library.

She is looking forward to building relationships that will strengthen Akron Law's role in the surrounding community. She also plans to do a lot of listening in the coming years: "I think it is my job to hear our students, build relationships with our alumni and create initiatives that will help benefit both groups." ■

GETTING TO KNOW DEAN EMILY JANOSKI-HAEHLEN

What influenced you to study law? Were there any other careers you were interested in as a kid?

"I wanted to be a doctor when I was a child. I told my parents I wanted to be a 'rotating doctor' so I could help everyone. We laugh about that now. I decided to study law after taking a class at the University of Kentucky on famous American criminal trials. I studied the Lindbergh baby kidnapping and was fascinated with how that case evolved."

a few strong, female mentors that I looked up to but the most influential female in my life has always been my mom. She is a strong woman who went back to school to earn her advanced degree, while raising three children, so that she could teach elementary education at Western Kentucky University. She also taught me the value of family, community and giving back. She still inspires me today."

As you think back on your own life, is there a pivotal mentoring moment that stands out?

"When I was in first-year legal research in law school, I took a job in the law library as a student worker and research assistant. I loved doing legal research and my professor, the associate dean of the law library, recognized that and hired me there. The rest is history. I think it was that job that sparked my interest in teaching law."

What's something people would be surprised to know about you?

"Two things that might surprise people about me are that I was a competitive figure skater throughout my childhood and into college, and maybe what won't surprise many is that I am an avid Disney fan. I love all things Disney!"

How can alumni and the UA community support the School of Law?

"I would encourage alumni to visit Akron Law to see all the great programs we have and to meet our students. Alumni can also show their support by building a relationship with a particular program like a clinic, donating to the School, attending events, hiring our students and graduates, and just promoting the reputation of Akron Law in general."

What advice would you share with other women who might be looking to reach a high-ranking position in their careers or take on a role traditionally held by men?

"I would tell them to aim high and don't let a moment of feeling defeated set you back. I would also tell them to not be afraid to speak up and offer their ideas or to promote themselves. Having a strong sense of self is incredibly important and I learned that from a young age. I had quite

Pictured below left: The first law school building on E. Market St. Adjacent: The first graduating class included Aileen McMurray Trusler (top, center). Right: A current Akron Law class.



🎁 The "Zips on the Rise" campaign enables donors to support Akron Law students directly. Visit uakron.edu/law/giving/



WINNING THE GAME of LIFE

UA football coach Joe Moorhead talks success on and off the field

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

Joe Moorhead is aware of the responsibility he bears as the head coach of The University of Akron football team. Dozens of young people—from early career assistant coaches to student-athletes to the men and women who serve as team trainers and managers—look to him as a teacher, mentor and advisor.

He frames his coaching philosophy around the mission statement of the program: to graduate 100% of Zips players with a meaningful degree and prepare them with the tools necessary to become productive and responsible citizens, while competing for championships.

Moorhead recently shared his thoughts on teaching, academic success and the challenges student-athletes face today.

What are the similarities and differences for you between teaching and coaching?

"As a coach I view myself as an educator. Anything that a teacher is trying to accomplish from a methodology and development standpoint are all the things we're doing in football. It's just a different medium. As a teacher, you do your research on the material, you present it to the students, they study and then you have a method of ensuring they understand the material. In a classroom, a test is done in a quiet, sterile environment with a lack of distractions and variables.

As a coach, you do all the same things leading up to the test. But for the test, you may do it in front of thousands of screaming people, in the rain, with people trying to rip the pen out of your hand and kick the chair out from under you."

What is your view of the relationship between academic and athletic success?

"I talk with our kids about our pillars of success: accountability, productivity and persistence. This relates best to the productivity pillar in the sense that every kid doesn't have to be a straight-A student to be considered successful. To me, productivity is about maximizing and doing things to the best of your ability. If you come here with the tools to be a 4.0 student, then we're going to push you to be that student. If you're a guy who busts his tail to get a 2.5 and that's the best you can do, to me that's academic success. As a coach, you assess that the student-athlete is doing everything they can to be as good as they can be in academics and in their social life; then you're going to see it on the field."

After you've determined a recruit will be a good fit for your program, how do you determine they'll be a good fit off the field?

"It goes back to discipline, accountability, work ethic, attention to detail, selflessness and the ability to communicate. After you've



checked off the tangibles and you think they can help you win championships, you want to dig deep into what a kid's all about and find out what he stands for. When you don't do enough research into the character and intangibles of the young man that you're bringing in, that's when it has the opportunity to go sideways."

Many coaches pursue degrees in sports science, physiology or education. You were an English major. How do you feel this course of study impacts your coaching?

"Kids tease me about that all the time! What I learned best from being an English major was to think critically and communicate clearly. Written and verbal communication skills are a lost art, and I think some of the ancillary roles in which a football coach is required to show proficiency are things that I was fortunate to have learned in college. I read some of the greats and I learned how to express my thoughts in words." ■

Be sure to catch Coach Moorhead's first season coaching Zips football this fall. Access the schedule at gozips.com

A Winning WINTER



The University of Akron Department of Athletics added three new trophies to its collection thanks to a stellar winter sports season. Three UA teams won Mid-American Conference (MAC) championships, and the Zips men's basketball team earned a coveted berth in the NCAA tournament for the first time since 2012.

Hoop Dreams

Nearly a week after beating Kent State in the MAC championship game and earning the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA tournament, UA faced UCLA in a nationally televised first-round matchup. The Zips had a one-point lead at halftime and played strong defense, but fell behind late and lost to the Bruins 57-53.

Given UA's solid play and the energy of the band, cheerleaders and of course, mascot Zippy on hand to root for the team, the game was an opportunity for UA to shine on a big stage.

"We represented the City of Akron, we represented the University, all the students that have gone there before, and those that are there currently," head coach John Groce said during a post-game press conference.

"Hopefully we brought a smile to their face a little bit because where we're from, you've got to earn stuff," he said. "It's blue collar. That's the way Northeast Ohio is. I hope they enjoyed watching this team because I think it embodied a lot of the values that are part of our community."

Splash and Dash

In the pool, the UA women's swimming and diving team earned its eighth MAC championship in the last nine years, while women's indoor track and field won its seventh conference title overall.

UA made a big splash in individual awards with Paulina Nogaj picking up MAC Swimmer of the Year and Brian Peresie earning MAC Coach of the Year. The MAC Most Outstanding Senior award went to UA's Sarah Watson, and Abby Daniel was named the MAC Freshman Swimmer of the Year.

UA track and field also picked up individual awards. Head Coach Dennis Mitchell and assistant Dominika Stokowska each received Coach of the Year awards. Amya Clarke was the MAC Most Valuable Performer of the Meet and Taylor Shriver was the Freshman Field Performer of the Year.

Conference championships are among the top goals for any intercollegiate athletics program. UA had one more big reason to celebrate earlier this year when Athletic Director Charles Guthrie announced the University's student-athletes had extended their grade point average streak to six consecutive semesters of a 3.0 department-wide GPA or higher.

The Zips continue to rise, whether they're in competition, the classroom or in the community. ■



UNIVERSITY OF INVENTORS:

UA'S PROLIFIC PATENT PRODUCTIVITY

BY ALEX KNISELY

Earning patents for licensed technology is nothing new to UA, especially since famed polymer scientist Joseph Kennedy has 146 U.S. patents to his name alone.

From July 1, 2019, to Dec. 31, 2021, UA produced 92 issued patent applications from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, continuing to make UA a "mini patent factory."

"Patents are central to the technology life cycle, from research in the lab to issuing third-party licenses that generate revenue and support for the University and its researchers," said Phil Allen, acting vice president of research and business engagement.

So, what makes UA such a great place for researchers to patent their technology? "The University is located near many technology and engineering companies in Northeast Ohio," said Allen. "It has a long history of applying its research to industrial applications, including its co-invention with B.F. Goodrich chemists of synthetic rubber that helped the Allied powers win World War II. Technology transfer through patents, licensing and start-up companies enhances UA's mission to contribute to an improved quality of life."

Here are a few examples of our scientists' innovations:

Better Water

A dual-purpose UA patented method for algae production and wastewater treatment invented by Distinguished Professor of



Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering Lu-Kwang Ju was licensed to global wastewater treatment company Ovivo.

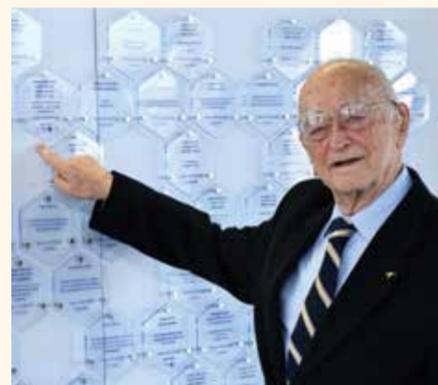
Since signing the license, Ovivo has scaled up production, launched a pilot plant in Canton, Ohio, and delivered growing licensing revenue to UA.

Safer Lithium Batteries

Akron PolyEnergy, an advanced materials company, has licensed UA polymer binder technology to improve the safety and performance of lithium-ion batteries. The technology was developed by Associate Professor of Polymer Science Yu Zhu. Akron PolyEnergy has already received \$100,000 in funding from an Ohio startup fund to further develop the technology.

**Less Wear and Tear**

Akron Research and Technologies licensed UA engineered surface technology that can reduce friction and wear on metal parts. The technology was developed by Professor Emeritus Gary Doll, former director of UA's Timken Engineered Surface Laboratory. The patented technology is a novel coating for high performance metal surfaces, like titanium.



Joseph Kennedy

Lake Erie Quality

UA scientists developed a novel version of a spectrometer that collects data on water quality. It is simple to use, enabling everyone to learn about and monitor our water resources. Cleveland Water Alliance, Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation and a coalition of shoreline communities around Lake Erie launched a three-year program, empowering residents to contribute to the health of their watersheds.

**No Sticky Situation**

Abraham Joy, professor of polymer science and polymer engineering, has patented technology for PolyLux, a photo-responsive adhesive that sticks better than the competition. Joy and then-student Kaushik Mishra, who graduated from UA in 2021, launched the new technology to help large medical bandages, like those used for diabetic foot ulcers and surgical incisions, come off more easily and reduce pain and injury. ■

POLYMER SCIENCE
#1 IN WORLD**Tops in Polymers**

We're number one! The University of Akron was recently named as the top university in the world for polymer science and plastics engineering, according to global ranking site EduRank.

A world leader in polymers since the founding of the United Synthetic Rubber Program in 1939, the School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering offers cutting edge master's and doctoral programs. It also added an undergraduate degree for fall '22. The faculty represent one of the largest concentrations of polymer expertise in the U.S., having invented more than 300 issued and pending patents.

"The School offers polymer research centers, testing facilities, workshops and laboratories equipped with advanced instrumentation and process capabilities right on The University of Akron's campus," said Craig Menzemer, the new permanent dean, College of Engineering and Polymer Science. "Our faculty leaders prepare student researchers and post-docs to make a significant impact on the success of the region and the world."

The polymer program is home to many important discoveries in modern polymer syntheses, characterizations, theories and applications.

"Big names like Joseph Kennedy, Alan Gent, Stephen Cheng, Darrell Reneker, James White, Arkady Leonov and Paul Han will be

referenced in polymer textbooks for their phenomenal contributions in many years to come," said Tianbo Liu, A. Schulman professor and interim director, School of Polymer Science and Polymer Engineering.

EduRank's overall ranking methodology factors in research performance, non-academic prominence, including backlinks to a university from other sites, and an alumni score.

"In the evaluation, 31,128 research publications of our University were considered. Of these, 14,146 were in engineering and 9,477 were in material sciences," said John Wiencek, executive vice president and provost. "Research publications from the University overall have been cited more than 760,492 times."

UA WOMEN EARN *more*

Female students, take note: According to a recent workforce analysis focused on R2 institutions producing the highest-earning female alumni under 40 in the United States, The University of Akron made the list of top universities in the Midwest.

Universities classified as "R2" have doctoral programs and high research activity.

The study, published by Steppingblocks, ranked UA 12th in the Midwest for female alumni under 40 who earn more than \$100K annually—with an average salary of \$129,167.

Top employers for this group of UA alum include Cleveland Clinic, Akron Children's Hospital and GOJO Industries, while top majors

are nursing, law and accounting. In "The State of the Gender Pay Gap in 2021," PayScale reported that income inequity widens as women progress in their careers, often because women climb the corporate ladder more slowly than men.

In theory, if women accelerate their pace of upward mobility, they'll decrease their deficit in potential lifetime earnings.

So, according to Steppingblocks, universities producing high-earning female alumni under 40 are working toward better outcomes for their students, recent grads and alumni. It's good to be a Zip!





KEEPING OFF-CAMPUS NEIGHBORHOODS SAFE

Employees and students work together to make positive changes

BY CRISTINE BOYD

Sitting on a hill just a stone's throw from downtown, The University of Akron is sprawling and beautiful. And while it benefits from the City's dynamic entertainment and cultural offerings, it shares in the realities that go with an urban location.

That's where The University of Akron Police Department (UAPD) steps in, not only providing law enforcement services on campus, but assisting the City of Akron Police Department (APD) with patrolling neighborhoods on the outer ring of campus. While large apartment complexes have sprung up over the past 10 years, a good percentage of students live in individual rental homes located in the South of Exchange (SOE) neighborhood.

During the pandemic, when most students moved home, some landlords began renting houses to non-students to keep the units occupied, thus changing the dynamic of the neighborhood. And when communities change, new issues often arise.

For that reason, UA President Gary L. Miller hired 13-year UAPD veteran Kerry Jackson as the inaugural director of off-campus safety. In this position, Jackson is working to help build partnerships, communication and connections with landlords, students, members of the APD, local businesses and elected officials.

"Although we are responsible for safety on the UA campus, we also see adjacent neighborhoods in the City of Akron as part of our footprint," said Jackson. "Many of our students live in off-campus rentals and we have to make sure they feel safe and secure there."

Shining a Fresh Light

One of the first projects started, which involved updating lighting in the SOE neighborhood, was designed to help students feel safer walking at night. The effort is a joint collaboration between the University, the City of Akron and FirstEnergy.

Another initiative came after the tragic loss of UA student Maya McFetridge to gun violence in September 2021. President Miller, in reiterating the University's commitment to safety, doubled down on its efforts by working with the Ohio State Highway Patrol to provide additional patrols.

The University also reopened the Block by Block office on Exchange Street to provide more eyes and ears (and student escort services), hired additional police officers for the SOE area, and worked with Summit County and the City of Akron to invest in a new camera system for that neighborhood.

"I am personally committed to doing whatever it takes to secure the safety of every person who comes to this University to learn, work or visit," Miller said in an address to campus. "There is nothing more important to me and this University community."

Professor Leads Property Project

Students and faculty alike have joined in the effort. Stephanie Yuhas, a practicing attorney and former magistrate, serves as an associate professor of practice, criminal justice studies. She's now leading a group of five UA undergraduate criminal justice studies

students in a special project to help Jackson identify nuisance properties in the SOE neighborhood that are causing safety issues.

Nuisance properties can be noisy, abandoned or neglected properties, be the location for fights or other violence, or have alleged criminal activity taking place such as the sale or use of drugs and guns on the property.

Here's how the project works: a nuisance property is identified, students conduct a crime analysis on it which is then verified through public records, and a package of information is created and given to local authorities. They, in turn, may issue a nuisance letter to the property owner who would be assessed the cost of police response if called to the property for certain kinds of activities.

This not only saves the community money, but it also pressures the property owner to do a better job monitoring renters and activity on the property and incentivizes them to clean it up.

According to Yuhas, the project improves housing safety for all SOE residents by holding property owners responsible for doing their part. "The hope is that we can help create a culture of housing safety as the expectation for all landlords city-wide."

Students Lend a Hand

Angelena Dorbish and Faith Fox are among students currently organizing a database in a way that some 50,000 Akron Police Department records can be sorted and understood. Other students working on the project, Braden Schaffer and Kayla Copiskey, are using public records to obtain additional information needed in generating a nuisance report. All say they value the experience.

Dorbish hopes to work with a police department and maybe even a federal agency after graduating. "I like the crime analysis part—and this project is an amazing opportunity for me. I enjoy it even more than I thought I would."

Another set of students is working on a survey that will gauge perceptions of safety and how the University can improve it. Hanah Ramsey and Emily Starkey created questions for this survey after conducting a research review about perceptions of crime. Starkey will be conducting an analysis of the data as part of her honor's work associated with this class. After the data comes in from the survey, the reports will be presented to President Miller and his team.



Making a Difference

Yuhas realizes the importance of this work and hopes others do as well. "UA is an important part of the community, and this program shows our students that every decision has real-world impact."

Fox loves the idea that her work might change the community, and she wants more students to be aware of the project. She believes the campus survey will show students that the University is taking their concerns seriously by asking for their feedback.

"I am thankful to be part of this project to learn about and apply research skills," said Fox. "But ultimately we are all trying to make South of Exchange a better place to live."

Both Jackson and Yuhas understand that their work won't bring about an immediate fix. But they are both dedicated to the effort.

"We hope to put in place a system where the City and University can work together in a cohesive way to address safety," Jackson said. "By opening communication, we can work together to find solutions. If we can get this right, it benefits everyone." ■





COMING FULL CIRCLE

UA alumnus R.J. Nemer pivots back to campus as College of Business dean

When alumnus Robert J. (R.J.) Nemer hears someone call out, “Hey dean,” he sometimes forgets to turn around. “I am still pinching myself,” said Nemer, who took the reins at the College of Business in January 2022.

Nemer earned a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from The University of Akron in 1990 and a Juris Doctorate from Akron Law in 1995. Leaving his first position as an estate tax attorney, he founded a sports agency in 1998 and grew it into the largest independently owned golf management and marketing agency in the world. He subsequently sold that agency to William Morris Endeavor, (WME) the parent company of IMG, the largest sports management agency in the world. Nemer ran golf globally for the company.

Prior to returning to UA, Nemer worked for over two decades in the global sports industry, and most recently had been serving as chief marketing officer for MAI Capital Management in Cleveland.

It’s been a road with several forks, a story with surprising twists. Nemer credits his Zip years as the impetus for the journey.

“When I was here as a student,” said Nemer, “I felt that my instructors and professors, both undergrad and at the School of Law, really cared about me. They knew my passion points and my strengths and weaknesses. They really wanted to invest in me and my career. The instruction went well beyond the classroom.”

When Nemer started his sports agency, some of the advice he sought was from his former professors. And when he was named dean of the College of Business, many of the congratulatory notes he received came from UA mentors.

As dean, he is trying to emulate that model, meeting students personally and investing in their lives and careers. “To be able to do so is one of my favorite parts of the job.”

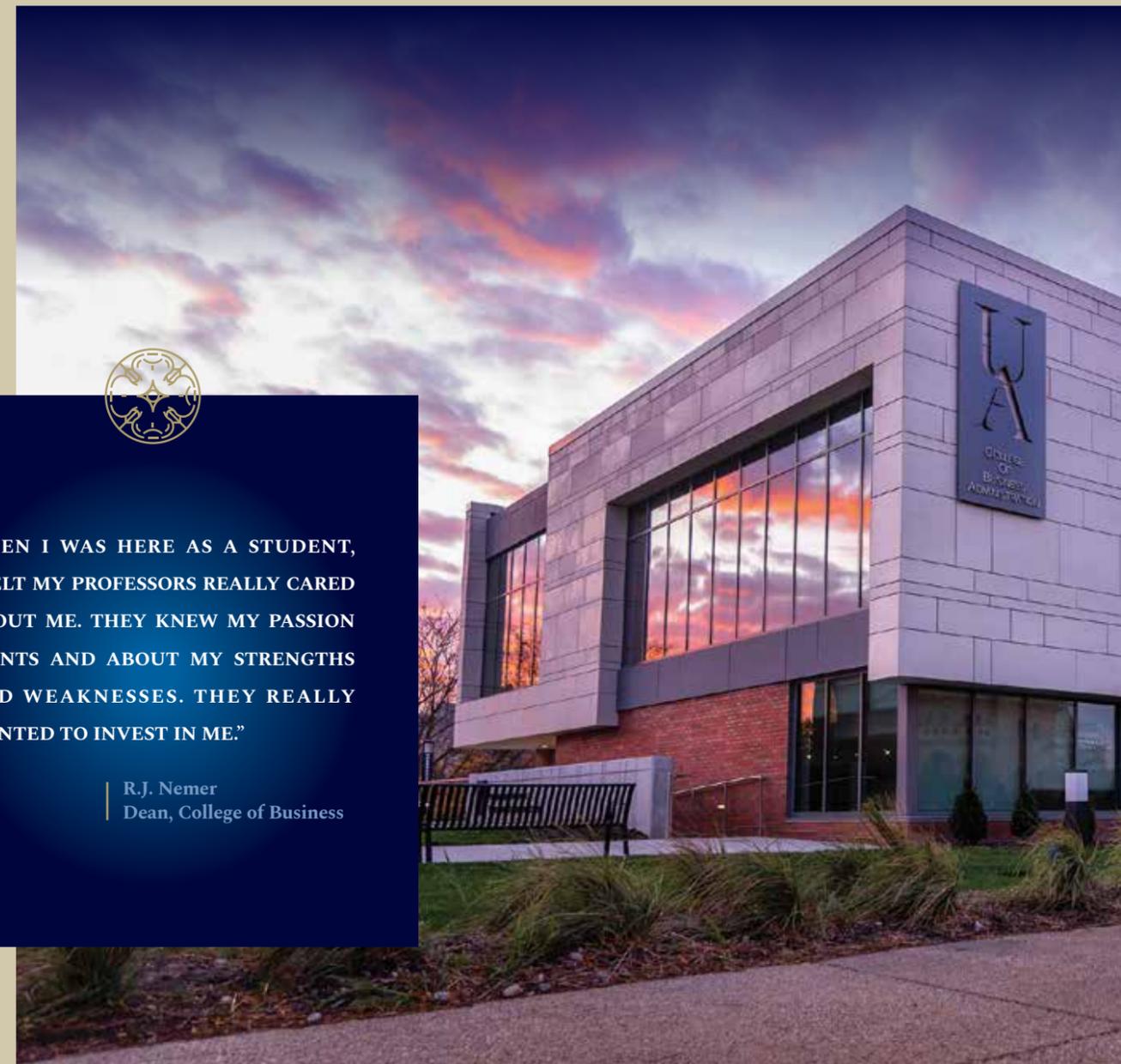
Another favored aspect of his role, said Nemer, is to share how the capabilities, resources and offerings of the College of Business have changed astronomically since he was a student.

“There really has been rebirth at The University of Akron,” said the man who understands reinvention. When asked about the genesis of his career shifts, Nemer said, “When I find that I have become complacent with something, then I know that I am not growing. I like to push out of my comfort zone.”

While he loved being a sports agent, after two decades, Nemer found he was getting “more charged up about helping younger agents than doing my own deals. That spoke to me in terms of what I should be doing down the road.”

In his last position at MAI Capital, Nemer enjoyed his work, but it wasn’t what he calls “a passion point.” He remembered what that was like when he was a sports agent—and “I knew I needed to find my passion again.”

He has faced each of these transitions without fear: “I think failure is underrated because of the lessons learned. When you become unafraid, you will move out of your comfort zone and grow.” ■



“

WHEN I WAS HERE AS A STUDENT, I FELT MY PROFESSORS REALLY CARED ABOUT ME. THEY KNEW MY PASSION POINTS AND ABOUT MY STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES. THEY REALLY WANTED TO INVEST IN ME.”

R.J. Nemer
Dean, College of Business

THE POWER of GIVING BACK

*Michael and Chaka Crome
find meaning in helping others*

BY JANET CHISMAR HARDIE



You could call them the ultimate power couple: Michael Crome is the chief financial officer of the Las Vegas Raiders; Chaka is an attorney and owner of Crome Law Firm. But the spouses, whose paths intersected on The University of Akron campus, are a bit more down to earth. They are humble, generous and committed to giving back to their community.

Michael, a 1999 grad who was a Distinguished Alumni Award recipient in 2003, was also recognized by Vegas, Inc. this year with a C-suite award—an honor for the area's top-level executives and most accomplished business leaders.

As CFO of the Raiders, Crome oversees all financial aspects of Las Vegas' NFL team, including athlete salaries, stadium sales, merchandise and more.

Chaka, who graduated from Akron Law in 2002, specializes in family, small business and personal injury law. After graduation, she joined Chesnoff & Schonfeld in

Las Vegas as an associate attorney. After becoming a partner, she branched out on her own and now owns Crome Law Firm.

Fuel for the Zips

Both Cromes discussed how their experiences at UA shaped them into the people they are today. "I owe a great debt to Akron and the people here," said Michael, a Columbus, Ohio, native. "I grew up in humble beginnings. I was the first person in my family to attend college, so I didn't really have a clear understanding of what to major in or how to navigate on campus."

Because he was eager to make friends, Michael signed up to be a Resident Assistant, a role he kept throughout his time at UA. Working in what were then Brown and Grant halls, Michael developed friendships that he maintains to this day.

But the bigger impact on his current life came while he worked in the Office of Minority Affairs with peer counseling. "That gave me a chance to interact with a lot of different students from a lot of different backgrounds," Michael recalled. "I think that is where I grew and learned to be a leader, thanks to people like Coleen Curry '91, who personally mentored me and ran the program."

Another debt of gratitude goes out to Career Services for helping him during his senior year with the practicalities of resume building, interviewing and internships. "I credit the University with building my professional skills as well as the educational component."

Most importantly, Michael wouldn't have married Chaka if he hadn't attended Akron. "I had a friend, David Hitchens '98 and '02, who also was a peer counselor and during my last year, we were roommates." Hitchens was a law

student, as was Chaka. After being introduced by him at a party, Michael and Chaka didn't cross paths again until Hitchens graduated. But those two brief interactions left a lasting impression.

A year later, the couple "just so happened" to reconnect after Chaka had already moved to Las Vegas. For Chaka, it was a move back home. "I was born and raised in this great city and I am proud to still call it home," she said.

Chaka, like Michael, is a first-generation college graduate. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Nevada, Reno in 1997. While considering which law school to attend, it was the offer of free tuition for her first year that sealed the deal at UA.

"I had never been to Akron until a week before classes began," Chaka said, "but I loved it. It was the perfect spot for me. The class sizes were small, and Ohio has this hometown feel of hospitality. It didn't matter that I didn't know anyone. The community was already waiting for me in Akron."

Her professors were extremely helpful, she noted: "In a larger setting, I could have gotten lost. I feel like I was properly equipped and can practice law anywhere with my great UA education."

Paying it Forward

Now, with successful careers, a beautiful daughter, a shared faith, and a few years of hindsight in the mirror, the Cromes focus on giving back what others bestowed on them.

Chaka makes sure that her clients, who often come to her broken, leave the office with encouragement as well as solid legal help. "Everybody goes through something at some point in their lives," she shared. "If I can, at some section of their lives, help them out, I think that is what I was designed to do."

She is also involved in the community, serving with Jack and Jill of America, on the board for Goodwill of Southern Nevada, and with her local library foundation. "I joined the board because I feel that the library is an equalizer for everyone. Anyone can walk in and get a book or take a class and grow their passion or skills."

Michael, meanwhile, uses his love of running to make a difference. In 2019, he completed the World Marathon Challenge, finishing seven full marathons in seven continents over seven days to raise money for Junior Achievement (JA).

Even now, he admitted with a laugh, he's probably "overly involved" in community outreach, previously serving as the chairman of board of JA in Las Vegas and currently directing their capital campaign. The group's efforts are on track to raise \$30 million to build a JA campus in Las Vegas.

Michael also serves on the board of a national foster care organization called Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth, through which he gives back using his knowledge of finance.

Even while representing the Las Vegas Raiders, he makes sure community relations are tailored around being active in the Black community: "We need to show up as much as possible. I didn't have role models growing up. My goal now is to find more 'Michaels'—kids like me who need direction to help figure out what they are going to do next. They just need a little mentorship.

"One of the big reasons that I volunteer and give back today is because I never know whose life I may impact by simply being present while inspiring young people to dream big," Michael added.

Chaka chimed in, "We are committed to being positive influences in the community. And it's a value we learned at The University of Akron." ■ ■ ■



“WE ARE COMMITTED TO BEING POSITIVE INFLUENCES IN THE COMMUNITY AND IT'S A VALUE WE LEARNED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON.”

Chaka Crome '02

ALUMNUS MATTHEW CHERRY RETURNS TO UA

RETHINKING RACE

Keynote address inspires students
and facilitates discussion

After two long years during which the pandemic put a halt to most live events, it was a welcome surprise when alumnus Matthew Cherry delivered the Rethinking Race: Black, White and Beyond keynote address on the UA campus in person. Originally slated as a virtual gathering, Cherry delighted the University community when he announced he would be attending the February 21 event instead.

Sponsored by the Office of Inclusion and Equity and the Rethinking Race Committee, the keynote speech brought an estimated 300 guests to the Gardner Theatre in Jean Hower Taber Student Union. It kicked off two weeks of programming designed to facilitate productive conversations on race and race-related issues.

When Cherry was a student at UA, he studied radio and television broadcasting, as well as media production. Additionally, the Chicago native was involved with WZIP, one of the country's top college radio stations. Outside

of the classroom, Cherry played on the Zips Football team as a wide receiver and still holds two punt return records.

Following his time at UA, Cherry played with several NFL teams: Jacksonville Jaguars (2004), Cincinnati Bengals (2005) and Carolina Panthers (2006). He retired from the Baltimore Ravens in 2007.

It was following his football career that Cherry really put his UA education to good use by embarking on a career behind the camera—writing, directing and producing. His early credits include music videos, and he has since gone on to work on a variety of projects, including the film “BlackKlansman,” as well as the television shows “Black-ish,” “The Last O.G.” and “Whiskey Cavalier.”

Cherry won an Oscar in February 2020 for his animated short film “Hair Love,” the heartfelt story of an African-American father learning to do his daughter’s hair for the first time. “Hair Love” was later adapted into a picture book for Penguin Random House where it became a *New York Times* Bestseller.

Speaking to the group assembled for Rethinking Race, Cherry said of the film, “Hair Love allowed us to tackle the negative societal stereotypes around natural hair and black fathers, and to normalize the depiction of a loving black family that we have seen so little of in media.”

In answering a question about advice for current students, Cherry said, “Sometimes all you have to do is see people that look like you, that went to the same school as you doing really well, and it can help motivate and inspire you too.”

Cherry said he was proud to be a Zip. “The University of Akron is amazing. It was just a really great experience.”

Sandie L. Crawford, interim director for the Office of Inclusion and Equity said the Rethinking Race event was a success in “showcasing someone who has had national recognition for the work that he’s done.” ■



ALUMNI CONNECTION

Class Notes

1960s

Charles L. Greene, B.A. '62, J.D. '77, has been appointed chairman of the Alpha Phi Alpha Foundation. He is currently CEO of Tomorrow's People, Inc., a consulting firm based in Akron.



Charles H. Huettner, B.S. '69, was presented with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who's Who, the world's premier publisher of biographical profiles. Huettner has amassed more than three decades of expertise in aviation and aerospace policy.

1970s

James P. Ogden, J.D. '70, was honored by the Florida Bar virtually at a 50-Year Member and Senior Counselor Recognition Luncheon for his distinguished years of service.

Kathleen Meyer, B.S. '78, will be one of nine local activists honored in June with the Woman of the Year award by the Women's History Project of the Akron Area, a program of the Summit County Historical Society. Meyer is founder and president of Peace Together Choir and a hospice nurse.

1980s

Pamela J. Braden, B.A. '81, has joined the firm of AE Industrial Partners, LP (“AEI”), as an operating partner. She brings more than 35 years of defense, technology, and government services expertise, having served most recently as CEO of Gryphon Technologies.

John Hoag, B.S. '83, has joined Averett University as professor and chair of the Computer Science and Information Systems Department.

Kathy S. (Knopp) Hayes, B.A. '89, was welcomed by City Limits Publishing as a new author with the release of “Dear Oval Office Occupant: Letters to the White House in the Age of Trump.” Hayes has



been featured in the Akron Beacon Journal and the Cleveland Plain Dealer for her activism and letters to the White House.

Bonita “Bonnie” Teeuwen, B.S. '85, has been appointed Chief Operating Officer by Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb. Teeuwen has more than 30 years of experience in the civil engineering and public administration field, most recently serving as the Director of Transportation and Municipal Engineering for Osborn Engineering where she worked with public clients on infrastructure projects.



1990s

Brian Keith Johnson, B.M. '90, an Akron Public Schools teacher and professional opera singer, sang the national anthem at the Browns-Steelers game in Cleveland on October 31, 2021. The music educator has sung opera everywhere from New York's Carnegie Hall to Europe throughout his career.

Martha E. Vetter, M.A. '91, has been appointed a new board of trustees member at Lourdes University. She is a public relations and communications expert with more than 35 years of experience.



Andrew P. “Paul” Gluck, B.S. '93, has been promoted to Great Lakes Regional Director at Michael Baker International, a global leader in engineering, planning and consulting services.

2000s

Mike R. Skaggs, A.A.S. '00, B.F.A. '04, is an artist/sculptor who has found his niche creating custom dolls of horror movie monsters, including Frankenstein, Dracula, Freddy, Jason, Ghostface, etc. His clients extend as far as the United Arab Emirates and Australia.

Jerome J. “Jay” Rohr III, B.A. '07, M.S.E. '12, has been named Jackson High School's head football coach. After being considered the greatest player in Jackson football history, Rohr played football at The University of Akron. Named defensive player of the year as a senior, he helped Akron reach its first Division I-A bowl game.

2010s

Gregory A. Amentini, A.A.B. '19, B.S. '19, has been promoted to system administrator, IT services at Bober Markey Fedorovich, a national Top 200 CPA and advisory firm.

Zachary A. “Zack” Hawks, J.D. '14, L.L.M. '14, has joined the firm of Black McCuskey Souers & Arbaugh LPA as an associate attorney. Hawks focuses his practice in the areas of business and intellectual property. He is a member of the patent bar.



Leanna J. Chatman, B.S. '17, helped the global production launch of the all-new 2022 MDX, Acura's new flagship SUV. Chatman served as the stamping project leader on this exciting launch.

2020s

Samantha M. Rathburn, M.T. '20, has been promoted to senior manager, tax services at Bober Markey Fedorovich, a national Top 200 CPA and advisory firm. Rathburn provides tax compliance, planning and best practices to closely held companies and family-owned businesses.

Farewells in 2022

Alumni we lost in January and February 2022

- Richard D. Ballway, B.A. '52 - January 27
- Karen A. Boos, A.A.B. '95 - February 11
- Lynda D. Cafarelli, B.S.E. '72 - January 12
- Joseph W. Clements, B.S. '54 - February 14
- Franklin O. Curry, B.S.E. '75 - January 26
- Joanne G. Dobbins, A.A. '89 - January 1
- Anthony C. Economou, B.S. '50 - January 13
- Debra E. Eippert, A.A.S. '78 - February 10
- Thelma E. Esker, A.A.S. '73, B.S.E. '76, M.A. '78 - January 14
- Isabelle Gordon, B.S. '81 - January 9
- Paul N. Herbert, B.A. '79 - January 30
- John E. Hieber, M.S. '66 - February 24
- Judith Kay Hilbish, B.S.E. '66 - January 2
- Robert J. Horvath, B.S.E. '53 - January 15
- Joseph Hrubik, B.S.E. '49 - February 5

Visit akron.edu/magazine for the entire list of Class Notes and Farewells and other alumni news. You'll also find full-length versions of the stories in this issue, along with videos and additional images.

Betty Jane Humphrey, B.S. '54 - January 28

Bryan L. Kinnamon, MBA '74 - January 19

Joyce M. Kiser, B.A. '88 - January 20

Daniel F. Klemmensen, M.S. '68 - January 22

David F. LaBate, B.S. '75, MBA '79 - February 1

Nancy A. Lentsch, A.A.B. '84 - January 25

Donald E. Lombardi, B.S. '62, J.D. '68 - February 1

Michael B. Mihalick, B.S. '87 - January 12

William G. Mittas, J.D. '89, M.T. '91 - January 3

Anne G. Nehoda, M.T. '92 - January 25

Phillip D. Pashley, B.A. '81 - January 6

Walter A. Peloso, A.A.B. '91, B.F.A. '94 - January 13

Wayne E. Preston, B.S. '77 - February 24

Jean U. Questel, B.A.E. '48, M.A. '84 - February 10

Robert G. Ritchie, B.S. '68 - February 16

Albert R. Sawaya, B.S. '83 - February 2

John F. Schmitt, B.A. '71, M.A. '71, M.A. '73 - January 30

Ellen L. Schneiderman, B.A. '84, J.D. '88 - February 24

William L. Sebok, B.S. '73 - January 4

William A. Stein, B.S.E. '62 - January 8

Peter N. Timoch, B.A.E. '97 - February 7

Margery Walcott, B.S.E. '52 - February 22

Connect with Your Alumni Association

Facebook.com/uakron.alumni/

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Send address updates to:

The University of Akron
Alumni Association,
375 E. Exchange Street,
Akron, OH 44325-2602
or email alumni@uakron.edu



EMPOWERED WOMEN EMPOWER OTHERS

Join The University of Akron in celebrating the impact of philanthropy at UA through the Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle

With an annual goal of raising \$100,000, this concerted effort of organized giving will support one of the following initiatives to be voted on by members of the Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle:

Campus Cupboard

The Campus Cupboard, UA's food pantry, provides students in need with access to non-perishable food and hygiene items. Support from the Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle could bolster the Campus Cupboard and combat food insecurity on The University of Akron's campus. It would also provide resources for pop-up meals for students and sponsor a "free meal day" at Rob's Café.

Title IX

UA is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Title IX in 2022. Many female student athletes excel in sports and achieve academic success, but often without the benefit of scholarship assistance. Support from the Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle would provide scholarships to female student athletes. With 10 women's sports in total, the greatest need for scholarship assistance is for student athletes in lacrosse, golf, softball, cross country and track and field.

Health and Wellness

The University of Akron is acutely aware of the need to provide wrap-around services to students, including access to healthcare and counseling services. Support from the Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle would provide access to virtual telehealth counseling services, create a mental health oasis (relaxation space) on campus, and assist uninsured students with fees associated with wellness visits to the UA Health Center (flu shots, preventative care, etc.).

Contact Lia Jones (330.972.2819 or LiaJones@uakron.edu) or Lisa Sabol (330.972.8572 or LSabol@uakron.edu) to make a gift, request a Women in Philanthropy mailer or learn more about The University of Akron's Women in Philanthropy Giving Circle.



JEAN HOWER TABER'S HISTORIC ESTATE GIFT TRANSFORMED SCHOLARSHIPS



The late Jean Hower Taber was part of a historic family legacy that reshaped the Northeast Ohio community. Her own magnanimous gift—more than \$20 million designated to The University of Akron through her estate—will broaden educational opportunities for generations to come. The gift, announced in October 2017, was the single largest contribution in the University's history at that time.

Approximately two-thirds of the gift supports scholarships for students in the Williams Honors College, as well as the Department of Audiology. The remaining portion maintains Hower House, the Hower family mansion

located on campus, which offers exhibits and programs to the public, and programming in support of UA's mission.

Taber, who received an honorary doctorate from the University in 2004, had provided more than \$7 million in gift support prior to her landmark estate gift. She did not attend UA, but her grandfather was a graduate of Buchtel College, now The University of Akron. She lent her time and talent to numerous causes and was also a key supporter of UA student scholarships and academic initiatives, including the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology program and Zips athletics.

THANK YOU to the UA Foundation Board of Directors. Without them, this magazine would not be possible.

The UA Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors and special committees made up of alumni and friends who deeply love and support the University and who safeguard and manage its assets. As catalysts for growth and opportunity, these individuals are leaders in business and civic organizations, leading us into bold tomorrows.

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TIMKEN GIFT GIVES A LIFT TO MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing companies across the nation will soon have access to state-of-the-art resources and vital expertise to assist them in developing new and innovative finishing technologies thanks to a generous \$3 million gift from the Timken Foundation of Canton. The Timken Foundation Center for Precision Manufacturing will be housed on East Mill Street in the facility that housed the Akron Polymer Training Center. The Timken Foundation's \$3 million gift will provide funds for upgrades to the building including the roof, foundation, HVAC system and façade. Pictured above is Siamak Farhad, associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, interim director of the Center.

CLOSING SHOTS

GETTING TO KNOW MITCHELL S. MCKINNEY

Dean of the Buchtel College of Arts and Sciences



What has been your greatest accomplishment as dean thus far?

I think I'm most proud of what we've started within the college to recognize and thank our staff and faculty. At the heart of this outstanding academic enterprise is its people. It really is our "secret sauce"—what makes Buchtel College such a great place to live and learn—engaged students who work with amazing faculty supported by dedicated staff.

What do you most hope to achieve during your tenure?

For me, a first-generation college student, it's not at all cliché to speak of the transformative power of higher education. I like to remind myself that we are in the business of changing lives that change the world; and I see this process unfold on a daily basis, through the great work of our faculty and the accomplishments of our students. My goal is to work with my colleagues in building a college that delivers a world-class liberal arts and sciences education.

What do you like most about your role/working at UA?

I love leading a college with such a broad focus. From the natural and biological sciences, the social sciences, to education, the visual



and performing arts, literary arts and the humanities, we truly do span the spectrum of knowledge and learning. I show up every day, like a kid in a candy shop, eager to learn something new.

What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?

That my car's satellite radio is always on two channels: classic country and bluegrass.



"Forever a Zip"
HOMECOMING & FAMILY WEEKEND '22

9/30 - 10/2



A DOWNTOWN SHOWCASE

If you can imagine a university celebrating its new downtown landscape with color and form, music and poetry, you can imagine the Polsky renaissance.



As UA's new front door to downtown, this iconic Akron treasure will be reimagined as Polsky Arts, with a 15,000-square-foot space featuring stages for music, theater, dance, literary and other performances; an art gallery; the Made at Myers boutique; a café and shared public spaces.

Polsky Arts will open directly onto Main Street, welcoming the public onto campus in an exciting new way. The performance space will be programmed and operated by students in the Arts Administration program.

This building is part of the University's contribution to Akron Cultural Plan's call to "celebrate and market Downtown Akron as a premier arts and culture district for local and national tourism and bolster the collective ownership of downtown and its cultural amenities for all Akron residents."

LEAVE A LEGACY THAT SHAPES THE FUTURE

Establish a legacy that will make a lasting impact on students through a **bequest** in a will or trust or **beneficiary designation** of an investment or retirement account (IRA, 401(k), stock portfolio).

If you are age 70½ or older, you may make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA:

- When you gift any amount up to \$100,000 per year to UA Foundation
- Then you reduce your taxable income by the amount of your gift—whether itemizing or taking the standard deduction.

For more information, contact:

Lia Jones, Director, Center for Gift and Estate Planning, 330-972-2819 or LiaJones@uakron.edu.



To give now:

- Visit uakron.edu/giving
- Text **UA** to **41444**
- Scan this **QR code** with your smartphone:



We lift our people. We elevate this place. We live up to our promises.



HELP MAKE UA THE NEXT STOP FOR SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE.

Do you know a college-bound high school student or someone interested in transferring to UA? Maybe there's an adult in your life who's ready to take the next step in their education?

Connect a Future Zip to all that UA has to offer by referring them to uakron.edu/hello.

When they complete the online form or schedule a visit, they'll begin to receive regular communication about the UA experience, including important deadlines and next steps in the enrollment process.

Here, everyone rises.

