"Great opportunities almost always involve great opposition. But in the midst of the opportunity/opposition/tension, God refines us, matures us, strengthens us, and causes us to rely and trust on him."

DENNY RYDBERG ’67
President Emeritus, Young Life
I am also continually amazed at how SPU’s alumni serve others and celebrate God’s creation while pursuing excellence. One example of this is the dedication of alumna Brandi Williamson ’96 in training for a competition in canicross, an obscure sport that she discovered, realized she loved, and so many other SPU faculty we’ve written about over the past few years — made in years.

As I transition from editor to assistant professor, I am inspired to embody the same care for my students that staff, faculty, and fellow classmates, who journey with students through that time. It has been a privilege to work with a community for the last two years. I haven’t been here for long, but working as the editor has let me get to know many of you, and you have made an impression that I will carry with me for many years. A few things strike me as particularly special about this University and the people it attracts. One is the close-knit community on campus and the way it continues after graduation. I am also struck by the service-minded work that those people pursue and the way they do it with excellence. You don’t have to look any further than this issue to see what I mean.

I am also continually amazed at how SPU’s alumni serve others and celebrate God’s creation while pursuing excellence. One example of this is the dedication of alumna Brandi Williamson ’96 in training for a competition in canicross, an obscure sport that she discovered, realized she loved, and now pursues relentlessly.

Another example is embodied in the stories of Jamie and Alissa Shattenberg, the 2020 Alumni of the Year, who have worked alongside the Madagascar people for years to help them and the natural world of Madagascar to flourish. These are just two stories that illustrate how SPU’s alumni serve and play a vital role in Madagascar — pursuing unique talents and utilizing gifts to make the world a better place. You inspire me to do the same.
P

PEOPLE OFTEN QUESTION the value of a college degree — especially a degree from a liberal arts university like Seattle Pacific University. However, economists from the New York Federal Reserve Bank recently found that the average rate of return on a college investment remains high at around 14%. Most of us would be ecstatic if our retirement portfolios performed at that rate and with such consistency. Beyond the economic benefit of a college degree, higher education offers value for our students’ future and for the world. An SPU education is defined by unique elements that make us at once timeless, timely, and prepared for a future time. First, our Christian mission is timeless. At SPU, our Christian identity is foundational and formative, and the life of the mind and a life of faith are mutually informative instead of mutually exclusive. Our Christian identity and focus on whole-person education is not only timeless, it is timely. The most sought-after values by employers in 2018, identified by the Association of American Colleges & Universities’ 2018 Employer Research Survey, included a set of intangible skills boot learned in a liberal arts environment, rather than a skills-focused degree program. These include the ability to write and speak effectively; to work in teams with diverse groups; to think critically, analytically, creatively, and independently; to practice ethical decision-making; and to apply knowledge in real-world settings. Those outcomes are central to the liberal arts mission of SPU. However, we are not merely preparing students to live the good life by equipping them with skills to succeed in the workplace. Rather, we encourage them to live a good life. We teach students not to simply acquire knowledge for self-serving ends, but rather to acquire knowledge to serve and edify others. Even as SPU is adapting to the technological trends that are shifting how, when, and where students are accessing higher education, our graduates have the ability to respond with resilience and creativity to change. We are preparing our students for jobs of the future — jobs that don’t yet exist, and that will require knowledge that is not yet taught in a classroom. Seattle Pacific offers a future-focused transformational educational experience that is grounded in the liberal arts; prepares our students through a robust engagement across the disciplines as they enter an increasingly complicated and complex world; teaches them how to think, write, speak — and, perhaps more necessary than ever — to listen.

As we prepare SPU students for the future, we aim for the University to be known as a premier Christian university that attracts and trains leaders from every kind of background. Those watching us should see these values reflected most transparently through the lives of our alumni, who embody the University’s vision and commitment to global and cultural engagement, reconciliation, and human flourishing.\footnote{Abel, Jason R. and Richard Deitz. “Despite Rising Costs, College is Still a Good Investment.” Liberty Street Economics. Federal Reserve Bank of New York, June 5, 2019. https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2019/06/despite-rising-costs-college-is-still-a-good-investment.html}

IN 2008, Seattle Pacific University’s new Office of Multi-Ethnic Programs needed a director. “The University had an emphasis on increasing the diversity of the student body,” remembered Jeff Jordan, vice president for Student Life. “We wanted to support those students’ academic, social, and cultural adjustment.” Susan Okamoto Lane, a 25-year veteran of SPU, was the director of the Career Development Center. She previously had led SPU’s internship programs and also had worked with the Ames Scholars program for traditionally underrepresented students of color. Colleagues encouraged her to apply, but Okamoto Lane wasn’t interested. She knew people from traditionally underrepresented ethnic backgrounds commonly faced slights, prejudices, and insults — microaggressions — related to their racial identity and family situations. Some →
Okamoto Lane was hired for the position and began in 1983. Refugees from Southeast Asia were flowing through the Northwest for resettlement, and Japanese Presbyterian Church, which Okamoto Lane attended, assisted the new immigrant families. "I had started volunteering with refugees from Laos," she recalled. "We had this gigantic youth program with kids from 5 to 25, who were primarily Mien. I wanted to do more, but my full-time job limited that." She applied for a part-time job at SPU that fit her experience.

Okamoto Lane eventually moved into a full-time position in what was then called the Career Center. In the years to follow, the SPU student body went from less than 10% students from historically underrepresented ethnic minority groups in the early 1990s to 44% by autumn 2018. That number continues to grow.

As a program director, Okamoto Lane could take on some interesting histories, including housing-deposit deadlines. She noticed that first-generation students and students whose parents were immigrants often had the most expensive deposits due to the high cost of housing for the first time. Students submitted deposits later than others. She presented the problem to the undergraduate admissions and housing services teams. The policy was changed soon after.

"That always struck me as something that could be easily missed," said Serena Manteo, the new director of the Multicultural and Multilingual Program.

"I can see you thriving here,"" she said. ""I have made gallons and gallons and gallons of West African peanut stew for study breaks with students," said Okamoto Lane. Once worried about burnout, Okamoto Lane discovered her capacity expanded.

"I have made galloons and galloons of West African peanut stew for study breaks with students," Okamoto Lane said. ""I've got your back. I know what brings you joy.""

First generation and immigrant students had the highest financial need but also the most expensive campus housing due to when deposits were submitted. Okamoto Lane saw the inequity and helped to change school housing policies.

"The program created Early Connections Orientation as an event to assist traditionally underrepresented students and those who are first in their families to attend a four-year university to thrive. Students attended family dinners, hikes, and study breaks during finals.

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In July, Okamoto Lane retired from Seattle Pacific, but she has no intention of saying goodbye to SPU. She will serve as intercultural alumni liaison for Alumni, Parent, and Family Relations, connecting with graduates who once spent hours in MEP’s offices.

"Susan has been my direct link to SPU post-graduation," Philip Jacobs ‘08 wrote in an email. Jacobs works at Greatheart Consulting.

"I admired the quiet leadership that she exhibits, never seeking the spotlight or attention for herself. Susan is as authentic as they come."

"To be in that water every day, to be a part of something bigger, to be a part of a life lesson, was something I always sensed," said John Womack, a former student. Womack said Okamoto Lane was always there for him and many students.

"Susan was one of the main reasons I stayed at SPU," said Josh Redaque ’19. Okamoto Lane could explain her role in students’ lives.

"I will always remember that first day of orientation. I had a dream," she remembered. "I had a dream that I would be the face of Seattle Pacific University, and I didn’t know how." Okamoto Lane was hired for the position and began in 1983. Refugees from Southeast Asia were flowing through the Northwest for resettlement, and Japanese Presbyterian Church, which Okamoto Lane attended, assisted the new immigrant families. "I had started volunteering with refugees from Laos," she recalled. "We had this gigantic youth program with kids from 5 to 25, who were primarily Mien. I wanted to do more, but my full-time job limited that." She applied for a part-time job at SPU that fit her experience.

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Students can create a historical documentary film, a history blog, or a small oral history collection. Highlighting practical research and writing skills through the new “Doing History” courses, it’s a change from “studying history.” In one class, students worked in teams to pitch mock funding proposals for Iraqi and Syrian refugees living in Amman, Jordan, based on data collected by their professor (Walter) during recent field work.

“One of the things we thought about is how we could help communicate the value of not just historical knowledge but historical thinking,” said Hughes. “This is really part of being an informed citizen.”

The old curriculum emphasized facts over skills, meaning students could graduate from the program with a lot of memorized information but unable to put those facts to use in their jobs. Walter said.

“The curriculum wasn’t an intentional scaffolding of building skills step by step,” she said. “That’s something we’ve changed and redesigned.”

The new curriculum is also designed to help students think of their own lifetimes in a historical context. For instance, Walter pointed out that nearly all her students were born after Sept. 11, 2001, and have lived their entire lives in the era of war on terror. “They don’t know how to ask questions about what it is that they’ve been living through,” she said.

The new curriculum is also more globally focused. “One of the major contributions of this new curriculum is to ‘break up’ with the traditional divisions… we live in an inter-connected world,” Ye said. “The curriculum offers many more courses with global scope and multiple study abroad programs.”

Not surprisingly, the task force report found the division between West and non-West “highly problematic.” The world outside the West was defined in negative terms (“non-West”), implying the history of non-Western cultures was negative. This disparity also reflected in the number of credits required for Western history (20 versus “non-Western” history 10). The new curriculum introduces thematic “pathways” to enable students to focus on specific themes in history, including gender, politics, and faith. Students also will be required to take one class that examines the intersections between history and Christianity. “One of the distinctive features of our new curriculum,” explains Hughes, “is that we have a new category of study: Christian Perspectives on Problems in History. This new requirement affords students the opportunity to study theory issues in history (such as genocide, forced migration, and war), and reflect on them through the lens of Christian faith and ethics. It provides students with the tools to make wise and faithful decisions for the future.”

History alumnus Conrad Reynolds V99, an attorney and founder and president of the 501((c)(3) nonprofit law firm Washington Civil & Disability Advocacy, was excited to hear about the new curriculum.

“I loved the core content of my history classes, but it would have been helpful to have spent more time discussing practical application and providing career guidance,” he said in an email. “I can only recall a handful of occasions when the subject came up during my studies.”

The new curriculum will enable students to better understand the marketable skills they learn in history classes, including research, writing, and critical thinking, and will emphasize past graduates’ success in the job market.

Ye summed up the new curriculum in this way: “In the end, history is about memory,” she said. “If people lose their memory, they don’t know who they are. It is the same with a society, a civilization. We need to understand our identity as a nation and a world, and our new curriculum allows our students to do this. I’m excited about its global perspective, practical focus, and engagement with social issues through Christian faith.”

The final proposal was approved by the Curriculum Committee earlier in the fall.

**Flaherty, Colleen. “The Vanishing History Major.” Inside Higher Ed Nov 27, 2014.**

By Bethany Cummins

Any Seattle public high school graduate can receive two years of college tuition at participating Seattle community colleges under Mayor Jenny Durkan’s Seattle Promise College Tuition Program. Seattle Pacific University became the first university to respond to the mayor’s plan by announcing the Seattle Pacific Transfer Promise: a direct pathway from community college to enrollment at a four-year university for these students. In Autumn Quarter 2020, SPU will begin offering 50% off tuition for eligible community college students in the Seattle Promise program. These students can also follow a direct path way into most SPU majors and participate in unique mentor ship, internship, and advising opportunities.

“At a time when higher education is facing significant financial challenges, we are proud to announce the Seattle Pacific Transfer Promise,” said President Dan Martin. “Transfer students comprise an important part of our campus, and we work hard to help them complete their degree at Seattle Pacific.”
An ensemble for the 21st century

BY BETHANY CUMMINS

LAST APRIL in Nickerson Studios, the student musicians of Seattle Pacific University’s Ensemble[21] sat poised on stage, ready to begin the concert as soon as the conductor’s baton dropped. The ensemble’s pianist, senior Tim Bartlett, music education major at SPU, was the moment he had been working toward throughout the school year. The orchestra began playing Fantasy, an original composition he started writing the previous November.

Bartlett’s soaring eight-minute piece involved 16 instruments and drew inspiration from 19th-century Romantic-era composers he studied in his Winter Quarter history course, particularly Franz Liszt and Robert Schumann. Open to the public, the April concert premiered Fantasy, as well as pieces by three other student composers. “This piece is my biggest musical accomplishment this year,” Bartlett said.

Music department faculty volunteer their time to support Ensemble[21], but the group is primarily a student-run effort. Students volunteer their skills, compose the repertoire, schedule rehearsals, conduct, and perform. “Many schools have orchestras performing student works, but Ensemble[21] is designed as a contained and organized institutional version of the real world. It is a scaled version of the composer/producers/performer artistic process in the professional scene,” said Brian Chin, music department chair and Ensemble[21] faculty coordinator, along with Assistant Professor of Music Danny Hatch and Director of Composition Stephen Newby. “This ensemble is designed to engage with our artistic culture in Seattle, to be a tool for social venture and elevating social consciousness, and to encourage our students to take risks and create and perform original and challenging material.”

Music education major and Ensemble[21] member Megan Seibert, a junior, played flute in Fantasy. “You never get to meet classical composers, so it gave a different perspective to see my friend work hard on this piece and be a part of it.” Seibert described rehearsals as collaborative, with musicians giving composers feedback as they played.

Next year, students and faculty hope to feature major works of the late 20th century, allowing students to learn modern performance techniques and practice conducting, with the annual spring concert showcasing student compositions. “I see this group as an elite group of performers and composers committed to creating new works and engaging in the conversation that is happening nationally in new music,” said Chin.

Seibert hopes to work as a band director after graduation and says the experience of composing an orchestral work and conducting rehearsals is already building necessary career skills. “Ensemble[21] is opening my eyes to the process of composing a piece, while also showing how I can one day encourage my future students and run rehearsals efficiently.”

Bartlett, who plans to work as a music educator and orchestra director, agrees. “Knowing how to stand in front of a group of people with confidence and conduct them—that is my biggest takeaway,” he said. “In the end, it doesn’t really matter how awesome your piece sounds; people forget performances. But I’ll always remember what I learned from this experience.”

Liturgy as a Lens on Public Theology: Day of Common Learning 2019

BY ROB ELMER

At the campuswide Day of Common Learning this fall, the SPU campus explored the connections between heart and service, liturgy and life. Can worship re-center us in the biblical story and re-shape our public witness? Can “habits of the heart” orient us closer to God’s desire for a flourishing creation?

The annual, all-day event on Oct. 16, featured an opening keynote from James K.A. Smith, professor of philosophy at Calvin College in Michigan and editor-in-chief of Image journal which is housed on the SPU campus. Smith is an award-winning author and speaker, a prolific writer and thinker known for building bridges between the worlds of university, society, and church. The title of his talk, “Practicing the Prophetic: Liturgy as a Lens on Public Theology,”

At Calvin College in Michigan Smith warns. Building on the Hebrew worldview for peace or wholeness, he hopes the day deepened SPU’s intentionality with its “rhythms, rituals, and practices.”

Following Smith’s talk, break-out sessions led by the SPU community (including faculty and staff) explored the unique perspectives on the concept of shalom as it relates to public theology and liturgy.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION RECEIVES GRANT FOR BIG READ

The School of Education was awarded a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts to host a community reading program based on the book When the Emperor Was Divine, a much-lauded historical fiction account of the Japanese internment during World War II. SOE will partner with local libraries, Highline College, and school districts to provide information for book discussions and public events, and free e-cards will be available for students and community members to access the book online.

The six-month program kicked off on Oct. 16 during SPU’s annual Day of Common Learning, with two breakout sessions devoted to the book. Besides several campus events during Autumn and Winter Quarters, SOE faculty members will facilitate community readings at local libraries with K-12 students and teachers. The program concludes with a special public event on March 9 with the book’s award-winning author, Julie Otsuka.

Kristine Grittner, chair of the graduate program in literacy and di-rector of NEA Big Read, King County 2020, says the book is a good fit for the Seattle area. “When the Emperor Was Divine is written in spare, haunting prose, and features a time in history that affected many Northwest citizens,” said Grittner. “One of the goals is for community members to celebrate the resilience of a population that endured racism and continues to thrive in our community.”

Look for more information at spu.edu.
Investing in the future

BY DANIEL F. LE RAY

Andrew Baklund '18 and Andrew Fräldi '19 made their first investments in the stock market when they were in high school.

“The bad investment could be looked at in terms of opportunity cost. We might have invested in a great company, but we could have been losing money by not being invested with another.”

Andrew Baklund '18

According to Fräldi, who majored in accounting and business administration and minored in psychology, the most important thing he learned was to speak up. While SIF students’ knowledge varied, the best contributors were those who made critiques, asked questions, and presented new ideas, Fräldi said.

The SIF portfolio tries to focus on companies with a growth bias — banking behemoth Charles Schwab, content provider Netflix, and retail giant Costco, for example. Students are divided into sector teams overseeing different categories, explained Brian Pickens ’07, director of the Seattle Pacific Foundation.

“We try to have a senior and a junior on each sector team, with the idea that you’re encouraging diversity of thought,” he explained. In addition to market research, students consider less tangible factors, which Pickens calls “soft factors” — factors that might not be reflected in a company’s stock price.

“It’s easy to read a balance sheet,” he said. “But it’s not easy to understand how Netflix is going to use artificial intelligence to grow their user base or how Amazon might disrupt different industries.”

Learning to tackle these questions was one reason Emma Haney ’19 joined SIF. In her senior year, she was lead sector analyst for industrials, a category that included positions in 3M, Lockheed Martin, and Illinois Tool Works.

“I wasn’t familiar with industrials when I was assigned to that, but that’s what I asked for. I wanted to be forced to educate myself about a sector I knew little about,” said the accounting and international business double major, who joined accountancy firm Moss Adams this fall.

Baklund had a similarly eye-opening experience in the health care sector. Learning about vaccine and clinical trials and thinking about the moral implications of certain investments, in light of skyrocketing drug costs.

Sometimes, however, a seemingly solid investment in an organization like GlaxoSciences, did not pan out as expected. The firm had sufficient funding, sales potential, and a new acquisition that had positioned them in a new market, but its stock price did not increase as expected.

“It was a learning experience to follow the company and investigate what was holding it back,” Baklund recalled. “For us, the ‘bad investment’ can be looked at in terms of opportunity cost. We might have invested in a great company, but we could have been losing money by not being invested with another.”

In his senior year, Fräldi was a tech sector analyst with the SIF. His biggest takeaway: Watch out for the hype.

“I don’t want to say avoid the hype,” he said. “Sometimes it results in a large payoff, but at other times, it appears that a company is built on hype.” Fräldi joined the financial services firm KPMG this summer.

In addition to making investment decisions, SIF students have the opportunity to learn from professionals at local financial organizations. Last year, they toured Zevengenius Capital Investments with portfolio manager Anthony Zackery and met with empathy from various divisions.

Zackery, who also volunteers on the finance advisory board at Western Washington University, said SIF’s student-run investment portfolio embodies “true active investment management.”

“This style of investing is simple to explain but not easy to do well,” he said in an email. “The career benefits for SIF students are clear. SIF alumni feel more empowered when they enter the workforce since they’re familiar with all of the verbiage and can talk more confidently about investing.

And SIF has influenced the former high school investors’ approach to the markets,” he said.

Baklund said he now manages his investments with a better insight and philosophy than he used to, while Fräldi said he has refined his portfolio.

“I bought four trades,” Fräldi said. “I invest in better quality companies.”

A BANNER YEAR FOR UNIVERSITY SUPPORT

Seattle Pacific’s first Day of Giving, April 11, brought together 386 donors and raised $1,100,209 for the Seattle Pacific Fund — the largest number of donors and gifts in a 24-hour period in the University’s history. The fund provides for student scholarships and aid and also supports endeavors that enhance SPU’s academic excellence, Christian faith formation, and career service programs.

“The Day of Giving is part of a wider wave of generosity to the University that made fiscal 2019 the best in Seattle Pacific’s fundraising history,” said SPU’s vice president for alumni relations and advancement. The Day of Giving is part of a wider wave of generosity to the University that made fiscal 2019 the best in Seattle Pacific’s fundraising history...

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Studying stress  
Doctoral team researches shame, stress, and substance use

**GOOD QUESTIONS**

Jeffrey Keuss, professor of Christian ministry, theology, and culture, published *Time’s Questions: How Searching Shapes Our Convictions and Commitments* (InterVarsity Press, 2019). In the book, Keuss suggests that embracing hard questions about life and our beliefs is a way to strengthen Christian faith rather than insisting on certainty. Book chapters discuss questions about responsibility, fear, doubt, love, discipline, and other topics, urging the reader to practice good question-asking. “To be human is to ask more and more questions,” Keuss writes.

The effects of stress and parent- ing in adolescence on children’s physiological responses to stress. Young teens whose parents were less supportive during stressful life experiences exhibited physiological signs of stress over the course of a year; while teens with more supportive parents showed fewer signs of stress. In July, Mezulis and doctoral students Madeline Wielgus, Lauren Hammond, Andrew Fox, and Melissa Hudson PhD ’17 published an article on the link between shame and self-harm in *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*. Students who were prone to feelings of shame and brooding and tended to act rashly when distressed were more likely to engage in non-suicidal self-harm behaviors.

The studies all fit under Mezulis’ research interest in depression rates among adolescents. From age 10 to 20, depression rates rise from around 5% to around 25%. “I’m interested in why that happens — why are teenagers so much more likely to get depressed?” Mezulis said. “Everything we do is answering the question in some way.”

Mezulis works with around 10 graduate students at any point, and she tries to include each of them as authors on research publications to help them move into jobs as independent researchers after graduation. “One of the distinctions of our PhD program is that we have a close mentoring model,” she said. “I meet with all of my graduate students weekly, and we have two to four research projects running simultaneously. It’s a close mentoring relationship where students get a lot of one-on-one time with their faculty mentor.”

**POEMS OF CONSECRATION**

Scott Cairns, program director for Seattle Pacific’s MFA in Creative Writing, published *Anaphora* (Paraclete Press, 2019). The title alludes to the practice of deliberately repeating words or phrases and also to the prayer that accompanies the preparation of the Eucharist in liturgical churches, signifying the moment of consecration. “I trust … that most [of these poems] will invite a sense of words as doing more than naming, more than serving the reader to practice good question-asking. “To be human is to ask more and more questions,” Keuss writes.

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**STUDENTS WILL REASSEMBLE WHALE SKELETON TO HANG IN EATON HALL**

BY JULIA SIEMENS

Next year, a class of SPU students will assemble the skeleton of a gray whale that beached itself on a private beach in Longbranch, Washington. Peter Moe, assistant professor of English and director of campus writing, will teach the 2020 summer course advised by experienced whale assembler Rus Higley, director of the Marine Science and Technology Center at Highline College. A necropsy of the whale revealedorca teeth marks and likely death by starvation. Moe and Higley helped tow the whale to Gig Harbor. The rotting carcass then traveled by truck to a nearby farm where volunteers, including SPU faculty and staff, buried the bones. A necropsy of the whale revealed orca teeth marks and likely death by starvation. Moe and Higley helped tow the whale to Gig Harbor. The rotting carcass then traveled by truck to a nearby farm where volunteers, including SPU faculty and staff, buried the bones.

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Next year, a class of SPU students will assemble the skeleton of a gray whale that beached itself on a private beach in Longbranch, Washington. Peter Moe, assistant professor of English and director of campus writing, will teach the 2020 summer course advised by experienced whale assembler Rus Higley, director of the Marine Science and Technology Center at Highline College. A necropsy of the whale revealed orca teeth marks and likely death by starvation. Moe and Higley helped tow the whale to Gig Harbor. The rotting carcass then traveled by truck to a nearby farm where volunteers, including SPU faculty and staff, buried the bones.

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When the John Perkins Center opened on Seattle Pacific University’s campus in 2004, John Perkins described it as “the fulfillment of a lifelong dream.” A decade and a half later, the dream is still alive as the Perkins Center continues to raise up a new generation of leaders trained in community development and committed to practicing reconciliation.

Through a series of stories in these next few pages, we are taking a look at the inspiring ministry of John Perkins, who called believers to engage in a “quiet revolution” by being willing to relocate, reconcile, and redistribute their resources.

Response asked SPU’s President Emeritus Philip W. Eaton to recount the beginnings of this first-of-its-kind partnership between the John and Vera Mae Perkins Foundation of Jackson, Mississippi, Seattle Pacific University, and Christian community leaders throughout the Northwest.

And the Perkins Center’s current executive director, Caenisha Warren, describes what the Center is doing today to encourage students and the whole community to engage in critical, sometimes uncomfortable conversations about differences, privilege, and moving beyond stereotypes.

The dream is still being fulfilled.
It was a typical spring day in Seattle — drizzly and a chilly 53 degrees. The year was 1978, and Seattle Pacific University students gathered for chapel in First Free Methodist Church where then-President David McKenna introduced a speaker he had met just months earlier: John M. Perkins.

“I heard the word about a black man in the South who was living out the Christian faith about which so many of us only talk,” McKenna said. “That man challenged me.”

Perkins then challenged SPU students, telling them about God’s redemption in the midst of crushing Deep South racism. He called believers to a “quiet revolution,” ministering to others through the “three Rs”: Relocation, Reconciliation, Redistribution.

Relocation to areas of need. “When you get to know people, and they can see that you love them, and their needs become your needs, then you can reach people,” Perkins told students. “That’s incarnated love.”

Reconciliation through the force of the gospel. “The gospel has no other purpose, no other objective,” he said. “The idea of the gospel is to burn, to explode, to destroy, any force of the gospel. And when you do that, that is on college campuses (by his last count, he’s spoken at more than 200 college campuses), and he continues to write. In fact, Moody Press released his latest book, He Calls Me Friend: The Healing Power of Friendship, in October 2019. A Mississippi sharecropper’s son, Perkins fled to California when he was 17 after a town marshal murdered his older brother, then a recent veteran of World War II. Although he vowed never to return, Perkins did go back in 1960 after his conversion to Christ. A leader during civil rights demonstrations, he faced repeated harassment, imprisonment, and beatings. Through it all, he and his wife, Vera Mae, founded Christian community development organizations such as Mendenhall Ministries, Harambee Christian Center, and Voice of Calvary Ministries. In 1989, he became the co-founder of the Christian Community Development Association, an organization of thousands of individuals, churches, ministries, institutions, and businesses across the country that are living out Perkins’ three Rs in their communities. After meeting SPU’s ninth president, Philip W. Eaton, in Mississippi, Perkins partnered with Seattle Pacific in 2004 to open the first-of-its-kind, John Perkins Center for Reconciliation, Leadership Training, and Community Development. He has returned each year to the University for the Perkins Lecture Series. (The 2020 lecture is on April 21.) “I would like to see Seattle Pacific equipping young folks for the church,” he said. “We are trying to understand justice so that we can do justice, and so that we can participate in letting justice roll down. The church is here to be that prophetic voice, to nurture us so that God’s light and voice can come out through us. We hope that Seattle Pacific, through the Perkins Center, can be part of that witness.”

To listen to John Perkins’ April 5, 1978, message to the SPU campus, visit spu.edu/perkinsmessage

Redistribution of resources. “We have to look for new ways of sharing our wealth and resources, especially in the fellowship of believers.”

More than 40 years later, Perkins moves more slowly and talks more slowly. Yet at age 89, he still points the way. “Reconciliation goes deeper than race,” he told Response. “God created man in his own image and (the same blood courses through our veins). God didn’t mean for us to determine who was created in his image and who was not.”

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I N T H E E A R L Y summer months of 2000, violence erupted in the streets of Seattle. The incident was scared by racial tensions causing horrified surprise in some quarters. The reports were full of heartfelt handwringing. Could racial hatred actually be simmering beneath the surface, ready to explode in our beloved city? How could this be? Does anyone have a vision, not just to address those problems, but to offer a path toward reconciliation?

I remember stepping up to the podium that September for the annual State of the University Address. I came with great hope for SPU, of course, but I also came with a heavy heart. At one point in my speech, I sounded out as clearly as I knew how: “We must figure out, as a Christian university, how to come to the table with help for our city. What do we have to offer?” And if we couldn’t answer the question at that moment, as I most certainly could not, how should we begin searching in earnest for answers?

We were all working hard in those early years of my tenure at SPU to articulate our vision of “engaging the culture, changing the world.” My charge that morning was, “OK, this is the way we engage the culture. If we do not address these racial tensions in our city, in our own university community, in our own lives, we know nothing about engaging the culture. This is our test. This is a key measure of our language.”

In the months that followed, a group of students began coming to my office with a request. They were planning a trip to Jackson, Mississippi, over Christmas break to support the work of John Perkins in his

The Perkins Center: creating a path for reconciliation
neighborhood. Tall Hairston, then in the Office of Campus Ministries, was leading the group. They invited me to go along. I told the students I just had too much on my schedule already. They persisted, revisiting my office a number of times.

Finally, I cleared my plate and said, “Yes, I’d love to go with you to Jackson.” And off we went. This trip turned out to be one of those conversion moments for me; one of those times where God calls us to see things in very different ways. I vividly remember sitting with the students each morning, in fact, early in the morning, at the feet of the great John Perkins.

He opened the Scriptures for me with power and freshness. John Perkins had known suffering, violence in his family, crushing poverty in his community, all of it powered by racism. Nevertheless, John poured out a vision of reconciliation, healing, and joy — despite the suffering — a vision deeply anchored in the transforming love of Jesus Christ. How could this man who had suffered so much not be bitter? He had so much to be angry about, and yet, here he was teaching us about joy.

He was “a new creature,” he would often say over the years, because Jesus loved him, along with all the children of the world.

During that visit to Jackson, I began thinking, I wonder if John would be willing to come to our campus, maybe regularly, to help us shape a vision for reconciliation on our campus, perhaps a vision we could model for the city of Seattle? Could we create a regular lecture series once a year, maybe more, where he could come and teach the Scriptures, alongside our own biblical scholars perhaps? And then the outlines began to take shape: Maybe we might even establish a center in John’s name! John and Tali and I sat in a conference room in Jackson over that week and dreamed and schemed what such a center for reconciliation might look like.

I remember sitting one night in my rental car, having dropped off John at his home after dinner. It was raining, dark, and quiet, drops pelting against the window. I began to feel this heavy tug on my heart, a desire to bring John Perkins’ kind of gospel into the campus community and into the city.

The Perkins Center carries on to this day. I know the leaders of SPU today still carry that same dream, that John Perkins’ kind of gospel into the campus community and into the city. I pray for them often this will be so.

In In February 1996, Philip W. Eaton was appointed the ninth president of Seattle Pacific University. He is now president emeritus. His most recent book is Sing Uw: A Song of Joy: Saying What We Believe in an Age of Unbelief. He serves on a number of boards, continues to write, speak, teach, consult, mentor young leaders, and give leadership in the church. He and his wife, Sharyn, live in Pasadena, California, enjoying the sunshine and loving their three married children and seven wonderful grandchildren.

The Perkins Center: learning how to engage with discomfort and differences

The John Perkins Center is a part of the living legacy of John Perkins, the “fulfillment of a lifelong dream,” as he described it.

The Perkins Center, I wasn’t sure what Seattle Pacific hoped to do with the Center beyond making a token statement in the conversation around race and justice. A private, affluent, predominantly white university partnering with John Perkins to effect change? I was skeptical.

Yet, after working at the University for 14 years, 12 of those in the Perkins Center, I have experienced just how meaningful this partnership is. The Center has cultivated student leaders who in turn leave to lead in their own communities, like alumna Rediet Mulugeta ’12 who is a program associate for The Krista Foundation. We have created key programs such as Multicultural Night of Worship with Ashley Bosley, which still offers diverse worship experiences on campus. For nine years we have reflected on areas of justice and reconciliation through our annual symposium. The JPC will continue to focus on reconciliation ministry, community development, and leadership training. As the Center’s executive director, I want students to develop hearts for community and reconciliation work, and a passion for justice and advocacy. I want students to know more about themselves because of their involvement in this work.

PHILIP W. EATON

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“I watch from the sidelines now, but I am pleased to see the heart of the vision of the Perkins Center carries on to this day. I know the leaders of SPU today still carry that same dream. John Perkins’ kind of gospel into the campus community and into the city. I pray for them often this will be so.”
The Center’s work focuses on student engagement on campus and in the broader community. It provides the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing programs of our partners, build relationships, and learn from the leaders and communities. Students come to understand that redistribution speaks about more than just economics.

We hope students can be motivated by their experiences of being in the community. In addition to their formal education provided in a classroom, we want students to learn through stories about impact and privilege.

We seek to help students develop perspective, acknowledging privilege and hearing someone else’s story, learning humility and perspective, and moving beyond stereotypes. “JPC taught me how to engage in my story, listen to others’ stories, and learn more deeply about the different communities’ stories,” one student wrote. “Just because my perspective seems true doesn’t mean it is complete, or the best perspective.”

The Center helps students to live in a world where people, community, justice, and reconciliation meet. We teach leadership that is developing students’ capacity to learn from a community. We teach reconciliation might begin with the individual, but it also requires us to look at the laws and practices that perpetuate inequitable treatment. Perkins preaches that reconciliation values people and sees worth in their capacity to contribute toward their community.

Reconciliation presents us with something beyond just ourselves, beyond our self, and beyond our world. Perkins’ personal story of transformation demonstrates how a person’s life can be changed by the power of reconciliation. In Perkins’ book *Letters from the Underdogs*, he writes, “The purpose of the Gospel is to reconcile alienated people to God and to each other; across racial, cultural, social, and economic barriers.”

Reconciliation requires sitting in places of intersection and connection; finding places of historical perspective, as well as present growth, and engaging opportunities for learning and even unlearning.

In 2010, DeAuradour Pulliam ’11, a senior at SPU, started a discussion series on race and justice called “In Context” on campus. “In Context” was controversial at first, but today, these discussion groups are woven into the fabric of student life on campus.

In 2015, I was in Memphis attending the Christian Community Development Association conference, when a young man approached me at a restaurant. “You don’t remember me. My name is Tim,” he said. “I was in the first group that did ‘In Context’ when I was a student at SPU, and I wanted to let you know it had a huge impact. In fact, it is why I am here at CCDA.”
Alumni of the Year Jamie and Alissa Shattenberg spark restoration of Madagascar

BY BETHANY CUMMINS
PHOTOS BY ZACHARIAS ABUBEKER

RESTORATION OF AN ISLAND
Madagascar is home to SPU alumni Jamie Shattenberg ’99 and Alissa Wiertz Shattenberg ’99, and their children.

The son of missionaries in Madagascar, Jamie was born and raised on the world’s second largest island country located off the coast of East Africa. He grew up with a love and appreciation for the land, the culture, and its people. Alissa, a California native from Santa Barbara, fell in love with Madagascar in the summer of 1999 while on a service trip with a group of fellow SPU students led by Jamie.

After graduating, the two served in Madagascar together: “We realized that we made a pretty good team,” Jamie said. They married in 2003. Eight years and three kids later, they returned with their family to Madagascar in the summer of 1999 while on a service trip with a group of fellow SPU students led by Jamie.

Together, they founded the ministry Red Island Restoration with the goals of providing Allen and education related to pregnancy, health, and community. Below: Alissa Wiertz Shattenberg, far left, opened the Sarobidy Maternity Center in 2013. The center guides women through pregnancy, birth and postpartum care, while babies receive regular check-ups to ensure they are healthy.

RESTORATION OF LAND

Jamie spearheads reforestation efforts as international director of the Madagascar branch of Eden Reforestation Projects, a U.S.-based international organization that restores forests and other natural landscapes lost due to deforestation in developing countries. Jamie prepared for his role with an undergraduate degree in biology from SPU and then a master’s degree in intercultural studies from Fuller Seminary, but it’s a significant challenge to counteract the dire effects of deforestation on the island.

Nearly 90% of Madagascar has been deforested, with most of it occurring within the last 50 years. There are several causes: Madagascar’s high population growth rate contributes to increased competition for cultivated land. “Slash-and-burn” practices to transform wooded areas into agricultural land carry high risks of spreading beyond control and wiping out whole forests. The majority of Madagascar’s more than 26 million people rely on charcoal for cooking and heating. “It’s seemingly impossible to keep up with,” Jamie said.

Inland forests disappear. Rain diminishes. And top soil is lost to erosion. When the rains come, any healthy top soil washes out and clogs river beds, reefs, and ocean, driving out fish that coastal towns rely upon for food and livelihood. On an island nation like Madagascar, forests are needed to protect villages from cyclones that cause devastating tidal surges. And as forests are cut down, wood and charcoal for heating and cooking become increasingly expensive.

“The forest is so important to sustaining life on multiple levels,” Jamie said. “There is a direct connection between poverty and deforestation. As the forests are cut down, poverty increases. And as poverty increases, more forests are cut down. Reforestation addresses environmental issues while alleviating poverty at the same time.”

To start, Jamie recruited a team of eight Malagasy to replant mangrove estuaries. In its first year, the team planted 100,000 trees on the island, which is roughly the size of France. Today, Malagasy men and women employed by Eden Projects expect to plant 40 million trees in 2019 alone, bringing the total to over 240 million seedlings planted since 2007. According to Jamie, the reemerging forests have contributed to the return of aquatic life and slowed erosion. Plus, people now have a growing care for the land. “People who once didn’t care about the forest have grown a passionate love for it,” said Jamie. “And since we’ve hired over 1,200 men and women, there is a large group of people who are pushing and encouraging and teaching (others) how to protect and care for the environment and restore it … and fight [against] the destruction of it.”

The Malagasy earn steady incomes through employment with Eden Projects, creating opportunities to provide for their families, buy property, diversify their income, start businesses, plan for the future, and establish an inheritance to leave to their children. “Many who once lived in poverty now not only have a steady income and provide for their children, but they also have an impact in their communities and country,” said Jamie. 

RESTORATION OF HEALTH

After earning her bachelor’s degree in nursing at SPU, Alissa went on to earn her master’s in nursing as a family nurse practitioner. While still living in the States, she attended a conference in New Mexico about midwifery in the developing world. “I learned that women all over the world die in childbirth every day due to very preventable reasons, and how often, women are abandoned physically, emotionally, and spiritually during this incredibly precious time in their lives.” As a result of this knowledge, Alissa obtained her midwifery degree.

Alissa opened the Sarobidy Maternity Center in 2013. The center offers a 14-month program run by trained midwives who build relationships with women and guide them through their pregnancy; birth; and postpartum period with medical care. Mothers receive care and education related to pregnancy, health care, nutrition, labor and delivery, newborn care, and family plan-
nning, while babies receive regular check-ups to ensure healthy growth until they are 6 months old. To date, about 1,000 women and their babies have received care at the center. In Madagascar, 1 in 45 women die in childbirth, often because no midwife or trained doctor is available. “When women die during childbirth, the likelihood that their baby will die is high, and any other children they had are without a mother,” she said.

In response, the center provides additional evidence-based training to Malagasy midwives employed there. “Our hope with our maternity center is to empower Malagasy midwives to increase their education so that they can care for their Malagasy sisters.”

Sarolily’s national director, Rota Rakotomalala, has known the Shattenbergs since she was young (her father worked with the Shenberten’s mission agency for more than 20 years.) Her deep desire to serve her fellow Malagasy women and children led her to complete midwifery school, at which time, she and the Shattenbergs reconnected.

“We want to be a change in the Malagasy systems here, and we really care for the women here,” she said. “We get to share Jesus’ love with the women as well. I would love to see more centers like this across Madagascar. I trust and pray that God will continue to do this work.”

“Rota has been the backbone and heart of the maternity center,” said Alissa. The Shattenbergs attribute the skills they use every day to improve maternal health and agricultural health on the island to things they learned in Seattle Pacific’s classrooms. “SPU was a critical part of our lives that God used to bring us together but also, to prepare us for this work,” Jamie said. It was his biology professors who instilled in Jamie a love for God and His creation while equipping him with skills he uses regularly in his reforestation work. His undergraduate research experiences on Blakely Island and on an SPU study abroad trip to the Galapagos Islands provided him with a knowledge base for his future work in reforestation.

Alissa uses her training as she works on Sarolily’s best practices and caring for patients, but she says SPU had the greatest impact on her faith. “I was a new Christian when I came to Seattle Pacific, and I really fell in love with Jesus there,” she said. “God nurtured my faith through the professors, students, and the whole community of believers. That prepared me for service in Madagascar.”

Every day is different for the Shattenbergs. Some days, Jamie drops off their kids at school and heads to visit the current mud brick Eden Projects in replanting with mangroves. Alissa heads to the maternity center for prenatal, postpartum, or family planning program days. Occasionally, the Shattenbergs travel to the United States to raise support and awareness for the programs. Last year, the family moved to France for 10 months while Jamie and Alissa took intensive courses in French, the primary language of Madagascar’s government, medical, and educational system. Even though they speak Malagasy, French has become necessary to better navigate those systems. At the same time, they are raising their own family of three children, ages 9, 11, and 13, hosting sleepovers with their Malagasy friends, attending soccer games, and spending time together as a family.

“The beauty of raising our kids on the mission field is that their world is large,” said Alissa. Her children can often be found outside with their Malagasy friends, making bamboo fishing poles, running down to the nearby rice paddies to fish, and cooking the fish with rice over a fire in their friends’ backyards. “Their American friends don’t really understand their Malagasy life, and vice versa, but they gracefully live between two worlds and get to see how God works in both.”

As the programs have grown, Jamie and Alissa’s roles have shifted to include more overseas donor relations and general oversight, while their Malagasy colleagues take over day-to-day tasks and direct leadership positions. Jamie meets weekly with nine Malagasy leaders, who each oversee a different branch of the Eden team. Alissa leads the maternity center administrative efforts, while the medical staff and director lead midwifery education programs and manage patient appointments and births with the midwives. “This ministry wouldn’t be possible without the Malagasy people,” said Alissa. “This is their country and people and culture, and we are outsiders. We look to our Malagasy teammates as leaders and seek to support them and to rely on them.”

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Artificial intelligence is no longer a scientist’s fantasy or the futuristic imagination of an early 2000s feature film. AI is here and already changing the computer science realm with voice recognition systems, product recommendation platforms, navigation tools, and more.

A recent article published by The Verge sums up some of the fears associated with this area. The article titled, The State of AI in 2019, details how artificial intelligence is being used to make decisions about our lives whether we like it or not. AI is shifting the way researchers and scientists are studying the world, and it’s compelling people to ask more provocative questions about the way AI might affect humans. A research team at Seattle Pacific University is all-in, finding new ways to build upon SPU faculty research and opportunities, as well as leveraging recent AI developments to ask thought-provoking questions about AI as it relates to the future.

A functional faith

Universities are sometimes criticized for constructing ivory towers where academics engage in esoteric discourses with one another, but Seattle Pacific’s community is dedicated to looking for new ways to integrate their theology and faith into their academic fields, their worship practices, and even in the ways in which they engage with and consider the role of technology in society. Faith isn’t compartmentalized for religion class or brought out for special occasions or religious holidays. It’s a daily, durable, functional faith.

Artificial intelligence and faith research group looking to the future

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SPU’s AI and Faith Research Group — composed of a theologian, ethicist, philosopher, neuroscientist educator, and a computer scientist — is thinking about how Christian faith informs the way that we interact with the rapidly changing world of AI.

According to the group’s facilitator, Michael Paulus, there is a larger need for more theological reflection on technology.

“Everyone is thinking about recent AI developments,” he said. “AI raises so many hopes and fears about the future. Christian hope can offer a lot more than those tech hopes and fears. What we’re really hoping for in all of this is to create a better future.”

The group’s goal is to build on things group members have already been doing on their own over the last few years. As a research group, together they aim to stimulate multidisciplinary and theological reflections about AI; increase knowledge about AI; and cultivate community, collaboration, and scholarship related to AI and the future.

While Paulus’ inquisitiveness revolves around the state and effects of AI as it relates to the future of human beings and the future of work, Rebekah Rice, the group’s philosopher, employs a different interest and set of questions:

“What kinds of things could you possibly be making? Could you get to a point where you couldn’t ethically turn it off? What do world faiths have to offer? What kind of world do we want? How might my faith shape my engagement with these technologies?”

“We’re in this for the well-being of others, including [people] who might be most vulnerable, most likely to be harmed,” said Rice. “Usual-ly these things affect people who are already socially vulnerable. Lots of
Helping scholars develop theological literacy

For nearly two decades, Jennifer McKinney’s students have posed a similar question to her: “Knowing everything you know about the church and the world, how can you still be a Christian?”

McKinney, a professor of sociology, understands her students’ skepticism. “I can give a testimony of why I believe in the saving grace of Jesus and the ultimate redemption of the world, but sometimes students are trapped in particular tenets of theology that I am not equipped to tackle.

“I feel like part of my call to Christian education is to show millennials and Gen Z that you can be an academic and a Christian. So many of them are walking away from the church,” McKinney said. “Having a more theologically nuanced and integrated discipline can only help us, as faculty, help students to more thoughtfully engage their faith.”

To that end, McKinney and four other SPU faculty members have received funding to pursue a certificate in theological integration at Seattle Pacific. Seminary thanks to a $10 million commitment—the largest single gift in SPU’s history—to support a faith integration initiative at Seattle Pacific. The donors requested anonymity to avoid publicity.

At Seattle Pacific, the donors requested anonymity to avoid publicity. Although SPU faculty and staff profess the Christian faith, not all have training. Strong said: “A lot of faculty teaching at Christian universi-

SPU’s Artificial Intelligence and Faith Research Group

Mike Paulus
Assistant Provost for Educational Technology; Associate Professor of Information Studies

Carlos Arias
Assistant Professor; Chair of Computer Science

Phil Baker
Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Chair of Philosophy Department

Bruce Baker
Assistant Professor of Business Ethics

Mike Langford
Associate Professor of Thirvology, Discipleship, and Ministry

David Wicks
Assistant Professor of Computer Science; Director of the Digital Education Leadership Program

Rebekah Rice
Associate Professor; Chair of Psychology

Phil Baker
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BY COLLEEN STEELQUIST

fols are concerned about this. This is not only a Christian motivation. For us, Christ’s model serves as the specific narrative that motivates us.

Rice continued, “It puts a little pressure on our go-to answers and hopefully inspires us to think in a careful, sophisticated way about who we are.”

Carlos Arias, the computer scientist of SPU’s AI and Faith Research Group believes it is inevitable that people will use AI for good .. and bad. People have a responsibility to use it for good, Arias believes.

Arias said that SPU is equipped to step into this space first and foremost because of its faith pillar. “Everyone in our group is a committed Christian,” Arias said. “We believe we are here with a purpose. We want to make a contribution to society. At SPU, we can do this. SPU is a Christian institution. Our shared hope is to produce something that helps people.”

Arias, along with all of the other group members, believes that SPU has a Seattle advantage.

“We are right in the heart of all this stuff — Amazon, Microsoft, Google. It’s easier to talk to people eye to eye, and events are happening here that we can participate in,” Arias said.

While the group was recently formed, a variety of to-do items already have been disclosed. The group will begin to develop a theological framework for the work, and their final group duty will be the publication of a series of essays in which all members will contribute a section.

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School of Theology lands grants to support worship arts and church youth

Seattle Pacific University’s School of Theology received more than $1.1 million in grants to fund two programs focused on building relationships with area churches and helping these communities nurture teams and diverse ways of worship.

The Program in Worship Renewal, which will help congregations design, test, and create new models for nurturing teens’ religious lives and provide opportunities for them to engage with their congregations’ mission and ministries. The project will receive $1 million over five years from the Lilly Endowment as part of its Strengthening Congregational Ministries with Youth Initiative.

The funds supported the Convergent Conference at SPU this past June. The sold-out conference’s 80 participants included a mix of pastors, musicians, and laity from diverse backgrounds and churches. Through prayer, song, creative arts, and conversation, the attendees pondered how the creative arts might help congregations cultivate new ways forward in a fragmented age, and how worship gatherings can reflect diversity while not falling prey to cultural consumerism or appropriation.

Sigler and Newby led the conference, along with Esau McCaulley, assistant professor of New Testament at Wheaton College; SPU’s Minister of Worship and Production Priscilla Onyedikachi Ozodo, and Shannon Steed Sigler, executive director of Brehm Cascadia, the Seattle-based branch of Fuller Theological Seminary’s Brehm Center for Worship, Theology, and the Arts.

In February 2020, SPU will host its first joint conference with Brehm Cascadia, which has long held annual conferences related to worship in the arts.

For Sigler, both grants point to the foundational connections between SPU and area congregations. “As a university, we have a reciprocal relationship with churches,” he said. “I don’t ever want the work that I’m doing to neglect the life of the church.”

By Colleen Steelquist

**Autumn 2019**
SENIOR APPAREL DESIGN
major Julieta Cueva was filled with trepidation over pitching her look to the three women potentially modeling her designs for the 2019 MODE fashion show. She needed them to understand the impetus for her fashion.

Cueva’s designs included a strait-jacket inspired dress, a kimono-like jumpsuit, and a bandage dress. The makeup included grungy bleached eyebrows. Her worry was that the avant-garde nature of her designs would be off-putting to them, but Cueva’s goal was to use her designs as a metaphor for the emotions people experience when they
are struggling with depression or other mental health issues.

For example, Cueva used the voluminous folds of an oversized kimono that overwhelmed a model to symbolize the feeling of drowning in one’s own emotions.

Cueva’s designs were informed and inspired by research she did at Western State Hospital in Washington. Her costumes depicted the stigma, oppression, and the heavy burden of emotions people with mental illnesses face, and Cueva hoped her designs might help an audience consider and understand some of those struggles through her fashion.

To her pleasant surprise, the women enthusiastically agreed to model her designs.

“I gave them a quick overview of what the collection was and what the inspiration was. One of them started researching all this stuff and was so excited,” Cueva said.

For students like Cueva who participated — models, makeup artists, designers, and stylists — the MODE fashion show offered a window into the fashion industry. At the same time, it was a creative outlet for budding designers and stylists.

The show was exciting, but it was also nerve-wracking to display fashion creations to a public audience, Cueva said.

“It’s personal, and I don’t know how other people are going to react,” Cueva said. “Obviously, you want people to react positively to your stuff, but that’s not always going to be the case.”

This was Cueva’s first time presenting her work in a public forum, and she was unsure of how her design would be received.

In the end, though, Cueva’s risk paid off. Her interpretation of mental health and depression won “Most Innovative Design” at the show. Other awards included most marketable, best representation of Seattle, most creative, and best representation of brand.

“It offers exposure to the industry, but the best thing about this is that it builds character and your ability to follow through on ideas and make them come to life,” said Sarah Mosher, who was an advisor of MODE and professor of apparel design and merchandising at SPU last year. “In the academic setting we’re always just a little bit shy of that. The MODE fashion show is a place where they can actually action something.”

The event looked significantly different from past years. Previously, models strode down a catwalk in Royal Brougham Pavilion. This year, the event moved to the Museum of History and Industry which prompted the group to rethink the presentation style since the new venue did not work well for a runway.

Nina Selset, the president of MODE, described it as a “science fair,” where designers and stylists would be on the floor alongside their mood boards and models.

Morgan Gaston, the treasurer of MODE, said the club’s choice to switch styles also reflected the fashion industry’s move away from runway-style shows. Gaston explained that while catwalks are definitely still in use, the newer presentation style offers more opportunity for designers and stylists to explain the inspiration for their looks. It made the MODE show a more intimate experience than it had been in the past.

“I’m glad we did the presentation style because I got more comfortable speaking about designs to people that I don’t know,” Cueva said. “The enthusiasm from people helped a lot and made me less self-conscious about explaining the collection.”

Amongst other things, MOHAI became a support for MODE as they
put together the show. “MOHAI took us on as content collaborators, which meant that they really gave us creative reign, but they also completely hosted the event,” Mosher said. “We were incredibly fortunate to have that opportunity.”

MOHAI set a high bar, asking that all participating design students create a mood board (a collage of images that set a tone for their design) and that the designs be held to professional standards. For their part, MOHAI set the theme for the event and managed the organization of the judge’s folders.

According to Mosher and Cueva, these high standards pushed the designers to be more ambitious in the creativity and quality of their designs. The MODE fashion show was a character-building experience and provided a creative outlet for student designers. And the hands-on learning experience allowed the students to learn about themselves and about the world in a unique way. They also had the opportunity to participate in something that goes beyond a fashion show: the sacred act of creating something.

“If we are created in the image of the Creator, then the act of creating is our highest calling,” Mosher asked. “Shouldn’t we be leaders in that?”

SPU ALUMNI, PARENTS, faculty, and staff will gather on campus Feb. 7-8 for the 66th annual Homecoming and Family Weekend. Highlights include double-header basketball games, the Theatre Department’s Urinetown: The Musical, an alumni music concert, academic reunions, a live taping of the SPU Voices Podcast, and fun for the whole family.

At the Alumni Awards Dinner on Feb. 8 in Gwinn Commons, four of SPU’s own will be honored for their accomplishments and service.

Medallion Award recipient Julieta Altamirano-Crosby MEd ’18 co-founded the WAGRIO Foundation, which serves Latinx communities in Washington state and in Mexico by providing resources for youth, helping families navigate the education system, and training special-needs educators and families. Her efforts have garnered awards and additional leadership roles.

The second Medallion Award honoree, Terresa Davis ’02, is the co-owner and business manager of four venerated Seattle restaurants: Bluacres Seafood, Shellhead Diner, Otter, and Zane + Wylie’s.

Alumni of the Year Jamie Shattenberg ’99 and Alissa Wuertz Shattenberg ’00 serve in Madagascar. Jamie, the country’s international director for Eden Reforestation Projects, manages large-scale reforestation work. Alissa, a licensed midwife and family nurse practitioner, opened the Sarobidy Maternity Center in 2013 to provide prenatal, labor and delivery, and postpartum care. (Story on page 24)

Learn more and register for Homecoming and Family Weekend at spu.edu/homecoming.

PHOTO BY QUITON CLINE

BY COLLEEN STEELQUIST
SPU Alumna Terresa Davis ’07 thrives in competitive Seattle restaurant industry

BY BETHANY CUMMINS

Terresa Davis grew up on the other side of the globe, in a small town outside Adelaide in southern Australia. At 16 years old, while working at a local restaurant serving American cuisine, she met Kevin Davis, a talented visiting chef from New Orleans. Two years later, they married, starting a new life in New Orleans, inspired by a common love for health, fitness, and, of course, good food.

While her husband grew his reputation as an award-winning chef specializing in seafood, Terresa worked on the other side of the business as an accountant for restaurants. When the couple relocated to Seattle in 1999, Terresa worked as operations manager for a small restaurant called Wild Ginger, now one of the biggest restaurant companies in the Seattle area.

Terresa was growing into a skilled accountant, but without a college degree she found doors closed to her. She applied to several Seattle schools, but after visiting Seattle Pacific University, she knew it was the place for her. “I had never really had strangers be unconditionally kind to me for no reason, and here was a whole community of kind people,” Terresa said. “It was the first time in my adult life that people asked me, ‘Who are you? What do you believe in? What do you want to do with your life?’ And they cared. They focus on creating leaders by looking at students’ God-given gifts.”

As her capstone project for her business degree, Terresa created a business plan for a hypothetical mid-sized restaurant. Guided by the feedback of her business and marketing professors, she created the business model, financial plan, and marketing strategy. “Terresa was engaged,” said Professor Emeritus Jeff Van Duzer, who taught several of Terresa’s business courses. “She tested out the theories we were discussing in class, asking how she could think about her business as a means of serving.”

Right after she graduated with her bachelor’s degree in business, the Davises sold a property, and with those funds, they saw an opportunity: making Terresa’s vision a reality. “The most important thing I learned in business school is that your business is not yours; you are a steward of it,” she said. The Davises have since added two more children to their family and two more downtown Seattle restaurants: Orfeo, a fine-dining restaurant serving classic Italian and French fare; and Zane + Wylie’s Steakhouse, named after their twin boys, opened in 2018.

Kevin developed a Northwest-inspired menu specializing in fresh seafood, sustainably sourced exclusively from America. Terresa put her business plan into action, starting a restaurant. Steelhead was a smash hit. The next year was filled to the brim for the family. To better navigate the legalities of restaurant management, Terresa began working toward a law degree from Seattle University.

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Terresa took to social media, developing relentless marketing campaigns via email and social media, and taking the business one week at a time. “Slowly but surely, we made it work,” she said. The Davises have been invited to more than 25 business conferences, where they share the secrets of running a successful restaurant.

According to Terresa, Seattle’s economic climate has grown increasingly challenging for restaurants, mostly due to rising costs of labor, skyrocketing housing costs, and challenging transportation options for staff. And as Seattle has grown with a constant influx of new restaurants, the competition is greater than it’s ever been.

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I now ask myself how I can use my business to spread God’s love and create community.”

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Team USA in Pulling ahead: represents SPU grad

BY KATE TRACY

SOUL LIVING OUT THE SPU MISSION SPU.EDU/RESPONSE

At 6 a.m. on a July morning, Brandi Williamson ’06 is stepping into what strongly resembles a rock-climbing harness outside her home in Montana’s Bitterroot Valley. She tries to ignore the chorus of barks and howls from eight of her Siberian huskies in their kennel as she secures a harness around Buck, one of her strongest and fastest dogs. Those morning runs with Buck are routine, but Williamson still feels sad leaving her other dogs behind.

The temperature is in the 50s as she connects the 7-foot leash from her waist to Buck’s harness. Williamson prefers freezing temperatures, but this will do.

Williamson and Buck set off running at a fast clip. Buck pulling hard as Williamson’s 6-foot frame bounds directly behind him. This is the sport of canicross, and Williamson is one of the top women in the country competing in the sport.

Williamson has always loved running. In 2000, she was Washington’s 44-state cross country champion. Doris Heritage, who coached track and cross country at SPU for four decades, remembers Brandi well.

“She was a very outstanding athlete. She was fun to coach. She was a hard worker, and she was a very good student,” Doris said. “Brandi was the kind of person you wanted to have on your team.”

Williamson enrolled as a biology major at Seattle Pacific, so she split her time between the lab and the outdoors.

“Going to SPU was one of the best decisions I made,” Williamson said. “The classes were amazing. The scientific track at SPU really set me up well for where I am now. The small feel [of the school] and the support you get from the professors and stuff really meant a lot.”

After graduating from SPU, Williamson went on to earn her master’s degree in public health at the University of California at Berkeley before moving to Montana. Today, she works as a laboratory technician at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton where she studies viruses, including the Sin Nombre virus, carried by deer mice, that can cause a fatal respiratory disease in humans.

One of her career highlights was successfully tracking the source of a relapsing fever case to a spirochete in the ticks and rodents on the infected man’s property.

Her work has also extended beyond Montana’s big skies and taken her to West Africa. When Liberia was experiencing an Ebola outbreak, Williamson traveled there to study the virus. Two years ago, she traveled to Mali to aid in disease diagnosis.

But Montana has her heart. The summer before starting her research job, Williamson was fighting fire in Montana when she met and fell in love with her husband, Cobey, as well as his dogs — three huskies, at the time.

The couple married and moved to their current home in Corvallis, in the southwestern part of Montana. And then Williamson went out and tried dog sledding for the first time.

“Cobey said he could see my grin from a mile away, and he knew that we were in for it,” she said.

Today, the Willamsons own nine huskies. They started attaching the dogs to a harness and lead around their waist, running that way for about seven years before realizing she could race competitively this way.

Williamson ran her first canicross race in 2017 in Spokane, Washington and was hooked.

To compete on an international level in canicross, a selection committee approves applicants for the U.S. national team based on past performances at various canicross races and other criteria.

In October 2019, Williamson was one of three women to represent Team USA at the International Federation of Sleddog Sports Dryland World Championships in Sweden.

“I’m honored that I was selected for the team to represent the U.S. and show how well the U.S. can do at the world championships,” Williams said.

“It’s neat to run with a dog because it can almost help you get your mind off the pain when you’re really pushing hard, because you’re just mesmerized by how beautiful it is to watch them run,” Williamson said. “You’re a team, and you’re working together toward this one goal. It’s something special.”

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Hannah McMillen ‘11 could feel the buzz of election excitement as soon as she stepped off the plane in Kiev. Although she couldn’t read the election posters or completely understand the Ukrainian TV campaign ads, she quickly fell into her assignment there.

As one of 750 international election observers in the country, she followed poll workers, watched campaign ads, kept an eye on vote tabulation, and helped ensure the legitimacy of recent elections. She was recruited from a register of American voters who had served as election judges in their own home district, something she said gave her “way more knowledge and more pride in our system than I’d ever had before.”

Overseas election observers are expected to understand the basic mechanism behind working an election, and the premise of genuinely free, fair, and secret elections, said McMillen.

Once in the Ukraine, McMillen worked with a partner from another country to help oversee both the primary and runoff elections. Teams observed polling station security and the voting process, from poll opening to tabulation and announcements of results. During the primary election, she worked 33 hours without stopping.

“You just don’t ever expect to sleep,” she said with a laugh. “Even so, she enjoyed the challenge, and she returned to the U.S. with plenty of stories to tell.

Team members were typically paired from different backgrounds, so McMillen expected to be partnered with someone who was older, with a lot of election experience. She was surprised when she met her assigned partner, a Slovak diplomat.

“She was the exact same age, she had also really not done this very much before, and her name was Hannah,” she said. “So we kind of looked at each other and said, ‘This can’t be right!’

The two Hansas together discovered a distinctly Ukrainian tradition: If you meet two people with the same name, you stand in between them and make a wish.

“We have a lot of photos of ourselves with every Ukrainian election worker we met, standing in between us and grinning, because they’re making a wish between two people named Hannah,” she said.

In an unfamiliar culture during a busy election, election monitoring provided plenty of surprises. But McMillen said the experience also dovetailed well into her assignment here.

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Denny Rydberg

BY HOPE MCPHERSON

DENNIS “DENNY” RYDBERG ’67, died May 16, 2019, after losing his battle with melanoma. The SPU 2000 Alumnus of the Year was 74 years old.

President of Young Life from 1993 to 2016, Rydberg explained his “BHAG” — Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal — to Response in Winter 2000, saying: “Things have changed for kids. We didn’t have guns when we were kids, and the temptations of sex and drugs are more intense today. You can go on the internet now and get porn. It’s a tougher time, but I’m not an alarmist. There are still great kids out there, and I’m not wringing my hands.”

Instead of handwringing, Rydberg used his abilities to organize, motivate, and build relationships. During his 23-year tenure at Young Life, the ministry expanded from serving in 25 countries to serving in 101 countries, reaching millions of youth in middle school, high school, and college. Young Life, in a statement following Rydberg’s passing, wrote: “… he helped the mission grow at unprecedented rates in every major ministry category.”

The son of a junior high principal, Rydberg grew up in Anacortes, Washington. When he arrived at Seattle Pacific College, he quickly put his natural skills in action while earning a degree in psychology. He captained the tennis team and played freshman basketball and intramurals. By his junior year, he was a residence life coordinator on campus while commuting twice a week to Tacoma to work as a youth director at First Presbyterian Church. He also co-wrote an often-satirical column, “The Fugitives,” for the student newspaper, The Falcon, once encouraging an all-school prank day.

With the Vietnam War in full gear, Rydberg was drafted after graduation, but when the Air Force lost his papers, he was released from service. He moved to California and became the director of Christian education at First Presbyterian Church, San Diego. Rydberg also worked for Youth Specialties, an organization that created materials for church youth workers, and he wrote for Youth Specialties’ satirical creation The Wittenberg Door, which the Los Angeles Times called “Mad Magazine of Christendom” and The Seattle Post-Intelligencer called “an outrageous gadfly magazine to unsettle the pious.” At The Wittenberg Door, Rydberg interviewed such notables as Billy Graham, Francis Schaeffer, and Fred Rogers.

Rydberg wrote numerous books over the years, including Creative Bible Studies for Young Adults, How to Survive in College, and Youth Group Trust Builders. By the mid-1980s, Rydberg was back in the Northwest as director of university ministries at Seattle’s University Presbyterian Church. He shared the position with his wife, MARILYN HENDERSON RYDBERG ’68, who was once the national women’s coordinator for Campus Crusade for Christ. At UPC for nearly a decade, Rydberg was offered the presidency of Young Life in 1993. Rydberg was the organization’s longest-serving president when he retired in 2016 due to the cancer.

Rydberg is survived by his wife of 39 years, Marilyn, their two sons, a daughter and son from his first marriage, nine grandchildren, and his brother, LON RYDBERG ’72.
Plans are underway to construct a memorial for Paul Lee, the student who died in a tragic shooting at Seattle Pacific University on June 5, 2014.

“The memorial will honor a person who was near and dear to many on campus and reflect how a community was impacted and came together,” said Jeff Jordan, vice president for student life.

Discussion about a remembrance began soon after the gunman, with no relation to SPU, killed Lee and injured two other students on campus.

Lee’s family requested a bench where they and others could sit and have quiet moments of reflection. One of Lee’s friends, art major Julia Bennett ’17, worked on a scale model of an art installation for Lee during a sculpture class her senior year. Roger Feldman, professor emeritus of art, also helped with the design. Feldman taught a 2014 class that included both Bennett and Lee and has hosted four annual class barbecues honoring Lee each year on June 5.

The memorial commemorates a specific tragic event, but it also “reflects the DNA of a Christian university,” Jordan said. “We understand that life is precious and valuable. We want to have hope through tragedy.”

The Paul Lee Memorial will reside on the north side of Ashton Hall and will be visible from the window of Lee’s former residence hall room. An undulating wall next to the sheltered bench reflects Lee’s love of dance. The wall ends abruptly signaling how his life was cut short.

The memorial will become a focal point to reflect over events that can’t be controlled,” Feldman said. On top of the memorial, designers will grow clematis or other plants on the trellis as a sign of continuing life, the presence of hope.

“The community of faith has always lived in a world where tragedy happens; where evil raises its ugly head; where death tries to be victorious; where chaos attempts to rule,” Frank Spina, professor emeritus of Old Testament said at a prayer service following the shooting in 2014. “Even Psalm 23, that great comforting prayer, makes us realize that it’s when we’re walking through the valley of the shadow of death, we fear no evil. Not because the evil’s not there, but because ‘You are with me.’ The threat is not taken away. The anxiety does not go away. The danger is still there. It’s God with us. We should know that. The great prophecy of Jesus was, ‘his name Emmanuel, God with us.’”

Approximately $15,000 of the estimated $46,000 cost of the memorial has been raised so far. Donations can be given at spu.edu/give with the designation, “Paul Lee Memorial.”

BY JULIA SIEMENS

“A permanent way to remember Paul Lee”
Bob Fowler ’61 is living at the Dallas Retirement Village in Dallas, Oregon, where he moved to be near his brother. Bob taught the third and fourth grades for 27 years. He has been married for 25 years and has three sons and 16 grandchildren.

Wallace Clausen ’71 penned his first book, Last Words of a Flirt — A Call to Understanding, published by Deep River Books. Written from a narrative, “final form” lens in which the Bible’s broad, contextualizing messages surface, the book points to the commencement of the Kingdom of God on earth. Wallace retired in 2010 after working 35 years in education, serving 18 of his last 26 years as a principal in Kent, Washington.

Susan Anderson Dow, MA ’78 retired in June after four decades teaching special education at three schools in the Moreno School District. She was the longest-serving special education teacher at Monroe High School, her final mix. Her husband, Bill, is also a retired teacher. They have two children and five grandchildren.

1980s

Steve “Frazier” Reed ’89 is the athletic director for Corban University in Salem, Oregon. Prior to spending the last three years as athletic director at Central Christian College in McPherson, Kansas, Steve had been a director for Young Life on the West Coast and in Singapore for 30 years. While with Young Life, he coached cross country and track and field athletes, with three of his runners competing in the U.S. Olympic Trials. He and his wife, Michelle, live in Salem.

Athena McKay ’87, head coach of Liberty University’s men’s basketball ball team in Lynchburg, Virginia, received the 2019 Jim Phelan National Coach of the Year Award, presented annually to the top coach in NCAA Division I men’s basketball. He helped the Flames shatter many records last season, winning 29 games, a school record. The Flames also celebrated their first NCAA Tournament win and first trip to the tournament’s Round of 32. Ritchie played basketball for the Falcons as an undergraduate.

Ritchie McKay ’87, head coach of Liberty University’s men’s basketball

2000s

Devon Long ’01 is the managing director of strategy, planning, and client relationship management for Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group’s corporate real estate group in San Diego, California. He earned an international MBA from the University of South Carolina. During his prior tenure at Bank of America, he held executive leadership roles and helped integrate the real estate portfolio when Countrywide Financial and Bank of America merged.

Kelly Shaw Ash ’05 is the vice president of government relations for the California Nurses Association, serving as the trade association’s chief lobbyist and managing its advocacy efforts. Prior to joining CGA, Kelly worked for three years as the capital director in the California State Assembly and spent two years as deputy political director for the Personal Insurance Federation of California.

Devin Long ’01

Athletic Hall of Famer
Coach Foreman, renown for leading cross country and track and field teams

Kenneth E. Foreman, former Seattle Pacific athletic director, professor, and world-renowned Olympic coach, died Dec. 23, 2020, at the age of 96.

After serving in the Coast Guard during the Pacific Theater during World War II, Foreman earned a BBA in Accounting and a bachelor’s degree at Southern California in 1949. He began his tenure at Seattle Pacific College in 1950 at the junior varsity basketball coach and a physical education instructor before becoming the men’s cross country and track and field coach.

Foreman earned a Ph.D. in kinesiology, sport psychology, and other topics in the Physical Education Department. He also served as the school’s athletic director and founded the Falcon Track Club for women, helping establish Seattle Pacific as a pioneering institution in female athletics.

Foreman continued to teach and coach at Seattle Pacific until his retirement from the University in 2000. During this time, he earned a master’s degree from the University of Washington and a doctorate at University of Southern California. He also joined the U.S. Olympic program and held numerous U.S. national team assignments, including head women’s track coach for the 1980 Olympic team.

Over the course of his career at Seattle Pacific, Foreman coached hundreds of athletes, producing 159 All-Americans, 26 collegiate champions, and two world champions. He was named to the Seattle Pacific University Athletic Hall of Fame in 2010 and enshrined in the U.S. Track and Field and Cross Country Halls of Fame.

Foreman was preceded by his first wife, Dorothy, survived by his second wife, Denise Foreman ’67, children (Vicki Foreman ’78, Viki Foreman ’78, and Tim Foreman ’78), five grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

The practice track adjacent to Royal Brougham Pavilion on campus is named in Foreman’s honor. Dustin King

Join SPU for a wintertime Tradition

STARTED BY SEATTLE PACIFIC students in 1986, Tradition is a campus-organized Christmas celebration to which the entire neighborhood is invited the first Friday night in December. A handful of delights include ugly Christmas sweaters, rich yuletide treats, and fun photos with Santa.

This year’s Tradition celebration will be held on Friday, Dec. 6 on the SPU campus.
In Memoriam

WALLACE “WALLY” BATS ’60 died June 12, 2019, at the age of 93.
REED HILL ’61 died Aug. 2, 2019, at the age of 86.
DAVID BUTTERFIELD ’51 died June 7, 2019, at the age of 90.
KATHERINE “KATHY” FRANKING, MED ’97 died Sept. 1, 2018, at the age of 55.
JUDITH “JUDY” MAUN-GORDON ’61 died April 16, 2019, at the age of 72.
FRANCIS JOHNSTON K ’98 died March 9, 2019, at the age of 87.
WALNUT RALPH KOHL ’44 died March 15, 2019, at the age of 41.
DOUG RAUDE LIEBERT ’67 died Dec. 30, 2018, at the age of 84.
JAMES LANE ’59 died May 21, 2019, at the age of 82.
JAMES WOOL ’74 died July 3, 2019, at the age of 66.
MARY BLOOS SCHMIDT ’44 died July 19, 2019, at the age of 98.
KAY DREIBELGIS STEELE ’53 died May 8, 2019, at the age of 74.
DAVID TILDEN ’66 died April 30, 2019, at the age of 54.
HAROLD TILDEN ’77 died June 18, 2019, at the age of 64.
DIANE DAVIES VERNAL ’57 died Jan. 4, 2019, at the age of 79.
SUSAN WERKEMA ’81 died March 31, 2019, at the age of 60.
FAYE HERSON NESTRUP ’52 died Feb. 20, 2019, at the age of 84.
LYLE WILLIAMS ’52 died Jan. 30, 2019, at the age of 90.
REBECCA ZALKE ’91 died in March 2019, at the age of 77.

Steve Sakanashi ’08 is the founder of Zubits Japan and a co-founder of Zubits LLC, a Seattle-based firm that helps new ventures rapidly build and scale. Steve lives in Tokyo as the U.S. partner at Labs8, a Seattle-based venture capital operating company.

STEVE SAKANASHI ‘08

Paul Lepse, professor emeritus of chemistry, died of cancer July 19, 2019, at the age of 82. Raised in Seattle’s Ballard neighborhood, Lepse had a firm calling from a young age.

Paul LEPSE, laboratory department chair and a professor of chemistry for nearly a decade. She recently worked with nonprofits and sport-based development programs for 11- to 14-year-olds, headquartered in the Seattle area.

ISabella ZIELinski, PhD ’18 is a clinical sport and health psychologist in Seattle. She currently works at Swedish Medical Center’s Bananas, a family sports medicine and wellness center. Thomas supports a portfolio of brands with a focus on digital marketing, e-commerce, and business and marketing efforts. He has extensive marketing experience in the beverage industry.

AMANDA DUBO ‘13 is the development director for the Kirkland Arts Center. She coordinated the center’s gala, which raised $185,000 for education programs last year.

Amanda has worked with nonprofits for nearly a decade. She recently married JEROME DUBO ‘10.

JULIE WILENSKY, PhD ’10 is a clinical sport and health psychologist in Seattle. She currently works at Swedish Medical Center’s Bananas, a family sports medicine and wellness center. Thomas supports a portfolio of brands with a focus on digital marketing, e-commerce, and business and marketing efforts. He has extensive marketing experience in the beverage industry.

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Is technology good for us?

As I started to think about the word technology, I remembered a conversation with my father. This conversation took place in the late 1980s. My dad was a retired Lt. Col. of the Honduran Army, and during the '80s it was very common to hear people say, “All military people are corrupt!”

I asked my father about their comments, to which he responded, “Military people are as corrupt as people from any other profession.” Every profession reflects the amount of corruption that is present in that society, he explained.

What does this have to do with technology? Before we go there, let’s talk about what this means.

The dictionary defines technology as “A manner of accomplishing a task especially using technical processes, methods, or knowledge.” Given this definition, we can easily recognize that a computer represents a technological device. But what about fire? Is it also a form of technology? Or language? People might not consider running water a technology, just like fire or language, but this is because we are accustomed to it.

That’s why computer scientist Alan Kay said, “Technology is anything that wasn’t around when you were born.” This definition fits the common perception that technology applies to the new things but not to the things we take for granted.

Technology is all around us, even when taken for granted. It is the fruit of the gift of intelligence we received by the breath of the Spirit when we were created (Genesis 2:7). We were even encouraged to create technology: “The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it” (Genesis 2:15).

We were created intelligent. We were meant to use our intelligence to take care of the garden. We were asked to name the animals, to use language. So there is no point claiming that technology is intrinsically evil.

Technology is as good or as bad as the society where it is created and where it is used. Its use is going to be a reflection of the society that uses it, and technology reflects the amount of corruption that is present in any given society.

The problem with technology lies in our own broken nature. We were created pure, but since the Fall, our sinful nature leads us to use technology for evil — weapons, genetically created diseases, etc.

While some technology is not intrinsically evil, it can harm us by how we use it or by how it affects us — the internet, mobile phones, etc. In fact, any device or use of a device that affects our freedom hurts us in some way. If someone is really anxious when they don’t have access to the internet or their cell phone, are they free or are they enslaved to these technologies?

God wants us to be free, not slaves of sin, not slaves of devices, not slaves of vices. Sometimes, without our own awareness, we chain ourselves to the available technology. Technology is not neutral, and it can affect us in more ways than we acknowledge.

It is critical that we ask ourselves: Am I able to be free of this device? Is the use of this technology hurting me or others? Is the technology helping me or others? Is this making the world a better place? The honest answers to those questions may help us figure out how technology is affecting our lives.

CARLOS ARIAS is an assistant professor of computer science at Seattle Pacific University where he teaches courses such as “Problem Solving and Programming” and “Concepts in Programming Languages.”
PARENTS: Is this magazine addressed to an SPU graduate who has moved elsewhere? Help us update our records at spu.edu/response.

**Stories that inspire**

*SPU Voices Podcast* host Amanda Stubbert interviews Laura McGregor '96 about working in her family's cheese import business.

You'll find personal stories with a universal impact on the monthly interview show.