Longing for a life with God

This past year I had the wonderful privilege of taking a short-term sabbatical (Dec. 5, 2005-Jan. 30, 2006). During that time, I returned to a project I have been thinking about for 25 years: How do we understand our life with God? My own spiritual awakening occurred when I was an undergraduate student studying with Richard Foster during the same period in which he was writing Celebration of Discipline. I had been in Christian circles all my life, yet I had never read nor experienced such a thorough ordering of how we could understand and make progress in our life with God. As you can imagine, it was a thrilling time and the discoveries made during college continue to guide me to this day.

Following college, I attended Princeton Theological Seminary where I came under the remarkable life and teaching of Diogenes Allen, professor of philosophy of religion. At the time, he was integrating philosophy, theology and church history in the most remarkable synthesis I had ever seen. Here was an order and pattern that unveiled the depths of our life with God while providing the most robust evidence of the intellectual credibility of Christianity.

Together, these two men have played an indispensable role in my own spiritual journey. Everything I now understand to be true was initially stimulated by their personal and intellectual influence. Because they have drawn so deeply from the great saints of the church their writings are especially helpful in guiding us to discover and participate in our own life with God.

During college, my early forays into this literature provided the framework to understand my life with God at a new and profound level. It ushered in a period of peace and contentment that convinced me of the meaning of the Christian life. But still, I was haunted by the question, is it true? Is this life with God a charade or is it the very ground and substance of the universe?

To my joy and amazement, my quest to find the intellectual credibility of Christianity was fulfilled. My desire to know that our life with God is not only meaningful, but also true was satisfied as I continued to read in this literature and especially as I saw my own confidence in the Christian life strengthened. While in seminary, I realized it was the very essence of the Christian life to ask and pursue answers to the great questions of life that guide every honest seeker. What is the meaning of life? How can a loving God allow suffering? Why would a good God permit so much evil? Is there proof for the existence of God? How can we begin to address and answer this question? And if Jesus is the only way to God, how do we understand the reality and persistence of all these other religions?

Eventually, I would graduate from seminary, pastor a church, return for my doctorate, and begin my current life in higher education. Still, these foundational questions, the ones that confront each one of us, continue to rivet my attention. This past year I had the opportunity to speak to these questions and to talk about our life with God in a variety of contexts. The graphic shown here outlines and identifies the various steps we take and the processes in which we engage as we grow in our knowledge and understanding of our lives with Christ.

As you continue on your own spiritual journey, it is my hope that it will always focus on the living reality of Jesus Christ. Everything begins when we settle this fundamental question. Then, as we live our lives in relationship to God, all of the other challenges we face are placed in a perspective that provides hope and understanding.

May God bless you as you follow Him.

With joy and anticipation,

Gayle D. Beebe, Ph.D.
President
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ON THE COVER
The cover image captures the very essence of education graduate Nikki Keen ’03. Read more about Keen and her inner-city work in this issue’s feature story, “Living inspired lives,” on page 4.
Providing a transformational educational experience sounds like a big job. But it’s a necessary job. And it’s one Spring Arbor University is well-prepared to deliver. Our students and graduates are proof. These young leaders are making a difference in a variety of fields — from art to worship and everything in between. Read on to learn how Caleb Porter, Nikki Keen, Andra Morrell and Robb Selfe are leading inspired lives that inspire others.

Porter enters a booming industry with momentum

“I graduated on Saturday and started work the following Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. It was nice to not miss a beat,” says Caleb Porter ’06. In mid-May, he began putting his freshly printed bachelor’s degree to use at Momentum, LLC, an organizational development firm.

The experiences Porter gained through his study at the University proved to be valuable commodities, too. After just two short months at Momentum, he was offered a position at Daniel Brown & Associates, an advertising firm in Rochester, Mich., where he is currently working as a graphic designer.

Porter transferred to Spring Arbor University from Huntington College two years ago to continue the pursuit of his art degree with a focus on graphic design. “After two years at Huntington, I felt like it wasn’t the right place for me. I began looking around at universities closer to home,” says Porter.

After hearing about SAU from friends, Porter set up a campus visit. “When I came and met with the art professors, I felt blown away by how professional and serious the art program was here. I felt like it was going to be a great place for me to get the training necessary to secure a good job,” says Porter.

Porter strives to create art that will allow him to compete in a booming field: graphic design. And he reflects on the lessons learned — whether in the studio or not — from the faculty at SAU. “The art professors have influenced my life in several ways, either through encouraging words about my work ethic, or feedback on my designs — both good and bad. All of it has helped me,” says Porter.

“The art classes at SAU really trained me as a graphic designer to operate at a very professional level and create great work. Through the art faculty, I also learned that if you want to see the results, you have to be willing to invest the time and effort,” says Porter.

“Caleb developed the skills to show ordinary information in new and exciting ways,” says
art department chair and SAU alum, Brian Shaw. "I believe as Caleb gains professional experience, he will be able to combine his communication skills with creative visual solutions to become a leader in the field of graphic design."

While Porter gained valuable knowledge from the faculty at the University, the talented artist gave back to the department as well. From the day he arrived on campus, Porter contributed great works of art. In his first juried art show at Spring Arbor University in Fall 2005, Porter was awarded first place in graphic design. The art department rewarded Porter’s quest for excellence by granting him departmental honors for his unique technique of layering photographs, typography and illustrations to create captivating visual stories and communication.

Porter’s art pieces from his two years at the University are a collective mix of poster designs, letters made from jean material, wakeboard graphics and much more. "I have somewhat of a grungy, almost sporadic design style that is distinctively mine," says Porter. His favorite artwork displays a snippet of his personal life. "I love the wakeboard piece the most because wakeboarding is one of my passions and I just really put a lot of thought, energy and time into it," says Porter.

Reflecting the University’s overall enrollment growth since 2001, the number of art students has nearly doubled in those five years. It was also the same year Shaw returned to the University as a graphic design instructor. Five years and a Master of Fine Arts later, he serves as department chair.

In addition to Shaw, longtime faculty members Bill Bippes and Roger Varland continue to guide aspiring artists. Bippes has been teaching art courses at the University for more than 30 years, while Varland has taught for 25. He also recently earned his Master of Fine Arts from Eastern Michigan University.

Another contributing faculty member includes Paul Wolber, who retired in 2000, but continues to serve as professor emeritus of art. His award-winning acrylic paintings have been seen in many national, regional and local exhibitions.

Though Porter transferred in to the University in the middle of the art department’s growth, he could tell exciting opportunities were underway. "Being around the other art majors who were here for four years, I could tell there were some big things happening. I know it will continue to grow as technology advances, which means many more opportunities for graphic design professionals. I think with more jobs comes more interest in the world of art," says Porter.

The arts facilities have also received a boost. Made possible through the generosity of alums Lloyd and Judi (Colson) Ganton, construction of Ganton Art Gallery was completed in May 2005, and was capped off with an all-alumni art show. Since that time, the gallery, which boasts the largest single-room art gallery in Michigan, has hosted shows featuring artwork by world-renown artists, including the Pentagon-commissioned paintings by alum Rick Herter.

"It was an honor to be among the first students to have my work displayed in such a great gallery. As a graphic designer, it was quite an experience to see my work framed and more like a fine art piece — especially because I know Ganton Art Gallery will host quality pieces for generations to come," says Porter.

Keen became a Christian after she finally gave in to her friend’s frequent request of attending church during her junior year in high school. After sitting in a few services, Keen saw that going to Heaven would take more than just being a “good person.” Soon, she would see that being a disciple of Christ would take more than going to church and reading her Bible. It would take servanthood. She had no idea where her desire to serve Christ would take her.

Graduating fourth in her class of 49, Keen began pursuing a triple minor in language arts, science and education at Spring Arbor. Participation was a hallmark of her student experience. As a student, she was a peer advisor for 15 freshmen for two years, student ministries co-director, coach for junior high basketball and volleyball for a local school, all while making the dean’s list each year.
Through the eyes of a child

Keen was exposed to the needs in three inner-city communities during her sophomore year. That’s what prompted her to sign up to become a mentor for what many alums know as Action Jackson — a student-established mentoring ministry that pairs economically disadvantaged Jackson children with SAU students. Keen spent her next three years at the University participating in this program.

Later that year, Keen applied for a spring break missions trip. Her first impulse was to choose a warm location — Florida or Mexico. But as she prayed about it, she felt the Lord whispering to her about New York City. She was selected for the trip and had, as she says, “a powerful experience.”

As part of the trip, students helped with an after school program in Newark, N.J. Most of the children who attended the program were from a nearby public housing project. As she was helping a student with his multiplication tables, he stopped and looked at her.

“You look like someone,” he said, as he squinted his eyes at her. “It’s in your eyes. You look like Jesus.”

That comment stuck with her. Children growing up in the midst of so much hardship needed a voice of hope. She began thinking about teaching in an underprivileged, urban environment. And her love of teaching and of children grew to include a love of the city.

“I realized my calling to work with urban youth through programs made available at SAU,” says Keen. “God used professors like Rhonda Hurst and SAU alum Paul Nemecek to set in motion what His purposes would be in my life.”

That same year, Keen found the place she could take all the things she loved and use them for Christ. She traveled to Chicago as part of a general education course. At the end of the CORE 200 trip, Nemecek took Keen’s class to visit Lawndale Community Church (LCC), located in the west Chicago neighborhood of North Lawndale — one of Chicago’s most impoverished neighborhoods.

From that service Keen saw the church was powerful in the community. And from that point on, she desired to end up in Chicago and hoped she could live or work in North Lawndale.

“I’ve always been the kind of person who wants to be a part of the solution to a problem. I saw the impact LCC had on the community and that it was good kingdom work. Because of that, I wanted to come alongside and be a co-laborer with the congregation at LCC,” says Keen.

Currently serving 800 parishioners, LCC is a church focused on community development, as well as providing a place for the people of Lawndale to worship Jesus Christ. Part of its mission is to meet the spiritual and physical needs of Lawndale residents in creative ways. In 1984, the church founded Lawndale Christian Health Center, which currently sees 75,000 patients a year, providing them with affordable, quality healthcare — all while showing patients the love of Jesus.

They also achieve this goal through the Lawndale Christian Development Corp., created in 1987 “to bring holistic revitalization to the lives and environments of Lawndale residents through housing improvements, educational enrichment and community advocacy.”

There are countless LCC programs to minister to every kind of need. There are ministries for families with an incarcerated relative; men who have been released from prison or are overcoming substance abuse problems; families in need of emergency assistance; individuals or families seeking to purchase a home in Lawndale; and adults seeking to grow deeper with Christ. LCC also boasts “The House,” said to be Chicago’s only hip-hop worship service in Chicago.

Many Chicago public schools operate year-round, but also incorporate “loop teaching.” Teachers at Keen’s year-round school work for three months and get one month off, and because it uses loop teaching, Keen and her colleagues travel with students through sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade. They start over with a new group every three years.

Teaching in Little Village presented Keen with new challenges. Many of her students were first-generation Americans with their parents coming mostly from Mexico. And while all the students are bilingual, their parents aren’t necessarily. For most students, school is the only place they speak English, as all the businesses and restaurants in Little Village are Spanish-speaking.

Unfortunately, Keen didn’t know any Spanish. What she did have on her side was a strong talent for teaching and a love for her students that could cross any language barrier. Her second year of teaching, she even set out on an endeavor to meet every parent of her 91 students before school started in August.

God used professors like Rhonda Hurst and SAU alum Paul Nemecek to set in motion what His purposes would be in my life.
This took her to some of the poorest areas, as nearly 90 percent of the 400 students at Madero are on a free lunch program and the remaining participate in a reduced lunch program.

**Changing her world**

Committed to the area and the people, Keen purchased her first home in North Lawndale through an initiative called Ezra Homes. Ezra purchases vacant lots and builds new, affordable homes for many first-time home owners. It also provides them with classes on how to be a homeowner.

"I had so many chances to see beyond the world I knew and I was able to view things from other perspectives at SAU," says Keen. "Once I did that, I saw things I didn’t like — things like biases based on race, class and culture. I realized once God reveals those things, you have an accountability to respond. Because of that, I felt responsible to do my part to change the way things are into the way they should be. It was at SAU that I gained a hopeful perspective that changing the world was possible."

What’s next for Keen? In the fall, the recently engaged justice crusader will start a new job in North Lawndale at Herzl Elementary School. She would like to pursue further education and possibly work to reform the educational system in the years ahead.

"Above all else I want to be a disciple of Christ. Sometimes I get caught up in the ‘doing’ that I forget about the ‘being.’ I am so focused on what I can be doing for the Lord that I forget that preparation time is not wasted time," says Keen. "My heart is to see justice in the world. It is hard work being in the midst of many injustices. I feel called to be a neighbor to people of different cultures and am learning a lot about God’s love, mercy and humility from living in a community that is so drastically different from the one of my childhood."

"God is calling me to love. Every year I think about what my mission is for that year, which helps me focus. This year I want to get into the Word more and lead a more intentional life. I can’t wait to see how this goal will help me reach my new students, my church family and the people of my community." 

Everything about him is big. His stride and his smile. His hands and feet. His heart. The first time you shake Andra Morrell’s hands, they simply swallow you up, much like a father’s does to his newborn child. Seriously: This guy is big.

It should come as no surprise, then, when you hear that Morrell’s vision for his life and the impact he can have on the world falls in line with everything else about him: It’s big. Breed his passion for youth with his talent for leading worship experiences and you have his dream: directing large-scale youth conferences — the ones where thousands of teens travel across the country to be pumped-up, challenged, trained and equipped in their relationships with Christ.

"I have a heart for mass ministry," he says. "There’s just something about leading a huge crowd of people into the presence of God. And that’s what the senior youth ministry major does at least a couple times a week at Spring Arbor University. Call it training.

**Steeped in worship**

On any given Monday or Wednesday, just after 10 in the morning, the Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church sanctuary brims with anticipation and expectation of what’s to come: an encounter with the Most High God. Students fill the pews. Faculty and staff are scattered in their midst. Announcements run on the screen and music competes with the murmur of the crowd. Chapel Crazies crowd the altar like their counterpart Cougar Crazies line a court — just as excited about what they are rooting for.

As chapel worship commences, Morrell emerges at the center of it all. Leadership aura surrounding him, the audience naturally follows wherever he goes — and that means right into the very throne room of the Father. Passion clearly glinting on his face, eyes closed, arms raised to heaven, fingers pointing to the Lord, he leads by example.

"Go where I go," his posture whispers. "Come with me."

Comfort in carrying such responsibility may seem unusual to some, but remember that this is Andra Morrell we’re talking about. He’s big. He can handle it. Besides, he’s been doing it for years. Morrell grew up in and around worship experiences at what is now POWER Center Church International in Belleville, Mich. His mother was choir director and taught him to be the children’s choir director while he was still young. Around age 12, the modern praise and worship movement hit his congregation and he was leading his church in worship when he was 14.

So, it’s in his blood. Even more importantly, it’s in his heart.

**Coming together**

If you ever e-mail him and he replies, take a minute to look at his message signature. It contains his many campus leadership titles — a list that is impressive, if not slightly intimidating. It reads:

Andra D. Morrell  
Presidential Ambassador  
Director of Student Activities  
Executive Director of SAU  
Gospel Choir  
Chapel Band Worship Leader

The last title you are familiar with: Morrell leads worship for the chapel band. Moving up the list, we find that he heads up gospel choir, too. And now we see the visionary that he is truly unleashed.

"When Jeremy (Johnson ’04) asked me to lead gospel choir, I really had to pray..."
about it because I didn’t want to lead just an organization,” Morrell explains. “So when God said ‘yes’ to gospel choir, I pursued what that meant beyond performing music.”

What it has meant, so far, has been nothing less than a destroyer of racial barriers on campus.

“Gospel choir is a bridging ground for students of different colors,” says Morrell, a black student from Carleton, Mich., which is between Detroit and Monroe. “When I came here, I often would find pockets of people of color in the dining commons or in chapel. I don’t see that as much any more. I feel the Lord has used me and the leadership positions He has placed me in to break down those walls.”

It’s always nice to be a large person when you’re breaking down walls.

Morrell continues: “I love diversity. I went to a white school and a black church. So I know how to exist in both environments. I’m passionate about bringing people together — especially in worship services. I think there is a lot to learn from each other with how we worship God.”

That’s where gospel choir — and Gospelfest in particular — come in.

Can I get a witness?

Morrell wasn’t even an official member of the gospel choir when he was asked to lead it. He participated in the group for about a week his freshman year, but then decided not to be involved. He did, however, stay quite “unofficially” involved for two years by traveling with the choir and supporting their performances. This went a long way in establishing rapport with Johnson and gaining his trust.

Johnson had a good ear for God’s plans for gospel choir, because he hit a home run when inviting Morrell to lead the ministry. In just the second year under his leadership, the gospel choir had some 80 students who wanted to be involved. The choir consisted of less than 20 in 2003. Knowing 80 was too many to take on the road, Morrell informed the would-be choir of the steep expectations — and volunteers slipped to a much more manageable 50.

“We’re not really your typical gospel choir. Ours is more diverse [with white students] than Michigan State’s or Eastern Michigan’s,” he says. “Some choirs will have people doing back flips on the stage while singing and put on a big show. That’s not who we are. We have our own flavor and we bring the house down anyway.” He cited the Akron, Ohio, concert as an example.

“Akron was a tough show because everything that could go wrong did go wrong. We weren’t able to get a sound check because the board was messed up and then they gave our guitar player the wrong amp. All sorts of other stuff happened that could have distracted us,” Andra recalled. “But then we just decided: We don’t care what has happened, we’re here to minister for the Lord. And we tore the house down. God moved and people worshipped with us more than any other choir that night.”

What makes the Morrell-led Spring Arbor University Gospel Choir unique — at least from a limited perspective — is its “cross-over” nature. It isn’t exactly as pure of gospel music as you would find at a black church. Many of the songs the choir performs are gospel-flavored worship songs from headline artists such as Delirious and Matt Redman. This makes audience participation much easier, especially for those with limited exposure to the genre.

Gospelfest electric

A year of practice, touring and performing by Gospel Choir culminates each spring with Gospelfest — a multi-ethnic, multi-denominational worship experience hosted by Spring Arbor University. Gospel choirs from other schools and churches come to campus for a night of diverse worship and song. It’s a night of paradigm-breaking sorts, as tunes of more urban roots fill the air and “rhythmic movements” shake the ground.

It’s possible Gospelfest 2005 could have been mistaken for any other Gospelfest. It was held in the same venue — White Auditorium, and roughly the same number of people attended — a couple hundred. Aside from a larger host choir than in year’s past and edgier promotional materials, little changed. Gospelfest 2006, however, was clearly in a league of its own. It was way bigger.
Morrell tried telling people. He really did. But people just didn’t have his vision for the event. Case in point: the stage. Nobody had a clue how big it was going to be.

“I could use some help setting up the stage,” he said to some friends.

“Sure. How long do you think it will take?” some replied.

“A few hours probably. It’s really big.”

So, the friends came over, with no expectation that it would take as long as he said. How could it take a couple hours to set up a few risers? Then they saw it.

“Oh my gosh — that stage is huge!”

“I told you it was really big…”

And that would be a microcosm of Morrell’s experience planning and executing Gospelfest 2006. People just didn’t understand how big it was going to be. But, it’s not entirely their fault, because even he didn’t know if he could pull it off.

Three gospel artists and three featured choirs, including Eastern and Detroit Mercy, made for an event that pulled people from hours away. The Spring Arbor University student body attendance increased vastly from previous years and people brought their parents, friends and relatives — even the unsaved.

Midway through the actual event, he stood in the middle of his giant stage and asked his light guy to direct a few of the stage lights onto the audience. He wanted to see how many people had shown up.

He almost got choked up.

“Wow. This is amazing,” he told the audience of 600 or so. “I wish the people who told me it wasn’t possible to pull this off could see all of you here.” Gospelfest 2006 had packed out Dunckel Gymnasium — a venue Morrell was encouraged to host the event in next year, when they had a larger budget and more advertising. But in his mind, it was already too big for the auditorium. It had to be in the gym. And it had to be this year.

“Where God guides, God provides,” they say.

Touché. The Lord gave him a big vision for Gospelfest, and He provided an equally big audience.

Bigger and still growing

Morrell wants Gospelfest 2007 to be even bigger. It makes sense, since that’s just how things work with him. Plans call for it to be in the Fieldhouse, where bleachers are present, allowing for more seating and less set up. With a year of experience in his repertoire, Morrell feels he’ll be able to delegate more and take Gospelfest to places he couldn’t by himself. If grant funding comes through, his position as executive director might even be paid.

He had a youth ministry internship lined up at Joel Osteen’s Lakewood Church in Houston, but he plans to push that back for the sake of Gospelfest. That’s his commitment level. He also wants to record an album with the choir. And of course he’ll still be leading chapel worship. Forget about the other positions listed in his e-mail signature, because you can be sure his schedule will be as full as possible, presidential ambassador or not.

Whatever the 2006-07 school year holds for Morrell, it’s certain he’ll continue sending shockwaves throughout campus. He can’t help but impact and influence people; it’s what he was designed to do, just like a hand was designed to grab and a foot was designed to kick. He’s a mover and shaker — a big one at that.

“Andra’s creativity, passionate faith, ingenuity and determination combine to be a significant force,” says Damon Seacott, chief of staff for President Gayle Beebe.

Well put. He is a significant force. But it’s not just because he’s big. It’s because he’s led by the Spirit of God. And with God, all things are possible.
it takes to succeed, not hoping it does or thinking it does or wishing it did in the heat of the moment.

Spring Arbor University was Selfe’s training facility. Other pre-med students were his teammates and faculty were their trainers. He knew ahead of time what it would take to get through medical school. He was prepared and equipped to succeed. He had the support system necessary.

“When I got to Spring Arbor, I knew I wanted to do something in the life sciences,” says Selfe. “But I couldn’t see myself working in a lab for the rest of my life. I wanted to interact with people, not beakers.” A student leader during his time on campus, this made perfect sense. He even served as a resident assistant his senior year — and displayed great people skills.

SAU’s pre-medicine program was an ideal route for Selfe. And friendships he formed his freshman year helped him find it. Professors took over from there.

Adjust your pace

So, what do molecular biology and photography have in common? Nothing — nothing at all, in fact. But Selfe loved both classes. And that’s the beauty of a liberal arts education: students don’t take classes outside their concentrations just to fill credit requirements the last few semesters before graduation. They’re constantly taking classes outside their concentrations — classes like photography — and being stretched in ways they may never thought they would be stretched. Sometimes — maybe even oftentimes — they wind up loving a class and developing a new hobby or new passion.

Photography hasn’t been a one-time deal for Selfe, either. It has become vital to his success in the med-school marathon. Compare it to an energy gel a runner sucks down during a race to replenish carbohydrates and keep from “hitting the wall” or “bonking.” It’s vital.

Selfe explains: “Photography was a great escape from all the pathways and calculations associated with my degree in biochemistry. It has been therapeutic for me to get out and enjoy the world through the lens of a camera. I feel that a balanced lifestyle is at the root of healthy living and photography has been a great outlet for me.”

Photography prepared Selfe to relax, while his biochemistry track prepared him to study. Professors Chris Newhouse and Jeff Regier didn’t demand all blood, sweat and tears from their students but it was probably close. Good thing, though, because medical school wouldn’t get any easier.

“When you start med school, the class population is very diverse and can make you question your ability and preparedness,” says Selfe. “But the biochemistry major at Spring Arbor was filled with a very demanding course load and lab schedule. If I can speak on my own behalf and on behalf of several friends who are now finishing med school or residency programs, we all feel we were well trained.”

Newhouse and Regier, who took a job at Taylor University several years ago, left a distinct impression on Selfe. Regier ran a tight lab and taught brilliant courses, “explaining complex concepts in simple terms for us common folk” — although, the commonness of the biochem student could probably be questioned. Newhouse was instrumental to Selfe as he applied to the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine.

“If I can speak on my own behalf and on behalf of several friends who are now finishing med school or residency programs, we all feel we were well trained.”

Regardless, Newhouse and Regier were there. His path through Spring Arbor University wasn’t different. He was equipped with what it takes to succeed and fulfill his dream of becoming a medical doctor, daunting as it is.

But the thing about daunting tasks is that you know they’re daunting. That’s what makes them daunting. Yet that’s also what makes them doable.

“My professors had a great understanding of the demands of medical school and the drive it takes to succeed in this marathon.”

There’s that word again: marathon. There’s really no better comparison. “They did a great job preparing us in pre-med for the long road ahead,” he continued.

Keep running. You can do it. You are almost there.
STUDENT FILM PREMIERES AT MICHIGAN THEATRE

One night junior Matt Francis (Bellevue, Mich.) had a dream he was robbing a morgue. While some might brush off dreams with wild premises, Francis decided to use his idea to write a screenplay and eventually make a movie. His creativity paid off when his feature-length film, Grave Robbers, premiered at Michigan Theatre in Jackson, Mich.

The film studies major has written other short films in the past, but this marked his first feature-length film. “With Grave Robbers, my rule was this: no time-constraints. As I developed characters in the film, sub-plots and situations just opened up and the only way to tell the story was through a full-length movie,” says Francis.

The cast for the film was comprised of SAU students, faculty and alumni. “I really wanted to thank the cast and my supporters by giving them an event to look forward to other than the movie itself — and the Michigan Theatre was the perfect place for the premiere,” says Francis. “It’s huge and historic and has a classic cinema feel.”

While this is his first feature-length film, Francis does not intend for it to be his last. He started a video production company with alum Eric Carlson ’04, called FBA Films. “I want to make films for the rest of my life,” says Francis. “I really enjoy editing, directing, producing, acting, writing and all aspects of filmmaking.”

Hayworth to lead student development

Kim (Austin ’90, ’97) Hayworth has been named vice president for student development and learning. Hayworth started her new position in January.

During her 16 years at SAU, Hayworth has served the University in many capacities, including time as an admissions representative, director of career services and retention, as well as assistant and associate dean of retention and academic advising. These positions have been an excellent platform for her to pursue her passion to help students.

After receiving her bachelor’s in communication from SAU, Hayworth went on to earn a master’s in business administration from the University. She is currently pursuing a doctorate in higher education leadership from Western Michigan University.

Mason inspires Trailblazers through speech and performance

Over 250 community members celebrated the accomplishments of alum Babbie (Oliver ’78) Mason by attending the fourth annual Trailblazer dinner at SAU. The annual event honors leaders who have inspired students to pursue higher education; at the same time, it raises money for the Trailblazer scholarship at Spring Arbor University.

Fitting with the night’s theme, “Passing the Mantle,” Sherrilyn Dungy-Sims, daughter of last year’s recipient Wilbur Dungy, presented Mason with the honorary plaque. Mason has set a positive example for Jackson youth by furthering her education and using it to advance her career. As an award-winning Christian artist and songwriter, Mason understands the importance of higher education for young adults.

During the dinner celebration, Mason shared how Spring Arbor University impacted her life in a positive way. She then performed for the audience.

The highlight of the evening was when Mason invited Spring Arbor University’s gospel choir to join her onstage for a musical act that included her mother. Along with Mason’s musical performances, the University’s gospel choir and the Willis C. Patterson “Our Own Thing Chorale” performed at the celebration.

The Trailblazer Scholarship supports underrepresented students pursuing higher education at SAU. This year alone, nine scholarship recipients were supported financially through the generosity of the community.

University student Emmanuel Olmos Gonzalez (Jackson, Mich.), one of the current recipients, spoke about how the scholarship has helped make his dream of reaching a college degree a reality by providing the financial backing.

“This dinner is always a special time to honor a local hero who has blazed the trail for higher education,” says Marci Stanley, event coordinator. “I continue to be amazed at how the community comes together to support the Trailblazer scholarship.”

LEGENDARY FOOTBALL COACH SPEAKS AT SAU

Spring Arbor University hosted an evening with legendary football coach Herman Boone. Boone led T. C. Williams High School to an undefeated season in 1971 when racial tensions ran high in Virginia. His story became famous when Walt Disney Pictures made Remember the Titans, a film based on Boone’s story. His visit was part of the University’s celebration of Black History month.
Biochemistry student writes article for international journal

“Monomeric Yeast Frataxin is an Iron Binding Protein” answers a long-standing question in the field of biological iron metabolism: Does frataxin, the major iron-binding protein in mitochondria, function as a single polypeptide or does it team up with other frataxin molecules to make clumps of frataxin that perform frataxin’s function?

Junior Anna Crater (Litchfield, Mich.) knows the answer; she co-authored the article, which appeared in Biochemistry, an international, weekly journal that presents the latest discoveries from around the world in the biochemistry realm.

While the average person might not follow the exact significance of frataxin, Crater understands and has helped research how it functions. Her knowledge of the protein has helped her achieve a feat commonly reserved for graduate students or working professionals. “This is a fine achievement for any student, but because Anna is an undergraduate, this is a monumental achievement,” says Michael Buratovich, associate professor of biochemistry.

Much of Crater’s research began last summer when she participated in a 10-week program that allowed her to work in the research lab at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit. The research is part of collaboration with Timothy Stemmner on structural and functional studies on frataxin, where a genetic screen was established in order to examine mutations in the frataxin protein. “I knew nothing about this topic going into my research opportunity, but since then I have become very interested in frataxin,” says Crater.

“Anna’s contribution to this paper is a testimony to her tenacious work ethic and intellectual capabilities,” says Buratovich. “This paper is a significant contribution to biochemical understanding. It answers a long-standing question in the field of biological iron metabolism.”

University curriculum requires students to spend time performing laboratory experiments. In addition, all chemistry and biochemistry majors must do a senior thesis, which requires they either work in University labs for a year on a special project or work full-time during the summer at a place outside of SAU. Crater’s commitment to excellence in the classroom led her to Wayne State University, where she could study with experienced researchers in the biochemistry and molecular biology department, while completing major requirements.

“We are ecstatic she became involved in biochemical research at Wayne State last summer,” says Bruce Baldwin, associate professor of organic chemistry.

“Even more rare and exciting is this Biochemistry article. The summer is a short amount of time to significantly contribute to a scientific article, so the fact that she is a co-author on a paper that will appear in a prestigious, peer-reviewed scientific article speaks volumes about her scientific ability and excellent work ethic.”

While co-authoring an article for an acclaimed magazine is significant, Crater’s experience in the lab has also confirmed her vocational passion. “Working at Wayne State gave me the opportunity to see my future as a researcher. Writing this paper has given me a lot of experience in every aspect of what it means to be a researcher. I am hoping to contribute to another paper from the work I will be doing in the same lab this summer,” says Crater.

Following her senior year at the University, Crater plans to attend Wayne State for graduate school and pursue her doctorate in biochemistry. She then hopes to go to the University of Michigan for post-doctorate work in the stem cell program.

BIOTECH MAGAZINE FEATURES RESEARCH BY SAU PROFESSOR

Michael Buratovich, associate professor of biochemistry, helped research and write an article that was featured in Stem Cells and Development. The article, “Transcription Factor TFIIAtau Is Associated with Undifferentiated Cells and Its Gene Expression Is Repressed in Primary Neurons at the Chromatin Level In Vivo,” appeared in the April edition of this popular biotechnology publication.

Two summers ago, Buratovich accepted an invitation from an old friend to live and work in Boston. During his break from teaching full-time at SAU, Buratovich worked alongside Josef Ozer, assistant professor of pharmacology and molecular medicine at Boston University, studying transcription factor TFIIAtau. Transcription factors are proteins that help protein-making genes get expressed. They accomplish this by binding to DNA and aiding in the production of RNA copy of the DNA coding region.

Buratovich’s contribution to the article was an extension of preliminary work on the same topic. “Science is a means of acquiring knowledge and truth, but not simply a codified collection of facts. To be a scientist means wrestling with nature to make it give up its secrets. If I see Jesus Christ as the perspective for learning, then I will do just that; I learn. And the way we learn in the sciences is by doing research,” says Buratovich.

He is guiding student research on the respiratory system in the sowbug, Porcellio scaber, which are one of the few crustaceans that live on land. He and his team of undergraduates are discovering how sowbugs breathe and seeking the answers to how such unique creatures develop. “We are using antibodies to try and view respiratory tissue in embryonic sowbugs,” says Buratovich. “I want to extend this research to determine how lung and gill formation differs molecularly.”
It was January 10 when President Beebe announced to the SAU community that chaplain Ron Kopicko was diagnosed with testicular cancer. During his treatment, which included surgery and several rounds of chemotherapy, regular updates were provided by Kopicko through his blog, found at www.arbor.edu/journals/ronkopicko. We all rejoiced when we read this post nearly five months later.

May 23, 2006
CELEBRATE!

There are no sweeter words for a cancer patient to hear from their doctor when getting the PET scan results than, “You are clear!” Doctor Madani just called me and gave me this great news. I am so very thankful to the Lord for His healing in my body. I would have been glad for an immediate miracle of healing, but in my case I am thankful for the miracle of people being able to discover chemicals out of the Lord’s creation that have the ability to find and kill cancer cells at each of their stages of development. I am thankful:

• to Becky, David and Emily for their incredible understanding and support.
• to my extended family; my mom and dad; brother, Bob; sisters, Patt and Su; and their families for being “rocks” of encouragement.
• to some very close brothers who stuck “closer than a brother” through the last 5 months — you know who you are.
• to my campus community of students, staff and faculty who have been a river of encouragement.
• to my church community of the Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church for being what Jesus meant for the church to be.
• to those of you who have read this blog so faithfully and sent such great words of blessing.

Even in the midst of this time of trial, I have been a very blessed man. The trial simply brought the blessings to life in new ways.

To each of you, thank you! Thank you! Thank you! God bless you!

A party with a purpose is what some have called Relay for Life events. So it came as no surprise, then, that SAU students wanted to host a RFL event on campus. The inaugural event, held in April, was in memory of legendary coach Hank Burbridge, who lost his battle with the disease in February 2005. The event raised $20,000 for cancer research.

An international event to promote cancer awareness, RFL celebrates survivors of the disease and honors the memory of those who lost the struggle. Teams of students, faculty and staff gathered at the athletic field track to take turns walking or running laps.

After losing Hank Burbridge, the University rallied around Shaun Page, a senior who was diagnosed with leukemia in December 2005, and University chaplain Ron Kopicko ’77, who was diagnosed in January with testicular cancer.

“I think this Relay for Life was an awesome opportunity to show our chaplain and friend how much we love and support them,” says campus coordinator Maria Wyatt ’06, from Watervliet, Mich.

Students reaching out

Last year, colleges and universities across the country raised more than $10 million through Relay for Life events. The number of college-aged participants continues to grow. “Relay for Life is a chance for students to reach out and make a difference,” says Mary Ball, the Jackson-area American Cancer Society coordinator.

As daylight faded, Relay for Life continued into the night and beyond. “The reason for the 24 hours is that cancer never sleeps. Sometimes you want to give up, but you just keep going,” says Wyatt.

Though this is the first Relay for Life the University has hosted, it likely will not be the last, says Steve Newton ’93, director of service and outreach for student development. “We’re trying to get college-aged students informed about cancer because the more they know, the better they can prevent it.”
After guiding the Bartow (Fla.) High School softball team to a 31-1 record and a state title in 2006, Glenn Rutenbar ’81 was named the Florida Dairy Farmers Softball Coach of the Year.

Sponsored by Florida Dairy Farmers Inc., a statewide panel of softball coaches and prep media representatives picked Rutenbar for the award. Rutenbar is the first coach to receive the honor more than twice. He was also honored in 2002 and 2004.

Building a premier sport
When fast-pitch softball was just getting started in Florida, Rutenbar decided to take a chance and switch from coaching high school baseball to developing the new program for girls at Bartow High School, where he also teaches physical education.

Looking back on the decision likely brings a grin to Rutenbar’s face. Over the past 20 years, he has guided the Bartow Yellow Jackets to 11 consecutive state tournaments bringing home the title seven times.

“I like the competition coaching provides,” says Rutenbar. “The companionship among the kids is also rewarding.”

Despite carrying a career coaching record of 571-92-1, Rutenbar is quick to pass off the achievements of the softball program to others. “The kids are who make this program successful,” says Rutenbar. “The girls are great to coach. They work hard and aren’t selfish. I also have had tremendous assistant coaches over the years.”

Learning from the best
At Spring Arbor University, Rutenbar suited up for the Cougars after transferring from Mott Community College. Rutenbar played second base for the University. During his senior year at SAU, the Cougars went to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics World Series. It was the first of three times the University has advanced that far during post-season play.

“I have fond memories of Spring Arbor and playing for coach Hank Burbridge,” says Rutenbar. “He was a great coach and a great man. I still talk about him and think of him often.”

Those methods have more than paid off. Rutenbar’s teams have made 11 consecutive appearances in the state tournament. His 2003 squad finished No. 1 in the USA Today national rankings and he has been featured in Sports Illustrated.

As the founding softball coach at Bartow, Rutenbar has no intentions of retiring anytime soon. And despite his hectic schedule as one of the top high school coaches in softball, Rutenbar highly values his role as father and No. 1 fan of his daughters, Kelli and Kara, who both play for the University of North Florida. “I try to make every game I can,” says Rutenbar.

Rutenbar named softball coach of the year
After completing the toughest regular season in women’s soccer history, Spring Arbor University advanced to their fifth consecutive post-season national tournament.

The Cougars traveled to Kissimmee, Fla., to compete in the NCCAA championship. “It was exciting to return to the NCCAA finals again in 2005. The players really enjoy the Christ-centered environment, and there was excellent competition,” says head coach and alum Jason Crist.

A No. 4 seed in the tournament, Spring Arbor University was upset in opening round play by Hope International University (Calif.). But the Cougars bounced back to defeat Dallas Baptist University in the second round. In their final game of the tournament, the Cougars faced Palm Beach Atlantic. At the end of regulation, the teams were deadlocked at one a piece and forced to complete penalty kicks to determine the winner. Unfortunately, the Cougars found themselves on the losing end.

Spring Arbor University landed two athletes, senior Megan Bauhoff (Troy, Mich.) and junior Diana Humphrey (Kinde, Mich.) on the NCCAA All-American team, an honor reserved for only 11 players nationwide.

During the first two seasons as members of the Mid-Central College Conference, the University posted a 13-1-2 record.

Awards roll in for Salow
Scott Salow ’91 was named National Coach of the Year for baseball by the National High School Coaches Association.

A week later, he earned his second state title in three years. The award-winning coach guided the Homer (Mich.) Trojans to its Division 4 state baseball championship. The win capped off an impressive run for the Trojans who, over the past three years have won 113 of 115 games.

If he thought the state title was the final reward he would receive in 2006, Salow was wrong. The Detroit Free Press named him Prep Person of the Year.

Salow established one of the premier baseball programs in the country within a town previously unknown to most. Last spring Salow and his Homer Trojans gave Homer, the small town in southern Michigan, a place on the map as they surpassed the record for consecutive wins. With news breaking in publications like Sports Illustrated, Homer has become synonymous with excellence in high school baseball over the past three seasons — and much of the credit goes to Salow.

A former member of SAU’s baseball program, Salow has led the Homer Trojans since 2001, where he also serves as the middle school principal. During his reign at the helm of Homer baseball, the team has won two state titles, set a national record with 75-straight wins and been ranked first throughout the majority of the last three seasons.

“Being named Michigan’s coach of the year during the last two years was plenty, but to be named in the same breath as some of the best coaches in the country — well, that says a lot about our team and our kids,” says Salow.

Salow played his prep career in Monroe, Mich. He then followed in the footsteps of his older brother, Tom Salow ’88, and signed a letter of intent to play for the Cougars under coach Hank Burbridge.

“I think Coach taught me more about life and how to become a good man,” says Salow. “I learned to put my education and relationship with Christ ahead of baseball because there are more important things in life.”

After Burbridge died in February 2005, Salow switched his uniform number from No. 14 to No. 20, which was Burbridge’s number, to honor his mentor.

Women’s Soccer Returns to National Competition
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BRITSCH RETIRES AS WOMEN’S BASKETBALL COACH

At the conclusion of the 2005-06 season, longtime Spring Arbor University women’s basketball coach Tom Britsch retired, bringing an end to his 15-year career at the helm of Lady Cougar basketball.

Britsch led the Cougars to a 289-217 record over the course of his career and carried an average of 21 wins per season over a 12-year stretch during his tenure. The team also posted records above .500 in 12 of 15 seasons under Britsch’s leadership.

Britsch has mentored multiple NAIA and NCCAA All-Americans since taking the reins of the program in 1990. He led the Lady Cougars to the NCCAA national tournament twice, finishing second in the nation in their first appearance. Britsch also led the Cougars to four appearances at the prestigious NAIA national tournament, twice advancing to the elite eight before being eliminated.

It took a bit of coaxing to get Britsch to move from the ranks of high school coaching to the college scene. “When Kay (Gallagher HS ’59) Dunckel called me 15 years ago and asked me to take the team, I originally said no,” said Britsch. “She was persistent and called me back. I’m glad she did, because this has been just a wonderful experience for me.”

All of the accomplishments and accolades take a back seat to the opportunity Britsch had to work with student athletes. “I’m really going to miss working with the girls. There is a great sense of fulfillment watching them grow and develop as players — and adults.”

“I’ve been blessed to work with great people on a daily basis,” says Britsch. “Spring Arbor is so special to me because it’s more than a coaching job, it’s a ministry. It’s been a great platform for me not only to teach the game of basketball, but also to share Jesus Christ.”

Cougar baseball places second at NCCAA national tournament

The Cougar baseball team claimed runner-up honors at the 2006 NCCAA national tournament after falling to Malone College 0-6 in the championship game.

“I am proud of the team for what they accomplished and how hard they played throughout the tournament,” says head coach Sam Riggelman ’73.

For seniors Tom Compian (Taylor, Mich.) and Scott Edwards (Parma, Mich.), the NCCAA tournament run ended their collegiate careers — but not without leaving their marks in the Cougar record books. Edwards leaves SAU as the career leader in RBIs and doubles. “He has been a tremendous clutch hitter,” says Riggelman. “To claim the most RBIs at Spring Arbor with the history of this program is significant.”

While Compian’s fastball classified his abilities, his competitive nature propelled his success and won over the respect of his coaches, teammates and opponents. “He has been described as a bulldog because of his presence on the mound and his competitive strength,” says Riggelman. The veteran pitcher also worked to tutor younger members of the Cougar pitching staff.

“I’m glad they had the opportunity to play in the national tournament and final game. Their careers deserved it,” says Riggelman.

Freshmen Jesse Bachman (Middlebury, Ind.) and Eric Vojtkofsky (Wayne, Mich.), and Edwards were all named to the NCCAA All-tournament team. Bachman and Vojtkofsky also were named All-Americans. Spring Arbor finished the year 34-22.

THOMPSON RECORDS 500TH WIN

Softball coach Deb Thompson ’84 reached a milestone in April with her 500th career victory in a double-header victory over Concordia University.

“I couldn’t have done this without some great women with strong work ethics, and blessings from the Lord,” says Thompson.

After leading the Cougars to consecutive winning seasons since the turn of the century, Thompson managed to go from her 300th victory in 2000 to win number 500 just six years later.

Thompson also credits past University coaches who modeled sports success. “I’ve had some great mentors here at SAU,” Coach Hank Burbridge, Kay Dunckel, Bill Bockwitz and others gave me the guidance to work hard with the program,” says Thompson.

After coaching for more than 20 years, Thompson’s favorite part of her job has not changed. “Seeing a group of young athletes come together to form a team is the most rewarding part of my job. Watching and helping them use the gifts and talents God has given them in a group effort is very rewarding,” says Thompson.

Since 1987, Thompson has recorded a distinguished list of accomplishments. The Cougars captured the NCCAA national title in 2005 after finishing as runners-up the previous year.

Thanks to her impressive leadership, Thompson has been honored several times by local and national organizations. In 1996, 1998 and 2004 Thompson was named the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Regional Coach of the Year. She has also earned NCCAA Regional Coach of the Year nine times, and in 2005 she was named NCCAA National Coach of the Year after her Cougars captured the NCCAA national title.

“Her dedication to softball goes far beyond the campus of Spring Arbor University. Thompson has served on the NAIA Softball Coaches Association Executive Committee for the past five years, and currently serves as national vice chair of the NCCAA. She also serves as the NAIA region VIII softball chair.

Thompson’s work at Spring Arbor extends beyond the softball field. She is an exercise and sports science professor and CORE 100 instructor. She also has led cross cultural trips to other countries.
Back-to-back NCCAA titles for men’s hoops

The Cougars claimed their second consecutive National Christian College Athletic Association Division I National Championship by defeating host Oakland City University Mighty Oaks 93-89 in the championship contest in March.

After knocking off Bethany Lutheran and Roberts Wesleyan to advance to the championship game, the Cougars battled to the end for the right to defend their title. The championship game featured 15 ties and 23 lead changes.

“It was an incredible basketball game with both teams playing extremely well. Our guys just refused to lose,” says Ryan Cottingham ’94, Cougar head coach.

A fight from the opening tip, the team trailed by four with less than two minutes to play in the first half. An 8-0 run capped by a Mike Folkert (Hudson, Mich.) 3-pointer allowed SAU to head into intermission with the score deadlocked at 84-84 with just 1:24 to play.

Micah Lancaster (Belmont, Mich.), a first-team NCCAA All-American point guard who finished with 20 points and 10 assists, found junior transfer Scott Parrish (Charlevoix, Mich.) open on the wing, and Parrish delivered his only 3-pointer of the game to give the Cougars an 87-84 advantage with 58 seconds to play.

SAU then came up with a huge defensive stop and the Mighty Oaks were forced to foul Lancaster with just 38 seconds remaining. Lancaster converted on the one-and-one situation to increase the lead by five.

After a quick two by Oakland City, Lancaster was fouled and faced another free throw opportunity with 22 seconds left in regulation. Once again, the senior connected on both free throws to push the lead back to a five-point margin. The Mighty Oaks would not retreat, as they hit a 3-pointer with nine seconds remaining to make the score 91-89.

This time it was senior DaJuan Jefferson (Jackson, Mich.) who was fouled and had to go to the line. Jefferson, who finished with 25 points and was named to the all-tournament team, hit both free throws to secure the 93-89 victory.

Folkert, who was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player, scored a game-high 28 points including eight for 15 shooting from behind the 3-point line. For the tournament, Folkert averaged 30 points per game, while shooting an amazing 24 of 44 from behind the arc.

I’m really proud of this group. They’ve persevered all year long. I’m especially happy for our four seniors — Lancaster, Folkert, Jefferson and Michael Hinkle (Spring Arbor) — who have given us so much over the course of their careers. With back-to-back NCCAA national championships and a host of team and individual accolades, they have forever left their mark on SAU basketball,” says Cottingham.

The Cougars ended the season with a 23-13 record.

Riggleman collects 700th victory

Baseball coach Sam Riggleman ’73 picked up his 700th win as a collegiate head coach as the Cougars advanced to the championship game at the National Christian College Athletic Association national tournament in May.

Riggleman, who pitched for the Cougars (1969-1973) in college, began his coaching career in 1977. Since then, he has had few seasons where the win column was not larger than the loss. Riggleman became the third coach in the history of SAU baseball.

At the conclusion of his first season at the helm, Riggleman’s career coaching record stood at 667-476-2. His 2005 Cougar squad notched a 21-27 overall mark.

When the Cougars took the field in 2006, they proved to be a much improved squad. Highly touted for developing pitchers, Riggleman’s pitching staff sported a 4.18 overall ERA and a 3.52 ERA against MCC conference foes this season. The Cougars also set standards in stolen bases by collecting 131 in 2006, a mark that surpassed the school record, set by Riggleman’s 2005 team. In fact, the Cougars stole enough bases to rank them fifth overall in the nation.

The improvements led to more wins in 2006 and helped the Cougars earn a spot in the NAIA region VIII playoffs, where they advanced to the semifinal round.

With a solid season in tow and a No. 3 NCCAA ranking in their corner, Spring Arbor accepted an at-large bid to the NCCAA national championship in Clearwater, Fla.

On the road to the championship game, SAU faced off with Mid America Nazarene in the semifinal round. Down 0-1 late in the game, the Cougars manufactured a two-run rally that gave them the lead going into the final frame. Cougar pitcher and sophomore Mark Fransen (East Lansing, Mich.) retired the MNU side to send the Cougars to the finals and earn Riggleman his 700th career victory.

Riggleman is one of only 10 coaches to reach the 700-win plateau in NAIA history. His 701-498-2 record places him in the top five among active NAIA coaches and the top 10 overall for wins. His 2006 Cougars finished 34-22 overall and as the NCCAA national runner-up.

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Riggleman collects 700th victory

Baseball coach Sam Riggleman ’73 picked up his 700th win as a collegiate head coach as the Cougars advanced to the championship game at the National Christian College Athletic Association national tournament in May.

Riggleman, who pitched for the Cougars (1969-1973) in college, began his coaching career in 1977. Since then, he has had few seasons where the win column was not larger than the loss. Riggleman became the third coach in the history of SAU baseball.

At the conclusion of his first season at the helm, Riggleman’s career coaching record stood at 667-476-2. His 2005 Cougar squad notched a 21-27 overall mark.

When the Cougars took the field in 2006, they proved to be a much improved squad. Highly touted for developing pitchers, Riggleman’s pitching staff sported a 4.18 overall ERA and a 3.52 ERA against MCC conference foes this season. The Cougars also set standards in stolen bases by collecting 131 in 2006, a mark that surpassed the school record, set by Riggleman’s 2005 team. In fact, the Cougars stole enough bases to rank them fifth overall in the nation.

The improvements led to more wins in 2006 and helped the Cougars earn a spot in the NAIA region VIII playoffs, where they advanced to the semifinal round.

With a solid season in tow and a No. 3 NCCAA ranking in their corner, Spring Arbor accepted an at-large bid to the NCCAA national championship in Clearwater, Fla.

On the road to the championship game, SAU faced off with Mid America Nazarene in the semifinal round. Down 0-1 late in the game, the Cougars manufactured a two-run rally that gave them the lead going into the final frame. Cougar pitcher and sophomore Mark Fransen (East Lansing, Mich.) retired the MNU side to send the Cougars to the finals and earn Riggleman his 700th career victory.

Riggleman is one of only 10 coaches to reach the 700-win plateau in NAIA history. His 701-498-2 record places him in the top five among active NAIA coaches and the top 10 overall for wins. His 2006 Cougars finished 34-22 overall and as the NCCAA national runner-up.
COUGAR RUNNERS AMONG TOP NATIONWIDE

Spring Arbor University sports a long history of successful running programs. Training year round, SAU competed at the national level on every opportunity during the 2005-06 season. Both the men’s and women’s teams qualified for the cross country National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics championship, a feat new to the University. Both teams have advanced that far in the past, but 2005 marked the first joint trip for Cougar men and women.

The women’s team took 9th overall, while the men finished 22nd. Senior Christine Ingraham (Horton, Mich.) placed 25th to lead the women, while junior Herbert Rotich (Eldoret, Kenya) finished 23rd to pace the men.

The success of Cougar runners during cross country season flowed into winter and spring track schedules as well.

At the indoor NAIA national meet, each Spring Arbor University runner who qualified finished in the top 10 of their respective events. On the men’s side, freshman Takis Pifer (Buckley, Mich.) placed 7th. Senior Dan Lane (Holland, Ohio) advanced to the finals with a time of 4:19, which ranks him 7th overall for the fastest indoor mile at SAU.

On the women’s side Ingraham placed 7th overall in the mile with a time of 5:05, which places her 2nd on the all-time SAU indoor list. The women’s 4x800 meter relay of senior sisters Christine and Courtney Ingraham (Horton, Mich.), sophomore Amber Myers (Jackson, Mich.) and junior Holly Pifer (Buckley, Mich.) ran the 5th fastest time in SAU history with a time of 9:25 in the semifinals before taking 8th in the finals.

“This was a great meet, anytime your entire group is able to make the finals at the national championship it’s a great accomplishment,” says head coach Bill Bippes ’91.

During the outdoor track season, two University runners qualified for the NAIA national meet in California. Takis Pifer and Christine Ingraham both turned in admirable performances on the biggest stage the NAIA has to offer.

In qualifying rounds, both runners raced well to advance. “The opening day was great for both Takis and Christine,” says Bippes. “Takis ran well enough to place him 14th overall and just 1.5 seconds off the time of the leader. Christine’s time was even better, landing her in 6th place overall going into the final.”

Pifer missed qualifying for the finals, as he took 18th in the second round. “As a freshman, Takis had a great national meet,” says Bippes. “This will be a great learning experience for his growth in the sport.”

Ingraham placed 9th in the mile after her performance was hindered by severe stomach cramps that forced her to make a stop at the emergency room the day before the finals. “I am very proud of Christine,” says Bippes. “She started her career as a champion, and ended it the same way.” Ingraham leaves the University tied with four SAU athletes for the most NAIA national awards, with five over the course of her career.

Kreklau heads new era in Cougar women’s basketball

Former Dickinson State University women’s basketball coach, Tara Kreklau, will lead the women’s basketball program at SAU. Kreklau takes over for longtime coach Tom Britsch, who guided the program to a 289-217 record during his 15-year tenure.

“After an extensive search, it is apparent that Coach Kreklau is the right person to lead the women’s basketball program,” says Sam Riggleman, director of athletics at Spring Arbor University. “Her experience, maturity, success and commitment to the mission of the SAU athletic program will serve her well as she works with her athletes and continues to develop the program.”

In addition to her coaching duties, Kreklau will teach courses in exercise and sports science and CORE and be responsible for a variety of administrative duties for women’s athletics as she serves as the assistant director of athletics for women’s sports.

“I am absolutely thrilled to get started at Spring Arbor,” says Kreklau, who most recently coached at DSU in North Dakota (1999-2006), where she guided her team to two NAIA national tournaments. “There is a positive energy on the University’s campus and I am very impressed with the mission of the athletic department and the leadership of Sam Riggleman.”

Kreklau inherits a team that has been riddled with injuries over the past 15-year tenure.

The program has had a lot of success in the past and I want to continue to build on that legacy by establishing the foundation to help this team annually compete for the conference title,” says Kreklau.

The seasoned coach, whose coaching resume also boasts stops at Peru State College (Neb.) and St. Cloud State University (Minn.), also intends to help her student-athletes prepare for their lives outside of basketball. “I want to help guide these young ladies in their careers and in all phases of their lives so they will be successful when they leave Spring Arbor University,” says Kreklau.
Leave your legacy as part of the SAU Legacy Society

The old saying, “You can’t take it with you,” is only partially true. In fact, you can take something with you: it’s the satisfaction of knowing you left your possessions where they will do the greatest good.

Currently, over 500 alumni and friends of Spring Arbor University are experiencing that satisfaction. We invite you to join this elite group of individuals.

Today, more wealth than ever before is being passed down from one generation to another, but parents and grandparents alike are expressing concern over simply bequeathing assets to heirs. What they are learning is that careful planning makes it possible to distribute an inheritance that not only establishes a lasting legacy, but also reflects their personal values.

Through contributing to Spring Arbor University, you can achieve both personal and philanthropic goals. The most common are bequests, charitable gift annuities and trusts. By designating Spring Arbor University as sole or partial beneficiary of a retirement plan account or life insurance contract, you can achieve your goals and assist the University at the same time.

Establish a strategy for your legacy today and become a member of the Spring Arbor University Legacy Society.

Contact the SAU Foundation for a free consultation. You can make a legacy gift today that will benefit current and future generations of SAU students — and provide a legacy that mirrors your values and life’s work.

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The Charitable Gift Annuity is a perfect example of how you can accomplish two objectives with one asset:
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With the benefits of high payment rates, an immediate charitable income tax deduction, and ultimately a deferred gift to Spring Arbor University, it’s easy to see why so many friends consider the CGA to be the ultimate win-win gift plan.

For details on how a CGA can work for you in your charitable giving, contact Bob Freelove at 877.SAU.Legacy (877.728.5342), or e-mail at legacy@arbor.edu. Void where prohibited by state law.
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Orbitform
Physicians Health Plan of South Michigan
PS Food Mart
Rheinmann Group
R.J. Michaels/Jackson Magazine
Spring Arbor Lumber and Home Center
Wolverine Steel & Welding

William H. (Bill) White/Prudential Real Estate

COMPANY: Bill White, Associate Broker with Prudential Premier Properties
OWNER: Laura Schlecte
HEADQUARTERS: Jackson, Michigan
SERVICES: Real Estate Brokers
EMPLOYEES: 30
HISTORY: nearly 30 years (Bill White)
PHONE: 517.796.6144
WEB: www.billwhite.com

An associate broker who serves the Jackson community, Bill White believes in mission statements. White's mission simply states, "By creating and implementing distinctive marketing plans, providing accurate and relevant information, trustworthy advice and focusing on my clients' expectations, I will gain lifelong customers." White believes relationships are very important in the real estate business. That belief carries over into his community involvements, too.

Partnering with Spring Arbor University was an easy decision for White, especially because of the impact the University had on his wife, Sandra '00, as well as his brother, John White '76. "Witnessing the influence of the University in the lives of those close to me has certainly been a factor in my growing commitment to the mission of Spring Arbor University. In addition, I have grown spiritually and professionally due to several people who have invested in my life over the years," states White.

The benefit White enjoys most as a corporate partner is the opportunity to attend the luncheons. He feels the University continues to bring outstanding business leaders to campus to share their experiences. White also finds the testimonies of SAU alums — who now impact the Jackson community — to be very encouraging. He believes the advantage to Spring Arbor University is its focus on an education that combines faith and learning with purposeful training for future careers. "I am excited about what the future holds for Spring Arbor University and the impact its graduates have in our community and our world," says White.

J.L. Watson Funeral Chapel

COMPANY: J.L. Watson Funeral Chapel
OWNER: Jerry L. Watson Jr.
HEADQUARTERS: Jackson, Michigan
SERVICES: Complete funeral, cremation and pre-planning services
EMPLOYEES: 6
HISTORY: Locally owned since 1930
PHONE: 517.782.7144
E-MAIL: watsonfuneralchapels@voyager.net

Serving the Jackson area for over 75 years, J.L. Watson Funeral Chapel provides personal attention and professional services to families in their time of need.

Jerry Watson, who has owned the business since 1999, believes in serving the community in other areas, too. Watson’s involvement in the Spring Arbor community led him and his wife, Sandy, to partner with the University. As a member of the Volunteers in Partnership Program, Sandy assists with SAU events by helping with mailings, set-up and greeting, and registering guests.

It was this involvement that led the couple to become corporate partners. "By partnering with the University, we see first-hand how great an example the University is at setting goals and working hard to achieve them. We continue to realize the positive influence Spring Arbor University has on the community," says Watson.

“The Christian atmosphere is what sets Spring Arbor University apart from other schools,” says Watson. He believes the University presents faith and learning as a dynamic, ongoing process of both personal and professional development; and that Christian learning promotes the exploration of new ideas, as well as the undertaking of new challenges. According to Watson, “Spring Arbor University’s continued success can only mean great things for the Jackson community.”

BECOME A CORPORATE PARTNER  Learn more about how you can become a corporate partner. Contact Jay Mansur, vice president for university advancement, at 517.750.6397 or 877.SAU.1873.
The University will soon be bustling with the excitement of students returning for fall semester. Enrollment again is at an all-time high and we continue to rejoice with God’s blessings in this area!

Spring Arbor University’s University Hall, a new 39,500-square-foot student living center, is complete and home to 160 students. The landscape of Spring Arbor University’s 100-acre main campus continues to change, as new facilities are built to aid in the growth of our student population.

Excursions
We continue to have a great response to our travel excursions and I am in the throes of planning additional trips for the coming year. In fact, our third New York City Theatre Excursion is right around the corner (Thursday, Nov. 9-Sunday, Nov. 12) and we still have room for additional travelers. Please contact me at iprice@arbor.edu or 517.750.6725 if you are interested in joining us for this excursion.

Support
The alumni association has partnered with Shop4Zero! This enables our alumni, friends and students to shop without the stresses of full parking lots, long checkout lines and crowds. Shop4Zero offers over 900 stores — and it’s all from the comfort of your own computer. Not only is it convenient for you, but also a percentage of every purchase comes back to Spring Arbor University. All proceeds help fund student scholarships! Go shopping today at www.springarbor.shop4zero.org.

Events
As our alumni base continues to grow, I want to be sure you have plenty of opportunities to connect with friends — old and new. It is my hope you will be able to join alumni and friends at one or more of these events. Check out the listing below and be sure to mark several dates on your own calendar.

And of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention the spiritual climate on campus. This year alone, we have more than 500 of our students involved in various ministries. As President Beebe has said, “We want our students to maximize their God-given abilities and grow spiritually, intellectually, emotionally and physically.”

Spring Arbor University alumni continue to be our most important asset.

Thank you for all you do — both your time and your resources.

IRENE PRICE GREINER
Director
Office of Alumni Relations
Meet the alumni board “freshmen”

Kimberley Bracey ’90, a resident of Detroit, is a 25-year employee at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and is the manager of Bricktown Customer Support. After graduating from Spring Arbor University with a bachelor’s degree in management of human resources, she earned a master’s in organizational management from the University of Phoenix. Bracey is a member of Messiah Baptist Church in Detroit, where she serves as assistant adult superintendent of Sunday school and is chairperson of the communications ministry. Bracey is a member of the Association of Black Educators, the National Management Association, and is past president of Mayflower Optimist Club of Detroit. Her favorite pastimes include studying God’s word and spending time with family.

Kathi Marston ’95, ’01 graduated with a bachelor’s degree in management of human resources, and went on to earn a master’s in management and organizational development. Marston has worked at Spring Arbor University’s Toledo site since May 1994. Currently, she is the academic advisor for the undergraduate programs and student services coordinator for the graduate programs. Marston is also an adjunct instructor in the management and organizational development program at the Toledo location. Marston and her husband, Ron ’76, live in Temperance, Mich. They are both very active at CrossRoads Community Church located in Ottawa Lake, Mich. Marston enjoys spending time with her family — especially her grandchildren.

Joseph Taylor ’72, ’02 is a retired tool and die maker and has worked for Spring Arbor University’s Metro-Detroit site since 2002. Taylor also serves as a full-time lay minister, teaching and counseling at NorthRidge Church in Plymouth, Mich. He completed his master’s in organizational management in 2002 and will receive his master’s in counseling from SAU this year. Taylor and his wife, Hope (Meissner ’71) reside in Wayne, Mich. They are the parents of two adult children and one recently deceased.

Steve Thompson ’93 grew up in Clarkston, Mich., but graduated from Pan American Christian Academy in Sao Paulo, Brazil, before returning to the United States for college. After graduating from Spring Arbor University, he furthered his education at Asbury Theological Seminary, earning a master’s in divinity in 1997. From 1998-2003, Thompson was the pastor of the Auburn Hills (Mich.) Free Methodist Church. He currently is an associate pastor and church planter for Watermark Church in Grand Haven, Mich. — a church led by Steve Deur ’94. Thompson married fellow Common Bond alum, Jessica (Baughn 1991-93) and they reside in Grand Haven with their three children, Spencer, 7, Carter, 5, and Zoe, 2.
PHILSON BLENDS PASSION AND EXPERTISE TO SERVE YOUTH

Growing up in a single-parent home meant some struggles for Brian Philson ’85 and his siblings. It wasn’t until he was an adult, though, that he understood the hardships. “We were poor, but we didn’t know it,” says Philson.

Surrounded by family and friends, Philson learned to appreciate relationships above all. “A lot of people helped me in life, and I’ve never forgotten that,” says Philson, who recently stepped down from his 20-plus year role at the Jackson County Youth Center to pursue another challenge: director of residential services at Highfields, a multi-service agency whose programs offer a variety of services designed to assist youth to be responsible for their behavior.

“My family and the community helped me,” he says. “I have always been passionate about serving young people and their families.”

He completed an internship in Jackson, where he opted to stay. Philson went on to earn a master’s degree in social work from Michigan State University.

Philson established himself as a leader early in his career at the Jackson County Youth Center. Starting as a youth specialist in 1991 Philson quickly rose through the ranks at the 50-bed juvenile detention facility serving as supervisor and deputy director before becoming the director. As director, he was responsible for youth center programs, which included residential, detention and community corrections.

ACCEPTING NEW CHALLENGES

The decision to accept a new challenge was a struggle. In his new position at Highfields, Philson is using the skills he acquired throughout his career to help the troubled facility return to its former status as one of the top juvenile facilities in the state. Under his direction, Highfields reopened its doors in July after being closed for several months due to allegations of mistreatment of youths.

Founded in 1962, Highfields works with approximately 1,000 families a year in a variety of in-home and school-based programs to improve parenting, and prevent domestic violence and abuse. The residential program is one of 17 programs Highfields operates in 11 counties for families, youth and communities. “I will be providing leadership for the appropriate education and treatment of those kids,” says Philson.

SERVING BEYOND THE EXPECTED

In 2004 Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed Philson to serve on the Michigan Committee on Juvenile Justice. “I was honored to be appointed to this prestigious committee,” says Philson. “It’s a huge responsibility with a rigorous selection process.”

Meeting quarterly, Philson is part of a committee that examines the needs of special populations within juvenile delinquents. Philson and the committee review grant requests and award funding to deserving counties.

Philson also chairs the Michigan Juvenile Detention Training Committee, of which he is a past president. He is also a member of organizations like: National Juvenile Detention Association Education Committee, National Association of Social Workers and the Jackson Association of School Counselors.

TRAINING LEADERS

The seasoned champion for juvenile justice has presented workshops in that field and residential treatment programs for many organizations, including the NJDA and the National Institute of Corrections, a federal organization that helps train new executives to become better leaders. Somehow Philson has also found a way to give back to SAU. Since 1991, Philson has taught social work courses. Typically guiding one or two courses a semester, Philson has used his experience and expertise to teach future social workers about adolescence psychology and crime and delinquency. “As a student, I was inspired by professors who had real life experience. That made me want to become someone who could teach and inspire, too,” says Philson.

“It’s important to take charge of your destiny and be intentional with what you want to achieve,” he says.

The veteran social worker is excited about his newest venture. Philson says, “Highfields is an organization with a similar mission and values to those I hold dear — working with children, youth and families to help them be successful.”

Philson is married to Bonnie (Crute ’83).

::: 1948 :::

Dean Adams JC ’48 and Marion (Cowles HS 1944-45) Adams celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in December 2005. They reside in Harrisville, Mich. deadams@kwcom.net

::: 1947 :::

James Taylor HS ’47, JC ’49 and his sister Mary (Taylor HS ’49, JC ’51) Previte spoke at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Weihshien Concentration Camp in China, and found their names engraved on the memorial monument. James and Mary, children of Free Methodist missionaries James and Alice Taylor, were prisoners of the Japanese for almost three years during World War II. James and his wife, Leone (Tjepkema JC ’50), are missionaries residing in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Mary serves in the New Jersey Legislature and resides in Haddonfield, N.J.

::: 1954 :::

Lloyd Ganton HS ’54, JC ’56 was awarded the Pioneer Award by the Health Care Association of Michigan in September 2005. The award recognizes those who show leadership and innovation in the field of long-term care. Lloyd is the owner of Lloyd Ganton Retirement Centers Inc., and resides in Spring Arbor with his wife, Judi (Colson HS ’60).

::: 1957 :::

Lorraine (Collier HS ’57, JC ’59) Griffith retired after teaching for 17 years in the Pasco County School District in Florida. She also taught in Michigan and Illinois earlier in her career. Her husband, LaMan, is retired from his job as a credit manager in the construction industry. They reside in Dunedin, Fla. yooper39@tampabay.rr.com

::: 1950 :::

James Taylor HS ’47, JC ’49 and his sister Mary (Taylor HS ’49, JC ’51) Previte spoke at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Weihshien Concentration Camp in China, and found their names engraved on the memorial monument. James and Mary, children of Free Methodist missionaries James and Alice Taylor, were prisoners of the Japanese for almost three years during World War II. James and his wife, Leone (Tjepkema JC ’50), are missionaries residing in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Mary serves in the New Jersey Legislature and resides in Haddonfield, N.J.
1959
Elaine (Post HS ’59, JC ‘61) Curtis retired in June 2005 after 30 years of teaching. She taught third grade for the last 23 years in the Pentwater School District. Elaine and her husband, Lee, reside in Pentwater, Mich. ecurtis@jackpine.com

1966
Marilyn (Johnson ’66) Hayes, a painter, was elected president of the Greater Washington DC area chapter of the Women’s Caucus for Art in 2004. In 2005, she was elected to the national board of directors for the Women’s Caucus for Art. Marilyn resides in Arlington, Va. with her husband, Knox.

1968
Mary Jane (Kinney ’68) Bender resides in Fenton, Mich., with her husband, Richard. Mary teaches pre-school at Grace Lutheran Church in Howell, Mich., and Richard is retired from the Air Force and Federal Civil Service. They have four adult children and seven grandchildren. rcbender44@hotmail.com

1969
William Craig ’69 and his wife, Marie, now reside in Henderson, N.C. They are restoring a bed and breakfast, country store and mill.

Arnold Delamater ’69 is completing six years as pastor of the Mt. Carmel Free Methodist Church in Mt. Carmel, Ill. His wife, Sheryl (1965-66), works as a pharmacy technician at Lawrence County Memorial Hospital. They reside in Mt. Carmel, arnieandsheryl@earthlink.net

Marilyn (Kraft ’69) Stone has retired from teaching after serving 20 years in the Beecher School District in Flint, Mich., and 17 years in the Napoleon School District in Napoleon, Mich. She and her husband, Gordon JC ’59, also retired, reside in Jackson, Mich.

Darrell Whiteman ’69 was named vice president and resident missiologist of The Mission Society in December 2005. His responsibilities include developing theological and missiological training for national church leaders and Mission Society missionaries. He resides in Norcross, Ga., with his wife, Laurie. They have two children, Geoffrey and Julia.

1970
Joella Tromble ’70 has retired from teaching and is currently working privately as a family counselor. Her husband, William, is the development director for the Wabash Valley Community Foundation. They reside in Terre Haute, Ind.

1975
Lowell ’75 and Clarice (Somerville ’75) Rose celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on May 24, 2005. Lowell is employed at Meijer as the head frozen and dairy clerk, and Clarice is a recorder at Northwest Title Company. They reside in Howell, Mich., and have three children, Lowell II, 24, Jonathan, 21, and Danielle, 18. keewee53@hotmail.com

1976
Elaine (Lenz ’76) Kilmer joined VISA, Volunteers in Service Abroad, and is working at the Kibogora Hospital Mission Compound in Kamembe, Rwanda. She teaches French and basic computer usage to secondary school students at the John Wesley Institute, and also has hospital administration and community outreach responsibilities.

1977
Anthony Luttrell ’77 was named vice president of quality for MedImmune Inc. and is responsible for overseeing the company’s quality assurance, validation and clinical quality departments. His wife, Jan, is a quality consultant for Innovative Biopharm Solutions and they have four children, Matthew, 27, Michelle, 25, Johanna, 22 and Bethany, 17.

In December 2005, Barbara (Bell ’77) Yarina received her master’s in teaching from Wayne State University. She has been teaching fifth and sixth-grade science at a charter school in Inkster, Mich., for two years. Her husband, Steven, works for the Michigan Department of Corrections. They have one son, John, 16, and reside in Ferndale, Mich. swybajisy@aol.com

1978
Keith Brewer ’78 received his doctorate in New Testament from the Caspersen School of Graduate Studies at Drew University in Madison, N.J. in October 2005. He is in his 14th year as the chaplain of the Wesley Foundation at Princeton University, where he also serves on the faculty as a lecturer in the Department of Religion and the University Center for Human Values. Keith resides in Hillsborough, N.J. and is the father of Katie, 17, and Josh, 7.

Andy Duffy ’78 teaches special education students at Pineview Homes School in the Mecosta/Osceola Intermediate School District. He also writes outdoor copy for the Cadillac News and other publications. Two pieces he wrote appeared in an anthology of outdoor humor, The Great Duck Misunderstanding and Other Stories, published by

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New York City
Theatre Excursion

Join SAU alumni and friends for our annual New York City Theatre Excursion this November.

Dates: Thursday, November 9 through Sunday November 12

Hotel: Sheraton - New York
811 Seventh Ave.
New York, NY

Package: $1,600 per couple
$800 per person (double occupancy)

This price includes airfare, hotel, Broadway theatre tickets (two shows), and discount shopping coupons.

Please contact Irene Price Greiner at 517.750.6725 or iprice@arbor.edu to confirm your reservation.
Willow Creek Press. His wife, Mandy (Johns ’79), is a registered nurse, but is currently tutoring. They have two adult children, Sean, 20, and Erin, 18, and reside in Evart, Mich. 
aduffy@netonecom.net

Mark Terman ’78 has been named director of principal gifts with University Development at Michigan State University. He and his wife, Denise, reside in Mason, Mich.

David Garrett ’79 has written Been Wronged Lately!, a book published by Xulon Press that explores conflict in today’s church and outlines a biblically-based means of creating a resolution. David has his own law practice with several offices in western Michigan. He also oversees ICORVI Ministries, an organization that offers dispute resolution training to churches and other Christian organizations. David resides in Muskegon, Mich., with his wife, Loril, and their children. davidgarrett@icorvi.org

Eben Smith ’79 became pastor of the Rose Lake Free Methodist Church in LeRoy, Mich., on Sept. 4, 2005. This marks the sixth rejuvenation assignment for him and his wife, Ruth (Davey ’79). Eben teaches government and economics at Lake City High School, where he has been on the staff for 20 years, and also serves as the senior chaplain at Cadillac Mercy Hospital. Ruth has taught Spanish at Cadillac Junior High for 11 years. They reside in Cadillac, Mich.

DeLynn (Stevens 1980-82) Coppoletti has earned her bachelor’s in fine art from Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio, and recently had 11 pastel drawings on exhibit at the Southern Ohio Museum. Her husband, Sam, is the director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Shawnee State. They reside in South Webster, Ohio, with their sons, Mitch, 19, and Christian, 9. They also have an adult son, David. dcoppoletti@yahoo.com

M. Dawn Jones-Baer ’80 works as a school nurse for the Casa Grande Elementary School District. She also mentors a group of Native American girls and recently helped them write a play on bullying. Dawn resides in Casa Grande, Ariz.

In November 2005, Carl Boutilier ’82, a 13-year employee of Mirkovich and Associates was named its new president. The company is a manufacturer’s representative agency specializing in products for the food service and hospitality industry in Illinois and Wisconsin. Carl resides in Wheaton, Ill. with his wife, Stacey.

In 2008, Katherine (Lofts ’82) Lofts completed a master’s of strategic studies, her second master’s degree, from the U.S. Army War College in July 2005. In January, she was promoted to the rank of colonel in the Michigan Army National Guard. She resides in Stanton, Mich., with her husband, Larry, a soldier who recently returned from Iraq. Kathie is currently the dean of student services for Montcalm Community College in Sidney, Mich. kathiel@montcalm.edu

Brent Cryderman ’89 was named principal for Western High School in Spring Arbor. He resides in Jackson with his wife, Joann (Gallogly ’89), a full-time mom, and daughters, Chloe, 12, Tessa, 10, and Brooklyn, 8.

David McConnaughey ’89 was named acting president, Maytag services for the Maytag Corporation in November 2005. He resides in Newton, Iowa.

Rob Acton ’91 is an attorney residing in Chicago and serves as the executive director of Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic, the first Christian legal aid organization in America. The CGLA provides free legal services in the areas of housing, family and criminal law to those in need. robacton@cglalaw.net

Ruth (Stevenson ’91) and David Eblen welcomed a son, Ryan Matthew, on Aug. 19, 2005. He joined his big sister, Anna, 3. The Eblens reside in Brownstown, Mich., where Ruth is a stay-at-home mom and David is an engineer with the Ford Motor Company. ruth.eblen@comcast.net

Amy (Goodall ’91) and William Locke ’96 reside in Jackson, Mich., where Amy teaches at Northwest Flora List School, and William works at Seven’s Paint and Wallpaper Company, alocke@nsd.k12.mi.us

Robin (Lowrance ’92) and Ronald Blackburn (1983-85) welcomed a daughter, Alyssa Rochelle, on April 3. She joins her older brother, Joel, 5. The Blackbourns reside in Kalamazoo, Mich., where Ronald teaches drafting and woodshop at Gull Lake High School and Robin is a stay-at-home mom. rblackburn@netzero.net

Joe Krause ’92 is the principal of Nenana City School in Nenana, Alaska. Located between Denali and Fairbanks, the school is comprised of 240 students in grades K-12. His wife, Christine (Cooper ’93), is a stay-at-home mom and assists with Nenana’s cross country ski/biathlon team. They reside in Nenana with their three children, Ron, 11, Glen, 8, and Naomi, 5. jkrause@nenana.schoolaccess.net

Michelle (Redman ’92) and Ron Schaffner ’94 welcomed a daughter, Anna Rebecca, on May 25, 2005. Anna joined older siblings, Luke, 10, Abigail, 8, Kaitlyn, 6, and Joshua, 3. They reside in Clinton, Mich., where Ron teaches math and science at Clinton High School and Michelle is a stay-at-home mom.

Karen (West ’93) Aiello resides in Mt. Morris, Mich., with her husband, Jeremy, and children, Kami, 4, and Connor, 2. Karen teaches kindergarten in Mt. Morris, and Jeremy teaches middle school Spanish and French for Clio Area Schools. kaiello@nmorrischools.org

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Submit nominations for the 2007 Alumni Awards. Alumni are recognized for the following honors:

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

leroY M. loWELL (For SAU faculty & staff)

FAITHFUL SERVANT

YOUNG LEADER

Details about each award can be found in the Alumni & Friends section of www.arbor.edu

Contact: Irene Price Greiner
517.750.6725
iprice@arbor.edu
or Lynne Markiewicz
517.750.6687
lynne@arbor.edu

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1, 2006.

** 1979 **

David Garrett ’79 has written Been Wronged Lately!, a book published by Xulon Press that explores conflict in today’s church and outlines a biblically-based means of creating a resolution. David has his own law practice with several offices in western Michigan. He also oversees ICORVI Ministries, an organization that offers dispute resolution training to churches and other Christian organizations. David resides in Muskegon, Mich., with his wife, Loril, and their children.

davidgarrett@icorvi.org

Eben Smith ’79 became pastor of the Rose Lake Free Methodist Church in LeRoy, Mich., on Sept. 4, 2005. This marks the sixth rejuvenation assignment for him and his wife, Ruth (Davey ’79). Eben teaches government and economics at Lake City High School, where he has been on the staff for 20 years, and also serves as the senior chaplain at Cadillac Mercy Hospital. Ruth has taught Spanish at Cadillac Junior High for 11 years. They reside in Cadillac, Mich.

** 1980 **

DeLynn (Stevens 1980-82) Coppoletti has earned her bachelor’s in fine art from Shawnee State University in Portsmouth, Ohio, and recently had 11 pastel drawings on exhibit at the Southern Ohio Museum. Her husband, Sam, is the director of the Physical Therapist Assistant Program at Shawnee State. They reside in South Webster, Ohio, with their sons, Mitch, 19, and Christian, 9. They also have an adult son, David.

dcoppoletti@yahoo.com

M. Dawn Jones-Baer ’80 works as a school nurse for the Casa Grande Elementary School District. She also mentors a group of Native American girls and recently helped them write a play on bullying. Dawn resides in Casa Grande, Ariz.

In November 2005, Carl Boutilier ’82, a 13-year employee of Mirkovich and Associates was named its new president. The company is a manufacturer’s representative agency specializing in products for the food service and hospitality industry in Illinois and Wisconsin. Carl resides in Wheaton, Ill. with his wife, Stacey.

** 1987 **

Kathie (Olsen ’87) Lofts completed a master’s of strategic studies, her second master’s degree, from the U.S. Army War College in July 2005. In January, she was promoted to the rank of colonel in the Michigan Army National Guard. She resides in Stanton, Mich., with her husband, Larry, a soldier who recently returned from Iraq. Kathie is currently the dean of student services for Montcalm Community College in Sidney, Mich.

kathiel@montcalm.edu

** 1983 **

Brent Cryderman ’89 was named principal for Western High School in Spring Arbor. He resides in Jackson with his wife, Joann (Gallogly ’89), a full-time mom, and daughters, Chloe, 12, Tessa, 10, and Brooklyn, 8.

David McConnaughey ’89 was named acting president, Maytag services for the Maytag Corporation in November 2005. He resides in Newton, Iowa.

** 1991 **

Rob Acton ’91 is an attorney residing in Chicago and serves as the executive director of Cabrini Green Legal Aid Clinic, the first Christian legal aid organization in America. The CGLA provides free legal services in the areas of housing, family and criminal law to those in need.

robacton@cglalaw.net

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alocke@nsd.k12.mi.us

** 1992 **

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rblackburn@netzero.net

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jkrause@nenana.schoolaccess.net

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** 1993 **


kaiello@nmorrischools.org
Cunningham writes for disillusioned twenty-something crowd

Tapping the 32 million “spiritually-intrigued 18-34-year-old” market was something Michigan-based publishing giant, Zondervan, wanted to do. So they signed four young authors to do just that. Among the talented nonfiction writers was SAU alum Sarah (Raymond ‘01) Cunningham.

Released in August, Cunningham’s Dear Church, focuses on helping young Christians overcome disillusionment in the modern church. Dear Church is the result of a letter Cunningham wrote a couple of years ago. “It was a rant about the church and the direction it needed to go,” says Cunningham. Her journal-like essay caught the attention of Zondervan — and the rest is history.

Cunningham never imagined her life’s roadmap would take the stops it has so early in life. And she certainly never expected to see her name in print at this point in her career. But she readily accepted the opportunity and set her laptop in motion. “The content of Dear Church comes directly from my own personal experiences,” says Cunningham.

Targeting the disillusioned

Much of her book focuses on disillusionment within today’s church. “We get into a habit of tracking disappointments and eventually those letdowns impair our vision for what the church is meant to be,” says Cunningham. Her writing strives to encourage young Christians to look past those frustrations and seek the church’s true meaning.

“It’s important for people to remember that God will sustain them and help them through whatever hardships they may face. These struggles are not reasons to abandon the church,” says Cunningham. “Sometimes the most insightful moments happen in the middle of suffering, when pride is no longer in the way.”

While the book is focused at twentysomethings, Cunningham believes everyone can benefit from it. “Anyone who works with young adults or who has experienced disillusionment within the church can identify with Dear Church,” says Cunningham.

Born and raised in a church-friendly environment, Cunningham leads a life that is focused on her faith. Yet, the journey hasn’t always been smooth. After what Cunningham refers to as “an 18-year course in church leadership,” she enrolled at Spring Arbor University and began her own journey within the church.

As a student, Cunningham was active in leadership and volunteer opportunities on campus. “Spring Arbor University was instrumental in helping me grow. The whole idea of integrating life and learning is so important,” says Cunningham. “There was a constant flow of professors and speakers who inspired me to be committed to seeking more from the church and discovering truth.”

Cunningham credits professors from a variety of disciplines for helping her examine her journey and direction within the church. “English professor Marsha Daigle-Williamson made me engage the conversations. She really forced me — and all of her students — to sit up, pay attention and think for themselves,” says Cunningham. “When I arrived at SAU, I thought I knew all Bible material, but my religion professor, Bob Bailey, challenged me to keep thinking and learning. My sociology professor, Paul Nemecek ’81, challenged me and others to truly examine the Christian experience.”

Mary Albert Darling ’78, assistant professor of communication, continues to mentor Cunningham about the publishing process. For Cunningham, though, professors were not the only ones to help steer her on the right course. The student development staff at the University also guided her through the transition period from teenager to adult. “They really have their hands on the pulse of the school,” says Cunningham.

Switching focus

Following graduation, she continued working for Westwinds Church in Jackson, Mich. — the place she began her career prior to completing her undergraduate coursework. There, she directed children’s education, as well as community development and outreach. After much debate, Cunningham gave in to a sense of urgency to reach out to a different audience in the area. “I felt a strong draw to work with a more diverse group,” says Cunningham. “It was hard to walk away, but I wanted to remain true to my passion.” Cunningham left her position at the church and began a teaching career at daVinci Institute, a creative community-based school.

Later, Cunningham and her husband, Chuck ‘01, launched Portal Ministries, a nonprofit ministry that serves as a doorway for churches who seek relationships with diverse audiences.

With her first book in bookstores, Cunningham remains committed to serving the church through her unwavering service. While no new book plans are on the horizon, Cunningham is not opposed to writing in the future. “When God shows me something, I want to express it,” says Cunningham.
Michigan University. She is a licensed professional counselor and has worked for Wayne County Community College District for 10 years. Marie resides in Belleville, Mich., with her son, Joshua.

mtumer1@wcccd.edu

Ed ’94 and Angie (Donnelly ’94) Wensley adopted a daughter, Averie Jayne, on Oct. 6, 2005. She was born on Aug. 23, 2004. Averie joined big brothers, Nathaniel, 7, Brennan, 6, and Gabriel, 4. The Wensleys reside in Noblesville, Ind. thewensleys@insightbb.com

::: 1995 :::

In June 2005, Melissa (Welsh ’95, ’00) Blackmer completed her master’s in education from Indiana University. She is currently a high school guidance counselor at Wawasee High School in Syracuse, Ind., and her husband, James, is an auto claims representative for State Farm Insurance. They reside in Columbia City, Ind.

Christopher ’95 and Heidi (Cryderman ’94) DeBacker welcomed a daughter, Darby Faith, on Nov. 4, 2005.

James Sinclair ’95 is currently the head coach and director of player development for the Dornbirn Indians baseball team in Dornbirn, Austria. He also coaches the Austrian National Baseball Team. James resides in Dornbirn. sinclairjames30@hotmail.com

Kristin Vischer ’95 resides in Virginia Beach, Va., where she works for Operation Blessing International. In May 2005, she was promoted to the position of manager of media projects. kjloveslife@hotmail.com

::: 1996 :::

Kimberly Halladay ’96 married Rich Giddings on Oct. 15, 2004. Kimberly is a licensed social worker working in memory care at Presbyterian Homes, and Rich is a manager for T-Mobile USA. They reside in St. Paul, Minn. kimberlygiddings@hotmail.com

::: 1997 :::

Thomas Oakley ’97 was selected as the 2006 Michigan Higher Education Art Educator of the Year by the Michigan Art Education Association. He resides in Jackson, Mich., where he is an assistant professor of studio art at Jackson Community College. Thomas also serves as co-chair of the JCC Council for Inclusion and Diversity, and co-founder and co-chair of the JCC New Educator’s Network.

Eric Platt ’97 has been awarded a Fulbright fellowship to conduct research in the Netherlands during the 2006-07 academic year. Eric is working on his doctorate in history at the University of Wisconsin. He and his wife Elisabeth (Gaikema ’98) currently reside in the United Kingdom, where Eric is doing research for his doctoral dissertation, while Elisabeth works in the student recruitment department at the University of Warwick.

Matt ’97 and Michelle (Johnson ’99) Ray welcomed a son, Lane Marcus, on Sept. 9, 2005. He joined siblings Lucas, 5, Logan, 3, and Brooklynn, 1. Matt is an elementary physical education teacher, as well as a high school football and girls basketball coach. Michelle is a stay-at-home mom. They reside in Craig, Colo. mmray22@peoplepc.com

Sadie (Marx ’97) and Sean Robinson welcomed daughter, Alahni Faith, on July 11. She joins big brothers, Silas, 1. Sadie is a sales representative for BeautiControl products. She also provides in-home spa escapes and is an aerobics instructor. Sean recently established a consulting firm in Grand Rapids, Mich., where they reside.

Jason ’97 and Carole (Brown ’99) Stiles welcomed a daughter, Lillian Jean, on Sept. 13, 2005. She joined big brothers, Connor, 5, and Heath, 3. They reside in Fowlerville, Mich., where Jason is marketing director for Michigan Tool & Gauge Inc., and Carole is a stay-at-home mom. stiles@zoomon.net

Steve Vissia ’97, of Fremont, Mich., was named The Chronicle’s Upper-Tier Division Soccer Coach of the Year. The voting was conducted by area coaches and The Muskegon Chronicle, a western Michigan newspaper. Steve is a teacher and soccer coach for Fremont High School. He and his wife Heidi (Lake ’97, ’00), a stay-at-home mom, have two sons, Grant, 3, and John, 6 months.


::: 1999 :::

Kristen (Ibeque ’99) and Brian Babbitt ’01, of Cedar Springs, Mich., welcomed a daughter, Sydney Ann, on May 10, 2005. Brian is a teacher and head basketball coach for Belding High School and Kristen teaches elementary school in Kent City.

Erik ’99 and Barbara (Parks ’99) Barber welcomed a son, Miles Parks, on Dec. 16, 2004. Barbara is a stay-at-home mom, and Erik is the director of development for Inspiration Ministries, a non-profit religious organization that helps people with disabilities. They reside in Lake Geneva, Wis. barbarerik@sbcglobal.net

Mark Collins ’99 is currently an electronics technician and resident councillor for the City of Oregon (Ohio) Wastewater Treatment Plant. His wife, Sally, also works for the city. They have two daughters: Amy, 22, graduated summa cum laude from Ohio Wesleyan University in May 2005, and Christie, 17, graduated summa cum laude from Genoa High School this past spring.
Alumni & Friends Reunions

SOUTH FLORIDA & PHOENIX, ARIZONA
Spring Arbor University held annual events for south Florida and Arizona in January and February. On both occasions, guests shared a wonderful time of meeting new acquaintances and renewing friendships. Attendees were greeted by President Gayle Beebe, Jay Mansur, vice president for university advancement, and Irene Price Greiner, director of alumni relations.

In Florida, guests met at the Hutchinson Island Marriott Beach Resort, located in Stuart. The Arizona event was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel Phoenix-Biltmore, located in Phoenix. Elaine (Marrs JC ’61) Goulden assisted in contacting Phoenix alums about the event.

LAKELAND, FLORIDA
The annual Lakeland reunion was held at the Light and Life Park in January. More than 175 alumni and friends were in attendance. The theme of the event was “Let’s Reminisce.” Mary Lee (Voller JC ’59) Cain served as the emcee.

President Beebe distributed the President’s Report and reviewed the main areas. He captured the essence of a growing spirit on campus and promised to stay true to the mission of Spring Arbor University. Greiner shared a newly produced alumni DVD, which featured new programs instituted in the past year and shared a trivia quiz with the guests. Three-minute memories, presented by Jane (Thompson JC ’57) Acton and Mike Goldsmith HS ’52, JC ’54, ’70 highlighted the event.

A ladies’ choir group, organized by Allene (Bouck JC ’46) Jackson, sang to the tune of “Mr. Sandman,” as they wore black knicker pants — replicas of their college women’s basketball team pants worn in the 1940s. The program concluded with alumni from the SAU music program, performing several song selections.

In March, a second gathering was held in Lakeland: the second Cougar Baseball Tailgate Party. More than 60 alumni, parents and friends watched the Cougars secure the team’s victory over Southeastern College — replicas of their college women’s basketball team’s pants worn in the 1940s. The program concluded with alumni from the SAU music program, performing several song selections.

In March, a second gathering was held in Lakeland: the second Cougar Baseball Tailgate Party. More than 60 alumni, parents and friends watched the Cougars secure the team’s victory over Southeastern College Crusaders. With the help of Homer Jackson JC ’46, the Office of Alumni Relations organized this second event to give the Lakeland-area alumni and friends the opportunity to support the Cougar baseball team.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Also in March, SAU hosted 40 alumni at the third annual Southern California reunion dinner, held at the Hilltop Restaurant/Shilo Suites Inn Hotel in Pomona. David ’03 and Shelby (Olson ’04) Knight assisted with the organization of the event. The event was attended by President Beebe, who provided a campus update and distributed the President’s Report.

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Amanda (Foley ’99) and Cody Gascho ’01 of Fairview, Mich., adopted a son, Malaki Michael, on Oct. 24, 2005. Malaki was born on Oct. 20, 2005. He joined big brother, Ezra. agascho@gmail.com
codygascho@gmail.com

Carol (Sherman ’99) and Steve Hanks welcomed a daughter, Bridget Ellen, on Sept. 14, 2004. Carol is a stay-at-home mom as well as a tutor for Sylvan Learning Center. Steve is an account representative for RHDDonelley. They reside in Carpentersville, Ill.

Thom ’99 and Amanda (Grams ’00) McMurray are new missionaries with The Christian & Missionary Alliance. They reside in Bamako, Mali in western Africa. Thom is the bookkeeper for the mission, and Amanda is looking for ministry opportunities that involve local children. Both are currently studying the local language, Bambara. mcmali@gmail.com

Jim and Elizabeth (Stewart ’00) Yeager, of Falls Church, Va., welcomed a son, Drew, in December 2005. He joined big brother, Abe, 1. Elizabeth works part-time for Congressman John Boozman of Arkansas, and Jim works for the Department of Commerce.

Dean ’01 and Laurie (Dunlap ’03) Archer welcomed a son, Lincoln Dean, on April 12. Dean is a third-grade teacher at Parma Elementary in Parma, Mich., and is the assistant coach for the SAU women’s soccer team. Laurie is a veterinary/office assistant at Blackman Animal Clinic in Jackson, Mich. They reside in Parma, Mich.

Dan ’01, ’02 and Janelle (Wiederhold ’01) Milnes welcomed a daughter, Sydney Eleanor, on May 7, 2005. Dan started a real estate development company, StoneRidge Builders, and Janelle shows Siberian huskies at dog shows and is a stay-at-home mom. They reside in Spring Arbor. janellemilnes@yahoo.com
Jennifer (Ross ’02) and Jeremy Jackson ’03 reside in Chicago, where Justin recently completed his bachelor’s in fine arts from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is seeking a job in the art field while continuing his studio work. Jennifer has completed her third year of teaching for Chicago Public Schools.

Ben Kopke ’02 and Lisa Milnes ’02 were married on July 9, 2005. They reside in Madison, Wis., where Lisa teaches fifth grade and Ben is a graduate student at the University of Wisconsin.

Lisa Olsen ’02 graduated with a master’s in library science from Indiana University, Bloomington, in December 2003, and is currently working on a master’s in theology. She is the acquisitions/serials librarian for Concordia Theological Seminary, and resides in Fort Wayne, Ind.


Bethany Timmons ’02 resides in Jackson, Mich., where she is the director of community impact for the United Way of Jackson County.

Kelli (Cutler ’03) and Dan Martin welcomed a son, Micah James, on Sept. 2, 2004. They reside in Delton, Mich., where Dan is an electrician, and Kelli is a stay-at-home mom.

Angela Teal ’03, of Azusa, Calif., won the title of Miss Azusa and went on to compete in the Miss California Pageant. There, she was the recipient of the Miss America Academic Achievement Award and a $1,000 scholarship. Angela is the junior high youth pastor at Light & Life Christian Fellowship North in Long Beach, and is also working on her master’s of worship and leadership at the Haggard School of Theology at Azusa Pacific University.


Wendy Spray ’05 teaches preschool through eighth grade at Pines School on Bois Blanc Island, located between the upper and lower peninsulas of Michigan. Her husband, Ted, is a construction foreman and machinist. They reside on the island with their sons, George and Grant.

Richard Buckta HS ’48, JC ’55, ‘67 of Indianapolis, Ind., passed away in April 2005. He was a teacher and administrator in Michigan and in Taichung, Taiwan, where he served with his wife under OMS International. He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Mandy, and their adopted son, Micah, James.

Spring Arbor University Alumni Tuition Birth Certificate

You have a new baby! What a blessing!

Beginning January 1, Spring Arbor University began issuing a tuition certificate to newborn, newly adopted children or grandchildren of alumni born on or after Jan. 1, 2006.

Upon enrolling full time at Spring Arbor University’s main campus, your child or grandchild will be entitled to a $2,500 tuition credit to attend your alma mater in a traditional undergraduate program (main campus). Our desire is to honor you as alumni parents and grandparents and encourage your child to attend SAU.

Please contact Lynne Markiewicz in the Office of Alumni Relations at 517.750.6687 or ALUM.ARBOR with your child’s birth or adoption announcement. You will be asked to provide a photocopy of the child’s birth certificate or adoption papers. You will then receive a tuition certificate, numbered and signed for your newborn, newly adopted child or grandchild.

You have a new baby! What a blessing!

Great news! You will soon be able to update your information from your home computers, reconnect with other alumni and view our calendar of upcoming events online via a new alumni portal. Watch for this exciting new portal later this fall!

Stay connected.

www.arbor.edu/alumni
years, Doris (Altopp JC ’52); two children; two sisters, Esther Jones and Virgena Rensberry HS ’48, JC ’50; and four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Ralph Churchill JC ’39 of Lawrence, Kan., passed away in June 2004. He served as a ministerial worker for the Free Methodist Church in Michigan, Kentucky, Texas and Kansas for eight years, then as a payroll clerk for the FMC for 33 years. Ralph was a member of the Lawrence Free Methodist Church. He is survived by his wife, Ada Mae; three children; and four grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Florence (Harpham HS ’31) Collins of Coldwater, Mich., passed away in February at the age of 92. She was a member of the Coldwater Free Methodist Church and was the organist for 35 years, a Sunday school teacher and the secretary of the church board. Florence was preceded in death by her husband, Charles.

Virginia (Anderson ’70) Elliott of Flint, Mich., passed away in November 2004. She was an active member of the music program at Central Church of the Nazarene in Flint. Virginia is survived by her husband, Garnet ’70; and two daughters.

Dale Harpham HS ’31 of Waterford, Mich., passed away in April 2005. He was an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Coldwater, where he taught Sunday school and was instrumental in building their adult Sunday school program. Preceded in death by his wife, Ruthanna, he is survived by two daughters.

Helen E. Jacobson JC ’32 of Woodstock, Ill., passed away in February 2005 at the age of 92. She taught elementary school for many years.

Eugene Kasarjian JC ’54 of Imboden, Ark., passed away in August 2005. He was a teacher, chemist and factory worker. He taught throughout Michigan, California, Japan, China and the Samoan Islands, where he was also a pastor and diplomat for the U.S. government. Eugene is survived by his wife, Madeline; one daughter; and one grandchild.

Herbert Mallett JC ’40 of Bedford, Ind., passed away in March 2005. He was preceded in death by his wife, Eva, and is survived by four children.

Kyle Norgaard (1981-82) of Traverse City, Mich., passed away in August 2005 at the age of 41, following a battle with cancer. He ministered physically, including eight years as a minister, and 12 years as a medical professional/surgeon. He is survived by his wife, Barbara, and three children.

William Probst HS ’32 of Spring Arbor, Mich., passed away in April 2005. His wife, Helena (Black JC ’37), preceded him in death. He is survived by his children, David HS ’59 and Prudy Smith ’68.

Roland Sayre JC ’32 of Pompano Beach, Fla., passed away in April 2005. A retired teacher and principal, he is survived by his wife, Sue; two children; and brother, Eldon JC ’40.

James Sims HS ’56, JC ’58 of San Dimas, Calif., passed away in January 2005. He is survived by his wife, Virginia; two children; and two grandchildren. James pastored Free Methodist Churches in the 1960s and 70s. For the last 25 years he owned a tax and finance business specializing in the needs of the clergy.

James Snyder HS ’48, JC ’58 of Spring Arbor, passed away on June 3. He was a talented artist and an instructor at Jackson Community College for 27 years. James is survived by his wife of 57 years, Lula Faye (Cutler HS ’47, JC ’49); four children; one brother, Howard HS ’58, JC ’60; one sister, Nancy Ragatz ’87; and 19 grandchildren.

Alice (Bandringa JC ’48) Terman of Spring Arbor, Mich., passed away in August 2005 after a long battle with cancer. She taught elementary school until 1983, then served as assistant registrar and adjunct professor for Spring Arbor University. Alice was a member of the Spring Arbor Free Methodist Church and participated in the choir, welcome center and prayer chain. She is survived by her husband of nearly 57 years, William HS ’46, JC ’48; children, Linda Grimm ’74 and Mark ’78; and four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Donald Whited JC ’53 of Allen Park, Mich., passed away in March 2004. He is survived by his wife, Virginia (Terman HS ’51); one son; and three grandchildren.

Myrtle (Thompson JC ’45) Zimmerman of Grosse Ile., Mich., passed away in July 2005. She taught English in Detroit schools for 20 years, was active in civil rights work and served as the organizer for various cultural events. She was preceded in death by her husband, Hollis, and is survived by four children; and seven grandchildren.

Dr. William R. Waters (1982-83) of Spring Arbor, passed away on October 25. He was a professor of English and theatre at SAU. He is survived by his wife, Beth; two children; and one grandchild.

Donald Whited JC ’53 of Allen Park, Mich., passed away in March 2004. He is survived by his wife, Virginia (Terman HS ’51); one son; and three grandchildren.

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In 1966, Jim Snyder HS ’48, JC ’58 gained international attention for his skill with metal when his work was featured in the Nemco Industrial Publication. In 1970, he presented an original falcon sculpture to the United States Air Force Academy. The American Welding Society Convention honored Snyder for creating a fully functional aluminum roadster in 1972. Over the years, Snyder has been commissioned to create some unique pieces for Spring Arbor University. The cross in the Centennial Gardens at the center of campus is one that is most notable. The sculpture of a lamp, cross, and world is a visual representation of the Spring Arbor University Concept, and also helped to inspire our new logo.
“Because I have received scholarships from Spring Arbor University and had the privilege of participating in SAU phonathons, I have been blessed on both sides. The most exciting part of being involved in the phonathon was the chance to personally thank alumni and friends for their gifts and encourage them to continue supporting student scholarships through the University Fund. And because of the connection, many times they would ask me about my SAU experience and how God was working in my life.

Thank you for making it possible for me to experience life-shaping opportunities at Spring Arbor University. Because of this I am able to serve at-risk young people in Jackson County with competence, compassion and commitment.”

Rachel Kendall ’06
Teen Parent Counselor
Florence Crittenton Services

Thank you for answering the call for the University Fund. Each fall our students look forward to talking with SAU alumni and friends. Be sure to connect with the student who calls you during our annual fall phonathon. And remember each pledge goes directly to support student scholarships.
Alumni Awards Banquet


Ganton Art Gallery Exhibition

Theatrical Production, Off the Page

Athletic Hall of Fame Banquet

Varsity and Alumni Sporting Events
    Women’s Soccer vs. Indiana Wesleyan University
    Men’s Soccer vs. University of St. Francis
    Men’s & Women’s Basketball Exhibition Games

October 13-15