

STAYING SAFE IN A CONNECTED WORLD

**CYBERBULLYING, INTERNET CRIME, & ELECTRONIC WARFARE:
TOOLS TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**



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LIABILITY
IN PROFESSIONAL
SPORTS**

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WILDLIFE
TRAFFICKING
IN AFRICA**

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Support NKU! Look for this giving icon throughout the magazine for ways to support the NKU departments and programs you care about, or log on now to givenow.nku.edu. Thank you!

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Should the NFL keep tightening its rules to make the game safer? Or are concussions and serious injury part of the risk in the highest-grossing game on the planet? Chase Law Dean Jeffrey Standen weighs in.

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STAYING SAFE IN A CONNECTED WORLD

Ours is an era of internet-based crime, cyberwarfare, identity theft, and a cyberbullying phenomenon that causes 160,000 students a day to stay home from school. But there are simple ways to protect you, your children, your privacy, and your data. Here's how.

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THE ELECTION IS OVER. GOOD NIGHT!

It can't be easy to work behind the scenes in politics during the wildest presidential election in modern history. Here's a day in the life of the rarely glamorous, always stressful, and never boring work of two NKU alumni who work on Capitol Hill.

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Horizon League Championship MVP Jessica Frey and the Norse women's soccer team advanced to NKU's first D-I tournament. **Page 14**



NKU MAGAZINE

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DID YOU KNOW

The top 5 earned degrees and declared majors at NKU right now:

2015-2016 Top 5 Earned Bachelor Degrees

Organizational Leadership
Nursing - Traditional
Computer Information Technology
Health Science
Accounting

Fall 2016 Top 5 Undergraduate Declared Majors

Computer Information Technology
Biological Sciences
Organizational Leadership
Computer Sciences
Nursing



Have a question? Email us at nkumagazine@nku.edu.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ten years ago, our University created a bold vision for a new college that would create cutting-edge, transdisciplinary programs to prepare our students for successful careers in the 21st century. The move wasn't without risks. For starters, no one even knew what the word "informatics" meant. And how could we create a high-tech college without a high-tech facility?

Today, the College of Informatics and Griffin Hall have become an integral part of our campus and our region. The College of Informatics has been designated a National Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security, and our faculty and staff are training students to solve real-world problems related to online privacy, internet security, and even cyberwarfare. Our students are working to make the online world a safer place for future generations.

Innovative programs like those within informatics and across our campus are helping to attract some of our nation's best students and faculty. Based on our preliminary data from this Fall, the median ACT score of our incoming freshman class was 24. Five years ago, it was 22. The quality of our academic programs and our student body has never been higher.

And we continue to graduate more students than ever before, helping critical industries in our region and across the Commonwealth meet the growing need for highly skilled workers who are job-ready upon graduation. Over the past decade, NKU has conferred more than 27,000 degrees, and we now claim well over 60,000 proud alumni.

Some of those graduates are featured in this edition of *NKU Magazine*. In particular, you can read about two alumni who have assumed leadership roles on opposite sides of the political aisle in Washington.

Stefanie Muchow started as an intern in Sen. Mitch McConnell's office in 2003, and she has been with the Senate Majority Leader ever since. Today she is his director of operations. Greg Mecher graduated from NKU in 1999 and has since worked for Rep. Ken Lucas (KY), Rep. Steve Driehaus (OH), and the Democratic National Committee. Today, Greg is chief of staff for Rep. Joseph Kennedy III (MA).

I hope Stefanie, Greg, and all of our alumni are able to make it back to campus in February for our annual Homecoming Weekend and Alumni Awards. Our men's basketball team will be hosting Milwaukee, and our women's team will host Valparaiso.

Best wishes for a safe and joyous holiday season.

Geoffrey S. Mearns
President

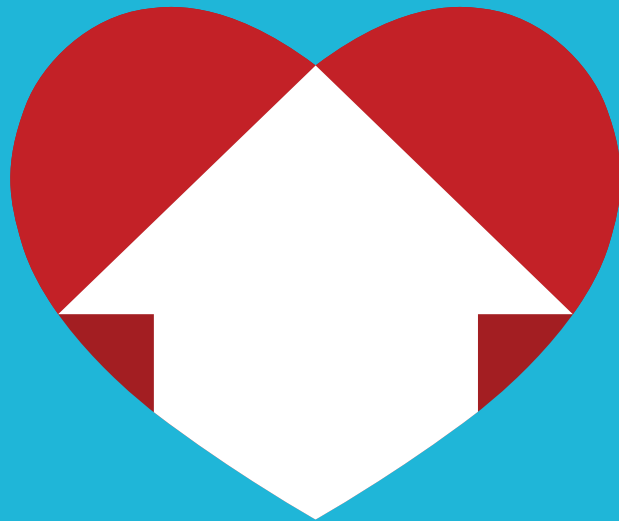
[AROUND CAMPUS]

Student Phuong Tran, 24, and friend Tuyen Le, celebrate at World Culture Fest, sponsored by NKU's International Students and Scholar Services. Phuong, from Khanh Hoa, Vietnam, is in NKU's American English Language Program and plans to study accounting.

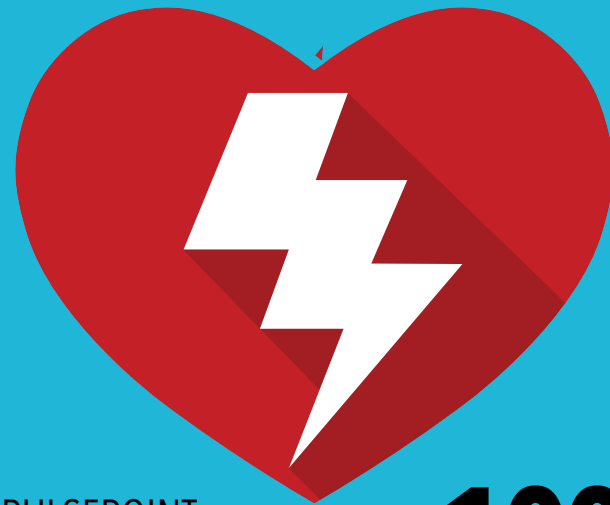


THE APP THAT SAVES LIVES

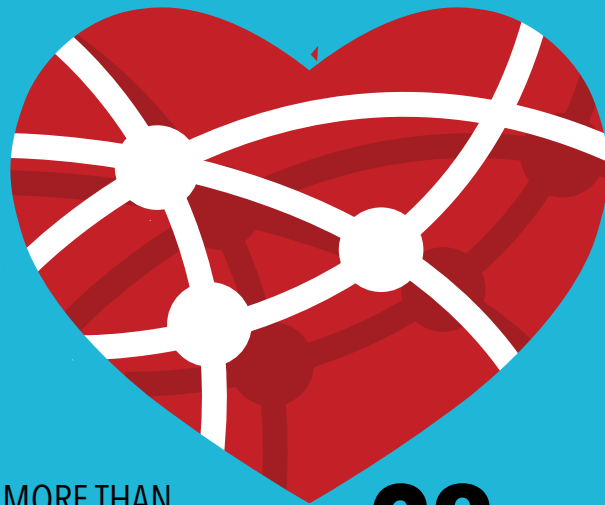
TO DATE, **PULSEPOINT** HAS ACTIVATED MORE THAN **31,000** CITIZEN RESPONDERS ON MORE THAN **12,000** CARDIAC ARREST ACTIVATIONS



EARLY CPR AND RAPID DEFIBRILLATION BEFORE AN EMERGENCY TEAM ARRIVES CAN BOOST SURVIVAL BY **50%**



PULSEPOINT IS ADDING MORE THAN **100** AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AEDS) PER DAY TO THE PULSEPOINT REGISTRY VIA **PULSEPOINT AED**.



MORE THAN **2000** COMMUNITIES IN **28** STATES ARE PULSEPOINT CONNECTED.



PULSEPOINT SYSTEM PROCESSES MORE THAN **200** CARDIAC ARRESTS A DAY.



THE APP IS ACTIVATED ABOUT **30** TIMES PER DAY ACROSS THE U.S.



13M AMERICANS ARE CPR TRAINED AND CERTIFIED ANNUALLY.

ILLUSTRATION BY DIONNE LAYCOCK

AROUND THE HORNS



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[TECHNOLOGY]

DOWNLOAD THIS

The PulsePoint app, first created at NKU, turns five // By Brent Donaldson

For each of the roughly thousand people a day in the United States who suffer a cardiac arrest, emergency responders typically take several minutes to respond. Each minute that ticks by before they arrive, the victim's chance of survival decreases by 10 percent. Permanent brain damage or death can occur after eight minutes.

But for cities that have integrated PulsePoint technology—more than 2,000 in 28 states so far in the U.S.—the moment the call is received by dispatch, an alert is pushed to the PulsePoint app on smartphones and devices of anyone within close proximity to the victim. These CPR-trained volunteers are shown the victim's precise location, and can within seconds begin providing CPR and lifesaving care. By doing so, these “bystander” first responders can triple the victim's chance of survival.

PulsePoint was first created by Northern Kentucky University's Center for Applied Informatics (CAI) back in 2011. Since then, it's helped save numerous lives. Tim Ferguson, then-director of CAI and now NKU's chief information officer, spearheaded the collaboration with co-creator Richard Price from the San Ramon Fire Department. “I am very proud of the popularity and the success of the app, given that it is having significant impact on the health and wellbeing of the general public and those in need,” Ferguson says. “It is heartwarming to know that NKU has a hand in saving lives, and demonstrates the innovative and impactful spirit that NKU has at its core.” 🐮

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER–APRIL
Check out the Norse basketball game schedule (see page 15 for more info)

DECEMBER 5
Experience the Aurora and Solar Quest
Noon at the Haile Digital Planetarium (SC 409)
"Experience the Aurora" shares the science behind the aurora and tells the dramatic story of this special phenomenon. "Solar Quest" demonstrates how the Sun and Earth are interconnected and explains the special dynamics between our planet and star.

FEBRUARY 3–5
Syrian Shrine Circus
With three rings of affordable, family fun and the only three-ring circus act in town, the Syrian Shrine Circus will thrill fans of all ages.

FEBRUARY 10–11
Alumni Weekend (see page 34 for more info)
It's the biggest and best multi-event weekend for NKU alumni all year! Highlights include:
NKU Alumni Awards Celebration (Friday, February 10, 6 p.m. in the James C. and Rachel M. Votruba Student Union Ballroom).
If you aren't ready to go home after dinner, join us for a post-event nightcap.
Norse Basketball Double-Header (Saturday, Feb. 11; BB&T Arena)
Women's team vs. Valparaiso, 1 p.m.
Men's team vs. Milwaukee, 7 p.m.
NKU Alumni Chili Cookoff
Before men's game, enjoy the tastiest chili cookoff in town. Dozens of competitors include students, alumni, faculty, staff, and community members. Hosted by the Alumni Association.
For more information, visit go.nku.edu/alumniweekend.



HAPPY HALF-CENTURY, NKU!

Northern Kentucky University is the youngest of Kentucky's eight state universities. It's a status that has allowed us to stay adaptable and innovative across our service to public education—both in the Commonwealth and beyond.

Next year marks a milestone year for the University—**NKU's 50th Anniversary**. In 2018, it will have been a half-century since NKU was founded in 1968 as Northern Kentucky State College. We celebrated the first graduating class in May, 1973—the same year we moved to Highland Heights—and became officially known as Northern Kentucky University in 1976.

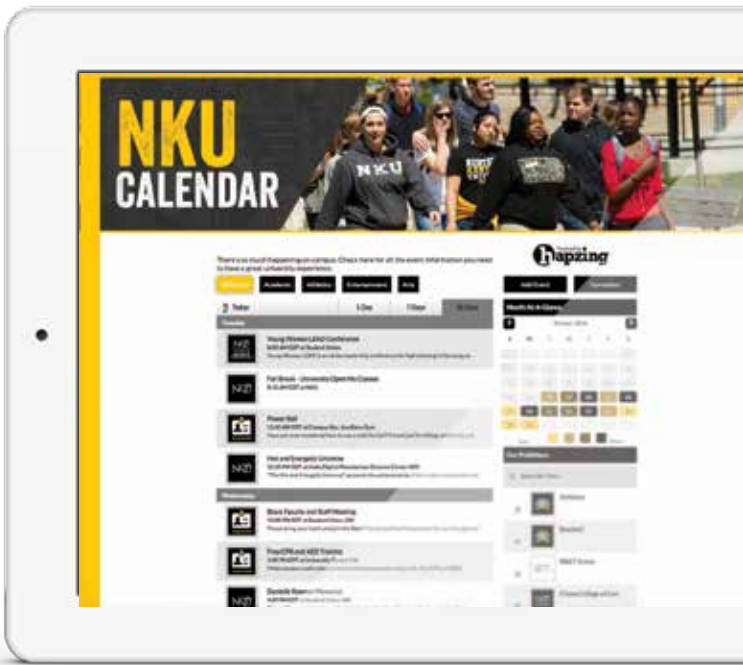
Help us celebrate 50 years by sharing memories about your experiences at NKU—moments that inspired you, or made you laugh, or changed your perspective on the world. Share them at NKU50@nku.edu, and stay tuned!



MILITARY, FORBES RANK NKU AMONG THE BEST

For the eighth straight year, *Forbes* list of "America's Top Colleges" has included NKU in the nation's top 660 public and private universities for student return on investment. The rankings focus on student outcomes in five categories: student satisfaction, post-graduate success, student debt, graduation rate, and academic success.

NKU is also among the best universities in the nation for military veterans, according to *The Military Times*. The publication's sixth annual "Best for Vets" list ranks NKU 36th among four-year institutions for the services and support it provides to military veterans and their families. Also this year, NKU was named a Military Friendly School by Victory Media for the sixth consecutive time and was named a top school in the 2016 Military Advanced Education Guide to Colleges & Universities.



INTRODUCING NKU'S NEW EVENT CALENDAR

From sports, to entertainment, to events that celebrate the community and Commonwealth, so much is happening every day on campus. Check out NKU's new, all-inclusive calendar to stay up to date on all the event information you need to have a great university experience. Visit special.nku.edu/calendar to see the list of events and share or download them straight to your calendar.



NKU THEATRE

Earning high praise by critics and patrons alike, NKU's Theatre & Dance department's **new season lineup** is bold and ambitious. New shows include *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, where audiences will relive the roaring 1920s in this Tony Award-winning musical that features jazz, thunderous tap dancing, frisky flappers, and dashing leading men. *All Shook Up* is a hip-swiveling, lip-curling musical fantasy about The King that includes classics such as "Heartbreak Hotel," "Jailhouse Rock," and "Don't Be Cruel." And *Dance '17* features new and innovative works created by faculty, guest artists, and nationally-renowned choreographers in creative expressions including theatre dance, contemporary and classical ballet, tap, modern, jazz, and world dance. *From Dec. 1 through April 2. Visit artscience.nku.edu/departments/theatre.html for more info.*

SAFEST CAMPUS

Highland Heights, Ky., the home of NKU, is the **12th safest college town in America**. The distinction marks the third year in a row that NKU has made the list in annual rankings by Safewise, a Utah-based security and crime prevention firm. Safewise praised the proactive steps NKU takes to help keep campus safe, such as the Norse Alert emergency notification system, the safety features provided via the University's mobile app, and programs such as A.L.I.C.E. training.

Safewise also gave kudos to the Highland Heights Police Department for educating and informing the campus community.



ILLUSTRATION BY LARS LEETARU

[LAW]

LEGAL HEADACHES

Concussions and the legal fiction of assumed risk // By Brent Donaldson

THERE'S A DEBATE THAT BREAKS OUT in living rooms and bars across the country when NFL fans see a player get hurt during a game—especially when that player is knocked out of the game with an injury to the head.

Should the NFL keep tightening the rules to make the game safer? Or is serious long-term injury part of the high risk/high reward equation when you sign up with the hardest hitting, highest grossing sports league on the planet?

As a legal matter the issue is wildly complex. Player consent and league liability disputes become tied up in court, most recently evidenced in a decision by the U.S. District Court in Pennsylvania last year that allows a \$1 billion settlement to move forward between the NFL and a group of ex-players. The suit, now delayed on appeal, was brought by nearly 5,000 former players who allege that the NFL suppressed known links between repeated trauma to the head and serious medical conditions, such as chronic traumatic

encephalopathy, or CTE. CTE is a degenerative brain disease associated with symptoms similar to Alzheimer's, including dementia and aggression, that has been found in the brains of dozens of former professional players. In 2011 and 2012 respectively, former NFL stars Dave Duerson and Junior Seau took their own lives after struggling for years with the disease.

Jeffrey Standen, dean of Northern Kentucky University's Chase College of Law, and one of the country's preeminent experts in sports law, says that the league's recent acknowledgment of the link—a major reversal of its previous stance—was legally pragmatic. Quoted earlier this year in *The New York Times*, Standen said that the NFL's decision was strategically sound, as the settlement agreement would close all claims prior to 2015. "For future sufferers," Standen said, "the NFL has now effectively put them on notice that their decision to play professional football comes with the acknowledged risk of degenerative brain disease."

To the casual football fan, it may seem logical that repeated head trauma could lead to long-term brain injury. But Standen says that legally proving direct causation is extremely difficult.

"I don't think the NFL said football *itself*, as opposed to concussions, causes CTE. I think that remains a point of contention," he says. "People have different vulnerabilities. People have different numbers of traumas, different impacts from those traumas, and so it's not easy—even when evidence tends to mount—to say that, yes, this sport does cause that injury. So the question that remains outstanding is, do those repeated head traumas of smaller dimension accumulate over time and cause long-term brain injury? And that remains something that's to be determined."

But even if the \$1 billion settlement moves forward, and even if future players enter their NFL contracts in full acknowledgement that their job might cause degenerative brain disease, Standen says that league liability for future damages will rest on the league's level of transparency and disclosure around the issue. In other words, any sports contract between a league and player can state that the league is not liable for certain injuries. But if the player assumes risks that were known but not disclosed by the league, then the contract is essentially worthless.

"Courts have always been willing—perhaps even more willing with athletes than they are with ordinary people—to reach the conclusion that the athlete assumed the risk of his or her activity. The baseball player assumes the risk of being hit by a pitch, or the hockey player assumes the risk of being hit by a body check and so forth. But even with that said, athletes only assume the risks that they know of.

"If the NFL or some other entity had some knowledge that they did not share with the athletes, then it would not be correct to say that the athlete assumed the risks of which they were unaware, and could not reasonably make themselves aware. That's the distinction.

"Consent is a bit of a fiction. You consent to the game, and the court then decides what is part of the game and what is not part of the game. And if it's not part of the game, then the victim did not consent." 🐼

MEET A FEW OF OUR NEW ALUMNI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Congratulations and welcome to the following new members of our alumni board:

Lisa K. Blank '82 '01 '07, Nicole E. Clare '09, Shelly E. Deavy '00, Josh S. Heuser '01, Erika T. Jay '14, Randolph J. Poe '83 '85, Christina A. Rogers '04, Wade Williams '97 '01, Serena Owen '98

The Northern Kentucky University Alumni Board of Directors was founded in 1974 and today consists of 24 members elected for a term of three years by the members of the Alumni Association. Board members may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Get to know some of our new members below, and read about their favorite NKU memories. Stay tuned for our next issue when we highlight the rest of our team's new members.



LISA K. BLANK '82 '01 '07

St. Elizabeth Healthcare, System Director Employment/Development

FAVORITE NKU MEMORY: "One of most memorable experiences at NKU was our long studying sessions together at Nunn Hall while in nursing school. You develop such close relationships with other students and those relationships are still there for me 24 years later after graduating with my first degree in Nursing."



SHELLY E. DEAVY '00

The University of Cincinnati Foundation, Office of Development and Alumni Relations

FAVORITE NKU MEMORY: "Hands down, the best and most memorable experience at NKU was acting in the Theatre Department's production of *Noises Off* my senior year under the direction of Ken Jones. The cast really bonded doing that show, and honestly we had more fun than should even be legal."



RANDY POE '83 '85

Superintendent, Boone County

FAVORITE NKU MEMORY: "My favorite NKU memory is meeting my lovely wife, Melinda, of 30 years. Our first meeting was prior to math class in the Natural Science Center.



WADE WILLIAMS '97 '01

Senior Vice President, Business Development, Tri-County Economic Development Corporation

FAVORITE NKU MEMORY: "My favorite NKU memory is my freshman year and those first classes. I was mesmerized by the topics and the environment. My favorite was American Political Thought and the intense debates my friends and I would discuss after class on the couches in Nunn Hall."



Support NKU Health Innovation Center by visiting givenow.nku.edu.



Support NKU scholarships by visiting givenow.nku.edu.



[CAMPUS]

NKU'S NEW HEALTH INNOVATION CENTER TOPS OUT

The HIC promises to be the most advanced health education facility in the region // **By Amanda Nageleisen**

IN SEPTEMBER, just eight weeks after the first column was erected, the final steel beam was lifted into place atop the structure that will eventually become Northern Kentucky University's new Health Innovation Center.

At a topping-out ceremony to mark the occasion, members of the campus community gathered to sign the final steel beam before it was lifted into place atop the frame of the new academic facility, set to open in 2018. The Health Innovation Center will be home to NKU's College of Health Professions and will also bring together experts from each of NKU's six colleges, who will create transdisciplinary teams to

study health care from new perspectives.

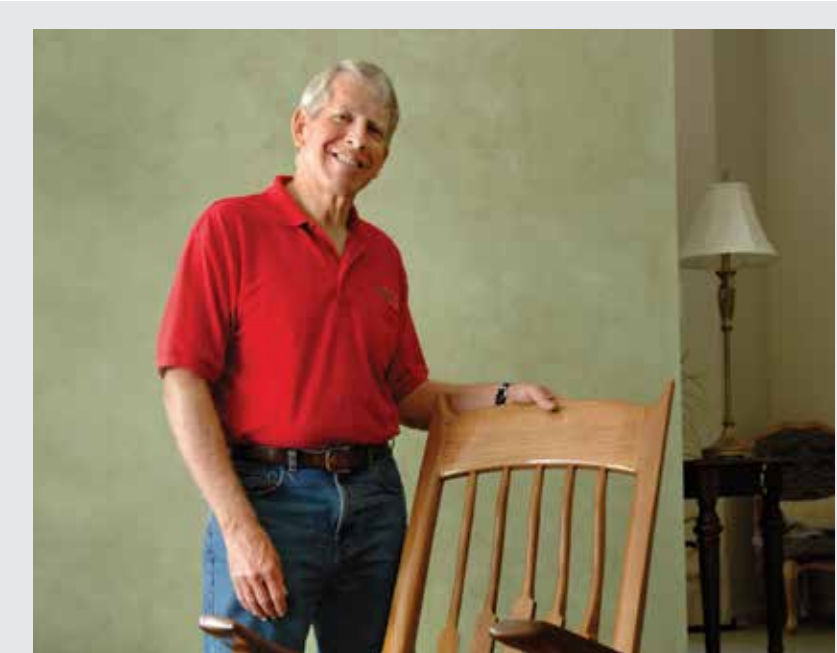
The approach will combine data analytics, psychology, preventative care, and holistic approaches to help address population health challenges such as addiction and chronic illness. New academic offerings will include an addiction science program.

"It has been truly exciting to watch this new academic facility take shape on our campus, and we are pleased that students, faculty, staff, and our friends in the community joined us to mark this important milestone in the Center's journey toward completion," said NKU President Geoffrey S. Mearns.

[PHILANTHROPY]

THANK YOU

Every gift contributes to our students' success, and we are so grateful to our generous alumni and friends who make NKU such a special place to be. We would like to celebrate two recent gifts to the University that support student success and faculty innovation.



DR. JERRY WARNER

In 1976, when NKU hired Dr. Jerry Warner as a professor of biology, he felt that NKU gave him a unique opportunity when faculty jobs were scarce. Dr. Warner spent his academic career serving as a faculty member, as the department chair of Biological Sciences, as the associate dean for the College of Arts & Sciences, and as interim provost. Through those roles he was integral in shaping NKU into the comprehensive University it is today. Recently, Dr. Warner made a planned gift to NKU of approximately \$100,000 to start the Dr. Jerry Warner Scholarship in Biological Sciences. He hopes the scholarship will help students like himself, who may not have been given every opportunity, but with a little support can achieve great success.



DR. CAROL J. SWARTS

Dr. Carol Swarts, born into a family of tenant farmers, was one of three women in the University of Nebraska Medical College's 1959 graduating class. Dr. Swarts spent most of her career as an oncologist in private practice. Her husband, Frank Milburn, was a brilliant inventor, a mentor to countless other inventors, a talented photographer, a newspaper columnist, an entrepreneur, a ham radio operator fluent in code, and even a consultant to the U.S. military during World War II. The pair met while Carol was treating Frank's mother in 1963, and they married the following year. Recently, Dr. Swarts donated her Burlington farmland to create the Frank S. Milburn and Dr. Carol J. Swarts Award for Innovative Research and Creativity. To honor their creative interests, the award will recognize a College of Arts & Sciences faculty member who embodies an entrepreneurial spirit and fosters creativity within the college.



[D-I]

NORSE WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM WINS HORIZON LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY women's soccer team made NKU history when it captured the University's first Division I conference championship on November 5. The Norse defeated No. 1 seed Milwaukee, 3-2, after erasing a 2-0 first-half deficit in the Horizon League Championship match at Engelmann Stadium.

"I continue to be really proud of our players that work hard, persevere and continuously overcome adversity. This was really a well-deserved victory," said head coach Bob Sheehan. "The team stays together, creates a positive atmosphere and has a real sense of comradery. All of that comes out on the field. If they go down, they find a way to come together and compete. Overall, I'm extremely proud of the entire team."

The victory came in comeback fashion after the Norse surrendered a pair of goals to Milwaukee in the opening 20 minutes to trail 2-0. NKU held Milwaukee scoreless throughout the remainder of the match and found the game-winner in the 88th minute off the foot of freshman Shawna Zaken for the 3-2 win.

Junior forward and First-Team All-League selection Jessica Frey was named the Horizon League Championship MVP after posting three goals and three assists across NKU's three postseason matches. Junior forward Macy Hamblin, senior midfielder Katelyn Newton, and Zaken, a freshman forward, were also named to the All-Tournament team.

The victory over Milwaukee means that the Norse will play in the university's first NCAA D-I tournament in the very first year of NCAA tournament eligibility. The NCAA granted NKU active Division I status in August. —*Melissa Powell*



GO NORSE!

The NKU Athletics department recently hosted "A Night With The Norse" to celebrate our successful transition to Division I. The event raised more than \$100,000 for our student-athletes. NKU alumni and friends joined comedian Josh Sneed and adidas North American President Mark King for an amazing night at Great American Ballpark. If you would like to support our student-athletes and directly impact the student-athlete experience, visit givenow.nku.edu.

NORSE ATHLETES SHINE BRIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM

Northern Kentucky's student-athletes continue to elevate their performances in the classroom, establishing or matching school records for student-athlete GPA in each of the last four semesters.

Of the 17 sport programs, 15 posted a cumulative GPA over 3.00 last spring. Men's tennis recorded a department-best 3.80 GPA, the second-highest semester GPA ever recorded by an NKU athletic program. Women's golf (3.46) and volleyball followed as a total of 19 NKU student-athletes recorded a 4.00 GPA, while 70 percent posted at least a 3.00.



Support our Norse Athletics programs by visiting givenow.nku.edu.

BOOSTING STUDENT-ATHLETE CARE

Student-athlete well-being has been at the forefront of the collegiate athletics landscape over the last few years. Since its inception more than 40 years ago, NKU's Department of Athletics has placed an emphasis on the well-being of its student-athletes—a commitment that was reaffirmed with its recent partnership with St. Elizabeth Healthcare and Commonwealth Orthopedic Centers.

"I was excited to announce this partnership in August because we are committed to continue providing our student-athletes with world-class care," said Ken Bothof, Director of Athletics. "Both St. Elizabeth and Commonwealth share our vision for caring for our student-athletes and helping them compete at the highest levels both athletically and academically."

Through the partnership, the Athletics Department increased its level of support for the student-athletes by enhancing athletic training services. In addition to retaining NKU's athletic training staff, St. Elizabeth added two new full-time athletic trainers, a part-time physical therapist, and provided access to a registered dietitian. —*Bryan McEldowney*

NCAA GRANTS NKU ACTIVE DIVISION I STATUS

IN AUGUST, the Northern Kentucky University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics was granted active status as a Division I institution by the NCAA—the final step in a four year transition period that allows NKU's student-athletes the opportunity to compete for berths into NCAA Championships.

"The move to Division I athletics provides the platform for our student-athletes to compete at the highest level of collegiate athletics," NKU Director of Athletics Ken Bothof says. "The opportunity for our student-athletes to compete for a Division I championship re-energizes everyone throughout our program."

During the reclassification process from Division II to Division I, it took a collective effort from coaches, student-athletes, and administrators to continue growing the Norse brand and fielding competitive teams in the classroom and on the playing field.

"There has been an immense amount of work to move the program from Division II to Division I," women's soccer head coach Bob Sheehan said. "The NCAA rules allow more time in the off season for the development of student-athletes. One of the biggest areas of time has come in the form of recruiting. We have been able to expand our geographical footprint in recruitment as a result of the move to Division I."

Now in the Horizon League, NKU has seen substantial success in the classroom, in the community, and on the playing field. The department has posted four straight semesters with a cumulative GPA above 3.2, and 10-consecutive at 3.0 or better. Norse student-athletes also amassed nearly 2,800 hours of community service in just the last year. —*Bryan McEldowney*



NORSE BASKETBALL HOME SCHEDULES

Men's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
11/26/2016	North Carolina Central	7 p.m.
12/07/2016	Eastern Illinois	7 p.m.
12/18/2016	Eastern Washington	1 p.m.
12/21/2016	Brescia	7 p.m.
1/05/2017	Youngstown State	7:30 p.m.
1/07/2017	Cleveland State	1 p.m.
1/20/2017	Oakland	7 p.m.
1/22/2017	Detroit Mercy	1 p.m.
2/09/2017	Green Bay	7:30 p.m.
2/11/2017	Milwaukee (Homecoming)	7 p.m.
2/21/2017	Wright State	7 p.m.
2/24/2017	UIC	7:30 p.m.
2/26/2017	Valparaiso	1 p.m.
3/3/2017 – 3/7/2017	Horizon League Championship Motor City Madness	

Women's Basketball

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME
11/26/2016	East Tennessee State	1 p.m.
11/30/2016	Stetson University	11:30 a.m.
12/10/2016	Murray State	1 p.m.
1/5/2017	Cleveland State	5 p.m.
1/7/2017	Youngstown State	7 p.m.
1/14/2017	Wright State	1 p.m.
1/27/2017	Oakland	7 p.m.
1/29/2017	Detroit Mercy	1 p.m.
2/09/2017	UIC	5 p.m.
2/11/2017	Valparaiso (Homecoming)	1 p.m.
2/24/2017	Milwaukee	5 p.m.
2/26/2017	Green Bay	3:30 p.m.
4/4/2017 – 4/7/2017	Horizon League Championship Motor City Madness	



// BY IAN ALDRICH, BRENT DONALDSON AND JAYNA MORRIS

// PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY SOFRANKO

Staying Safe in a CONNECTED WORLD

THINK ABOUT WHAT'S TAKEN PLACE ONLINE IN JUST THE PAST FEW MONTHS:

In late October, hackers infiltrated millions of Wi-Fi-enabled home devices—including baby monitors—and used them to shut down huge swaths of the internet across the United States. Meanwhile, hackers infiltrated political email accounts in an alleged attempt to influence a presidential election. Add the surging levels of internet-based crime, cyberwarfare, identity theft, and a cyberbullying phenomenon that causes 160,000 students a day to stay home from school, and it all adds up to this: Interconnectivity comes at a price.

But there are simple ways to protect you, your children, your privacy, and your data. Here, Northern Kentucky University expert professors and alumni bring you stories and practical advice about staying secure in our connected world.



VANESSA HUNN

THE AGE OF CYBERBULLYING BULLYING ISN'T LIMITED TO THE SCHOOLYARD ANYMORE. HOW DO PARENTS PROTECT THEIR CHILDREN FROM A BULLY THEY CAN'T SEE?

Technology's power to connect us is matched only by its potency as a weapon. Derogatory texts and emails, false rumors on social media, embarrassing photos posted without permission, and fake online profiles meant to harass are all part of today's arsenal for online bullying—a phenomenon felt most acutely by children.

According to the Center for Disease Control, approximately 4,400 young people between the ages of 10–24 commit suicide every year. Kids who report being frequently bullied are at increased risk for suicide-related behavior.

Vanessa Hunn, associate professor of social work at Northern Kentucky University, says that while cyberbullying itself isn't new, the legal consequences of it are. She points to the tragic and complex story of Rebecca Sedwick—the 12-year-old girl from Florida who committed suicide after being bullied online for months in 2013.

"From a legal standpoint, it is difficult to make a direct causal connection between bullying and suicide," Hunn says. "Other factors like depression and other lived experiences may contribute. While bullying may be a factor in suicide, we don't know if it is the primary factor or a contributing factor. That is a case-by-case analysis."

All 50 states have laws that pertain to bullying, according to the

Cyberbullying Research Center, but fewer than half of them have policies that relate to cyberbullying specifically.

At NKU, Hunn teaches a class called Juvenile Suicide, Bullying, and Cyberspace, in which she uses Rebecca's case to discuss the risk factors that lead to cyberbullying, as well as solutions to combat it.

"When you think about what it's like to be a teenager, it's a time of self-discovery, development of self-esteem and identity. "There can be issues with self-esteem, jealousy, envy. People are more impacted and influenced by their peers during adolescence than at any stage in life."

Dr. Stephen Yungbluth, a trained mediator and associate professor of communication at NKU who specializes in conflict management, says there is a big difference between being mean and being a bully.

"When we're talking about bullying, we're talking about a repeated pattern of behavior," Yungbluth says. "Saying one thing mean in passing or one comment online is inappropriate behavior, but if there are repeated, negative interactions, then it's bullying—especially if you're drawing the attention of others and inviting them to participate."

Unfortunately, most parents don't even know if their child is being cyberbullied—or being the bully themselves—because they may not show physical signs of distress. And evidence of harassment and harmful messages can be obscured from parents' view with the click of a mouse.

—Jayna Morris



NICK HOFFMAN

Nick Hoffman ('07) is nationally recognized as a computer software reverse engineer who specializes in combating computer viruses and malware.



CLICK HERE TO ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT!

EVERY INTERNET-CONNECTED DEVICE WE OWN IS AN ENTRY POINT TO OUR LIVES. HERE'S HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF ONLINE.

If computer firewalls and antivirus software were foolproof, Nick Hoffman's job wouldn't exist. Hoffman, a 2007 graduate of Northern Kentucky University's College of Informatics, is a reverse engineer at Morphick, Inc. It's his job to pull apart computer viruses and malware, figure out how they work and what their capabilities are, and then write code so others can detect them.

Here's Hoffman's advice for keeping your info and identity safe online. Happy browsing! —*Jayna Morris*



THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK

Don't open attachments from people you don't know. Truly, if you don't recognize or know the sender, delete it. When in doubt, throw it out.



ENABLE TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION

Typically, this works by entering a random code sent via text to your phone in addition to your password when you log into your accounts. (Google offers this option across its many platforms.) A slight hassle? Sure. But less than being hacked.



ENCRYPT PRIVATE MESSAGES

Need to send a secure email? Encrypt it. Encryption takes your message, garbles it all up, and sends it to the recipient. If someone intercepts the email between those two points, they would have no idea what the intended message is. (In Outlook, go to Options>Security>Encrypt Message.)



DON'T ALWAYS ALLOW PERMISSIONS

Many downloaded apps and programs will ask your permission to access contacts or other data. If you don't like the permissions, don't allow it!



USE THE MOBILE SITE

If you don't want to use the app, use the mobile site for the app on your phone's internet browser. (Ex.: mobile.facebook.com) Why? It typically doesn't require special access and permissions to your data.

Hunn and Yungbluth recommend a multifaceted approach if you think your child is being bullied or bullying others online—an approach that includes lots of open dialogue:



SAY NO TO CYBERBULLYING

CONTACT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, more than 160,000 students miss school on any given day out of fear of being bullied. Teachers are more likely to be conscious that something is going on, as cyberbullying often takes place at school and on school computers. Teachers or administrators can identify who is doing the cyberbullying and work as a mediator to stop it from continuing.

ASK YOUR CHILD DAILY HOW THINGS ARE GOING. Go beyond the typical, "How was your day?"-type of questions, and ask them if there is anything they need to make their school experience better. "Something is amiss when children are being aggressive to their peers," Hunn says. "Is that child being bullied and in turn bullying others? What is going on with a child that may result in that child being aggressive with other children?"

DEVELOP EMPATHY IN CHILDREN EARLY. Teach your children how to put themselves in another person's shoes. Back up your conversations about empathy by volunteering at local non-profits, churches, soup kitchens, and shelters. "If you can instill empathy early on so a child can imagine what another child feels, then they're less likely to harm someone," Hunn says.

TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT THEIR ONLINE EXPERIENCES. "You can't rely just on parental monitoring software. You can't rely on just checking all their texts and emails," Yungbluth says. "There are all kinds of websites and other social media applications where things can happen. Parents need to have conversations with their kids about what their expectations and hopes are and ask them about their experiences online. Are they having positive experiences? What are they getting out of the equation? Talk about what the valuable uses of the devices are, but also talk about what types of activities are harmful."

ADVOCATE FOR ANTI-BULLYING POLICIES. The National Education Association recommends reviewing your state and district policies related to bullying. "Ensure that space is carved out to address bullying at local meetings and state conferences. Get bullying on the map."



DAN JACKMAN

THE SHADOW DETECTIVE
INSIDE DAN JACKMAN'S CRUSADE TO PROTECT
YOUR CHILDREN ONLINE

In late January 2008, a young teenager named Jason introduced himself to Ronald Underwood, a 56-year-old high school baseball coach, on the social media platform Myspace. The two quickly forged a friendship and over the next two months stayed in steady contact. Their bond, it seemed, was mutually beneficial. Jason came from a broken home—his own father had bolted from the family when he was young, he claimed. Jason stayed in Louisville with his mom and was looking for a paternal figure to fill the void.

Underwood was well-known by many young boys in the Louisville public school system—a sort of community paterfamilias who enjoyed mentoring kids. But with each online interaction with Jason, Underwood became more aggressive in his requests. Appearing nude in front of a webcam or sending compromising pictures were at the top of Underwood's list.

What Underwood didn't know was that Jason was actually Dan Jackman ('95), a police detective with the Crimes Against Children Unit of the Louisville Metro Police Department. Over the previous three years, Jackman had spearheaded an entirely new way of policing for his hometown PD. Working from anonymous tips that came to the department, he posed online as a young boy or girl to make contact with his suspect, then moved to arrest them when he had enough evidence.

With Underwood, the necessary evidence piled higher and higher until March 28, 2008, when Jackman and a team of officers executed a search warrant at Underwood's home, where he lived with his elderly father.

"[Underwood] came out on the front porch," Jackman recalls. "I introduced myself, and he was so visibly nervous he threw up. It was an admission of guilt."

So were the thousands of images police recovered from Underwood's computer. In late 2012, a United States District Court

judge sentenced him to 262 months in federal prison.

Underwood's online profile and the methods Jackman used to create and maintain a friendship with the ex-coach have been the subject of presentations Jackman has given to other departments throughout the Midwest. It's good policing—which should come as no surprise considering Jackman's pedigree.

A Louisville native, Jackman grew up in a world where law and order was a way of life. His father, uncle, cousin, and two aunts had all made careers of it. Family get-togethers often resembled a union rally. Cop-talk pervaded.

"That was the culture I grew up in," he says. "And when I was young I wanted nothing to do with it. I remember even telling my dad, a cop is the last thing I'll ever be because I'm tired of hearing about it. I'm going to do something different."

Jackman had plans to turn an early love of computers into a career when he landed at NKU in the fall of 1991. The school he arrived at fit him perfectly. It was small but growing with a tight-knit community that fostered friendships. Jackman was an Alpha Tau Omega fraternity member, played recreational sports, and tutored fellow students in math. NKU is where Jackman met his future wife, Angie Buchart ('93). "I loved my college career there," Jackman says.

By his sophomore year, however, Jackman began to think differently about his career. Computer science felt like a good hobby, while police work offered something stable and known. He switched majors to criminal justice, and in the fall of 1996, 18 months after graduating, returned to Louisville to work as a patrolman.

Jackman's early exposure to programming at NKU helped establish an understanding of early operating systems, and later, he says, "how to logically retrace a suspect's recent criminal activity from his or her computer." For seven years, Jackman patrolled the neighborhoods around the Churchill Downs Racetrack. In 2004, he was promoted to detective and delved into casework involving crimes against children—abuse issues, mainly. But it was the following year, he says, when

"the lights turned on" for him after he took a one-day class on online exploitation.

"It was something new and nobody [in the department] was doing internet investigations," says Jackman. "I kept saying, we have to do this." He laughs. "I was the squeaky wheel."

In 2005, Jackman became a virtual one-man crew, and over the next 11 years exposed countless Ronald Underwoods living in Louisville. For several years he served on the Cyber Crimes Task Force for the FBI. The work he did was hard but necessary, requiring him to keep up the banter with suspected pedophiles, and to review and look at sexually explicit videos and images.

"I'm very good at compartmentalizing things," says Jackman, the father of two teenage boys. "I'd never go straight home after work. I'd go for a run or hit the gym—just to give me a barrier between what I did for a living and my family life."

The ending we all want is that Jackman's foresight and doggedness has helped bring an end to the kinds of criminals he's spent much of his career targeting. But reality paints a darker picture. Jackman says online exploitation is "100 times" worse than it was when he first started. Social media and a thirst by pedophiles to find a new way to take advantage of their victims have changed the game.

"I compare it to alcohol or drugs," he says. "It's an addiction. You have an ounce of bourbon to get you somewhere but then the next week that same amount isn't going to do it. You need more. It's the same thing with pornography."

Earlier this year, Jackman decided he'd had enough. No amount of compartmentalizing could shake him free from a case in which two of the victims looked like—but weren't—two kids he coaches on a running team with his church. He needed to do something different.

Today, he's handling gang-related cases. Like before, much of the work is done online, tracking down threats and identifying gang members. It's new work, he says, and it's the same work.

"I'm still the in-house geek." —*Ian Aldrich*

PRO TIPS FOR PARENTS

DAN JACKMAN is a certified instructor for Kentucky's Department of Criminal Justice Training, teaching other officers how to properly investigate and respond to cybercrimes. He is also a regular conference speaker who talks about how to better protect children online. Here are Jackman's top three tips for parents:



RANDOMLY AUDIT YOUR CHILD'S COMPUTER OR MOBILE DEVICE. "If your child purchased the device with their own money, it is still open for you to review," Jackman says. "Some parents have told me that their child has an expectation of privacy and they cannot search their cell phones. I promptly remind parents that the Fourth Amendment protects citizens from unreasonable search and seizure by the government. It does not protect children from parental checks."



KIDS SHOULD TURN CELL PHONES IN AT BEDTIME. "Most of my cases involve the minors chatting with predators between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m., while the parents are asleep."



BECOME FAMILIAR WITH TODAY'S POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS. "Although Facebook is one of the more popular apps, most minors communicate on other social media networks."



Colonel Stephen Ling ('84), center right and opposite right, recently retired from more than 30 years serving in the U.S. Air Forces Cyber/24th Air Force, most recently serving as Chief of Staff.



**COLONEL STEPHEN T. LING ('84)
CYBERSECURITY AND CYBERWARFARE IN THE UNITED STATES
MILITARY**

Colonel Stephen T. Ling retired in June 2016 as the Chief of Staff, Air Forces Cyber/24th Air Force/Joint Forces Headquarters in San Antonio, Texas.

A 1984 graduate of Northern Kentucky University's computer science program, Colonel Ling's 30-year career included duties as an electronic warfare officer, instructor, evaluator, operations officer, squadron, group, and vice-wing commander, staff officer, and Center Director.

We sat down with Colonel Ling to talk about cyber's role in the modern U.S. military, the whole-of-government approach employed to combat cyber terrorists, and the technological revolution that has occurred during his distinguished career.

How has the "cyber" role in the military evolved over the last decade?

There's an evolution that's occurred everywhere as far as cyber is concerned. Our original networks were built without any real thought of having to secure them. If you think about it, the internet was altruistic. Everybody was going to be a good citizen on the internet, and life, theoretically, would be just fine. It was built that way.

The unfortunate thing is, it was built that way. Therefore, a lot of it is susceptible because nobody was thinking in terms of bad things happening on those networks.

So in recent years, what you're seeing is that we're looking at the networks with a more operational mindset. How do I protect something? How do I attack something? What do I need to do to ensure I can get my job done when someone else may not necessarily want me to be able to do that job? Those kinds of thoughts.

Can you talk about the differences between cyber-based operations the Air Force Cyber/24th Air Force undertake, versus those of other government agencies?

One of the things that's important to understand is that there are domains of war fighting. There's air, ground, sea, space. So the Army has the lead on the ground along with the Marines; the Navy leads in the maritime domain; the Air Force leads in the air domain. Each Service has a domain that they specialize in and are responsible for, even though we all have assets that work within each of those domains.

The Army, Navy, and Marines all have air assets, but the Air Force is considered the lead in that domain.

But right now, no Service by itself is the executive agent for the cyber domain. Cyber is unique in that it is a manmade domain. It's a domain unto itself, and each of the Services are contributing manpower to help work that domain.

Among the many anxieties of modern life, one of them is the fear that nefarious actors or nation-states can wreak massive destruction upon a city or nation in the U.S. through a cyber-attack. How realistic is that?

I would just say that you have a very capable force that's been assembled throughout the whole of government that is very attuned to what's happening, and is very focused on ensuring that the American way of life is preserved. That whole-of-government approach that's being taken is the way in which we're combating all of this for the future.

Thinking back on your career, which operations stand out as those that best utilized your skills and training?

During Bosnia and Serbia operations when our friendly fighters were targeted by surface-to-air missile systems (SAMS), I had the opportunity to fly missions to protect those aircraft by jamming those enemy systems. We had a lot of success.

Same thing in Iraq and Afghanistan. We did operations similarly throughout the areas of responsibility during Operations SOUTHERN WATCH, NORTHERN WATCH, IRAQI FREEDOM, and ENDURING FREEDOM. These were all combat operations where we had friendly aircraft targeted, and were able to provide threat-warning and jamming capabilities to protect those aircraft in harm's way.

Talk about your experience in NKU's computer science program. What was it like during your time here, and what kind of career did you imagine after graduating?

I graduated in the 1984 timeframe and, at that time, I think a lot of folks looked at Northern as a bit of a commuter school with maybe not the reputation of some of the larger universities. Quite honestly though, between the opportunities presented in the Air Force and having gone to NKU, I know our Northern Kentucky University graduates can and do compete at any level. I'm sure you have seen that proven over and over.



When you think about the Computer Science program during my timeframe, you need to consider the environment. Some of our programming was done on punch cards where you actually programmed in one building and had to walk across campus to run the program on a punch card reader. If you dropped those cards or they were wet because of rain—tragedy!

So if you think about the state-of-the-art at the time, computer science was very much at its infancy and we were very lucky to have some very great professors at Northern Kentucky University in Dr. Gail Wells, Dr. Steve Neumann, and Dr. Chuck Frank. And then there was Dr. Bart Braden who also drove us hard in physics and math. As computer science was being developed, all these folks were leading to bring it into the forefront. Everyone predicted computer science to be the wave of the future, and it has been.

How important is the cyber component in the fight against modern terrorism?

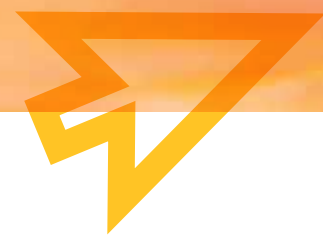
Whatever enemy we're coming across in today's world, all elements of power are brought together to fight that particular threat. You'll hear the term DIME: Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic. Each of these pieces of national power are brought to bear

against an adversary. If you think of any of these elements, you can probably tie cyber to pieces of that and how it would help us counter a particular threat.

What kind of skillset does a person need to become involved in your line of work?

Cybersecurity is huge—huge—across all of the commercial industry and across the military, and it's going to continue to be huge for a long time. When you think in terms of how we've pushed STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) programs overall, those are all areas that have a lot of legs under them for the future. I think rightfully so. A lot of what you do in the cybersecurity world is math-based and understanding logic.

I think the whole-of-government is truly, truly engaged with all of this. There have been enough high-level issues that have given us all wakeup calls to realize that we need to continue to significantly invest here. The beauty of all of this is, there's also a great government partnership with the commercial industry side. We all see the need and we all see the susceptibility and we all want to figure out how we can continue our way of life in a world that has vulnerabilities in the cyber domain.—*Brent Donaldson*



CELEBRATING

10
YEARS

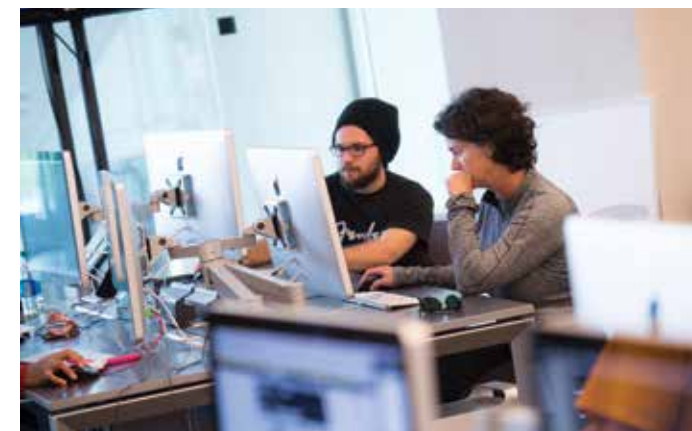
OF INNOVATION
INFORMATICS

THE COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS IS 10 YEARS OLD!

For the past decade, COI students, faculty, staff, graduates, and supporters have embraced most of what we do in the digital age — the art, science, business, and technology of information. That's journalism, cybersecurity, business intelligence, and more. It's the cold logic of computer code and the passion of persuasion. It's how we communicate.

The college has become a center of excellence in cybersecurity and has been recognized for its unique virtual co-op program. Enrollment has increased over the years, indicating a wealth of opportunities for graduates.

Happy anniversary, COI! 🐦



TRAINING STUDENTS TO WORK IN CYBERSECURITY IS CRUCIAL

to keeping our information and online identity
safe and secure. The Cybersecurity Scholarship
is designed to support these students.

*If you would like to support a student doing this
essential work, visit givenow.nku.edu.*

NKU was the first institution in Kentucky
and the Greater Cincinnati region to be
designated as a National Center of Academic
Excellence in Information Assurance/Cyber
Defense by the U.S. National Security Agency
and the Department of Homeland Security.
The designation positions NKU on the
frontlines in preparing students to deal with
the cybersecurity challenges businesses and
government face on a daily basis.



THE ELECTION

IS OVER. GOOD NIGHT!

THE RARELY GLAMOROUS,
ALWAYS STRESSFUL,
AND NEVER BORING WORK
BEHIND THE SCENES ON
CAPITOL HILL.

★ BY JASON COHEN ★

You probably don't remember what you did on New Year's Eve four years ago, but Stefanie Muchow and her husband Scott will never forget.

"It was my first married New Year's," says Muchow, a 2004 political science grad. "So, my poor husband got to spend it by himself. He called me to say happy new year, and I was like, 'Hey I've gotta call you back.' And he said, 'No, you really have to say Happy New Year to me at midnight.' I didn't even realize it was midnight!"

That's because Muchow works for Sen. Mitch McConnell, and December 31, 2012 was the night the Kentucky Republican, who was then Senate Minority Leader, closed a deal with Vice President Joe Biden to avoid the so-called "fiscal cliff"—a series of automated tax increases and spending cuts that could have paralyzed both the federal government and the United States economy.

Negotiations had been going on for weeks; because they were working through the holidays, McConnell's staff had taken to grilling hot dogs and toasting marshmallows in their antique office fireplace, since the Capitol building's usual dining options weren't open. "It's truly how we fed ourselves for about three days," Muchow says. By 2 a.m. on what was now the first day of the new year, her boss was on the Senate floor to vote.

Stefanie Muchow ('04) serves as Senator Mitch McConnell's director of operations. "Stef... is the person you have to see if you want to see me," McConnell says. "For the last several years, she has steadfastly guarded my door... and made me far more efficient than I'd otherwise be."



Greg Mecher's career has maintained a steady path since he served as president of NKU's Student Government Association before graduating in 1999. Here, Mecher is pictured with his wife, Jen Psaki (current White House communications director), their young daughter, and President Obama.



Such is life when you have "Potomac Fever," as former NKU Student Government Association (SGA) president Greg Mecher calls it. Mecher, a '99 communications grad, is currently the chief of staff for Rep. Joseph Kennedy III (MA), while his wife, Jen Psaki, is White House director of communications. Mecher has spent plenty of late nights at the Capitol, and he's also been the work widow: Psaki's last job was at the State Department, where she logged some 600,000 miles visiting more than 50 countries with Secretary of State John Kerry. In June of 2015, Psaki gave birth to a daughter, making work/life balance for both of them even more of an imperative. When Kennedy became a parent for the first time this past January, he apologized for not realizing how hard those first months must have been for his chief of staff. "He's gone through some of the same things I went through, a little bit behind," says Mecher. "So that was a funny moment."

Muchow and Mecher are, essentially, real-life, unexaggerated versions of supporting players from *House of Cards* and *Veep* (though those shows mostly focus on the executive branch). Beyond America's intense focus on electoral politics and the partisan rancor of cable news, they are the people behind the people—the ones doing the often unglamorous, always stressful, but never boring daily work of Congress: logistics, liaising with other government officials, policy research, committee paperwork, constituent relations, and sometimes, buying mustard for the office fireplace hot dogs.

As McConnell's director of operations, Muchow, 33, is the person the senator spends the most time with on any given day—"for better or worse for him!," she jokes. "There isn't much that gets to him that doesn't go through me, which is really fun." And Mecher, having worked for both former Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy II (RI) and now Joseph Kennedy III (who is four years younger than 39-year-old Mecher) is the

keeper of a 70-year political family legacy.

"It's one of those jobs that certainly is not the same every day," says Mecher. A Cincinnati native, he was a commuter student his first two years at NKU, the trip occasionally made easier by the fact that his grandparents lived two miles from campus. Mecher's path to the Potomac began with the SGA: after serving two years in the student senate, he came out at the top of a fierce three-candidate presidential race in 1998, with just seven votes separating the winner from the third-place finisher. In one pre-election interview with *The Northerner*, Mecher proposed getting Pearl Jam to play a show on campus as a way to fire up and unify the student body. But his greatest campaign weapon was the banner he put up on the side of I-275, secured with a log and a stop sign. "I had more people come and tell me that they saw that sign than anything else," Mecher says.

While Mecher was SGA president, the Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce flew two students to Washington to meet with their local representatives and talk about the issues. "I got caught with the D.C. thing and I ended up moving here, and that was that," he says. He started as an intern for Rep. Ken Lucas (KY), the last Democrat elected from Kentucky's 4th District, and then became a scheduler for Clifford "Ronnie" Shows, the former congressman from Mississippi.

Mecher's career picked up speed at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, which provides fundraising and infrastructure for the party's House of Representative candidates. Just 23, he started out as then-chair Patrick Kennedy's so-called "body man"—part travelling companion, part assistant, and part crowd-and-media control cop. "I ended up traveling around the country with Patrick, and got to know him very well on the road." Mecher would go on to work for Rahm Emanuel and meet his future wife (who was on Emanuel's communications team) while working at the DCCC.

In 2010—the same year Mecher was named an NKU Outstanding Young Alumnus—he landed his first chief of staff job for Steve Driehaus, during the Cincinnati Democrat's sole term in office. When Joe Kennedy III got elected to Barney Frank's old Massachusetts House seat in 2012, Mecher was called in, he thought, to talk with Kennedy about what it was like to open a freshman Congressional office, having just done it for Driehaus. "Turns out it was a job interview, and I have happily worked for him for the last... nearly four years," he says.

Muchow, who is from Boone County, developed her passion for what she calls "the craziness of politics," with the help of her mother Dianne, who volunteered for a local campaign in Boone County in 2002. She met the senator at a few events and interned in his office when she was still enrolled at NKU in 2003—an unusual time to come on, as the Senator underwent a triple bypass soon after she started.

Muchow also has fond memories of what was actually her first-ever class at NKU, Poli-Sci 101, with then-department chair Michael Thomson. She credits the department with helping her earn enough independent study credits to graduate in three years, and has been with McConnell ever since, something she certainly couldn't have predicted at the time. "I had no idea," she says. "To be from Kentucky and to get to work for the senator from Kentucky, it was just the coolest. And now, 13 years later, here I am. I work literally right outside his door."

And when your home-state senator is also one of the most powerful men in the leadership, why go anywhere else? Muchow moved from intern to staff assistant to legislative correspondent before becoming McConnell's director of scheduling in 2006. As director of operations since 2014, she still plays a role in scheduling, and also coordinates the senator's participation in major events like last year's visit by Pope Francis and the upcoming presidential inauguration. Being involved in nearly every part of McConnell's day, "I get to see past the mud-throwing—the

up close and personal relationships the members have," Muchow says.

"Stef... is the person you have to see if you want to see me," McConnell wrote in his recent autobiography, *The Long Game*. "For the last several years, she has steadfastly guarded my door and managed my schedule, [and] made me far more efficient than I'd otherwise be."

Things have been especially satisfying for Muchow and McConnell since the 2014 election, when McConnell was not only re-elected but saw the Republican Party win its first Senate majority since 2006. "We kind of get to control things a little bit more, though I wouldn't say it gives us any more control of his day," she says. "The Senate is not a predictable place. But the senator would tell you that for him, the fun part is getting to be the offensive coordinator for the stuff that's happening on the floor."

As Democrats are the minority in the House of Representatives, Mecher and Kennedy know their efforts aren't likely to produce landmark legislation. "It's the way the founders drew it up," says Mecher. "It's not supposed to be easy." But the "Schoolhouse Rock" magic of participating in the legislative process is always there. This past July, Mecher helped his boss shepherd a highly personal bill through both chambers of Congress, establishing a Centennial Commission for President John F. Kennedy (who was born in 1917). "This obviously did not have far-reaching policy implications, but is still important to a great many people," Mechers says. "Something I personally helped to draft passed the House and Senate unanimously and was signed into law by the president. That never gets old."

Minority or majority, Muchow never loses the sense that she's seeing history being made every day. "You can't walk into the Capitol, and not just every day be a little bit in awe," she says. "I have yet to get a day where I'm not like, 'Wow, I get to work in the Capitol.' If you're ever not in awe, then it's time to move on." 🐼



Support NKU's College of Arts & Sciences
by visiting givenow.nku.edu.



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

The global war on animal trafficking

Brandon Neukam's good work carried across the ocean. It broadcast in waves from the South African bush, where he'd just traveled seven hours over dirt roads to deliver survival and surveillance equipment to park rangers in Hluhluwe-Imfolozi Park in the KwaZulu-Natal province.

Holding the new equipment, the park rangers beamed. Conversation turned toward the night-vision lenses they'd use to track the poachers and thieves who do their killing in the dark.

From there, Neukam's good work crossed deserts and mountains; it penetrated the underground of Asia and the Middle East

and the United States, where criminals and terrorists would have one less shipment of blood ivory and rhino horn available to fund who-knows-what.

Brandon Neukam, a 2005 graduate of Northern Kentucky University (political science major, theater minor), serves the U.S. State Department as a foreign affairs officer for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. His mission, he says, is not entirely about "saving the animals." Wildlife trafficking permeates layers of criminal enterprise.

"It's a lot of dirty money and a lot of dirty operations that have to happen," Neukam says. "You can think of it as a moving black

market, and you're creating a dangerous situation throughout that entire thread."

So yes. The day Brandon Neukam and his colleague handed the park rangers more than \$200,000 worth of equipment—equipment that had been stuck for months in the U.S. Embassy warehouse seven hours away in Johannesburg—was a good day.

"We can write higher-level thinking about what this means, but when you're actually in the field or in the park and talking to the rangers themselves, you'll hear stories [about] finding someone in the park at night trying to illegally poach rhino, and they're trying to track that person and they can't because it's pitch black. It's nearly impossible."



As a foreign affairs officer for the U.S. State Department, Brandon Neukam ('05) routinely travels throughout sub-Saharan Africa to combat wildlife trafficking. "You can think of it as a moving black market," he says. "It's a lot of dirty money and dirty operations."

Neukam has worked for the U.S. State Department for 11 years—12 if you count the internship while he was still a student at NKU. The internship became a job offer, and soon Neukam found himself in Albania, five-thousand miles from home, serving as an election observer, watching democracy unfold in a manner far different from what he was used to. "I was 21," he recalls. "Being able to go to watch that process, and watch people who were really fighting for their futures—realizing that and seeing what foreign assistance and diplomacy does, it solidified for me that this is what I wanted to do."

Far-flung assignments sent Neukam around the globe. He helped manage U.S. foreign assistance to Eastern Europe. He served as assistant to the U.S. coordinator of the 2006 Olympics in Turin, Italy, where he worked to ensure the safety of Americans, but also landed softer assignments, like guiding the former First Lady Laura Bush on an architectural tour of the old city.

Neukam later moved to the Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, which works to keep Americans safe at home by countering international crime and instability abroad. He worked on countering crimes in Asia and then helped build an initiative to counter drug transit through West Africa.

"And now," Neukam says, "I have the most rewarding position I have ever held. I am working toward the U.S. goals to combat

wildlife trafficking."

In February of 2014, the Obama administration released its "National Strategy for Combating Wildlife Trafficking"—a set of principles and strategic priorities designed to counter what it called an "urgent conservation and global security threat." According to government estimates from 2013, one elephant is killed for its ivory every 15 minutes. International trade in products derived from illegal poaching generate anywhere from \$7 billion to \$23 billion annually.

Neukam has worked on U.S. initiatives to combat wildlife crimes in source and transit zones throughout sub-Saharan Africa. He's seen several wildlife crime scenes; like the time he took his office director to South Africa to visit a project being considered for federal funding. There happened to be a fresh kill while they were visiting—a large, pregnant rhino whose face had been destroyed beyond recognition by poachers.

These animals represent more than ecological diversity, Neukam says. They create opportunities for tourism and are an economic incentive to the locations that have them. "So when you kill off that economic opportunity, you're taking away those opportunities for people and creating a destabilization within that society."

It's the kind of work that Neukam says he learned to appreciate at NKU, where it always felt like he and his friends were

building something, establishing a group, or developing an event.

"We all have reward sensors," Neukam says, "and we want to reward ourselves by doing something that makes us happy. When you're in college trying to find what makes you happy or what you find rewarding, there was something for me at that age, something about working for or with the U.S. government that felt important. It was important to me to be a part of something that I saw as big."

It is. Poaching numbers are decreasing in many areas across South Africa. One park in Tsavo, Kenya hasn't seen an animal poached in two years. Neukam is helping to build investigative and enforcement functions, and works with local communities throughout Africa to become invested in the protection of their parks.

To the cynics and fatalists who concede to global decline, Neukam has only his enthusiasm and pragmatic advice.

"If the world is going to hell, are we all going to throw our hands up and say, okay? Because then what happens? Do we actually want a planet where it's a free-for-all, where laws don't matter? If there are negative things happening, you don't just throw your hands up and quit. You keep going.

I think we have a leadership opportunity and the capability to really make a difference—not just for our country, but to make the world a habitable place."

—Brent Donaldson





NOT MY KID

Substance-abuse prevention advocate Debbie Moak's mission to save families

Every parent prepares themselves for the big milestones in their child's life—first words, first steps, learning to ride a bike, getting their driver's license, high school graduation—but nothing could prepare Debbie Moak for entering her 20-year-old son into a rehabilitation center for substance abuse.

Moak and her husband, Steve, began to notice changes in their son's behavior when he turned 15. In addition to drinking and smoking pot throughout high school, he added pills to the mix in college. It wasn't until the Moaks discovered that their son had become addicted to cocaine that they knew they had to act quickly.

"Parents really have to consider when it's addiction versus just experimentation," Moak says. "I was watching the consequences of the destructive decisions he was making in order to feed his addiction—losing his personal belongings, his health, a safe place to live, and the ability to complete his education. As parents, we had to intervene

and save his life."

The Moaks put him into a 30-day residential treatment program. Afterward, he spent a total of six months in rehab between three different programs.

Their experience inspired Debbie and Steve to create notMYkid as a way to share their family's story and help other families struggling with substance abuse. notMYkid's mission is to foster positive family relationships in order to help children make smart life choices and prevent the damage of destructive behavior.

"We were a very loving, intact family, and if it could happen to us, it was certainly happening to other families," Moak says. "We made a conscious decision that we were going to share openly what our family had been through and help other families."

Moak has shared her family's story with thousands of families in the U.S. and internationally. She has also created several programs focused on substance abuse prevention through notMYkid and has led two

national drug awareness campaigns.

Her advocacy for drug prevention led her to her current role: director of the Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family. Arizona governor Doug Ducey handpicked Moak for the position, which works with councils and commissions on substance abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, juvenile justice, and faith-based initiatives.

Moak graduated from NKU in 1985 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education and recently returned to campus and local schools in the region to tell her family's story. She was also recently named NKU's College of Education and Human Services' inaugural Distinguished Scholar.

"It truly was one of the honors of my life to be recognized," Moak says. "It really holds great meaning for me. Getting through my studies at NKU wasn't a simple process—it was a very challenging time of my life. But because of the hard work it took for me to get my degree, I was very well prepared for the world I'm in today." —Jayna Morris



NKU student Summer Buchanan works with a Florence Elementary student as part of the Collaboration Project.

TEACH, LOVE, LEARN

The collaboration project that is transforming elementary education

There is a study underway in the staff lunchroom at Florence Elementary School—one in most participants vaguely understand that they are part of Something Big.

Dr. Tammie Sherry ('93, '00), NKU assistant professor of elementary education, and Lisa Resing ('00, '03, '10), the beloved principal of the elementary school, recently explained the "study" to a group of NKU students gathered in the Florence Elementary faculty cafeteria.

Yes, you are still college students, Sherry and Resing said, but you are setting out to become a unique generation of teachers because you are about to take part in a one-of-a-kind program in Kentucky: The Florence Elementary/NKU Collaboration Project.

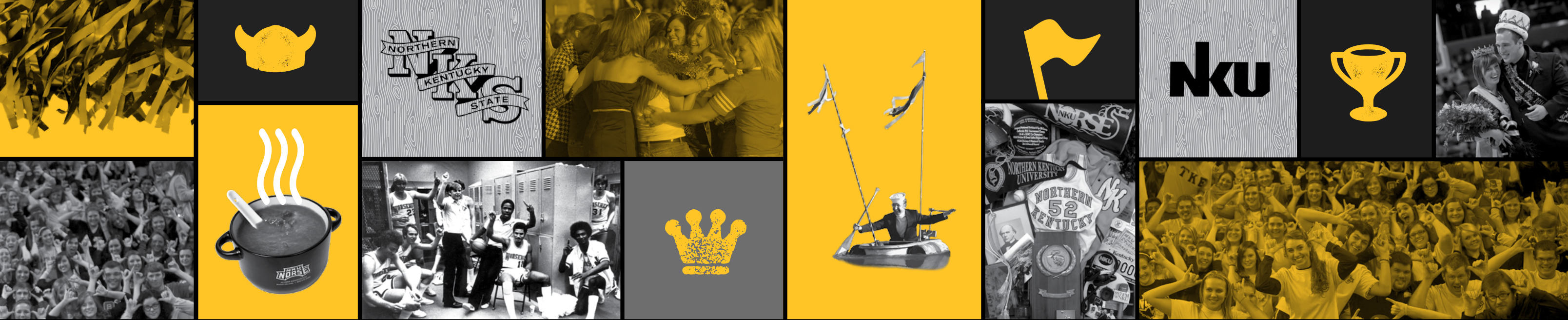
The Florence Elementary/NKU Collaboration Project represents synergy on a grand scale—complete student immersion into reciprocated learning and teaching. As part of the new Collaboration Project, NKU students are not only taking their core teacher education classes at the elementary

school, they are embedding themselves four days a week in the elementary classrooms as practicum students and teaching assistants—a process that previously didn't begin until they had completed general studies classes. It means that the NKU students are gaining years of teaching experience before their first job interview, and many Florence Elementary students are reaping the benefit of having two or even three teachers and teaching assistants in their classroom nearly every day.

"Everyone has a kid in their life that they love," Sherry says. "At the heart of what we're trying to do is making education better. We're trying to create better teachers—teachers who are more qualified to work with our kids who have different needs. If you know any child who has any kind of learning or social issue, you want a teacher who has been in that school as much as possible. And with our relationship with Florence Elementary, it's growing into this really big family. Nobody in the state is doing anything like this in elementary schools." —Brent Donaldson



ABOVE TOP: Dr. Tammie Sherry ('93)
ABOVE BOTTOM: Lisa Resing ('00, '03, '10), won NKU's Alumni Award for the College of Education and Human Services in 2014.



WE'VE MISSED YOU. COME BACK HOME.

Save the Date for the Alumni Weekend. February 10th-11th, 2017

FEBRUARY 10TH, 6 P.M.

Alumni Awards Celebration – A fun evening with dinner, drinks, and good music to honor and recognize four exceptional alumni. If you aren't ready to go home after dinner, join us for a post-event nightcap.

FEBRUARY 11TH

Chili Cookoff – Have a delicious chili recipe? Enter and compete in a taste test with other alums, students, faculty and staff, and NKU friends. Prefer to just taste? Grab a cup and a spoon and try some of the best chili in the region.

Men's and Women's Basketball Homecoming Game – Join us for a doubleheader and cheer on our Norse.

2017 ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



MARY ZALLA '87,

Global President, Consumer Brands and Managing Director of Cincinnati and Chicago Landor LLC

Outstanding Alumnus Award

This award is presented to an alumnus who has distinguished him/herself in their chosen field and is an exemplary ambassador for the University, who has enhanced Northern Kentucky University or the community, and who has distinguished him/herself through professional accomplishments.



MARTY BUTLER '77,

Partner, Strauss Troy Co., LPA
Distinguished Service Award

This award recognizes alumni who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and service to Northern Kentucky University through their time and talents.



JASON MERRICK '14, '16,

Director of Inmate Addiction Services, Kenton County Detention Center

Outstanding Young Alumnus Award

This award goes to an alumnus who has graduated in the past 10 years and has enhanced Northern Kentucky University or the community, and who has distinguished him/herself through professional accomplishments.



LYNNE SMITH,

Professor, Teacher Education
Faculty/Staff Strongest Influence Award

This award goes to a faculty or staff member whose teaching, counseling or advising had a profound influence on the life and/or career of the nominating alumnus.

For more information and to register, visit go.nku.edu/alumniweekend



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SOLVE THE MYSTERY FOR NKU HISTORY!

*Winter is the king of showmen,
Turning tree stumps into snow men,
And houses into birthday cakes,
And spreading sugar over lakes.*

*Smooth and clean and frosty white,
The world looks good enough to bite.
That's the season to be young
Catching snowflakes on your tongue.*

*Snow is snowy when it's snowing
I'm sorry it's slushy when it's going.
—Ogden Nash, "Winter Morning Poem"*

Ah winter, "the king of showmen" and the season to be young—like these merry Norse sledders. Can you identify them and tell us where they are on campus? Email your answers to nkumagazine@nku.edu. Happy holidays and stay cozy!