RICH BOEHNE IS GIVING LIGHT

HE STRUGGLED AT NKU BEFORE FINDING HIS PATH. NOW THE E.W. SCRIPPS CEO SHINES A LIGHT FOR FIRST GENERATION STUDENTS.

STUDENTS FIND DANGEROUS LEVELS OF LEAD IN NEWPORT, KY SOIL. // PAGE 10

PHOTOS FROM THE FIRST RACIALLY INTEGRATED SCHOOL IN THE U.S. // PAGE 22

NKU'S COOL COURSE CATALOG WILL MAKE YOU WISH YOU WERE HERE. // PAGE 28
How do you go from struggling first-generation college student to president, chair, and CEO of one of the nation’s largest TV and digital news companies? Just ask Rich Boehne.

Innovative and challenging programs are why NKU is consistently ranked among the top universities in the nation by Forbes. But a handful of classes in particular turn conventional teaching methods on their heads.

A photographic look at artifacts unearthed at the site of a pre-Civil War racially integrated grade school—the first of its kind in the country.

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!

Christine Roush joins the 1000-point club for the Norse. Page 13

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Christine Beach joins the 1000 point club for the Norse. Page 13

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Too Cool for School

Departments

NKU anthropology alumnus Nick Thaxton (’15) bags artifacts from the foundation of the Parker Academy school house—the first fully-integrated school in the United States. During an ongoing series of archeological digs on the site, NKU faculty, students, and volunteers unearthed many of the artifacts presented on page 22.
Our campus has been busy since the printing of our first edition of NKU Magazine last Fall. Our students have been working on innovative undergraduate and graduate research in our classrooms and communities, and the entire Northern Kentucky community has rallied to advocate for additional state funding for our University.

Our cover story explores NKU’s impact upon Rich and Lisa Boehne, and the impact they will have on a new generation of our students through a generous $1 million gift to provide scholarships for first-generation students.

Rich and Lisa met at our University, and they began their pursuit of a dream here. Rich is now chairman, president, and CEO of The E.W. Scripps Co., and incoming chair for our Board of Regents. He says his journalism adventure began the first time he walked onto our campus and into a learning environment that enabled his career.

Like so many of our students—about half of our incoming freshmen each year—Rich and Lisa faced unique challenges as the first members of their family to attend college. Through their generous support, we will be able to ensure that our students can succeed and achieve their dreams.

Our commitment to diversity among our student body, faculty, and staff is a central goal of our five-year Strategic Plan. Since the launch of the plan in 2013, the number of bachelor’s degrees conferred to underrepresented minority students has grown by 37 percent.

Kevin Smith, a senior biology major, studies the histology of human organ tissue in BIO 426, Mammalian Anatomy and Physiology.
LEARN BY GIVING
NKU’s Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project has invested $1 million in community agencies. // By Jayna Barker

For the last 16 years, Northern Kentucky University has taken pride in its commitment to community engagement through the Mayerson Student Philanthropy Project, which launched in 1999 as a way to teach students about philanthropy in hopes they would become lifelong stewards of their communities. Since then, more than $1 million has been invested in community organizations and agencies.

Here’s how it works: Students are required to identify a need in the community and determine which nonprofits in the area are working to fulfill that need. Most classes receive between $1,000 to $2,000 and award smaller grants themselves. Some classes use an indirect model, in which students work with the donor to guide the donation.

Over the years, NKU’s professors have found new ways to incorporate service learning into the classroom across numerous disciplines.

“The quick measure of the project is the money invested: over $1 million in 16 years,” says Mark Neikirk, executive director of the Scripps Howard Center for Community Engagement. “That’s impressive, but other numbers tell a fuller story. The percentage of students whose eyes are opened to community needs is consistently high. So is the percentage of students who learn their course material more thoroughly because the philanthropy component was added to a class, connecting classroom theory to real-world issues and need.”
JUNE 8-26  
"The Star Spangled Girl," Stauss Theatre. This comedy follows the lives of Andy and Norman, two young men living in San Francisco in 1966 who are struggling to make a living publishing a not-so-popular magazine. A love triangle forms when Sophie, an all-American girl and self-described “religious follower of Sports Illustrated,” moves in next door. For more information, visit commonwealth.nku.edu.

JUNE 25  
Black and Gold Safari, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden. Join fellow alumni, faculty, and staff at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden for the annual Black and Gold Bash! Enjoy animal encounters, appetizers, a scavenger hunt, a photo booth, balloon artists, and more. Tickets are $25 each and include all day admission to the zoo, parking, and event activities. To purchase tickets, visit supportnku.nku.edu.

JULY 6-24  
"Some Enchanted Evening," Stauss Theatre. Re-live the best of Rodgers & Hammerstein’s music all in one night. This musical revue includes musical theatre classics from from “Carousel,” “Cinderella,” “The King and I,” “South Pacific,” and many others. For more information, visit commonwealth.nku.edu.

JULY 16  
Jeff Dunham, BB&T Arena. With many handcrafted sidekicks, the wildly popular and internationally acclaimed comic/ventriloquist Jeff Dunham is sure to entertain. Watch Walter, Achmed, Bubba J, and Jose Jalapeno take over the stage. For more info, visit thebbatarena.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CAMP TIME, NKU STYLE

There are kids’ camps galore available this summer that will test young students’ logic, communication, problem-solving, and teamwork skills. No matter what your children’s interests—from science, to sports, to art, and beyond—there is a camp adventure for all tastes.

CINSAM  
The Center for Integrative Natural Science and Mathematics hosts a variety of summer camps for 3rd-12th grade students that focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)-related topics. Through July 29. For more info, visit cinsam.nku.edu.

SPORTS  
Sports fans in grades 1-12 can learn the fundamentals of volleyball, baseball, soccer, and basketball this summer from June to early August. Students can meet new friends, increase skills, and make memories. For more info, visit nkunorse.com/camps.

YOUNG REMBRANDTS  
Young Rembrandts partners with local schools, and community centers to teach art to young students from ages 6-12. This summer Young Rembrandts will be teaching art lessons ranging from fashion design to anime cartoons. June 16 to July 23. For more info, visit communityconnections.nku.edu.

INTRODUCING NKU’S NEW PODCAST

Ask NKU is a new monthly podcast that invites the finest academic minds at NKU to share their knowledge about any number of subjects with you in a fun, engaging, relatable way. The professors and faculty who appear on the show have spent years amassing a wealth of highly-specialized knowledge, and we invite them into our studio on campus to distill all of that information to you, for free! You can find all episodes on Soundcloud, iTunes, or on our website, and recommend topics or send your own questions or suggestions to asknkupodcast@nku.edu.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, COLLEGE OF INFORMATICS

Calling all Informatics alumni, faculty, friends, and fans! Join us this October when we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the College of Informatics and the 5th anniversary of Griffin Hall. The College of Informatics has much to celebrate, having garnered national recognition in areas ranging from media/journalism and mobile app development to cybersecurity. Stay tuned for more information about the upcoming anniversary celebration.

ALUMNI AWARDS

Each year, the NKU Alumni Association recognizes distinguished graduates for their contributions to the University, their community, and society. This year’s Alumni Awards Celebration was hosted in February in conjunction with NKU’s homecoming activities. Congratulations to this year’s recipients!

OUTSTANDING ALUMNUS AWARD  
Garren Colvin ’96, Haile/US Bank College of Business President & CEO St. Elizabeth Healthcare

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD  
John Wagner ’73, Haile/US Bank College of Business Former Vice President, Labor Relations, Kroger

OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNUS AWARD  
David Spaulding ’06, Chase College of Law Manager of Business Development and Legal Affairs, Turner Construction Company

FACULTY/STAFF STRONGEST INFLUENCE AWARD  
Michele Day ’08, College of Informatics Lecturer and Student Media Adviser, NKU

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Collaborative effort finds dangerous levels of lead in Newport // By Kelsey Bungenstock

THANKS TO A COLLABORATIVE STUDY between Northern Kentucky University journalism and environmental sciences majors, some Newport, Ky., residents now know if the soil in their yards contains potentially harmful levels of lead.

NKU science students, working with assistant professor Dr. Kristen Schwarz, tested eight residential sites near the former location of a lead smelter plant in Newport.

After the students collected and analyzed multiple measurements at each site, they found that 38 percent of the samples exceeded 400 ppm — the Environmental Protection Agency’s recommended maximum for urban gardening.

“Lead-contaminated soil is a much broader issue than just the communities that are living adjacent to old industrial sites,” Schwarz says. While past studies have focused on industrial contributions to lead contamination in soil, there are other important sources of lead in cities, such as lead-based paint and gasoline.

Thanks to funding provided by CINSAM as well as a National Science Foundation Major Research Instrumentation Grant that Schwarz received in 2013, environmental science students were able to measure lead levels in the sample area’s soil through handheld machines called X-ray fluorescent (XRF) analyzers. XRF analyzers have the capability to quantify lead onsite, rather than having to send the samples to a lab. While the analyzers provided a great convenience, that didn’t make the project easy.

Homeowners for the test sites were given the results, along with precautions to take regarding the level of lead contamination found in their yard.

One of the greater challenges for the inter-department collaboration was the element of timing. According to Schwarz, the pace of science — when compared to journalism — is “glacial.” Day recalls that the NKU journalism student working on the project, Kevin Schulz (now a Hearst Journalism Fellow at the San Francisco Chronicle), was anxious to start getting reactions to the results when the science students hadn’t even been to the research sites yet. “It took some time to adjust,” Day says. “The experience gave us a better understanding of the mindset of the scientist, but we were also trying to keep the priorities of the journalist.” The collaboration gave the scientists a different perspective, as well.

“Scientists struggle to find someone to tell their story in an interesting and impactful way,” Schwarz says. “Incorporating journalism into the study was a logical step.”

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“One of us who worked on the study benefited from the fact that NKU has a really good reputation within the community,” Schwartz says. “When we’re doing these kinds of projects in the community, we have to be careful that we respect that reputation, recognizing that it is an important relationship, but also a fragile one.”

According to the students’ findings, urban soil lead is patchy and widespread, but intensive sampling and spatial modeling can help predict patterns of lead-contaminated soil. Schwarz says that she and her students have continued sampling around the northern Kentucky and Cincinnati region, and have presented their findings to the Northern Kentucky Sierra Club and the Kentucky Academy of Science.

Day says that the experience could lead to future journalism projects involving science. She and Schwarz are part of a transdisciplinary group of NKU faculty who have proposed creating a collaborative to fund research and communication on environmental issues.

“We got funding for our next project. We’ll be more prepared for the challenges of collaborating with people who see the world in different ways,” Day says. “It takes time to understand each other and to build that trust.”

“Transdisciplinary collaboration is hard,” Schwarz says, “but it’s worth it.”
ATHLETICS PARTNERS WITH ADIDAS

In February, Northern Kentucky University and adidas agreed to make the Portland, Oregon-based company the official athletic footwear, apparel, and accessory brand of the Norse through the 2020-21 season.

Ken Bothof, NKU's director of athletics, says adidas recognizes that NKU is on the rise and will have success in Division I. “Not only does this partnership allow us to remain true to our core values,” he says, “but it helps elevate our profile among the Division I landscape.”

The partnership with adidas perfectly aligns with NKU’s core values: student-athlete well-being, brand awareness, and fiscal responsibility.

Northern Kentucky will outfit all 250+ student-athletes in each of its 17 intercollegiate athletics programs from head to toe with adidas apparel, equipment, and accessories beginning July 1. It also aligns the Norse brand with one of the premier athletics apparel companies in the world.

The agreement, adidas will also assist with an annual fundraiser and create partnership opportunities with the official apparel worn on the playing fields by NKU's student-athletes, coaches and administrators to what fans can purchase.

—Brian McEldowney

HORIZON SHINES BRIGHT FOR NORSE ATHLETICS

IN AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON MAY 11, 2015, on Northern Kentucky University’s campus, NKU President Geoffrey S. Mearns accepted an invitation from commissioner Jon LeCrone to join the Horizon League in all sports effective for the 2015-16 season. The Horizon League recognized that NKU—in both academics and athletics—is on the rise. The Norse proved that in its first year in the league.

By all accounts, the Norse exceeded expectations in their first year as members of the Horizon League. Women’s soccer; men’s soccer, volleyball; women’s basketball, and men’s basketball all surpassed their preseason rankings and advanced to postseason play in the Horizon League championships, where women’s soccer; men’s soccer, volleyball, and women’s basketball each advanced to the semifinals. Individual accolades in the fall and winter included 21 all-league or all-freshman honors, three all-tournament accolades, and six academic all-conference honorees.

In the spring, NKU saw 13 student-athletes named to all-conference teams. In addition, 51 student-athletes received academic awards, including 10 student-athletes who were named to the conference’s Honor Roll. Eleven programs earned the NCAA Public Recognition Award, recognizing that these teams have maintained an overall average grade point average of 3.0 or higher for their entire academic career.

In the classroom, NKU’s 250+ student-athletes posted a 2.28 GPA, which ranks her 12th on NKU’s all-time list, as NKU posted its 33rd-consecutive winning record.

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RICH BOEHNE STRUGGLED AT NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY UNTIL HE FOUND HIS PATH.
NOW HE SHINES A LIGHT FOR OTHERS TO FIND THEIR WAY.
// By Brent Donaldson

Who knows. Maybe everything would have been fine. His friends walked away unscathed from their adventure. But maybe not. Maybe Rich wouldn’t have gone on to overcome his difficulties in school, or meet Lisa, or rise to the top of The E.W. Scripps Company. Who knows. Calculated risk.

If you talk to Rich Boehne and his family, his NKU classmates, his friends and colleagues, they paint a picture of paradoxes about the man. Complex and simple. Humble and powerful. A man who struggled with early failures, stayed steady and calm, and today leads one of the largest television and digital news companies in the country. This is Rich Boehne’s story, told by those who know him best.
Richard Albert Boehne grew up in a modest home on Grant St. in Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Like many children of the 1960s and early ’70s, Boehne’s formative years were occupied by the era’s profound social and cultural turbulence. By the age of 12, Boehne was a voracious consumer of the news, reading two papers per day, daily documents of racial injustice, cultural upheaval, political corruption, and war. But away from the A-frame newsstand, it was another story. Mary and his parents, Thelma-Jean and Albert, Boehne lived a happy and stable life.

Thelma Jean Boehne (Rich Boehne’s mother) I just have to tell you the good things. Don’t I? He was a good boy. He liked to work. When he was about 13 he started working at the YMCA as a volunteer helping with day camps and things like that. I don’t know that he liked to work around the house too much, but he did like to work at the YMCA a lot. He didn’t like to read until the fifth grade when they got into history. Even those little books in grade school, “Dick and Jane” and he didn’t like them at all. He liked the real stuff. He wasn’t interested in reading about Dick and Jane.

Rich Boehne (’81, president, chair, and CEO of the E.W. Scripps Company) The Boehne side of my family was from Germany and England. My father [Albert Boehne] worked for American Laundry Machinery in Norwood for 40-plus years. They made the old one-hour Martzing machines—“fresh as a flower in just one hour”—Huge commercial dryer cleaning equipment. My mother, from Grants Lick in the country, comes from a farming family. I was raised with a grace-and-mercy approach to life, rather than one that believes what you need is hard knocks to make you tough. A very “last shall be first,” Southern-Baptist kind of upbringing. I was a student that believes that what you need is hard knocks to make you stronger. I was raised in a family that is very much from my father, who is 96 and still the same way.

Thelma and her children lived among a small circle of friends who were 96 and still the same way.

Rich Boehne I didn’t apply myself. But he was very smart. He was serious about his studies, which I think was perhaps what he needed. I could never remember what my grade point average was, probably a point-eight-nine or something. NKU had the wisdom to decide that it would be best if I left for a while. I came back in the spring semester of ’79 and met Lisa in class.

Lisa Boehne (’81) Rich had a rocky NKU experience and left and went to Florida for a couple of years. So, I had been at NKU two years, and all of the sudden Rich shows up with his flip flops and his tan, and bleached-out blond hair from being in Florida. And I thought, “This is interesting.”

He was a mess. I was always dressed up like I was going to work, and he was always wearing overalls with one shoulder hanging down. What the heck was going on? I went to the University Center when she walked by. But I’ve always dressed like I was going to work, and he was almost wearing overalls with one shoulder hanging down too.

Rich Boehne I was always wearing overalls with one shoulder hanging down too.

Lisa Boehne The first year (at NKU), Rich started making these comments all the time about my hair; because my hair was kind of a big deal for all of those years. It was blond, and I was spray painting it all the time. Back then, you could smoke in class, and there were a bunch of Vietnamese vets in class who would wear their army coats in the back and smoke. And Rich would come in and walk up to them and say, “You better put your cigarettes out, Lisa. You’re about to come in, and you don’t want to set her hair on fire.” It was pretty funny.

And so that went for on and off while he was making these comments. But Rich is just a really sweet guy even though he can be a smart-ass. Then we started actually dating, right when summer started our junior year. If you would have asked anyone, there’s no way people would have thought we were dating. He was about as casual as you can be and still be dressed in. In the winter, he wore socks and flip flops.

Rich Boehne I always tell people that Lisa passed up George Clooney to go out with me, and that what literally means is that she walked past George on campus to meet me. George just happened to be standing outside the University Center when she walked by. But it’s a great line, isn’t it?

Richard Damert (’81, former editor of The Northerner) It was Rich’s second time around (at NKU) and he was a couple of years older than me. And that was very evident in his demeanor—he was very cool; he was very calm, calculated. He took things at ease. And he was funny and very intelligent.

Particularly my first couple of years at NKU when I was a freshman, and there were a very serious journalism students there. People like Rich and Gary Webb and Tim Funk and others went on to pretty distinguished journalism careers.

Corky Johnson (’80, former editor of The Northerner) It has been many years to get through Northern because I was working on three newspapers. I was at the [Cincinnati] Post on the weekends. I was working at The Northerner, but then I would quit school for awhile, and then I’d go back to school. A lot of us were dropping in and out of [NKU], but on the other hand there was a seriousness to it. As a student, you want to get practical experience and be out there doing stuff. A lot of us did.

And that was the question: whether you get a degree, or whether you don’t get a degree. Look at Carl Bernstein. We all came out of the Watergate era, and he didn’t have a degree. It was a time of asking, what was journalism? Was it a vocation? What was it? You could see in class that [Rich] kind of had it figured out. He was maybe a little more... thorough? I just remember his stuff being more polished.

Dr. Michael Turney (Rich’s former professor and former chair of the communication department at NKU) Rich was somebody who I think struck a number of professors as a pain in the ass, but I never felt that way about him. He was feeling his oats as a young man. He was confident, cool but also very laid back and very easy going.

Before he left for Florida he wasn’t a good student because he didn’t apply himself. But he was very smart. He was serious about journalism, but he didn’t care about the academic side. He wasn’t interested in the history of mass media and how it evolved throughout the decades. He wanted to be out there doing journalism, not studying...
RICH AND LISA GRADUATED FROM NKU with bachelor’s degrees in communications/journalism in 1981. They married that same year and each took jobs working for local weeklies.

By 1985, Boehne had experience at both the Post and as a part-time reporter for the Cincinnati Enquirer. That year he accepted a full-time job with the Cincinnati Post, and climbed to new heights at the paper’s parent company, Scripps. It was a period that would mark the birth of the Boehnes’ two sons: Luke in 1987, and Jake in 1989.

Lisa Boehne. When we got married, we were working for community newspapers making $8,000 each. But this was the post-Watergate era, so a lot of people, even in our class of 1981, weren’t getting jobs because journalism was kind of dead. We were just happy that we had steady jobs in our field.

Rich Boehne. I started as a reporter at the Cincinnati Post in early 1985. I did several different things. I had come up in weekly newspapers, so when I walked into the Post, I covered a beat, but if an editor was out I could draw up pages. I had been a manager so I had a lot of tools.

Then, I took a job on the business desk. This would have been maybe 1986 or 87, covering mostly capital markets. I wrote a lot about the issues on Wall Street—drugs, insider trading, the separation of Main Street and Wall Street. I loved it. No one wanted to be a business writer and I had enough of a business and math background that it didn’t intimidate me. I thought it looked like a good opportunity.

We had a great managing editor at the Post, a guy named Steve Pagan, who is still around. He said, “Look, I know what you’re thinking. Covering business is writing about things going up two percent or down two percent.” He said, “It’s not. These are stories about jobs, and about how some people are going to eat, and some are not. Some people are going to pay their mortgage, and some are not.” You need to write adventure stories, and I need to be able to hear the music in my head when I’m reading your stories.” I thought, “I’ll do that.” I was fat and happy at the top of my career as a business reporter and covering Wall Street.

Mike Phillips (former president and CEO of the Scripps Howard Foundation). When [Rich] was a brand new reporter working on the business desk of the Cincinnati Post, I think what impressed people about him as a young man was that he did his homework.

When he went to go interview somebody, he probably knew a lot of the answers to the questions before he even asked them. And I think that practice has followed to this day.

Rich Boehne. I used to tell our editors at Scripps that when the paper lands in the yard, people need to look out at it like it’s flopping around out there. Like you’re almost afraid to go get it. It is out there breathing. And that is the way that I found it every day, an enterprise adventure that arrived every afternoon.

Rich Boehne had proved his mettle as a business reporter and Wall Street reporter, but an unexpected change was coming. From its inception in 1978, Scripps had been a privately-held company. But 110 years later, in June of 1988, the company went public with its initial Class A common stock offering on the New York Stock Exchange—a place with which Boehne was well familiar from his reporting. A few years later the company would launch the cable network Home & Garden Television (HGT), the brainchild of Ken Lowe, Boehne’s friend and counselor. Soon after they purchased and expanded Food Network. Other cable channels and internet businesses followed. The rapid expansion into cable TV brands preceded Scripps’ 2008 split into two separate companies: Scripps Networks Interactive (SNI), focused on the lifestyle cable brands, and The E.W. Scripps Company, focused on news and journalism through television and the internet.

Throughout a period of seismic shifts in media industry—not to mention the Great Recession of the late-aughts—this was Boehne’s steadfast leadership that launched his career.

Rich Boehne. In 1988, the parent company (of the Post), Scripps, called and asked if I would consider coming to the corporate side and help them become a public company. I had written a story about Scripps once before and I wasn’t sure if it had made or ruined my career. But apparently someone (Larry Leser, then CEO) had enough respect for the way I did the story and thought, “Well, Rich covers Wall Street for the company, why don’t we ask him about being a public company?”

So that is when I moved to corporate office and focused for years building Scripps on Wall Street. I was manager of investor relations. They were a hundred-year-old family company and had no notion of being public. A company that never told anyone anything for a hundred years now has to tell everyone everything. So someone had to build the relationships with shareholders and Wall Street analysts that knew the industry, and I knew, and I had quoted a lot of them.

I took a pay cut to go to the corporate side. I had a good job deal at the Post, but I looked and thought “There is a big company here, and this is interesting stuff.” I was trying to build my career, so I would take on anything risky.

In 2000, the board of Scripps came to Ken Lowe and I and asked, “Would you all like to run the company?” Which was just stunning. Particularly stunning to a whole lot of other people in the company. “Oh my God, you’re going to let Ken Lowe be the CEO of the company, and make Rich Boehne the executive vice president—the number two?” But we had some board members who looked at us (and said), “These guys are entrepreneurial, and they are still young, they have a long runway. Media is going to go through a lot of changes.”Now in 2016, I’m the chair and the CEO of [The E.W. Scripps Company] and Ken Lowe is chair and CEO of [Scripps Networks Interactive]. Sixteen years later we are still doing it.

Nathan Smith (outgoing chair of the NKU Board of Regents). I think Rich is one of those people, he doesn’t want to have the air of a CEO. He doesn’t want to be Mr. Boehne, or CEO Boehne. He wants to be Rich, and he always treats people with the utmost respect, and really values and appreciates the people who work for him.

Mike Phillips. Rich is not a guy who wants you to know how smart or important he is. He doesn’t have the CEO’s ego, but don’t ever underestimate him. He’s very bright and knows what’s going on around him, and he’s probably about six questions ahead of you.

Rick Dammert. You don’t often hear about CEOs dropping out of [college] and then coming back. He’s extremely down to earth even to this day. He doesn’t forget anybody, and he doesn’t act like he’s above anybody. You don’t see that trait in a lot of people who have reached his position.

Kim Williams (Scripps board member since 2008). Rich began his career as a journalist, and so he’s taken that and has led E.W. Scripps through a period of very traumatic issues for the industry. When E.W. Scripps spun off the [cable] networks business and was left with what I would characterize as the traditional media businesses—both the newspapers and the television stations—it coincided with the financial crisis and with the rapid decline in classified advertising. When things were very challenging toward the industry, it would have been easy to focus on the minute issues without looking at the broader picture and what we had to do in order to be successful.

The other thing is—and I think this speaks more broadly of Rich and who he is in terms of his focus on vision and the mission of E.W. Scripps—during those periods of difficult conditions for the industry, he continued to focus on the need to invest in quality journalism. This
Thansidally for us, there are many ways our graduates support NKU. Some alumni give back through service to the University, while others enhance our reputation through professional and community service. And of course, many support their alma mater directly through philanthropy. Rich and Lisa Boehne are exceptional—they contribute to the University generously in all three respects. We are so grateful to them.

Nathan Smith. The University, being a younger institution, has not had a lot of alumni who are in the upper echelons of the business world. And it’s very easy for people to find themselves, when they work in the industry they do or that I do, who like to say, “Oh, I went to Swarthmore.” And Rich and I love to tell everybody, “Oh! We went to NKU.” Rich represents Northern’s coming of age; in growing up. And Rich is very proud of that, and proud of the institution that he attended.

Lisa Boehne. NKU gave Rich a second chance—they took him back after not having a great track record. And then Scripps straight out offered him a job from reporter to corporate officer. Obviously, if you are ranking our life, then those two [events] are key to anything we’ve achieved.

And for me, they kept me in town. I might have been off somewhere and not had the life I’ve had at all because of that scholarship. It was definitely a God thing all the way around with the school. We’re very much indebted and we love the school because of that. Lisa Boehne.

Michael Turnsey. When I was still advising students on an active basis, I often would bring up Rich and point to him as an example. The dream C student who was not taking school seriously, but something snapped and he became interested. What he has grown into, what he has done for Scripps, and what he has done for the community and especially for Northern, is incredible. It’s wonderful.

Brian Lawlor (senior vice president of Scripps broadcast division) Rich is the perfect CEO for Scripps. Because Scripps has always been, from the day it started, about giving a voice to the little guys. Our responsibility is to be the defender of the little guys.

Gary Prutt (president and CEO of The Associated Press, where Boehne serves on the board of directors) Rich, first and foremost, was a journalist. And he’s still a journalist today. He also happens to be CEO. But he’s a journalist. Sticking up for the right of the people to know and not being intimidated by the rich and the powerful and the strong. I think what Scripps is showing is that you can be a strong successful thriving business and still pursue strong first amendment rights and values in journalism. That’s Rich’s great contribution.

Ellen Weiss (vice president and bureau chief at Scripps Howard News Service) Let’s face it: newscasters are a pain in the ass. They make trouble. They make things uncomfortable. And in this shifting media landscape, it could be much easier to focus on the profits than on the mission. But that is not how Rich Boehne runs Scripps. You feel Rich in your head saying, Go there. Make it matter. Make a cause.

Ken Lowe (chairman, president, and CEO of Scripps Networks Interactive) He’s never forgotten what it was like to be in the role of reporter. In the course of getting the facts, if he has to blow some stuff up, yeah, he’ll do that. Because at the end of the day, Rich is about battling injustice and getting to the truth. If we had to have one individual, in the entire history of E.W. Scripps, that embodies the slogan of “Give light and the people will find their way,” it’s Rich Boehne.
As race relations in the United States continue to be strained by factors affecting social and economic equality, it’s important to remember that even one person can make a difference. James Parker did just that. And he did it at a time when circumstances were far worse—in the years leading up to the U.S. Civil War.

In 1839, as the issues of race and freedom divided the nation and pushed it toward the greatest conflict in its history, Mr. Parker and his wife, Priscilla, founded a small school in New Richmond, Ohio. The Parker Academy was the first school of its kind in the United States to offer fully integrated classrooms open to all races, religions, and genders. The small college preparatory academy was a beacon of light and tolerance during one of America’s darkest hours.

The Parkers dedicated their lives to using a classical liberal arts education to build equality in their classrooms and their community. Abolitionists and teachers came from across the country and as far as Europe, joining runaway slaves who’d escaped the South. These former slaves were taken in by the Parkers and given access to an education free from racial prejudice.

Of course, not everyone shared the Parkers’ world view. The school was raided by “slave catchers” seeking to reclaim students, who they viewed as human property, back to the plantations from which they’d fled. Mr. Parker defended his school and his students, fighting tirelessly for their civil, educational, and religious rights. Later, many of those students would go on to help turn the tide against slavery, serving in Colored Regiments in the Civil War. Many went on to become successful business owners and farmers in our region and beyond.

“The Parkers and a small group of like-minded visionaries, changed our region and our nation for the better, and their example rings as true today as ever,” said Dr. William Landon, NKU unearths history at the first fully integrated school in the United States // By Dr. Sharyn Jones, Dr. Brian Hackett, and Dr. William Landon // Photos by Timothy Sofranko

Finding grace in America’s darkest hour
chair and associate professor of history at Northern Kentucky University. Beginning last summer, Landon and colleagues Dr. Sharyn Jones and Dr. Brian Hackett led a partnership between NKU and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center to excavate the Parker Academy site. The Freedom Center is in the process of creating a permanent onsite exhibition on the Parker Academy.

For the ongoing archaeological excavations that began last spring, NKU history and geography students and faculty are joined by their anthropology peers as well as those from the NKU graduate program in public history. Together, for the first time in an academic setting, they are examining the extensive Parker family archive. In another first, Drs. Jones, Hackett, and Landon are working to mentor Dr. Peggy Brunache, a postdoctoral scholar from Scotland who recently received Ford Foundation funding to visit NKU and the Parker site over the next year. Brunache will collaborate with the Freedom Center and continue Parker site excavations, lab work, archival work, and public outreach for the project.

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**FRAGMENT OF A DOLL’S FACE.** This item is porcelain, likely imported from Germany, ca. 1860.
**DISCOVERY DATE:** May 2015
**LOCATION:** Foundation of the men’s dormitory
**DISCOVERED BY:** NKU students

**PARTIAL CLAY PIPE BOWL,** perhaps dropped during construction of the men’s dormitory in 1842. This pipe is likely from the Point Pleasant pipe works located approximately one mile away from the Parker Academy.
**DISCOVERY DATE:** May 2015
**LOCATION:** Foundation of the men’s dormitory
**DISCOVERED BY:** NKU students

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**A LETTER WRITTEN TO THE PARKER ACADEMY by Colonel Henry Corbin,** a white officer stationed with the 14th U.S. Colored Infantry. As a graduate of the Parker academy, Corbin was asked to return to be a guest speaker at a reunion of graduates. In this letter, Corbin declines the invitation, but writes that he thinks highly of the academy and speaks fondly of the experiences he had there. He writes about the patriotic spirit that took over the school, complete with cheers and marches, when the students heard about Fort Sumter. Corbin also talks sadly of his classmates who died in battle and now lay in “graves dug by traitors.” He states that he has no love of the South and the “evil they brought to the earth.”

After the war, Corbin stayed in the army, rising to the rank of Adjutant General—the army’s highest ranking officer. Corbin was the Commanding General of the United States Army during the Spanish American War, the Philippine Insurrection, and the Boxer Rebellion.

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**“GRAVES DUG BY TRAITORS.”**

Colonel Henry Corbin

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**HANDMADE CLAY MARBLE,** likely a child’s toy, ca. 1830-1860. Its presence supports the idea that children and perhaps runaways were housed at the Parker Academy.
**DISCOVERY DATE:** May 2015
**LOCATION:** Foundation of the men’s dormitory
**DISCOVERED BY:** NKU student
“THIS COMBINATION of hands-on archaeological experience, archival training, historical interpretation and preservation, and in-depth research, offers students from our region and the across the country a unique opportunity to experience history in real and hands-on archeological preservation, and in-depth research, offers students from our region and the across our region and the across the country a unique opportunity to experience history in real and hands-on archeological training, archival training, and historical interpretation and preservation. These items suggest that both learning and conflict may have been part of daily life at the academy. The large shot in particular may indicate that it was necessary to defend the Parker ideals of freedom and equality; these items were found in the doorway to the schoolhouse. When we engage in new conversations, our sense of self—and much of our identity, background, or institutional position—to thrive. NKU strives to attain inclusive excellence as a widening of our worldview—an expansion of our sense of self—and much of our work revolves around teaching others to develop the capacity to appreciate differences. “When we engage in new behaviors, our brain defaults to a recol—fight or flight,” Roberts says. “I’m asking people to enter a space of uncertainty for a longer period of time. I see it as a vision and practice where diversity, equity, and inclusion are reframed as vital to an outcome of institutional excellence.”

A LETTER WRITTEN BY PRISCILLA PARKER IN 1847, addressed to her “beloved brethren and sisters” who were members of a church association in “Mount Virginia,” Parker implores the reader to consider their position on slavery, and discusses her complex feelings about the impending Civil War. “As the day is fast approaching when we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Why should we bear to speak to each other about the great sin of oppression that has not only crept into many of the churches, but stalks abroad at noon day with shameless front declaring it is of God appointed origin... I do not think we give that clear and pointed expression of our conviction of the sin of slavery that the times require. I am not satisfied that we clear our own shirt of this very much fear we have not done this of the blood, of these crushed and bruised ones. I want to send out a voice that will sound in thunder tones wherever there is an oppressor to tremble or a slave to suffer. We have declared before the world that we are Christ’s people, and that He has made our spirits free from the bondage of sin and death. Then why should we fear to make an expression against this vile bondage that subjugates thousands of our poor brethren and sisters soul and body to the evil dominion of a fellow mortal.”

A FRAGMENT OF A SLATE FOR WRITING. — Note the ruled lines where the handwriting would have gone; this would have been especially helpful for someone who did not know how to read or write. A student would gain skills by practicing on this small, intricate metal button with dog and puppies. This item is likely from a child’s coat or shirt, ca. 1840-1850.

A VARIETY OF SHOT AND BULLET CASINGS recovered from around the Parker Academy schoolhouse and men’s dormitory. These items may indicate that it was necessary to defend the Parker ideals of freedom and equality; these items were found in the doorway to the schoolhouse.

A SMALL, INTRICATE METAL BUTTON with dog and puppies. This item is likely from a child’s coat or shirt, ca. 1840-1850.

NKU strives to attain inclusive excellence by preparing all students to live, work, and flourish through engagement in an increasingly multicultural and globalized community. These conditions allow all members of the NKU community—irrespective of identity, background, or institutional position—to thrive. In August, 2014, President Geoffrey Mearns appointed Dr. Kathleen Roberts the first senior advisor to the president on inclusive excellence. “In order to be truly inclusive,” Mearns said, “we must expand diversity to include gender, religion, culture, sexuality, geography, socio-economic status, and political and philosophical beliefs. We must also ensure that everyone, irrespective of these characteristics, has an equal opportunity to be heard in our governance processes, because including different perspectives leads to better decisions.”

Roberts sees inclusive excellence as a widening of our worldview—an expansion of our sense of self—and much of her work revolves around teaching others to develop the capacity to appreciate differences. “When we engage in new behaviors, our brain defaults to a recol—fight or flight,” Roberts says. “I’m asking people to enter a space of uncertainty for a longer period of time. I see it as a vision and practice where diversity, equity, and inclusion are reframed as vital to an outcome of institutional excellence.”
The coolest classes on campus are as fun as they are challenging.

Think about it: Without the ingenuity and discoveries of teachers and professors, where would we be as a society? We count on the creativity and dedication of professors and researchers to prepare each new generation for a better future. At Northern Kentucky University, innovative courses that challenge and enlighten are part of daily life.

FOR SCHOOL

Some of NKU’s courses are as fun as they are challenging. But if you look hard enough, you’ll find a few classes that truly turn conventional teaching methods on their heads. Classes that pair pop culture with critical thinking, or connect human cultures through the deconstruction of a single meal.

NKU’s course catalog is filled with classes that challenge and enlighten. But if you look hard enough, you’ll find a few classes that truly turn conventional teaching methods on their heads. Classes that pair pop culture with critical thinking, or connect human cultures through the deconstruction of a single meal.

CONVENTIONAL

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CONVENTIONAL
THE GAME OF LIFE

COURSE: MIN 394, Board Game Design
INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Alexis Pulos

When it comes to our free time, a lot of our fate is determined by a roll of dice, the flick of a spinner, the cards we’re dealt, and where the chips fall. While mobile and platform gaming may attract all of the buzz, contemporary tabletop games are still an entertainment staple in most households.

Dr. Alexis Pulos’ Board Game Design course teaches traditional game design by examining two basic questions: What is a game? And can be layered to create complex systems. Students learn how the and meaningful interactions."

"Game structures teach us something about the world around us,” Pulos says. “They teach you how to be a critical thinker in complex situations—to be aware of where we are, and what moves we can make and can’t make. They require us to ask how we make intelligent moves and meaningful interactions.”

LAWS CORPUS

COURSE: LAW 556, Facts, Storytelling, and Persuasion
INSTRUCTOR: David Singleton

A well-told narrative is the most powerful tool a lawyer can use. As humans, we’re hardwired to communicate (and thus make sense of the world) through telling or listening to stories. But when it comes to the courtroom, stories are less about the storyteller and more about the listeners—the jury.

David Singleton, professor of law at NKU, teaches this mindset in his Facts, Storytelling, and Persuasion course. The class focuses on how to pull a jury into the narrative of a story. Singleton uses a real-life, high-profile case to engage his students and asks them to step into the shoes of defense lawyers by using facts to develop a powerful narrative. For the first three or four weeks of the course, students pore over the facts—police reports, videotaped statements, and evidence.

But the facts are only a small building block in the defense’s story. “We spend so much time in school talking about the law—which is important and does matter—but it’s not why we win,” Singleton says. “Cases are not decided based on law, by and large, but on emotions that come from those facts.”

Once students have developed their theory of defense, the rest of the course is spent putting that theory into practice. Students are asked to practice storytelling in ways that could help throughout the trial—jury selection, opening and closing statements, cross-examination, etc.

Singleton wants his students to spend time thinking about how they can weave a fact-based defense theory with supporting emotional themes. “Once you’ve done that, everything else falls into place,” Singleton says. “The principles of everything you do in the trial have to be governed by your case theory. If you don’t have the ability to figure out what story you’re going to tell, you’re not going to win your case and be an effective advocate for your client.”

THE GREATER GOOD

COURSE: SWK 565, Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness
INSTRUCTOR: Diane Wright

It’s not always easy to be compassionate. All of us carry experiences and presumptions that might make it challenging to accept and respect others without judgment.

Diane Wright’s Compassion, Empathy, and Forgiveness class puts recent research to the test and calls for students to apply those challenges to their own professional and personal lives.

Wright asks students to perform a random act of kindness or compassion each week throughout the course. Students aren’t required to spend money or put themselves at risk; but instead make a difference in the lives of the people they encounter on a daily basis. Over the course of weeks, the numbers add up, and students log hundreds of acts of kindness—big and small—by the end of the semester.

One of the bigger assignments in the course requires each student to write an objective letter using the four steps of non-violent communication. The letters won’t be mailed but are addressed to someone whom students might have a difficult relationship with, such as a partner, roommates, boss, or family member.

“It’s about taking a moment to take a breath and put yourself in a place where you will be able to engage that person with compassion, empathy, and respect,” Wright says. “It’s a challenging thing. We talk about compassion a lot, but when the rubber hits the road, it’s not always easy. A lot of students have said it’s the most powerful assignment they’ve encountered.”

The best way to learn something is to teach it, right? Students take time to develop their own program model in which they teach a target population about compassion, empathy, and forgiveness.

Wright hopes that students tune into their lives in a different way and that they are confronted with difficulty in their life—whether it’s professional or personal—they will be able to approach situations with more consideration and kindness.

WHY FUN MATTERS

ONE NKU PROFESSOR OFFERS HIS TAKE ON UNCONVENTIONAL, INNOVATIVE CLASSES AND THE RESEARCH THAT PROVES THEY’RE WORTH TEACHING.

Sure. Some of us will be skeptical about “fun” college courses and may even question the value they lend to a student’s overall education.

Dr. John Alberti, professor of English and director of the English department at Northern Kentucky University, politely disagrees. Alberti sees nothing wrong with classes that allow students to study creative concepts that might track with a traditional career path.

“I think it’s both interesting and a little sad that we have come to consider education to be unpleasant or that a learning experience can’t be fun and challenging at the same time,” Alberti says. “On the contrary, all the evidence suggests that we learn the most and push ourselves the hardest when we engage with material that we have a deep personal connection to. I teach an Honors class on feminist punk rock and women’s music, and the final assignment is a creative project. In the spirit of punk rock, I encourage people to consider writing and performing a song, and some do—along with blogs, ‘zines, art projects, even costume design. The day of the presentations are always the most emotional and amazing days of the year. Students still tell me how that experience affected their lives, made them more confident, and had a positive impact on their other coursework.”

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Josh Heuser's AGAR takes the art of celebration to new heights

B ack in the day, when Josh Heuser (‘01) was throwing parties in area bars, it never really crossed his mind that within a few years he’d have a private audience with the president of his alma mater, or that the two would share plans to prepare events for Northern Kentucky University.

His hobby turned into a full-time job when, after graduation, Heuser worked his contacts to land a marketing gig with local restaurant owner Jeff Ruby. By 23, Heuser had opened his own nightclub, Club Clau, a popular nightlife spot in Over-the-Rhine. Over the next 10 years Heuser went on to open, operate, and sell two additional bars before going through a bit of a transition.

“When you become the older guy in the bar, that’s the time to get out,” he says.

In 2009, at age 30, he started AGAR, an agency that helps create “experiences” around brands. Named for the “red base in a petri dish that allows organisms to grow,” AGAR specializes in experiential marketing and brand development:

“We create immersive experiences.”

AGAR’s website says. “We take an authentic and holistic approach to consumer and brand relationships. Through our multiple interactive and engaging touch-points we unite brands with their audience and the audience with their brand.”

With 14 full-time employees based in Cincinnati’s Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, AGAR now features clients like TriHealth, Toyota, Procter & Gamble (AGAR manages the company’s community sponsorship dollars), and Cincinnati staples like Lumenocity, the Flying Pig marathon, and events at Fountain Square. “The company helped refashion the old St. John’s Unitarian church on Elm Street in Over-the-Rhine, where Heuser opened a popular club and event center called The Transept.

“We want to be involved in any events that feature Cincinnati, either directly or indirectly,” Heuser says. The company’s bottom line has increased 20 to 30 percent each year, he says, and they are currently up 30 percent over the last fiscal year.

Heuser’s success stood out to his professors and to the leaders at his alma mater. And that led to a personal meeting last year between Heuser and NKU President Geoffrey Mearns. “It was a great feeling, knowing you went to a university and 15 years later you have the opportunity to contribute your skill set to enhance the university experience,” Heuser says.

Recently, AGAR collaborated with NKU Athletics to develop strategic concepts that resulted in the creation of the men’s and women’s basketball hype videos, as well as the integration of the Gjallarhorn into pre-game athletic ceremonies. The videos, and especially the Gjallarhorn (the giant horn associated with Norse mythology, not the video game weapon), were created to instill new traditions in Norse Athletics and the University for years to come.

“We’re really excited about what’s going on at NKU,” Heuser says. “I was fortunate enough that because of NKU, I was able to enter the professional world with no debt, and it was so important to me. With no debt, I was able to fail—and fail many times—before I had success. I was able to add to our company versus graduating with massive student loans and being forced into the debt column of our economy.

“I mean, I was able to throw parties and get paid for it,” he continued. “Ultimately, I think NKU has set me up for success.”

—Ryan Clark

LIFE OF THE PARTY

Josh Heuser’s AGAR takes the art of celebration to new heights

Life of the Party

Josh Heuser's AGAR takes the art of celebration to new heights.

Support NKU's College of Informatics by visiting givenow.nku.edu.
Northern Kentucky University grad Gary Darna waited almost two decades to buy the R2-D2 Pepsi cooler he’d been eyeballing since he was 11 years old. He drove hundreds of miles to Pennsylvania to retrieve it, disassemble it (to fit in his car), drive it home, and piece it back together.

Darna’s passion for collecting started with one Star Wars figurine and has transformed into a functioning business, CompleteSet, an online, “shoppable” knowledge base where collectors can digitally document collectors’ items they have and want in one central location. CompleteSet users hail from more than 45 countries.

“There are people in countries we’ve never visited—people who speak languages we don’t even understand—who are using a product we built,” Darna says. “It’s an amazing feeling.”

Darna met his co-founder, Jaime Rump, in April 2012 while they were both students in NKU’s INKUBATOR program. They launched their beta site in May 2013 after they won the Cincinnati Innovates competition and received a $10,000 grant from CincyTech.

Their turning point came in 2014 when Darna and Rump raised $650,000 through Velocity, a Louisville startup accelerator program. They grew their team, launched an iPhone app, and expanded their audience.

“FLYING INTO HISTORY

Retired Northern Kentucky University nursing professor Beverly Reno participates in first-ever Women’s Honor Flight.

When Beverly Reno was invited to participate in the first-ever Women’s Honor Flight last September in Washington, D.C., she didn’t know what to expect when her flight landed at Dulles. Within 24 hours, Reno had received the honor of a lifetime.

Reno—a retired Northern Kentucky University professor—joined more than 100 female veterans from the tri-state area in a flight from Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport last year to visit the Women in Military Service for America Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery. During that trip, they visited many other war memorials, including the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Reno was one of four women to place a wreath on the unidentified soldier’s grave that day.

“I didn’t realize how big of an honor it was until the day it happened,” Reno says. “The ceremony was unbelievable—the people who showed up—it was overwhelming and beyond anything you could ever imagine.”

Reno enlisted in the military in 1957 as an officer when she was 20 years old after she graduated from Sisters of St. Joseph School of Nursing at the University of North Dakota. She served as a stateside nurse during the Vietnam War from 1959–1961.

Reno didn’t originally have plans to end up in the Greater Cincinnati area. Her husband, Jack—a singer and host in country music radio—traveled all over the country during his career before settling down in northern Kentucky. When she first became a nursing professor at Northern Kentucky University in 1975, NKU was only seven years old and had approximately 5,000 students.

The nursing department was located in two houses—faculty offices in one house and lab in another.

“There are people in countries we’ve never visited—people who speak languages we don’t even understand—who are using a product we built,” Darna says. “It’s an amazing feeling.”

Darna met his co-founder, Jaime Rump.

A COLLECTOR’S DREAM

CompleteSet’s Gary Darna turned his lifelong hobby into a career

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But for Darna, it’s more than just about the numbers in the archives.

“What is so meaningful about what we’re building at CompleteSet is that there’s a story behind many of the things the collectors own,” Darna says. “What they’re really collecting isn’t objects—it’s memories that remind them of a person, place, or time in their life. It’s great being able to build something people care about and interact with.”

—Jayna Barker

LIGHT THE WAY

YOUR GIFT COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE.

Did you know? Planned giving at NKU has never been easier. In fact, in 2015, the U.S. Congress passed a law that allows IRA owners 70 ½ and over to make a gift directly from their IRA to the NKU Foundation, tax free (up to $100,000). Another bonus? This gift counts toward your required annual minimum distribution.

For more information, contact Julie Dials at (859) 572-6062, or development@nku.edu

NORSE NOW

PHOTO BY PATRICK MCCUE

THE WAY

YOUR GIFT COULD MEAN THE DIFFERENCE.

For more information, contact Julie Dials at (859) 572-6062, or development@nku.edu

PHOTO BY PATRICK MCCUE
The filename for this photo is “cafeteria.” And back in the day at NKU, that’s exactly what this was. Published in the 1973 edition of the NKU yearbook, Polaris, the photo shows the “lunch rush” in a nondescript hallway somewhere on campus (anyone remember where?), filled with busy students and faculty and staff. Can you identify these hungry patrons? Do you remember the vending machines or the tastes and textures of the food-like objects that dropped from them? What other thoughts or memories strike you about this vintage image from the dawn of NKU? There’s an interesting story or two here that’s just waiting to be told. Help us tell it! Email your suggestions, thoughts, and answers to nkumagazine@nku.edu.