

Dear '56 Cobbers,

I want to thank all of you who responded to our letter by way of email, telephone and letter, starting with Delores (Baldry) Ersland, Curtis and Ruth Bakken, Frances (Bokinskie) Corbett, Lyle Dahl, Ruth (Ylvisaker) Foster, Lester Horntvedt, Jule (Hendrickson) Jeffs, Bonnaveve (Paulson) Johnson, Betty (Anderson) Liebelt, Marilyn (Duncan) Moe, David Olson, Paul and Geri Opsahl, Ann Koster Williams and many more that have talked to me. Thank you so much for answering my call. I'll bring more information to Homecoming.

Here is some news from our class:



**Curtis and Ruth Bakken:** Curtis retired from the Mayo Clinic in 1995. We are residents of Arizona, living in Green Valley, just south of Tucson. We still have a home in Park Rapids on Fish Hook Lake where we spend about five months each summer. We are still physically active, primarily bike riding. We did our 32<sup>nd</sup> European bike tour last year in The Netherlands. We visited The United Arab Emirates and Oman in February with our daughter, Sonna, and granddaughter, Madison. Curt worked there while at Mayo so it was fun to see the changes. We make it to most of the Homecoming events. We keep in touch with Concordia through John Pierce. President Craft comes to Arizona regularly so we also get to visit with him. Warmest

regards to all classmates.

**Ruth (Ylvisaker) Foster:** I am now living in Des Moines near my sister, Mary. Moved four years ago to downsize (from California) after being widowed in 2008. Miss the California weather, but otherwise have a comfortable townhouse here and much less maintenance for the old bones.



This is **Lester Horntvedt**, who grew up in the great state of North Dakota, venturing way across the state to attend our beloved Concordia College. From there, I went to Luther Seminary in St. Paul and graduated in 1960, but my ordination into ministry was delayed until May of 1963. I was called by First Lutheran Church of Mitchell, SD to serve as Youth/Education Pastor. I was there four years. Then I was called by Zumbro Lutheran Church of Rochester, MN to serve in the same capacity. I retired from that church on March 31, 2000. Dianna Weiberg and I were married June 19, 1983. We each have three children and are

blessed with eleven grandchildren. During retirement, I have worked as a volunteer for a variety of non-profits such as: Good Earth Village, our Bible Camp, the Rochester Area Family Y, the Rochester Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, and the Lyra Baroque Orchestra. We regularly attend the Concordia College Christmas Concert at Orchestra Hall. Our closest tie to Concordia at this point is Dr. Michael Culloton, who lived in Rochester for eight years, as Conductor of the Choral Arts Ensemble; he and his family were members of Zumbro Lutheran Church. He currently serves as Associate Professor, Vocal Music Education, Church Music; Conductor, Chapel Choir, Kantorei and Cantabile at Concordia.

**Jule (Hendrickson) Jeffs:** Peter and I are still very active in our church activities, Meals on Wheels, Kiwanis, doing music at a retirement center, as well as enjoying contact with our children and grandchildren. Our youngest daughter and family came from Pittsburgh for Christmas, and the grandchildren ages 14 and 15 kept the house lively. We had lots of snow so that made them happy. I had a knee replacement in May to match my other knee done five years ago. Aging does make life interesting, but God is so good and has blessed our life and marriage in remarkable ways. We hope to do some traveling in the fall. We are in our third year on the Oregon/SW Idaho State Gideon cabinet, which involved time and travel, but has been a blessed experience and given us many great friends across the state. It is amazing that 63 years have passed since our Concordia days, but they were unforgettable, and certainly provided a great foundation for the rest of our lives. Greetings to all!

**Marilyn (Duncan) Moe:** The end of June 1956, I married my sweetheart who had recently gotten out of the army, and I had graduated. We lived on a family farm near Grafton, which is where our 6 children graduated from high school. We had 2 daughters, then went to Lutheran Welfare and adopted a son, after which I gave birth to 2 more daughters and

son. Teaching piano, both private and group lessons in my studio in our home was my primary life work – I taught from 1954 to 20010. Concurrently during the time, I was also employed by the Grafton Hospital for the Home Health Dept. and for 6 years, held a real estate license. I have written several self-published books including a music teaching book/workbook “Creative Chords” which includes an answer key and DVD of my teaching the class to piano teachers across the state of North Dakota as well as to my own piano students. Five other books I’ve authored are Bible based, including a 12 lesson book/workbook “The Godly Woman”.

My husband, Darrel, and I have traveled to every continent, including Antarctica, and took many trips within the USA with our children as they were growing up. Darrel’s jobs included farming, being a hospital maintenance engineer and shift work in a local potato processing plant in Grafton. Later working as a service man in Scheel’s Hardware and driving cars for Enterprise Rental. Those last 2 jobs were after our pre-retirement move to Fargo, ND in 2010, after our 6<sup>th</sup> child had graduated from high school in Grafton. In 2010, we moved from Fargo to Rochester, MN to be closer to family, who by this time had received their educations and had jobs across the country, where our daughter is a doctor at the Mayo Clinic. We have 2 doctors, 2 nurses, a teacher and a mechanic, as our children’s occupations. We currently live in a retirement community – yes, faith based, as its roots go back to the Salvation Army. We live in the Independent area. Also included on the campus of The Homestead are Assisted Living, Nursing Home, Rehab, and Memory Care. God has certainly blessed our lives. We are grateful that I survived and thrive after a serious stroke in 2012. Our family includes 19 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

**Dave and Avis (Garberg) ’57 Olson:** It was a joy to get your email! It brought back many wonderful memories, both from Moorhead High School and Concordia. We moved to the Lake (Lake Lawrence, Yelm, Washington) 31 years ago and live each day with much gratitude! I would love to learn what my Cobber and Spud friends are doing. Thanks for getting a newsletter going.



**Paul Opsahl:** I married Geri Ness ’57 a year after college graduation. She is also an ELCA Pastor, but before graduating from Gettysburg Seminary, was a music teacher in Minneapolis and Washington D.C., a real estate agent in New Jersey, and a Chaplain at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Hospital in Houston. After Concordia, I finished Luther Seminary, St. Paul, then completed graduate studies at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, and then it was into ordained ministry. My first parish was Lakota, North Dakota. Then for 13 years, we lived in the New York City area, where I was on the staff of the Lutheran Council/USA’s Division of Theological Studies. Then it was back into parish life, in Houston for 10 years, followed by 16 years here in Northern Virginia until retirement in 2006. So we managed to bounce around a good bit over these 60+ years. Still, we feel terribly grateful for the good “ride” we’ve had. Retirement is enormously rewarding, too, and finds us still preaching, and never tiring of visiting all that Washington D.C. offers. We still love traveling, especially when it brings us to our kids (3), grandkids (5), and great grandchild – all living in Texas and/or here in Virginia. Blessing and all the best. Be well!

**Dolores (Erslund) Baldry:** Reported that she is living part of the year in Mesa and part of the year in Billings, Montana.

## Here are some updates from Concordia

### Concordia Language Villages

-Summer 2018 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. We had over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attend immersion programs at our Turtle River Lake sites just north of Bemidji and at other leased camps in northern Minnesota. This strong enrollment demonstrates the value families are placing on world language and culture education.

-Thanks to a generous gift of \$5 million from the Simone Corporation and its CEO Kenny Park, we will soon begin the first phase of construction of *Sup sogüi Hosu*, the Korean Language Village, on Turtle River Lake. The first Village to be built was *Skogfjorden*, the Norwegian Language Village, and that happened 50 years ago this summer. A special event to commemorate this milestone will be held on July 13. *Sjölunden* the Swedish Language Village, celebrates its 45<sup>th</sup> summer

with a *midsommar* event on August 3. International Days are July 5 and August 9 where we will also celebrate 50 years of offering four-week high school credit sessions.

## Music

-Dr. René Clausen announced that he will retire following the 2019-20 academic year, concluding his service as professor of music and conductor of The Concordia Choir. Clausen is a leader in choral music as both a conductor and a composer. He is the artistic director of the Concordia Christmas Concerts. In addition to composing arrangements and original pieces for Concordia ensembles, he has written dozens of commissioned compositions including “MEMORIAL” and “Crying for a Dream” for the American Choral Directors Association. Clausen was also commissioned by Concordia to create a major work in observance of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The work is titled “The Passion of Jesus Christ” and premiered at Orchestra Hall in 2017. President William Craft noted in an announcement to the Concordia community that throughout his work at the college Clausen has lived the mission of The Concordia Choir “to uphold a sacred choral tradition through the uncompromising and unrelenting collaborative pursuit of musical integrity and spiritual expression.”

-The Concordia Choir completed a highly successful tour through the Pacific Northwest in March. The tour featured concerts in Washington, Oregon, Montana, North Dakota, and Minnesota. The Choir also had engagements with ten high school choirs, as well as The Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University and a collaboration concert with The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists at the Ordway in St. Paul. Work is now being done to plan the Choir’s 2020 tour to the Southeast United States. Updates and more information can be found at [www.TheConcordiaChoir.org](http://www.TheConcordiaChoir.org).

-The Concordia Orchestra completed a very successful fall domestic tour with performances in Appleton, Wausau and Chippewa Falls in Wisconsin and Roseville, Sartell and Brainerd in Minnesota. Repertoire included *Symphony No. 3* by Florence Price, *Scheherazade* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and *Concerto for Trombone* by Jim Pugh, which featured Concordia Professor of Low Brass Dr. Nathaniel Dickey on trombone. Also joining the tour was guest conductor Christoph Rehli-Fankhauser, professor of conducting at the Lucerne University of Music in Switzerland.

-The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Music Educators Association Conference in Bismarck. In addition, the band was also invited to be the featured collegiate band at the Westman Honour Band concert at Brandon University in Brandon, Manitoba. As part of their annual domestic tour, the band performed a joint concert with the Encore Wind Ensemble in St. Paul, MN as well as concerts in St. Anthony Village, Albany and Staples-Motley, all in Minnesota. The band is in the beginning stages of planning their international tour to Spain in May of 2020.

## Cobber Athletics

- In the spring of 2018, Concordia had only one team – women’s basketball – with a female head coach. Fast forward one year, and with the hiring of new volleyball head coach Faith Dooley, the Cobbers now have 5 additional female head coaches mentoring student/athletes. Dooley, who was an All-American at the University of North Dakota, joins women’s golf head coach Kari Weidner-Ceniceros, Maureen Greiner of women’s hockey, Rebecca O’Shurak from women’s soccer and NDSU All-American Laura Januszewski who coaches both the men’s and women’s cross country teams. The rise of female head coaches was recognized by University of Minnesota’s Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport in their 2018-19 coaching report card that cited Concordia as the top college in the MIAC for the increase in female head coaches over the past year.

- Concordia men’s track and field junior Matt Bye, Moorhead, won the heptathlon at this winter’s MIAC Indoor Championship Meet and went on to finish 11th in the event at the NCAA National Indoor Meet held in Boston, Mass. Bye won the MIAC title with the second highest point total in school history.

- The Cobber men’s hockey team earned its seventh consecutive berth in the MIAC playoffs this season. Concordia finished conference play with nine league wins which was the most since the 2013 season. Sophomore forward Tyler

Bossert, Fargo, led the MIAC in scoring and went on to earn All-American Second Team honors to become the ninth All-American in program history.

### **New Hires**

-Concordia added two critical new leaders in the Career Center this year. Kris Olson joined the College as the new Director of the Career Center in October 2018. Jill Wenger, a Barnesville native, was hired in the role of Assistant Director of the Career Center in March 2019.

Kris began her career in Higher Education spent several years in Higher Education at NDSU and Concordia before making a career switch. She began working for Cargill, Inc as a Corporate Training Consultant, Training Curriculum Specialist, a Member of a Global Realignment Team, and a Recruiting Manager. Following her time at Cargill, Kris founded her own consulting business. Kris is an experienced professional with over 30 years of progressive experience in Higher Education, Corporate Business and Consulting.

Jill is an experienced professional with progressive experience within the City of Moorhead ranging from City Clerk, Assistant City Manager, and most recently, Human Resource Director. Jill brings great insight into public service, the local Fargo-Moorhead area, the Restorative Justice process, and recruitment best practices.

-Katie Nystuen was hired as our Health Services Coordinator this year. Part of her role is to guide students in making choices regarding their healthcare needs, and connecting them to the many quality providers in our community. Though direct care is not the focus of the Health Services Office, she is First Aid, CPR and AED certified, and can assist with triage and referral to an appropriate medical facility should an urgent situation arise, as can our Public Safety Office. One of her goals is to be more proactive and holistic regarding health and wellness programming on campus.

-Dallas Fossum joined Concordia as the new Director for Facilities Management in March. Dallas is an experienced director of facilities management and has, with his teams, completed more than \$50 million in renovations, new constructions, infrastructure, and deferred maintenance.

-Dr. Jill Abbott has been appointed Deputy to the President at Concordia College, effective June 3, 2019. Dr. Abbott holds a bachelor's degree in literature/language arts education, a master's in counseling and human resource development, and a doctorate in educational administration. She currently serves as the associate vice president of academics at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Dr. Abbott will serve as a member of the college cabinet and will continue the good work of her predecessor Tracey Moorhead as liaison to our Board of Regents. As Deputy to the President, she will work with me to ensure the fulfillment of the new college plan following its affirmation by the Board of Regents, to represent the college in building strong local and regional partnerships for mutual success, and to position Concordia as mission driven institution of national significance.

### **Other News**

-Concordia's outstanding tradition of preparing students for medical school is now available to those who have completed an undergraduate degree. This intensive, 1 year program is designed for highly motivated individuals with excellent academic records, who have earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited four-year institution, but lack most or all of the prerequisite science courses needed for admission to medical school. Our program is ideal for career changers, and individuals deciding later in their academic journey, to pursue a career in medicine.

-Concordia sent 12 members to the American Forensic Association National Individual Events Tournament (AFA-NIET) at the University of Alabama, where 60 colleges and universities from across the United States competed for top honors. Concordia was one of only a few smaller colleges that placed in the top 15, which is dominated by larger research institutions.

-The Center for Student Success has a new home in the Normandy. The beautifully renovated space is open and light making for an inviting space for students. The center includes academic support, Orientation and First-Year Transition Programming, the Peer Mentor program, and the Diversity Coordinator for Student Support Services.

- More than 300 students presented their posters or spoke at concurrent sessions during Concordia's 2019 Celebration of Student Scholarship (COSS) on April 10. Some students participated in multiple presentations. New at this year's COSS was an art display with printmaking pieces and two sessions presented in Spanish. "Our goal is to keep building on the diversity of research," says Krys Strand, director of Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Activity and coordinator of the Celebration of Student Scholarship.

A dinner was held April 4 to celebrate the naming of Dr. Dan Biebighauser as holder of The Sigurd and Pauline Prestegaard Mundhjeld Endowed Chair of Mathematics. Biebighauser is a 2002 graduate of Concordia and joined the faculty in 2006. The holder of the Mundhjeld chair is to be a person who has provided exemplary service in teaching and scholarship in the field of mathematics and who is known and respected in the field. All of the past holders of the Mundhjeld Endowed Chair were present. Past holders include Dr. Bill Tomhave, Dr. James L. Forde, Dr. Alexander Sze and Dr. Gerald A. Heuer '51.

### Alumni Awards:

The National Alumni Board voted on the 2019 Alumni Achievement, Sent Forth and Called to Serve Awards. To learn more about each award, visit [www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/](http://www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/).

### 2019 Alumni Achievement Award Recipients

- **Dr. Paul Brandvik '59**, professor emeritus of music at Bemidji State University, served as director of choral activities for 31 years. Brandvik received several awards, guest conducted more than 100 festivals and workshops in 16 states and abroad, and composed, edited or arranged more than 50 works.
- **Dr. Kristi Ferguson '71**, is professor emeritus of General Internal Medicine and served as director, Office of Consultation and Research in Medical Education at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine. She spent her entire career at the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine where she has greatly influenced the development, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum.
- **Dr. Thomas Samuelson '81**, a board-certified ophthalmologist, is a founding partner and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants, P.A., Minneapolis. He's also an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota and on the faculty of Hennepin County Medical Center. He has received several awards and has been named to America's Top Doctors each year since 2002. He has written numerous articles and given more than 600 presentations around the world.
- A 1977 Concordia graduate, **the Rev. Ann Svennungsen** is the bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod, the first female bishop to serve in any of the ELCA's six Minnesota synods. She served as a parish pastor prior to serving as president and CEO of The Fund for Theological Education and then as president of Texas Lutheran University. Svennungsen, a well-respected theologian and speaker, is published in numerous journals, and is invited to lecture, preach, and provide keynote and commencement addresses.

### 2019 Sent Forth Recipients

- **Betsy Grams '98**, co-founder and executive director of Cycle Health, is a 1998 Concordia graduate. CycleHealth was founded in 2014 to equip kids to power their own wellness. CycleHealth's programs are based on adventure and self-directed goal attainment, and are prescribed by pediatricians in more than 50 Twin Cities clinics through an innovative platform called Sweat Rx.
- **Matthew Culloton '98**, Matthew Culloton, founding Artistic Director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists, is a 1998 Concordia graduate and earned a master's and a doctorate from the University of Minnesota. He is Choirmaster at The House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minn., an adjunct faculty member at the

University of Saint Thomas and composer. Culloton received the VocalEssence/ACDA of Minnesota Creative Programming Award (2003) and MN ACDA Outstanding Young Choral Conductor of the Year Award (2004).

### **2019 Called to Serve Recipients**

- **LaVern '54 and Lois (Austin) '56 Nornes** have spent their lives dedicated to the Lutheran faith. LaVern was a high school biology teacher, a driver's education instructor and a high school hockey coach. Lois, a retired public school music teacher, was also director of music and senior choir director at their church, Transfiguration Lutheran. In addition to their involvement with the church, LaVern and Lois have been active in Meals on Wheels and Feed My Starving Children, among others. At Concordia they've been members of C400, the National Alumni Board and various committees and volunteer activities. They've received several awards from the college for their generous gifts and sponsor, in part, the Nornes Lectureship.
- **Gayle (Carpenter) Denny '76** has served as the executive director of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association since 1999. She previously worked in congregationally based early childhood center management and taught pre-K through college in a variety of public and private schools. She is a current board member of the Council for American Private Education (CAPE). She has devoted her life to being a member of the ELCA, and has served as a musician and choir member for various churches. Throughout her life, she has maintained her commitment to educating others, and serving both the church and her community.

Thanks for keeping in touch! Keep the Faith!

Mavis (Sunde) Lysaker