

Dear classmates,

This is my 12<sup>th</sup> year, I believe, as your class agent. It is actually something that I enjoyed, but It is time for someone else to come forward and relieve me of this duty. We celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> class reunion 10 years ago, and we had a blast. Now we are on the threshold of celebrating our 60<sup>th</sup>, and plans have been made to have another great get-together. Who, then, will take over as class agent?

What is happening on the Concordia campus or affiliates? It was beautiful to hear the bell on the bell tower while on campus for our reunion committee meeting. How lucky we were to enjoy higher education at this wonderful place.

Jan and I belong to Sons of Norway, Snorre Lodge in Thief River Falls, and I would recommend joining in your area if you have any Scandinavian blood in your heritage. Every year we raise money to send a child to the Concordia Language Village in Bemidji, MN. It is such a worthwhile endeavor. The summer of 2118 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. They had over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attend immersion programs at the various sites in Minnesota. The first village to be built 50 years ago was *Skogfjorden*, the Norwegian Language Village. How many have been there? They are having a celebration on July 13<sup>th</sup> to commemorate this milestone. Let me know if you plan to attend.

Dr. Rene 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. We will miss him and his work as the artistic director of the Concordia Christmas concerts.

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 Concordia Orchestra completed a tour, also, with performances in Appleton, Wausau and Chippewa Falls in Wisconsin and Roseville, Sartell, and Brainerd in Minnesota.

The Concordia Band was invited to perform at both the Minnesota Music Educators Association Mid-Winter Clinic in Minneapolis and the North Dakota Educator's Association Conference in Bismarck. What an honor for them.

The rise of female head coaches at Concordia was recognized by University of Minnesota's Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport. Concordia leads all colleges in MIAC for the increase in female head coaches in this past year. Hooray for Concordia!

Now get this, one of our classmates will receive the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award. It is Dr. Paul Brandvik, professor emeritus at Bemidji State University. What an achievement for him. He has received several awards, guest conducted more than 100 festivals and workshops, and composed, edited, or arranged more than 50 works. He will receive his award on Friday evening at the Homecoming Banquet.

Other recipients for the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award include: Dr. Kristi Ferguson '71 at Iowa Carver College of Medicine, Dr. Thomas Samuelson '81, a certified ophthalmologist, founding partner, and attending surgeon at Minnesota Eye Consultants in Minneapolis, and Rev. Ann Svennungsen '77, bishop of the ELCA Minneapolis Area Synod. She is the first female to serve as a bishop in any of the six Minnesota synods.

We have lost a few classmates since the last newsletter. They are Harriet J. Stenberg, Robert R. Pehkonen, Sylvia E. Nelson, and Gordy Hvidsten. If you would like further information about any one of the deceased, let me know, and I will email you their obituary.

Plans are underway for our 60th homecoming reunion in October. If you did not receive the itinerary for that weekend, please let me know. The Class of '59 breakfast, starting at 8:30 will be at Christ the King Lutheran Church located at 1900 14<sup>th</sup> St. S in Moorhead. We will have our Scandinavian buffet with a social at 4:00pm and dinner at 5:00pm at Sons of Norway Kringen Lodge, located at 722 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. N. in Fargo.

Some tidbits from our classmates:

Allen Grundahl writes that he had to remove his class ring which he had worn all these years since graduation. He took a tumble on some church steps and broke his right arm at the wrist and also below his shoulder. Upon his recovery, he was thankful to be able to wear his ring again. It is a sign of friendship and lasting memories of Concordia. I noticed at our committee meeting each member was wearing their ring. One joke about that is, a person says, "I see you graduated from Concordia!" Oh, said the Cobber, "How did you know that?" The person says, "I saw the ring when you picked your nose."

Vern Rice mentioned he was still enjoying good health, (how thankful we are) going to grandchildren's events, and working with recent immigrants. (Good for you!). Lowell Bratrud calls Vern often, and he sends greetings to all. Vern says, "See you at the reunion!"

Norm Holen reports he has a couple of things for the class letter. The adaptive tools and splints he made while teaching at Augsburg University, for his physically challenged students, have now been included in the permanent collection at the Minnesota Historical Society. Also, two of his pieces of sculpture were recently purchased for the permanent art collection at Concordia, with a gift from a generous donor.

Everett Greenli from Mesa, AZ writes that he is still keeping active with volunteering for middle and high school STEM/CTE programs,

university outreach programs, and judging in State and National Science Fairs. One other thing that he does is cut and serve lutefisk in Mesa. He thinks he has served 8 tons over the years. He may quit after 10 tons or 20 years whichever comes first. Speaking of Arizona, we had some very tasty lutefisk in Green Valley last January at Desert Hills Lutheran Church. Umm, good.

We got word from Rose-Mary Strom that Gloria Holliday has not checked her email for weeks, since her husband was diagnosed with brain cancer. Please keep them both in your prayers.

I would like to close with this suggestion. Since we are over 70, and have money in annuities or other programs, we must take out a certain percentage (RMD) out each year or be penalized. How about having your accountant or representative send some of that money to Concordia?? It is tax deductible and doesn't come out of your pocket. Maybe some of you are doing this already. Keep it up, Concordia deserves it.

Sincerely and God Bless,

Jim Strandlie, Class agent.

### **2019 Class Letter Campus Update**

#### **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 sogŭi 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.