Greetings and classmate news--from Sharon Muir Buhr

As I sit down to write this newsletter for our class, wonderful memories of our 50th reunion flood my thoughts. It was a fantastic homecoming week-end catching up with so many of you, but the time was too short! Thank you to the many classmates on the reunion planning committee who gave of their time and talents to put together the Memory Book and make our 50th homecoming week-end a success. Over 200 of our original 426 classmates submitted info and 175 of us attended our 50th!

I have little classmate news to include, probably because so many of you were able to share what’s been happening in your lives via the Memory Book and at the 50th. Dave Skurdahl was unable to attend our 50th but I was lucky to have a good conversation with him on the phone. He
was a science major at Concordia, and went on to get his doctorate in biochem. He jokingly said he couldn’t get a job so he went to medical school at Loyola in Chicago and trained/worked in anesthesia at Walter Reed. The last 15 years he’s been at a Catholic Health Initiatives hospital in Williston, ND. He’ll be retiring about now and will be moving to Raleigh, NC.

Please send me news about your activities and milestones for our next Class Letter! AND also, please consider nominating a Concordia graduate for the following awards (www.concordiacollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition/):

1) **Alumni Achievement Award**: graduates of 20 years or more who are notably carrying out the mission of the college and who have distinguished themselves in their career.

2) **Sent Forth Award**: an alumnus of 20 years or less who has distinguished themselves in their career.

3) **Called to Serve Award**: alumni who have notably carried out the mission of the college through their life-long vocational contributions to society.

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**Concordia’s Mission and Our Class Gift**

You are all familiar with the Concordia mission—to influence the affairs of the world by sending into society thoughtful and informed men and women dedicated to the Christian life—a truly inspiring mission. Concordia is grateful for the financial contribution our class has made this past year to reach out and help our students and bring this mission to life.

Total giving for the class of 1968 for the past year was $2,759,904 with 108 people donating (29% participation). The amount our class has given since graduation is $8,654,289. Concordia thanks you!

Other good news—in May, President Craft announced that Concordia College completed the largest comprehensive fundraising campaign in the school's history by reaching $157.3 million (goal was set at $150 million). And it was reached 8 months early!

My husband and I are excited about a partnership that Concordia has with Minnesota Public Radio (KCCM) which retains Concordia’s exclusive rights as the only higher ed institution within the local broadcasting area whose promotional messages air on MPR’s local stations. We made an additional donation to support this important partnership. There are many needs in running the college and I would encourage you to consider inquiring as to how you might help.

**Classmates Who Have Passed Away:**

Susan Haugen Sletto passed away in Mandan, ND on October 20, 2018.

Lucy Niccum Garrity passed away on January 14, 2019.

At our reunion it was also mentioned that Duane Knutson passed away on July 29, 2009, and Nancy Jo Marquardt Anderson passed away on January 23, 1998. We had not known this information previously.

**Lost Classmates:**
Concordia Language Villages

Summer 2018 was a busy one for Concordia Language Villages. Over 4700 villagers and families from all over the world attended 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, the first phase of construction will soon begin 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 45th summer with a midsummer event on August 3. International Days are July 5 and August 9 to 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 five 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.
- 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 the Board of Regents. As Deputy to the President, she will work 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 a 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, one 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.
- 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/.

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.

- **Rev. Ann Svennungsen** ‘77 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, MN, 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.

**Cobber Corn Feeds (by state).** More information on dates/times at www.cord.edu/cornfeeds
Massachusetts: Boston
Minnesota: Eagan, Eden Prairie, Maple Grove, Brainerd, Alexandria, Willmar, Rochester, Litchfield, Duluth, Moorhead, Bemidji
South Dakota: Sioux Falls
North Dakota: Bismarck
Oregon: Portland Montana: Kalispell
Arizona: Phoenix
California: Thousand Oaks
Nebraska: Omaha
Wisconsin: Milwaukee, Menomonie
Washington, D.C.
Idaho: Boise
Iowa: Des Moines

**Summer Sporting Events**
Cobber Night at the Fargo Red Hawks, 7:02 p.m. July 30, Newman Outdoor Field
Cobber Night at the MN Twins, 7 p.m. August 8, Target Field, Minneapolis
Summer Golf Tournaments: head to https://www.concordiacollege.edu/events/ to register
Finn Grinaker Golf Tourney, Monday, July 8
Baseball Golf Tourney, Monday, July 29
Football Golf Tourney, Friday, August 2
Golf Team Golf Tourney, Monday, August 26
Wrestling Golf Tourney, Saturday, September 14

Concordia at Minnesota State Fair, August 22-September 2, Education Building
Concordia Homecoming October 11-13. The theme this year is “Cobber Pride, Stayin’ Alive.”
For information and to register, go online to www.ConcordiaCollege.edu/homecoming

Soli Deo Gloria!

Sharon Muir Buhr
Class of 1968 Class Agent