Dear Classmates from 1979:

Can it be? Really? Forty years? **40 YEARS?** Uff da. As I was telling another classmate, we have been out of Concordia for about 2/3’s of our lives. Yet, those four years (give or take) were probably some of the most foundational that most of us will ever experience. When something transforms us that much, it’s only natural that we’d like to relive and recreate the experience. What does that mean? Homecoming!

You have probably started to get the emails from campus, reminding you of this year’s Homecoming celebration from October 11th-13th. Those emails are so helpful and will help you plan your weekend; to see a full schedule and to register for homecoming, go to [www.concordiacollege.edu/homecoming](http://www.concordiacollege.edu/homecoming). Now just let me recap, specifically for us and our Great Class of 1979!

**Homecoming Information**

**Friday, October 11th**
6:30 p.m.: Homecoming begins with the Friday evening banquet, located in the Knutson Campus Center, Centrum, with a pre-banquet reception at 5:30 p.m., with beer and wine available for purchase! This event is a great way to kick off Homecoming. Two of the four Alumni Achievement winners this year come from classes right around ours: Ann Svennungsen ’77 and Thomas Samuelson ’81. Make plans to attend the banquet and congratulate the awardees!

7:00 p.m. – 12 a.m.: The All-Reunion Class Gathering is located at the Courtyard by Marriott in Moorhead. (Remember Sher’s Kitchen? The hotel is in that neck of the woods.) Stop by the hotel lounge whenever you get in. You don’t need to be staying at the hotel to partake of the party that’s going on.

8:00 p.m. – 12 a.m.: Band/Orchestra/Choir All-Reunion Gathering; join fellow music alumni and reminisce of the good old days.

**Saturday, October 12th**
8:00 A.M. Yikes, 8 in the morning seems early for those of us who are retired. Nevertheless, that’s our breakfast time. Our breakfast is located in Jones A/B in the Knutson Center. If you need help finding the Knutson Campus Center, please refer to the campus map online. I’m also working on getting us a speaker who can bring us up to date. (My first choice was Dr. Dovre, but the 50 year reunion class pulled rank on me.)

11:00 a.m.: Homecoming Parade, I don’t know what to think about our participation in this. At our last reunion, we were still so busy talking with each other that we had to dash down the street to claim our spot in time to march. I’m thinking about nixing our marching in favor of just standing along the street and catching candy. What do you think? If you have strong feelings one-way or the other, shoot me an email to cobbers79@yahoo.com.
1:00 p.m.: Football game against Gustavus. Attend and relive the glory days of our NAIA National Championship in Fall 1978. There are also other tours and events around campus if you want to take a look at what has changed...and what hasn’t.

6:30 Band, choir and orchestra concert in the Memorial Auditorium. As has been true for the past several years, the Saturday evening concert and the more formal Sunday afternoon concert are now combined into this one event. That way, after worship on Sunday, everyone can head home.

8:30 (after the concert) There are gatherings by class back throughout the Knutson Campus Center. And—get this—there is alcohol available for purchase ON CAMPUS! People in the know tell me that the Food Service got a beer and wine license in connection with its catering business. I just shake my head; who knew?!

Sunday, October 13th
10:30 All Campus worship in Memorial Auditorium. One last chance to see everyone and bask in the glow. Then we’re off, rested and refreshed, back to the real world.

Note: I wrote the schedule above with plenty of detail for those of you who haven’t been back to campus frequently—or ever—since you graduated. (Some of you may even live in Fargo/Moorhead!) ALL are welcome, and I want everyone to have a great time and connect with people and places long forgotten. Please come! Find the event(s) that speak to you and show up. You’re guaranteed to see someone you know.

Also at this point in our lives, family, travels, volunteering AND career adventures are equally important. We all have stories to share. Don’t think that your life isn’t just as interesting as the next person’s, because it is.

Class Giving

Annually, you get a big THANK YOU for your giving in the last fiscal year, ending April 30th. This year, almost 100 of us gave $77,843. Over the life of our class as alumni, we have given almost $1.9 million! That’s so impressive. Better giving this way while we’re all still alive. Next up? Bequests from our wills! Don’t want to think too hard about that, do you?

News From and About Classmates

Thanks so much for answering my call on updates in your lives. There are a variety of responses, a variety of lengths and a variety of news items. I’m more-or-less cutting and pasting directly from e-mails, so you’re seeing these updates in people’s own words and in no discernible order.

Michael DeKraii  Pastor for 29 years. Well, I am thrilled in my 4th call as a pastor. I serve St. John’s Lutheran Church in Webster, S.D. I am finishing my 3rd year here. I grew up in Brookings, S.D. It feels like I have returned home after 40 years of being away. We are an active growing church in rural South Dakota. We are a multi-generational church with active grandparents, parents, and children. I bought an older home when I moved to
Webster. I have had fun making the house my home. Next February I am leading a group on a pilgrimage to Israel. This will be my 3rd adventure there. I live within 150 miles of my family and get to see them on a regular basis, which makes me happy. Over my career, I have lived many hours from them and it is so nice to be close. I love to travel and have been blessed to do a lot of it.

Paul Rykken  I'm currently in my 40th year of teaching and coaching at the high school level. Mary (Schultz ’80) and I have been in Wisconsin since 1990. I was named Wisconsin History Teacher of the Year in 2014 by the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of New York, particularly for work I have done in the area of First Nations History (aka American Indian history). I don't know if I ever sent that as an update. I mention that because I had a terrific exchange with Olin Storvik prior to his death recently. He was one of several truly exceptional history professors I studied under at Concordia during our time there and I was able to tell him that -- so gratifying. Martin Lutter, Dave Sandgren, Herman Larson, and Pete Hovde also were such excellent people and mentors.

Connie (Johnson) Eslinger, Hannaford ND  On May 1, I will be starting my 8th, 4-year term as the Griggs County Treasurer. Calvin & I have been married for 35 years and have a son and daughter and 4 grandchildren. Calvin is semi-retired from carpentry work. The older we get, the less important the job is, and the family becomes more important and we treasure the time spent with them and our extended families.

Jim Doherty  On April 1, 2019, James F. Doherty, Jr. will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of his health law firm, Pecore & Doherty, LLC, in Columbia, Maryland.

Roxanne Ford Hagen  I retired from teaching Elementary Music in the East Grand Forks School District, and am currently a Freelance Pianist in the Greater Grand Forks area. I also farm with my husband, Roger (NDSU 1976). My son, Nick (Juilliard 2009) married Molly Yeh (Juilliard 2011) in 2014. They have a girl, Bernadette, who was born in 2019. My daughter Anna (Concordia 2010) married Jason Sather (Concordia 2010) in 2017. They have a boy, Cliff, who was born in 2018.

Karen Franzmeier
Here’s some about me... My invisible disability...and “retiring” when I was 45 years old! Even with some of the cognitive and memory frustrations, my energy is still there! Nowadays re: “work”...10-15 hrs/week: leading and/or enjoying sewing, singing, weaving, growing plants and being crafty. Recently enjoyed a great Concordia Alumni trip to Tanzania. My daughter Esther and I get together each week. She has full time work and will be married in a year. Spending my days...Volunteering: I’ve tried a lot & found some! Lucky: both parents, brother and sister (+ families), and longtime friends. Yeah! Meeting new folks with “Meet-up” groups. Faith: Keep looking and searching. Wait and have patience.

Diane Buchholz Benson  I recently retired from a career in Human Resources Management at the University of Michigan. Although I have had some time for volunteer activities. I have spent the majority of my time preparing our home here in Michigan to sell. Local thrift shops and donation agencies have reaped benefits from our downsizing! We have property in the mountains of North Carolina and will be having a home built. We are excited to start this next chapter, which will involve lots of hiking, visiting our children in Colorado and Oregon and extensive traveling.

Michael Olson  I recently celebrated my 34th anniversary as Minister of Music at First Lutheran Church in Fargo, North Dakota. I currently have a studio of 39 private piano and organ students, the most I’ve had in many, many years. I serve as the Dean of the Red River Valley Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, and the Vice President of the Red River Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society. Unlike others who have already retired (including my younger sister!), I guess that retirement is a LONG, long way off for me! And maybe that’s a good thing...?


Sue (Abelson) Thelen  5 years ago I was able to retire from teaching. Wow...retirement is sure great. With all that new “free time” available my husband Rick and I enjoy traveling, spending time at the lakes, camping and biking. Family times are shared with our 4 grown up children and their spouses and 7 grandchildren.

Ann Carlander  I just retired from teaching K-12 Art in Cromwell, MN. Before that, my husband, Burnell Peterson and I were teaching History and Art at international schools overseas, after all of our kids graduated from H.S. I now teach weaving classes, and enjoy exploring indigenous cultures and arts from around the world, esp. basketry. Burnell and I spent three years in Cairo, before, during and after the Egyptian revolution. We came back to the States volunteering for a year at Holden Village (Lutheran wilderness retreat in the north Cascades of WA State), then returned to our international teaching adventures and travels, this time in India. We have been home for four years now at our hobby farm south of Duluth, MN, where we raised our six kids. These days we have four grandkids and two more on
the way, and it's great that our place is a hub of activity, much of the time. We hike, tent and travel to remote places in mountainous areas as often as we can. I rode horseback and hiked to stay with indigenous farmers high in the Andes with some girlfriends in the mountains of Peru not long ago. Burnell and I do miss the travels we took from our international schools in the eastern hemisphere, but we are babysitting now! We still get up to the BWCA to canoe and camp with our grandkids. Overseas we often traveled the rustic route, by wooden felucca in Egypt, hiking in the Himalayas to wooden tea houses, or sleeping in bamboo long-houses with indigenous people in Borneo. Cultural contacts are so much more interesting than five-star-resorts to us. Next summer we are talking about the Camino de Santiago in Spain, and I am on my way back to Holden Village for a while again this summer. We are active in our sanctuary (UCC) church in Duluth, and continue to volunteer for Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry and the Red Cross. We continue to take our role as land stewards more seriously, planting pollinators and more trees, enjoying our wildlife out here in the country. We have great organic farmer neighbors and entrepreneur friends here in Wrenshall.

Carol Preston  I quit teaching public school music three years ago. Now I have a combination of employment including teaching private music lessons and serving as executive director of the Midcoast Symphony Orchestra in Maine, which I have played violin in for 19 years. I am also busy as board president of the Maine Suzuki Association.

Ruth Ann Kroonblawd  I am a retiree from the Anoka-Hennepin School district filling in on a long-term substitute position. I officially retired in 2016, but have been filling in on short-term contracts.

Heidi Hagstrom  I resigned my position as director for the ELCA Youth Gathering (after 18 years of service) and entered the TEEM (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) program in December 2015. I graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary and was ordained in September 2018. I am serving a three-point parish called Fields of Grace Lutheran Parish, made up of Bernadotte Lutheran and First Lutheran in Lafayette, MN and Swan Lake Lutheran of rural New Ulm, MN. I loved the excitement and resources of Chicago, and now I am enjoying being closer to the earth, and have 17 chickens.

Rick McGill  Kathy and I have retired to Beaufort SC (just north of Hilton Head). Our “retirement” includes spending our entire summer volunteering with one of the top summer theatre programs in the country, Southeastern Summer Theatre Institute (SSTI). Kathy is the costume designer. We start June 1, work every day until August 15, a typical day is 10-14 hours at the theatre.

Tshiakatumba Tshimanga  From the time I left school, I worked with the Bank, shortly after that I had to move from Congo to South Africa. In South Africa, I worked again for Avon as Business developer. After, I started my own Company in aviation; this was in fret within Congo. For now I do different projects between South Africa and Congo.

Cam Enarson  My wife Carol and I live in Chapel Hill, North Carolina where I hold a faculty appointment as Professor of Anesthesiology in the UNC School of Medicine and serve as Vice Dean for Strategic
We have one grandson, Callaway, who lives in Raleigh (30 minutes away) and turns two on 5/26.

Carletta Rhen-Mlodzik  My husband and I retired in 2017 after Greg’s heart and kidney transplant. I enjoyed 35 years working in Health Care as a Registered Dietitian and Food Service Manager in several locations, our last being Roseau, MN. We moved here in 1991 from Phoenix, AZ after the birth of our first daughter, Kristen, since Greg was offered a Mechanical Engineering position with Polaris Industries. Then Ingrid was born in 1993. I can say we have been blessed beyond measure. The Mayo Clinic only needs to see Greg annually now; he is running circles around me. Kristen and Cody were married in 2015 and we are expecting grandbaby number 1 any day now. Ingrid married her sweetheart Andrew Grothmann, June 1, 2019.

Tim Paulson  Married Jody Gordhamer ’77 -- will have been married 40 years this summer. Two children -- Karilo O’Keefe - she and her family live in Grand Forks, ND

Scott Paulson - he and his family live in Eagan, MN

Enjoy spending time with our FIVE GRANDSONS. Have lived in Stephen, MN and taught Math, Physics and Chemistry at Ind. School District #2856, Stephen, MN since 1980. Retirement will be within the next two years. Greenskeeper at Riverside Golf Course, Stephen, MN for the past 22 years. Member of the Stephen Volunteer Ambulance Service since 1981. Member of the Stephen Lions Club.

One Classmate No Longer Here

Sadly, I have one death to report. Nancy (Mathers) Oncley died at her home in Boulder, CO on December 30th. At the time of her death, she was the assistant manager of the Salvation Army Thrift Store, and played cello in several community orchestras. She leaves behind husband Steve and sons Douglas and Sasha.

Campus Update

Usually, I spend a fair amount of time in this section, bringing you highlights from goings on around campus. But with the reunion info above and A LOT of class member news (Yea!), I’ll go light here. If you’re interested in more detail, the campus update as prepared by the Alumni Office is appended to the end of my letter. You can read all the details to your heart’s content.

One little thing. I had the chance to attend a breakfast this winter that featured Dr. Dovre, reflecting on his time as president. It was really interesting to hear him talk in retrospect about all the changes that had been happening on campus when he came to be president. (Remember him wearing a beanie? Our freshman year was also his first as prez.) He talked about the abundance of changes that happened in just 18 months—intervisitation, on-campus dances, changes in curriculum including Core classes and Distribution (cross-department) classes. We students were living it, so it didn’t seem so strange to us, but it sounded to me like the process equivalent of trying to turn an aircraft carrier. I gained even more appreciation for him and his wisdom through those days.
And So It Goes

That’s another year’s worth of news. I sure do hope to see you at our reunion in October. If that doesn’t work out for you, however, just know that you are always and forever a part of our class. We did this together!

Dawn (Schoepke) Hill
Cobbers79@yahoo.com

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 45th 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/.

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.