

# CLASS LETTER

CONCORDIA COLLEGE  
CLASS OF 2011



## A NOTE FROM YOUR CLASS AGENT

*BY AMBER BENOIT*

Hello, Class of 2011! Each year that I put this letter together, it seems the time flies faster and faster. The past couple of years have been really... different. It was a nice change of pace to gather together in person for our 10 year reunion in October. I had a great time reconnecting with familiar faces, catching up with friends, and taking part in the homecoming and reunion activities. As always, it was also fun to receive your updates for this letter, so thank you for sharing!

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# CAMPUS UPDATES

## **President Craft to Retire**

President Craft announced his upcoming retirement at the end of his second presidential term, on June 30, 2023. The Board of Regents has already started seeking Concordia's next president with a presidential search committee and national consulting firm.

## **New Executive Director for Faith and Learning**

Dr. Michael Chan will be welcomed in June as the new Executive Director for Faith and Learning. He will direct the Lorentzen and Dovre Centers, guide Concordia's interfaith relationships, and oversee the work of Campus Ministry.

## **Dr. Gwen Wagstrom Halaas '75 Named New Dean of Sanford Heimarck School of Health Professions**

Dr. Halaas brings more than four decades of research, teaching, program development and administrative experience to Concordia. She grew up in the Fargo-Moorhead area and is a 1975 graduate of Concordia. Dr. Halaas will assume the role on July 1, 2022.

## **Learn. Work. Lead.**

A Concordia College education is rooted in the college's deep commitment to providing a transformational experience for every one of our students through learning, working and leadership. Development has continued on our academic framework through **Three Schools, One College:**

- Sanford Heimarck School of Health Professions
- Offutt School of Business
- School of Arts and Sciences

Concordia will begin renovation in the summer of 2022 on the Sanford Clinic building adjacent to campus to provide expanded laboratory, classroom, and centralized office space for its freshly named Sanford Heimarck School of Health Professions. The project will include a nursing simulation lab and a human performance lab. It will be a remarkable advancement to the program.

## **COVID Response/Planning**

We continue to monitor guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC to keep our campus as healthy as possible amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Students, faculty, and staff are updated regularly and encouraged engage in risk-reducing practices to prioritize in-person learning and working through the academic year.

## **Advancing the Mission: Cobber Ambassador Program**

A new initiative was officially launched to invigorate the unique network and relationships among alumni, friends, and students of Concordia College. Cobber Ambassadors are people who care about the students and mission, believe in the college, and help spread the word about Concordia's life-changing education. Learn more or become an Ambassador at **[ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/cobber-ambassador-program](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/cobber-ambassador-program)**



## Around Campus

·Renovation was completed in Christiansen Recital Hall to provide a higher quality and more modern experience for students and guests.

·A gas firepit was installed on campus near the 8th Street entrance to Knutson Campus Center.

·An Indoor Performance Center for golf was added in Olson Forum using the latest simulator technology to provide year-round training for the men's and women's golf programs.

·Olson Forum's workout balcony will be expanded this summer.

## Concordia Recognized for Women in Coaching

The University of Minnesota's Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport gave Concordia an "A" grade on its 2020-21 report card. The college was highlighted for having female head coaches for 70% of its women's sports. Concordia was the only MIAC school to receive an "A" grade in the report. Compliments to Athletic Director Rachel Bergeson for her leadership in athletics.



## Homecoming

100 Years of Homecoming was celebrated on campus in October 2021. The college was happy to successfully welcome back over 700 alumni and friends to celebrate this strong Cobber tradition.

We look forward to celebrating with you **October 7-9, 2022!** Watch for updates at **[ConcordiaCollege.edu/homecoming](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/homecoming)**

## Corn Feed Season is around the corner!

We will continue with the tradition of hosting corn feeds in the summer and hope to see you! Updates can be found at **[ConcordiaCollege.edu/cornfeeds](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/cornfeeds)**

## Travel the World with Concordia

Each year, the Alumni Relations Office offers opportunities for alumni and the Concordia family to partake in global travel experiences led by our in-house experts. From wine tastings in the French countryside, participating in Northern Spain's rich culture from the seat of your bicycle, or traveling as a companion to our top vocal and instrumental ensembles as they share their music with the world, there's an excursion catered to every interest. Explore the trips at **[ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/global-travel](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/global-travel)**

## News & Notes

Stay up to date on news throughout the year and subscribe to our weekly newsletter.

**[ConcordiaCollege.edu/news/news-and-notes](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/news/news-and-notes)**



# Alumni Awards

## 2021 Alumni Achievement Award

Fay Ferguson '73  
Co-CEO of Burrell  
Communications Group



Dr. Gwen (Wagstrom)  
Halaas '75  
Vice chancellor for  
Academic Affairs and  
professor  
Washington State  
University Health  
Sciences



Harold D. Pope '77  
Senior counsel at Dykema Gossett,  
PLLC



Dr. Corey Teigen  
'86  
Chief Scientific  
Officer  
Penumbra, Inc.  
Vascular and  
interventional  
radiologist,  
researcher and  
developer

### Nominations Always Open

To read more about these recipients or to  
nominate a deserving alumni go to  
**[ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/awards-  
and-recognition](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/alumni/awards-and-recognition)**

## 2021 Sent Forth Award



Judge Jade  
Rosenfeldt '05  
Clay County  
Courthouse  
Seventh Judicial  
District



Stephen  
Letnes '00  
Founder,  
Executive  
Director  
Able Artist  
Foundation



# CLASS UPDATES

**Keri (Kimble) Lauritsen** and Mike Lauritsen continue to work for the Oostburg School District, specifically the Middle School. Keri serves as the school's Counselor, AD, and Student Council Advisor; Mike serves as the PE/Health Teacher and coaches HS Football and Track. When their two-year-old and puppy aren't keeping them busy, they love to travel and relax at the lake. January 2022 brought about another big change for them as they started hosting a foreign exchange student from Italy (for the second semester of her senior year). They have really enjoyed learning about a new culture and having a teenager in the house!



KERI LAURITSEN

**Leif Stavig:** Denna (Francischetti) Stavig (2012) and I got married in Cordova, Alaska, where we currently live.



KRISTI KOHL

**Kristi (Aschenbrenner) Kohl** has been working as a group fitness instructor/personal trainer. She got married in 2020 to Jake Kohl and is now expecting her first child in March 2022!

**Kaitlyn (Boily) Hanson:** We became a family of 4 as we welcomed our son Caleb to the world in May 2021! We praise God for this journey and the miracles it brings.

**Amber (Jackson) Blomberg** and Brady Blomberg (2010) welcomed girl #3, Ryleigh Rae in May 2021.



LEIF STAVIG





KELSEY MEEHAN

**Katie (Rimmereid) Okoth:** Ethan was born in January 2021!



KATIE OKOTH

**Corey Brenner** and Sarah (Nick) Brenner (2012) got married in August 2021.

**Kelsey (Klein) Meehan:** This year we welcomed our daughter Lucille to our family! We are enjoying living in the mountains in northern Maine - thankful these last two years we have been living in an area that has such wonderful hiking trails.

**Steven Reuter** accepted a leadership position at the Minnesota Department of Administration as the Assistant Director of the Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution. Steven works with state, county, city, and tribal leaders to find solutions to complex and often immovable issues. He facilitates collaborative problem-solving efforts along with builds the capacity of leaders to implement collaborative efforts in their work on a daily basis.



COREY BRENNER

**Corian Carter** and Greg Clark (2012) moved to Fargo this year, along with their four cats: Minerva, Lucy, Edith, and Jean-Ralphio. The move from West Fargo was only a few short miles, but if you ask the cats, it was quite the grueling and traumatic journey. Corian is in her second year as an elementary school librarian, which has been an exciting change for her, after being a classroom teacher for so many years. Greg is going on five years working for Sanford Health in their data analytics department.

**Jolee (Pederson) Lilja:** This past year was spent mostly in our house (thanks, covid!) . Very thankful we were all able to stay healthy and that we live close to family and friends. We just welcomed our second baby girl in December and are all obsessed with her. Maybe in 2022 we'll venture out of the house. Fingers crossed.



JOLEE LILJA



DEREK NEU

**Derek Neu** and Rachel Neu (2012): We welcomed 2021 with the birth of our first child, Maddux. It has been quite the year watching him grow up and into his own personality. Maddux was so excited to meet Santa in 2021, and get a picture with his two fur sisters (Marley and Kona). We are both enjoying advancement at our jobs and love living in lakes country. We recently moved to the lake and cannot wait to spend our first summer on the water.

**Anna (Haugo) Argo:** My husband Willie and I live in Minneapolis. We were married in 2021 and are expecting our first child in April 2022. I work for a start-up biotechnology company that is a spinout of Mayo Clinic as the head of Business Development.



**Kayla (Goetz) Anderson:** Michael and I welcomed our first child last year. Seth Michael Anderson was born on February 28, 2021. He weighed 9 pounds 7 ounces and was 22.5 inches long. Due to some precautions the medical team took over a concern about possible infection when he was born, he had to stay in the NICU for a few days, until lab tests verified that he was completely healthy. We got to bring him home on March 4, which was also our 4th wedding anniversary. He joined "big sister" Ziva, our Vizsla puppy who is 8 months older than Seth. I traded the corporate world for life as a full-time mom after 7 years working in human resources at the Bobcat HQ office in West Fargo. Michael, Seth, and I went on a family road trip vacation to Colorado in November, and we look forward to more travels in 2022.



KAYLA ANDERSON

**Annie (Erickson) Cloud:** My husband and I are both teaching in Owatonna, MN. We are expecting a little Niblet in April 2022 :)

**Amber (Sperling) Benoit:** I am still working for Choice Bank and Northern Lights Arts Council. My husband is staying busy as a self-employed contractor (along with a few projects in our own house!). Our daughter Blake will be two in May and keeps us on our toes. I was able to head to Concordia this fall to get together with friends and celebrate our 10 year reunion. Pictures included :)



AMBER BENOIT

**Kristina (Loken) Lankow:** Brian and I have been living in Brookings, South Dakota for more than 10 years now! It seems like just yesterday we were hauling our boxes into our apartment...and now fast forward to 2022! We moved into our current house in 2018 knowing full-well that we wanted to do a major renovation to the main space. We decided 2021 was the year to do so. We dove head first into this project (sometimes literally) acting as our own general contractors. We worked for eight months as painters, plumbers, carpenters, electricians, designers, demolition and install crew! We are now enjoying our fully renovated space! Brian started a new job as the Communications & Outreach Coordinator at the South Dakota State University Miller Wellness Center. I have been at the Swiftel Center (multipurpose live event facility) now for 7 years and was recently promoted as the Director of Marketing. Live events has been extremely impacted by the pandemic and its been rocky riding out these last few years. I am looking forward to bringing live events back again and seeing people enjoying concerts, weddings, and special moments together! This summer, Brian and I enjoyed an adventure vacation into the wilderness of the Uinta Mountains near Salt Lake City, Utah. Camping under the stars was incredible. Our son Weston celebrated his second birthday in November. He is so full of energy and keeps us on the go go GO! Being

parents has been the most incredible and rewarding experience each step of the way! We are looking forward to what this next year will bring. Cheers and blessings! XOXO



KRISTINA LANKOW

## GIVING UPDATE

We can pay forward the generous scholarships we received as students by supporting this new generation of Cobbers. Together we help make sure a Concordia education is possible for every student. In 2021, more than 5,000 people came together to raise \$2.6+ million for The Cobber Fund. **THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR CLASS WHO MADE A GIFT!**

Be on the lookout for the Cobbers Give campaign March 7-18; a generous alum will add an additional \$100 to each of our gifts to The Cobber Fund. The class of 2011 can truly make a difference in the lives of current students. Learn more at **[ConcordiaCollege.edu/giving](https://ConcordiaCollege.edu/giving)**.