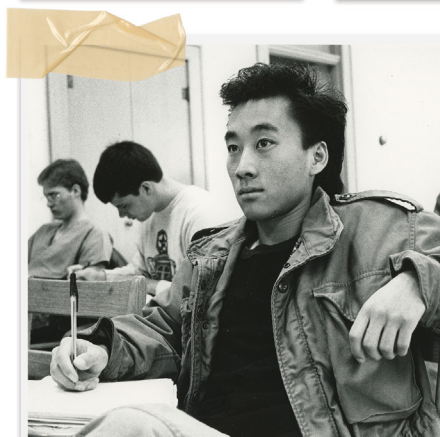
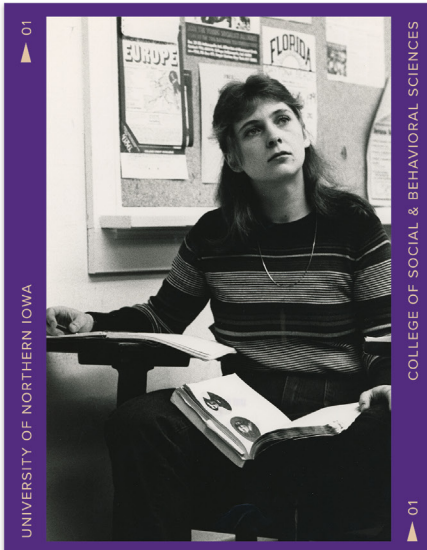
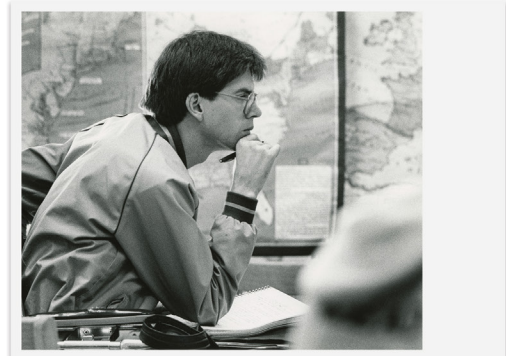
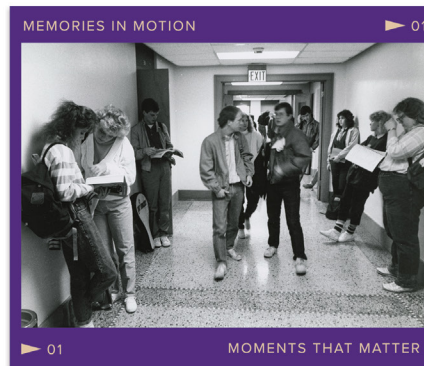


VOLUME 27 | 2026

STATEMENTS

— COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES —



MOMENTS THAT MATTER

UNI
University of
Northern Iowa

150
years
EST. 1876

CONTENT

FEATURES

CSBS AT 45 4

Tracing CSBS from its roots to today, and the future it is shaping for Iowa and beyond.

LAURA ENSIGN.....12

Rediscovered story of a pioneering professor who advanced equity and helped shape early academic standards.

RUTH BLUFORD ANDERSON16

Pioneering educator who built UNI's social work program while advancing equity and challenging discrimination.

DAVID A. WHITSETT18

Uniting psychology and physiology to build confidence through marathon training and experiential learning.

BRIDGING GENERATIONS 22

Students connect with alumni through interviews, exploring shared histories and generational perspectives.

A LIVING

MAP OF UNI MEMORIES 24

As UNI marks 150 years, historical photos and digital mapping bring campus memories to life.

TRAINING

TOMORROW'S NURSES 26

Completion of UNI's nursing facilities marks a milestone in hands-on, hospital-like training for future nurses.

REGULARS

COLLEGE NEWS..... 28-33

PANTHER SPOTLIGHTS

BILL BARNETT HOOD JR. 34

R. GORDON HOXIE 35

PAT & O. JAY TOMSON..... 36

DORIS KELLEY, CATHY YOUNG

& JOY COLE CORNING..... 38

ANNUAL GIVING 40

CLASS NOTES 42



2026

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**University of
Northern Iowa**

College of Social &
Behavioral Sciences

FROM THE DEAN

As I reflect on this year's edition of *Statements Magazine*, I'm reminded that some milestones ask us to pause and recognize just how far we have come.

This year is one of those moments.

As the University of Northern Iowa celebrates its 150th anniversary, we also mark 45 years with the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Together, these milestones remind us of the generations of faculty, staff and students whose teaching, learning, scholarship and service helped shape UNI into the welcoming, student-centered university it is today.

Our theme for this issue, *Moments That Matter*, reflects that shared history. It celebrates the people, places and turning points that continue to define CSBS. From our feature story tracing 45 years of the college's growth and evolution, to profiles of pioneering faculty like Laura Ensign and Ruth Bluford Anderson, to the completion of our new nursing facilities preparing the next generation of health professionals.

Across every department, school and center, CSBS continues to adapt to meet the needs of students, communities and the state of Iowa. Through hands-on learning, faculty-led research, global engagement and opportunities across disciplines, we remain focused on preparing students not only for careers, but for lives of purpose and service.

What remains constant is our people. The strength of this college has always come from faculty and staff who challenge, support and inspire students every day. Their work makes UNI a place where students feel valued and empowered to make a difference.

As we reflect on these milestones, I am filled with gratitude for the community that makes this work possible. Thank you for being part of the CSBS story. We are proud of our past, energized by our present and hopeful for the future we are shaping together.

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Brenda L. Bass".

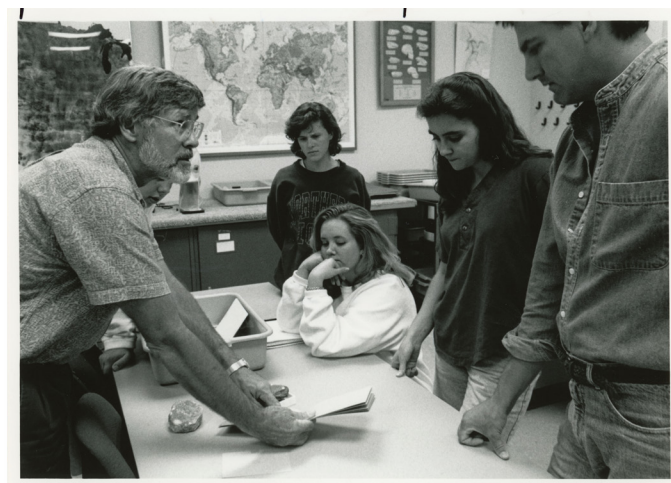
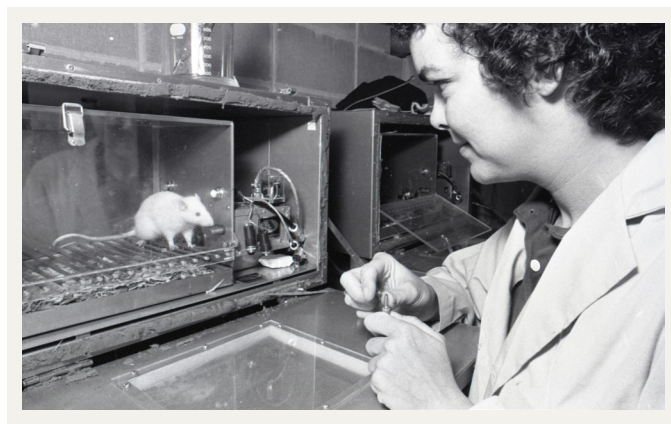
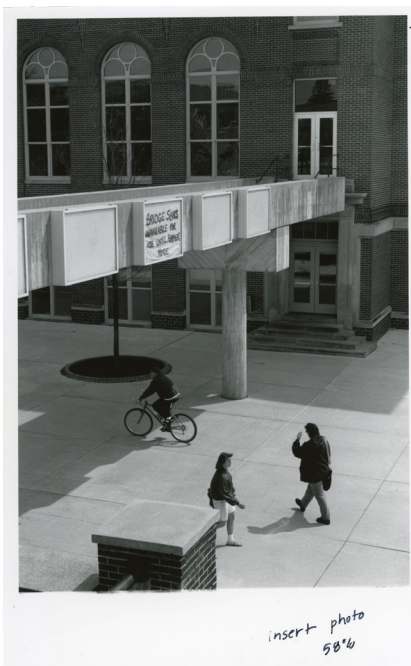
BRENDA BASS

DEAN, COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES



CSBS AT 45

A CHAPTER IN UNI'S 150-YEAR STORY



YESTERDAY

As the University of Northern Iowa marks its 150th anniversary, the story of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences is inseparable from the institution itself — shaped by a commitment to understanding people and society.

UNI's origins date to 1876, when it was founded as the Iowa State Normal School to prepare teachers for a growing state. Through its evolution into the Iowa State Teachers College (1909–1961) and later the State College of Iowa (1961–1967), the study of human behavior, civic life and social systems remained central to the university's mission, even before those fields were formally organized within a single college.

That structure came into focus in 1967, when the institution became the University of Northern Iowa, signaling a broader academic vision. One year later, in 1968, UNI reorganized into four colleges, laying the foundation for what would eventually become the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences.

From a broad mission to a distinct college

The newly formed College of Business and Behavioral Sciences brought together disciplines already deeply embedded in UNI's identity: business and business education, home economics, psychology and the long-standing social science department, which dated to 1922. Psychology, which had previously been housed within education, moved into the new college, reflecting a growing recognition of the behavioral sciences as a field in its own right.

In 1969, the once all-encompassing Department of Social Science was differentiated into five departments: economics, geography, history, political science, and sociology and anthropology. This reorganization mirrored national trends in higher education while signaling UNI's increasing emphasis on disciplinary depth, scholarly identity and research.

Growth, realignment and a new identity

Throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, the college continued to evolve alongside the university. Programs expanded and adapted as social needs and academic disciplines changed. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology briefly incorporated social work in 1975, underscoring UNI's long-standing commitment to applied learning and community engagement, before social work became its own department in 1982.

A pivotal moment came in 1980, when UNI's business programs emerged as a separate entity with collegiate status. With that shift, the College of Business and Behavioral Sciences was renamed the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, clarifying its academic focus and mission.

That shift ushered in another period of realignment. In 1985, the Department of Economics moved to the School of Business, the only instance of a department shifting out of CSBS. Even so, the college's core purpose remained steady: advancing the scientific study of human behavior and social systems while preparing students for leadership in communities, organizations and public service.

Responding to a changing world

As UNI moved into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, CSBS adapted to new interdisciplinary approaches and emerging societal needs. In 1997, sociology and anthropology expanded to include criminology, reflecting a growing focus on justice, policy and social institutions. Home economics gradually evolved into the School of Applied Human Sciences by 2010, signaling a broader commitment to human development, aging and well-being.



During this period, the college's physical home was also being transformed. From 2009 to 2011, Sabin Hall underwent a major renovation that modernized the historic building while honoring its architectural character. Original features such as terrazzo floors, marble fixtures and the central light well were carefully restored, and the interior was reimagined to include collaborative spaces, technology-enhanced classrooms and sustainable systems designed to support teaching, research and student engagement. The project created a dynamic, adaptable environment that reflects the college's evolving mission.

In 2011, the Department of Military Science joined CSBS, strengthening the college's role in leadership development through ROTC and building on a military presence at UNI that dates to the early 20th century.

This period also marked the beginning of steady leadership under **Brenda Bass**, CSBS' current dean.

Dean Bass began in an interim role in 2012 and was appointed dean in 2014, guiding the college through a decade defined by program growth, restructuring and renewed emphasis on enriching the student experience.



By the early 2020s, higher education in Iowa and across the nation was facing shifting demographics, rising workforce demands and a heightened focus on recruitment and retention. For CSBS, these changes underscored the need to align programs with societal priorities while staying true to its longstanding commitments to applied learning, civic engagement and the humanities.

A focus on health and human sciences

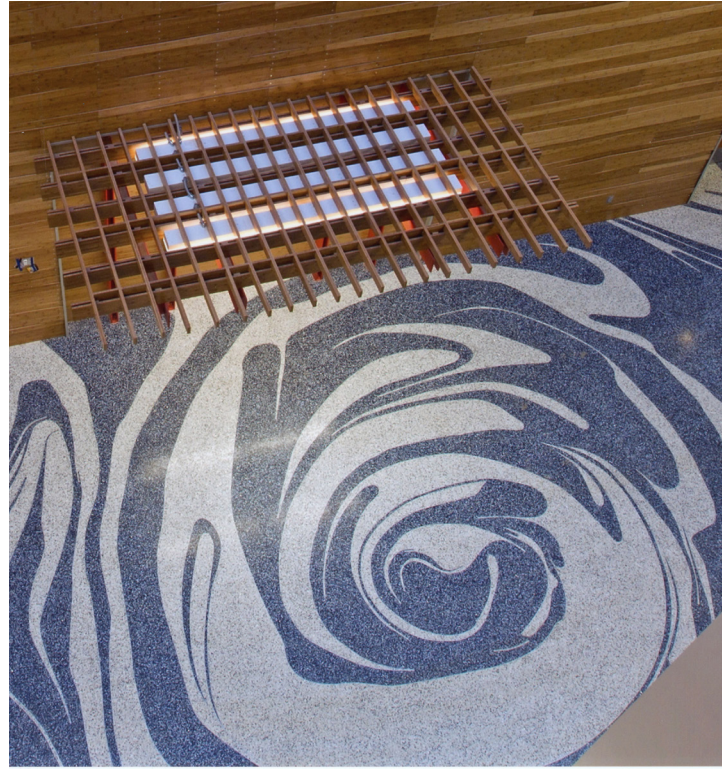
By 2022, CSBS was ready to take the next step in meeting Iowa's evolving health and human service needs. The college launched the School of Health and Human Sciences, bringing together the Department of Kinesiology and Athletic Training from the College of Education, the newly created Department of Nursing and Public Health, the Department of Family, Aging and Counseling, and the Department of Social Work. This reorganization reflected CSBS's continued evolution and UNI's deepening focus on health and well-being.

The new school arrived at a time of growing demand for professionals who could do more than provide clinical care. Employers sought graduates prepared to advance prevention, support mental health, address the challenges of aging, and strengthen families and communities. By uniting these programs

ARTIST'S STATEMENT LYNN BASA

“College changes people. New friends and ideas shape old ways of thinking. You’re not exactly the same person who entered school by the time you leave. ‘Coursing Through Life’ is about this transformation. It slices through the rigid rectangularity of the old building like a force of Nature. Like the best original thinking, there is no pattern of conformation.”

“COURSING THROUGH LIFE”
terrazzo floor, Sabin Hall



under one school, UNI strengthened its ability to prepare students for careers that influence health at every level — from individuals to families to entire communities. The creation of the nursing program in particular expanded the university’s capacity to train skilled, compassionate nurses, reinforcing CSBS’s leadership in developing Iowa’s health care workforce.

The school also reaffirmed UNI’s identity as a public university grounded in service. Health care and social assistance are among Iowa’s largest employment sectors, and demand for nurses, counselors, public health professionals and human service providers continues to grow. By combining classroom learning with hands-on experience and community partnerships, students gain expertise while understanding the social factors that shape health outcomes.

The launch marked a turning point for CSBS, highlighting a vision in which health, human

development and public systems are inseparable. It positioned the college to respond to emerging challenges, prepare students for meaningful careers, and continue shaping graduates who strengthen the health and vitality of Iowa communities.

Shaped by mission

At 45 years old, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences stands as both a product of UNI’s past and a driver of its future. From its early roots to its current role, CSBS reflects the university’s enduring belief that studying human behavior, culture and the communities we serve is essential to improving the world around us.

That legacy now sets the stage for what comes next, guiding the college as it moves forward with a renewed focus on meaningful student experiences and preparing graduates to meet the evolving needs of society.

TODAY

Today, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences continues to be a place where curiosity meets action. Across its departments, schools and centers, CSBS blends rigorous study of human behavior, society and health with hands-on experiences that prepare students to make a real difference at home here in Iowa and around the world. Faculty continue to innovate in the classroom, incorporating active learning through research, internships, service experiences and emerging technologies like AI, ensuring students are prepared for a rapidly changing world.

Health and human sciences remain at the forefront. The Department of Nursing and Public Health continues to expand, offering innovative pathways into high-demand careers. In fall 2025, the department announced a new Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, creating a fast-track pathway into nursing for students who already hold a degree or have completed significant college coursework.

CSBS's centers provide additional opportunities for applied learning and community impact across the college. In 2026, the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention celebrates 15 years of research, education and partnerships aimed at reducing violence. The ARCTICenter also marks its 10th anniversary, continuing to immerse students in research that drives real-world solutions.

The Department of Family, Aging and Counseling's Dementia Simulation House continues to grow, giving students hands-on opportunities to better understand the challenges experienced by those living with dementia and their caregivers. Since it's opening in

Feb. 2022, the team has offered dementia simulation experiences to over 4800 individuals and certified over 2900 Dementia Friends.

The Center for Civic Education, now in its second year and under the new direction of **Allison Rank**, is expanding opportunities for engagement on campus and across Iowa. In its first year, the center hosted civic salons and speaker events to help students explore their civic identities while also supporting professional development for K-12 educators and UNI faculty. In year two, the center expanded its priorities to include programming for teachers and school leaders, offered continuing education courses and hosted workshops focused on civic literacy, inquiry and teaching practices. By bridging campus, community and state needs, the center is positioning CSBS as a key resource for civic learning and engagement.

Global engagement continues to be a priority, with faculty-led study abroad programs spanning Europe, Asia and Latin America. These immersive experiences allow students to apply classroom learning in international contexts, deepen cultural understanding and develop the skills and perspectives needed to thrive in diverse communities.

CSBS also celebrates the 40-year history of UNI Army ROTC, which has trained student leaders since 1981. Following a national restructuring, the program will remain on campus as an extension unit of the University of Iowa through a partnership with the Iowa National Guard, allowing cadets to complete all training locally. UNI ROTC continues to provide scholarships, leadership training and career pathways while remaining a vibrant part of campus life.

Spring 2026 brought more structural changes that reflect both growth and a renewed commitment to the humanities and social sciences. Philosophy and world religions joined the Department of History, strengthening the study of ethics, culture and human thought.

The Department of Political Science welcomed criminology and criminal justice and the online philanthropy and nonprofit development (M.A.) to form the School of Public Affairs and Service, equipping students to address policy, governance and community challenges.

Sociology also joined geography to create a new School of Community and Geographic Innovation, blending sociological and geographic insight with hands-on community engagement.

Faculty are driving additional new initiatives, such as the UNI Humanities Hub, which embeds internships and career preparation into humanities curricula while strengthening the role of these fields on campus and in the wider community.

Together, these reorganizations and initiatives show that both humanities and social sciences remain integral, equipping students with critical thinking, ethical reasoning and the skills to shape their communities and build successful careers.



TOMORROW

The College of Social & Behavioral Sciences faces the future with purpose and pride.

Higher education continues to shift — from enrollment pressures to changing workforce demands and evolving student expectations — and yet, the college remains committed to Iowa, its students and preparing graduates who make a real difference in their communities.

“Teaching remains a dynamic endeavor, and in many ways, it is even more challenging today than it was in the past,” Dean Brenda Bass reflects. Faculty are meeting those challenges with creativity and care, incorporating new approaches to teaching, technology and active classroom experiences, all while maintaining the college’s core commitment to student success.

Health and human sciences will continue to anchor the college’s work. Nursing, public health and kinesiology programs are poised to grow, preparing professionals who deliver compassionate care, promote healthy communities and help individuals live stronger, healthier lives. Mental health programs will expand alongside them, responding to pressing needs across Iowa and beyond. Humanities programs will remain central as well, helping students develop critical thinking and ethical reasoning — skills that allow them to address complex problems with insight and empathy.

Experiential learning continues to define the CSBS experience. Dean Bass notes, “We have long focused on undergraduate research, internships, service learning and study abroad. Today, we are embedding these opportunities more deeply into every student’s curriculum, preparing them for the next steps in life and work.”

The Center for Civic Education will give students, faculty and K-12 educators the chance to engage across perspectives, build civic skills and connect with communities statewide.

Faculty-led study abroad programs allow students to bring global lessons home, applying what they learn internationally to local communities and civic challenges.

Through hands-on learning and interdisciplinary collaboration, the college prepares students not just to enter careers but to lead, serve and create meaningful change. Building on 45 years of innovation, CSBS approaches the future with confidence — ready to meet new challenges and empower the next generation. Every experience, in the classroom or beyond, gives students the chance to strengthen Iowa and the communities they touch.

Decades of learning, service and a willingness to adapt have shaped our college; kept us grounded and guided by purpose.

CSBS faculty remain focused on preparing students to flourish after graduation, and those values will continue to define the future students who walk our halls, and carry forward a long legacy of impact.

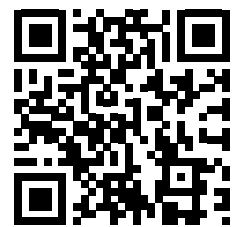


CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE WHO HELPED SHAPE CSBS

This year, CSBS is celebrating the people who have shaped our college across generations — faculty, staff, alumni and friends whose leadership, service and vision continue to make a lasting impact.

Discover more stories at csbs.uni.edu/150, featuring a growing collection of profiles that highlight the strength of the CSBS community, past and present.

New honorees will be added throughout the summer and fall.





IOWA STATE NORMAL SCHOOL
CEDAR FALLS,
DEC 12th 1891

LAURA ENSIGN

TEACHER. LEADER. REFORMER.

Laura Ensign arrived in Cedar Falls in 1878, joining the Iowa State Normal School faculty at a moment when the institution was still defining what it would become. Her influence would help shape the academic culture that later grew into the University of Northern Iowa.

Ensign played a key role in defining how teachers were trained. Though her name is little known today, she emerged as one of the most influential faculty members in the school's earliest decades and a central figure in its struggles over pay equity, academic freedom and professional recognition for women.

"She was everywhere in the records," said **Thomas Connors**, professor of history and author of a study on Ensign's career. Connors began researching Ensign after discovering her personal photo album for sale online, a chance find that led him to uncover a story largely forgotten.

Ensign was not the first woman to teach at the Normal School. **Frances Webster**, hired earlier, left after two years and never achieved the rank of professor. Ensign, however, would stay for 14 years and become a leader among her colleagues at a time when women's authority in higher education was still contested.

Born in New York, Ensign came to Iowa with her family at age 5. She grew up in the first house built in New Hartford, which had been founded by her father and uncles. Education was a family value, and she pursued advanced study before entering teaching.

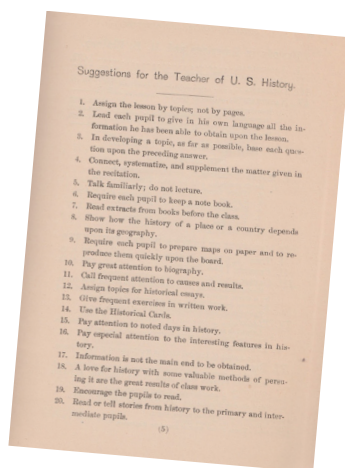
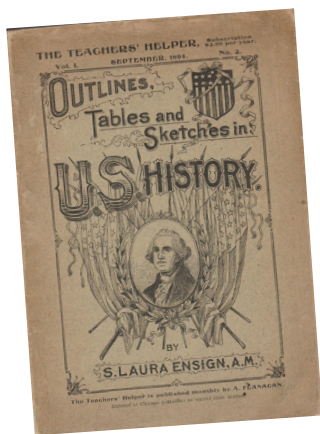
In 1879, she earned a master's degree from the University of Iowa and was selected to deliver the commencement oration, becoming the first woman to do so. By the time she arrived in Cedar Falls, she was already recognized as a skilled educator with strong views about how teachers should be trained and had begun establishing herself as a specialist in history and geography pedagogy.

Those views soon put her at odds with the school's leadership.

In the Normal School's early years, Principal **James Gilchrist** assigned faculty to teach whatever subjects administrators thought necessary, regardless of their expertise and whether classes were available in their fields. Ensign objected. She believed instructors should teach in their areas of specialization, a position that placed her at the center of a broader fight for faculty governance and professional standards. With the support of her colleagues and the Board, she prevailed.

"She wanted teaching to be treated as a profession," said Connors. "Not as interchangeable labor."

Ensign also became a leading voice in disputes over salary and rank. At one point, the state Board of Directors reduced her pay after deciding all women faculty should earn the same salary, regardless of experience or responsibility. Ensign protested the policy, arguing that compensation should reflect work and qualifications, not gender. Others supported her, and the Board backed down from its controversial policy.



From top to bottom, left to right: album found by Prof. Connors; photo of Ensign with Bartlett, Gilchrist, Hobron, Hull and Wright; photos of Ensign's students, as seen in album; book and excerpts by Ensign; headstone.

Her advocacy extended beyond herself. No woman at the Normal School held the rank of professor until 1889, when President **Homer Seerley**, an early advocate for women's rights, pressed the Board to grant the title to women on the faculty and recognize women's work as equal to men's. Ensign was the first woman to be promoted, officially recognized as a professor in history and geography, marking a turning point for women across the institution.

The obstacles she faced were compounded by a difficult relationship with Principal **James Cleland Gilchrist**, the school's first leader. Ensign had been hired over Gilchrist's preferred candidate, a decision made directly by the board. The result was a strained and often hostile working environment that lasted for years.

Despite that tension, Ensign remained deeply invested in the school's future. As Gilchrist's position weakened, she quietly worked behind the scenes to recruit his successor, her friend and fellow educator Homer Seerley. When Seerley became principal in 1886, the institution entered a period of reform that aligned closely with Ensign's long-held priorities.

"She was thinking institutionally, not just personally," Connors said. "She wanted the school to be better for students and faculty alike."

That commitment extended to her scholarship. Ensign authored textbooks on pedagogy and grammar that became widely used throughout the Midwest, including in Chicago. By 1900, her books sold more than 100,000 copies, a remarkable figure for the period, and helped standardize teacher training practices beyond Iowa. Her textbooks were still in print when she died in 1937.

Through her writing, Ensign reached classrooms she would never see in person. She advised teachers to "talk familiarly, do not lecture." Her work emphasized clarity, structure and the intellectual seriousness

of teaching, reinforcing the idea that education deserved the same respect as other professions. Students, too, felt her influence. Ensign was known for high expectations and careful attention to instruction, traits that reflected her belief in preparation over simple memorization. She combined firm standards with steady support in the classroom. Her album is filled with pictures of early alumni that those students gave her.

Her career at the school ended in 1892, but the legacy of her efforts remained. The principles she championed — fair pay, academic specialization and professional rank — would become standard features of the institution as it evolved into a comprehensive university.

In that sense, Ensign's story reflects the broader arc of the University of Northern Iowa's history. The school's early years were marked by experimentation and conflict, shaped by individuals willing to challenge existing norms. Ensign stands out among them not only because she was a woman in a male-dominated profession, but because she insisted that the institution live up to its educational mission. The arrival of Seerley began decades of rapid growth and academic modernization, and ended a decade when the survival of the school was uncertain.

Ensign's life also underscores how easily such contributions can be forgotten. Unlike presidents or politicians, faculty pioneers often leave behind scattered traces rather than grand monuments. It took a chance discovery, a photo album offered for sale more than a century later, to restore Ensign to view.

As UNI observes its sesquicentennial, her story offers a reminder that progress is built through persistence as much as celebration. The ideals now associated with the university — academic excellence, commitment to students and respect for professional expertise — were once matters of debate.

Laura Ensign did not set out to make history. She set out to teach well, to be treated fairly and to see her profession taken seriously. In doing so, she helped lay the groundwork for generations of educators who followed, ensuring that the institution she served in its infancy could grow into the university it is today.

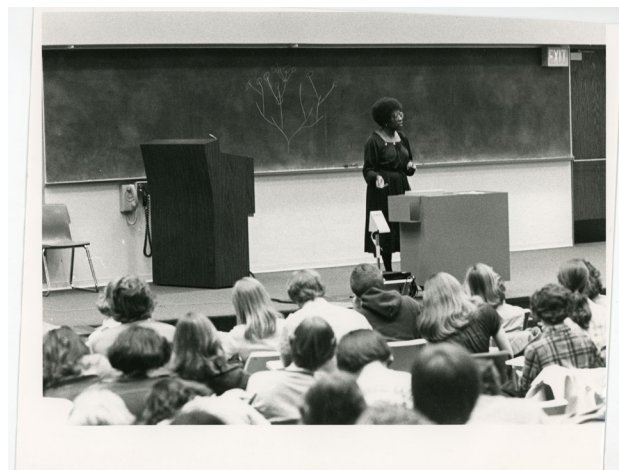
"Anyone who is familiar with the university in Cedar Falls will have recognized some names among Ensign's colleagues," Connors wrote at the conclusion of his booklet. "Buildings commemorate Gilchrist, Wright, Sabin and Seerley, who is also honored by a city park and boulevard."

“Laura Ensign is forgotten, as indeed are most of the women and men who taught on the Hill, yet she left a legacy, winning struggles over rank and pay for women and helping set the school on the path to faculty governance.”

In a career that ranged from rural schools in Butler County to elite girls' schools of Minneapolis and Baltimore, her most significant contributions came during her time in Cedar Falls. A supportive family helped her navigate the seasons of her career, and it is in their plot near the front of the town cemetery a little north of New Hartford that a small gray headstone commemorating S. Laura Ensign can be found. While her family's markers are labeled husband, wife, daughter, sister and aunt, Laura's reads: "Teacher."

Professor Connors' illustrated booklet about Laura Ensign can be downloaded for free, thanks to UNI Scholarworks: csbs.uni.edu/Ensign-Booklet





RUTH BLUFORD ANDERSON

A TRAILBLAZER FOR WOMEN & PEOPLE
OF COLOR IN HIGHER EDUCATION

As a Black woman navigating the challenges of the late 1960s, **Ruth Bluford Anderson** broke barriers in higher education through resilience and a deep commitment to helping others. Her pioneering leadership for women and people of color in academic roles led to her becoming the first African American department head at UNI.

In her 1985 autobiography, she described a long-running legal battle with the university over promotion and discrimination: “I began what was to be for me, personally, the longest battle against discrimination that I have had to fight. My request for promotion to full professor, while recommended by my Departmental Professional Assessment Committee and my department head, was denied.” The case ultimately resulted in Anderson being awarded tenure and a full professorship in an out-of-court settlement widely regarded as a landmark victory for female faculty at Iowa’s public universities.

Anderson founded the social work program at the University of Northern Iowa in 1969, teaching all three courses initially offered. She built the program from the ground up — developing curriculum, establishing field placements with local agencies, creating a social work library, and securing accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education.

“I decided to come to UNI after checking the enrollment and realizing that a large percentage of UNI students continue to reside and work in Iowa throughout their lives. I knew my teaching here would affect the quality of social work in Iowa and I felt it needed it.”

Today, the UNI Bachelor of Social Work program enrolls more than 200 students. In recognition of her contributions, the department established the Ruth Bluford Anderson Social Work Scholarship for undergraduate majors.

Before and during her academic career, Anderson worked in social services in Waterloo, focusing on public welfare and addiction. She was among the first in the region to address substance abuse issues affecting women and Black communities. Deeply engaged in civic life, she served as president of the Black Hawk County NAACP, a member of the Iowa Substance Abuse Commission, and an active supporter of the Sickle Cell Foundation of Black Hawk County, while also corresponding with incarcerated individuals in Iowa prisons.

After 22 years of service to UNI, Anderson retired as Professor Emeritus and went on to make history again as the first African American woman elected to the Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors.

Her contributions earned widespread recognition, including induction into the Iowa Women’s Hall of Fame and the Iowa African American Hall of Fame, along with honors from the Iowa Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, including Social Worker of the Year and a Lifetime Achievement Award.

“I feel I’ve been recognized because I’ve taken advantage of all the opportunities given to me to impact the lives of others,” she reflected after her Hall of Fame induction.

Anderson’s influence also extended through sustained civic leadership. She served as president of the Black Hawk County chapter of the NAACP and contributed to statewide policy conversations as a member of the Iowa Substance Abuse Commission. Her commitment to service was both institutional and personal — whether shaping public policy, supporting community health initiatives like the Sickle Cell Foundation, or maintaining correspondence with incarcerated individuals. Across all of these roles, she worked to ensure that those most often overlooked were not forgotten.

DAVID A. WHITSETT

RUNNING THE DISTANCE: HELPING PANTHERS FIND STRENGTH IN EVERY STEP

When psychology professor **David A. Whitsett** arrived at the University of Northern Iowa in the mid-1970s, he didn't just bring research expertise, he brought curiosity about what drives people to reach beyond their limits. Two decades later, that curiosity became the heartbeat of one of UNI's most memorable and nationally recognized learning experiences: the Marathon Class.

Created with exercise physiologist **Forrest Dolgener**, the course asked an audacious question: "What if students who had never run much in their lives trained, body and mind, to finish a 26.2-mile marathon?" The answer, as Whitsett later told *Northern Iowa Today* in 1993, was simple: "They believe if they can do 26 miles, they can do anything. Their attitude becomes, 'Bring on the world.'"

An experiment in mind and body

The two professors met at the intersection of psychology and physiology. Whitsett brought deep understanding of human motivation and self-efficacy; Dolgener contributed rigorous training science and a hands-on approach that earned him a loyal following among students.

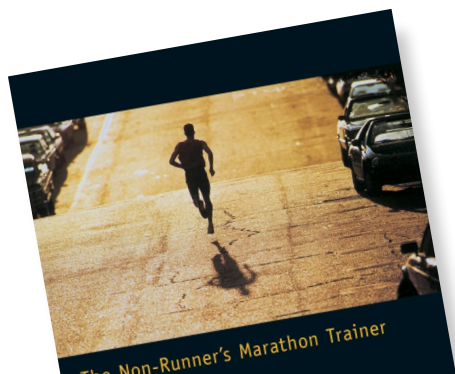
“We wanted to know, if you take a group of unconditioned people who’ve never done much athletically and put them through a program which you know produces a high level of physical development, do they become more mentally developed? The answer was an unequivocal yes.”

Whitsett saw the marathon as a metaphor for life. “If you can put people in a situation where they do well, they feel better about themselves,” he said. “They feel competent and believe they can make things happen.”

Dolgener shared that focus on personal growth. “The class was a tremendous success,” he said in 1993. “I look back and say, ‘Boy, I’m glad we did that.’”

Running toward discovery

Students in the Mental Health and Fitness course, affectionately called the Marathon Class, learned far more than pacing or hydration. Whitsett taught them about visualization, self-talk and goal-setting — psychological tools for confidence and persistence. Dolgener guided the physiological side, designing mileage plans, monitoring recovery and analyzing data on everything from heart rate to muscle adaptation.





By combining those elements, the two made science personal. Dolgener told the *Northern Iowan* in 2001, “[Whitsett] did the psychological component and I did the physiological component, and it was really the combination of the two that made it as successful as it was.”

The partnership worked. Over more than a decade, nearly 200 students trained for and finished full marathons. As Whitsett put it, “They like themselves. They feel better in ways that have nothing to do with physical ability.”

A course that captured attention

By the mid-1990s, the Marathon Class had grown so popular that enrollment had to be capped and names drawn from a lottery. What started as a classroom experiment soon reached runners far beyond Cedar Falls. The story caught national attention in *Runner’s World* magazine, and in 1998 Whitsett, Dolgener and alumna **Tanjala Jo Kole**, ’95, turned their curriculum into a book, “The Non-Runner’s Marathon Trainer.”

The book laid out a 16-week, four-day-a-week plan that mirrored the class structure, combining manageable physical training with lessons on mental resilience. It remains widely used among first-time marathoners and exemplifies the holistic approach Whitsett and Dolgener pioneered.

Readers continue to remark on its impact. One UNI alum commented on Facebook, “I followed the book for my first marathon. Loved the book’s approach, and it was so non-threatening!” Another noted, “His book is really great! I used it for my first marathon 20 years ago and loved the simplicity and motivating stories.”

Runners outside UNI have also shared praise. One Amazon reviewer wrote, “I just feel better when I run,

plus it helps me to cope with things in general. The skills we’ve learned don’t apply just to marathoning — they apply to life.” Another Goodreads reviewer said, “The book works. Not only did I finish, but I had fun in the process as promised.”

A teacher who made students believe

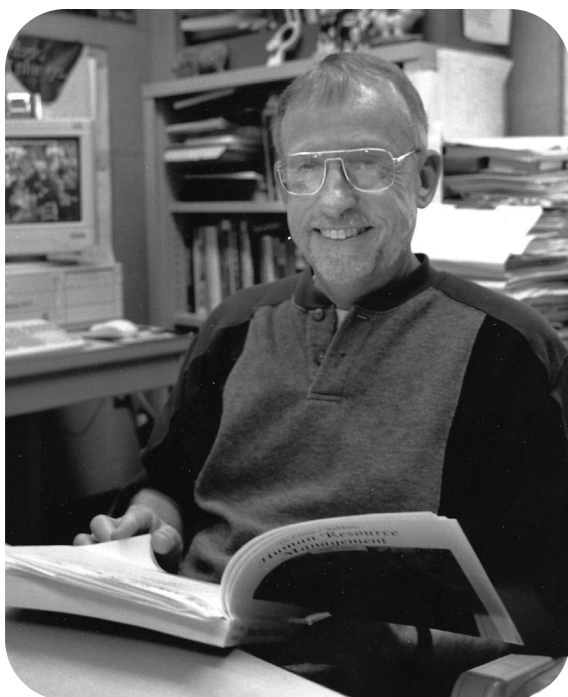
Whitsett’s impact stretched far beyond running. As a founding force behind UNI’s industrial and organizational psychology program, he helped students link theory to real-world performance. He also devoted time to UNI athletics, especially wrestling, where he coached athletes to “create their own realities” in pursuit of peak achievement.

Former student **Murray Barrick**, ’80, reflected, “One of Dave’s super powers was the art of seeing you and making others feel seen and heard and understood. As a 19-year-old, that had an effect. It made you raise your own game. Made you become a better version of yourself.” Barrick continued, “Students had the answers locked up inside themselves, but they needed a guide. And Dave was an extraordinary guide.”

“You meet a lot of tough guys in wrestling, but not a whole lot of professors of psychology,” reflected former UNI wrestling coach **Jim Miller**, ’75, ’88. “How you think and what you say to yourself matters. Dave just wanted to see people reach their full potential.”

Karen Paul, ’84, said it simply: “His legacy lives on in all the careers he’s launched and the inspiration he instilled.”

When Whitsett died in 2024 at 82, those he taught and mentored remembered a professor who could make them believe in themselves. “He respected my ideas,” Whitsett once said of a mentor who inspired him to teach. “No one had done that before. I decided then I wanted to do that — for other kids.”



Enduring lessons

As UNI marks its 150th anniversary, the Marathon Class remains one of the university's most powerful examples of experiential learning — where discovery happens not just through lectures but through sweat, reflection and shared accomplishment.

The class showed students what Whitsett always believed: that success begins in the mind. For those who ran with him, that lesson has lasted far longer than any race time.

“They believe if they can do 26 miles, they can do anything. The finish line, it turns out, was only the beginning.”

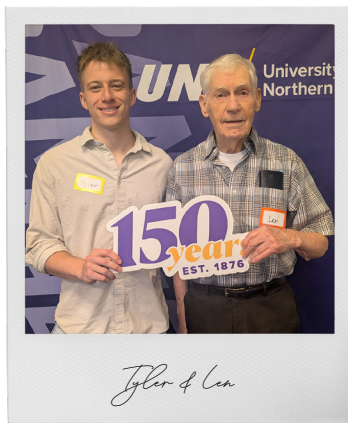
DAVID A. WHITSETT LEGACY OF IMAGINATION ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

We are proud to announce a new scholarship honoring Dr. Whitsett's passion for sparking curiosity and imagination. The fund will help junior or senior psychology majors who demonstrate financial need, with a focus on those pursuing the work psychology certificate — Dr. Whitsett's area of expertise.

You can help carry on his legacy by supporting the scholarship with a gift.

csbs.uni.edu/whitsett-legacy





BRIDGING GENERATIONS

HELPING PANTHERS FIND STRENGTH IN EVERY STEP

Throughout the UNI Sesquicentennial Celebration, keeping students engaged with the university has been a priority. The hope is that today's students will gain an appreciation for the university they call home.

One family services course, taught by Assistant Professor of Gerontology **Melinda Heinz**, brings the legacy of UNI to life by pairing students with older alumni ranging in ages from 65 to mid-90s. Students then crafted posters and presentations about the life stories of the alums after conducting interviews on campus.

Along the way, Heinz and her students gained insight into UNI's history. Through her alum's time as a student and teacher, **Ava McGreevy**, a junior family services major with minors in psychology and mental health, learned about the Price Lab School. Heinz discovered a former tradition of students dressing up for Sunday dinners.

"I really didn't have a broad view of older adults before this," said **Neesa Striegel**, a junior majoring in family services and minoring in mental health. "That's

a demographic I could be working with in whatever job I get after graduation. So I think just knowing that everyone does have a life and story to share, and that continues past a certain age has been helpful for me."

Striegel learned about UNI through a different lens, as her alum attended as a non-traditional student. "I heard a lot about the culture of UNI through her explanation of being welcomed by her peers and never feeling judged as an older adult," said Striegel.

The students also met with UNI Archives to hunt down photos of their alums from their college days. These photos not only made their way into the presentations but were also assembled in photobooks that were gifted to the alumni as a thank-you for their participation.

"Some of those photos I don't think that they had ever seen, or if they had, it was decades ago," said Heinz. "One of the women was on the leadership team for Campbell Hall, so there was a photo of her along with many other women in the 1960s. We found that picture, the student put that in the photobook and then mailed it to the alum."

The project also helped bring course concepts to life, including how major life events — such as divorce or the loss of loved ones — shape a person's well-being over time. It also showcased the different theories of aging, which explain the different dimensions of growing older.

"Sally is involved in so many things in her life," McGreevy said of her assigned partner, an alum in her late 60s. "She plays pickleball. She's involved in many of her church groups. She spends time with her family. So she's always doing something. Active aging is keeping your body and your mind moving, and that helps you live a longer life. Sally is a prime example of that."

Heinz said a wide variety of students took this course from those majoring in family services to social work to interior design and pre-health. She believes any of these students can benefit from the skills they learned through this project.

"I think your ability to connect on a personal level with anybody is an invaluable skill. It's one of those soft skills we need more of. It forces you to think through things like how to find commonality with somebody you've never met when you just know you went to the same school."

"How do you develop a dialogue with that? That active listening and ability to ask appropriate follow-up questions to keep that conversation going is important no matter what field you're pursuing."

For McGreevy, the skills she used to connect with Sally will stay with her long past the assignment's completion date.

"Being able to connect with people and share experiences is really important in the family services field," she explained. "So having just real-life experience talking to a complete stranger and creating a strong bond with them within not a lot of time is a skill I'll definitely be able to use moving forward."

Each alum visited campus twice: once for an initial meet-and-greet and again for a recorded interview.

"My first impression of Ann was, right off the bat, it was like we knew each other," said Striegel. "We clicked right away. We got into the deep questions right away. So it was pretty easy, flowed well and was comfortable."

"I think in general I'm pretty good at connecting with others and finding something in common with them, but with Sally, I was really kind of nervous going into that first initial meeting with her," said McGreevy. "But within five minutes of talking with her, it felt comfortable, and it felt like we have known each other for a long time."

For some students, the connections didn't end when the semester did. Striegel and Ann continue to email each other, a lasting reminder of the meaningful relationship that was built throughout the course.





A LIVING MAP OF UNI MEMORIES

AS UNI MARKS 150 YEARS, HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND DIGITAL MAPPING BRING CAMPUS MEMORIES TO LIFE.

In perfect timing for the UNI Sesquicentennial Celebration, one exciting campus project lets people literally walk through history, bringing images from old scrapbooks, UNI Archives and photo collections into the present day. While time travel may still be science fiction (for now), this might be the next best thing.

Meet **Zach Rogers**, '25, a recent UNI graduate who has spent three semesters working with Professor Emeritus **Bettina Fabos** on Fortepan IA, crafting 360-degree street view tours layered with historical photos of UNI's campus and beyond.

From their new home within the Department of History, Fortepan IA has grown beyond preservation into a teaching and research tool used across disciplines. Faculty and students in history, public history, digital studies and women's and gender studies are using the platform to analyze local photo collections, build digital stories and connect personal histories to larger cultural narratives. Whether students are mapping historic campus images or uploading family photo collections from across Iowa, the project helps bring everyday history into the classroom.

"It's a history and culture tool," explained Rogers, who majored in geographic information science

(GIS). "You can just see how things have evolved. It's interesting to see how the campus and students have changed."

The result of Rogers' work, along with contributions from several other dedicated UNI students, is an augmented reality experience known as FotoSphere Tour, that lets users see the past merge with the present. He's geolocated hundreds of historical photos into Fortepan IA's digital platform. The project tied in perfectly with his GIS background, which focuses on data collection and digital mapping.

"The pictures come from families around Cedar Falls or people who lived here," Rogers explained. "A lot of them are from the UNI Archives in the library, and then we also have some from UNI Museum scrapbooks."

The photos span more than a century of UNI history, going back to the 1870s. Rogers' favorites are the ones that capture slices of student life, like one image of UNI Panthers playing seven-on-seven tackle football in front of the Towers.

So how does it work? Once Fortepan IA receives a photo, Rogers or another team member scans the image at high resolution, uploads it to the photo history portal and works to pinpoint where it was



taken. Sometimes, it's obvious. Other times, he collaborates with Rod Library Special Collections & University Archives to determine the exact spot.

Rogers first prints the images and visits the exact site on campus where they were created. He takes a picture of the historical image on his phone, positioning it as close as possible to its original placement. Then he uses a 360-degree camera to snap a new photo, hiding out of sight for the final product.

Students are inevitably captured in the 360-degree images and have come up with some creative ways of hiding.

"There are some funny pictures from the people who took the 360 pictures before me," said Rogers. "They're sprawled out on the grass next to the camera or curled up in a ball under the camera."

Rogers first heard about Fortepan IA when Fabos spoke at one of his geography classes. She welcomed anyone in need of an internship to connect with her. Since then, Rogers has worked on pictures at UNI, in Cedar Falls, as well as other Iowa communities like Waverly and Ottumwa.

He has even been able to use his experience as a commercial pilot and piloting drones to bring aerial photomatching to the projects.

"It's nice to have that experience on troubleshooting cameras. The company I'm working with after



graduation does GIS work. It helped me out in my interview to have that experience."

Although Rogers has now started his full-time position, he's willing to rejoin the FotoSphere Tour project in the future — especially if Fabos ever takes the time-traveling experience abroad. The project already has plans to go global with efforts in Switzerland and Chile. The team hopes FotoSphere Tour can be used in education and tourism, allowing people to virtually walk through a site without having to physically be there.

EXPLORE THE UNI MEMORY MAP

Supported by a UNI 150 grant, Fortepan IA and the Department of Geography are now partnering on the UNI Memory Map, an interactive web experience that lets users explore more than 1,500 historical UNI photographs from 1872 to 2000.

Using geolocated images from UNI Special Collections, the UNI Museum and local donors, visitors can click through decades of campus history — from iconic buildings to everyday student life.

Scan to explore the map and walk through UNI history for yourself.





TRAINING TOMORROW'S NURSES

COMPLETED UNI NURSING FACILITIES INTRODUCES STUDENTS TO EVEN MORE CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY



If you walk into the main floor of the Innovative Teaching & Technology Center on the UNI campus, you might think you were just transported to a hospital. The newly renovated space has a nurses' station and rooms with patients in need of care. This isn't a health care facility, but it is training the next generation of health care professionals who are studying in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program.

After two and a half years of work, the final building renovations wrapped up at the end of January. The space has brought the vision of Chief Academic Nursing Administrator **Nancy Kertz** to life.

"It feels pretty incredible to see it come full circle from the initial conception of what it should be to final completion," she said.

Kertz describes the newest area as a mini hospital unit. It contains trauma, critical care, labor and a delivery and pediatric suite. Medical manikins, known as high-fidelity simulators, can have amputated limbs. One can deliver a baby. Others are children themselves.



“Many programs have one, maybe two simulators,” said Kertz. “Maybe they have an OB simulator and another high-fidelity simulator. We have multiple high-fidelity simulators and even a pediatric, premature infant simulator.”

Kertz believes these additions reflect the evolution of UNI’s BSN program to emphasize trauma care, which she describes as the most difficult scenario to prepare for in school. Wherever the nurses may end up working upon graduation, Kertz believes the skills they learn in these suites will provide a strong foundation in trauma care.

“I want our students to be able to work anywhere in Iowa, whether it’s a rural, critical access hospital, or an urban setting in a level-one trauma center. We just want them to have competencies and proficiency in trauma care.”

The unit also contains an anatomy table – a seven-foot-long touch-screen tablet containing digital cadavers developed from real people. It’s yet another way UNI leverages cutting-edge technology to give future nurses hands-on experience that emulates a hospital setting.

“There are three-dimensional photographic images created from cross-sections of the human body that have been digitally reconstructed,” said Kertz. “Having observed autopsies throughout my career, I find the level of realism remarkably accurate. Students are able to move through layers of tissue and anatomy in a way that closely reflects real human structure — it’s truly impressive.”

At the nurses’ station, the computers house a simulated electronic medical record system where students can document patient care and review labs and other diagnostics. There is also a medication administration area where students can find medications and IV solutions. There are four rooms for students to discuss simulation scenarios before and after they are done. Lastly, there are three faculty offices and a storage area.

While advanced technology plays an important role in preparing nursing students for safe and competent clinical practice, Kertz emphasizes that compassionate, patient-centered care remains central to the University of Northern Iowa’s approach to nursing education. This emphasis is reinforced even during simulation experiences, where students are expected to engage with simulated patients as they would in real clinical settings.

“In our simulation suites, students are never allowed to refer to the experience as ‘pretend,’” said Kertz. “They are expected to interact with simulated patients using professional, therapeutic nurse–patient communication. I’m continually impressed by how our students introduce themselves, establish rapport and communicate with respect and professionalism, skills that reflect genuine readiness to care for real patients.”

“I was in awe the first time I walked through here,” said **Keatan Pfantz**. “The manikins we have are very realistic, and the stuff that we can actually do on them is going to help us long-term in our nursing practice.”

“When I walked in, I got goosebumps immediately,” said **Allison Sessler**. “I was so excited. It’s just really awesome to see such real-life settings.”

COLLEGE NEWS



UNI ROTC TO REMAIN ON CAMPUS UNDER NEW U.S. ARMY STRUCTURE

UNI's Army ROTC program will remain on campus under a revised Army Cadet Command plan, transitioning as an extension unit of the University of Iowa's program. UNI cadets will continue all four years of training in Cedar Falls, ensuring the university's long-standing ROTC legacy continues.

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FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND INITIATIVE IN IOWA FOR RETIRED MEN

Professor Melinda Heinz has launched Iowa's first Men's Sheds program, creating weekly opportunities for retired men to build friendships, engage in hands-on activities and strengthen social well-being. The Cedar Valley Men's Sheds is already boosting connection and purpose for participants of all ages.

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BRINGING ARCHITECTURE TO LIFE THROUGH SESQUICENTENNIAL WALKING TOURS

As part of the University of Northern Iowa's sesquicentennial celebration, UNI history faculty and students guided architectural walking tours during homecoming, showcasing 150 years of campus.

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\$1.22 MILLION GRANT TO UNI'S CENTER FOR CIVIC EDUCATION

The U.S. Department of Education awarded a three-year, \$1.22 million American History and Civics Education – Seminars (AHC-Seminars) grant to the University of Northern Iowa Center for Civic Education.

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USING HISTORIC PHOTOS TO CONNECT WITH INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

UNI theatre students partnered with the gerontology program, Western Home Communities and Fortepan IA to create "Timeless Journeys," a documentary capturing their creative-care performances with community members living with dementia.

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA RECEIVES \$2.4 MILLION GRANT TO LAUNCH HUMANITIES HUB

The UNI Humanities Hub is a transformative initiative designed to expand paid internship opportunities and strengthen the role of the humanities on campus and in the community.

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UNI ANNOUNCES RESTRUCTURING TO STRENGTHEN HUMANITIES AND PUBLIC SERVICE EDUCATION

Philosophy and World Religions joins the Department of History, while the Department of Political Science, the Criminology and Criminal Justice program and the Philanthropy and Nonprofit Development program formed a new School of Public Affairs and Service.

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UNI LAUNCHES ONLINE NON-THESIS MASTER OF ARTS IN GEOGRAPHY

The University of Northern Iowa is expanding access to graduate education with the launch of a new online, non-thesis Master of Arts in Geography program designed for working professionals seeking advanced knowledge and career growth.

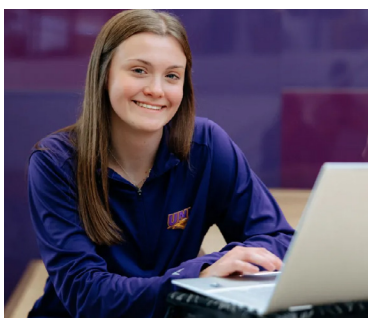
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UNI TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM CONTINUES TO BOAST HIGH PLACEMENT RATE

After graduating from UNI with a history teaching degree in spring 2025, Elizabeth Forcht promptly got offered a position as a social studies teacher at Cedar Falls High School, which she describes as a dream job.

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UNI LAUNCHES ACCELERATED THREE-YEAR DEGREE PATHWAYS

The University of Northern Iowa is launching 30 new three-year degree pathways, giving motivated students the opportunity to complete a bachelor's degree in just three years.

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RETIREMENTS



KEN ATKINSON

completes a 27-year career at UNI that began in Philosophy and World Religions and concluded in History, his academic home since 2011.

He has a strong record as an instructor, teaching 19 undergraduate courses across a wide range of topics, from The Historical Jesus and Mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls to The Cold War and Terrorism.

Equally accomplished in scholarship, Prof. Atkinson received UNI's James F. Lubker Research Award in 2023, the Donald N. McKay Faculty Research Award in 2008 and the Distinguished Scholar Award in 2006. His work includes eight books, three co-edited volumes, 45 articles and 28 book chapters and proceedings. He has served the department with distinction, most recently helping build history's online MA program. He will be greatly missed.



GREGORY BRUESS

has been a deeply valued leader in both the Department of History and the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences. A longtime professor of history, he has shared his expertise in Modern Russia and Modern Greece with generations of students through courses on Imperial Russia, Twentieth-Century Russia and Modern Europe. Widely respected for his engaging teaching and deep knowledge of cultural and religious history, he has remained active in the Russian and Slavic studies community through scholarship and conference participation. Since 1999, he and his wife, Isabela Varela, have led a summer study abroad program to Greece for more than 350 students.

Since 2015, Prof. Bruess has served as associate dean of CSBS, helping guide academic programs and support processes across the college. His contributions to UNI will be felt for years to come.



TODD EVANS will retire after a distinguished career as a cornerstone of the Athletic Training division.

Prof. Evans served as division head for several years and played a key role in the program's transition from an undergraduate to a graduate degree. He also helped shape the current faculty, directly training two of the three tenured members in the division.

He contributed to UNI research through strong scholarly publications and by serving as chair of the Institutional Review Board. In that role, he supported both faculty and student research by providing detailed feedback and meeting regularly with investigators to strengthen proposals and ensure timely, ethical approval.

Prof. Evans' leadership, mentorship and commitment to academic rigor have had a lasting impact on the division and university.



MARK GREY retires after 35 years of service to UNI as professor of anthropology and former head of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Criminology.

Prof. Grey's research focused on immigration, demographic change and the transformation of rural Midwestern communities, raising important social and public policy questions. His scholarship also examined ethnic diversification in Iowa, immigrant labor systems and globalization's effects on rural communities.

He served as director of the Iowa Center for Immigrant Leadership and Integration and associate director of the Iowa Center on Health Disparities. His public service included training for public health, law enforcement and community organizations. Over his career, Prof. Grey shaped generations of students and strengthened UNI's connections with communities across Iowa.



JAMES HALL will retire after a distinguished career marked by outstanding teaching, leadership and service to the department.

Prof. Hall built strong rapport with students, who were drawn to his engaging personality and the practical, meaningful knowledge he brought to the classroom. Over years of classroom observations, his courses consistently fostered a positive and highly engaging learning environment.

Prof. Hall also proved a vital team member, teaching a wide range of courses to meet critical departmental needs as they arose. His leadership of the coaching minor helped grow the program and strengthen support for students pursuing careers in coaching and sport leadership.

Beyond the classroom, Prof. Hall had a lasting influence on the department's culture through his consistently positive, collegial approach and willingness to support colleagues and students alike.



WALLACE HETTLE, professor of history and specialist in the American Civil War and Reconstruction, retired last fall after 31 years at UNI.

Prof. Hettle's Civil War course has been a cornerstone of the department curriculum and a strong draw for students, especially teaching majors who carry his lessons into classrooms across Iowa and beyond.

He published three university-press books: "The Peculiar Democracy," "Inventing Stonewall Jackson" and "The Confederate Homefront," plus the open-access collection "The Union Homefront" through UNI ScholarWorks. Prof. Hettle also gave extensive service to the profession and campus, including nearly two decades coordinating the Phi Alpha Theta lecture series, which brought distinguished scholars to campus for the annual Carl L. Becker Memorial Lecture in History. His humor, erudition and collegiality will be deeply missed in Seerley and across campus.



MARY LOSCH, director of the Center for Social Behavioral Research and professor of psychology, retires after 28 years at UNI.

Prof. Losch joined UNI in 1998 as an associate professor and CSBR assistant director, became a full professor in 2008 and was named CSBR director in 2015. Before UNI, she served as a program director at the Iowa Social Science Institute.

Across her career, Prof. Losch contributed to more than 100 survey, evaluation and applied research projects spanning STEM education, public health, environment, energy and public policy. She led numerous multiyear NSF and state and local evaluations, published research on survey and evaluation methods, social science and health, and taught Psychology of Gender Difference from 1998 to 2009. She received the Kennedy Achievement Award and Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research fellowship honors in 2024.





CLEMENS BARTOLLAS passed away on October 6, 2025, at age 90.

He earned degrees from Davis and Elkins College, Princeton Theological Seminary, San Francisco Seminary and The Ohio State University, where he completed a Ph.D. in sociology with a specialization in criminology. Ordained in 1961, he served several Presbyterian congregations in Michigan and Ohio.

Prof. Bartollas began his academic career at Pembroke State University and later taught at Sangamon State University before joining the University of Northern Iowa, where he served for more than four decades. He established UNI's criminology program and launched the major in 1985, which grew substantially under his leadership.

A prolific scholar, he authored more than 65 books with national and international recognition. He also worked extensively with violent offenders and served as an expert witness in death penalty cases.

Prof. Bartollas will be remembered for his intellectual rigor, mentorship and enduring commitment to service.



CAROLE EDGINTON, known by her pen name Lulu Edge, passed away peacefully on October 20, 2025, at age 58. She dedicated her career to fostering creativity, empathy and intellectual curiosity in children and young adults through writing, teaching and global engagement.

An accomplished author of more than two dozen children's books, her work emphasized compassion and cross-cultural awareness. She served for over three decades with Camp Adventure Child and Youth Services, leading international programs and mentoring educators across more than twenty countries. She also collaborated with museums to develop youth-centered educational and cultural initiatives.

Prof. Edginton earned her B.A. from the University of Northern Iowa and her M.A. from Iowa State University, and pursued doctoral study (ABD) at UNI. She taught sociology, anthropology and East Asian history for over fifteen years.

Her scholarship and service reflected a commitment to global understanding and the transformative role of education.



MARY LOUISE FRANKEN passed away at the age of 86. She earned her B.S. in Home Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Stout, her M.S. in Counseling from the University of Wisconsin and her Ed.D. from Drake University.

Prof. Franken joined the faculty at the University of Northern Iowa, where she taught family studies and later served as chair of the Department of Home Economics. She retired in 1998 after a distinguished academic career.

She was active in the Cedar Falls community, including her involvement with St. John Lutheran Church and her service as a volunteer with Cedar Valley Hospice. She also contributed her leadership to several organizations, including the YWCA, Family Service League, Family and Children's Council and Lutheran Services of Iowa.

Prof. Franken will be remembered for her dedication to education, service and community engagement, and for the positive impact she had on colleagues, students and the broader community.



JOHN JOHNSON passed away on January 2, 2026, at age 79. A distinguished historian and devoted member of the University of Northern Iowa community, Prof. Johnson found his professional home in Cedar Falls, where he was deeply valued for his scholarship, teaching and collegiality.

Throughout an academic career that also took him to institutions in New York, South Carolina and Alaska, he was recognized as a gifted teacher, mentor and facilitator whose influence extended well beyond the classroom. At UNI, he remained an engaged member of the campus community, embracing Panther athletics and the life of the history department with enduring enthusiasm. He was equally appreciated for the friendships and sense of community he fostered among colleagues and students.

Following retirement, Prof. Johnson continued his commitment to service through the Reading Buddies program, civic involvement and active engagement in the Cedar Falls community. He will be remembered for his intellectual generosity, love of learning and dedication to others.



SUSAN "SUZY" WELCH passed away on November 6, 2025, at age 85. Raised in Earlham, Iowa, she developed an early love for the outdoors that shaped her lifelong commitment to youth development.

She earned her B.A. in Physical Education from the University of Northern Iowa and began her career teaching before joining Camp Fire staff in 1965.

Prof. Welch served as director of Camp Hantesa beginning in 1972 and later as executive director, guiding significant program and facility expansion. She also contributed to the University of Northern Iowa as an adjunct instructor, teaching courses in camp leadership and administration.

Recognized nationally for her expertise in camping, she served in leadership roles with the American Camp Association, including as board president. Following her retirement in 2005, she remained active in mentoring leaders and supporting camps nationwide.

Prof. Welch will be remembered for her visionary leadership, dedication to youth development and lasting impact on generations of campers and colleagues.



CHARLOTTE C. WELLS passed away on December 20, 2025, at age 73. She earned her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, her M.A. from Marquette University and her Ph.D. from Indiana University.

Prof. Wells served as a professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa from 1993 until her retirement in 2020. She taught a wide range of courses on early modern Europe, including the Renaissance and Reformation, the Enlightenment and women's history. Her scholarship focused on national identity in early modern France and later on the relationship between religion and identity in seventeenth-century North America.

Beyond her academic work, she was actively engaged in community service, volunteering with local organizations and contributing to lifelong learning initiatives. She was also an active member of her parish community.

Prof. Wells will be remembered for her dedication to teaching, scholarship and service, and for the lasting impact she had on her students and colleagues.

LEGACY OF INFLUENCE

WILLIAM “BILL” BARNETT HOOD JR.



William “Bill” Hood, ’62, was a pioneer in education, a committed mentor and a guiding presence in his community. One of the first African American students at UNI, Hood was born in Moline, Illinois, on May 21, 1933. He graduated from Davenport High School in 1951 before serving in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1954 to 1957.

His college journey was not easy. During his first quarter, Hood’s father passed away, and he left school to help support his mother before returning a year later. He, his wife Gwen and their two young children lived in Sunset Village, better known as the Quonset huts, while he completed his degree. Hood often said his greatest challenge was being poor, but he described those years as “a joyful sacrifice.”

After earning his bachelor’s degree in social science in 1962, Hood received a master’s in social

work from the University of Iowa in 1968. Though he first pursued teaching, his work at the Mental Health Institute in Independence opened the door to social work. There, mentors recognized his gift for working with young people and encouraged him to continue his education. Hood often credited those mentors, including UNI professor **Erma Plaehn**, for giving him what he called a “bump up” when he needed it most.

He later became the first African American teacher at Mount Mercy College and served as vice president for student affairs from 1982 to 1992. He also led Harambee House until his retirement in 2004, mentoring students and young leaders both there and through the Jane Boyd Community House.

Inspired by those who helped him as a student, Hood and his wife created several scholarships, including one for UNI students in social science teaching. That

scholarship, open to students of any race or background, reflected Hood’s belief that financial need should never stand in the way of becoming a teacher. “A lot of people helped me along the way, and I’ve never forgotten that,” Hood said. “I believe we are blessed in this world to bless others.”

Hood was inducted into the Iowa African American Hall of Fame in 2013 and recognized with the History Makers Award in 2015.

He passed away on Jan. 7, 2017, leaving a lasting influence on UNI, Cedar Rapids and the many lives he touched.

“I enjoyed getting to know Bill during his campus visits. He enjoyed visiting with our future teachers,” said **Chad Christopher**, coordinator of social science and history education. “Because of his generosity, our program continues to thrive, carrying forward a legacy of opportunity and excellence.”

FROM WATERLOO TO WASHINGTON

R. GORDON HOXIE



When **R. Gordon Hoxie** left Waterloo, Iowa, to attend Iowa State Teachers College in the late 1930s, he carried a small-town sense of purpose and a deep curiosity about how ideas shape history. Those values guided a lifetime of leadership and public service that reached from Cedar Falls classrooms to Washington, D.C.

Graduating in 1940 on the brink of war, Hoxie joined the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II, rising to captain and later to brigadier general in the reserves. The discipline and sense of duty he gained became hallmarks of his leadership.

After the war, he returned to academia, earning advanced degrees from the University of Virginia and Columbia University. At Columbia, he worked closely with Dwight D. Eisenhower, then the university's president.

That experience deepened Hoxie's interest in the American presidency — an interest that would define his career.

Hoxie taught history at the University of Denver before joining Long Island University, where he served as dean and later chancellor. His tenure emphasized academic rigor and open dialogue, even as the campus faced the turbulence of the 1960s. Though his time there ended amid protests and administrative conflict, it strengthened his belief that education must remain a space for debate, dissent and civic engagement.

In 1965, drawing on connections with Eisenhower and other leaders, Hoxie founded what became the Center for the Study of the Presidency (now the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress). Its work, including Presidential Studies Quarterly, continues to shape scholarship and public understanding of

presidential leadership and the balance of power.

Hoxie remained deeply connected to his alma mater, establishing a fund to support the study of the presidency and bring speakers to campus. That legacy continues through events like the Hoxie Forum, which fosters discussion about government and democracy.

Over his lifetime, Hoxie received numerous honors, including the Legion of Merit, and served as a consultant to the U.S. State Department. Though he built a global career, he never forgot his Iowa roots. Inspired by historian **Carl Becker's** belief in "thinking citizens," Hoxie dedicated his life to the idea that education, dialogue and civic responsibility are essential to a healthy democracy.

Hoxie passed away in 2002, but his legacy endures in classrooms, conversations and the ongoing study of democratic leadership.

GIVING WITH PURPOSE

THE TOMSONS' VISION FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES



For **O. Jay and Patricia Tomson**, '86, giving back has never been a single moment. It has been a way of life, shaped by their work, their community and a shared belief that meaningful change begins with people.

In Northern Iowa, where they built both a family and a business, the Tomsons became known for steady leadership and deep community roots. O. Jay built a banking career that began with national regulatory work and grew into executive leadership before he and Pat invested in what became First Citizens Bank, now serving communities across Iowa and Minnesota. At the same time, Pat's path took a different, but equally impactful direction.

After raising their three daughters, Pat returned to college and earned her master's degree in counseling from the University of Northern Iowa in 1986. That decision

marked the start of decades of work with individuals and families facing some of life's most difficult experiences. Through her private practice and her leadership with Parents United, Pat worked to break cycles of abuse, supporting not only survivors but entire family systems.

Her work extended beyond counseling sessions. She became an advocate in courtrooms and legislative spaces, raising awareness and pushing for systemic change around domestic and sexual violence. Over time, those experiences shaped a clear understanding: while response and recovery are critical, prevention is essential.

That belief ultimately connected the Tomsons to UNI. Their initial support established the Tomson Scholars program, designed to bridge classroom learning with real-world experience in violence prevention. Through internships

with community organizations and service providers, students gain hands-on skills while contributing to work that strengthens communities across Iowa.

For the Tomsons, the impact was immediate and personal. They saw students stepping into meaningful roles. They saw communities benefit from new energy and ideas. They saw the kind of long-term change that happens when education and experience come together with purpose.

That momentum led to a transformational decision. In 2021, O. Jay and Pat made a \$2 million gift to ensure the long-term sustainability of the center's work. In recognition of Pat's lifelong commitment to advocacy and healing, the center was renamed the Patricia A. Tomson Center for Violence Prevention.

Today, as the center marks its 15th anniversary, the Tomsons' legacy

is evident not only in its name, but in its reach. Housed within UNI's College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, the center has become a trusted partner for schools and communities across Iowa. Its programs, including Mentors in Violence Prevention, equip students, educators and community members to recognize harmful behavior, intervene safely and promote healthier norms.

For the Tomsons, leadership has always been especially meaningful. They believe prevention is not about a single program, but about empowering individuals to make better choices and look out for one another. Programs like MVP help young people understand their influence and responsibility within their peer groups and communities.

That focus aligns closely with UNI's broader mission. As the university celebrates 150 years, its commitment to preparing students for lives of impact continues to take shape in programs supported by the Tomsons. Through hands-on

learning, community partnerships and applied research, students gain knowledge while contributing to solutions that extend far beyond campus.

The Tomson Scholars program is a clear example. Students enter communities across the state, working alongside professionals in victim services, criminal justice, education, healthcare and social services. In doing so, they gain practical experience while strengthening systems that support prevention and care.

For Pat, the connection between learning and lived experience has always been central. Her own journey — returning to school, building a practice and advocating for change — reflects the same values now carried forward by students. For O. Jay, the investment reflects a lifelong understanding of community. Just as strong institutions are built over time, so too are safer, healthier communities.

Together, their philanthropy reflects both perspectives. It is grounded in experience, shaped by values and focused on the future.

Fifteen years into the center's work, that future continues to unfold. Schools are building stronger climates. Students are developing the skills to lead and intervene. Communities are working more collaboratively to address challenges before they escalate.

For the Tomsons, those outcomes matter most. Not recognition, but impact. Not a single milestone, but sustained progress.

In that way, their story and the center's story are deeply connected, rooted in the belief that when people are given the tools, support and opportunity to act, meaningful change is not only possible, but lasting.

From left to right: Pat and O. Jay with Michael Fleming, Annette Lynch, Alan Heisterkamp & Brenda Bass at 2021 dedication ceremony; Pat and O. Jay with the 2025 Tomson Scholars; Michael Fleming and Alysa Mozak.



BUILDING A LEGACY OF SERVICE

DORIS KELLEY, CATHY YOUNG
& JOY COLE CORNING

In the heart of Iowa, three women, **Doris Kelley, Cathy Young** and the late **Joy Cole Corning**, '54, have spent decades shaping their communities. Through bipartisan collaboration and deep personal commitment, they have shown that leadership rooted in service can transcend politics and create lasting impact.

The University of Northern Iowa shares strong ties with all three through education, mentorship and scholarships that support students pursuing careers in public service. Their efforts have helped students graduate with greater confidence, less debt and a stronger commitment to leadership.

This is the story of three friends and colleagues who used their experience and dedication to make lasting change, shaping generations of leaders and leaving an enduring impact.

Championing public service and education

Former Iowa Rep. Doris Kelley has dedicated her life to civic engagement, education and public service. Serving in the Iowa House from 2007 to 2011, she represented more than 30,000 constituents in Cedar Falls, Hudson and Waterloo. Her career has been defined by a focus on “people over party” and the belief that leadership is about service, not status.

“Right after graduating from high school, I served as administrative assistant and accountant for the City of Hoopston, Illinois,” Kelley said. “Right then and there I could see how serving the citizens was more rewarding than anything I got paid to do.”

Throughout her tenure, Kelley was known for bipartisan leadership. “I was more of a centrist and

moderate legislator,” she said. “We were at the Capitol not to represent the party but each of our 30,000 constituents.”

Her approach earned recognition from groups across the political spectrum. After leaving the legislature, she was appointed by Gov. Terry Branstad to serve as vice chair and later chair of the Iowa Board of Parole.

Kelley’s work has always been guided by one principle: “By keeping one’s head down, staying focused, looking at the big picture and thinking of others more so than oneself is a great way to make a meaningful contribution.”

Her dedication to UNI was recognized in 2024 with the Honorary Alumni Award.



From top left to bottom right: Doris Kelley, Cathy Young (photo credit Nichole Diehm Photography), Joy Cole Corning.

Nurturing faith and leadership

Rev. Cathy Young's connection to UNI began not as a student, but as a parent. "My first memorable experience at the University of Northern Iowa was bringing one of our preschool sons to the Speech & Hearing Clinic," she said. "Their services were superb."

Born in Michigan, Young moved to Waterloo in 1970 with her husband, Rick. After teaching elementary school and raising four children, she was called to ministry, eventually serving as senior pastor at Cedar Heights Presbyterian Church.

Her leadership extended far beyond the pulpit. "I give the Junior League of Waterloo-Cedar Falls credit for superb volunteer and leadership training," she said. She helped form the region's first child abuse prevention organization and later helped found the Waterloo Schools Foundation, which has contributed more than \$3 million to education.

"I firmly believe that all of us are created to do what we can to make the world a better place," she said. "Collaborative efforts are so much stronger than 'lone ranger' leadership."



Shared legacy: service, perseverance and paying it forward

Kelley and Young's partnership grew through their shared commitment to civic responsibility, alongside Joy Cole Corning, who served as Iowa's 43rd lieutenant governor from 1991 to 1999. Known for her advocacy in education and women's leadership, Corning's legacy at UNI continues through the Joy Cole Corning Distinguished Leadership Lecture Series.

While Corning passed away in 2017, her vision lives on through the bipartisan scholarship she helped create. "We decided wouldn't it be nice to hold the first bipartisan scholarship at UNI," Kelley recalled. What began with \$950 in 2010 has grown to more than \$127,000 awarded to 34 students.

"The leadership, mentorship and scholarship support provided by Doris, Cathy and Joy have transformed the experiences of our students," said **Scott Peters**, director of the School of Public Affairs & Service.

The three women also collaborated on initiatives such as Iowa's 50-50 in 2020 efforts, helping strengthen



civic engagement across the state. Together, they show students that leadership is less about titles and more about integrity, collaboration and the courage to act.

"I think all three of us try to live by Helen Keller's advice," Young said. "I am only one, but I am still one. I cannot do everything, but I can still do something."

Their influence stretches across generations of UNI students, many of whom have gone on to careers in law, public administration and community leadership.

Kelley points to perseverance as key: "Perseverance is needed when one is chasing either their dream or an opportunity to serve humanity." She often recalls, "Behold the turtle; it only makes progress by sticking its neck out."

Leading by example, Kelley, Young and Corning have demonstrated how a commitment to service, multiplied through collaboration, can transform communities and inspire future leaders.

From left to right: Joy Cole Corning in February 1992; Cathy Young and Doris Kelley with 2024-25 Women in Politics Scholarship Recipients (photo credit Nichole Diehm Photography).

LEGACY SOCIETY

The following members of the UNI Legacy Society have made provisions for CSBS through a deferred gift:

Susan K Baker	R. Allen Hays	Cheryl Myhr
Murray R Barrick	Tim Hilby	Marybeth Nelson
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Eloise Beatty Dennis	John Koberg	Scott A. Schamberger
Terry W. Edmunds	Katherine A Kuker	George E Soper
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Mary Gaye Fielding	Patricia J. Maxwell	David B VanSickel
Al Geiger	Joann McBride Neven	Charles J. Walker
Chuck Grassley	Jessica Moon	Diane E Wille

AMETHYST SOCIETY

The Amethyst Society recognizes annual donations of \$1,000 or more to the college in fiscal year 2025. This year's members include:

Anonymous	Marty & Nancy Gilson	Carol Phillips
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Kyle & Payten Gerjerts	Karen B Paul	Roberta & Reg Yoder
Charles Gillette	David & Cindy Petratis	Cathy & Rick Young

DEAN'S FUND FOR EXCELLENCE LOYALTY ROSTER

Donors who gave \$100 and above to the Dean's Fund during fiscal year 2025.

\$100 - \$249.99

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Paul & Erin Wittkowski
Michael Wright

This year has been a special one for CSBS as we celebrate UNI's 150th anniversary. It's been a chance to reflect on the impact this college has had over the years — and the role so many of you have played in shaping it. I'm continually inspired by the ways our students, faculty, alumni and friends bring that legacy to life.

During our annual day of giving, Live Purple Give Gold, the university saw record-breaking support — such an exciting reflection of Panther pride. Your generosity continues to make a real difference for our students, opening doors to hands-on experiences, scholarships and opportunities that prepare them for whatever is next.

This has truly been a year of celebrating our past, present and future — and the people who make it all possible. I've especially enjoyed connecting with many of you along the way and would love to continue those conversations. I hope you'll join us for Homecoming Weekend October 9-10 as we wrap up this milestone year together!

ALISSA SPIDELL, '14

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

alissa.spidell@uni.edu

319-273-5985



1950s

'56 RALPH WEDEKING, BA, MA '71, Clarksville, had a long and varied career, including teaching sociology at Wartburg College, administering a program for the elderly and handicapped in Waverly and serving as pastor with the United Church of Christ.

1960s

'63 CARROLL ENGELHARDT, BA, Moorhead, MN, published his sixth book digitally, titled "Schooling: A College Life," which recounts his career as a college history professor.

'64 LARRY JANSEN, BA, MA '71, Kamrar, retired from teaching in 2000 and continues to manage farmland in north central Iowa.

1970s

'70 LARRY CLEMENT, BA, Sioux Falls, SD, partnered with Mike Chapman to write and publish his life story titled "Life in the Fast Lane: The Larry Clement Story." He grew up on a farm, played football and saw success as an owner of a large auto and truck dealership in Fort Dodge. He was also a hall of fame auto driver, team owner and licensed pilot.

'70 LYLE LUCKOW, BA, Johnston, retired after more than 42 years as claims adjuster/litigation specialist and more than nine years as legal administrator for a large law firm in Des Moines. He is enjoying every minute of retirement!

1980s

'84 CHARISSE (BROWN) GILLET, BA, MA '87, Versailles, KY, published "Melodies of Faith: An Advent Devotional for African American Churches and Families." She was also elected to serve as the chair of the board of directors for the In Trust Center for Theological Schools.

'88 HALANE (CUMBERLAND)

CUMMINGS, BA, Center Point, received the 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award from the Iowa Family and Consumer Science Educators. She has taught at Center Point Urbana Schools for the last 27 years.

'88 GREG MCDERMOTT, BA, Ashland, NE, retired in Mar. 2026 as the winningest coach in Creighton University men's basketball history. His coaching career spanned 32 seasons as head coach with 16 of those at Creighton and five at UNI.

1990s

'92 JASON FOLLETT, BA, Ankeny, served as 2025-2026 president of the Professional and Scientific Council at Iowa State University. He celebrated ten years with software engineering advising in Feb. 2026 and also served as 2026 chair of the Special Olympics Iowa board of directors.

2000s

'02 MATT DEGNER, BA, Iowa City, was named one of Education Insider's Top 10 School District Superintendents. He serves as superintendent of the Iowa City Community School District. Degner was also named K-12 Dive's 2025 Superintendent of the Year in recognition of high academic achievement, establishing full day preschool and unique academic programs.

'02 WILLIAM HAGANS, BA, Houston, TX, was elected 2025-2026 Fellows Chair of the Texas Bar Foundation and was named to the Top 100 Houston Super Lawyers list for 2025 by the Thompson Reuters publication Texas Super Lawyers.

'03 KELLI SNYDER, BA, EdD '12, Dunkerton, received the 2025 Educator of the Year Award from the Iowa Athletic Trainer's Society. She is an associate professor and program director of athletic training at UNI.

'03 JACQUELYN WIERSMA MOSLEY, BA, Fayetteville, AR, was named a fellow of the 2025 Southeastern Conference Academic Leadership Development Program. She is an associate dean and professor of human development and family sciences in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food and Life Sciences at the University of Arkansas.

'04 NATE GRUBER, BA, BA '10, MPP '20, Cedar Falls, is a curriculum analyst on the degree audit team within the Office of the Registrar at the University of Iowa as of March 2025.

'04 ELLEN (STAERK) WEISHAAR, BA, ASC '20, Geneseo, IL, was named principal of Williams Middle School in the Davenport Community School District for the 2025-2026 school year.

'06 JESSICA (WEBB) DOWELL, BA, Johnston, was selected as the 2025 Iowa History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. She is a social studies teacher at Johnston High School.

'07 ANESA KAJTAZOVIC, BA, Waterloo, published a book titled, "Anesa, No Škola Today," which is based on her true story of fleeing the Bosnian War at age seven and surviving three years in war and refugee camps.

2010s

'11 ADAM HASELHUHN, BA, MA '25, Des Moines, was selected by the Des Moines Business Record as one of the 2026 Forty Under 40 honorees. He is a senior director of development with UnityPoint Health Des Moines Foundation.

'14 WES JONES, BA, Cedar Falls, earned a Master of Science degree from Iowa State University in cybersecurity in May 2025.

'14 RYAN MOON, BA, Norwalk, was selected by the Des Moines Business Record as one of the 2026 Forty Under 40 honorees. He is the governmental relations director with Delta Dental of Iowa.

'16 AMANDA (KHADER) STICKLEY, BA, MA '17, EdS '19, Des Moines, works at Magnolia Connection, a clinic in Norwalk providing psychological testing and therapy services for children.

'17 SHAKARI BAKER BRUCE, BA, BA '22, MA '25, Grand Prairie, TX, received a 2025 Gold Star Award for outstanding teaching in Black Hawk County. She is a second grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary.

'18 MICHAEL CASEY, BA, Ames, was promoted to captain with the U.S. Army Reserve in Nov. 2024.

'18 COURTNEY (ANDERSON) SOLBERG, BA, Waverly, received a 2025 Gold Star Award for outstanding teaching in Black Hawk County. She is a physical education and health teacher at Columbus High School in Waterloo.

'18 ABIGAIL VAN PATTEN FREEMAN, BA, MA '21, Brookings, SD, earned her PhD in counselor education in Dec. 2025. She is an assistant professor of counseling at south Dakota State University.

'19 MARIA BOTTINO, BA, Des Moines, became the first paralegal for the American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa in Sept. 2024.

2020s

'20 KYLA (MULNIX) FANGMAN, BA, Independence, is a human resource generalist with Exceptional Persons Inc.

'22 JASMINE (CARBIN) YANT, BA, West Des Moines, is an associate attorney with Whitfield & Eddy Law. She earned her Juris Doctor from the Drake University Law School in 2025.

'25 WYATT FITZGERALD, BA, Truro, was promoted to second lieutenant with the U.S. Army Reserve in May 2025.

'25 GAGE RIGGLE, BA, Alexandria, VA, was promoted to second lieutenant in May 2025 with the U.S. Army Reserve.

'25 HANNAH TSCHETTER, BA, Urbandale, was accepted to Drake Law for fall 2025.





University of
Northern Iowa.

College of Social &
Behavioral Sciences

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