Arkansas’ #1 University

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2020 U.S. College Rankings

www.jbu.edu
Our Longing, Our Hope, Our Commitment

New Stained-Glass Window Looks to the Future

Dear Friends of JBU,

We have had a full year of celebrating God’s goodness to John Brown University in this our centennial year. From the centennial branded stickers placed on all the entrance doors in January to the Christmas Candlelight service coming up next week, we have remembered God’s faithfulness to us in the past and given thanks for his blessings in the present, and we look forward to his direction for our future. As you can see from the expanded photo spread in this Brown Bulletin, the culmination of the centennial year was our four-day Centennial Celebration at the end of September. It was a special time of remembrance and gratitude.

As many of you know, the 10 stained-glass windows in the Cathedral tell the story of JBU’s history in their bottom panel and the story of the life of Christ in their upper panel. We have had faculty and staff “preach the windows” for the chapel this semester, and it has been a wonderful way to learn about JBU’s history and celebrate Christ’s life. To commemorate JBU’s centennial, we created a new stained-glass window that you see on the cover of the magazine. It is placed just above the organ and will be unveiled in the last chapel of the semester.

The image depicts the second coming of Christ when he will return to call his own, both the living and the dead, from every nation, tribe, people and language and usher in his new kingdom. As Paul writes in Thessalonians 4:16-18, “For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.”

The window was designed to express JBU’s longing to reflect Christ’s church in the present, our hope in the power of Christ’s resurrection for our future and our commitment to worship Christ over all forever. It was built through generous gifts from JBU faculty, staff and board members, including gifts from the Ross family in memory of Luke and from our family in memory of Ben.

In this Advent season, as we conclude our celebration of JBU’s last 100 years and look forward to JBU’s future, we hope and pray that this new window will encourage you and future generations of JBU students to serve Christ faithfully and await his coming again eagerly. May it always be true of us at JBU.

Godspeed,

Dr. Charles W. Pollard
President, John Brown University
Celebrating the Centennial

The Centennial Celebration was a four-day bash full of reunions, events and celebrations of JBU’s history. Highlights include the Michael W. Smith concert, Showcase, the Time Capsule Ceremony and the Community Worship Service.

Before the Centennial Celebration, I often identified as an outsider. Not at all because of how the JBU community interacted with me, but because I couldn’t relate to the sort of JBU moments’ I heard alumni reminisce about.

As our team began preparing for the Centennial, I was excited to work at a university celebrating 100 years of existence, but for the most part, it was still just a project to me. Then came Thursday, Sept. 26.

The Centennial Celebration embedded me into the Head, Heart, Hand culture from the minute alumni and visitors stepped on campus. I can only assume many of them were tired from their travels, as I met visitors from Kansas, Colorado, Texas, California, and even China, but their warm and gentle personalities were contagious. I was also moved by the amount of patience, grace and unselfishness the volunteers showed each other all weekend. Sixteen-hour days couldn’t break up the teamwork and selfless attitudes that existed among the UMC, Advancement and other employees who sacrificed personal time, still wearing a smile.

Working together for a purpose that is much bigger than ourselves can only be achieved by a culture of Head, Heart, Hand. John E. Brown Sr. would be proud to know that his vision is still alive and well among the alumni, faculty and staff today – an inclusive culture that even extends to non-JBU alumni like me.

Jay Nickel
Managing Editor, Brown Bulletin
Wall Street Journal Ranks JBU Top School in Arkansas
In September, JBU was named the highest-ranked university in Arkansas according to The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education 2020 U.S. College Rankings list and the top-ranked regional university in Arkansas according to U.S. News and World Report. Overall, the WSJ ranked JBU 328 out of 968 institutions in the nation. JBU ranked 11th out of 141 southern universities in the 2020 U.S. News & World Report Best Regional Universities list. U.S. News also recognized JBU as a “Best Value School,” a top 10 “Best Colleges for Veterans,” a top school in “Undergraduate Teaching” and a top performer in “Social Mobility,” a new category that measures graduation rates for students who have received Pell Grants.

Campaign Goal Exceeded, $156 Million Received
At The Scholarship and Campaign Celebration Dinner, Dr. Jim Krall, vice president for university advancement, announced that JBU’s seven-year fundraising campaign exceeded its $125 million goal by $31 million, receiving $156 million in gifts and pledges. Read more on page 8.

JBU Named ‘Great College to Work For’ Fifth Consecutive Year
For the fifth consecutive year, JBU was named one of the best colleges to work for in the nation, according to the Great Colleges to Work For survey published in The Chronicle of Higher Education. Nationally, JBU is one of only 85 colleges to receive recognition, is among 42 institutions on the Honor Roll and placed top 10 within the small enrollment size category.

Center for Faith and Flourishing Established
With commitments of more than half a million dollars, JBU established the Center for Faith and Flourishing (CFF). The center will provide programming, curriculum, partnerships and activities dedicated to exploring the relationship between Christianity and human flourishing. Funding will be provided by a $143,500 grant from the Charles Koch Foundation and a $430,500 grant from an anonymous donor. Dr. James Bruce, associate professor of philosophy, will serve as the center’s inaugural director, and Dr. Daniel Bennett, assistant professor of political science, will be the assistant director. More info: jbu.edu/faith-and-flourishing/

Computer Science Program Announced
Beginning in fall 2020, students can enroll in a new computer science program. The program is designed to be flexible and allow for an emphasis or double major in a variety of fields including gaming/web development, cybersecurity, business analytics and more. More info: jbu.edu/cs

New Deans Appointed
JBU appointed new deans: Dr. Ryan Ladner as the dean of the Soderquist College of Business; Dr. Richard Ellis as the dean of the College of Education & Human Services; Dr. Stacey Duke as the dean of The Graduate School and Dr. Joe Walenciak as the dean of business development and strategic partnerships in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Wilson Awarded 2019 Heitt Prize in the Humanities
Dr. Jessica Hooten Wilson, associate professor of humanities, was named the 2019 Heitt Prize in Humanities Award Winner. The Heitt Prize, awarded annually by The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, is given to candidates who are in the early stages of their careers, devoted to the humanities, and whose work shows extraordinary promise and has a significant public component related to contemporary culture.
Wilson, a Fulbright Scholar, has published three books and is currently working on the notable commission to complete Flannery O’Connor’s novel “Why Do the Heathen Rage?,” unfinished at the time of O’Connor’s death in 1964.

Simpson Establishes Memorial Plaque for Jewish Forced Laborers in Slovakia
Dr. Kevin Simpson, department chair and professor of psychology, helped establish a memorial plaque at the MŠK Zlina Football Stadium in Slovakia to commemorate the more than 250 Jewish forced laborers who helped build it. Simpson taught at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, as a 2018-2019 Fulbright U.S. Scholar. During his research, he discovered that Jewish forced laborers helped construct the stadium’s grandstands between 1940-1943. Simpson, along with football club president Jozef Antošík, unveiled the memorial plaque with members of the press and players in attendance.

JBU Partners with Regional Organizations to Offer Tuition Discount
JBU recently partnered with Mercy, Harvest Group and DaySpring to offer tuition scholarships to eligible employees and their immediate families. Through each employer’s partnership, eligible employees receive a discount for traditional undergraduate, online undergraduate and graduate programs at JBU. Other partnering organizations include J.B. Hunt, Sam’s Club, Walmart, Tyson and the City of Siloam Springs.

Construction Management Students Claim National Ethics Title
For the fourth year in a row, JBU CM students took home the title at the American Institute of Constructors collegiate ethics competition held in Philadelphia, Pa. Students Leo Castillo, Joshua Barnett, Noah Hubert, Brett Heidelberg and Cameron Crawford qualified for the event by submitting an initial response paper to a case study based on actual industry events. JBU was one of only three teams selected to make their final presentation at nationals and won over teams from Texas A&M and the University of Houston.

Sports Information Director Receives SAC Recognition
Nick Robinson, JBU sports information director, was named the 2019 SID of the Year for the Sooner Athletic Conference.

Men’s Soccer Captures SAC Regular Season Championship
In its 25th season as a member of the Sooner Athletic Conference, JBU men’s soccer program captured its first-ever regular season title (8-1-0). Led by the nation’s leading scorer, freshman Jacob Zamarron, the Golden Eagles secured its third-ever appearance in the SAC tournament championship, scheduled for Nov. 16 at Alumni Field.

For up to date athletic updates, visit jbuathletics.com
From 2012-2019, JBU received gifts and pledges totaling $156 Million

Thank you to all who contributed to the campaign’s success.

The Campaign Contributed:

- **$40 Million**: for 8 building projects including maintenance and operational endowments
- **$43 Million**: for student scholarships, 83 new endowed scholarships, 97 endowed scholarships increased
- **$30 Million**: in commitments for future estate gifts
- **$10 Million**: for the Endowment for Academic Excellence
- **$33 Million**: in operational support

New Programs:
- Nursing
- Computer Science
- Visual Effects
- Track & Field
Celebrating the Centennial

The highly anticipated Centennial Celebration finally arrived, September 26-29. Over 2,000 alumni and friends of JBU filled the campus Thursday through Sunday with a slew of activities scheduled for each day.

Thursday night kicked off the Scholarship and Campaign Celebration Dinner, where JBU shared the successful completion of the Campaign for the Next Century, exceeding the $125 million goal by $31 million. Each year, the dinner recognizes and thanks donors of scholarships for their generous contributions to JBU, and the event serves as an opportunity for donors to meet the student recipients of their scholarships.

Friday was highlighted by the Time Capsule Opening and Day of Declaration at the Flagpoles, with a reading of proclamation by Siloam Springs’ Vice Mayor Reed Carroll and Rep. Robin Lundstrum. Siloam Springs declared Sept. 27 John Brown University Day, and Gov. Asa Hutchinson declared it John E. Brown Sr. Day. The time capsule opening revealed items set inside the flagpole monument at its dedication in 1982. The items from 2019 that will be buried in the new time capsule and unveiled in 50 years were announced. The renaming and dedication of the Sheridan Townhouses took place that afternoon, and then Grammy Award-winning singer Michael W. Smith closed the day with a memorable concert in Bill George Arena. Playing for more than two hours, Smith treated the audience to hit songs from the past, songs from his newest album and a moving time of worship.

Saturday’s schedule was chock-full of class reunions spanning the last six decades from the 50s to the 2010s. The day began with the annual Alumni Breakfast, featuring the class of 1969 and an address from President Chip Pollard. A slew of athletic events canvased campus throughout the day – ultimate frisbee, rugby, tennis, soccer, volleyball and basketball. The Centennial Car Show was a crowd favorite that celebrated the last 100 years by giving a glimpse of the cars and trucks that signified those decades. The rides dated back to the 30s and were on display between the tennis courts and Alumni Field with owners on-hand to share the history and personality of their vehicles. Saturday also included the Heritage Society Induction Ceremony, honoring the Class of 1969, as well as the Dedication of the Dr. Shirley Forbes Thomas Honors Library.

Food trucks were camped out by Bill George Arena that evening before the Showcase highlighted the 100-year history of JBU through unforgettable music and entertainment by current students and alumni. Saturday ended with a bang (literally) as the evening was capped off with the Founder’s Fireworks Show, lighting up the night sky above the Rugby Pitch.

“Friendships were rekindled and memories were shared at the same time new memories were being made. We continue to receive notes of gratitude from attendees regarding the beauty of campus, attention to detail and most importantly an opportunity to connect with former classmates, roommates and friends.”

— Brad Edwards ’02

Director of Alumni and Parent Relations

Sunday’s Community Worship Service in Bill George Arena featured one of the student chapel bands and a message by President Pollard that gave thanks to God for the first 100 years and looked forward to JBU’s next 100. John E. Brown Sr.’s favorite meal of traditional fried chicken was enjoyed in Kresge Dining Hall following the service, bringing the weekend to a close.
Homecoming King Arfennee Cordoba and Queen Laura Gutiérrez
“JBU has done a great job of maintaining its identity as a Christ-centered institution that trains future servant leaders. Seeing that makes me feel like it’s still the same school I attended, even if half the buildings are new.”

— Sarah Ball ’97
“This weekend made me feel optimistic about the future of JBU’s campus and the people that will come here.”

— Scott Lightbourn ’20
Time Capsule Opening

Sheridan Townhouses Dedication
“I was able to connect with alumni through convenient and unplanned interactions. As a fellow alumna, it was fun to share stories and brush shoulders with so many others who have - for a season in their life - called JBU home.”

— Bethany Smith ’16
“The Michael W. Smith concert was my favorite event. It was meaningful to me, not because of who he is, but because he created a worshipful atmosphere. As I was singing along and scanning the audience from my seat, I felt in awe of what my great-grandfather began for all these people when he trusted and obeyed God. It was humbling to know God had brought us all to JBU and, like the ripple effect, God used our trust and obedience for His purpose all over the world. Singing His praises in thankfulness for all He has done in our lives was definitely a highlight of my weekend. It was powerful.”

— Kathryn Cottrell '99
Saturday

Alumni Breakfast

Heritage Society Reunion and Induction Ceremony
Tennis

Men’s Ultimate Frisbee
“The students' stories are a powerful reminder that the work of JBU bears kingdom results long after they leave our campus.”

– Becci Rothfus
BBQ Lunch

Class of 2014 Reunion

Construction Management Reunion

Class of 1969 Reunion
“Learning about JBU’s past reinforced that we have a great spiritual heritage that we must carry forward to future generations.”

— Kevin Macfarlan
Department of Education Reunion

Natural Science Reunion
“It was fantastic! Seeing old photos and hearing alumni share memories was so fun. It was special to think about how my time as a student was just a sliver of JBU’s 100-year history, but the impact JBU has had on my life is something that other generations can relate to as well.”

— Amy Anderson ’04
Food Truck Dinner
“I loved everything I was able to attend. JBU’s fireworks were the best I have ever seen, and I just went to Disney World.”

— Katy Gunneman ’05
“I was so encouraged by seeing how staff, faculty, alumni, and students are loving and serving the Lord. It was a truly worshipful weekend, and I’m happy to be a JBU grad.”

– Laurie Kauer ’94

For more photos, visit jbu.edu/centennial/homecoming
Christopher '97 and Kristin Wilson of Kansas City, Mo., welcomed Brek Lincoln into the world February 17.

Stephen C. Jewett '71 is the 2019 American Academy of Underwater Sciences recipient of the Scientific Diving Lifetime Achievement award. Jewett is research professor emeritus at the College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Marcos '15 and Christina '12 Gutierrez of Siloam Springs, Ark., welcomed Zion Warren Gutierrez into the world Sept. 21.

Lucas Roebuck '97 released “Flight of the Magnus,” book two in the Project Waypoint Series. Lucas is the vice president for marketing and chief communications officer at the University of Texas at Tyler.

Kalin Salman '15 has become the volunteer coordinator at the Arkansas Dream Center in North Little Rock, Ark.

Sarah Masciana '03 recently published “Discover + Remember Group Identity Study,” an intensive small group identity study tool (DiscoverAndRemember.com). Masciana will share her study at Yaya Women’s Conference at Mo-Ranch in Hunt, Texas, Feb. 20-23.

Kim Mills '95 is the principal at Hillcrest School in Papua, Indonesia. Kevin Mills '94 works in communications and teaches creative writing. (Also pictured: Kyler, 17; Kara, 10; and Kaleb, 12).

Be featured in the Brown Bulletin! Submit your professional and family news to jbu.edu/alumni/magazine/news.

Join the JBU Alumni Facebook Group: facebook.com/groups/jbualumni
Be part of their college memories.

Family Weekend | Feb. 21-22

Experience your student’s world for a weekend. Spend the time however you want—cheer on the rugby teams, watch the talent show, explore Siloam Springs or simply talk for hours with your child. No matter how you use your weekend, it’ll be worth every second.

jbu.edu/familyweekend
In Memoriam

Dr. Ida Adolphson ’51, age 95, died June 30. Adolphson earned a degree in English and broadcasting from JBU and served as a missionary with Far Eastern Broadcasting Crusade in Manila. She later served JBU in a variety of capacities, including head resident of Mayfield, dean of women, director of counseling, professor of psychology and coordinator of graduate admissions.

Norman “Glen” Atchley ’54, age 87, died May 16. Atchley studied aeronautical engineering and architecture and helped build the Cathedral of the Ozarks as a work-study student. He served in the U.S. Army and later worked for Cessna, Learjet and Boeing before venturing into real estate.

Larry Gene Austin ’67, age 73, died April 29. He attended JBU before finishing his degree at Northeastern State University. He worked in the insurance industry and served in the U.S. National Guard.

Anna (Graves) Berwick ’52, age 88, died July 4. She graduated from JBU with a degree in piano performance and Bible.

Dr. Millard Box ’48, age 102, died May 30. He had a bachelor’s degree in English from JBU and was an ordained Southern Baptist minister, serving in ministry for 87 years.

Ada (Duncan) Coombes ’82, age 92, died April 9. She earned a JBU degree in home economics. She loved to cook and taught culinary arts at Talking Leaves Job Corps in Tahlequah, Okla., for many years.

Brian Denyer ’57, age 88, died Oct. 10. He earned a bachelor’s degree in radio engineering and was a missionary for over 35 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Brazil and JAARS.

Dr. Thomas Arthur Dodd ’70, age 71, died Aug. 7. At JBU, he earned a pre-medical degree and was a member of the baseball team and of the Sound Generation. Dodd graduated from the University of Missouri School of Medicine and practiced medicine until 2000.

Lawson Duhan ’50, age 92, died Oct. 3. He received a degree in mechanical engineering. Duhan taught at Habibia College in Afghanistan in the 1950s, enjoyed a long career in real estate and taught English in Pakistan for 11 years.

Frank Dyke ’07, age 65, died May 9. He received his bachelor’s degree in organizational management. He was an assistant manager for Arkansas Community Correction and taught criminal justice at the University of Arkansas – Fort Smith.

Larry Eldred ’55, age 94, died March 4. Eldred earned a degree in voice performance from JBU. He served in World War II. He retired as pastor of Manson United Methodist Church.

Frances (Jackson) Henry-Endicott ’68, age 72, died June 19. She studied home economics at JBU. Henry-Endicott worked in banking and served as a substitute teacher in Siloam Springs.

Barbara Hill ’51, age 91, died Aug. 5. She graduated from JBU with a degree in home economics and earned her master’s from Humboldt State University. She taught school for 12 years and served as a high school reading specialist for 19 years. Hill also taught Bible studies and served as a church choir director.

Melissa Huntley, age 42, died Sept. 30. She was working on her master’s degree in counseling at JBU. Huntley loved to travel.
and find new and interesting places to eat at and see.

Elijah “Bud” Hyde ’57, age 92, died July 26. Hyde served in the U.S. Navy during WWII. He earned a degree in electrical engineering from JBU. Hyde served for 42 years in Brazil with Wycliffe Bible Translators and then continued with Wycliffe in the U.S.

Dale Kelly ’53, age 87, died Aug. 20. He obtained a degree in chemistry and was a member of the Cathedral Choir. He took flying lessons at JBU, got his pilot license and flew small aircraft into his 60s. He earned an MBA from The Ohio State University and was a chemist until his retirement.

Gerald Kestner ’65, age 76, died Oct. 3. He earned a bachelor’s degree in Bible at JBU. Kestner was an entrepreneur and enjoyed a long career in sales.

Garland King ’01, age 40, died July 24. He obtained a bachelor’s degree in business administration and worked most recently as an analyst for Implus in Durham, N.C.

Linda (Cummins) Letellier ’69, age 72, died May 6. She earned a degree in nutrition & home economics from JBU where she met her husband Glen.

Steven McKinney, age 79, died Sept. 6. McKinney worked for the Civil Aeronautics Board for many years and also practiced law. After retirement, he took English literature classes at JBU to pursue his love of writing poetry and short stories.

Edward Mikel ’70, age 79, died June 6. After serving in the U.S. Navy from 1962-1964, Mikel graduated from JBU with a degree in secondary education. He worked as a carpenter for 40 years.

Kate Morrissey ’45, age 97, died Sept. 14. She studied office administration at JBU before leaving to work in the Department of Defense’s Arkansas ammunition plant during WWII. She was devoted to her family, faith and home, and loved to travel.

Boyce McQuay ’58, age 83, died Nov. 4. He received a degree in construction management at JBU where he met his wife Alice. McQuay taught in JBU’s construction management and engineering department and served as the JBU campus planner and physical plant director.

Eric Murray ’02, age 44, died Nov. 17, 2018. He worked at Calvary Chapel Bible College before coming to JBU and earning a bachelor’s degree in digital media. Murray served in the U.S. Navy for several years and was a lieutenant commander in the reserves until his death.

Mary Murray, age 94, died in April. She studied office administration at JBU.

Carol (Thomas) Nichols ’78, age 81, died Sept. 30. She earned her bachelor’s degree from JBU and a master’s from the University of Arkansas. She taught at Gentry Elementary for 18 years and also taught at JBU.

Yvonne Nicolay ’49, age 95, died July 26. She earned a bachelor’s degree in Bible from JBU, obtained her teaching credentials and taught for many years. She was an avid tennis player and prayer warrior.

Wilma Marie (Wood) Pennington ’63, age 78, died Aug. 12. Pennington graduated with a degree in business and worked at the Department of Police Administration at Indiana University and the Department of Human Services in Canton, Ohio.

Kenneth Richards ’67, age 74, died June 10. He earned a bachelor’s degree in biblical studies. After getting a Master of Divinity, he served as a pastor then as the director of Christian education for the Midwest Baptist Conference. He later served
as the director of a degree completion program in Little Rock for JBU.

**Tamra Jean (Sims) Roberts ’02**, age 59, died June 17. She received her bachelor’s degree in organizational management and worked in human resources for FedEx.


**Val Shaffer ’96**, age 63, died Oct. 14. He earned a degree in construction management from JBU. He earned numerous awards for his work in the industry.

**Sherry Rena (Thurman) Shrum ’96**, age 59, died Sept. 2. She earned a bachelor’s degree in organizational management from JBU and worked as an administrative assistant for Tyson Foods.

**Don Siemens ’71**, age 71, died Oct. 16. He was a graduate of JBU, Southeast Missouri State and Southern Illinois University. Siemens was inducted into the JBU Hall of Fame in 1983 for his cross country and track & field accomplishments. He was an education professor at JBU until 2012.

**Rosemary Steele**, age 71, died Sept 13. She attended JBU before beginning her family. Her love of children led her to become a nanny. She enjoyed gardening, reading, camping, hiking, traveling and sitting under an umbrella on any beach.

**Betty (Tichy) Thompson ’52**, age 90, died May 11. She graduated with a degree in Bible and religion from JBU where she met her husband Bill. The Thompsons were pioneer radio missionaries with SIM in Liberia for 27 years before returning to the states where Bill pastored a church. Thompson used her music and writing skills, performing and writing radio scripts.

**Bill Leon Thompson ’56**, age 88, died June 29. He served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and entered JBU in 1955. He worked as a trader, starting first with horses and cattle, and then with cars. Bill was a longtime member and Commander of VFW Post 1674 in Siloam Springs, and past president and member of the Siloam Springs Lions Club.

**Silvio Vargas ’92**, age 51, died July 13. Vargas, a Walton International Program Scholar, earned a degree in engineering. He returned to his home country of Nicaragua after graduation and continued to serve as an ambassador for JBU and the Walton program. He served on the JBU Board of Trustees from 2003–2005.

**Garrett Wilson ’02**, age 39, died June 4. He graduated from JBU with a degree in political science and received his law degree from the University of Arkansas. Wilson worked as a senior litigation team leader at Kwok Daniel Law Firm in Houston. He was named one of the “Top 40 under 40” attorneys in Texas by the National Trial Lawyers Association and a “Texas Super Lawyer Rising Star” by his peers.

**Beverly (Margetts) Windsor ’75**, age 75, died June 9. She graduated with a degree in music. Windsor was employed for a number of years as a sign language interpreter for deaf students at Liberty University and served as a volunteer deaf interpreter for Thomas Road Baptist Church and had many friends among the deaf in Central Virginia.
We use the word “community” a lot at JBU. Not just to define the group of people at JBU—students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, donors—but to somehow try to describe the unique culture that is created by the melding of all these groups in an atmosphere that places Christ at the center of a rigorous education. Ask students why they chose JBU and inevitably “the community” is one of their answers. Alumni talk about it decades later, and it’s the reason why many end up working at JBU.

If you ask me to define the JBU community, I generally have a hard time putting it into words. But there was one unmistakable attribute on display during the Centennial Celebration — servanthood.

Most people are blissfully unaware that preparations for celebrating JBU’s centennial started over four years ago. It wasn’t just about the Centennial Celebration weekend. We celebrated all year long. When students returned from the Christmas break last January, there were decals on the doors, new banners on the light poles and a Centennial kickoff chapel with special t-shirts and cupcakes. We’ve brought in special alumni speakers, hosted a gala, published two books, and we gave Regal the Eagle a makeover. You get the idea.

In addition to the work the university marketing & communications team has put in to the Centennial, I’ve had the privilege of co-chairing the centennial committee with Brad Edwards, director of alumni and parent relations, for the last year. It has been both energizing and exhausting.

It has pushed me outside of my comfort zone. My StrengthsFinder assessment will show that God gifted me with the strengths of responsibility, communication, maximizer, discipline and activator. While these are all great traits and have served me well, there is always a “shadow side.” I can be a bit of a “control enthusiast,” and I often take on so much I nearly drown in the emotional and physical weight of my responsibilities.

But the sheer volume of tasks for the yearlong centennial, and especially the weekend celebration, demanded that I trust those around me and let go of my tendency to control. In the weeks leading up to the homecoming, I often laid awake running through the details, afraid someone, somewhere, was going to drop the ball. But God kept reminding me that he’s surrounded me with an incredible community of people just as focused as I am on making the weekend amazing for our guests.

And amazing it was! Over 100 staff and students volunteered to drive golf cart shuttles, give campus tours, serve as ushers and more. When a few minor hiccups arose, staff jumped in to help, and things were fixed quickly.

When I headed home on Sunday afternoon, I was practically bursting with gratitude for the amazing people that I get to work with each day. Monday morning, the university advancement department gathered to debrief and the sentiment was the same — the way that people came together, gave selflessly of their time and energy, and served our guests left us in awe.

It was perhaps the JBU community’s finest moment.

Julie Gumm ’95 is director of University Marketing & Communications and editor of the Brown Bulletin.
Join over 300 Founder’s Circle members by committing to pray, promote and provide for JBU.

Visit jbu.edu/founderscircle to learn more and sign up today.