COME VISIT: we’ll reimburse the gas for vehicles of 4+ prospective students!

Your stories can inspire their stories.
Share yours and refer a student (or two) to JBU.

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Dear Friends of JBU,

When I was in my senior year of college, I did not have clear direction on what I might do next in the world. I knew that I loved learning and that I would like to go to graduate school, but I wasn’t sure in what discipline. I took the LSAT for law school and the GRE for graduate school in English. I did somewhat better on the LSAT, and I took that test result as God leading me to law school. It was not the most nuanced understanding of God’s calling in my life, but I am grateful that he was faithful in using my simple fleece to direct my path.

In this edition of the Brown Bulletin, you will learn the stories of several of our alumni as they have sought to work out their faith, work and life in obedience to Christ. A couple of things struck me about these stories. First, discerning one’s calling in life is not finished when you graduate from university; it is a lifelong listening to God’s voice. Second, God often uses some of the most difficult things in our lives to move us to new areas of service. As C.S. Lewis wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain.” This redirection of our lives through suffering is a part of God’s redemptive work in our world.

At JBU, we seek to give students more wisdom and tools to discern God’s calling in their lives as we continue to refine and develop educating head, heart and hand. Certainly vocation has something to do with the work that we do, but it also has to do with serving in church, raising a family, working for justice, loving a spouse, caring for a neighbor and participating in civic life. The breadth of God’s call in our lives encompasses the breadth of God’s work in this world. Helping young people recognize that breadth is one of the hallmarks of a JBU education.

Frederick Buechner wrote that “vocation is the place where our deepest gladness meets the world’s deepest need.” Carey and I are grateful that a part of God’s calling in our lives has included helping, in part, meet the deepest needs of students at JBU. We know that it has brought us great gladness.

Godspeed,

Dr. Charles W. Pollard
President, John Brown University

The Breadth of God’s Call

JBU Helps Students Discover Vocational Calling
Up until my graduation from JBU, I always had a “next step” — elementary school, then middle school, then high school and then college. But after graduation, I was burdened with the possibilities of what my life could look like.

I made a five-year plan that didn’t seem the least bit realistic. I knew where I saw myself in 10 years, but I didn’t know how to get there. I knew I needed a job but didn’t know what. I thought about graduate school but didn’t know what to major in.

As I thought about God’s calling for my life and how blessed I am to have the ability to choose, I was convicted by two truths – God’s calling is meant to serve others for his glory, and God’s calling is to be present in what he has for us today. I realized that I needed to trust God in the opportunity he had already given me, which was to become a staff member at JBU.

In this issue, you’ll read stories of JBU alumni who made U-turns, who questioned God when they reached a crossroad, who were called to an assignment that they didn’t expect and who knew what their calling was from the beginning.

But in each of their stories, you’ll find that God used them as vessels to serve others and give glory and honor to who he is.

As you read, we hope you’ll ponder, “What is my calling?”

Tarah Thomas ‘16
Managing Editor, Brown Bulletin

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PRESIDENT
Dr. Chip Pollard

VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT
Dr. Jim Krall

EDITOR AND DIRECTOR OF UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS
Julie Gumm ’95

MANAGING EDITOR
Tarah Thomas ’16

COVER DESIGN
Kelly Saunders ’12

LAYOUT DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION
Gabrielle Marcy ’17, Kelly Saunders ’12

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Coby Dolloff ’21, Gabrielle Marcy ’17, Valerie McArthur ’18, Zeke Willcox ’18

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Logan Craine ’19, Rachel Hustedde ’20, Kelly Saunders ’12, Spencer Theobald ’21, Kaitlyn Thompson ’15

SUPPORT
Tracy Balzer ’03, Markit Schwartz Fain ’05, Laura Merwin ’20, Sherry Miller ’75, Sonya Price, Nicholas Robinson

COPY EDITING
Paul T. Semones ’99, Andy Klungland ’97, Jay Nickel

Submit news items, story ideas, letters and corrections to jgumm@jbu.edu or via U.S. Postal Service to:
Brown Bulletin
2000 W. University St.
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

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Campus News

The 50th Anniversary of the Tet Offensive Commemorated

JBU commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Tet Offensive, the military campaign that became a turning point in the Vietnam War, with an event titled “The Vietnam War & the Men Who Fought It.”

Broadcast on C-SPAN, the evening featured personal stories from three Vietnam combat veterans and a presentation from retired Arkansas Army National Guard Col. Anita Deason, military affairs liaison for U.S. Sen. John Boozman, R-Ark. View the broadcast at http://on.jbu.edu/2p1zYQs.

Construction Management Students Place at Regional Competitions

JBU construction management students received second place in the commercial building category at the Associated Schools of Construction Region 5 annual competition, where they developed a construction project proposal.

JBU construction management students also placed third at the 7th Annual Disaster Shelter Design Competition, sponsored by Samaritan’s Purse International and hosted on JBU’s Siloam Springs campus.

Graduate School Launches New Master of Science Programs

The Graduate School of John Brown University, in affiliation with the Department of Business, will launch two online Master of Science programs this fall.

The M.S. in Design Thinking & Innovation will help students learn techniques, gain experience and develop real-world projects using design thinking methodologies to implement new and creative solutions to positively impact the world around them.

JBU construction management students received second place in the commercial building category at the Associated Schools of Construction Region 5 annual competition, where they developed a construction project proposal.

JBU construction management students also placed third at the 7th Annual Disaster Shelter Design Competition, sponsored by Samaritan’s Purse International and hosted on JBU’s Siloam Springs campus.

The M.S. in Outdoor Program Management will equip students with the education, leadership skills and training in therapeutic treatment to advance their careers in the outdoor industry for roles such as executive director or site manager.

The M.S. in Design Thinking & Innovation will help students learn techniques, gain experience and develop real-world projects using design thinking methodologies to implement new and creative solutions to positively impact the world around them.

Alpha Eta Omega Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi Receives Rising Star Award

The Department of Teacher Education’s Alpha Eta Omega Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi received the Rising Star Award at the 51st Biennial Convocation in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The award is given to new chapters that demonstrate exceptional leadership and programming within their first two years.

JBU’s chapter was the only chapter in the U.S. and the only collegiate chapter to receive the award. Curtis Cunningham, assistant professor of teacher education, senior Morgan Carlson and Lucy Hubbard ’17 received the award on JBU’s behalf.

Students Receive Honorable Mention for Best MAL Delegation

At the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations’ Model Arab League (MAL), a delegation of eight JBU students received honorable mention for Best Delegation, with four students being awarded honorable mention for their work on the economic and social affairs councils.

MAL allows students to engage in diplomacy and negotiation on complicated questions, similar to the Model UN. Students learn how to prepare resolutions and engage in debate, all under parliamentary procedure.

Daugherty Named 2017-18 NAIA Under Armour Athletics Director of the Year

Director of Athletics Robyn Daugherty was named the 2017-18 NAIA Under Armour Athletics Director of the Year by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics.

Since Daugherty became director of athletics in 2006, 152 JBU student-athletes have been named Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athletes, an honor which recognizes juniors and seniors who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher. Daugherty
will accept her award at NACDA’s 53rd Annual Convention in Washington, D.C., on Friday, June 29 (more details on page 10).

Society of Women Engineers Hosts Second Annual Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day

Over 100 third to fifth-grade girls attended this year’s Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day, hosted by the JBU collegiate section of the Society of Women Engineers.

The annual event inspires and encourages girls to pursue engineering by introducing them to engineering-related activities and connecting them to other SWE regional members. Participants learn and apply science, technology, engineering and math concepts through hands-on activities.

Threefold Advocate Students Win Awards

The staff of the Threefold Advocate, JBU’s student newspaper, received seven honors from the Arkansas College Media Association. First-place awards went to Noah Franz for designer of the year and news writing and to Sam Bailey for reporter of the year. Second-place awards were given to Sam Bailey in feature writing, Catherine Nolte in personality profile and Ashley Burger for photographer of the year. KJ Roh received third place in newspaper editor of the year. Lead Editor Samuel Cross-Meredith also won the Evangelical Press Association’s Award of Excellence for student writer of the year.

Siloam Springs Fourth-Graders Participated in JBU Day of Discovery

The Division of Engineering & Construction Management, the Division of Natural Sciences and the Department of Teacher Education hosted all the fourth-grade students from Siloam Springs Public Schools for “A Day of Discovery.”

Almost 400 students were able to participate in hands-on demonstrations in STEM-related fields while interacting with students majoring in these and other fields as well as professors.

Psychology Professor Receives Fulbright U.S. Scholar Grant

Dr. Kevin Simpson, department chair and professor of psychology, has been selected to receive a 2018-19 Fulbright U.S. Scholar Grant from the U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Simpson will teach two courses – social psychology of the Holocaust and sport and exercise psychology – at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, for a semester beginning February 2019.

Song Wins Faculty Excellence Award

Dr. Ted Song, assistant professor of engineering, received the 2018 JBU Faculty Excellence Award.

The award honors faculty who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarship, service and spiritual modeling; positively impacted students, colleagues and the JBU community; and contributed substantially to the goals and mission of JBU.

The selection is based on faculty accomplishment data as well as nomination letters which mentioned Song’s exemplary classroom instruction, care and encouragement of others as well as leadership in campus clubs, Bible studies and his church.

Kennedy Wins Golden Eagle Award

Melanie Kennedy, assistant director of human resources, was named the 2018 Golden Eagle Excellence in Service Award winner at JBU’s Employee Recognition Banquet on April 27. This award, which has been given annually since 1990, was created to recognize a staff member who has given exceptional service to the JBU community in the past year.
Joe Walenciak ’81 said he would never do two things – teach and travel. Walenciak has now taught and mentored thousands of undergraduate and graduate students at JBU for 36 years. He supports and oversees faculty and staff as the dean of the Soderquist College of Business. He has also traveled to 25 countries, taken dozens of groups on short-term mission trips and helped implement water purification systems in Guatemala. Spreading the love of Christ to all nations and being available to God is the heart of his service.
WHAT LIFE LESSONS SHAPED YOUR VALUES IN HOW YOU INTERACT WITH YOUR STUDENTS?

1. In my first class, I started with 45 students and ended with 38. Other professors thought that I must’ve done something wrong because I should’ve ended up with 22. But my goal was for my students to succeed. You should measure my success not by how many students I drive away but by how many students succeed in my class.

2. I was in two doctoral classes when I learned my father passed away. I called my two instructors. One said to take the time I needed, and the other said be in his class tomorrow or drop the program. When the first instructor saw me the next morning and heard what my second professor said, he told me, “School’s important, but this is life. There are times when you need to stop school and deal with life.” I’ve heard myself say that over the years. I realized that God was using that moment to ask me which instructor I would be.

3. I read the story of the shepherd who had 100 sheep. Ninety-nine did what they were supposed to do, and one didn’t. Jesus said put extra time to the one. I thought this concept could be applied to Christian higher education. I need to put the extra effort into the one student who might be struggling or not as engaged as the others.

WHAT ARE THE THREE PRINCIPLES YOU WANT TO INSTILL IN STUDENTS?

1. Be available and open to what their future could look like, instead of demanding God to adhere to their plan.

2. Sometimes you find your greatest joy in the things that start out as your greatest fear.

3. Be a person of faith first, and what you are in your vocation second.

WHAT EXPERIENCES HINTED TO YOU THAT TEACHING WAS YOUR CALLING?

1. My first-grade teacher would tell my mother, “Joe’s going to be a teacher someday because he finishes his work quickly, gets up and walks around the room to help other students.”

2. I was a graduate student at the University of Arkansas. They were in need of professors and asked, “Do you want to teach a class?” I opened my mouth to say “no,” and I heard the word “yes” come out. I thought, “Where did that come up?”

3. When I saw students understand and start to get the concepts, something lit up inside of me. I began to really enjoy that. It was a surprise because I never thought I would.

AS A SENIOR FACULTY MEMBER, HOW DO YOU VIEW YOUR ROLE AS AN ADMINISTRATOR?

1. The younger faculty are in their golden years of teaching like I once was. Now, my golden years are investing in them, giving them my resources and encouragement and removing their obstacles so that they can stay here a lot longer than I will.

2. My goal is to continue to embrace change, not resist it.

3. You have to embrace a desire for relevance and understand that the future is not going to look like the past. The values have to stay there, but we have to embrace a relevant future and work hard toward it.

HOW HAS YOUR WORK IMPACTED YOUR FAITH?

1. I’ve met new people from all over the world.

2. I’ve been challenged in how I live and communicate the Christian worldview from the perspective of creation, fall and redemption.

3. I have an understanding that God has Christians all over the world who are connected by the heart and core of the Christian faith, which is who Jesus and God are.

WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT BRING YOU JOY?


2. Connecting with people, connecting people with each other and building collections of people.

3. Seeing students learn, grow, succeed and fulfill their goals.
STRESS RELIEVER: JBU students know that nothing helps de-stress from the semester better than some quality time petting an alpaca or racing through an inflatable obstacle course. In an annual tradition, the Student Events and Activities office hosted Safari on the Quad the week before final exams. Wild Wilderness Drive Through Safari Inc. brought alpacas, turtles, goats and snakes to campus to visit with the students while they ate corn dogs, snow cones and ice cream.
This spring, Robyn Daugherty ’85 was named the 2017-18 NAIA Under Armour Athletics Director of the Year by The National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics. Since becoming the director of athletics in 2006, Daugherty has played a major role in advancing JBU’s athletic program.

Under Daugherty’s leadership, four JBU teams have earned 11 trips to national tournaments in their respective sports. One men’s cross country student-athlete has appeared in three national tournaments.

JBU athletics has been recognized as a Champions of Character Five-Star Institution, earning either a gold or silver-level nomination by the NAIA each of the 16 years the initiative has been awarded.

In addition, 152 JBU student-athletes have been named Daktronics-NAIA Scholar-Athletes, an honor which recognizes juniors and seniors who have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Daugherty has also overseen the construction of JBU’s $9.5 million Bill George Arena, which serves as a playing venue for volleyball and men’s and women’s basketball, and the $5 million renovation of the Walton Lifetime Health Complex, a fitness center which encourages both JBU and the local community to engage in healthy lifestyles.

In 2011, she was named the Sooner Athletic Conference Athletic Director of the Year.

Much of Daugherty’s success as an athletic director can be attributed to her experience as a JBU student-athlete and a JBU coach.

Daugherty was a member of the women’s volleyball team from 1982-85, before graduating with a bachelor’s degree in education. She then coached JBU’s volleyball program from 1990 to 2010 before retiring from coaching to focus full time on her role as athletic director.


“Robyn, with the knowledge and understanding as a student, a coach and now an administrator, is able to build relationships and bridge barriers between them all to accomplish the best for JBU athletics,” Dr. Steve Beers, JBU vice president of student development, said. “She is characterized by integrity and fairness for all.”

For 20 years, the ADOY program has recognized intercollegiate athletic directors who have shown significant contributions and administrative excellence at their institution over the course of the previous year by annually honoring 28 athletic directors, four from each of the seven divisions.

Daugherty will accept her award during the James J. Corbett Awards Luncheon at NACDA’s 53rd Annual Convention at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Washington, D.C., on June 29.
NAIA Athletics

Men’s soccer won five straight victories, including against No. 3 MidAmerica Nazarene University and No. 1 Oklahoma Wesleyan University (OKWU). The win at OKWU marked the first time in program history JBU had knocked off an NAIA No. 1 squad. Junior Kelvin Omondi, junior Ryan Williams and senior Adam Holt were named All-Conference First Team selections. 01

Women’s soccer made program history with the second-straight season accumulating 18 victories. The team, with a 13-game winning streak, claimed its fifth-straight Sooner Athletic Conference championship game appearance but was upended in the SAC tournament title game in overtime. The loss snapped JBU’s 32-game unbeaten streak at Alumni Field. Head coach Kathleen Paulsen earned her first-ever SAC Coach of the Year accolade. 06

Women’s volleyball was unbeatable inside Bill George Arena, posting a perfect 10-0 mark at home. Sophomore Jessica Meyer and senior Alyssa Arnold earned All-Conference First Team selections and sophomore Carly McKinney and senior Beth Brankle earned Second Team honors. 05

Junior Josh Uzelac helped the Golden Eagles to a fourth-place finish at the SAC Cross Country Championships with a time of 26:18 in the 8K run, earning him his third-consecutive All-Conference accolade and a spot at the NAIA National Championships. 03

Junior Baily Cameron became the women’s basketball program’s 18th 1,000-point scorer and earned an NAIA All-American Third Team selection, a Women’s Basketball Coaches Association First Team selection and Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC) First Team selection. The Golden Eagles fell to the SAC regular-season champions, the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, in the SAC tournament semifinals. 02

Club Sports

The women’s rugby team, in its second year of competitive play, won regionals by defeating Kansas State University at the USA Rugby Spring College Playoffs Women’s Division II Round of 16. The team placed in the top 12 at the Division II Spring College Playoffs Women’s Division II National Championships. 04
**Advocate for the Disadvantaged**

**COMMUNICATION MAJOR RAISES AWARENESS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY**

Freshman Karina Jansma grew up on the banks of the Amazon River in Manaus, Brazil. With missionary parents and a 14-member family, Jansma was used to living without vast amounts of money. But attending college to study communication and photography was Jansma’s lifelong dream.

“I believe pictures can communicate truth in a very powerful way,” Jansma said. “I have been greatly impacted by the photographs that I have seen throughout my life and the stories that accompany them. I hope my photography can be a way to spread knowledge about suffering people’s situations. The message in my pictures will allow people to see into the perspectives of others who are perhaps very different from themselves.”

But as Jansma began to hear back from colleges to which she had applied, she was nervous her dream wouldn’t come true. The financial aid packages simply didn’t provide what she needed.

“I remember calling out to God in frustration and doubt — maybe I would be unable to afford going to school,” Jansma said.

When Jansma received her JBU financial aid award letter, she was excited to realize that a quality education at JBU was within her reach. She even received an art scholarship after submitting an application and a portfolio of her photographs.

Jansma plans to use her education to serve God overseas, teaching English and advocating for hurting people through her writing and photography.

Jansma’s dreams wouldn’t be possible without the opportunity to attend JBU and without the generosity of scholarship donors.

“I would not be where I am today, pursuing my educational calling at JBU, without the extreme generosity of countless people,” Jansma said. “Even though I am only a freshman, John Brown University has already done an exceptional job of empowering me with the means necessary to serve God’s kingdom in the richest and fullest way imaginable.”

For information on how you can impact JBU students through scholarships, email Lanya Carson at lcarson@jbu.edu or visit www.jbu.edu/giving/scholarship/.
Community of Prayer

Newsletter Promotes Petition and Praise

Prayer is an important part of the JBU community. Many groups on campus such as Admissions, Student Life, The Office of Christian Formation, Finance and Administration, Facilities, Advancement, the student phone-athon callers, faculty and the president's cabinet have a regular time devoted to prayer. In addition, we pray at meetings, in chapel, in small groups, individually and one-on-one.

We pray for students, faculty and staff, alumni and friends and prospective students; both for needs we are aware of and for unspoken needs. We try and practice Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

I have been told by alumni and friends that they regularly pray for students and the JBU community, which is a huge encouragement and gift.

The alumni board has sought to encourage prayer with an effort led by Mary Kline ’70. Kline visits with members of the JBU community and asks them for prayer requests. The alumni board lifts up these needs along with other alumni prayer needs. She also takes prayer walks around campus.

When we share with alumni or parents about how they can help the university, we often ask them to pray, promote and provide. Our Founder’s Circle is a group of about 300 alumni and friends who have made a regular commitment to pray, promote and provide for JBU.

Prayer is a very important and foundational part of JBU. It is incredibly special to be part of a community where prayer is included in every facet of our lives; where we can invite God to work in and through us as we deal with hardships; a community that also rejoices with us and joins us in praising God as we see his hand at work.

We have recently looked at our prayer network to see if we can be better at sharing prayer needs with the broader community.

For several years, we have had a prayer email newsletter, but we have not done much to promote its use. We realized that we are missing out on your involvement in covering the JBU community in prayer. If you’d like to join this group, please visit www.jbu.edu/subscriptions/ and subscribe to the Prayer Newsletter.

If you have a prayer request that you would like to submit to the newsletter, fill out the form at www.jbu.edu/prayernewsletter/. If you have a request, but you do not want it included in the prayer newsletter, mark the appropriate spot, and your request will be prayed for by smaller group of prayer warriors inside our community.

We believe that prayer has incredible power, especially when we join together to lift up our requests and praises to the Lord. Thank you for your prayers for the JBU community. We will try and keep you better informed of praises and needs in the future.

Jim Krall is the vice president for university advancement.
Andrea (Comfort) Martinez ’04 always had a heart for people from other cultures. She assumed that fitting her passion into a career meant becoming a missionary.

But as a junior, one JBU chapel changed everything. The speakers were a group of human rights lawyers from International Justice Mission (IJM), a global organization that protects the poor from violence throughout the developing world.

“I knew there was poverty in the world, but I didn’t know there was so much injustice in the world,” Martinez said.

Martinez returned to her dorm in tears and felt like she could hear the voices and screams of enslaved young girls ringing in her head. It was then that she found her true vocational calling as a human rights lawyer and began to set her course for law school.
Like Martinez, it is not uncommon for students to change their career path during college. According to Inside Higher Education, almost one-third of college students change their major at least once in the pursuit of a successful career that suits their skills and interest. Often that change happens as students begin to discover their calling, a process that John Brown University is now engaging in with students from the very start of their college experience.

In 2016, JBU was awarded a $50,000 Program Development Grant by the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE).

The grant funded a three-tier initiative to enhance the research, development and implementation of vocational-exploration programs. A committee of JBU community members collaborated to establish a common language and framework for student vocational exploration, as well as training materials and resources for faculty and staff advisers, student club leaders, resident assistants, student support services, retention program staff and student ministry leaders.

“Students sometimes think of a calling as having a ‘burning bush moment’ where God directly points them in a career direction,” said Steve Beers, vice president of student development. “But we want them to understand that while that does sometimes happen, usually finding your calling is a matter of determining how they can use their God-given giftedness, interests and passions to meet a human need.”

Now that conversation and reflection begins almost the moment students arrive on campus.

Beginning with the freshman Gateway Seminar course, JBU students begin to explore answers to three questions:

1. **WHO AM I?**
   WHAT ARE MY TALENTS; WHAT LIFE EVENTS HAVE SHAPED WHO I AM TODAY?

2. **WHO AM I DOING LIFE WITH?**
   WHO CELEBRATES MY SUCCESSES; WHO SUPPORTS ME IN TROUBLE; WHO SHARES GODLY WISDOM?

3. **WHAT AM I TO DO WITH MY LIFE?**
   WHAT FILLS ME WITH DELIGHT; WHAT MAKES ME WEEP WITH COMPASSION; WHERE DO I SEE JESUS WALKING AROUND IN THE WORLD?

Those themes continue as they meet with their advisers, live in campus housing and participate in student ministries.

In March 2018, JBU began what will be an annual focused month of campus-wide programming, called Vocaré, designed to help the community understand their vocation and calling. It included men’s and women’s retreats, seminars for various groups and vocation-focused chapels.

For Andrea Martinez, her 2003 JBU chapel experience brought clarity to her desire to help people from other countries. “I didn’t know anything about being a lawyer,” Martinez admitted. However, what she didn’t know she learned. She began studying for the law school entrance exam that summer and spent her senior year applying to law schools.

After getting her law degree from American University in 2007, Martinez spent nine months in Guatemala working with IJM, assisting Guatemalan attorneys as they prosecuted child sex offenders. When she returned to the United States, she clerked for a federal judge in Washington, D.C., while praying about how she could use her passion in the U.S. where she was licensed to practice law.

During the yearlong clerkship, Martinez married Jorge Martinez ’03, a JBU
Walton International Scholarship Program alumnus from Honduras. While helping process her new husband’s green card application, Martinez realized how difficult the immigration process was. Other people then started asking her for help with their applications.

Martinez recognized that she needed to broaden what she thought of as “human rights.” Very quickly she realized that with her experiences and her fluency in Spanish, practicing immigration law was a natural fit. “The practice of law is a holy calling,” Martinez explained and said her calling is continually reaffirmed, especially when defending clients from deportation. “Most of the time they are seeking asylum. I have a lot of clients who are fleeing domestic violence, especially in Latin America,” Martinez said. “We are helping protect people from potentially being killed if they return to their home country. Every time we win it feels like I saved a life.”

Martinez confirmed that there is a lot of burnout in the field and attributes it to the high stakes and the ever-changing immigration laws. Because immigration courts are run by the executive branch of the government, rules change all the time as leadership changes. Those that work in the field often refer to immigration law as “death penalty consequences with traffic-court rules.”

After working with another firm for seven years, Martinez opened her own practice in Kansas City, Missouri, in 2016, where on most mornings her team gathers to pray for their clients and the country’s leaders. “My faith is stronger because I’ve been forced to depend on it,” she said. “Even when we lose, we have to depend on God to protect our clients. The weight seems heavy, but Jesus loves them more than I do.”

Martinez feels like the key to finding your calling is to find something you’re passionate about and where you can serve other people. “I was a really good arguer,” she said. “Know your gifts and do something within your gift mix.”

Books
• “Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation” by William Placher
• “The Call” by Os Guinness
• “The Practice of the Presence of God” by Brother Lawrence
• “In the Name of Jesus” by Henry Nouwen
• “Let Your Life Speak” by Parker Palmer
• “God Is My Coach” by Larry Julian
• “Every Good Endeavor” by Timothy Keller
• “The Modern Enneagram: Discover Who You Are and Who You Can Be” by Kacie Berghoef
• “Called: What Happens After Saying Yes to God” by Casey Cole
• “Everyday Missions: How Ordinary People Can Change the World” by Leroy Barber and Chris Seay
• “God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life” by Gene Edward Veith Jr.
• “The Gospel Goes to Work: God’s Big Canvas of Calling and Renewal” by Stephen R. Graves
• “Calling All Years Good: Christian Vocation throughout Life’s Season” by Kathleen A. Cahalan and Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore

Articles
• “Can Non-Believers See God Through the Biblical Meaning of Work?” by Hugh Whelchel - Institute for Faith, Work & Economics
• “Can Meaningful Work Truly Be Found?” by Anna Arnold - Institute for Faith, Work & Economics

Videos
• Discovering God’s World Through Your Eyes (Gabe Lyons - WorkMatters.org)
• Know God. Know Your Calling (Gabe Lyons - WorkMatters.org)
• Calling Versus Narcissism (Jo Saxton - QIdeas.org)

Online Resources
• PraxisLabs.org
• The Institute for Faith, Work & Economics (tifwe.org)
• Work Matters (workmatters.org)
• The Truth Project (thetruthproject.org)
• Equipping Vocational Discovery Resources (fteleaders.org)

Visit jbu.edu/vocation-calling for links to the above articles and videos.
BY VALERIE McARTHUR ’18

With nine years experience as a Little Rock firefighter, Marvin Benton thought he would be a firefighter his whole life. But in 1993, everything changed when he was trapped by burning debris during a search and rescue mission and almost lost his life. Benton sustained third-degree burns on nearly 40 percent of his body. He endured surgeries and skin grafting to transplant healthy skin from one part of his body to the injured section. It took two years to recover from the physical and emotional injuries, and several years after to rediscover his purpose.

“It was pretty devastating to realize I would never be a firefighter again,” Benton said.

Since the injury, Benton has become a college graduate, author, motivational speaker and received a Medal of Valor.

“For my career to end like it did, you have to feel like it was all in God’s hands for me to be a firefighter,” Benton said. “For a while after I got hurt I wondered ‘why me?’ I finally realized ‘why not me?’ Maybe other people couldn’t handle it the way I did.”

It took Benton several years to come to peace with the accident, as he desperately wanted to stay in uniform. To keep that dream alive, Benton’s first job after the accident was as a fire prevention educator, teaching fire safety to children and adults. But it was difficult, so he moved on to another role with the City of Little Rock in 1999.

“It was hard to see the truck go out and have to stay behind,” Benton said.

Benton went back to school and received his bachelor’s degree in organizational management from JBU Online in 2001. This degree not only helped him get his position as assistant solid waste collection supervisor, a position he held for 11 years, but it also showed his then high-school-aged daughters the value of receiving a college education.

Benton has continued working for the City of Little Rock in various capacities and currently serves as a parking enforcement coordinator. He says the job still enables him to work for the betterment of people’s lives. This attitude of service and encouragement has been the constant thread through all of Benton’s positions.

“(As a firefighter) you had to be positive while you were working, so you could give people hope and get them out of the situation,” Benton said.

For many years Benton has also spent time sharing his story at fire academies, universities, government organizations and churches across Central Arkansas. While not his full-time job, Benton enjoys telling his story as long as people want to listen.

In 2016, Benton, along with his wife Valerie, wrote the memoir “Unfallen Hero,” to tell Benton’s story and to challenge readers to live with the provocative boldness of an unfallen hero. The book follows Benton’s life from childhood to the years following the accident and explores many of the trials and tribulations he experienced, as well as his faith in God.

Benton and Valerie wrote “Unfallen Hero” mostly during family vacations, with Benton talking and Valerie writing on her computer as they traveled.

“Some of it brought back bad memories,” Benton said, “We had to recreate the fire, talk about the hurt and trying to stay on the job... those parts were hard.”

However, Valerie believes that God wanted them to write the book to encourage others.

“Everyone who’s read the book, has felt inspired,” she said. “It’s a great testimony about not giving up and to keep on believing.”

When Benton speaks to groups, he encourages people to never give up, to go for their dreams and most of all, to pray for God’s salvation no matter the situation.

“When I was trapped, I thought I was going to die in the fire. Then I prayed to God and knew I was going to be okay,” he said. Benton believes that without that prayer he would have died within five minutes.

Prayer was also pivotal in his recovery as friends and family stopped by the hospital and prayed for his health.

In 2016, the Little Rock Fire Department established the Marvin Benton Hero Award in honor of Benton’s resilience and perseverance. The award is given annually, beginning in 2017, to a firefighter who has demonstrated bravery in the line of duty.

Benton is truly appreciative of this honor, and the award has served to reinforce Benton’s newfound purpose to motivate others.

“Bad things happen to good people,” he said. “You can’t just give up because things happen.”
UNFALLEN HERO

After barely escaping death, one firefighter struggles through significant injury and loss to hold on to his old identity while embracing a new life-purpose.

Marvin L. Benton
with Valerie E. Benton
Heidi Franz grew up in a family of educators and always knew she wanted to be a teacher, not because of pressure from her family, but because she knew it was God’s calling. “I was being called to be a missionary to kids,” Franz said.

After graduating from JBU in 1999 with a bachelor’s degree in music education, Franz taught at a private and a public school for five years. However, when she and her husband found out they were expecting their first child, she knew God was calling her to shift her focus to raising her own children.

Little did she know, her new focus would eventually lead her to develop a Christ-centered curriculum and a website, ABCJesusLovesMe.com, that would influence families and children in over 70 countries.

It started when she began looking into preschool curricula for her own children. Franz quickly realized that there were few options online that were user-friendly, and those that were available were significantly overpriced.

“As an educator, I knew the ‘requirements’ for kindergarten – the items they want all 5-year-olds to know at kindergarten screening time,” Franz said. “And because we chose not to send our children to a formal preschool, I knew the responsibility for readiness fell into my hands.”

She knew she couldn’t be the only mom looking for a simple curriculum that allowed a child to still be a child. “With my husband’s nudging, I felt led to create a curriculum that would give our children a solid foundation,” Franz said. “So, I began developing my own using my education background, classroom experience and life with our children.”

Franz’s Bible-based curricula considers preparation time, children’s age and their attention spans to help parents implement learning methods that can be incorporated into their children’s daily routine.

Since the launch of ABCJesusLovesMe in April 2008 with two basic curricula, Franz has expanded the offerings to include five comprehensive curricula (for children ages 1-5), each with supplemental workbooks, printable sheets and free options for families, as well as licenses available for churches, preschools and businesses.

THE MISSION OF ABCJESUSLOVESME IS TO HELP ADULTS BE INTENTIONAL WITH THE CHILDREN IN THEIR LIVES.

In addition, Franz provides content through her blog, Our Out-of-Sync Life, the ABCJesusLovesMe newsletter, live broadcasts, a YouTube channel and a 9,000-member Facebook group.

This May, Franz released the first of several 52-week Bible curricula specifically written for churches and preschools, and focused on the Old Testament.

Even with her educational background, it was Franz’s experience parenting her four children that had the biggest impact on ABCJesusLovesMe.

Franz’s first son was born with multiple heart defects and underwent open-heart surgery at 6 days old. While his heart has recovered greatly, his traumatic start resulted in unexpected difficulties and delays in his development. Her son has attended therapy for 10 years to help with his sensory, language and processing difficulties. Additionally, Franz’s middle son was diagnosed with severe attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

“Living through these challenges enabled me to come alongside parents in similar situations and provide resources to help,” Franz said.

“The mission of ABCJesusLovesMe is to help adults be intentional with the children in their lives,” Franz said. “This intentionality comes from Deuteronomy 6:7 where we are commanded to impress on children who God is and what God has done. In order to do this, I continually encourage and provide resources for adults to have a growing personal relationship with God. You have to know God before you can fully impress him upon children.”

Franz said her faith has been the anchor as the ministry of ABCJesusLovesMe has grown the past 10 years.

“My daily walk with God drives the entire ABCJesusLovesMe ministry,” Franz said. “Without plugging into God through my daily quiet time, I would not be able to do the things that I am untrained to do like website coding, encouraging and directing parents who ask for guidance and writing curriculum and articles.”

While it might have seemed that stepping out of the classroom would limit Franz’s influence, her obedience to God’s call on her life led to something much richer and even more influential, impacting thousands of families and children worldwide.
Growing More than Coffee Beans

BY ZEKE WILLCOX ’18

In the spring of 1990, Alfonso Mendez was unsure of his next steps. He had just graduated from JBU with a degree in business and a minor in economics. As a student in one of the first classes of the Walton International Scholarship Program (WISP), Mendez played soccer, participated in the Student Government Association and was elected as J. Alvin president, a role in which he created events and activities for the residents of the dorm. In the classroom, Mendez worked diligently, grateful for the opportunity to study and learn.

But upon return to his home in Costa Rica, a condition of participation in the WISP, he struggled to find work and purpose. He found only dead ends, as most companies had never heard of JBU or the Walton program.

When at last Mendez stumbled across a position with a green coffee roaster called Interamericana de Exportaciones and reluctantly started work, he didn’t realize he’d begun a lifelong journey to success.

“When I got back from JBU, it was kind of an accident, because the only job I could find was at a coffee roaster here in Costa Rica,” Mendez said, before he quickly changed his mind. “I wouldn’t say it was an accident, because I believe God had a path for me. But if you would have asked me if I was going to be working in the coffee industry, I would have probably said no.”

Interamericana de Exportaciones was owned by the Freytags, a German family who owned several coffee roasters and mills in San Jose, Costa Rica.

Mendez began work as an assistant in the export department, shipping coffee to various clients. The Freytags encouraged Mendez to pursue his work with enthusiasm, so he worked persistently and steadily climbed his way up the ranks of the company.

“I didn’t know anything about coffee, so they really pushed me to learn about the coffee industry,” Mendez said.

By his third year at Interamericana de Exportaciones, he had moved from the export department to a marketing manager position to the role of marketing director and then finally to general manager of the roaster.

In 2000, the Freytags moved back to Germany and wanted to sell their coffee businesses. They offered Mendez a deal to manage part of the company.

“Part of the negotiation with them was to keep the company, Interamericana de Exportaciones, and keep supplying their customer base with green coffee from Costa Rica,” Mendez said. “We negotiated a deal, and that’s how I started working with Interamericana as an owner, not an employee.”

Interamericana exports commercialized green coffee out of Costa Rica to coffee markets in the U.S., Europe and Japan and also sells several of its coffee brands to 90-100 clients, including Walmart and several prominent Japanese and European companies.

Mendez is also now the owner of Interam Coffee Inc. in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which provides roasted coffee for clients in the U.S. and in Asia.

“The coffee industry impacts a lot of communities, a lot of people,” Mendez said. “The economic impact of a coffee bean, of a cup of coffee, is huge for most cities, towns and small communities.”

Mendez, a member of the JBU Board of Trustees since 2014, believes his four years at JBU prepared him for all the challenges and successes he faces today as a business owner. Whether through strenuous training on the soccer field or diligent work in the classroom, Mendez said JBU equipped him in every way possible: physically, mentally, academically and spiritually.

“I’m forever thankful to JBU for that,” he said gratefully. “I really think God prepared me for what was coming – working through faith, learning about grace and love with other people.”

For Mendez, faith in God and his work in the coffee industry are similar as both involve challenges, dependability, hard work and love.

“It’s everything. You cannot separate faith from vocation,” Mendez said. “There is a right way to do things and a wrong way to do things. And the right way is based on the words God says, what the Bible says.”

Most of all, Mendez matured spiritually and became reliant upon God for provision.

“The older I get, my business and money become less and less important in my life,” Mendez said. “For a while, the business was my world, and I learned to understand that it’s not my world. There are other things that are more important like health, family, friends and faith.”
Laura was diagnosed with leukemia at age 14. Her experience with cancer set her on a course to become a nurse so that she could care and serve others just like her nurses did for her.

What was your reaction when you were told you had leukemia?
I was surprised. It seemed that cancer was something that happened to other people. I didn’t feel ready for what was ahead of me, yet I knew that God was going to carry me every step of the way.

What was your journey like from diagnosis to treatment?
The morning after my diagnosis, I received a port-a-cath to aid in sending fluids (chemotherapy, medication, I.V. fluids, etc.) through my body. I was moved to the pediatric oncology floor and from that moment, I knew I was in great care. My nurses immediately welcomed me and did their best to encourage me, alleviate my fears and speak truth about my situation. I received my first chemotherapy and was told that I would be in remission within 28 days.

When the 28th day came, I was not in remission. I received another dose of chemotherapy with the same promise of remission. Yet, again, I was disappointed and was called to trust the Lord with my life. After two more unsuccessful rounds of chemo, I was told that the best route of care was to have a bone marrow transplant, which meant radiation and high doses of chemotherapy to kill off my blood stem cells. Then, I could receive new blood stem cells, and they could produce healthy blood cells. This was the hardest part of my treatment. However, my nurses shined through my pain, hardship and weakness. Their care — not only physically but emotionally and spiritually — was one of the greatest support systems, along with my family and the host of people praying for me. I was in the hospital for about 30 days. On Aug. 30, 2013, I left the hospital to go home in full remission. It was a very sweet and sad goodbye because of the incredible relationships I had built with my nurses. With the transplant taking and working, I recovered throughout the next year, slowly building strength and attending high school. I was able to be involved in a high school pre-nursing program and graduate with my class. In August, I will be declared officially cancer-free, because this is the fifth year that I have remained in remission.

How did your experience with cancer influence what you decided to study at JBU?
Though awful, my experience was actually what made me want to pursue nursing. The nurses that were a part of my life every single day were the highlight of my stay in the hospital. They became my close friends and a huge support system. Their understanding of my situation and care led me to where I am today — pursuing nursing with deep aspirations to work in pediatric oncology.

What is God’s calling in your life?
I believe in general, God’s calling on my life is to care for and serve others. Nursing integrates both together, and I believe God has called me to nursing because of my experience. There is a specific perspective gained when one is a patient. There is nothing better for me to do but share that with others. Nursing is an incredible field that allows for individuals to exemplify our Lord and share the gospel through actions and care, rather than just words. It provides the opportunity to be with people at their absolute worst moments and still show the love and care that Jesus exemplified. I believe it is the ultimate call that God has not only placed on my life but on everyone who believes in him.
What made you decide to study psychology and intercultural studies?

The road I have taken has been one with many twists, turns and roundabouts. Throughout my life, I have had a fascination with animals—especially ocean life. For years, I was absolutely set on working in the animal care/training field. I completed workshops, talked with many different experts in the field and spent three summers volunteering at my local zoo for experience. As I had been praying about where to go to school, JBU became a very clear answer. While praying about my major, God began speaking to me, and I didn’t like his answer very much. When I told God that I wanted my job to be in the animal training field, he said “I have more for you.” After weeks of prayer and reflecting, I chose psychology as my major. However, part of this decision was because a psychology degree could still place me in the animal training field. Little did I know, God would change my heart so radically toward people instead. Over the course of three years, I went on three mission trips overseas. Through these experiences, God grew a supernatural love inside of me for people who were different than me. My sophomore year at JBU, I declared intercultural studies as my second major. It was a perfect fit. Over the last three years, my compassion for others has widened and deepened. I am fascinated by the different cultures around the world. Each has its own beauty and brokenness.

What are you hoping to gain?

I am spending my summer in Riga, Latvia, at an internship with Freedom 61, a hospitality and care ministry run by Youth With A Mission, for women who are or have been involved in street prostitution. I will be running a café where the women can come and get hot drinks, soup and baked goods. I will also be conducting a qualitative research project to complete my intercultural studies requirement. My project will be focused on the life stories of a few of the Latvian women who have come through the ministry. I hope to learn how to better love people who have been through very difficult situations and how to better love and live interculturally while interacting with a language barrier. I want this research opportunity to shed light into the holistic experiences of these Latvian women, so that anyone who reads it is reminded of the similarities that they have with these women and will be drawn toward compassion and action.

Where did your passion to advocate for sex trafficking victims come from?

I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, where sex trafficking is a serious issue because of its central location. It is often talked about at churches in the area. However, after I came to JBU, my previous emotion-driven reaction to the issue became intentional action. My freshmen year I joined the Students Against Sex Slavery group on campus. That year I went through a training and certification process that prepared me to care for women in prostitution in the U.S. Learning about the injustice of sex trafficking and prostitution in my own backyard was infuriating. I had to do something tangible. Whenever I had the chance, I wrote papers or gave presentations on the interrelated issues of sex trafficking, prostitution and pornography. In 2016, I went on a mission trip to Nepal alongside a ministry that conducted vocational training for women and girls who were rescued from sex trafficking. After spending time with these girls, I saw both light and darkness. I was surprised at how much joy they had and also devastated by how much pain they harbored. I knew whatever I did with my life, I wanted to help people heal from traumatic experiences such as what these girls endured.

What would you say is God’s calling in your life?

Four years ago, I would have said I was called to animal training. Two years ago, I would have said God called me to be a counselor or a therapist. Even just a few months ago, I would have said I knew God had called me to be a missionary overseas. However, the more that I reflect on what I know of God and what he has taught me over the years, the more I’ve realized that my calling is not about a specific job. The likelihood is, my job will change several times over my lifetime. I do not know where or when I will go to graduate school. I do not even know for sure what will happen when I graduate. However, I do know this: God has called me to love him with everything that I have. From that outpouring, I am called to love the people he died for with everything that he gives me.

Luke, a music major, wants to pursue a career in immigration law after working at Dogwood Literacy Council and developing friendships with people in the Hispanic community.

Why did you decide to choose this major?

I love music, specifically singing, so it was a natural choice to study music in college. The quality of the instruction that I have received has allowed me to travel the path toward becoming not only a good vocalist but also an excellent interpreter and musician.
How did you become interested in immigration law? 
Growing up, I frequently interacted with the Latin American community, including my best childhood friend, Francisco, who grew up in Mexico and immigrated to the United States with his family. Through my relationships with him and other individuals, I began to love the kindness, generosity, work ethic and dedication to family I witnessed within the Latino community. Furthermore, the Lord has given me a passion for standing up and advocating for the oppressed and disenfranchised. The combination of these two passions flowed naturally into an interest in immigration law. It is a field which provides much-needed attention, compassion, knowledge and advocacy to a group of people that may not understand U.S. law, and at worst may be taken advantage of by avaricious lawyers.

How has serving at the Dogwood Literacy Council - which provides free instruction to adults seeking to learn English - impacted your decision to study law or even immigration law? 
Interacting with four to six students from El Salvador on a weekly basis has been such a huge honor to me. Though I am technically the tutor, these individuals have taught me kindness, dedication, perseverance and patience. It is phenomenal people like these whom I desire to represent in the future.

Do you wish you had majored in something other than music? 
While I wish that I could’ve pulled off a double major, I definitely do not regret majoring in music. While it may or may not be the nature of my future career to be a vocational musician, the worth of studying music has been invaluable. Critical thinking skills, confidence, personal presentation, a good work ethic (let alone the actual skills and abilities of developing as an excellent performer and musician) have been some of the gifts that studying the music curriculum and being under the tutelage of excellent instructors has taught me.

Cory, a junior, declared education as his major his freshman year of college, thinking that education would lead him to more career options after graduation. But after considering his motivation, passion and God’s prompting, he changed his major to history with a minor in museum studies his sophomore year.

At one point you majored in something else? Why did you change it? 
I used to be an education major, but I only chose it because I felt it was the only practical way to use my love for history. However, I constantly felt out of place, like I was walking down a path and going the wrong way. God was calling me to make the switch. It didn’t seem that being a teacher was what he had planned for me.

What would you like to do with your degree? 
I would like to enter the museum field, but recently I think God may be wanting me to think about working in the national parks. It wasn’t something I ever considered before, but I’m definitely becoming more interested in the field.

What would you say is God’s calling in your life? 
I’ve always loved history, even when I was younger. I feel like God is calling me to be a torchbearer for the past. I think God wants me to properly teach history, not in a classroom with restrictions but to teach it freely in museums or national parks. People might wonder, “How does history advance God’s kingdom?” One of the biggest problems for the Israelites before the Assyrians and the Babylonians conquered them was that they forgot who they were. They forgot their history. I want to make sure that never happens to Siloam Springs, to Benton County, to Arkansas, to the U.S. and to humanity.

Belinda graduated with a degree in business and is now a private-banking executive at Banco Atlantida, the largest private bank in Honduras. Henriquez joined the Rotaract Club La Ceiba, a community service organization based in La Ceiba, Honduras, in 2015. In 2017, she helped equip a school with supplies, physical therapy equipment and renovations for 100 children with disabilities in Honduras.

What made you decide to work with children with disabilities? 
I did not choose to work with children with special needs, they chose me. I saw an opportunity to serve. I saw families who were traveling hours for their children to receive proper treatment, and even then, they were not receiving proper treatment. I saw enthusiastic and capable children who wanted to be integrated into society. I saw a selfish and indifferent government whose plan does not include children with disabilities.

Why is it important to help kids with special needs, especially in your country? 
In Honduras, there are still many taboos when it comes to children with any physical or mental disability. There is so much poverty and corruption that looking after the interest of children with disabilities is the last bullet point on the government’s agenda. Because of these issues, these children struggle to participate in our society or even live independently. In my hometown, La Ceiba, we only had one private school for children with disabilities. The school we work with is a public school, which means it does not receive help from any private sources or even the government. We saw a need to step up and help our community by providing the necessary equipment for these children to receive proper therapy to help their development and future.
I began, I was working on a school counseling program and was not sure where that would lead. As I stepped out in faith, God continued to open and close doors. Through this process, I felt led to move back to California to finish my degree. I am still working on the process, and my path is not finished. But each day is an adventure, and with each step the doors open or close leading me to God’s final destination.

What would be your advice to those who are thinking of a career change?
My advice would be to always follow God’s leadership. He opens and closes doors in our lives. If we are aware of His leadership, he will continue to guide our steps. We do not always know or understand where we are headed, but God’s ways are so much better than ours.

What has been the most challenging or memorable lesson you’ve learned through your experience?
Trusting God for the next step has been the hardest lesson to learn. I have to remember daily the many blessings and provisions in my life. Even when things appear to be falling apart, God is working out the details and putting the pieces together.

What event changed the course of your life?
In June 2013, I started having weird physical symptoms after a successful lumbar fusion. I’d get dizzy, have trouble swallowing, trip, feel numbness in my right arm and have hearing loss that came and went. I’d go to the doctor, who’d send me to a neurologist only to be given a wrong diagnosis. In December 2016, I was finally told that I had a stroke in my lower left cerebellum at the age of 46. In addition, they discovered I had a genetic blood clotting disorder that had gone undiagnosed all my life.

How did you feel when you had to give up teaching?
My symptoms had gotten worse, and there was no way I was in the physical or mental shape to put myself in the classroom, much less hold down a job. I was crushed. I remember crying so much, and I was so scared. I wanted answers — I had been praying and searching for three full years.

What is your advice to someone who also has to give up their passion because of a medical challenge?
I cannot imagine what a nonbeliever of Jesus Christ would go through in my scenario. It’s crushing to have to give up your life passion or love. But for a believer, faith brings you to your knees. Find refuge and strength in your Savior, seek him, listen to the Holy Spirit, cling to your favorite Bible verses, meditate, have friends pray with you and for you and have faith that God will lead you to the next season.

How are you making the most of your purpose post-disability?
This has been the hardest part of this journey. I’m still trying to figure it out. Some days I think I can conquer the
world. Then there are days that I’m brought back down to my knees. My husband knows my stubbornness (so does God), and I have a hard time gauging what I’m supposed to be doing and my abilities. But, I sought out what I felt God put on my heart in this post-disability season. I emailed the director of The Hope Center (a collaborative center for Christian nonprofits in Plano, Texas) completely and totally on a whim, with God constantly but quietly nagging me. He opened the door and brought me to a place where my heart and soul have happiness on a weekly basis by volunteering for two nonprofits. I also filled out a substitute teacher application, and I get to choose when I can work in a classroom. I have been given the best of both worlds.

**Danny Carlton ’85**

Danny graduated from JBU with a degree in broadcasting and briefly worked in the field. Eventually, Carlton found a passion in computer programming and become a successful freelance web developer.

How did you make the transition from broadcasting to web development?

After graduation, I received a temporary job at Channel 8 in Tulsa as a studio camera operator. I went back to school and got two associate’s degrees in accounting and business administration. I then attended seminary for a year and a half before I got married. After several years of working in lawn care, maintenance and an optical shop, my wife got a job at the new Whirlpool plant, and I became a stay-at-home dad, homeschooling our four kids. I excelled at that and was able to focus on one of my passions — computers. The Internet was still a bit new, but I began teaching myself how to build websites and learned a few programming languages. It turned out that I had a natural ability to quickly grasp the logic in almost any programming language and started acquiring clients. When my wife lost her job, we were able to transition to my collection of clients as a full-time income.

Would you say that web development is your calling? If so, why?

Yes. In addition to my regular clients, I have numerous ministry sites that I developed – MyOpenBible.org, SpurgesMorningAndEvening.com and NavesTopicalBible.org.

What initiative or project that you worked on had the most significant impact as a way to help others?

I previously built and ran CongenitalAdrenalHyperplasia.org, the most-used website for people with the rare congenital condition that two of my kids have. It’s since been replaced by social networks, but for over a decade it was able to connect thousands of people worldwide and offer support.

**Melissa Gaines ’95**

Melissa graduated with an accounting degree and worked in the field for many years before becoming a stay-at-home mom. Gaines now serves as an instructional assistant at Hall Elementary in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Looking back, are you still glad you majored in accounting?

I was a nontraditional student when I arrived at JBU in 1992 at the age of 27. I had always enjoyed working in accounting and knew it was a degree that I would always be able to use. After graduation, I began working with the State of Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration as a tax auditor, which I continued for six and a half years. In November 2001, I quit to become a full-time stay-at-home mom.

Name times when you feel God has you at the right place and in the right time, for his purpose.

I know God has me at the right place when one of the sweet kids at school looks at me and tells me something that is important to them because a parent is in jail, a mom has left them, they are hungry, etc. I am able to sit down and listen to them or give them a hug and say a silent prayer. People may think the government has taken prayer out of public schools, but my experience is that there are many staff members who are Christians. Those children are prayed for many times a day.

What has been the most challenging or memorable lesson you’ve learned through your experience in teaching?

The most challenging lesson I have learned is to quit fighting God. I have tried many times to go back in to accounting. He always closes the door. If you would have told me in 1995 I would be working at an elementary school teaching math to kids, I would have laughed. Many years ago I took a spiritual gift test, and my bottom gift was teaching. I found it very hard to teach others anything. I would get frustrated and just do the work myself. However, I have learned that if you allow God to take those gifts in which we are weak, he’ll use them to build our character for his glory.

What is your advice to students graduating from college or even to alumni who are considering a career change?

Follow God’s lead. I have found that it is only when we walk in the path that he has chosen for us, that we find true happiness and fulfillment. I have a 16-year-old daughter who wants to be an author. I always tell her that I am not particular what profession she chooses, as long as she is happy and following the path God has chosen for her.
Alexa McGriff ’10

Alexa graduated with a double major in graphic design and photography. McGriff works in marketing as the senior social strategist at Moxie, an ad agency based in Atlanta.

What made you decide to pursue a career in marketing?
I majored in graphic design and photography in undergrad, but in my last semester I took two marketing classes and fell in love with it. I decided to apply for jobs in the field, and I was lucky enough to get a great marketing job right after college. I’ve been learning and growing in marketing roles ever since.

How would you describe what you do?
I dig into research and data to pull out key insights and then build strategies grounded in those insights that help brands accomplish specific objectives.

Many people would still describe you as a young professional. What do you hope to accomplish in your career?
In the coming years, I want to continue to work with brands, both big and small, to learn about their industries and build strategies. My long-term goal is to lead a nonprofit, and I want to learn as much as I can along the way.

What initiative or project that you worked on has made the most significant impact on others?
While I’m proud of work that I’ve done professionally at my job, the most meaningful project I’ve worked on is actually a volunteer project. I sit on the board for my local rape crisis center and am the development committee chair. In the last year of sitting on that committee, we raised more money from individual donors than the agency ever has in a year. This means that we’re able to fund more programs and support more sexual assault survivors, which is helping create a better and safer community.

Looking back on graduation, what was your biggest misconception?
The biggest misconception was that I would struggle to find a job that I loved and would first have to work grunt jobs for years. The exact opposite has been true. While no job I’ve had has been perfect, I have loved so many aspects of my jobs and learned so much.

Mark Brookhard ’77

Mark graduated with a bachelor’s degree in psychology and a minor in broadcasting but stepped out in faith and attended seminary after being called by God to the ministry. He’s now a retired pastor and continues to serve in his church.

How did you receive the call of God on your life?
During my senior year at JBU, I was involved at Harvest Avenue Baptist Church. In October, they had a revival emphasis called Miracle Day, where they were looking for high attendance, evangelism and answered prayers to encourage the church. During that event, God spoke to my heart that he wanted me to prepare myself for pastoral ministry. It was an unexpected word from God, and I was resistant — unsure that I would be qualified to do this or be successful in trying. God said, “I call and I qualify. This is what I want you to prepare for.” I attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and came to understand better what God’s call on my life was.

What has been the most challenging or memorable lesson you’ve learned through your experience in church ministry?
People will disappoint you, and you will disappoint people. We are imperfect, even in Christ. God is working in us and around us to redeem the world. The journey of ministry is learning how God works to redeem the world to himself and how we are a part of that purpose. And we are not just a part but a vital, important, necessary part. No one is qualified, no one is fully equipped, no one is good enough, and no one is adequate. But God is, and he chose you.
In November 2015, Raynisha Robinson ’06 was a recruiter for America’s largest elevator manufacturer, ThyssenKrupp, when she received a call from an administrator at JBU asking if she would consider applying for the position of director of JBU’s Career Development Center.

The call startled Robinson. She had just moved to Dallas after working at Walmart for seven years and was launching a human resources consulting business. As Robinson heard the job description—helping students understand how their relationship with God molds their professional lives, providing career consulting and facilitating events—she realized that if she were to create a job for herself, it would look something like that.

Still, the decision to come to JBU was difficult. Robinson knew it meant giving up her progress in launching her own business. Yet, as friends prayed with her, Robinson felt peace. “I wanted to be obedient to what I believed God was calling me to,” Robinson said, viewing the job as an opportunity to help students and alumni respond to their kingdom assignments.

During her first year on staff, Robinson initiated JBU’s largest career and graduate school fairs, inviting over 30 employers and 20 graduate schools from Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Texas to recruit students. She also began coaching workshops, training student career development specialists and developing an employer partnership program. Robinson’s colleagues quickly took note of her drive and palpable impact on JBU’s campus.

“An overflowing passion for God and students best describes Raynisha,” Dr. Steve Beers, vice president for student development, said. “Her previous experience in the corporate world, paired with the fact that she is a JBU alum, enables her to build bridges for students to cross into their careers.”

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Michelle Reed, administrative assistant for the Career Development Center, daily witnesses one of Robinson’s key strengths—the ability to see and bring out the potential in each individual. “To work alongside Raynisha is to live kingdom life together,” Reed said. “Her passion is contagious as she guides students in reflecting on not just their time at JBU but also who God has created them to be. I and many others have flourished under her leadership and guidance.”

Within three years, Robinson’s staff has expanded to include student leaders from Costa Rica, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, the United States and El Salvador.

Looking back at team photos from each year gives Robinson a glimpse of the kingdom of heaven.

“I always say, where the kingdom of God is there is unity, but there’s also diversity,” she said.

Robinson recognizes the window of time she has to pour into each of her student leaders is brief, so she strives to equip them professionally and spiritually. “My moments of greatest joy at work come from my team,” Robinson said. “Whoever God brings on this team is who God meant to be on this team. I want to be very intentional about stewarding these individuals.”

Bethany Smith ’16 was one of the first students to serve under Robinson’s
leadership. However, it wasn’t until she graduated and moved to Ireland that Smith recognized Robinson’s influence in her life.

“Raynisha has been a constant person from the beginning,” Smith said. “She consistently points me to the Lord and his call to bring the kingdom of God into every area of our world and lives.”

Whether Robinson is sharing a devotional with Mayfield Hall residents, speaking on a panel with JBU’s Multicultural Organization of Students Active in Christ (MOSAIC) or discipling students, her involvement in the JBU community extends beyond her work hours.

Rebekah Brown, the Career Development Center project manager, has witnessed Robinson’s committed investment firsthand.

“Raynisha has a prodigious work ethic,” Brown said. “She puts her all into JBU Career Development. She dedicates not only her work hours to this task but also many extra hours talking with students, faculty and staff about kingdom calling.”

As Robinson looks toward her future at JBU, she is excited about transitioning coaching programs and workshops to virtual platforms. She hopes this will better meet the needs of graduate students and alumni. Robinson is also mapping out ways to strengthen the Career Development website with self-service resources.

By keeping a pulse on career development trends in higher education, Robinson ensures students and alumni receive critical resources.

“**When you are in an intimate relationship with God and know that he loves you, you can trust that he knows what he’s doing in your life.**”

Earlier this year, Robinson’s team implemented an online job board called Handshake, allowing over 200,000 employers to connect with JBU.

“Raynisha’s thorough research allowed the university to contract a low cost as a pilot school for schools our size,” Brown said. “This job board is already helping students and alumni find amazing opportunities all over the world.”

Although Robinson has strategic plans for strengthening Career Development’s professional services, her ultimate purpose at JBU is single-minded – to point students to God and his word and away from everything and everybody else.

She hopes to address trends of anxiousness she senses during counseling sessions with students and alumni.

“We don’t realize how much fear is at the core of our pursuits,” Robinson said. “We seek after comfort rather than God. Yet, God’s trying to bring us to total dependence on him. True calling requires dependence on God.”

Robinson reminds students that they will always be called to transform the world for God, no matter what career they pursue.

“Your vocation isn’t for your glory,” Robinson said. “It’s not for JBU’s glory. It’s not even for the people JBU is sending you to bless. God’s glory is the mission.”

Each time Robinson reflects back on her career journey and the ways God made his presence clear to her, she longs for the JBU community to experience a similar intimacy with him.

“Calling is sweet. It’s the voice of God. In order to respond to your calling, God has to be real to you, even in the hard seasons,” she said. “When you are in an intimate relationship with God and know that he loves you, you can trust that he knows what he’s doing in your life.”
On Saturday, May 5, JBU held commencement ceremonies for 231 traditional undergraduate students and for 128 graduate and online students.

Terri Wubbena, professor of music who retired this year after 42 years at JBU, gave the undergraduate commencement address. Jerry R. Geisler III, senior vice president and chief information security officer for Wal-Mart Stores Inc. gave this year’s graduate and online commencement address. Geisler is a graduate of JBU’s online (2004) and graduate programs (2006 and 2007).

Taking part in Saturday’s ceremony was JBU’s first graduating class of nursing students, with 28 students receiving a Bachelor of Science in nursing. Nursing graduates have already accepted positions to work at the Siloam Springs Regional Hospital; Mercy Hospital in Rogers, Arkansas; Washington Regional Medical Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas; Community Clinic of Northwest Arkansas; and Children’s Hospital in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They plan to work in units such as labor and delivery, emergency, intensive care, adult medical-surgical, neonatal intensive care, cardiac neurodevelopment, pediatric surgical and acute care.
Alumni News

Below are excerpts from recent alumni stories featured on our website. Read the full stories at jbu.edu/features.

The Dawsons Follow Calling to Eastern DR Congo
Mark ‘07 and Karen ‘06 Dawson found themselves drawn toward ministry while at JBU. Friends throughout their time at JBU, the two began dating about 10 months after Mark’s graduation, and they were engaged in 2009. In June 2015, Karen received an email with the opportunity to become a Seed Program co-facilitator in Eastern DR Congo. Four months later, the couple arrived in Eastern DR Congo, working to develop the local community and fight injustice.

Alumnus Enriches Bahamian Youth through Sports and Recreation
Simeon Hinsey ‘02 has always had a love for the game of basketball. From his childhood in the Bahamas playing with a basketball goal made from a milk crate attached to a coconut tree to playing on a 10-ft. basketball goal at JBU, the sport was always one of his greatest gifts and passions. Now he is using the game as his ministry, co-founding the International Youth Education and Sports Foundation with his wife Stephanie ‘01.

Alumni Updates

Jonathan Brentner ’75 authored “Shipwrecked! Learning from the Bible Bad Guys,” which recognizes the value of bringing the gospel into all our circumstances and relationships, even in the midst of the unexpected and unwelcomed.

Krista Gay ’16 was named executive notes and comments editor of the Brooklyn Journal of Corporate, Financial, and Commercial Law. Her note, “Dads are Parents Too, Why Amending The Pregnancy Discrimination Act is Necessary for Courts to Determine if a Parental Leave Policy Violates Title VII,” will be published in the journal in December 2018.

Jessica Mills ’04 and husband Chris welcomed Ezra Christian on March 26 in Flower Mound, Texas. Ezra is John Brown III’s 12th grandchild.

John Schall ’08, wife Melanie and big sister Bethany welcomed Audrey Anne on Dec. 21, 2017.

Steve Snediker ’86 has been promoted to JBU associate professor as of July 1. Snediker has completed his ninth year leading JBU’s digital cinema program, which has over 60 students and continues to graduate set-savvy filmmakers whose work is featured in regional film festivals and on TV and film sets across the country.
Retirements

JOEL ARMSTRONG – 14 YEARS

Artist Joel Armstrong served JBU as associate professor for visual arts, teaching drawing, illustration and fine art. He spent over 20 years as both an illustrator and graphic designer. While art director for Group, a magazine for youth ministers, Joel received his master’s of fine art in drawing from Colorado State University (CSU) in 2001.

At CSU, Joel began to work with wire and became interested in installation art. He has since continued to do wire installation for almost 15 years after graduation. More recently, he has begun working with nickel and silver wire, rust and gold paintings as well as aluminum public art pieces.

LARRY BLAND – 16 YEARS

Larry Bland ’71 joined the engineering department as a professor in 2002, teaching electrical and general engineering and serving as the division chair of engineering and construction management. Bland also helped implement water purification systems throughout Guatemala with Enactus’ Guatemala Water Project.

“Building relationships, seeing growth, witnessing the significant changes from freshman to senior year – these moments have been very rewarding,” Bland said. “Grades and grading are not an enjoyable part of teaching, learning is.”

To this day, Bland hears from former students who thank him for his dedication as an educator, especially in the classes they struggled in.

Bland plans to complete his wife’s honey-do list, spend time with his children and grandchildren and lead Bible studies in his home. He hopes to stay involved in future JBU water projects in Guatemala.

KIM ELDRIDGE – 18 YEARS

Since 2000, Kim Eldridge has served in the financial aid office, initially helping in the degree completion program, before becoming the director of financial aid, the director of admissions and most recently the associate vice president for admissions and financial aid. Eldridge says he found joy in assisting financially struggling students by puzzling out solutions to their monetary needs.

“We started meeting with students that were graduating with debt about how to pay it off in two years,” Eldridge said. “It is such a delight when I get an email from students who have paid off all of their debt in two years or less.”

Over the years, Eldridge and his wife Terri often housed students or invited them over for meals, something he always found to be a blessing.

Eldridge plans on spending quality time with his wife, kids and grandkids and pursuing volunteer construction opportunities with Samaritan’s Purse.

CHARLES PEER – 31 YEARS

Since 1987, Charles Peer has taught various art classes and served as the chair of the visual arts department and director of the Windgate Art Gallery. He helped expand the small art department the program’s offerings from an associate degree into an art major in the fall of 1990.

The Peer-Andrus Studio and Project Barn, a studio and project space for art and engineering students, was named after Peer in recognition of his work in growing the visual arts program into JBU’s largest program. “We’ve got the best students in the world. I tell everyone that,” Peer said.

“When I took this position, I expected to stay here two or three years. Now that 31 years have passed by, I feel that it has been a blessing and positive experience for me,” Peer remarked. “This community has been supportive. It’s provided me with opportunities I never dreamed possible. It has challenged me, and there are just more blessings than I can possibly count.”

Peer plans to hone his skills as a pastel painter and spend time with his family.
CAROL PETROSS – 17 YEARS

Carol Petross worked at JBU as an administrative assistant, site coordinator and office manager in the Advance Program (now JBU Online). At JBU, Petross was able to grow closer with the Lord and help students fulfill their dreams. Her most memorable experience at JBU was when she visited a student in the hospital to deliver books and registration information the student needed to continue in the program.

“I loved working in a Christian environment and felt very proud to see our students walk across the stage at commencement, knowing some of the struggles they endured throughout life while trying to get their degrees,” Petross said.

The advice Petross would give to students is to never give up and be kind to one another. Petross plans to enjoy time with her family.

CAL PISTON – 36 YEARS

Cal Piston joined JBU in the early 1980s. Since then, he’s worked as a professor of math, computer science, physics and general science. He served as the chair of the Natural Science Division, director of the Institute for Learning Enhancement and the associate dean of faculty development and assessment. Since 2009, Piston held the title of dean of institutional effectiveness.

Throughout his time at JBU, Piston spurred students toward intentionality with their time and energy to do things that mattered.

“I have had my view of the world grow immensely through working with students and seeing the Lord do amazing things,” Piston said. “Former students are working all over the globe in ministry, business and education in ways that would have been hard to imagine when I first met them.”

Piston plans to pursue a year-long position teaching mathematics and assisting with administrative consulting at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco. After that, Piston looks forward to spending time with family back in Siloam Springs and serving in community ministries.

SIMONE SCHRODER-JOHNSON – 30 YEARS

Simone Schroder-Johnson served JBU students and staff in library services including circulation, serials and references, with a primary focus in interlibrary loans. Keen on greeting students with a smile, she has enjoyed assisting students in their search for books and articles, as well as brainstorming ideas for papers and projects.

“It is wonderful to see the happy faces of students and their families as they graduate with our assistance,” Schroder-Johnson said.

She says the passionate and enthusiastic students are what she loved most about working in the library, but she jokes that they gave her gray hair. She hopes to leave behind a legacy of positivity and hard work.

“You get better results with a positive attitude than with a sharp stick,” Schroder-Johnson said.

Schroder-Johnson plans to slow down, rest, engage in her myriad of hobbies, spend quality time with her cats and travel.

DONNA SCHROEDER – 14 YEARS

Donna Schroeder served as the accounts payable clerk since 2003. In this position, Schroeder paid JBU’s bills to local merchants and national accounts, handled discrepancies with merchants quickly and in a kind manner, and she was the unofficial host for JBU’s auditors each year, making them feel welcomed. JBU’s reputation as a good corporate citizen was important to Schroeder as she ensured that JBU honored its obligations.

Schroeder had genuine care and concern for those she came in contact with. She maintained her department’s social calendar, making certain all birthdays and special days were recognized and celebrated. Since her retirement, she has worked part time at the JBU bookstore, but will be resigning soon to travel.
BOB TIMMONS – 14 YEARS

Robert Timmons '03 started at JBU in 2004 as an adjunct business professor before becoming a full time professor in the Soderquist College of Business, teaching finance, accounting and quantitative methods in the graduate business program. Timmons says JBU feels like home.

One of Timmons’ most memorable experiences at JBU took place after a challenging illness which left Timmons out of commission for a long period of time. When he returned for a faculty meeting, his co-workers exuberantly celebrated his return.

“I slipped into the back of the room, and was overwhelmed with heartfelt welcomes and expressions of love and belonging as many of my colleagues sought me out for warm greetings,” Timmons said. “It was then I realized, during the dark nights of sickness, I had been continuously lifted by prayers coming from my JBU family.”

Timmons says he is open to continuing to serve at JBU in some capacity, possibly as a member of the grounds crew, or he may look into other universities where he can use his skill set.

TOM VERDERY – 8 YEARS

Tom Verdery came to JBU in 2009 to serve as the executive in residence of Milestone Leadership (formerly known as Soderquist Leadership) and as a part-time professor of business in both undergraduate and graduate programs. In recent years, Verdery has split his time between teaching and consulting with Milestone Leadership.

Verdery believes JBU is an exemplary school that benefits the student body, faculty and the surrounding community.

While at JBU, Verdery assisted in developing and leading international business trips to China, Brazil, South Africa, Panama and Costa Rica.

“The most important decision students can make with their careers is to work for an organization that supports or complements their personal values,” Verdery said. “Never focus on just the best paying job but the ‘best fit’ organization that you can grow and enjoy working with for years to come.”

Verdery plans to spend time traveling and seeking out the next thing God has in store for him. He will miss the staff, but he hopes to return as an adjunct professor.

TERRI WUBBENA – 42 YEARS

Since 1976, Terri Wubbena has devoted her time and talents to the music department, serving as a professor of music method courses, an academic adviser and the Chamber Orchestra conductor. Known for her passion and enthusiasm for both music and God, Wubbena desired to bless students through her teaching as she prepared them for their future.

Wubbena says her time at JBU both enriched and challenged her to grow as a professor and lover of music.

“In many ways over the last 30-plus years, getting to make music with either small ensembles or the Chamber Orchestra has had a great impact on my life,” Wubbena said. “I have been challenged to provide musical experiences for students who are instrumentalists and want to keep playing.”

Wubbena plans on taking a gap year to spend time with her husband traveling, visiting her father and her children. She looks forward to whatever the Lord has in store for her.
October 5 & 6, 2018

HOMECOMING

Class Reunions
‘68  |  ‘73  |  ‘78
‘83  |  ‘88  |  ‘93
‘98  |  ‘03  |  ‘13

Class of ’68
50-Year Reunion

Please join us for
• Mayfield Residence Hall reunion
• Breakfast with the president
• KidZone activities
• Alumni sporting events
• Intercollegiate sporting events
• Alumni awards
In Memoriam

Lawrence Anderson, age 88, died Feb. 25. While attending JBU from 1948 to 1949, Anderson met his wife, Joanne. He dedicated his life to his family, his farm and his community of Burns, Wyoming. Anderson was a deacon and trustee at his church and served in civil government in multiple capacities, receiving the lifetime achievement award from the Wyoming Republican Party.

Sarah Androes ’12, age 34, died Oct. 29, 2017. Androes graduated from JBU with a master’s degree in leadership and higher education. She owned a candle and soap business and had a love for international travel, especially Scotland. Androes served on the International Board of Directors of Clan MacNicol in Scotland. Androes was also a certified storm chaser and helped save people and animals during storms.

Lee Brown ’54, age 92, died March 23. Brown served during World War II before graduating from JBU with a degree in English. He served as a professional printer for many years before owning his own printing business. Brown built bicycles from scratch and biked through British Columbia.

Phyllis Cauwels, age 82, died Jan. 9. She studied home economics at JBU after first attending John Brown Academy. She soon moved to California where she worked at the John Brown Schools. She enjoyed serving in her church, hosting friends in her home and playing golf.

William Cochrum ’53, age 85, died Aug. 4, 2017. Cochrum moved to Detroit after graduating from JBU with a degree in electrical engineering. He designed electrical and mechanical devices for power distribution for Square D, developed new products and also worked in sales for Fastron Co. He and his wife volunteered repairing youth camps.

Sheila Combs-Francis ’72, age 67, died Jan. 6. Combs-Francis graduated from JBU with a degree in music education and went on to receive her master’s degree in music and her Doctorate of Ministry. She served as a deacon at her church, a chaplain of St. Mary’s Hospital and the president of Habitat for Humanity in Oklahoma.

Bob Cook ’53, age 88, died Jan. 19. After graduating with a degree in agriculture, Cook served in the U.S. Army, stationed in England. He then earned a teaching certificate and spent over 25 years teaching science in Illinois and Michigan.

Al Dunn, age 67, died Feb. 28. After attending JBU, Dunn entered the hospitality and restaurant management business, where he excelled for over 30 years. He was known for his wit, humor, loyalty and love by those around him.

Betty Fairbank, age 93, died Nov. 21, 2017. She was a beloved wife, mother and grandmother. Fairbank and her late husband Richard were generous supporters of JBU.

Eunice Feaster, age 78, died June 12, 2017. She attended JBU before graduating from the University of Arkansas. She worked for many years as a substitute teacher and library aide in the Siloam Springs school system. She was involved in many community organizations, including the League of Women Voters.

Philip Goddard II ’70, age 71, died Nov. 6, 2017. He graduated from JBU with a degree in social studies and was a resident of Mesa, Arizona.

Burton Guest ’96, age 62, died April 14. He graduated with a degree in organizational management from JBU. He later retired from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. He was an organist and singer, who played at the Blossom Church of God.
William Guffey ’74, age 74, died Sept. 29, 2017. Guffey received his degree in communications and journalism from JBU before serving his country in the U.S. Army, where he received multiple medals. He was a well-known television and radio personality in Fort Smith, Arkansas, before becoming the public relations director for Carl Albert State College. He was also an avid photographer, woodcarver and musician.

Marjorie Hendry ’48, age 97, died Nov. 27, 2017. Hendry received an associate degree in medical technology and became a teacher at John Brown Academy. She served in the U.S. Army before earning her Doctorate of Physical Therapy. She worked for many years at Johns Hopkins University and Baltimore Memorial Hospital. She went on several mission trips to Holland and Africa, and loved camping, hiking, skiing and bowling.

Theodore Hill, Jr. ’51, age 90, died Dec. 16, 2017. Hill served in the U.S. Army during World War II, receiving an Army of Occupation Medal and a World War II Victory Medal. Hill received his bachelor’s degree in radio production from JBU. He and his family lived in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Ohio and Pennsylvania, as he worked in both broadcasting and entrepreneurship.

Jo Hines ’96, age 59, died Jan. 14. Hines graduated with honors from JBU with a degree in organizational management. She served as the director of a dental clinic, as well as career director for a community college. She won multiple ADDY Awards for journalism as the owner of All-Media Advertising Agency. She also published a book of poetry, enjoyed gardening and served as an elder at her church.

Ronald Johnson, age 69, died Dec. 8, 2017. Johnson served his country in the U.S. Army and received his degree in electrical engineering from the DeVry Institute of Technology. Johnson moved to the Island of Bonaire with Trans World Radio and then to Quito, Ecuador, before coming to Siloam Springs. He served as director of JBU’s Walton International Scholarship Program for over 20 years.

Mary Knapton ’51, age 92, died March 14. She graduated from JBU with a bachelor’s degree in Bible and religious education. She devoted her life to many different ministry opportunities including teaching, church planting and missions. She was honored by multiple organizations throughout her life, including being elected president of the Women’s Missionary Union of the Baptist Convention of New York.

Mark Kugler ’00, age 54, died Oct. 3, 2017. He served in the U.S. Army for over eight years before receiving a degree in organizational management from JBU. He worked for the Bella Vista Police Department, Securitas and Walmart.

Reyburn McCready ’50, age 93, died April 6. After graduating from JBU with a degree in Bible and religious education, McCready and his wife Doris (Naslund) ’50, served as missionaries in Okinawa. Upon their return from the mission field, McCready became a librarian at the University of Oregon, where he retired.

Wallace Moon, age 87, died Feb. 9. He graduated from Texas A&M University before becoming a professional baseball player, making him the first Major League Baseball player to start his career with a bachelor’s and master’s degree in hand. He won three World Series Titles, a Gold Glove and appeared in two All-Star Games. He later coached the JBU baseball team for over 10 years before becoming a minor league baseball owner.

Richard Niswonger, age 86, died March 7. He was a longtime Siloam Springs resident and was a history professor at JBU for more than 30 years.
Jennifer Peterson ’03, age 36, died Feb. 5. Peterson graduated with a degree in early childhood education. She worked as a preschool teacher at Friendship Pediatric Services in Siloam Springs where she was loved by her students. She was an excellent cook and loved to cross-stitch, giving her crafts away to family and friends.

Joy R. Reed, age 68, died Aug. 30, 2017. Reed attended JBU from 1966 to 1967, majoring in music with concentrations in harp and voice. She was active in church-singing in the choir, teaching Sunday school and directing the children’s ministry.

Florence Russell, age 87, died Nov. 17, 2017. She attended JBU before moving to Pittsburg, Kansas, where she worked as a legal secretary. She later taught business education and worked as a paralegal. She loved animals and raised Paso Fino horses on her family farm.

H. David Snider ’51, age 90, died Jan. 30. Snider earned a degree in general science from JBU. He served in the U.S. Army and later worked for All American Airways (later known as US Airways) for 38 years. He was a dedicated member of his church, serving as a head trustee for many years. He also served in the U.S. Civil Air Patrol.

Joann Soderquist, age 84, died Dec. 1, 2017. Soderquist attended Wheaton College before marrying Don Soderquist. She was a beloved member of the Northwest Arkansas community, serving on the board of trustees for the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County, Loving Choices and the Northwest Arkansas Children’s Shelter. Her long-time volunteer efforts were impactful to the JBU community.

Billy Spears, age 88, died Jan. 15. He attended JBU, majoring in building construction technology, before moving to Tulsa, Oklahoma. He worked many types of jobs, mostly in the aircraft industry. Retiring from Rockwell after 27 years, he spent his time hunting, fishing and gardening. He was also a member of the Masonic Lodge.

Margaret Wallis, age 91, died Dec. 4, 2017. She attended JBU where she met her husband, Ralph. During their early years together, she embraced her role as a homemaker and military wife. She later entered the work force as an office worker. She was an active member of her church and enjoyed working in her greenhouse.

Henry Waterhouse III ’52, age 92, died Nov. 8, 2017. Waterhouse graduated from JBU with a degree in radio production and served his country during World War II. He worked in broadcasting and journalism and was a deacon emeritus at his church.

Ramona Weikel ’55, age 84, died Feb. 7. Weikel graduated from JBU with a degree in business education and worked for 27 years as an elementary teacher for East Allen County Schools. She was an encourager and enjoyed singing and reading.

Leslie Whitby, age 76, died Jan. 16. He attended JBU majoring in music. His passion throughout life was music ministry and he worked in many churches in this capacity. He also was a gifted Bible teacher, counselor and speaker.

Nanette Williams, age 77, died Dec. 4, 2017. While attending JBU, she majored in home economics, came to faith in Christ and met her husband. She taught school for several years and served her family and church selflessly.
Discovering My Call

The Process of Combining Gifts and Passions

I've wanted to be a writer for as long as I remember. My first works were notes left in my dad's sock drawer as a surprise. I don’t remember their content, but I’m sure it was adorable. As a teenager, I filled notebooks with short stories and teenage angst-driven poetry, and I dreamed of living in the Big Apple as a New York Times reporter. I enrolled at JBU to study journalism. Along the way, I minored in business and took several graphic design classes, graduating with a well-rounded resume that made me highly employable. What I didn’t have was “a calling.”

I married my high school sweetheart, who was commissioned into the Army after graduation, and we headed into adulthood. Sadly, none of it was located in New York City. I spent seven years in the corporate world in various marketing and web management roles, a year at a public university and a three-year stint as a full-time stay-at-home mom. The jobs provided a nice paycheck (except that last one) and I enjoyed the people I worked with.

It wasn’t until my early 30s that I began to think about how I could use my gifts, combined with my passions, for something with a greater purpose.

While no one laid out the three questions that JBU guides our students through, I can see how my answers to those questions did, in fact, drive my calling.

• **Who am I?** I am a writer, a Christ-follower, a wife and mom in a transracial adoptive family who believes in living debt free so we can give generously.

• **Who am I doing life with?** My husband of 25 years, our extended families, other adoptive families, our church and the JBU community.

• **What am I to do with my life?** Point people to Jesus, care for the vulnerable, speak for the voiceless, give generously to organizations who do global, life-changing work and use my voice to motivate others to give.

As I transitioned back into full-time work when my youngest reached kindergarten, I served as the director of communications at our church. A couple of years later, after our adoption, came a role with an international orphan care nonprofit. In 2011, I wrote a book to help other adoptive families. And now, of course, I am at JBU.

The work I produced — stories, marketing mailers, social media posts, websites — had a greater purpose. Maybe it brought someone to church where they heard the word of God for the first time. Or maybe it inspired someone to give toward helping a vulnerable family stay together. Perhaps one more child was placed in a forever family. Maybe students came to JBU where their lives were transformed, and they discovered their calling.

The most important thing I’ve learned is that following God’s call is a continual process as life events often change the trajectory of our jobs. But when we identify our passions and purpose to use our gifts to God’s glory, I believe he is faithful to show us how to live out our calling.

Julie Gumm ’95 is director of University Communications and editor of the Brown Bulletin.
JBU’s partnership with PhilanthroCorp has helped many alumni and parents with comprehensive estate planning services. These professional, confidential services are available at no cost to you because of your connection with the university.

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