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Generations of JBU people have devoted their lives to educating students to honor God and serve others — to tell the next generation about God’s great works.

From Generation to Generation

A Commitment to Commend God’s Works

Dear Friends of JBU,

Dr. Marc Gilbert taught in JBU’s business department from 1948-1950 and again from 1965-1978. Many alumni have told me about the influence of Dr. Gilbert in their lives. He was known as a tough but fair professor who had high expectations but who also had every confidence that his students could meet those expectations. Business alumni from that generation say that they felt a true sense of accomplishment when they did well in Dr. Gilbert’s class, and they worked extremely hard because they did not want to disappoint him.

In the spring of my first year as president, Travis Jones ’73 encouraged me to visit with Dr. Gilbert. He was living in Siloam Springs Nursing Home, and he was just over 90 and almost completely blind. He had moved into the nursing home to be close to his wife who needed more care, and then after she passed away, he needed the care. He had a handwritten note over his bed that read: “If you come to visit and I am sleeping, please wake me up because I would rather talk to you than sleep.” He was asleep when we entered the room, but Travis followed his instruction and woke him up to introduce me as the new president at JBU, all of which made me feel a bit uncomfortable.

Dr. Gilbert responded, “Good. I have been waiting for you to visit me. I have a few questions for you.” He then interrogated me for the next 20-25 minutes, some on my academic philosophy but more on my Christian faith. And he shared with me his thoughts about what made JBU special. At the end, he said, “Thanks for coming. I think that you may work out.” It felt like a second interview for a job that I had been doing for nine months, and I understood firsthand what alumni meant when they said that Dr. Gilbert had high expectations. I also sensed his deep commitment to the Christian character and academic quality of JBU, and it felt as if he was entrusting me with his life’s work in service to God.

As David says in Psalms 145, “one generation shall commend your works to another.” Dr. Gilbert lived out that verse for me that day, and I have had similar experiences every spring when we celebrate and listen to retiring faculty and staff at JBU’s annual Employee Recognition Banquet. Generations of JBU people have devoted their lives to educating students to honor God and serve others – to tell the next generation about God’s great works. I am deeply grateful for their legacy at JBU, and I am humbled to be asked to carry it on to this next generation of students. May JBU always remain a place in which one generation will commend God’s works to the next.

Godspeed,

Dr. Charles W. Pollard
President, John Brown University
Inspired by Marie Kondo’s revolutionary art of tidying up, I recently began reorganizing my personal keepsakes. I realized that I’ve kept every single card or note anyone has ever given me.

In this modern age of technology, handwritten cards, letters and love notes are no doubt given less frequently. Instead of letters, we text. Instead of words, we use emojis. Instead of postcards, we take selfies and post them to social media. Communication is now easier and faster than ever.

But there’s a sense of nostalgia and meaning behind the care and the intentionality of someone taking the time to send one of these handwritten symbols of affection.

Like when I received a Halloween card from my late grandmother in college. A card from her meant she received a phone call from me, and I can’t help but think she just needed to hear my voice.

On the cover of this issue of the Brown Bulletin are handwritten letters from the founder to his wife Juanita, letters of gratitude to the founder, postcards from faculty and staff, and a receipt of a monetary gift to JBU.

Whether stored in an official archives collection or, like mine, hidden in the depths of a closet, these physical remnants remind us of the sender and of important moments in our shared lives.

Long after the sender is gone, these notes help us to continue telling the story of their generosity, faithfulness and commitment to JBU from one person to another.

Tarah Thomas ’16
Managing Editor, Brown Bulletin

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SPRING 2019

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Campus News

Fisher Receives HR Professional of the Year Award

Amy Fisher, JBU director of human resources, received the HR Professional of the Year award from the Northwest Arkansas Human Resources Association (NOARK). This award recognizes an individual who has shown outstanding service, promoted the Human Resources Management profession and is a member of NOARK.

Department of Teacher Education Recognized for National Excellence in Educator Preparation

JBU’s Department of Teacher Education became one of 52 providers in the nation to receive accreditation for its educator preparation programs by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). CAEP teacher preparation standards are rigorous, nationally recognized standards that were developed to ensure excellence in educator-preparation programs. JBU offers both undergraduate and graduate education programs.

JBU Partners with Regional Organizations to Offer Tuition Discount

JBU has recently partnered with the City of Siloam Springs and Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas to offer a 10% tuition discount to eligible employees.

Through each employer’s partnership, eligible employees receive a discount for online undergraduate and graduate programs at JBU. Other partnering organizations include J.B. Hunt, Sam’s Club and Walmart.

Athletics Debuts New Regal the Golden Eagle

Athletics debuted JBU’s mascot Regal the Golden Eagle’s new makeover during halftime of a men’s basketball game in January.

Music Students Named Finalists at Arkansas NATS Competition

JBU students took home five finalist and five semifinalist awards at the Arkansas NATS competition (National Association of Teachers of Singing). Finalists include Rachel Ball with first in freshman women (classical), Luke Merrick with first in senior men (classical), Olivia Myers with second in freshman/sophomore women (musical theatre), Hannah Schroeder with second in junior women (classical) and Kendra Jolly with third in sophomore women (classical). Semifinalists include Adam Goff, Taryn Morrow, Emily Nichols, Myah Veselka and Julia Hornok.

JBU Launches New Programs and Minors

This fall, students can enroll in new majors that include outdoor leadership ministries with wilderness medicine, photojournalism and visual effects. Engineering has been divided into two majors – electrical engineering and mechanical engineering.

In addition, minors have been added in civil engineering management; philosophy, politics and economics; renewable energy; speech and debate; and visual effects.

JBU Signs Articulation Agreements with Regional Institutions

JBU signed articulation agreements with Crowder College and the Arkansas Rural Nursing Education Consortium (ARNEC) to increase opportunities for students to advance their careers. The agreement with Crowder allows students to earn an associate’s degree from Crowder and then complete their bachelor’s degree at JBU, as well as reverse transfer credits to complete their associate’s degree from Crowder. Students are eligible to transfer into any of JBU’s traditional or online undergraduate programs.
The partnership with ARNEC creates a seamless path for nursing students to earn an associate’s degree from an institution within the ARNEC consortium and then complete their bachelor’s degree at JBU through JBU’s online RN to BSN Program.

Construction Management Teams Place at Regional Competition

JBU construction management teams earned first place in the heavy civil division and second place in the commercial building division at the Associated Schools of Construction Region 5 student competition.

The competition, sponsored by the TEXO Association, challenged students in project management skills that required estimating, scheduling, contracts, budget development and a formal presentation to construction professionals.

Smith Wins Faculty Excellence Award

Dr. Marquita Smith, associate professor of journalism and chair of the Division of Communication and Fine Arts, received the 2019 JBU Faculty Excellence Award.

The selection is based on faculty accomplishment data as well as nomination letters. The letters outlined Smith’s ability to help students visualize themselves as leaders and become confident in who they are as God’s children, as well as her tireless work to champion diversity and the way she expresses her faith not only as a professor but as the founder of a nonprofit to help with health education in Ghana.

Theatre Department Recognized by the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival

JBU’s production of “Sense and Sensibility” received recognition from the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival.

The following students received awards: Kaitlyn Bullington received excellence in assistant directing and dramaturgy; Madison Hatfield earned excellence in acting – Irene Ryan Nominee; Josiah Wallace, associate professor of speech and theatre, earned excellence in directing; Kara Peak earned excellence in stage management; and Hannah-Beth Kline earned excellence in acting – Irene Ryan Nominee.

Communication Students Win Awards

The staff of JBU’s student newspaper, The Threefold Advocate, won six awards at the Arkansas College Media Association (ACMA). Megan Koontz won ACMA’s Reporter of the Year.

Second place awards were given to Megan Koontz in election/political writing, Blance Sorrell in newswriting and Allie Toews for her review of the movie “Christopher Robin.” The Threefold Advocate won third place in the state competition for Newspaper of the Year. Karson George won an honorable mention for his political illustration.

Catherine Nolte won first place in copy editing and received a student journalism scholarship at the Evangelical Press Association Conference.

Flack Wins Golden Eagle Award

Cathy Flack, administrative assistant for the Natural Science Division, was named the 2019 Golden Eagle Excellence in Service Award winner at JBU’s Employee Recognition Banquet on April 26.

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.

$2M Challenge Scholarship Grant Established to Honor John Brown III

JBU received a $1 million matching scholarship grant from the Windgate Foundation to be used for endowed scholarships in honor of John Brown III and his 25 years of service as executive director of the foundation. JBU will add $1 million of undesignated gifts to the matching fund to honor Brown's lifetime commitment to the university. The new endowed scholarships will help students in financial need, with some preference for students whose parents are missionaries or in Christian ministry.
As an associate professor of history since 2007 and director of the Honors Scholars Program, Dr. Trisha Posey is passionate about learning from and teaching diverse perspectives to celebrate the gifts and differences with which God has created humanity. With interests in the interrelation of religion and reform, history of slavery and racism post-slavery, Posey strives to create strategies that facilitate discussions about diversity and help students from diverse backgrounds to better experience JBU.
WHO ARE THE THREE PEOPLE THAT HAVE IMPACTED YOU MOST?

1. My family—husband, children, sister, parents (particularly husband). They really love me for who I am and not for my title.
2. My grandfather, John Jenkins, who is a pastor. He and I have been close since I was little. He supported and encouraged me and gave me books to read.
3. My academic advisers—Dr. Maxie Burch and Dr. Rick Ostrander—who gave me opportunities and served as great mentors and advisers.

WHAT ARE THE THREE MOST RECENT BOOKS YOU'VE READ?

1. “Color of Compromise” by Jemar Tisby
2. “No Longer At Ease” by Chinua Achebe
3. “Paradise Lost” by John Milton

WHY DID YOU COME TO JBU?

1. Most definitely the students. During my interview lecture that I gave to students, I could not believe the quality of questions I got from them. They were thoughtful, curious and showed that they had studied so hard.
2. The location. Jake (my husband) and I had two criteria for a location when I was applying for jobs: the university had to be west of the Mississippi River and in a relatively small town.
3. The stability of the institution. I wanted to serve at a university that knew its mission, was financially secure and had a plan for the future. It was clear to me during my visit that this was the case, thanks to the leadership.

WHAT ARE THREE THINGS THAT INSPIRE YOU?

1. Young people who have incredible vision, which is why I love teaching.
2. The beauty of nature.
3. Art. I’m just so amazed at people that are able to create music and art and the imagination that it requires.

WHAT ARE THREE PRINCIPLES THAT STUDENTS HAVE TAUGHT YOU AS A PROFESSOR?

1. I’ve learned better to lament. I think that’s a gift that students who have gone through very difficult times have given to me.
2. My students consistently demonstrate to me the importance of a Christian community for spiritual development, emotional support and care for others.
3. They’ve taught me how to take risks. I am always inspired by students who step out in faith to do something challenging or stretching. They frequently model to me what healthy spiritual growth looks like when one steps out in faith.

WHAT MAKES JBU’S HONORS PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?

1. I inherited a very strong program, which has to do with the people that came before me: Shirley Forbes Thomas, Gary Quinn and Brad Gambill, who all did a fantastic job with the program.
2. We’re able to support students from across the divisions and colleges. Because the division chairs and deans have bought into the vision of honors and strongly support the honors students, we have across-campus support for what we’re doing.
3. We receive so many great, high-achieving students who are curious and creative and need academic and co-curricular opportunities to let those gifts grow and flourish.

AS A MEMBER OF THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE, HOW HAS DISCUSSING DIVERSITY IMPACTED YOUR OWN LIFE?

1. It has given me a lot more humility in my approach to the world. I recognize that my experience isn’t the experience of everyone else, so I have much more openness to hearing the perspectives of others.
2. It has also given me a drive to make a difference in the spheres of influence in which I operate. It’s not enough for me to learn about the value of diversity. I need to actively take steps to increase and engage with the diversity of the institutions of which I am a part, including JBU, my church and the schools my children attend.
3. As I’ve read and taught the works of leaders like Leymah Gbowee, Elie Wiesel, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Frederick Douglass and Sophie Scholl, I’ve come to understand the importance of speaking up when I see injustice taking place.
BLAST FROM THE PAST: JBU students dressed in 1920s attire and learned to swing dance to a live brass band at the Centennial Gala in January. The evening started with a traditional Billie Holiday dinner where students played “Who Am I” to determine what past JBU figures the faculty and staff were dressed up as. The evening also included a carnival and a photo opportunity on board a vintage 1923 Ford Speedster.
BY JON SCHULTZ ’19

Out of the thousands of JBU student-athletes in the university’s history, only 40 individuals have been inducted into the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame, earning the highest honor a JBU athlete can receive.

The Golden Eagle Hall of Fame recognizes players, coaches, supporters or teams who have made exceptional contributions to the achievements and prestige of the JBU intercollegiate athletics program.

This Centennial year, five more athletes and one coach joined the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame ranks at the brunch and induction ceremony on Feb. 16.

“Just because someone earns All-American or wins a lot of games doesn’t mean they are a Hall of Fame member,” JBU Director of Athletics Robyn Daugherty said. “We want that person to have exemplified the ideals and standards of JBU both while attending JBU and also since graduation.”

**Holly (Robason) Beitel (’87-’91)**

Holly Beitel, a prolific left-handed scorer on the women’s basketball team, held the record for most points scored until 2006 with 1,673 points. Beitel, who earned numerous awards and broke just about every record possible, still holds the program record for most career assists with 441. Beitel earned two NCCAA Scholar-Athlete honors and was named ICAA All-Conference three times. Today, Beitel runs a ministry called PurposeCast which is dedicated to helping others discover their story and realize their purpose to unlock a freedom and joy that brings glory to God. Beitel also serves on the JBU Board of Trustees.

“Nobody does anything significant by themself,” Beitel said.

Beitel’s illustrious basketball career was surpassed only by her character and Christian example. Her No. 10 jersey is the only number retired in program history, retired by former longtime women’s basketball coach Jack Augustine.

**Terry Brown (’90-’93)**

Terry Brown was an offensive powerhouse and still holds just about every record known in JBU soccer history — points (196), goals (79), game-winning goals (31), assists (38), shots attempted (411) and penalty kicks converted (7). Brown is also the only three-time NAIA All-American in program history. Brown played a major role as co-captain during the 1993 season when the team made program history by ranking No. 7 nationally, as well as making an appearance in the NAIA National Championships.

“Terry had an ability to make the players around him better,” former teammate Stephen Bos ’93 said. “He was spiritually mature and that Terry Brown smile was undeniable... There’s only one GOAT (greatest of all time) at JBU, and his name is Terry Brown.”

Since graduating from JBU with an eagerness to contribute significantly to his home country of Antigua, Brown has worked for 25 years at the Island Provision Group, serving as the general manager, financial controller and, most recently, managing director overseeing the day-to-day operations.

Brown is the first men’s soccer student-athlete individually selected for the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame.

**Kendra (McCormick) Knoner (’02-’06)**

Kendra Knoner played women’s basketball 15 years after Beitel, breaking Beitel’s all-time scoring record in 2006. Knoner led the Golden Eagles to their first-ever appearance in the NAIA National Championships her sophomore year and then to another appearance her senior year. At
“All six inductees impacted JBU, both on and off the field, and they set the Golden Eagle standard incredibly high for the next 100 years of JBU athletics.”

the time of her graduation, Knoner held the record for points scored (1,793), free throws made (384) and offensive rebounds (241). Her point record wouldn’t be surpassed until the prolific career of Baily Cameron ’19 nearly a decade later. Today, Knoner works with children with disabilities in the Siloam Springs School District.

“My teammates have become my family,” Knoner said. “I can always call them and talk and ask them to pray.”

Knoner rewrote the record books for JBU athletics, but her impact is also seen through the many students she’s helped within the local community.

Bob Gustavson (’80-’08)

Bob Gustavson, originally hired to jump-start the state of Arkansas’ first-ever collegiate men’s soccer program at JBU, would go on to build one of the most successful tenures of any coach in the university’s athletics history.

Gustavson began his illustrious coaching career for the JBU men’s soccer team in 1980 and ended his career in 2008 with a 308-194-44 record. Gustavson led JBU to its first-ever NAIA National Championships appearance during the 1988 season, followed by the program’s first win in the NAIA National Championships in 1993, as well as two more appearances in 2002 and 2003.

Under Gustavson’s leadership, the 1991 and 1993 teams won 17 games, a program record for the most wins in a single season that still holds today.

“Coach taught me about Christian leadership and how to be a husband. He loved his players. All of them,” assistant coach Travis Jackson ’90 said. “[He said] ‘develop one thing that you can do better than everyone else: stand out’.”

The wisdom and leadership, both on and off the field, impacted all of Gustavson’s players for the rest of their lives. Gustavson is retired now, but he remains the all-time winningest coach in program history.

Rodger Low (’69-’73)

Rodger Low, a JBU cross-country and track and field legend, was known as “the nucleus and difference maker for the program,” said Don Cleek, former head men’s cross-country and track and field coach.

Low consistently performed as the “Top Points Man” throughout his running career at JBU, which helped him earn the Most Outstanding Runner award his sophomore and junior years. Low voluntarily put in extra miles during his workouts which pushed his entire team to a higher standard. Low “was a weird guy because he actually liked to run,” fellow runner and friend Don Siemens said. Low’s only uncompleted marathon was when he passed out due to exhaustion before he could finish.

After his time at JBU, Low worked for 35 years in quality control in the electronics industry in Southern California while also competing in approximately 35 marathons and various 5K, 10K and other road and trail races. Low has worked in the office furniture reconfiguration business for the last 12 years.

Low’s contributions and continued support of the cross-country and track and field teams at JBU are unparalleled. The work ethic and character he helped instill into his teammates and friends continue on and even paved the way for another JBU runner and teammate Roger Vann who was inducted into the Hall of Fame class of 2019.

Roger Vann (’72-’76)

Roger Vann carried the torch that Rodger Low left behind to become one of the best and most influential cross-country and track and field athletes as well as one of the top marathoners in program history. Vann earned two NAIA All-American honors during his time at JBU, the first to receive those honors in the program. In 1975, Vann accomplished something no other JBU athlete has done – winning the individual NAIA National Championship.

Since graduating from JBU, Vann has enjoyed a successful career in piping and heat exchanger design and computer-assisted design for HVAC. He currently works at HYDAC Technology.

“I see this university as one of the few where the light is still on,” Vann said. “A lot of universities are dark, but it’s still light here.”

All six inductees impacted JBU, both on and off the field, and they set the Golden Eagle standard incredibly high for the next 100 years of JBU athletics.

The inductees’ records may be broken in the future, but their impact at JBU will always be remembered.
**PROGRESS UPDATE**

*The overall campaign goal was not increased with the addition of the Mayfield renovation and the Peer-Andrus Studio & Project Barn, but donations given or pledged to those projects are reflected in the total amount of gifts.*

**COMPLETED PROJECTS**

- **MAYFIELD RESIDENCE HALL**
  - $6M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **HEALTH EDUCATION BUILDING**
  - $12M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **WALTON LIFETIME HEALTH COMPLEX**
  - $5M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **J. ALVIN BROWN HALL**
  - $5.5M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **SIMMONS GREAT HALL**
  - $6.5M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **NORTHSLOPE APARTMENTS**
  - $3M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **PROGRAM & OPERATING SUPPORT**
  - $23M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **FUNDED SCHOLARSHIPS**
  - $21.7M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **ENDOWMENT FOR SCHOLARSHIPS**
  - $10M GIVEN/PLEDGED

- **PEER-ANDRUS STUDIO & PROJECT BARN**
  - $3.25M GIVEN/PLEDGED

**ESTATE GIFTS FOR THE FUTURE**

- **$125 MILLION GOAL FOR 2019**

**ENDOWMENT FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

- **$8M GIVEN/PLEDGED**

**JBU SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

- **$18.2M GIVEN/PLEDGED**

**ESTATE GIFTS FOR THE FUTURE**

- **$1.37M GIVEN/PLEDGED**

**NURSING MAJOR HOPES TO INVEST IN COMMUNITIES AND SERVE OTHERS**

Bridgette Ocampo, from Texas, first learned about JBU from a high school classmate, who was planning on attending JBU and gave glowing reviews. Ocampo visited JBU as a high school senior and loved how intentional and genuine the students and professors she met at JBU were.

"I fell in love with it," Ocampo said. "I was going to do everything I could to fight to be here." Growing up in a single-parent home, Ocampo knew from the very beginning that she would have to figure out how to pay for college on her own. Ocampo refused to be discouraged by the financial barriers and started writing scholarship application letters her senior year of high school. In the midst of the stress of finding funds, God gave Ocampo an incredible peace.

"God continued to work by providing scholarships," Ocampo said. "When I got my award letter in the mail and realized how much help I was getting, God was making it clear. These funds along with others provided the financial means for me to be able to be here at JBU."

Now a sophomore nursing student, Ocampo has been a part of the Student Government Association, Christian International Friendship Club, Leaders Scholars Institute and was a resident assistant.

While Ocampo was in high school, one of her friends was in a coma for several months. During her daily visits, Ocampo saw the compassion the nurses had for her friend and his family and how they brought comfort during a hard situation and decided she wanted to pursue nursing.

After graduation, Ocampo hopes to work in Central America and eventually work to do mission work with like-minded organizations around the world.

"I am passionate about serving people," Ocampo said. "I am grateful to JBU for providing me the financial means to get here."

Ocampo attributes her ability to attend JBU not only to the financial aid staff who were accommodating and compassionate but also to the donors who gave to support her and many other students at JBU.
Immeasurable Reach

The Power One Gift Can Make

In an effort to avoid a debt crisis and firm up the college’s finances, founder John E. Brown Sr. launched the Master Builders Campaign in 1941 and asked donors to pledge at least $1 per year to become a member. Brown Sr. received 10,000 new contributors from 47 U.S. states, Canada, Central and South America, New Zealand and the Hawaiian Islands, an achievement that exceeded his goal.

From the past 100 years, this is just one example of God’s faithfulness to JBU. The Master Builders Campaign illustrates perfectly that even the smallest gift can make a difference.

Part of the financial health of JBU today is a result of thousands of people who have given faithfully, diligently and consistently through all circumstances.

As part of the Centennial, a Faithful Givers Donor Wall was installed in the lobby of Simmons Great Hall to demonstrate the impact of the JBU scholarship fund on students. The wall includes 525 names of those who have given for 20 or more years or whose gifts to the JBU annual scholarship fund have totaled at least $10,000.

One couple featured on the wall is Jim and Priscilla Barnes. The Barnes family came to JBU in 1989 when Jim became JBU’s director of development.

At the time, John Brown III was looking for someone with planning, relational and executive skills to lead and develop JBU’s fundraising program, now known as University Advancement.

With his vast work history, including the Manhattan Project, Ford Motor Company and leadership with other organizations, Jim played a critical role in bringing focused professionalism and procedures to JBU’s fundraising efforts.

John Brown III thought that Jim was goal-oriented and kept employees accountable for their assignments but was always pleasant and charming with Priscilla at his side.

Jim and Priscilla were known for being like a favorite aunt and uncle.

For me, they were always encouraging; they were excited about ministering to students and loved JBU and the Lord deeply.

Jim passed away in 2005, but his contributions are still being felt today through alumni who have benefited from scholarships provided by their faithful JBU Scholarship Fund gifts. For that, Jim and Priscilla’s names are commemorated on the Faithful Givers Donor Wall.

“If my dear Jim was still here, he would consider it a great honor to have his name on the wall, as I do too,” Priscilla wrote to JBU. “Our years at John Brown University were a joy and a blessing for us.”

Every name on the wall has a story — what inspired them to give and the sacrifices that were made in order to give students an opportunity to attend JBU.

We are grateful for every gift we receive, and we stand in awe of the testimony of God’s faithfulness that we see through our donors every day. Thank you for helping us reach our centennial year and for celebrating with us as we continue to tell our story to future generations.

Jim Krall is the vice president for university advancement.
The Scriptures are flooded with assurances of how the Lord has been faithful. From God rescuing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s salvation from the fiery furnace to Christ’s death and resurrection for all mankind, we know that the Lord time and again works through our lives.

This centennial year offers us an ideal time of reflection, for remembering God’s acts of great power and great mercy over the university’s first 100 years.

“In remembering God’s work in the past, we find fresh reasons to give praise to God in the present and to have hope in him for our future,” JBU President Chip Pollard said.

It is through the shared experiences of the university’s presidents who manned the helm of leadership that we are able to recall stories of the Lord’s faithfulness to JBU through the years.

By Caroline White ’21
September 7, 1983

John E. Brown, III  
President  
John Brown University  
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Dear Mr. Brown:

I wanted to take an opportunity to express to you my impression of the JBU campus after my first week.

I have to say what impressed me most and prompted me to write was the quality of the instructors I have met. They have been very cordial and helpful. They genuinely care about their work and their students. Finally, they all seem very competent and experienced in their field.

The campus and facilities are beautiful and well-equipped. I was surprised with such a small another surprise! The cafeteria food is good!

Overall, I feel confident I made the right choice in coming to JBU and I look forward to the coming years.

Sincerely,

Gail Jalea  
Rm 210  
Mayfield  
Box 2440

Rick Froman
In the early years, JBU encountered many financially precarious times. Founder John Brown Sr. sold parts of his land at least once and accepted church speaking engagements to invest back into the university and pay down debt.

During the financial strain of the Great Depression, JBU accumulated over $1.75 million in debt by 1941 — the equivalent of approximately $30 million today.

The university filed for bankruptcy reorganization, and a federal court oversaw the university for a year. JBU came out of the reorganization and eventually paid all of its debt with John Brown Sr. insisting all debts were paid off at 100% of the original value.

But financial troubles still hung over the university into John Brown Jr.'s presidency.

“We had a big debt hanging over our heads, so I probably spent 80% of my time or more out knocking on doors and soliciting funds for the college,” Brown Jr. said. “When I became president, I didn’t really do things much different than my father had, except I intensified the effort to bring the school into a sound financial structure and to receive accreditation.”

Donors played a major role in keeping JBU financially afloat. JBU would have likely failed during its first 40 years without the gifts of Jesse Jones, a successful business man from Houston, Texas, who accepted Christ after hearing John Brown Sr. preach in 1905.

John Brown Jr. even visited J.A. Chapman, a wealthy oilman in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to ask for gifts to meet payroll.

The significance of this relationship is still being felt today.

Chapman added John Brown University to a group of specific beneficiaries that would derive money from three of his family's charitable support trusts that were founded in 1949, 1966 and 1974. These trusts are now worth in excess of a billion dollars.

JBU receives 5% of the annual distribution from the trusts — an excess of $3.5 million each year.

The university launched its first nine-figure fundraising campaign, the Keeping Faith Campaign, in July 2005 with a goal of raising $100 million—$50 million for scholarships, $30 million for building projects and $20 million for operations and programs. The campaign finished a year early and $18 million over goal. Four new buildings (Berry Performing Arts Center, Bill George Arena, Hutcheson Hall and the Balzer Technology Center) and the renovation of Kresge Dining Hall and the Cathedral Group brought new excitement to campus and began an era of increasing physical change. Many of these building projects received large lead gifts from faithful donors and foundations.

“I flew home with a check for $10.5 million dollars in the chest pocket of my shirt.”

The physical growth continued, aided by the Campaign for the Next Century which to date has raised $137 million for scholarships, academic excellence, program and operating support, and new facilities and renovations. Lead gifts from donors and foundations kick-started the construction of the Health Education Building, Simmons Great Hall, Northslope Apartments and the Peer-Andrus Studio and Project Barn as well as renovations for J. Alvin Brown Hall, Mayfield Hall and the Walton Lifetime Health Complex. The campaign, which closes on the university’s Centennial in September, has also raised nearly $50 million in scholarships for students.

Along with a generous community of donors, JBU’s radio programs were also significant to the success of the university.

John Brown Sr. recognized the potential of radio broadcasting early in the university’s history and started his first broadcast in 1928 on KFPW. While KFPW was sold a year later, a changing cast of radio stations brought in much-needed funds to support the fledgling school.

In the early ’80s, JBU operated a station out of Houston, Texas, which had undergone costly renovations but still failed to yield a profit.

The Brown family and trustees resolved to sell the station, asking $8.5 million to cover the cost of the renovations and the original purchase. A few offers came in, but they were upstaged by a southern radio and television evangelist, who offered $10 million for the station.

The Brown family was astonished. Then they got a second offer from Roy Disney, brother of Walt Disney, for $10.5 million. Within a few days, both parties met with lawyers, negotiated a deal and closed the sale.

“Dad had an earlier flight home,” John Brown III remembered, “but I stayed and waited for the check. It was a surreal experience. I flew home with a check for $10.5 million dollars in the chest pocket of my shirt.”

Brown III, JBU president from 1979-1993, says he and his family felt the Lord’s hand guiding the situation. The university was moving away from radio with the changing times, so the Houston station was becoming a liability. JBU’s finances were also tight because some of the university’s funds had been recently embezzled in an insurance fraud scandal.

The sale of the Houston station for $2 million more than they’d dared ask was reassuring that the university’s funds had been restored.
For Lee Balzer, JBU president from 1994-2004, the Lord’s faithfulness was evident in the flourishing of JBU’s campus and campus life.

“When we came,” Balzer recalled, “there were many little wood-frame buildings all over campus. The dramatic change to what the campus is today seems like an expression of what a very attractive—physically and otherwise—community the JBU campus has become. It’s kind of revolutionary to look back on it.”

More than two decades of construction and renovation began with the Walker Student Center groundbreaking in 2000, resulting in a campus that is 90% new or renovated today.

Balzer’s presidency began on the tail end of a year of instability. The university was still seeking its footing after the first year without a president from the Brown family, but Balzer says the JBU community was extremely warm and welcoming.

“There was a very clear call for us to come together to seek God’s will and purposes for the school, and he was very faithful in pulling the community together in a unified view for the future.”

The Balzers also see God’s faithfulness in the creation of the Walton International Scholars Program in 1985 by Sam and Helen Walton. The program has enabled over 500 students from Central America and Mexico to attend JBU on full scholarship.

“Having those students on campus,” Alice Balzer, Lee’s wife, said, “is an added value to the other students and to all of us.”

Lee agreed, “It’s so very, very strengthening to have a multicultural campus. God was faithful—and still is—to provide John Brown with the Walton program.”
Chip Pollard, JBU president since 2004, finds the greatest expression of God’s faithfulness in the people who make up the university.

“I wouldn’t do this job without contact with students,” Pollard admitted. “The privilege and honor to have real conversations with young people trying to figure things out—for me, that animates why I’m a teacher and a president.”

He remarked too on the tremendous “length of service, and good service, that we have from faculty,” Pollard said. “We have people who’ve been teaching for 40 years and still care about teaching well next year. To see that faithful service, student-focused, for such a long time, is a joy to watch.”

One early example is Mabel Oiesen, chair of the music department who came to JBU in 1942 from New York City. She was not impressed when she arrived in Siloam Springs.

“It had been one of those summers that had burned the grass to a veritable crisp and the roads were unpaved and dusty...,” Oiesen said. “It was a picture of absolute desolation... My mind was made up at once to return East.”

Oiesen did leave after that year, but she could not let go of John Brown Sr.’s vision of head, heart and hand education and wound up back at JBU where she spent the next 30 years serving as choral director of the Cathedral Choir and director of many spring musicals. Oiesen began the Christmas Candlelight Service that continues to this day, 76 years later.

“The next 30 years were fruitful and satisfying beyond words to express,” Oiesen said, reflecting on her return. “My work with the students has been rewarding, challenging, thrilling and joyous. I never again hesitated concerning this work. I knew it was the place I was called to serve.”

Dr. James Walters initially arrived at JBU in 1968 to serve as director of admissions. His wife Lynda had grown up at JBU as her father, Stewart Springfield Sr., was the business and advancement manager for over 45 years. In 1969, when a position in the Bible department opened up, Walters was asked to teach.

Among the courses he taught were Christian Life and Bible Doctrines, two of the core Bible courses required of all students.
Yet Walters wrote and taught fresh lessons each semester; he didn’t teach from “old” notes, even as good and accessible as they were. Walters taught that “all of life can be an act of worship as we respond appropriately with our minds, hearts and hands to God’s glory.”

Lynda’s diagnosis of multiple sclerosis (MS) in 1977 altered Jim and Lynda’s life greatly, but Walters humbly weaved their journey and their deepening worship and walk with the Lord into his classes and sermons.

Walters’ personal ministry outside teaching included counseling thousands of students, formally and informally, offering premarital counseling and officiating over the weddings of hundreds of students and saving many marriages as well.

Even after retiring from JBU in 2003 Walters continued teaching Christian foundations in the Graduate Program for many years and served as primary editor of the 2015 JBU devotional “Keeping Faith.”

In an essay titled “Why I Teach at John Brown University,” Walters said that the people of JBU were one of the core reasons he was at the university so long. “We have laughed together, grieved together, worshipped together, and grown together. We do not excuse being imperfect, but we strive to respond to imperfection in a way that is not imperfect.”

Dr. Leo Setian arrived two years after Walters as a professor of engineering and construction management (CM). At the time, the department was in the humble Hyde Building which had been built in 1930. In 1979, the department was able to move into one of the Cathedral group buildings when the library moved into the new Learning Resource Center. But the continued growth of the department during Setian’s years outpaced the capacity of the facilities. When Pollard announced funding for a new dedicated engineering and CM building, Setian teared up. “I have been in so many meetings about the need for this facility, and I thought that it would never happen in my career. Glory be to God.” Setian, who was voted Teacher of the Year in 1988, was able to enjoy the Balzer Technology Center for his last year of teaching before he retired in 2012.

“Leo was an inspiration to me as a new faculty member,” said Dr. Kevin Macfarlan, professor of engineering and chair of the Division of Engineering and Construction Management. “His concern for students, his passion for teaching, his dedication to maintaining his physical health, and above all his love for the Lord always inspired me to emulate him in all these areas.”

A college placement agency led Terri Wubben to an opening at JBU in 1976. During her interview, Wubben recalled asking the department chair, “How big is the band?” She received a deflected question in return: “What do you think of teaching music to elementary education students?” She replied, with characteristic self-confidence, “I think I could.” And so Terri was hired by JBU to teach woodwinds, choral music education, and freshman theory and musicianship.

During her second year at JBU, Terri met a new organ and music teacher, Dr. Jan H. Wubbena. Their friendship eventually blossomed into romance and marriage.

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Terri taught for 42 years but also served in administrative roles such as chair of the Department of Music and the chair of the Division for Communications and Fine Arts. When you include Jan’s decades of teaching, the Wubbenas served JBU for 72 years.

“Terri is good in almost everything she does,” said Pollard. “But her passion for her entire career has centered on two things: the presence and growth of instrumental music at JBU, and her love for, and the growth of, JBU students and colleagues.”

Oiesen, Walters, Setian and Wubbena are just a few examples of long, faithful service to the university in those early years. But in the bricks leading up to and surrounding the cathedral plaza, there are 141 names inscribed, each signifying a faculty or staff member with over 25 years of service to the university.

JBU, as Pollard sees it, has been blessed by the Lord’s molding of its people into an open and caring community—students, faculty, staff, board members and donors alike.

“My family really saw God’s faithfulness through the JBU community when our son Ben passed away,” Pollard said. “They were gracious in support, in allowing us space, in praying for us. So, for us, that was the greatest example of the Lord’s faithfulness.”

Every spring, Pollard holds a question-and-answer chapel. It’s a time set aside for intentional conversation with the student body, a time for them to address the president with their concerns and ideas.

“The year after we lost our son,” he remembered, “the first student stood up to ask a question, and all he said was, ‘How are you doing?’” Pollard paused. “I still get choked up about it. That’s the kind of support people provided—the fact that he even thought to ask. To me, God has been loving and faithful that way through the people of JBU.”

When John Brown Sr. was inspired to start a college, there was certainly no guarantee that it would be around 100 years later. Almost 40 universities and colleges have been started and closed in Arkansas alone, two of which were in Siloam Springs.

It is a significant landmark to reach 100 years.

“This year, we remember and tell JBU’s history from generation to generation in order to praise God for how he has extended his might and his mercy, his power and his protection, his creation and his care, to his people through this institution,” Pollard said. “We remember what has happened at JBU in order to praise God.”

God has worked miraculous provision and provided gracious mercy during times of great adversity and during times of flourishing. Let us be a generation that continues to commend God’s work from one to another.
From California to Kazakhstan, from South Florida to the coast of Australia, packages and letters addressed to JBU students flow in from every corner of the world. The treasures shipped from faraway places bring smiles to students’ faces, but they aren’t the only aspect of the mailroom that brightens a student’s day.

Janet Curry, the post office supervisor; Reta Leavitt, the post office clerk; and six work-study students engage with students, faculty and staff to ensure that mail is delivered on time and to the proper destinations.

Last year, approximately 40,000 packages and letters were delivered to the JBU mailroom, 1,845 of which were shipped from FedEx and over 38,000 from the United States Postal Service.

“That’s a lot,” Curry said. “It’s crazy how much mail goes through this small university. On a regular day, we receive at least 100 packages.”

Curry is proud that her small staff handles such a volume of mail.

“I’ve been here 12 years. We’ve had about 200 more students [now] than we did 12 years ago, so we get a lot more mail,” Curry said.

Curry and Leavitt said the package volume has continued to increase because many students have developed a habit of ordering everything online, even items that could easily be purchased at Walmart five minutes from campus.

“One of our work-studies last year ordered a gallon of windshield wiper fluid,” Curry said. “I said to him, ‘You could go right down there to Walmart and buy it.’ And he said, ‘Well why, when I could just sit at my computer and order it?’”

The mailroom employees never know what to expect, which keeps the job interesting. Curry said that several years ago, they received a potato.

“It had stamps on it, and it was addressed right on the potato,” Curry said. Also, “One year, one of the mothers thought it would be nice for her daughter’s soccer team to each have a flip flop. One single flip flop. It was addressed and stamped on the flip flop, not in a box.”

In addition to these peculiar items, the mailroom has seen things like pineapples, kayaks, watermelons, a six-foot long keyboard and bouquets of flowers.

In fact, one student’s dad has sent her flowers every Tuesday since her sophomore year.

“Every Tuesday a bouquet of flowers comes for her,” Curry said. “That’s been fun. Sometimes she keeps them. Sometimes she sends them on to one of her girlfriends to bless them. We have wonderful young people here that are thoughtful and considerate.”

Most recently, some odd car parts have filtered through the mailroom.

“Smelly tires and a bumper,” Curry said. “The most recent was a bumper.”

Leavitt chuckled and said, “We hope whoever ordered these comes and gets them soon.”

Even though students and families can connect via text and email, more packages are delivered to the JBU campus than ever before. Receiving a package of treats or a handwritten letter helps make a student’s busy day, filled with classes, meetings and homework, less grueling.

Kinzee Mayo, junior social studies education major, receives two packages roughly every month from her family or friends.

“I absolutely love getting packages and letters in the mail,” Mayo said. “It reminds me that my family and friends value me, and they understand how hard college can be sometimes.”

Texting and email are great tools for keeping in touch with family and friends back home, but for students the personal touch of a care package or handwritten letter means a lot more.

 “[My family and friends] take the time to send me something that will make me smile, and I am so grateful for that,” Mayo said.

No matter what comes in or out of the mailroom, you can count on Curry and Leavitt to deliver them with a smile.
Centennial Concert
with
Michael W. Smith

Friday, Sept. 27 | 7:30 p.m.
Bill George Arena - JBU

Special presale tickets for the JBU community available May 27.
Use code "JBUCelebrates100" to order.
(Save $5 on $20 tickets during presale only.)

Ticket sales open to the general public on June 10.
Ticket prices are $20-$60.

Purchase at jbu.edu/michaelwsmith
Jen Edwards, assistant professor of worship arts, assigned students in her Writing for the Church class to write a worship song to serve as the anthem of JBU’s centennial year. The challenge was to write a song that would spiritually enrich those without knowledge of JBU and also be relatable for the JBU community. Three songs were written and recorded by the students, then sent to various JBU faculty and staff on which to vote.

The committee chose “Christ Over All,” written by Jake Smith, a senior worship arts and graphic design major, as JBU’s centennial anthem.

“Our heads, Lord, we raise to behold you,” the chorus of the song states. “Our hearts, Lord, we lay down before you. Our hands, Lord, we claim hope that once was lost. We praise you Christ Over All.”

Smith loves writing songs and was interested in the challenging objective. He knew from the beginning that he wanted to include JBU’s mottos “Christ Over All” and “Head, Heart, Hand.” For him, the mottos provided a strong mental image.

“I decided to carry that image through every stanza and expand upon it as the lyric progressed,” Smith said. “The chorus of the song is meant to encapsulate JBU’s mission: we serve to worship Christ with our heads, hearts and hands.”

He also notes that the song ends with a call for the church as a whole.

“Upon recognition of God’s love, we respond with our minds, with our love and with our actions, all for the purpose of proclaiming Christ to the world,” Smith said.

As students, faculty, staff and alumni sing “Christ Over All,” Smith hopes that they are brought into worship and encouraged to respond to the great love of Christ.

“Honestly, this song is only important if it accurately reflects the character of God and helps create a moment of worship for the congregation,” Smith said. “As long as it does this for JBU students, then and only then do I think it can qualify as important.”

Listen to this song and others written by JBU worship arts students in the album “Heads, Hearts, & Hands” by visiting www.jbu.edu/worship-arts-album/.
FAMILIAR GOAL, FRESH WORDS:
REWITING THE ALMA MATER

BY CALLIE OWENSBY ’20

Since the mid-1930s, JBU’s alma mater has been sung at commencement ceremonies as a reflection of the continuing legacy of the university. The tune is an old one, written in 1857 by H.S. Thompson, and the words are not unique to JBU, having been used by various other universities over the years.

For some time, there has been a discussion about revising the alma mater to more distinctly reflect the university’s Christian values and history. Under the encouragement of faculty and staff, Jen Edwards, department head of music and theatre and assistant professor of worship arts, undertook the responsibility of recrafting the words to the alma mater.

“My main goals were really to reflect the mission of JBU accurately, to not change the song so much that it was no longer familiar and, if possible, to include some language that the JBU community would recognize as central to the mission,” Edwards said.

The new alma mater, while closely resembling the former version, has significantly less militant language and includes phrases that fit the institutional mission, spirit and goals.

“Alma maters are intended to remind those singing them that they were a part of something larger tied to a specific institution, culture and place,” Edwards said. “I believe the new alma mater better reflects the culture and commitments of JBU.”

It is fitting that a year that is full of celebration and reflection on JBU’s past and its continuing legacy is marked by an edition of the alma mater that seeks to do the same.

If you’d like to read the new lyrics, visit jbu.edu/alma-mater/. 
From late-night study sessions and early-morning classes to extracurricular activities and work-study assignments, the traditional college student has multiple priorities to balance. There’s no question that getting a college education requires a great deal of perseverance and discipline.

But for the nontraditional student, earning a degree takes an inspiring level of resilience. Most nontraditional students work full-time jobs and many have families, so they take classes at night or online, squeezing in homework whenever and wherever they can. Nontraditional students are often expected to be present as a spouse, a parent, a caretaker, an employee and a volunteer. Still, they persevere.

If anyone knows the challenges nontraditional students face, it’s Twyla Rownak ’11 and ’15. Rownak is a therapist with Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Benton County (SPSFBC), an organization that offers holistic assistance to single parents completing a college degree or credential that will bring them and their children out of poverty. Without assistance from SPSFBC for expenses like rent, childcare, transportation and tuition, most of these parents would not be able to further their education. Rownak works with these nontraditional students to provide free counseling services to the scholarship recipients and their children.

But Rownak’s understanding of what it’s like to balance family, work and school goes beyond her work as a therapist at SPSFBC — Rownak herself was a JBU nontraditional student and a recipient of the SPSFBC program. At the age of 30, Rownak found herself widowed with four children, ages 2 to 9, when strangers shot and killed her husband on his way home from work. In the midst of grieving and caring for her children, Rownak realized she needed to further her education in order to support her family.

Deeply impacted by the counseling she and her family received after losing a husband and father, Rownak decided to pursue a career that allowed her to help families in the same way. “Therapy greatly benefitted the older three children and helped me better understand their grief,” said Rownak. “Grief and healing for my family and other families — as well as needing to support my family — motivated me to pursue a degree in counseling.”

SPSFBC connected Rownak with JBU’s degree completion program, which allowed her to finish her bachelor’s degree in organizational management in 2011. “Many things demanded my attention,” said Rownak. “I continued to homeschool my children for several years while attending college. There were also several normal challenges like mothering, meeting living expenses, getting financial aid, commuting to campus... trying to remember old terms and how to study.”

Despite these challenges, Rownak graduated and then earned her master’s degree in marriage and family therapy from JBU in 2015. But Rownak says her time at JBU influenced more than her career; it impacted her spiritually. “I am continually grateful for my time at JBU and feel transformed by the experience,” said Rownak. “My spiritual journey at JBU led me to wrestle with my feelings of betrayal and anger toward God, who ‘allowed’ my husband to die. When I shared some of my struggles with a couple of professors, none of them gave me easy answers like ‘it all happens for a reason’ or any other fluffy, ‘cotton-candy’ spirituality. Instead, they heard, validated and empowered me to wrestle with my faith and with God.”
I went from blind belief to agnostic disbelief to a more confident faith in the God of the Bible who knows my innermost thoughts and still redeemed and continually transforms me.”

Rownak is just one of the over 200 nontraditional students JBU has been able to guide through the demands of finishing degree programs with a format that caters to their busy lives.

“**My spiritual journey at JBU led me to wrestle with my feelings of betrayal and anger toward God...**”

Dean of the Graduate School Dr. Richard Ellis has had the opportunity to witness how JBU has served nontraditional students for decades. He championed the creation of the Advance program, later renamed the adult degree completion program and now transformed into JBU Online.

“In 1993, you had to either quit your job or you had to attend class one night per week for several years until you earned your bachelor’s degree,” said Ellis. “As a degree became more necessary for career advancement, JBU wanted to create a way for working adults to get a quality education, so we developed the Advance program.”

The first Advance class was offered at a Holiday Inn in Springdale, Arkansas, in 1993. The program evolved from there, eventually expanding to several locations in Arkansas, including Little Rock, Fort Smith and Rogers. In 1995, JBU began offering graduate programs, initially in counseling, in a format that made it available to working adult students as well.

This year marks a significant milestone not only because JBU is celebrating 100 years as an institution, but because JBU’s nontraditional student programs are celebrating their 25th anniversary.

Today, the online and graduate school programs continue to create opportunities for nontraditional students. Students with prior college credit can now complete a degree exclusively online, and most of JBU’s graduate programs can be completed online, allowing for more flexibility. Although JBU will continue to evolve—serving students through new technology, expanded degree offerings and flexible course formats—Ellis says there is one thing that will never change.

“John Brown University is a school that is broadly Christian,” Ellis said. “We care about our students. We address the Head, Heart and Hand of the individual. We embrace the concept of ‘Christ Over All,’ and that will always continue.”
Online, Graduate Students Thrive, Find Balance  By Jessica Turner ’17

MICHAEL GRIFFIN ’06
B.S. in Organizational Management

As the director of Fort Smith Regional Airport, Griffin is responsible for administrative, technical and planning duties for the daily operation and long-range development of the airport. The knowledge and experience he gained through JBU gave him the leadership and business skills to advance to his current position. Balancing a full-time job and caring for his family meant he had to be very intentional about managing his time. Griffin attributes the support and encouragement from his classmates, many of whom were also parents and employed full-time, as critical to his success.

CHUCK DIETRICH ’18
M.B.A. in International Business

As part of a continuous improvement team focused on innovation, Dietrich is accustomed to hearing ideas that challenge his way of thinking. “I thought I knew everything I needed to know to be successful at my job,” said Dietrich. “But completing my MBA while maintaining my responsibilities [at home and at work] challenged me to think creatively. [and...] it taught me the value of restructuring my work.” He credits his experiences at JBU with helping him find innovative solutions on the job, an essential part of what he does as a director of elevation execution at J.B. Hunt Transport, Inc. Dietrich’s instructors, peers and the full support of his family played an essential role in his studies.

PAIGE HEFFRON ’18
M.S. in School Counseling, Marriage & Family Therapy

Heffron, as a school counselor at Springdale High School with a caseload of around 400 students, believes her education and training from JBU were crucial to preparing her for tackling the challenges of school counseling head-on. “Learning from a Christian perspective—and having professors and classmates who prayed for me—equipped me spiritually to serve as a school counselor,” said Heffron. With internships, classes and her position as a graduate assistant, the support the JBU community provided was vital to her success. Even more significant was the encouragement she received from her husband, who was also earning his graduate degree from JBU at the time. “It was challenging, but I had an end goal in mind, and the Lord constantly reminded me to cast my cares upon him.”

KRISTY NGUYEN ’18
B.S. in Organizational Leadership

As a natural-born leader who enjoys working with people, Nguyen attributes her time at JBU to equipping her for her role as a project manager and LMS administrator at Aegis Therapies. While at JBU, Nguyen learned the importance of budgeting her time and practicing self-discipline. “I had high goals set for myself when I was finishing my degree,” said Nguyen. “I had spoken with my family ahead of time, preparing them for the reality that I would need to dedicate a lot of time to my studies.” To balance her time, Nguyen developed a cutoff time each night for homework and one homework-free day per week to spend quality time with her family.

TABITHA MCFADDEN ’05
M.S. in Leadership & Ethics

Named to NWA Business Journal’s “Forty Under 40” list, McFadden has become a champion for leadership development in her community as vice president of people operations at RevUnit, a product studio in Bentonville. While earning her master’s degree from JBU, McFadden worked at Milestone Leadership. Although balancing school and work wasn’t always easy, McFadden said the impact JBU had on her life was well worth the effort. “I really consider JBU to have been a launch pad for my growth and development,” said McFadden. “I learned so much about operating in leadership from a place of humility and integrity... Some of those early experiences have shaped my perspectives and helped me to develop into the person I am today.”

JUAN OSORIO ’17
M.B.A. in International Business

Osorio began his MBA right out of college. Working fulltime and going to classes at night, Osorio was determined to dive deep into the complex areas of international business. “The MBA program pushed me to the next level,” said Osorio. “I learned to collaborate with different levels of professionals, how to take a step back, make sound decisions and understand the impact of those decisions... Most importantly, it provided me with the confidence and ability to overcome challenges I will encounter in my career.” Osorio is a proactive, strategic problem-solver, who develops business continuity and crisis management plans as an enterprise business continuity manager for Walmart in the U.S., Mexico and Central America.
KERI LEDBETTER ’15
B.S in Organizational Management

First-generation college graduate Keri Ledbetter was a single mother of two while earning her bachelor’s degree. Ledbetter persevered through late nights of homework and early morning shifts on the factory floor. “I never dreamed I would earn my bachelor’s,” said Ledbetter. “Working hard, staying focused, taking it one semester at a time and being intentional about trying to balance everything was imperative. I knew I had to create a better life for my children and myself through education.” Ledbetter is now owner of Values First, a for-profit, online store that donates a portion of every sale to empowering women to have a strong sense of values and self-worth.

LINA BALLARD ’20
M.Ed in School Counseling

Ballard discovered a passion for education when she began translating from Spanish at a local school in the U.S. She earned a teaching degree and taught for three years until God led her to school counseling. “While I was a teacher, I realized I was most concerned with the well-being of the children and their families,” said Ballard. “God kept telling me I needed to become a school counselor... that he would give me the strength I needed to follow his will.” Married with three young children, Ballard works to keep her family a priority and is very intentional about scheduling her day. Ballard is currently working on her internship and expects to graduate in May 2020.

ANGELICA YANG ’19
M.S in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

After graduating in May, Yang plans to pursue her licensure as a counselor so she can serve families affected by addiction, a struggle Yang says is not easy to overcome. “It’s a systematic issue, and I want to help families who are struggling with that,” she said. Yang’s time at JBU has impacted not only her professional life, but her family as well, as she has learned to be more empathetic and understanding toward her four teenagers. As the first person to earn a bachelor’s degree in her family—and now a master’s—Yang hopes she has shown her children the importance of getting an education.
When Marikit Schwartz Fain accepted a work-study position in University Archives during her senior year at JBU, she never dreamed she would later oversee the vast collection of writings, photographs, videos and other physical objects that represent the university’s 100-year history.

Schwartz Fain intended to work in ministry, earning a degree in child and family studies. After graduating in 2005, she worked at a daycare for almost three years. Though she enjoyed her work, Schwartz Fain wanted to be involved with JBU and continued to apply for open positions.

In 2008, JBU began looking for a new archivist, and Schwartz Fain interviewed for the position despite her minimal experience.

"Thankfully, Mary Habermas, the library director at that time, was willing to take a chance on me and invested in helping me learn the job," Schwartz Fain said. Managing the university archives can be something like trying to captain a ship without a single crew member for assistance.

“I almost quit at the end of my first year,” Schwartz Fain recalled. “I loved what I was doing, but I was completely overwhelmed.”

At larger institutions, a team of employees—a preservationist, historian, outreach director, restorationist, and more—works together to run the archives; at a smaller university like JBU, one archivist fills all of those positions.

With so much to learn, Schwartz Fain says it took about three years to find her sea legs. She attended archives training programs and relied on a network of archivists across the country for help in preserving sensitive materials like old film, which can spontaneously combust after a few decades of decomposition.

“My greatest takeaway from training was that an archives office needs a clear mission statement and collection policy,” Schwartz Fain explained. “The archives can’t just be a place to put cool stuff, because the larger the collection grows, the more difficult it becomes to truly care for everything. We have to narrow our focus so that we can better preserve all our materials.”

In her role, Schwartz Fain directs the collection and care of historical university resources, including publications like yearbooks and the Threefold Advocate, audio and video cassettes, artifacts from the various Brown schools and academies, and photos, memorabilia and books about local and regional history or the history of the university.
She fields requests from university departments, usually seeking photos or checking facts for publication, and she also responds to people outside the university who contact her looking for information about local history or family members connected with JBU.

“An archive allows people to look back,” Schwartz Fain said. “Because it’s an objective picture, it allows you to see the context—the broader picture of an era. It helps to inform where the school is going when you know where it’s been, the principles it was founded on.”

For example, when JBU recently redesigned the core curriculum, administrators sought out information on previous curriculum revisions to get an idea of how the current curriculum came to be.

University Archives owes much of its information to the legacy of May Boudinot, the university’s first historian. Boudinot came to JBU in 1921 to teach history and work in the library.

Once she arrived on campus, Boudinot began keeping meticulous records of university events, a practice she continued over the course of her 30-plus years associated with JBU.

During World War II, she began chronicling the names, locations and fates of those associated with the John Brown Schools. Her pages of the monthly John Brown University Bulletin were rich with details, updates on service members abroad and reports on friends lost in the war.

Boudinot’s work as JBU’s unofficial diarist culminated in two manuscripts detailing the history of John Brown University and John Brown himself, called “The First Fifteen Years of John Brown Schools” and “The Magnetic Power of Dreams,” respectively.

“**What I do have is the opportunity to shape the future... by reminding people of the why behind the history of the university.**”

She retired in 1953 at the age of 74 but continued to make pencil notes in the margins of her work, logging special banquets, commencement activities and campus changes.

Boudinot’s efforts to preserve the knowledge of JBU’s early history have been invaluable to archivists in later years, and Schwartz Fain regularly consults Boudinot’s manuscripts for information, particularly as JBU looks back to its founding in this centennial year.

Last summer, university archives moved to a new location off Holly Street, the house where JBU presidents lived from 1952 to 2006. One of Schwartz Fain’s new tasks is restructuring the archives to take advantage of the building space, which provides a much-needed public face for the collection.

Because she shares the space with the JBU Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, she often gives tours to visiting alumni, and she continues to connect with JBU students during the freshman Gateway Seminar’s annual trips to the archives.

Leading these tours over the years, Schwartz Fain has run up against a variety of common misconceptions about her position. The idea she sees most often is that University Archives works to shape history, that its main purpose is collecting and preserving relics from JBU’s past.

“Actually,” Schwartz Fain explained, “my job is the opposite. I don’t work to shape history, I work to preserve it as objectively as possible. What I do have is the opportunity to shape the future, helping to direct the forward movement of JBU by reminding people of the why behind the history of the university.”

As JBU celebrates its 100th year, Schwartz Fain has been more active than ever, seeking out resources and memories from JBU’s past to share with the students and administrators of the future.

*If you have items you think would be of value to JBU, email archives@jbu.edu.*
On Saturday, May 4, JBU held its historic commencement ceremonies for the Class of 2019 that included 248 traditional undergraduate, 97 graduate and 45 online students.

Leading the processional for the traditional undergraduate commencement ceremony were members of JBU’s Heritage Society, dressed in gold robes. The Heritage Society, comprised of alumni who graduated from or attended JBU 50 or more years ago, is a special part of JBU’s legacy attesting to God’s faithfulness to JBU.

Four Heritage Society members were able to walk with their grandchildren, including Ed Bateman ’56 with his granddaughter Dakotah Rodgers, Professor Emeritus Andy and Donna ’56 Bowling with their grandson Josh Bowling, Dave Steensland ’67 with his grandchildren Annika and James Pollard, and Gayle Young ’69 with her grandson Christopher Young.

Dr. David Brisben, professor of Christian ministries who retired this year after 27 years at JBU, gave both the undergraduate commencement address and the graduate and online commencement address. Learn more about Brisben’s impact on JBU on page 34.
Members of JBU's Heritage Society

SPRING 2019
Centennial Celebration

Homecoming 2019

Please join us September 26-29 for a Michael W. Smith concert, fireworks, a car show, reunions, The Showcase and a time capsule opening.

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

Alumnus Blends Passion for Outdoors with Therapy and Film

Dr. DB Palmer ’01 has worn a myriad of hats in his professional career. Whether he’s filming in the Alaskan wilderness, supporting families as a social worker, leading therapy treks in the north, kayaking the Yukon River in British Columbia, Canada, or developing outdoor youth group programs, Palmer’s motivation in every position is to serve as a guide. Today, Palmer works as the director of child and youth development for the Copper River Native Association in Alaska, where he assists in creating youth programs for infants to young adults in both native and non-native families.

Alumni Updates

Brent Ellis ’13 and wife Carley welcomed son Henry James on Jan. 1 in Franklin, Tennessee. Brent also received the Gold Addy Award for the MEDHOST direct mailer at the American Advertising Federation Nashville.

Fawn Hays ’83 is now the author and illustrator of the Christian children’s book “Just Think.” Her book is full of quirky pictures based on scripture that can bring delight, laughter and initiate conversations with elementary school-aged kids. It was the No. 1 new release for two weeks in the “Children’s Bible Reference & Interpretation” category on Amazon.

Barkley (Robinson) Beers ’02, husband Ricky and big sister Eva Caroline welcomed Norah Madeline Beers at 8 pounds, 8 ounces on March 7 in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Daniel Silver ’05 and wife Shelley welcomed their first children, twin girls Hailey Grace and Riley Rose in July 2018.

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

KRIS ANDERSON – 12 YEARS

While working in University Advancement, Kris Anderson has written correspondence for various staff members, aided the data team in updating alumni records and processing gifts, and helped with events including Homecoming, Family Weekend and student “thank you” card signing parties. Anderson and her husband have also led small groups as marriage mentors and led workshops on marriage skills for the Center for Healthy Relationships.

Anderson encourages students and co-workers to remember that “people and God’s word” have an eternal impact.

“Take the time to invest in any way you can into the lives of people,” Anderson said. “And take the time to read the word, asking for the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, and determine to practice the truth in love as you interact with others.”

Anderson remembers all of the students she and her family have hosted at their home over the years and how much joy they brought her. She loved sharing, even just a small part, in the lives of students. During retirement, Anderson plans to continue hosting students in her home and also put more time into various ministries in Siloam Springs, specifically Mothering Matters.

MAURILIA BLACKFOX – 12 YEARS

Maurilia Blackfox thought she could never be hired full time by the university but was encouraged to apply after conversations with staff.

Having worked previously in the cafeteria, Blackfox joined the custodial team in 2007. Since then she’s cared for nearly every building on campus including Soderquist Business Center, Cathedral of the Ozarks, Bell Science Hall, Balzer Technology Center, Learning Resource Center, Admissions, Mayfield Residence Hall, Hutcheson Residence Hall, Berry Performing Arts Center, Walton Lifetime Health Complex and the Walker Student Center.

She’s had ups and downs during that time but credits her faith with bringing her through them all. She’s happier now than she’s ever been and is most thankful for the opportunity to meet and get to know staff from different cultures and backgrounds.

During her retirement, she’s looking forward to spending her time gardening and canning, raising chickens (if her husband will let her) and spoiling her grandkids.

DAVID BRISBEN – 27 YEARS

David Brisben began teaching in JBU’s Division of Biblical Studies in 1992, 12 years of which he served as the division chair. Brisben taught many classes for the division but says that Old Testament Survey impacted him the most.

“I was beginning to learn that the teaching-learning experience that was going on in the classroom was actually a divine encounter; that it was one of the dynamic ways we as humans experience the immanent presence of Christ in us and among us… . I don’t want my students or my co-workers to ignore this divine encounter. Rather, I want them to enjoy it as much as I do,” Brisben said. “In fact, that is the thing I will miss most about teaching.”

In addition to teaching, Brisben developed several programs in the Department of Christian Ministries, including programs that have become family and human services, intercultural studies and outdoor leadership.

Brisben also helped recruit prospective Walton International Scholarship Program students from Mexico while he and his wife served as missionaries in central Mexico prior to coming to JBU and collaborated with Billy and Mindi Stevenson to launch JBU’s Irish Studies Program.

Brisben hopes to return to parish ministry in some form in his retirement.
DALE GRAVES – 21 YEARS

Dale Graves started working in the boiler plant at JBU in 1998. He later joined the grounds crew in which he mowed, installed irrigation and was the main mechanic responsible for maintaining all of the equipment. A couple of years ago, he returned to a position in the boiler plant.

DIANNE EWIN – 9 YEARS

Dianne Ewin served as the administrative assistant for what is now known as the Concurrent Program with Christian high schools, where she saw the enthusiasm and appreciation high school teachers had for JBU.

Ewin also served as the administrative assistant to the dean of Online Undergraduate Programs. In this role, she enjoyed being a part of JBU’s Online program and being able to advise students when they had questions and seeing them graduate.

“I have been thankful to work in an environment where co-workers encouraged me in my Christian walk,” Ewin said. “Several have impacted my life for eternity.”

Ewin and her husband plan to work part time at Lives Under Construction Ranch, a Christian-based organization that gives boys a second chance by teaching them the values of hard work, respect and responsibility through a structured farm and family environment in Lampe, Missouri. She will help manage the thrift store while her husband will teach the older boys how to fix appliances.

CRYSTAL HARMS – 6 YEARS

Crystal Harms has served in the registrar’s office as an undergraduate records coordinator and transfer liaison. As such, her work with students, faculty and administration spanned a wide variety of roles and projects, from data input to scholastic changes in the school curriculum.

Harms has loved interacting with students, encouraging them with a friendly smile and becoming a person they could trust. Harms and her husband have also served as host parents for three international students through JBU’s Friendship Family Program and loved the opportunity to know and learn from those students.

Harms hopes she leaves a legacy of care and trust and advises others to “smile and encourage the students and those you come into contact with.”

Harms plans to work part time and enjoy spending more time with her grandkids.

RITA LAMPHEAR – 39 YEARS

Rita Lamphear started working at JBU in 1980 at the centralized work processing center, now the Information Technology Services Department. Lamphear remembers installing the first administrative software system at JBU as well as bringing the first personal computers to campus.

After so many years at JBU, Lamphear points toward the Christian environment as one of the things she enjoyed most.

“Working in a Christian environment has been a wonderful experience,” Lamphear said. “The students and other employees treat each other with so much respect and a definite Christian attitude that you just don’t see in secular businesses. It is very refreshing.”

Lamphear is passionate about health and wellness, and she uses that passion to teach fitness classes at the Walton Lifetime Health Complex.

Lamphear plans to continue teaching her fitness classes during her retirement and also plans to camp with her husband at Table Rock Lake.
JAN PHILLIPS – 21 YEARS

Jan Phillips ’69 worked as the executive assistant to Dr. Gary Oliver in the Center for Healthy Relationships and also coordinated an annual retreat for student couples from other universities within the CCCU since joining JBU’s staff in 1998. Although her role did not include interacting directly with students, Phillips hopes her day-to-day work style has impacted those around her professionally and spiritually.

Much of the joy Phillips experienced at JBU can be attributed to her four years as a student in gaining lifelong friends, earning her degree and meeting her husband, but also building relationships with her co-workers and attending basketball games with her husband.

“I have learned many valuable lessons from people God put in my path here,” Phillips said. “I have been encouraged and refined, and I have been challenged to see growth areas and strive to allow God to produce growth where I need it.”

Phillips and her husband plan to travel during their retirement and enjoy their new free time with friends and family as well as serve in a variety of ministries in Siloam Springs.

ROBERT SMITH – 9 YEARS

Robert Smith worked in the Engineering and Construction Management Division as the engineering technician, facilitating student projects, providing faculty supplies and helping in other duties outside of the day-to-day faculty roles. Before JBU, Smith worked as a practicing engineer and in international mission leadership, and he also started two businesses. He was eager to share his knowledge and experience but also discovered an additional role of encouraging students.

“I think that most of the impact of my work is in encouraging a sense of wonder and curiosity,” Smith said. “I came on staff at JBU late in my career. That creates certain limitations but also allows me to relate from the experiences I’ve had — to point out opportunities for growth that students may not have otherwise realized.”

Smith maintains a hope that through challenges in life, God is constantly giving opportunities to grow in the process. “I think a legacy I can leave with JBU is to pass on a sense of optimism for the future and to demonstrate clearly that though there are challenges in adapting for the future, there are also immense opportunities to lean into, with an institutional vision of human flourishing in the fullest sense of the term,” Smith said.

Smith and his wife plan to move closer to family in Oregon and also reengage in a ministry with Christians from North Africa and the Middle East.

DIANA SUMMERS – 12 YEARS

Summers has been a part of the Information Technology Services team, first as a client support specialist for the Help Desk and most recently as the client services director. When her office was in the Walker computer lab, Summers felt honored to listen to students, watch them mature in their faith, graduate and leave with a more positive outlook, ready to work for God in whatever they chose to do.

“The people that work at JBU are so great,” Summers said of her time here. “They have set the example for me to always be kind to all people.”

Summers advises to stay positive because God is always willing to help you and to be kind and helpful to others because you never know the impact you have on people.

Summers looks forward to her next adventure that God hasn’t revealed yet.
In Memoriam

**Emily Astrid Adams ’21**, age 21, died Oct. 4, 2018. Adams was pursuing her nursing degree at JBU. She was born in France but lived most of her life in Indonesia. She was a member of the First Alliance Church of Toccoa.  

**Larry Alexander ’70**, age 71, died Dec. 10, 2018. Alexander graduated from JBU with a degree in physical education and health and played golf and basketball. He accepted Christ at JBU. Alexander served a tour in Vietnam and later taught physical education and coached basketball and golf teams.  

**William Bedgood ’70**, age 75, died Dec. 10, 2018. Bedgood graduated from JBU with a degree in electrical engineering. He was a faithful member of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama, and served in the U.S. Air Force. Bedgood was married 52 years to fellow JBU graduate Linda (Hanson) Bedgood ’67.  

**William Berkheiser ’54**, age 97, died Dec. 13, 2018. Berkheiser graduated from JBU with a degree in biblical and religious education. He served in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was a pastor before becoming director of EICM International. He was an active member of Calvary Bible Church of Mount Joy.  


**Darrell Boggs ’00**, age 54, died Dec. 27, 2018. Boggs graduated from JBU with a degree in organizational management. He served in the Arkansas Army National Guard/Reserves for 28 years. During his service, Boggs completed several military schools and two combat tours, earning the Bronze Star and other military awards. He also worked as the CEO of both Arkansas 811 and Arkansas Utility Protection Services, Inc.  

**Speedy Branstetter ’62**, age 80, died Jan. 30. Branstetter graduated from JBU with a degree in physical education and health. He was a member of the 1962 basketball team inducted into the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame class of 2010. Branstetter taught, coached and served as the principal at a high school and as superintendent in Southwest Missouri.  

**Kirk Garreans ’88**, age 52, died Jan. 23. Garreans grew up in the mission fields of Ecuador and Colombia and eventually came to JBU to study broadcasting. He met his wife Carol (Kinnamon) Garreans ’89 at JBU, and they were married for 32 years with two children. Garreans served as the president of ALP Design & Production, Inc. for over 25 years.  

**Stephen Giddings ’77**, age 64, died Nov. 1, 2018. Giddings graduated from JBU with a degree in business. He was from Jackson, Mississippi.  

**Betty (Bennett) Holland ’86**, age 92, died Oct. 21, 2018. Holland studied at JBU at the age of 58 after her husband Clark passed away. He sustained injuries from his service in World War II that left him paralyzed, so Holland cared for her husband for over 30 years while raising three children. Holland’s passion was to cook for anyone she met.  

Cecil (Denver) Kokensparger ’60, age 86, died Oct. 20, 2018. Kokensparger served in the U.S. Army before he attended JBU to study English and mathematics. For 34 years, Kokensparger taught mathematics, history, drama and English until retiring in 1990.

Louis Lucas ’78, age 62, died Oct. 15, 2018. Lucas graduated from JBU with a degree in physical education and health. He was a State Farm agent for 35 years. He was passionate about sports and played baseball during his time at JBU and later coached high school baseball. He loved following his son Reid in his sporting endeavors.

James Meadors ’51, age 89, died Dec. 9, 2018. Meadors was in the biblical studies program at JBU. Meadors served as a pastor at Lamar Methodist Church and Bellevue Methodist Church during his schooling. He pastored many churches throughout North Arkansas and remained active on church boards and district councils throughout his life.

Lee Netherton ’63, age 77, died April 20. Netherton served JBU for 30 years as a distinguished professor of chemistry, head of the chemistry department, coordinator of wilderness trips and chair of the natural science division. Netherton was a member of the JBU Faculty Hall of Fame, received the Faculty Excellence Award twice, was named Professor of the Year three times and was inducted into the Golden Eagle Hall of Fame in 2010 both individually and as a member of the 1962 Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges Championship team. Netherton attended almost every basketball game for 40 years, during which he often operated the scoreboard.

Shelly (Dill) O’Bryan ’04, age 58, died Nov. 29, 2018. O’Bryan graduated from JBU with a degree in organizational management which she used to help doctors at local medical clinics schedule, code and manage their clinics. She loved spending time with her family and was known for loving and helping anyone in need.

Grace Nancy Otto ’57, age 84, died Feb. 24. Otto studied home economics at JBU. She met and married her husband Ernest Otto ’56 at JBU. Otto worked as a nurse in various doctors’ offices through the years and stayed active by traveling, serving at church and participating in several clubs.

Jonathan Packard ’85, age 55, died Feb. 24. Packard studied electrical engineering during his time at JBU, where he met Karrie (Hines) Packard ’85 whom he married. He worked as a painter and glassworker most of his life and also worked at Day-Spring Cards for 13 years. Packard was a faithful member of Liberty Baptist Church in Siloam Springs.

Betty (Jones) Paulsen ’53, age 86, died Sept. 5, 2018. Paulsen studied business administration at JBU and sang with the Cathedral Choir and Triple Trio. She and her husband sang and were active in every church they attended. They returned to Bella Vista, Arkansas, in 2017. Her greatest desire was for others to know Christ.

Barbara (Rankins) Peeples ’61, age 79, died Nov. 4, 2018. Peeples earned a degree in social studies from JBU and used her degree to work as a grade school teacher her entire career.

Lela Frances Pendergraft ’47, age 93, died April 8. Pendergraft studied elementary education at JBU. She later taught third and fourth grade in Missouri and raised cattle and poultry with her husband on a farm. She worked as a homemaker, substitute
teacher and dressmaker; and she enjoyed gardening, sewing and visiting family. 17

Wilma (Phillips) Rafferty ’48, age 96, died Nov. 23, 2018. Rafferty graduated from JBU, where she met her husband Clark Rafferty ’48, with a degree in biblical studies. They both worked at a local religious radio station in Columbus, Nebraska. Rafferty’s life was full of travel, adventure, hard work and quiet determination. She also often volunteered at her church. 17

Ralph “Leroy” Reese ’50, age 90, died Nov. 3, 2018. Reese graduated from JBU, where he met his wife Wilma Chamberlain ’52, with a degree in biblical and religious studies. Reese worked at Bear Brand Hosiery for 21 years. He was a member of the Siloam Springs Rotary Club, serving as president for a time. He attended Siloam Springs Bible Church for over 40 years. 18

Dorothy (Stockdick) Scott ’46, age 93, died Nov. 4, 2018. Scott studied music at JBU. She was a talented soloist, vocalist, pianist and organist and used her talents in service of Katy Apostolic Faith Church in Texas. She was a judge of Ikebana International, a floral arrangement art form, and started many community groups. 20

Edward Seiford ’50, age 93, died Oct. 27, 2018. Seiford earned a degree in biblical and religious education from JBU. He met his wife Helen (Bundy) Seiford ’51 at JBU and served in the U.S. Navy. 19

Vontella M. Sheridan, age 91, died March 8. Sheridan taught at the JBU High School in Sulphur Springs, Arkansas, and also for one year at JBU. She and her husband Bob ’54 gave generously to JBU for over 25 years, supporting the JBU Scholarship Fund and the Construction Management Department. 21

Doris (Klett) Smallman ’62, age 79, died Jan. 22. Smallman graduated from JBU, where she met her husband William Smallman ’62, with a degree in business administration and biblical studies. For nine years, the Smallmans served in the Amazon Valley in Brazil and then moved to Ohio to work in the administration side of missions. For 14 years, she served as office manager at First Baptist Church in Medina, Ohio. 22

Mildred Marie Stover ’60, age 83, died Feb. 26. Stover graduated from JBU with an English degree and taught for many years. She enjoyed gardening and was a faithful member of Calvary Baptist Church in Neosho, Missouri. 23

Cole Truitt ’05, age 36, died Dec. 8, 2018. Truitt graduated from JBU with an English degree. He graduated magna cum laude from law school and joined the Arkansas Army National Guard as a paralegal specialist. He received many awards and loved playing board and video games with his friends and family. 24

Ernestine Ussery ’52, age 87, died March 14. Ussery attended JBU where she met her husband Bill Ussery ’52. She enjoyed working in the nursery at their church in Arkansas and selling Avon. 24

Paul Weldon ’86, age 54, died Feb. 5. Weldon studied broadcasting and journalism at JBU. Weldon’s passion for music led him to open the Alligator Lounge in Breckenridge, Colorado. Throughout his life, he composed music, and he also started his own band, the Paul Weldon Band. 25

Virgil Wiebe ’63, age 77, died Oct. 18, 2018. Wiebe earned a degree in radio production from JBU. He had a 36-year career at Back to the Bible and served in many capacities, including CFO and vice president of operations, until his retirement. He was an avid sports fan and often volunteered at NAIA sporting events. 26

Barry John Wingfield, age 47, died Nov. 4, 2018. Wingfield was an associate professor of counseling and marriage and family therapy at JBU. As a licensed marriage and family therapist and professional counselor, Wingfield was passionate about living a life to honor the Lord. 27
During my senior year of high school, I did the same thing every day when I got home. I checked the table in the front entry for mail. And nearly every day, there was a letter for me with a Siloam Springs postmark. The return address often had some funny name like “Your Romeo” or “Mr. Arkansas,” and the envelopes and letters came in all colors and sizes. But the author was always the same.

Mark and I had been dating for nearly a year before he drove away one August morning and began the 19-hour drive from Arizona to JBU with his older brother Matt, a JBU sophomore.

In a day when long-distance calls cost 75 cents a minute and email wasn’t available to the average person, we turned to daily letters to keep each other updated on our lives between biweekly phone calls.

Up to this point, my plans had been to attend the state public university. But as my senior year started, I began to consider not only attending a Christian college, but specifically JBU. While Mark’s letters were clear that he wanted me to find the right college for myself, I couldn’t help but be swayed by his words.

“Today seems so peaceful. It’s quiet and everybody’s doing their own thing and relaxing. I feel like going for a walk down by the creek… I really fit in here. When I started high school it was really different for me and I had to adjust. But here it’s been totally natural for me from the first day. It’s hard to explain, but it just is home to me already.”

— Postmarked Sept. 4, 1990

His letters would talk of dorm hijinks, lively class discussions, midnight movies and intramural smack talk.

So I applied and scheduled a campus visit for February. But I reminded him vehemently and often that I wasn’t going to come to college “just for him.” I was only coming to JBU if it was right for me.

I honestly don’t remember much about the visit except for the time I got to spend with Mark and staying in Mayfield with some of Mark and Matt’s friends. I was not swayed by the cold weather or the lack of leaves on any of the trees. (Having grown up in Phoenix, I looked forward to something different…namely, four seasons.)

By the end of that visit, I knew JBU would also be home for me. Mark’s stories, relayed each day in letters, would become my stories. I would get to experience my own dorm pranks and curiosity-driven classroom discussions and write my own letters telling friends and family about my life at JBU.

Julie Gumm ’95 is director of University Marketing & Communications and editor of the Brown Bulletin.
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