First Word

Conversation about Illinois State University

is generally focused on the students, as it should be. We exist to prepare and empower young adults to achieve. There are times, however, where I find it advantageous to examine the institution as a whole.

Just as we encourage our students to pursue their passion, the campus community strives for excellence by following a shared purpose and plan. The plan, Educating Illinois, can be found on the University’s website (IllinoisState.edu).

Evidence of what has been accomplished to date is included, demonstrating the University’s commitment to five core values that are the pursuit of learning and scholarship, individualized attention, diversity, integrity, and civic engagement.

The fulfillment of our promises is obvious in actions and external endorsement. For example, Illinois State has once again experienced an increase in overall enrollment this fall with a total of 21,039 students. Perhaps more surprising is our freshman class of 3,638, which is a record high for the third consecutive year.

What makes this exceptional is the reality that many schools across Illinois and elsewhere struggle to reach enrollment goals. At ISU graduate enrollment is also up, while diversity is strong and academic credentials solid with an average ACT score of nearly 24.

Simply put, the institution’s ability to deliver on its promises has made us the exception. Students and families know this, and are consequently responding by enrolling here.

Faculty and staff have the same appreciation for the University’s mode of operation. For the second consecutive year, ISU has been recognized by The Chronicle of Higher Education in its listing of Great Colleges to Work For. The flagship publication recognized the University for its collaborative governance, confidence in senior leadership, teaching environment, respect and admiration, tenure clarity and process, and the balance of work and personal life.

I know from networking with my administrative peers across Illinois and in other geographic regions that these characteristics are desired but rarely maintained. Recruitment of stellar faculty is often a struggle, but not at Illinois State. We are able to secure exceptional people looking for exceptional opportunities.

Both exist at the University. That’s why myriad students make Illinois State their first choice, and our enrollment is growing. That’s why members of our campus community consider Illinois State an excellent place to work. And that is why I continue to say, with every assurance, Illinois State is strong and stable.

Larry H. Dietz, Ph. D.
President, Illinois State University
FEATURES

8  Meet the gourd guy  
Mac Condill plants with a purpose. Owner of the Great Pumpkin Patch in Central Illinois, he interacts with thousands of visitors annually at his 200-acre farm. They marvel at 300 varieties of pumpkins, squash and gourds from 30 countries. He counts among his fans Martha Stewart and President Barack Obama.

12  Never a dull day  
Master’s graduate Deborah Hull-Walski is an archeologist, anthropologist, historian, researcher and educator. She does aspects of each job working as a collections officer of a Smithsonian museum. Millions visit the internationally acclaimed facility that preserves and displays natural history to feed curious minds, including her own.

18  Offering a helping hand  
Donna Bessant ’62 knows that the future isn’t always bright for college students. They increasingly lack the finances to maximize learning opportunities. She is investing in education majors who would otherwise have limited student teaching options. Read how her gift and the donations of others have impacted people and programs at Illinois State.

25  Foreign ground  
Settling into a college routine can overwhelm the most confident of students. Anxiety is especially anticipated by international students, as Arafat Kabir can attest. He traveled 10,000 miles from Bangladesh to find his future at ISU. His personal reflections reveal how he made the campus his home.

DEPARTMENTS

2  University News  
6  Redbird Athletics  
28  #Redbird Proud  
30  Class Notes
Illinois State students working with the Solar Pathways Project are exploring campus sites where solar panel installations would work. The project is sponsored by a $1.1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and part of a Midwest Renewable Energy Association (MREA) multi-university effort.

The grant is organized and run by students, who work with ISU’s Center for Renewable Energy, the Renewable Energy Program, and the Office of Sustainability led by Missy Nergard, M.A. ’15.

“The faculty and students are creating a shovel-ready solar development plan,” Nergard said. She and Department of Technology Professor Jin Jo work with them to gather data on locations where a solar array is feasible. Sites identified include the Center for Performing Arts roof and parking lots by Hewett and Manchester halls.

The initial phase already completed involved students analyzing possible annual energy production, different types of installation, cost analysis and risk assessment.

“The students were expected to do the research and come up with the answers the same as a professional organization might,” Jo said. They presented initial findings to ISU stakeholders and their applied research at the Smart and Sustainable Campuses Conference in Baltimore during the spring semester.

“It was really an incredible—and incredibly rewarding—project, bringing together students with a lot of different interests, and getting them all on the same page,” said project management graduate student Zach Rose.

Results are shared with MREA partners, including the University of Minnesota, Missouri University of Science and Technology, and Purdue University. The goal is to advance solar deployment at higher education institutions across the United States.

Work on Solar Pathways will continue into 2018. Though none of the MREA institutions are guaranteed to take up the plans, the students gain a competitive advantage through the experience.

“The goal is to develop the plan, not necessarily to complete a solar installation,” Nergard said. “What they learn could impact what they take into the field with them, and how they see the future of their jobs.”
Library renovation work includes removing canopy

Water problems that have plagued Milner Library for years will be addressed with $3.48 million of work approved by the Board of Trustees. The project, which is expected to be completed in 2018, includes removal of a tent-like canopy that has stood over Milner Library’s plaza since 2000.

The canopy helped funnel water away from the plaza deck, which functions as a roof over the library's first floor. Leakage has caused damage to interior spaces and book collections for years. The deck will be replaced and the first floor remodeled.

The project, which will be funded by certificates of participation approved by the board in 2014 for facility improvements, also involves upgrading central public restrooms to become compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Damage to the building’s exterior brick facade will also be addressed.

Pre-natal stress research funded by federal agency

Post-doctoral student Ryan Paitz received $300,000 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study how the stress of pregnant mothers impacts their offspring.

Paitz is a 2010 Ph.D. biological sciences graduate. His work continues in the department as he studies what long-term effects the stress hormone corticosterone has on quail eggs.

Partnering with a Bucknell University colleague, Paitz is examining how quail embryos protect themselves against an influx of the stress hormone that is known as cortisol in humans.

“Quail embryos have been known to metabolize the steroid in some doses. We’re looking at how much is too much, the point at which the eggs can no longer metabolize,” Paitz said.

Understanding the capacity embryos have for absorbing the hormone without long-term damage could offer insights into protecting human fetuses. In humans, an overabundance of the steroid has been linked to diabetes, hypertension and behavioral difficulties.

National teaching honor goes to business professor

Assistant Marketing Professor Tamra Davis has been named the National Collegiate Teacher of the Year by The National Business Education Association. She was honored for her outstanding contributions in teaching business education.

Davis joined ISU’s College of Business in 2011. Her research, which explores problem-solving and team-based learning, has been published in scholarly journals. She also co-authored a chapter on leadership in professional associations for the National Business Education Association’s Leadership in Business Education 2014 Yearbook.

Davis earned her doctorate in occupational education from Oklahoma State University. She also holds a master’s in business education and a bachelor’s in business administration from Oklahoma State. Prior to coming to Illinois State, she was a clinical assistant professor at the University of Oklahoma.

Nursing graduate program secures key accreditation

The Doctor of Nursing Program offered through Mennonite College of Nursing has been accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education. The endorsement runs through December 2021.

The doctoral program is the highest level of clinical practice education, and allows MCN to meet the healthcare needs of people in the state of Illinois and beyond. The college, which also offers a Ph.D., met all accreditation standards with no compliance concerns.

The accreditation is a further indication of the preparation of expert clinicians and leaders graduating from Illinois State and will open doors to excellent nursing professionals.

The 34-semester-hour program is designed for nurse professionals to take online. It can be completed over seven semesters and targets nurses seeking a terminal degree in nursing practice.

Efforts to eliminate water damage at Milner Library will include removal of a canopy added 16 years ago.
Provost is leaving ISU; national search planned
Janet Krejci will leave her position as ISU’s vice president for Academic Affairs and Provost at the end of the fall semester to serve as dean of nursing at Marquette University in Milwaukee. Jan Murphy will hold the position on an interim basis until a national search is completed.

“This was a very difficult decision. My love of ISU runs deep and strong,” said Krejci, who is from Wisconsin. She worked at Marquette for 20 years as a faculty member and administrator.

She arrived at ISU in 2009 as dean of the Mennonite College of Nursing. Under her leadership the college’s Nursing Simulation Laboratory opened, the doctor of nursing practice degree began, and nursing licensure examination pass rates consistently surpassed the national average.

The college doubled undergraduate enrollment under Krejci’s stewardship, and nursing faculty members received more than $1 million in grants. She left the college in 2014 to become interim provost and was named to the position in 2015.

Murphy is interim dean for the College of Applied Science and Technology. She has been at ISU more than 20 years, with one decade spent as an associate provost. She has also previously served as interim provost.

Acting dean named for College of Education
Educational Administration and Foundations Professor Emeritus Al Azinger has been named acting dean of the College of Education. Azinger will fill the post while Dean Perry Schoon participates in an American Council on Education (ACE) fellowship during the 2016-2017 academic year.

Azinger has served in leadership roles within the college, as well as Illinois State’s ombudsperson and interim associate vice president for human relations. Prior to his tenure at Illinois State, he served as a superintendent of schools in Kansas and Iowa.

Schoon is one of 33 senior-level faculty and administrators in higher education chosen from across the country to participate as an ACE fellow this academic year. ACE is the nation’s premier higher education leadership development program.

Global praise for actuarial program
Illinois State is one of only four institutions in the world to be honored with the 2016 Casualty Actuarial Society University (CAS) Award. The honor recognizes exemplary work in preparing students for a career in the property and casualty insurance industry.

“This is another example of the excellent work of our faculty and students as world leaders in actuarial education,” said Actuarial Program Director Krzysztof Ostaszewski. ISU’s program has also been recognized as a Center of
Actuarial Excellence by the Society of Actuaries (SOA) since 2009.

“Only two universities in the U.S. were recognized by both CAS and SOA from the time they started these awards for universities: Illinois State University and the University of Connecticut,” Osta-szewski said.

CAS officials noted the close connection between ISU’s program and industry, including pairing students with actuarial professionals to solve case studies. ISU’s strong industry research by faculty and a commitment to a real-world curriculum was also praised.

The three other schools honored with the inaugural award were the University of California-Santa Barbara, the University of Connecticut and the University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign.

ISU’s police chief invited to national White House event

Police Chief Aaron Woodruff attended a White House 21st Century Policing briefing during the summer. He was among a group of law enforcement officials from across the nation specially chosen to participate in the event that focused on policing best practices.

The final report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing was the foundation for the briefing.

“The Illinois State University Police Department places a high value on building trust within the campus and local communities. Ongoing training and education for our officers is a top priority,” Woodruff said.

Issues discussed included building trust, law enforcement policy and oversight, the use of technology and social media, community policing and crime reduction, officer training and education, and officer wellness and safety.

College of Business is among best in nation

The College of Business is ranked 75th nationally in the 2016 Bloomberg Businessweek Best Undergraduate Business Schools rankings. This is the sixth consecutive ranking by the magazine, which places ISU as the second highest ranked public university in Illinois.

Bloomberg Businessweek surveys students and employers to arrive at the rankings. Questions focus on how well the college’s programs prepare graduates for job success. The overall academic quality of undergraduate programs is also assessed by starting graduate salaries and the availability of student internships.

“The College of Business is very pleased to again be recognized as one of the top business schools in the U.S. This year’s ranking, up 20 places from the previous ranking, is a strong statement on the quality of business education in the college as viewed by our students and employers,” said Gerry McKean, interim dean when rankings were released.

“The ranking validates the college’s strong business curricula that combines active learning in the classroom with a variety of experiential learning activities,” McKean said. “The credit for this recognition goes to our dedicated faculty and staff, and our engaged students.”

Mail

To the Editor,

I enjoyed the article about WGLT and its history (May 2016). Ben Paxton hired me in 1973 during my freshman year. He gave me a job as an engineer and on-air personality. He brought me along in management thinking, and I did my directed project in broadcast management. He helped me to think outside the box. Don’t do the same old thing, find or build a new format.

For the senior year project, I formatted an all-sports station, radio and television together, for a 5 a.m.-midnight broadcast. It featured sports in Central Illinois and pro sports broadcasts when available. We sold time to advertisers in the area.

Ben thought it a good business idea and gave me a perfect score for my senior year. I beat ESPN’s start by two years (TV) and by 10 (radio). Thank you for the guidance, Ben. May you rest in peace.

John Volpe ’77

To the Editor,

I was delighted to read the article Exceptional English niche (May 2016). As a sophomore special education major, I took a class in children’s lit with Verna Hoyman. She convinced us that if teachers used children’s lit properly, we could change the world. I still remember her animated reading of Caps for Sale.

When I went back to ISNU to get my master’s degree in 1967, I took every children’s lit class available. Tami Ranta was my thesis advisor. Now when my granddaughters and I dramatize Caps for Sale or make Chicken Soup with Rice or sponge-paint to copy Swimmy pictures, I remember dear Miss Hoyman. I am grateful for those wonderful classes in children’s literature. They truly changed my life.

Nancy (Rose) Wissinger ’64, M.S. ’67
Ashley Rosch completed four stellar years on ISU’s volleyball team last fall. Over the summer she learned that she was one of 231 student-athletes nominated for the NCAA’s Woman of the Year Award at the Division I level.

“Woman of the Year is such a prestigious award, and to even be considered for it is something that I never expected, so I am just grateful and honored for this opportunity to represent Illinois State,” Rosch said.

She was one of just two nominees from the MVC vying for the award, which honors graduating female student-athletes who have distinguished themselves throughout their collegiate careers in the areas of academic achievement, athletics excellence, service and leadership.

A native of Fox River Grove, Rosch finished her Redbird career as the first, four-time All-MVC First-Team selection in program history and only the fifth overall in league history.

Rosch’s talent resulted in her appearing in every game during her freshman season and starting every game the remaining three years on the team. She set new career highs in points (31.5) and kills (27) in 2015, while also climbing Illinois State’s career record lists.

By the end of her senior season, she compiled impressive career statistics for attempts (4,914), while ranking third in kills (1,609), fourth in points (1,821) and seventh in digs (1,272).

Rosch was named to the MVC Scholar-Athlete First Team for the third year in a row in 2015 and was a nominee for the Senior CLASS Award. A three-time recipient of the MVC Commissioner’s Academic Excellence Award, Rosch was also named to the AFNI and MVC academic honor rolls every possible year and semester.

An environmental health major who maintained a 3.85 grade point average, Rosch participated in community service and campus activities throughout her years on campus. Her leadership roles included serving as ISU’s Student-Athlete Advisory Council representative to the MVC in 2014-2015.
Freshman stand-out in national spotlight

Owen Miller had such an amazing first season as Illinois State’s shortstop that he was selected to Baseball America’s Freshman All-American Second Team. The honor is in addition to Miller being named a Louisville Slugger Freshman All-American.

Only 30 freshmen in total were chosen for the two teams. Miller was also named an All-MVC Honorable Mention at the end of the season, during which he played every game. He ranked among the MVC leaders in three key categories. He led the league in doubles and ranked fourth in total hits. His batting average was the seventh-best mark in the conference.

A native of Wisconsin, Miller is majoring in business administration.

Fund drive underway

A “One for One” membership drive to boost the Weisbecker Scholarship Fund continues through 2016. Athletics hopes to gain 400 new donors—one for each student-athlete. Gifts of any size count toward the goal.

Support of the fund is critical to providing a high-quality experience for student-athletes.

“With the help of donors who have come forward, we have increased the number of scholarships, said Athletics Director Larry Lyons. “If we are able to grow our annual support by another substantial percentage this year, we will be in even better shape moving forward.”

A native of Wisconsin, Miller is majoring in business administration.

ISU Hall of Fame 2016 inductees honored

Illinois State Athletics welcomed three former student-athletes into the ISU Athletics Percy Family Hall of Fame during Homecoming, while also honoring a volunteer with the Stretch Miller Award.

The 2016 inductees include former baseball standout Jared Dufault, a 2002 physical education teacher graduate. Dufault was a career .346 hitter and two-time, All-MVC First-Team selection player at ISU.

Krystal Featherston graduated in 2005 with a degree in public relations. She became ISU’s only three-time MVC Diver of the Year. She was also a four-time All-MVC First-Team selection.

Lori Vogel studied speech communication and is a 1988 graduate. A member of ISU’s softball team, she holds the University record for fewest walks per game and ranks second in career victories and innings pitched. She is a two-time All-Gateway Conference First-Team selection.

Neal MacDonald was honored with the Miller Award for serving as a long-time member of ISU’s official statistics crew. The award celebrates contributions of those whose main services are not playing or coaching, but are important to the program’s success.

Illinois State track and field alum Aisha Praught ’12 represented Jamaica at the Rio 2016 Olympics in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. Praught met the Olympic A Standard in both the 1,500-meter run and the 3,000-meter steeplechase, but chose to compete only in the steeplechase.

Praught discovered her Jamaican heritage after she reconnected with her birth father during the summer of 2013. Two years later, she became a Jamaican citizen and has dual citizenship in the United States. Her first time representing Jamaica was at the 2015 World Championships.

At ISU, one of Praught’s most notable moments was a breakout performance in which she finished a close second in the mile run at the 2012 Indoor NCAA Championships. Praught holds the Missouri Valley Conference record in the 1,500-meter run and the steeplechase. She is ISU’s school record holder in the mile run, 1,500-meter run and steeplechase. Praught was Jamaica’s lone female entrant in a women’s distance event.

Redbird Olympian competed for Jamaica

Fund drive underway

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Support of the fund is critical to providing a high-quality experience for student-athletes.

“If we are able to grow our annual support by another substantial percentage this year, we will be in even better shape moving forward,” Athletics Director Larry Lyons said. “We will continue to push the bar higher in terms of athletic and academic success and community involvement.”

Donations can be made online at www.weisbeckerscholarshipfund.com or by calling (309) 438-3803.
As a boy, he loved putting his arms around a pumpkin from the family’s patch, hoisting it onto the kitchen table, and digging into the center with his mother’s spoon. He never imagined his love of the smooth squash would someday get him an invitation to the White House or a chance to chat up Martha Stewart on national television.

Mac ’99 grew up in Illinois Amish country, where people wave and skinny roads stretch past modest homes with vegetable gardens and clotheslines.

He is a twin and one of three boys. A high school valedictorian, he majored in psychology at a private college in Indiana. It didn’t take him long to miss The Great Pumpkin Patch, a business started on his family’s 200-acre farm in 1989.

During his sophomore year at ISU, Mac applied for a highly competitive internship in Scotland, but he didn’t get it. He applied again as a junior and was chosen. As much as he liked the idea of living in a castle and rolling his wheelbarrow around a 55-acre garden, he didn’t want to delay graduation. He met with Jeff Wood, then College of Applied Science and Technology dean (CAST), and developed a plan. Mac soaked up agribusiness and horticulture classes, graduated summa cum laude, and went back to the farm.

He was ready to lead, having strengthened management traits that were obvious to family members even in his youth. Dad Bruce Condill loves telling the story of Mac leaving a to-do list before going to school. It outlined how many ears of Indian corn needed to be picked, adding “When I get home from school, if these things were done, that would be awfully nice.”

Now 40, Mac owns The Great Pumpkin Patch with his wife, Ginny. More than 60,000 visitors a year take in 300 varieties of pumpkins, squash, and gourds from more than 30 countries. There are mazes, cooking demonstrations, and a chance to connect with the land. One Colorado couple packed three generations into an RV and spent the weekend there, saying it was a bucket list destination.

Mac is a fifth-generation farmer who’s focused on good stewardship, just like his parents. His mother, Mary Beth, wanted to add a few pumpkin seeds to the garden in 1977 to share with her then 4-year-old son and 1-year-old twins. They had a few extra pumpkins so they left them by the milk house, where people bought them and left a little

“I DIDN’T HAVE ENOUGH green IN MY LIFE.”

After driving by a greenhouse near his college, he stopped and asked to work there. “I didn’t have enough green in my life,” he said. Watering plants two days a week still wasn’t enough. He looked for options after his freshman year and found Illinois State University’s horticulture program. He met with former horticulture professor Ann Marie VanDerZanden. “She was just on fire for horticulture, and I knew this is what I had to do,” he said.

TO SAY MAC CONDILL’S LIFE’S WORK STARTED WITH A SEED WOULD BE TRITE BUT TRUE.
Mac is focused on providing visitors with an experience that ties to the land.

money in an envelope. That year they made enough for seed to plant the next year’s garden. The following year, sales covered tennis shoe purchases.

Mary Beth and Bruce are still very engaged in the business, along with Mac’s brothers Kit and Buck and their families. Mac and Ginny’s children include Charley, 11; Mackenzie, 9; and Coewn, 6. Charley hoes morning glories out of the pumpkins while the younger ones pot mums.

On a day this past summer when it was already 80 degrees by 10 a.m., Mac hopped off a tractor in his signature floppy hat and walked to his field of 5,400 mums as gravel crunched under his boots. He pointed to a strategically placed purple martin house. Birds like human interaction, Mac said.

So does he, which explains his excitement in adding options that increasingly lure visitors. One expansion occurred in 2006 with The Homestead Bakery, a year-round operation with Amish employees who arrive before sunrise and hop back on their bikes by noon after filling shelves with cinnamon rolls, breads, cookies and a variety of 18 angel food cake flavors.

Such attractions strengthen the operation, which is going strong in its 28th year despite significant struggles. During the farm crisis in 1989, there was a decision to make: take on debt and buy more land, find other jobs or diversify. The family opted to plant three football fields of pumpkins. A sign went into the yard that fall and people came.

The success intrigued Martha Stewart enough to invite Mac to appear on her show in 2005. The farm had been featured in the Martha Stewart Living magazine a year earlier. He got on the show by offering to decorate her set with 200 varieties of the vining plants.

“I kind of wiggled into that TV spot. The next thing you know, my wife and I and Charley at 7 months old are in a U-Haul truck, driving into Manhattan to Martha Stewarts’ loading dock.”

He convinced the Obama White House it needed an outdoor Halloween display featuring Illinois cucurbits in 2009 and found himself driving another U-Haul—this one loaded with pumpkins—down Pennsylvania Avenue in D.C.

After a check by bomb-sniffing dogs, he and his family toured the White House and built a towering display. Mac suggested it be staffed so a rolling pumpkin wouldn’t injure the 2,000 trick-or-treaters. The White House agreed. Mac’s family ended up at the display, handing out treats along with the Obamas.
Admitting he still hopes for an invitation to Ellen DeGeneres’ show, Mac is focused on providing visitors with an experience that ties to the land. Such an opportunity is increasingly rare, as barely 2 percent of the U.S. population belongs to a farm. “That’s not something you can rip from people’s DNA without having some kind of repercussion,” he said.

When the farm has more than enough, good stewardship remains the rule. Last year the business donated nine tons of produce to food pantries. Other leftovers go to livestock farmers, and anything remaining becomes fertilizer or compost. “We try to feed people, animals, and then the soil,” Mac said.

There’s a third business on the farm that allows everyday gardeners to get their hands on heirloom or rare cucurbits. Homestead Seeds offers tiny corked bottles of harvested seeds. Some have found their way to Illinois State’s grounds. Mac was involved in planning and designing the campus Horticulture Center. A wide variety of cucurbits are grown on the 10-acre site used for research and learning.

He was inducted into CAST’s Academy of Achievement in 2015. Six years earlier the Alumni Association recognized him with the Outstanding Young Alumni Award, in part for his unending creativity.

When it comes to creating, Mac is always at the table. He doesn’t worry about whether there is too much rain or too little, or if the days are too cold or too warm. By the close of the season each fall, he could easily be too tired to pull his boots off, let alone carve a pumpkin, but he always does. It’s a simple pumpkin, maybe even one with triangle eyes. It’s one of many traditions that live on in the Condill family and on their farm.

“There’s something about an orange pumpkin and a little kid,” he said. Or, in Mac’s case, a big one.

"WE TRY TO **feed** PEOPLE, **ANIMALS**, AND THEN THE SOIL."

After building this towering display at the White House, Mac Condill and his family greeted trick-or-treaters with President Barack Obama and his family.
HISTORY IN HER HANDS

BY SUSAN MARQUARDT BLYSTONE

Alumna collects, protects national treasures
The Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History’s (NMNH) mission is succinct: Understanding the natural world and our place in it. The complication comes in putting this far from simplistic plan into practice, as Deborah Hull-Walski knows all too well.

Hull-Walski, M.S. ’88, is a collections officer for the museum’s Collections Program in the nation’s capital. The work is daunting and challenging on a daily basis given the museum’s 145 million items.

Among all that has been preserved are more than 2 million cultural artifacts, an excess of 4 million pressed plants and 35 million insects. It is no wonder the museum ranks as the largest and most frequented natural history museum in the world.

“Our collection ranges from smaller than a flea to a whale skeleton and totem pole,” Hull-Walski said, noting she is often asked about the largest and smallest items. “It depends on if you want to know by weight, height or width.”

The varying dimensions are just one fascination for visitors. There were 3.8 million visits this year just through June, with more than 15,000 on an average day. The total reached 7 million in 2014, excluding nearly 600,000 annual database searches.

Each visitor has the opportunity to explore 325,000 square feet of exhibit space in the Natural History Building that occupies 1.32 million square feet on the National Mall. Others view the more than 3 million items loaned each year.

One of 429 full-time employees, Hull-Walski has been at the museum almost 25 years. The College of Arts and Sciences Hall of Fame inductee was hired in 1992 as the Department of Anthropology collections manager. The position was not one she envisioned in her future while completing her master’s in historical archaeology at Illinois State.

A native of Connecticut, Hull-Walski was fascinated with colonial history during her childhood. She was encouraged to attend ISU for graduate study while working at an historical archaeology site in Mississippi with alumnus Bob Sonderman ’76, M.S. ’79. She focused on historical archaeology at ISU under the leadership of now retired
Anthropology Professor Ed Jelks and his wife, Judy. “They raised generations of archaeologists,” Hull-Walski said. Students bonded during digs that left them sweaty, sunburned, and for Hull-Walski, eager to examine what had been found.

“I wanted to be in the field but soon realized many discoveries are in the lab. I liked that better because it was an opportunity to put order and structure to what was found,” Hull-Walski said. She came to that conclusion after working a range of locations including historic townsites in Mississippi, a Kansas fort and Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) sites on Colorado mesas.

“Sometimes it’s great, but tin can after tin can after bottle cap and glass shard” gets tiring. “Not everything is valuable. We have to be very disciplined and make efforts to document some materials in the field and leave them there,” Hull-Walski said.

That challenge has been an integral part of her job since she started at the Smithsonian as a collections manager in the Department of Anthropology. Her work involves securing legal documentation for every item. Beyond inspecting for pests when collections arrive and handling inventory tasks, duties include organizing, cataloging, photographing and housing each item.

“Storage is finite,” Hull-Walski noted, which is why the Smithsonian has strong collection guidelines that she helped formulate. “We have strict policies for the acquisition and disposal of collections.”

“I have stood with a piece of Mars in one hand and the Moon in the other. Where else is that possible?”

At the same time, it is critically important to look to the future. Enough variety of a specific treasure must be gathered to allow for serious research showing transition over time. An example is the extensive collection of pottery created by members of the Hopi tribe and dating back to the early 1600s.

“No two pots are going to be exactly alike because they were made by a person not a machine,” she said. “It is so important to have more than one piece. Researchers may want to look at designs from different time periods. They may be able to identify artists or see cultural changes through time.”

The teaching and research aspect of the Smithsonian’s collection is always a critical component to decisions made. It became an especially integral part of Hull-Walski’s four years of work as collections manager for the Office of Education and Outreach beginning in 2012.

Her first goal was to handle collections’ management issues as the museum planned and installed Q?rius (pronounced “curious”), which is an interactive learning space that opened in December 2013 to teens and tweens. Last fiscal year drew 241,000 visitors—with 1,200 daily on an average summer weekend—all eager to examine the 6,000 objects showcased. Others explore Q?rius collections through the website (qrius.si.edu), which had more than 300,000 online views in 2015.

The Q?rius collections are housed in archival boxes and have QR codes that link each specimen to an online profile that provides such things as scientific name, where it was collected and time period.

Each container is color coded based on the amount of handling allowed. The precautions protect both specimens and visitors.

“One of our biggest challenges was to know how best to make items available,” Hull-Walski said. “We had to worry about traces of chemicals and safety from sharp objects, something ingestible or fragile.”

Since its completion, visitors have exceeded expectations in their enthusiasm to study items under a microscope, do touchscreen activities, attend a laboratory class and meet visiting scientists.

The opportunity to create such a
Most days Deborah Hull-Walski works behind the scenes at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, navigating a maze of crowded storage space. Her office is equally hidden from public view, tucked away in what is affectionately known as the building’s attic.

There are times, however, when she finds herself in the spotlight. Her role in researching iron coffins and their unidentified remains has led to an expertise that has captured national attention. The work began in 2005 when the museum received a 19th century coffin recovered from an unmarked burial site in Washington, D.C.

“Cast iron coffins are not well known, so to be able to document the coffin was very interesting,” Hull-Walski said. “But more important was the boy inside. He came from an unidentified burial, an unmarked grave located in a subdivision.”

She partnered with forensic anthropologists Doug Owsley, the museum’s chair of physical anthropology; and Dave Hunt, physical anthropology collections manager, to research the location. They learned through historical documents that Columbian College, with an attached cemetery, was once on the site.

More research confirmed the coffin was made from 1850 to 1852, and the male clothing dated to the early 1850s. Hull-Walski, with a team of George Washington interns and other volunteers, searched obituaries and found records of three teen boys. The team began genealogical research to find living relatives, eventually identifying William Taylor White a the deceased. He was from Virginia but studying at the college.

The work resulted in a proper burial for White at a service Hull-Walski attended. In addition, she has found close to 2,000 ancestors tied to the White family.

“It was something that 20 or 25 years ago would not have even been possible—to be able to find someone, to be able to have the DNA match up with a living relative,” Hull-Walski said. “Blending the historic aspect of it with the genealogical research with the forensics aspects was amazing. It captured the interest of so many.”

Hull-Walski hopes for equal success in ongoing work with iron coffins removed from 19th-century cemeteries in D.C. and Virginia. She and Owsley are examining the remains and coffins from burial vaults, determined to learn the story behind each of the lives suspended in time.
A lab in the Ropp Agriculture Building processes meat for the purpose of research and teaching, according to Justin Rickard, assistant professor of animal and meat science. All the meat handled in the lab comes from the ISU Farm in Lexington. Most of the processing is done in the spring, with the bulk of the meat being pork and beef. On occasion, there is also lamb. Most of the lab’s research is done on beef, Rickard said. The lab can produce country hams, brats and sausages (both in several varieties), bacon, ground beef, ground pork, chops, steaks, and roasts.

1. Assistant Professor Justin Rickard
Rickard, ’04, M.S. ’08, currently has three graduate students and a “handful” of undergraduates under his tutelage. Rickard is a meat scientist and beef specialist. During the part of his day when his classroom is the meat lab at Ropp, Rickard says his focus is on meat quality.

2. Riley Parmenter
Parmenter ’14 is from Fairbury and is working on his master’s degree in meat science. Here he’s busy prepping meat for the grinder to be made into ground pork.

3. David James
James ’15 hails from Minier. He is a master’s student in ag education and leadership, with an emphasis on agriculture health and safety. He and Rickard work at a prep table trimming fat from a pork belly.

4. Market hog
This is actually one half of a market hog from the ISU Farm in Lexington in the middle of being processed. Pork is one of the most widely consumed meats in the world. A whole hog carcass weighs in the neighborhood of 205-220 pounds, and very little of it goes to waste in processing.

5. Smoking allowed
This is an ALKAR brand smokehouse. It’s similar to what some people might have at home for smoking wild game, but this one is likely bigger given that it has a 500-pound capacity. A smokehouse is necessary for two important functions: preservation and flavor.

6. High on the hog
This is a fresh ham. It comes from the top side of the hog, which is where the term “high on the hog” originated, according to Rickard. The value of a hog
used to be from the top down, but that’s changed in recent years since so many consumers prefer bacon, he said.

7. Belly up
This big slab of meat on the prep table is a pork belly. Pork bellies are fatty, contain spare ribs, and literally come from the pig’s belly. The pork belly section of a hog is also where bacon comes from. It gets cured, put in the smoker, and then is sliced into bacon.

8. Bacon needs combing?
A bacon comb is a tool used to hang pork bellies in the smoker. A bacon comb is a practical tool since a pork belly can take up a lot more space if it’s laid out on a smokehouse rack than if it’s hanging from one of these.

9. Dixie cup science
Known as a “drip loss setup,” these simply constructed devices are an example of actual science being performed in the lab. These are basic Dixie cups turned upside down with pieces of meat attached to a fishing hook that’s been punched through the bottom of each cup. The idea is to measure water loss. Why measure such a thing, you ask? “We are trying to improve the ability of meat to hold water,” Rickard said. “So it doesn’t cook up all dried out.”

10. Cool it
Behind this white wall is the lab’s walk-in cooler, integral to any meat processing plant. This one is pretty big with a capacity to hold either three beef carcasses at one time or five hog carcasses. You can figure the weight of a beef carcass at about 800 pounds each, with hogs weighing in at about one-quarter of that.

11. Tools of the trade
On both prep tables, you see some of the tools needed for the trade of meat cutting. Processing meat requires different sizes of knives, a sharpening steel to maintain the edges of knives, and a handsaw.

12. Well grounded
This is a BIRO brand meat grinder, the machine that gives you ground beef and ground pork. It’s used in the making of sausages and brats. Meat comes out of the grinder and then is stuffed into natural casings to get the finished product.
Much has changed in education since Donna Bessant received her elementary ed degree from Illinois State Normal University in 1962. Classrooms are more diverse, parental involvement is either nonexistent or overbearing, budgets have dwindled, violence has escalated, and government mandates drive the curriculum.

Having worked as a teacher, school librarian and district administrator in both the U.S. and internationally for nearly 40 years, Bessant has witnessed first-hand these monumental shifts. She is seriously aware of the education system’s issues, but she chooses to focus on the positive potential—specifically, the strengths and capabilities exhibited by the next generation of educators.

Bessant is confident teachers can survive the changing demands of the profession, if they begin with a solid foundation of practice supported by theory. She got that foundation in 1962 and is strongly convinced that Illinois State’s College of Education continues to provide the basics in preparing educators who will improve learning and teaching.

Her faith in the teacher-training program is so strong that Bessant is partnering with the College of Education by invest-
ing a significant portion of her life savings to support students who are participating in clinical experiences. She still vividly remembers her own student-teaching opportunity as the first true test of her skills.

“I went through all of my coursework at ISNU, but the proof of the pudding came in student teaching,” Bessant said. “I went into my assigned third grade class, took over the education of those young learners, and really saw how everything fit together.”

She found her student-teaching experience very rewarding, but she also faced challenges in ways that had little to do with the classroom work. “I had money troubles, living off campus, renting a room, getting a car to drive, and more,” Bessant recalled.

Gratitude for her experiences as an undergraduate and memories of financial need motivated her to designate a gift of more than six figures and establish the Donna L. Bessant Endowed Fund within the College of Education. ISU recipients will receive financial assistance to help cover the costs of housing, travel, technology, and other expenses tied to clinical assignments.
Bessant is especially hopeful the investment will allow more prospective teachers to experience the college’s Professional Development School, which creates a yearlong student-teaching experience. Many students who participate in the program are prepared to enter inner-city school districts that are struggling with major education issues.

“The endowment may not be a whole chunk of change for one young person, but it could make a difference at the beginning of their career,” Bessant said. “That’s the time we all need to be as positive as possible.”

She knows how even a little support can make a huge difference because she benefitted from sacrifices her parents made to ensure she went to college and obtained her teaching credentials. Bessant’s mother was city clerk in the small Illinois community of Geneseo, and her father drove a bulldozer at a local coal company.

“From my earliest years, my family anticipated that I would go to college. My parents said that they would save up and send me, even though that was back in the dark ages when not many folks went beyond high school,” she remembered.

“I vaguely remember that tuition, room and board, and fees totaled about $600 per semester. That was pretty expensive money in that day. I worked little jobs in high school to save as much as I could,” Bessant said. “My parents paid for first semesters, and I paid for the second.” Her parents also provided $20 per month to cover incidentals and Sunday evening meals, when campus cafeterias closed.

ISNU felt like home to Bessant. Enrollment in 1959 was approximately 3,500 students, which nearly matched the population of her hometown. She met peers from the big city of Chicago and other communities, took outstanding classes in multiple subjects—some taught in Old Main—and thrived in the environment. The University expanded significantly during her four years of attendance, yet the campus remained friendly under the leadership of President Robert Bone.

Beyond the fundamentals required for an elementary education degree, Bessant learned organizational and management skills while honing concepts of self-discipline. With her ISNU degree in hand, she began her career teaching third grade in Arlington Heights. She taught there two years before deciding to see the world.

“I applied for the Peace Corps and the Overseas Dependent Schools (Department of Defense),” she said. The latter offered a teaching position first. She had no qualms accepting the offer to teach in Okinawa and indeed, stayed with the program five years. She taught children of American military

A shifting paradigm

Libraries are changing not dying. That was the topic for this year’s Bryant Jackson Lectureship, an annual event at Milner Library that draws librarians from nearby states and features prominent speakers and scholars in the field of library and information science. The lectureship was endowed in 2003 by former university librarian Joe Kraus. He established the event and fund to honor his associate university librarian, Bryant Jackson, who served the campus for more than 26 years.

Since its opening in 1890, Milner Library has been the heart and soul of academic endeavors across campus. The facility today offers innovative, high-tech spaces and support services reflective of learning and teaching in the 21st century.

“We are focusing on what students want and maybe that’s a 3D printer, which you might need to do a project but don’t have in your residence hall,” said Magdalena Casper-Shipp, Milner’s public relations librarian. “Students use the library the same way professors use their offices. We’re not dying. We’re going to be way more interesting.”

Scholarship keeps student’s dream alive

After years of unexplained aches and pains, Sarah Hogan was diagnosed with fibromyalgia—a common and complex chronic pain disorder that makes even mundane tasks excruciating. In an instant, she saw her lifelong dreams of serving in the military or law enforcement vanish.

“That took a big toll on me,” said Hogan, who was just 17 at the time. “I thought, ‘How am I going to change the world now?’”

She found the answer at Illinois State, where she is a sophomore psychology major with a new plan to make a difference—one person at a time—through a career in substance abuse counseling.

Hogan was chosen as a scholarship recipient by Disability Concerns, which is now called Student Access and Accommodation Services. She received the Educational Enhancement Scholarship funded by an anonymous donor. The $2,000 award is almost an entire summer’s worth of work, which is challenging for her due to her disability.

“I’m not going to let this disease hold me back,” Hogan said. “I’m so motivated to do what I want to do.”
families in Japan and Germany, toured many exotic and wonderful places, and met her husband who served in the Army’s Special Forces.

Upon returning to the U.S., Bessant completed a master’s degree in library and information science at the University of Illinois. That prepared her for a career with the Monterey Peninsula Schools in California, where she began work in a Title II elementary school. Later she moved to a junior high school, completed an administrative credential, and served as district librarian and curriculum coordinator. She created a nationally-recognized school library program for the entire district.

In 2000 she retired from the Monterey school district, but did not end working with students and teachers. She joined the Monterey County Office of Education as an educational coordinator and partnered with superintendents, curriculum coordinators, and teachers to meet federal requirements, develop in-service opportunities, and coordinate specific educational activities in a county that is larger than Delaware.

Bessant is also involved in literacy projects with the Leon and Sylvia Panetta Institute of Public Policy, where she trains reading volunteers to implement a Monterey County Reads project. She continues to participate in a Reading Is Funda-

mental outreach that provides reading-aloud times, books, and positive attitudes for 2,5000 students from kindergarten through fifth grade three times a school year.

Each activity highlights the increasing need for educators who have a solid foundation in subject matter and teaching skills, as well as inner confidence to work with a diverse student group. Young teachers are entering a career where they face budget inadequacies, legislative mandates, and other educational hurdles. The rewards, however, continue to come from students.

“I’ve had a wonderful career,” Bessant affirmed, explaining that she cherishes interactions with youngsters who are always energetic and curious. “I can walk into a school, spend hours with students and teachers, and come out feeling as fresh as a daisy! The energy that comes from kids is just phenomenal.”

She wants that same positive experience for those just preparing to enter the classroom, regardless of the challenges existing in the field. “Beginning teachers bring freshness and vitality to teaching and learning,” Bessant stated.

“I’m proud that my accumulated estate can help the next generation of educators, and I encourage all of us to work together in supporting new, creative teachers in our schools.”

Margaret Balbach continues to leave her mark on Illinois State’s horticul-
ture program.

Before her death last year at age 91, Balbach and her husband established the Drs. Margaret and Harold Balbach Endowment Fund. It recognizes his work as a research biologist with the Army Engineer Research and Development Center and her impact as an ISU faculty member.

“It was a great contribution to her legacy,” said Professor of Horticulture David Kopsell ’93, a former student of Balbach. “She started the program here and championed it for 20-plus years.”

Balbach joined Illinois State’s Department of Agriculture in 1973 and founded the department’s horticulture-agribusiness program. She retired in 1994.

The endowment will help support the Horticulture Center and the Horticulture Club, a registered student organization that will use the gift to pay for students to attend the National Collegiate Landscape Competition.

“I don’t want a student to say, ‘I can’t go because I can’t afford it,’” Kopsell said.

Endowment plants a seed for continued learning

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Illinois State senior Emma Byall’s recent excitement over landing a summer internship in Sydney was quickly met with some sticker shock: Airfare to Australia is really, really expensive.

Instead of delaying the trip and taking a step back in her international business studies, Byall was chosen to receive the Carson and Iris Varner International Experience Fund scholarship. That made it financially possible for her to travel to Australia, adding real-world international business experience to her resume.

This is hardly the first time that the Varners put the world within arm’s reach for an Illinois State student. The husband-and-wife College of Business faculty members created Illinois State’s international business major—still the only one of its kind at a public university in Illinois.

“I couldn’t have done it without them,” said Byall, an international business major with minors in German and business environment and sustainability. “I’m really grateful. It makes me feel like what I’m doing is important, that it’s making a difference.”

Helping Redbirds fly around the world

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University Advancement closed FY2016 with the second largest fundraising year in the institution’s history. After an overwhelmingly successful 2015 that saw some of the largest individual gifts in Illinois State’s history, the University partnered with alumni and friends to continue the trajectory of success.

“Our goal was to reach $21 million in gifts and commitments to the University, and surpass 2014’s $19.5 million. Attached to that $21 million goal was a secondary goal of $11 million in cash,” University Advancement Vice President Pat Vickerman noted. “Through the generosity of our donors, both goals were achieved. Greater cash gifts bring resources that can be invested to help students, faculty, and programs right away. It is important to maintain a balance of cash and estate gifts when planning for the future of the University,” Vickerman added.

The philanthropy of donors to Illinois State makes stories like those on the preceding pages possible. Private gift support allows these individuals—as well as many current and future students—to achieve at their highest level as they prepare to make their mark on our world.

“The Foundation Board is proud of the unprecedented fundraising success of the last three years,” said Foundation Board of Directors Chair Ann Baughan, MBA ’83. “Many of Illinois State’s indicators of success are trending in a positive direction. Thank you to our Redbird alumni and friends for their role in making fundraising another of those positive trends.”

“We are here to change lives—to make an impact on the futures of individual Redbirds and those lives they touch after receiving an excellent education at Illinois State,” stated President Larry Dietz. “I deeply appreciate the contributions of our donors who are helping to make this far-reaching change in the lives of so many through their gifts.”

GIFT PRODUCTION BY PURPOSE

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Each gift stems from an interest in making a difference in the lives of people at Illinois State. Everyone has an opportunity to have an impact.

4 ways to invest in your passion today

1. VISIT IllinoisState.edu/Giving
2. CALL (309) 438-2592
3. EMAIL lwey@ilstu.edu
4. MAIL the enclosed envelope
Foundation

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The University benefits from individuals who give of their time as well as their finances. Members of the Foundation Board of Directors are especially instrumental in providing their expertise to solicit and secure funds. They also work to maximize each private investment.

The Foundation is a not-for-profit organization that manages gifts to the University. These dollars support many student scholarships, professorships, research, and other opportunities for Illinois State students.

Not only does the board oversee the portfolio investments of the Foundation’s endowment, but it also is in charge of distributing dollars to fulfill the wishes of our loyal alumni and friends who support the University. The Foundation ensures that money given to Illinois State is used as the donor intended and is consistent with the University’s mission.

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Dave Wampler ’83
Mary Ann Webb ’78
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Doug Collins ’73
Thomas Jacob
Christine Bruckner
Donald McHenry ’57
Mary Lou Mercier
Kaci Rollings ’94

FY2016 TOTAL FUNDRAISING

$21.69 M

After two consecutive record-breaking fundraising years, Illinois State’s fundraising met the annual goal of $21 million in private fundraising. This total was the highest of any previous fundraising year other than fiscal year 2015.

$3.7 M

Gifts DISBURSED TO THE UNIVERSITY

The ultimate goal of fundraising is to support Illinois State’s students, faculty, and programs. This fiscal year, $3.7 million from the endowment was given to the areas designated by our donors.

$11.6 M

Cash RECEIPTS

These gifts provided resources that can be used to help students, faculty, and programs immediately.

2,0008

Scholarships AWARDED

Scholarships help Redbirds attain their goal of an Illinois State degree, joining the ranks of our 200,000+ alumni worldwide.

11,898

Alumni DONORS

Redbirds support the University mission through private giving. Of the nearly 12,000 alumni who gave back to Illinois State over the fiscal year, 1,029 were first-time donors.
Efforts to maintain the pride members of the Class of 1984 exhibited with a gift of a ceramic-tile seal displayed on the east side of Bone Student Center were successful during the fall semester.

The initial seal, mounted facing Milner Library, was removed in 2015 for refurbishing. After hanging on the side of the building for decades, workers found damage to the tiles was so significant that repairs were impossible.

The new seal, which hangs in the same location and on the same base, was made possible through the efforts and talents of a graduate student in the College of Fine Arts. George Barreca is studying ceramics in the School of Art. He crafted the piece that is five feet in diameter under the direction of Albion Stafford, an associate professor in the school’s ceramics program.

“This was a great chance to give back to the University and the community I really love,” said Barreca of Philadelphia, who is in his third year and final semester. “I chose to come to Illinois State because the art faculty members were so welcoming, and that has held true of all the people I have met here.”

Barreca has become actively involved with alumni as well, hosting “pottery in the making” sessions for graduates visiting campus. The seal will now be a lasting reminder of his dedication and talent.

“This is a wonderful legacy George will leave behind when he graduates in May,” School of Art Director Michael Wille said. “And every time I walk past it, I will think of him and all the students in our incredible ceramics program.”

The Class of 1984 will now also still be remembered for a gift that lasted three decades. The new piece, like the original, will make all on campus Redbird proud.

Go to IllinoisState.edu/magazine to see a video of the project.
It happens every fall. A new cohort of students arrive feeling as if they have been dropped into an alien land. Even the most confident and prepared freshmen go through a transition as they adapt to the expectations, responsibilities and freedoms that come with collegiate life.

The challenge is even greater for international students, who literally learn to embrace Illinois State as foreign territory. Among them is Arafat Kabir, a 26-year-old who graduated in May with a master’s in political science.

Kabir came to ISU in fall 2014 as one of 445 international students from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Each was welcomed by the International Student and Scholar Services through ISU’s Office of International Studies and Programs. The unit helps students with issues that range from immigration to cultural, personal and educational questions.

Kabir was unique within that 2014 group. Beyond speaking four languages, he traveled the farthest to attend. ISU’s campus sits 10,000 miles from his home in Bangladesh and within a time zone that differs by 11 hours.

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated nations on earth, with 156 million people crammed into a country the size of Louisiana. The open prairies and cornfields were consequently quite a change for Kabir, who received a full scholarship to pursue his passion of global politics and culture.

Kabir’s experience was enriched as a graduate assistant, serving on the University’s Graduate Student Association and working as a freelance writer. His articles have appeared in the Wall Street Journal, International Policy Digest, and Forbes Magazine. The confidence Kabir gained after completing two years on the campus he embraced as his U.S. home prepared him to begin a doctoral program in political science this fall at the University of Utah.
My first day at ISU was perspiring. It was a sunny, sweltering day in August 2014. Beads of sweat were trickling down my forehead as I was walking around the campus for graduate student orientation.

Curious to see how I’d feel if I was home in Bangladesh, I checked my smartphone weather app. It revealed that the temperature in Celsius—I still can’t decipher the readings in Fahrenheit, a uniqueness of America—was higher in Normal than Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh. I was taken aback. For some inexplicable reason, I thought I’d never get sweaty in the considerably colder United States of America.

It wasn’t only the anomalous weather that caught me off guard. As I met people and conversed with them, I realized I wasn’t giving a solid answer to their apparently innocent question: “Why ISU?” One reason was the size of the Department of Politics and Government and the opportunity to interact closely with faculty. I also knew that the chair, Ali Riaz, is an expert in my area of study—South Asian politics.

Another answer was also swirling in my head: free ride at ISU. Graduate school, after all, is expensive. But I restrained myself from saying it, because it wasn’t entirely an honest response. A university in Texas offered me a better stipend package. Yet I came to ISU.

“But why?” I wondered.

That I didn’t know the complete answer to this simple question was a boon for me. I became consciously interested in the journey I embarked on at ISU. I was eager to see which direction ISU would lead me and how the University would transform my life.

Coming to Illinois State was one of the biggest decisions in my life. I had already completed a bachelor’s degree in engineering in Bangladesh and was working for Weatherford, one of the world’s largest petroleum service companies. I enjoyed my job, which allowed me to work with an eclectic mix of people, and travel across Southeast Asia.

When I quit, many thought I had gone crazy because I was one month away from a promotion. Moreover, I made a 180-degree turn from electrical engineering to political science. My reason was simple. Politics animates me. I wish to contribute to this field.

ISU meant to me a new life, new beginning. I promised myself that I wouldn’t take the opportunities, experiences or the knowledge offered for granted. As a Redbird, I wanted to do what was expected with punctuality and passion—performing my responsibilities as a graduate teaching assistant, maintaining good academic standing, engaging with the ISU community and taking ISU to the outside world.

I had a spectacular time during my two years at Illinois State. Beginning from the first week of school, I received more than my fair share of good fortune. Take for example, a dinner with Town of Normal council members and representatives of ISU’s Graduate Student Association. Each member spoke to us, listened to our suggestions and imbued us with the feeling that students are important when it comes to their decision-making process.

It was a new experience for me since Bangladeshi universities, in general, do not facilitate such interaction between politicians and students. This helped me realize that apart from being a proud Redbird, I had an identity as a citizen of Normal.

It didn’t take me long to find my new kin in Bloomington-Normal, thanks to the Graduate School and International Talk Time (ITT), a campus registered student organization. The group meets Friday nights for a Bible study and dinner offered by a local family. This was just one opportunity to meet other international students and share our unique yet common experiences as we adjusted to life so far from home.

Other campus services helped me settle in as well. The International Studies Office put me in
contact with John and Linda Berger when I was looking for housing. They coordinate local families willing to host international students for a day or two upon their arrival.

The Bergers help international students get furniture and appliances for free with the aid of a local church group, while host families provide other household essentials. This is a huge benefit because taking care of these things allows international students to settle down comparatively faster and easier.

Jack and Margaret Archibald, who lived and worked in Bangladesh for almost three decades, served as the host family for myself and two other Bangladeshi students. They took us to buy groceries; complete paperwork, including acquiring a state ID; and showed us around the city.

I was amazed to receive such warm hospitality from an American family. Even after I moved to my campus apartment, they continued to check on me and included me in Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations. Sometimes Margaret would show up with homemade cookies. If any need arose, I always knew there were people I could turn to.

And there were some troubling moments, including race-related comments that made it clear stereotypes unfortunately still exist. There was the struggle of finding a summer job, as I stayed on campus to complete summer courses, which is the norm for international students. The need to file taxes was another obstacle that I faced along with my international peers.

The chance to address these issues as a representative to the University Graduate Council was one of the rewarding experiences and opportunities I had while at Illinois State. The University also gave me a quality education, a safe environment, friends for a lifetime and unforgettable memories. I’ve worked with wonderful professors, professionals and even an Illinois senator—Jason Barickman ’98. I’ve met with leaders of their respective fields and been inspired by their achievements.

I’ve learned a lot in the classroom and beyond, as I realized many cultural differences. For example, it is common for students here to sit with their legs crossed in front of the professors. Back home it is considered disrespectful. Likewise, several of my actions, at first, came across rude to my friends. However, I tried to celebrate these differences too, including that I come from a land of spices. I became the ‘spice police’ for my friends whenever we tried an Asian food or restaurant. Surely, I’ll fondly reminisce those fun moments.

Not every moment was unique, yet I loved each and every day. Next time I’m asked why I chose Illinois State, my answer will be firm and fast: to fall in love with ISU.
Nothing matches the excitement of filling Hancock Stadium or a packed Redbird Arena. Distance unfortunately makes attendance impossible for Redbirds across the country, which is why regional and affinity alumni networks are growing in popularity.

There are more than 40 available, including a Seattle group with members shown above. Each links alumni to the University, providing opportunities for Redbirds to remain active no matter where they may live.

Nikki Kuniej ’10 sought that when she and husband, Andrew Maron ’10, moved to South Carolina. “We were looking for an easy way to make new friends in the area. The first thing we thought of was the Alumni Association. We were surprised to find out Charleston did not have a network,” Kuniej said. The couple hosted three alumni events within the past year, with attendance growing.

Other networks have been established for several years with much success thanks to leaders like Denver’s Jenna Anderson ’07. “My college experience was a great one. I wanted to get involved with my alumni network because I wanted to hear about everyone else’s experiences, while meeting new people in Denver.”

Both networks, along with several others within and outside of Illinois, have strong watch party attendance. Even alumni who are not huge sports fans enjoy the events.

Affinity-based alumni groups provide other options for alumni to stay connected to Illinois State. These range from interest in a specific profession to campus involvement through the Student Affair Alumni Network or the Alumni Band Network. Several have started scholarship programs.

Find out more about alumni networks, network events and how to get involved at Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/Networks.
Loyal Redbird couple
Homecoming royalty

Parker and Sharon (Morton) Lawlis of Normal, this year’s Homecoming alumni king and queen, are the epitome of what it means to be Redbird proud.

Parker ’57, M.S. ’61, studied business education and education administration while on the basketball team. He worked at ISU as alumni director and retired as director of placement services. He has served as president of the Illinois State Annuitants Association and received the E. Burton Mercier Service Award. Sharon ’60 studied home economics. She taught at Illinois State before teaching middle school.

The couple established the Lawlis Endowed Scholarship in Family and Consumer Sciences to assist students majoring in education within the department. They attend scholarship and university events, remaining involved with the Half Century Club and Alumni Association. Both are members of the Loyalty Circle, which recognizes financial contributions made to the University.

Deadline nears for scholarship search

Whether you have a student currently enrolled at Illinois State or planning to attend, there are several resources offered through the University’s Financial Aid Office to assist in the search for scholarships. One tool is the ScholarshipFinder. This resource matches scholarships that fit with your student’s interests. Begin a search at ScholarshipFinder.IllinoisState.edu.

The Alumni Association also offers financial assistance through the Marian H. Dean Legacy Scholarship for children of Illinois State alumni, the Alumni Association Scholarship, the Latin@ Alumni Network Scholarship, and several Black Colleagues Association scholarships. The deadline for these scholarships for 2017-2018 is December 16. Find them at Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/Scholarships.

From the archives

It was the 1960s when a human-size mascot began to appear at ISU games. The first version was a bird body and feet but no head. By 1966, top, the look had changed. President Robert Bone and the Homecoming queen are with the mascot. Twenty years passed from the original before a Reggie Redbird mascot similar to the one that still exists today was introduced. The unveiling occurred on September 5, 1981, at the first football game of the season. That was the same year ISU joined the Missouri Valley Conference, giving the University a new look for the more intense competition. The name Reggie was chosen by contest.
Taking care of business
Alum puts degree to work as a manager of Alamo II bookstore

Illinois State business alum Larry Ernat '94 has managed The Alamo II for almost a decade. His passions and his business philosophies stem back to his marketing and business administration studies in the College of Business (COB) more than two decades ago.

Ernat is still influenced by Peter Drucker's book *The Practice of Management*, which was assigned reading in a marketing class.

“It’s always been at the forefront that the purpose of a business is to create a customer. I remember reading that when I was 27,” Ernat said. He puts the principle into practice at The Alamo. Rather than wait for a lull in sales, he asks why something is working well.

As Ernat spoke, his staff continuously moved about helping customers and filling displays. It was clear they genuinely like their jobs, yet he shied away from taking full credit for the store’s friendly and focused atmosphere.

“So much was in place when I got here. The Alamo had such a great foundation,” he said. The store dates back to the 1930s, when it was founded as the Co-Op Bookstore by alumnus Orval F. Yarger ’32. The name was changed to The Alamo II in the 1970s.

Ernat builds on the long history with an eagerness to develop pilot and marketing projects. Last year’s ISU’s Family Weekend was an example of his leadership and his team’s ability. Sales increased “virtually 100 percent” from 2014’s Family Weekend.

He attributed part of that to a record freshman class enrollment, success of ISU’s football program, and staff who replenished the retail shelves at warp speed.

His focus is now on additional innovative marketing strategies and ideas to implement, including a change in the floor space dedicated to greeting cards and various school supplies.

“With the newest version of the Nike Redbird Professional shop, there will be an addition of mini shops, where the departments will sort of point themselves out,” Ernat said.

Given Ernat’s love for his college, look for an area with COB items.
1960s

Roslyn (Eck) Wylie ’62 is retired from Illinois State University, where she worked at Milner Library as the Teaching Materials Center librarian. She resides in Ballwin, Missouri.

Norbert Bufka, M.A. ’65, has authored 12 books since retiring more than a decade ago. He writes local histories and religious text. He and his wife, Carol, reside in Midland, Michigan.

Jo Ann Karr ’65, M.S. ’68, is an ACT and TAP test prep coach with Literacy Connects. It assists future teachers in preparing for the mandated exam before they begin their teacher education program. She is professor emerita of Northeastern Illinois University’s Department of Teacher Education. She resides in Morton Grove.

David Doman ’66, M.S. ’76, retired after 35 years with the Pikes Peak Library District. He previously worked at Milner Library on the Illinois State campus. He and his wife, Virginia Carlson, reside in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Patricia (Hill) Wright ’67 is retired from teaching special education students life and work skills. She is a school volunteer, helps care for five grandchildren and enjoys cruising the Caribbean with her husband, Kenneth. They have Florida residences in St. Petersburg and Palm Harbor.

1970s

Kevin T. Casey ’70, M.S. ’73, is executive director of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities. He and his wife, Mary, reside in Princeton, New Jersey.

Kathleen Odom ’70 is retired after teaching in Harvey School District 152. She resides in Crete.

Edward Patton ’70 retired from teaching after 35 years in Canton School District 66, where he also drove a school bus full time for 40 years. He and his wife, Patricia, reside in Canton.

Ronald Hughes ’71, M.S. ’72, is retired from Macomb Community College, where he was the director of enrollment services. He also worked at ISU in Admissions. He and his wife, Elizabeth, reside in Livonia, Michigan.

Sally Rader ’71, M.S. ’93, retired from teaching in School District 140. She works part time at Hudson Area Library as a story-time leader. She and her husband, Stan, reside in Carlock.

Gregg Watson ’71 retired from State Farm Insurance Company as a risk manager. He and his wife, Kathy, reside in Bloomington.

Wayne Frantzen ’72 retired after 20 years in the airline and travel industry, followed by 13 years teaching adapted physical education in Illinois and another 11 years in California. He resides in Napa, California.

Lynn (Mabie) Lange ’73 has retired after 40 years in education. She worked in special education at Hanawalt Elementary, which is part of the Des Moines school system. She and her husband, Fred, reside in Ankeny, Iowa.

Kathleen (Kemmer) Schneider ’73 is a substitute teacher at Franklin Central High School. She and her husband, Michael, reside in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Sam Walley ’73, M.S. ’80, is an air traffic controller with Lockheed Martin Corporation. He resides in Justin, Texas.

Karen Brown ’74 is an attorney with Swann Hadley Stump Dietrich and Spears. She and her husband, John Forester, reside in Orlando, Florida.

Shirley (Gardner) Sprenn ’74 is the Pelion branch manager/librarian in the Lexington County Public Library System. She and her husband, Guntis, reside in Pelion, South Carolina.

Pamela (Sutter) Collman ’75 retired from the U.S. Census Bureau and now conducts field interviews for LHK Partners. She and her husband, William, celebrate their 40th anniversary this year. They reside in Bethalto.

Vicky (Stancilffe) Hanson ’75 is a kitchen design consultant for

Pause for applause

Talented teacher

Jake Wager ’05, who studied geography education, loves his work as a social studies teacher at McCombs Middle School. Wager does such an exceptional job in the Des Moines Title I public school that he is Iowa’s 2016 Middle School Social Studies Teacher of the Year. He also coaches track at the school, which has a high percentage of students from low-income families. The honor makes Wager eligible for consideration as top teacher in the subject nationally. His students would agree he is worthy. They appreciate the engaging way he teaches, including a mock caucus before the real vote occurred in February.

At the helm

Nearly three decades ago, Tricia (Thomas) Griffith ’86 took a job as a claims representative at Progressive Corp. Now she is CEO of the firm that is ranked as the country’s fourth largest auto insurer. Griffith studied marketing in the College of Business while at ISU. After joining Progressive in 1988, she worked her way up to chief operating officer of the company’s personal lines division. Her new role as CEO makes Griffith one of the most prominent women in the insurance world. She will lead Progressive’s efforts to sell more home insurance, while staying strong in car coverage.

Dedicated Democrat

Michael Halle ’06 knows what it takes to win a campaign. He is especially strong in helping top Democrats running for the presidency. Halle played a senior role in Hillary Clinton’s campaign, working as her Iowa caucus director. He created and executed a strategy for Clinton to take the Iowa vote, which propelled her campaign forward. The sociology and political science graduate was equally involved in Barack Obama’s White House run in 2008, serving as a field organizer and working in five states before becoming deputy field director in North Carolina. He partnered with Obama’s campaign in 2012 as well.

Still making a splash

Fitness has been an integral part of life for Roger Osborne ’68 since his college days. A physical education major, he taught at Maine West High School in Des Plaines. Although retired, “Oz” is not idle. He is a winning member of the Elgin Blue Wave Masters swim team. In the spring of this year alone he captured eight, first-place wins and a second-place trophy at the state-wide meet. He took six national medals, including second place for the 200 butterfly. He has been swimming at the masters’ level for 30 years and now competes against others who are 70 years old.
How we met

Ada Klopfenstein and Jerry Christensen grew up eight miles apart in the farming communities of Gridley and Chenoa, respectively, but did not know each other until they met at the start of their freshman year.

Their chance encounter occurred as both fulfilled a requirement in the 1960s that all new students have a chest X-ray for tuberculosis. Jerry was living off campus and needed directions to the health center. A high school classmate living in Hamilton-Whitten invited him to come along with her group, which included Ada. The two ladies had adjacent rooms in the residence hall.

Ada had a boyfriend back home at the time, so it was not until spring that she and Jerry started dating. They stayed together throughout their college years, enjoying dances held in McCormick Hall and spending hours in The Cage. Both appreciated the tight-knit campus community of approximately 5,000 students, which led to encounters with President Robert Bone.

The two completed education classes, with Ada graduating in 1965 ready to teach business. Jerry ’65, M.S. ’69, Specialist ’84, focused on math education.

They paid $50 a semester in tuition, which was a discount from the $97.50 standard fee because both planned to teach. Jerry recalls paying just $5 a week to live off campus at 614 School Street.

These are just some of the memories from the ISU experiences that united the couple. Their engagement was in the spring of 1965, with the wedding weeks later in June. Both taught throughout Central Illinois in the years that followed.

Jerry pursued administrative roles, serving as a principal and superintendent before retiring in 1996. A second career emerged as he taught math at University High School. He served as assistant principal at U-High and later principal until retiring again in 2005.

During their 50 years together, the two raised a daughter and two sons. Now living in Gridley, Ada and Jerry enjoy spending time with their nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. The two stay active and connected to campus, which will forever hold a very special place in their lives.
Gary Neubauer ’79 is a partner of Sikich LLP. He and his wife, Amanda, reside in Springfield.

1980s

Barb Becker ’80, D.A. ’91, retired after 41 years of teaching. She spent 32 years as a mathematics professor at Saint Xavier University in Chicago. She resides in Westmont.

Michael Krickmire, M.F.A. ’80, teaches in the theatre department at The College of Brockport. He received the 2016 SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Adjunct Teaching. He and his wife, Mary (Fagnan), M.F.A. ’80, received the Rod Marriot Award for lifetime achievement in theatre and theatre education by the New York State Theatre Education Association. They reside in Fairport, New York.

Duane Pitts Sr. ’80 is a principal with the Chicago Public Schools. He has worked in the school system 35 years. He and his wife, Sharen, reside in Chicago.

Kathleen (Gerould) Sharp ’80 teaches eighth grade language arts within the Hollister Elementary School District. She and her husband, Alan, reside in Hollister, California.

Joe Chaloka ’81, M.S. ’95, is the department chair of developmental education at Moraine Valley Community College and a developmental reading instructor. He resides in Downers Grove.

Michelle (Meling) Curran ’81, M.S. ’83, retired as the director of Sangamon Area Special Education District, where she began as a speech language pathologist. She and her husband, Gregory, reside in Springfield.

Todd McGregor ’81 is director of customer experience for Exelon Utilities. He and his wife, Sarah, reside in Landenberg, Pennsylvania.

Caroline (Aldridge) Salzmann ’81 is the lead teacher at South Lyon Schools. She and her husband, David, reside in South Lyon, Michigan.

James Thomas ’81 is a product analyst with State Farm Insurance Company. He and his wife, Maureen (Keith) ’80, M.S. ’05, reside in Normal.

Jeff Kurtz ’83 is a lecturer in the College of Business at the University of Illinois in Urbana, where he resides.

Patricia (Mentzen) Langdon ’83 is senior production manager of Pacific Communications. She and her husband, William, reside in Yorba Linda, California.

Larry Timberlake ’83 is a research and development director with Clayton Corporation. He resides in Kirkwood, Missouri.

Steve Bauer ’84 is head of corporate communications at Birst, a business intelligence and analytics software company. He and his wife, Lori, reside in Redwood City, California.

John Cassens ’84 is the head tennis coach at Pacific Lutheran University. He and his wife, Karen, reside in Tacoma, Washington.

Philip Cook ’84 is a custom applicator at Evergreen FS. He and his wife, Heidi, reside in Toluca.

Proud educators
ISU’s reputation for preparing stellar teachers and administrators is exemplified by the staff of one Illinois school. There are 14 graduates at Emerson Middle School in Park Ridge/Niles School District 64, including Assistant Principal Tim Benka. All are grateful for their collegiate experience and proudly share with students their Redbird spirit. Front row from left: Karen (Janser) Helfner, M.S. ’86; Jill Dzik ’00; Katie (Even) Contreras ’09; Karen (Tipre) Hess ’99; Shannon Fuller ’12; and Lisa (Lacerra) Nelson ’00. Back row from left: Emily Hrobsky ’07; Nancy (Dunn) Golbeck ’88; Benka ’87; Linda (Frankenhoff) Aichinger ’87; Christy (Babcock) Schumacher ’89; Kara Pottinger ’00; and Erich Marx ’05. Alex Teater ’11 is not pictured.
Redbird legacy

Three siblings have created a strong Green family Illinois State connection. Each became a School of Communication graduate with an interest in TV news that began inside Fell Hall.

Alison (Green) Kelly ’03 came to ISU first. She tried every job at TV-10 before discovering her love of writing and producing. “That’s the great thing about that program at ISU. You get to do so many different things. I felt like I was working in the business before I even graduated,” Alison said. She is an Emmy Award-winning executive producer at the ABC affiliate in Phoenix, Arizona.

Following in her footsteps were younger siblings Caitlin Green ’09 and Ross Green ’11. Ross gained experience at TV-10 also and at WZND, the radio station where Caitlin worked as well. Both were hired at KHQA in their hometown of Quincy, where she remains the station’s digital director. Ross was the weekend news anchor before transitioning to a school district communications job in Colorado recently.

“I don’t know how it all started, but I guess we were all born with the same love for speaking, organizing things, deadlines, and the horrible stress of the TV business,” Ross said, reflecting on his days in television with his siblings.

None of the three can explain how and why they went into the same field. Their dad works in insurance, their mom in retail.

They agree that ISU provided a well-rounded experience through courses and station work that was excellent preparation for the working world.

“I didn’t feel like I was behind or needed to play catch-up when I got that first job,” Ross said. “I was really happy with the experience I had there in the School of Communication.”

The trio maintains their strong ISU connection through campus visits for such things as football games. Having worked in the same field makes it easy for them to talk shop, swap work stories, and share inside jokes.

“It’s crazy. I never would’ve thought it would’ve ended up this way, but we’re loving it. We’re just one big close-knit TV family,” Alison said.

More specifically, a Redbird family.

boiler. He resides in High Ridge, Missouri.

Kristen (Emmert) Shaner ’86 is an account coordinator with Caterpillar Inc. She and her husband, Bill, reside in Morton.

Jennifer (Albert) Bethman ’87 completed a doctorate in educational administration and leadership at Washington State University. Her dissertation was selected as dissertation of the year for Washington Education Research Association. She is the assistant superintendent of Bethel School District. She and her husband, Kurt, reside in Puyallup, Washington.

Daniel Coles ’87 has worked in education for 29 years. He has served as a teacher, middle school assistant principal, elementary school principal, and district-level director of human resources. The past 12 years he has been superintendent of schools for Wauconda CUSD 118. He was named the 2015 Lake County Superintendent of the Year and 2016 Superintendent of Distinction by the Illinois Association of School Administrators. He resides in Cary.

Bob Rasmus ’87 is executive director of the grain division with Growmark. He and his wife, Laurie, reside in Forsyth.

Laura (Tonozzi) Sterling ’87 is a materials manager at Gardner Denver. She and her husband, Roger, reside in Princeton.

Ann (Fairbairn) Gullixon ’88 is a substitute teacher for Unit 5 School District. She resides in Bloomington.

Laura (Sobek) Price ’88 is the office manager of Independent Life and Health LLC. She and her husband, Randall, reside in Rockford.

Robert Richley ’88 is the senior ERP developer at Adams 12 Five Star Schools. He volunteers in children’s ministry and has authored a children’s book titled. The Oregon Kids: The Big Catch.

Sheila Traylor ’88, M.S.W. ’06, works with the Department of Children and Family Services for the State of Illinois. She resides in Joliet.

Rochelle (Kilcher) Krueger ’89 is an intensive care nurse working with the American Red Cross. She harvests peripheral stem cells from cancer patients. The cells are re-engineered genetically and returned to the patient as targeted cellular immunotherapy. She and her husband, Jeff, reside in Normal.

Kelly (Daleen) Lothian ’89 is a senior customer relations manager with Food Service Professionals. She and her husband, Thomas, reside in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

Dawn (Ditzler) Schwarzkopf ’89 is an associate professor in the School of Education at Olivet Nazarene University. She and her husband, Todd, reside in Kankakee.

1990s

Caitlin, Ross and Alison are the Green siblings, from left, working in the same field. Their dad works in insurance, their mom in retail.

Laura (Sobek) Price ’88 is the office manager of Independent Life and Health LLC. She and her husband, Randall, reside in Rockford.

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Stephanie Crespal ’90 is a sponsored research business analyst at the University of Illinois. She resides in White Heath.

Susan Franzén ’90, M.S. ’92, is a nursing and health sciences librarian at Illinois State University. She resides in Normal.

Karen (Heaton) Heins ’90 is a medical education staff assistant with the American Medical Association. She resides in Palatine.

Jennifer Jendras ’90 is the occupational health and safety manager for the U.S. General Services Administration Public Building Services in the Great Lakes Region in Chicago. She resides in Glen Ellyn.

Tia (Thomas) Jensen ’90 is an attorney working in collaborative family law, mediation and parenting coordination. She and her husband, Judd, reside in Sarasota, Florida.

Sherry Lawson-Weaver ’90 is an attorney in the Lawson-Weaver Law Office. She and her husband, James Weaver, reside in Galesburg.

Kirk Nadherny ’90, M.S. ’92, is an English teacher in West Aurora High School. He and his wife, Dana, reside in Naperville.

James Rohweder ’90 is an IT specialist with Martin Equipment of Illinois Inc. He resides in Morton.

Melissa (James) Shadrer ’90 is a human resources manager with State Farm Insurance Company. She and her husband, Darin, reside in Normal.

Jennifer Swanson ’90 is a marketing communications director for Tickemaster. She resides in Pingree Grove.

Janet Zaidenberg-Schrum ’90 retired from Tucson Electric Power Company. She resides in St. Louis, Missouri.

Michelle (Hermes) August ’91 is the department chair and professor of information management systems at Moraine Valley Community College. She and her husband, Chris, reside in Frankfort.

Troy Babbs ’91, ‘00, is project coordinator of the National Digital Newspaper Project at the University of Illinois. He resides in Champaign.

Wendy Hicks ’91, M.A. ’93, M.A. ’94, is chair of the master’s criminal justice program at Ashford University. She resides in San Diego, California.

Loralean Jordan ’91 is a senior recruiter with Accenture. She resides in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota.

Dana (Wigant) Pitlik ’91 teaches fifth grade in the Lomont District 113. She and her husband, Christopher, reside in Frankfort.

Trena (Schneiderwibd) Younglove ’91, M.S. ’94, teaches deaf/hard of hearing students in Orange County Public Schools. She and her husband, Jim, reside in Orlando, Florida.

Michelle (Evans) Glatt ’92 is a school librarian with McLean County Unit 5 School District. She and her husband, Dan, reside in Bloomington.

Christine Knuth ’92, MBA ’04, is the associate director of the MBA program at Illinois State University. She and her husband, Richard, reside in Normal.

Dawn (Bertolotto) McKay ’92 has taught elementary art for 24 years. All but two have been at Hilltop School in the McHenry School District 15. She and her husband, Andrew, reside in McHenry.

Virginia McMath ’92 completed a doctorate and is dissertation faculty adviser at Trevecca Nazarene University. She is a published author and real estate entrepreneur. She and her son reside in Nashville, Tennessee.

Jeffrey Mikyska ’92 is an ordained pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He is the pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Elgin. He and his wife, Gail, reside in Oswego.

Karen (Guest) Reger ’92 is a pain management RN with the DuPage Medical Group. She resides in Plainfield.

Gayle Rogers ’92 is the information systems, program billing and public education manager of Futures Unlimited Inc. She resides in Pontiac.

Christine Bergan ’93 is a supervisor of eastern Wisconsin for AAA-Auto Club Group. She is a past recipient of the WDTSEA’s Teacher of the Year award and ADTSEA’s Teacher of Excellence honor. She resides in Madison, Wisconsin.

Brenda Gardner ’93 is an adult probation officer for LaSalle County. She and her husband, Timothy, reside in Streator.

Jeffrey James ’93 is a chief credit officer at Pilot Grove Savings Bank. He resides in West Point, Iowa.

Corey Oltman ’93, MBA ’01, is an accountant at Illinois State University. He resides in Normal.

Regina (Meyers) Bunning ’94 owns Home Grown Nursery. She resides in Taylorville.

Kendall Cook, M.S. ’94, is a psychotherapist with Red Oak Counseling. He resides in Kenosha, Wisconsin.

Julie Jervis ’94 is an assistant director of business affairs at the University of Illinois. She resides in Saint Joseph.

Celestia (Mann) Kenerley ’94 is a personal trainer, group fitness instructor and lifestyle diabetes coach for the Summerville Family YMCA. She and her husband, Mike, reside in Summerville, South Carolina.

Gina (Seidel) Lanning ’94 is a social worker with the West Central Illinois Special Education Co-Op. She resides in Warsaw.

Laura Miller ’94 is a data governance manager with Froedtert Health. She resides in West Allis, Wisconsin.

Sondra Moon ’94 is a supervisor of warranty return parts claims for MC Machinery Systems Inc. She resides in Schaumburg.

Mary (Fleming) Walker ’94 is a senior assistant state’s attorney in the DuPage County State’s Attorney’s Office. She and her husband, Brian, reside in Vernon Hills.

Sherri (Weissenberger) Chinski ’95 is a managing partner of Reiser, Chinski and Co. LLP. She and her husband, Steve, reside in Bloomington.

Laurel (Ballinger) Fortuna ’95 is the senior director of music and worship arts at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Clearwater, Florida. She resides there with her husband, Dave.

Lori (Owens) Granite ’95 teaches primary STEAM at Rockford Christian Schools. She was a 2016 Golden Apple finalist. She and her husband, Alan, are parents to three sons and reside in Rockford.

Rosalind Harris ’95, M.S. ’99, is a substitute teacher with the Chicago Public School system. She resides in Chicago.

Tom Jenkins ’95 is a business analyst with Amdocs. He and his wife, Tracy, reside in Tolono.

Anthony Johnson ’95 is a children’s minister and preschool director at Hazel Dell Christian Church. He previously taught grade school. He and his wife, Mary, reside in Fishers, Indiana.

Kristi Kull ’95 is a finance analyst with State Farm Insurance Company. She and her husband, Rick, reside in Bloomington.

Kerry (Schuetz) Foppie ’96 owns Foppie Ace Hardware. She and her husband, Ron, reside in Breese.

Laura (Ellis) Hale ’96 is a project manager at State Farm Insurance Company. She and her husband, Gregory, reside in Wapella.

Linda Klawitter ’96 retired as an office support specialist for ISU’s Department of Agriculture. She and her husband, Ronald, reside in Normal.
Elia (Garcia) Olivares ’96, M.S. ’98, is completing a doctorate at Midwestern University. She has traveled to Guatemala as an ambassador for the university, helping with the DoCare program. She helped bring together the First Lady of Guatemala, Patricia Marroquin, and DoCare representatives to improve services in that country. She and her husband, Alex, reside in Plainfield.

Christina, are the parents of three children and reside in Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Kathleen Monaco ’97 is a special education teacher in CUSD 303. She resides in Aurora.

Nicholas Percoco ’97 is chief information security officer of Uptake, a start-up analytics provider. He and his wife, Chelsea, reside in Chicago.

Matt Cascio ’98 is principal of Harlem Middle Schools in Loves Park. He and his wife, Kristina, are parents of three children and reside in Roscoe.

Tracie Ivey, M.S. ’98, Ph.D. ’05, is an assistant professor of biology at Wofford College. She resides in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Jennifer (Adams) Lass ’98, M.S. ’01, is a self-employed beachbody coach. She and her husband, John, reside in Wheaton.

Sam Lyons ’98 is a case worker for the Illinois Department of Human Services. He resides in Peoria.

Lisa (Henk) van Wageningen ’98 is an education services specialist with Community Unit School District 300. She and her husband, Bernhard, reside in Hampshire.

Beth (Seidelmann) Batael ’99 is an art teacher in LeRoy. She and her husband, Jack, reside in Bloomington.

Carrie Forestor ’99 is the principal at St. Zachary. She resides in Rolling Meadows.

Daniel Poulk ’99, M.S. ’06, teaches business at Streator Township High School. He resides in Streator.

Matthew Smith ’99 is a store manager for CVS. He and his wife, Jessica, reside in Normal.

Mary Tosch, M.S. ’99, completed a doctorate of education from St. Cloud State University. She is the student life manager at Waubonsee Community College and resides in Oswego.

Tisha (Gaede) Zavala ’99 is a department secretary with Genesis Health System. She and her husband, Jaime, reside in LeClaire, Iowa.

Doreen (Wojtczak) Roberts ’97 is a teacher leader of professional growth and development with School District Unit 46. She resides in Elgin.

Gary Washington ’97 is an analyst with State Farm Insurance Company. He and his wife, Julia, reside in Bloomington.

Lori Woeste, M.S. ’97, Ed.D. ’05, is an assistant administrator at the University of Iowa Health Ventures, Practice Management. She and her husband, Jim Kellogg, reside in Iowa City, Iowa.

Lucas Aiello ’98 is a payroll specialist with Brea-Olinda Unified School District. He resides in Brea, California.

2000s

Jed Otto ’00 is a financial adviser with O&G Financial Consulting. He and his wife, Lindsay, reside in Minier.

Dan Santry ’00 is a national sales manager with Bee Line Company. He resides in Davenport, Iowa.

Ryan Bretag ’01 is the associate principal of curriculum and instruction at Glenbrook North High School. He is also a nationally qualified bodybuilder. He and his wife, Cathy, reside in Naperville.

Brooke (Majeske) Dooley ’01 is director of social services at the Henry County Housing Authority. She and her husband, Shawn, reside in Galva.

Heather (Sharpe) Dunn ’02 is a customer advocate with Blue Cross Blue Shield. She and her husband, Ryan, reside in Springfield.

Emily (Wagner) Gold ’02, M.S. ’05, runs half marathons for her daughter, who has a rare syndrome and is wheelchair dependent. She resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Elizabeth Marvin ’02 is the board relations and capital campaign associate at Second State Theatre. She spent several years living in Afghanistan and Egypt with her husband, Nick, who is a U.S. diplomat. They reside in New York City.

Fayyaz Poonawala, M.S. ’02, is a senior software engineer with Microsoft. He is in the Azure Cloud Platform division, where he works on big data and cloud-scale technical challenges. He and his wife, Fatima Calculwala, reside in Sanamamish, Washington.

Denise (Yonker) Quitschau ’02 is the band director at Eureka Middle School. She and her husband, Drew, reside in Normal.

Sam Elbert ’03 teaches at Metamora High School. He and his wife, Jenna, are the parents of three children. Chase Carl was born in February of 2016. The family resides in Metamora.

Ben Piper ’03, M.S. ’05, is the associate director of programs in the recreational sports department at the University of Texas-Dallas. He and his wife, Rena, are parents of three children and reside in McKinney, Texas.

Maria (Fahrner) Wagner ’03 is a recruiter with World Wide Technology. She and her husband, Caleb, reside in St. Louis, Missouri.

Paula (Palmer) Webb ’03 is a counselor with Peoria District 150. She
Emily (Frailey) Hummel ’05 is a speech and language pathologist with the Springfield school district. She and her husband, John, reside in Chatham.

Barb (Bohling) Rosenberg ’05 is a senior lead analyst with Abbvie. She and her husband, Matthew, reside in Niles.

Elizabeth (Leonard) Sepich ’05 is a stay-at-home mom. She and her husband, Dominic, reside in Wheaton.

Brenda Cook ’06 is a life underwriter at State Farm Insurance Company. She and her husband, Mike, reside in Bloomington.

Erik Eddington ’06 is an electrical engineer at Caterpillar. He and his wife, Tiffany, reside in Bartonville.

Megan (Thome) Esker ’06 is a reading specialist at Woodland School District 50. She and her husband, Derek, reside in Round Lake.

Justin Hammons ’06 is a Web specialist at State Farm Insurance Company. He resides in Normal.

Lindsey (Kling) Zum Mallen ’06 is a registered nurse at Advocate BroMenn Medical Center. She and her husband, Robert, reside in Fairbury.

Rebecca (Kruse) Miller ’06, M.S. ’08, is a senior communications major with Paylocity. She and her husband, Jason, reside in Aurora.

Adam Price ’06 is a graphic designer with Disc Store. He resides in Bellevue, Nebraska.

James Sutter ’06 is senior account manager with Risk Sciences Group. He resides in River Vale, New Jersey.

Nicole Turner ’06 is a quality assurance specialist with Therapeutic Proteins International. She resides in Chicago.

Christie (Kornacker) Wereski ’06 is a professional development specialist at the Chicago Association of Realtors. She resides in Roselle.

Karen Carlson ’07 is a therapist at Family and Children’s Place. She resides in Louisville, Kentucky.

Tara (Trosper) Donahue ’07 is a human resources business partner for Belco Credit Union. She and her husband, Bob, reside in Denver, Colorado.

Brian Greenenwald ’07 is a police officer with the Village of Riverside. He and his wife, Allyson (Hocking) ’07, reside in Lombard.

Katy (Kokaly) McCormick ’07 is self-employed as a family child care provider. She and her husband, Kurt, reside in Bloomington.

Sarah (Sorensen) Peterson ’07 teaches science in the Champaign school district. She and her husband, Shawn, reside in Monticello.

Jakob Sedig ’07 is a consulting archaeologist with Harvard Medical School Reich Lab of Medical and Population Genetics. He and his wife, Areilla Goldberg, reside in Somerville, Massachusetts.

Jane (Poynter) Zahora ’07 is an internal audit manager with the WBA. She and her husband, Jeremy, reside in Palatine.

Amy (McLain) Ersland ’08, M.S. ’14, teaches second grade in Unit 5 schools. She and her husband, Scott, reside in Normal.

Sarah (Humphrey) Haske ’08 teaches math at Zion-Benton Township High School. She and her husband, Jordan, reside in Beach Park.

Sherilyn (Miller) Imhoff ’08 is a special education teacher with the Kewanee School District. She and her husband, Christopher, reside in Wyoming.

Nicole Kohler ’08 is manager of the SOAR Program for the City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation. She and her husband, Kenneth, reside in Bloomington.

Kyle Matas ’08 is an estimating engineer with Kopetz Manufacturing. He and his wife, Sarah, reside in Warrensburg.

Mike Opsal ’08 is a teacher and coach at Conant High School. He and his wife, Chrissy, reside in Mokena.

Brittany Parsons ’08 is a senior category management analyst with Rust-Oleum. She is also the vice president for Associate Leadership Council-Chicagoland, which is a young professionals group working with the American Cancer Society. She resides in Round Lake Beach.

Mandi (Cioni) Perko, M.S. ’08, teaches seventh grade in District

Still keeping track
Five members of the ISU cross country and track teams have maintained their friendship more than 35 years after graduation. The former Redbird athletes connected most recently this summer at the Olympic Track and Field Trials in Eugene, Oregon. It was there the U.S. team that competed in Rio was finalized. They are, from left, Dave Irion ’80 of Naperville; Mike Baker ’82 of Norfolk, Virginia; Mike Madison ’81 of Kalamazoo, Michigan; Chris Kuntz ’81 of Geneva; and Kurt Kleinow ’79 of Apple Valley, Minnesota.
50 schools. She and her husband, Josh, are parents of two sons and reside in Washington.

Lisa (Walwer) Williams ’08 is a registered interior designer with Melotte Morse Leonardi Parker Ltd. She and her husband, Diondre, reside in Springfield.

Christine (Doman) Bruckner ’09, M.S. ’11, is an analyst in research and planning at Illinois State University. She and her husband, Ian ’09, M.S. ’13, reside in Lexington.

Megan (Towner) Crowhurst, M.S. ’09, is a literacy specialist with Richland Community College. She and her husband, Casey, reside in Monticello.

Heather (Kieffer) Kieser ’09 is an account director with Trendline Interactive. She resides in Hoffman Estates.

Laura (Morrical) Simonton ’09, ’11, is a fourth grade reduction teacher’s aide in Olympia CUSD 16. She and her husband, Tony, reside in Atlanta.

Andrea (Solis) Spencer ’09 is an administrative assistant at Kohl’s. She and her husband, Matthew, reside in Lemont.

Grace (Hodgett) Wyffels ’09 is a financial adviser with First Command Financial Planning. She assists Army soldiers at various U.S. duty stations. She and her husband, Grant, reside in Fort Polk, Louisiana.

2010s

Stephanie Dockery ’10 is a marketing and business development specialist with Tresler LLP. She resides in Chicago.

Jimmy Ly ’10 is a gas control specialist at WEC Energy Group. He resides in Mokena.

Wesley McKinney ’10 is a music teacher at Uno Charter School Network Clemente. He resides in Chicago.

Torii More ’10 is a curator of digital humanities at the McLean County Museum of History. She and her husband, Kelby, reside in Bloomington.

Shara Swagger ’10 is a health navigator with Advocate Health Care. She resides in Chicago.

Michael Cross ’11 completed a master’s degree in leadership development at North Central College. He is an offensive assistant football coach at Utah State University. He and his wife, Cami (Bartlett) ’12, reside in Smithfield, Utah.

Joshua Crutchfield ’11 is an underwriting service assistant with State Farm Insurance Company. He and his wife, Caitlin, reside in Normal.

Cristy Langefeld ’11 is a high school science teacher in District 300. She resides in Lake Zurich.

Catherine Leinicke ’11 is a nanny and house manager. She resides in Chicago.

Annette Nevius ’11 is a teaching assistant at Metcalf Laboratory School. She and her husband, Anthony, reside in Bloomington.

Erin Reilly ’11 is a registered nurse at Tampa General Hospital. She resides in Tampa, Florida.

Kathleen (Rose) Sampson ’11 is a special education teacher with Downers Grove High School District 99. She and her husband, Andrew, reside in Lisle.

Ashley Wasserman ’11 is a special education teacher with District 131. She resides in Morton Grove.

April Wenzel, M.S. ’11, teaches at Washington High School. She and her husband, Matthew, reside in Washington.

Kyanne Baker ’12 is a developer with COUNTRY Financial. She resides in Bloomington.

Nicholas Bledsoe ’12 is a business development manager with Cargo Chief. He resides in Chicago.

Scott Clainin ’12 started his own freelance marketing agency, Clainin Marketing. He specializes in assisting small businesses. He resides in Champaign.

Elizabeth Doyle ’12 is a pre-kindergarten teacher at Methodist Family Child Care Center. She resides in Peoria Heights.

Rich Eckert ’12 is an assistant vice president at Beardstown Savings. He resides in Beardstown.

Pete Kinate ’12 is a claims representative with State Farm Insurance Company. He and his wife, Katie, reside in Bloomington.

Jonathan Klein ’12 is a Web developer for Onefire. He and his wife, Heather, reside in Eureka.

Lauren (Miller) Nadeau ’12 is a nursing student at Regis. She and her husband, Jeffrey, reside in Lake-wood, Colorado.

Samantha Nikel ’12 is a security administrator with Edward Hospital. She resides in Carol Stream.

Sara Pipala ’12 is a graduate research assistant at the University of Iowa. She resides in Iowa City, Iowa.

Paul Timmermann ’12 is a product manager at Grubhub. He and his wife, Mira Andreeva ’12, reside in Chicago.

Josh Weaver ’12 is an underwriter with Bitco Insurance Companies. He resides in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Jordan Carlton ’13 is the CNC department manager at Leatherneck Hardware. He and his wife, Aby, reside in Danville.

Daniel Cigrang ’13 is a ServiceNow developer with Discover Financial Services. He resides in Chicago.

Brittany Crouch ’13 is an underwriter with Zurich Insurance. She resides in Chicago.

Mary Klockowski ’13 is a workers compensation claims adjuster with AmTrust North America. She resides in Oak Lawn.

Rebecca Neblock ’13 is a graphic designer and visual communications specialist with COUNTRY Financial. She resides in Bloomington.

Alexis Oduyale ’13 is a registered nurse with Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. She resides in Chicago.

Scott Olson ’13 works in logistics and receiving for Walmart. He resides in Dalzell.

Phil Quattrocchi ’13 is a police officer in the City of Berwyn. He resides in Chicago.


**Forty years later**

During 1970 and 1971, a large number of Chinese students from Taiwan attended Illinois State. Together they shared a challenging and rewarding experience that shaped each individual’s life forever. Group members gathered in San Francisco in April for their first reunion. Alumni and their spouses came from around the world and across the U.S., as the graduates now live in China, Taiwan, New York, Chicago, Texas, Virginia, Georgia and California. The event was such a success that another reunion will be scheduled in Chicago, with members promising they will not wait decades to reconnect.
Patrick Hill ’04 serves in the U.S. Navy as the training officer at the Naval School of Music in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he lives with his wife, Jeana.

In memory

Faculty/Staff
Jerry W. Abner, ’75, M.S. ’92; University Marketing and Communications; 7/16
Brian R. Braye, Instructional Technology; 4/16
Bryant H. Jackson, Milner Library; 5/16
Mary K. (McGrath) Rotsch, Management and Quantitative Methods; 5/16
Christ F. Schwelle, Bone Student Center; 8/16
W. Paul Vogt ’65, Research Methods; 4/16

30s
Beatrice L. (Fisher) Swanson ’36; 5/16
Mary V. Carlson ’37; 5/05
Lois E. (Kumler) Cook ’38; 4/16
Paul A. Berutti ’39; 4/12; 5/16
Geraldine L. (Herriott) Hickle ’39; 5/16
Mary E. (Rodawold) Long ’39; 5/16

40s
Bernice M. (Brucker) Montalva ’40; 2/16
Priscilla N. (Espevik) Worthington ’40; 1/16
Alice M. (Hanson) Abrahamson ’42; ’65; 6/16
Rosemary (Thomas) Schulz ’45; 4/16
Mary E. (Bennett) Schildt ’46; 6/16
Katherine Jane (Price) Tepper ’46; 5/16
Alonzo P. Barnes ’47; 4/16
Esther R. (Sanders) Dunn ’47, M.S. ’55; 5/16
Jean C. (Stein) Kirby ’47; 6/16
Margaret M. (Kapraun) Ritter ’48; 5/16

Albina “Bina” (Monti) Rudow ’48; 12/15
Robert A. (Green) Cooper ’49; 5/16
Ralph W. Heinz ’49; 5/16
Emma L. (Opperman) Lemon ’49; 4/16

50s
Ruth E. (Ahrens) Faletti ’50; 6/16
Margaret (Gallagher) French ’51; 5/16
Isabelle H. (Miles) Seelye ’54, M.S. ’58; 3/16
Virginia D. (Borre) Dimarco ’55; 1/16
Gerald D. Oliver Sr. ’55; 5/16
Lloyd C. Atterberry ’56; 3/16
Norman B. West, M.S. ’56; 5/16
Marilyn L. (Robison) Atterberry ’57; 6/16
Earl J. Maxey ’57; 5/16
Thomas Hall, M.S. ’58; 4/16
Ronald N. Lagerstrom ’58; 9/15
Fred W. Nika ’58; 6/16
Diane Soldwedel, M.S. ’58; 5/16
Mary A. (Strong) Hooker Kelleher ’59; 4/16
Robert L. Viehweg ’59; 4/16

60s
Robert O. Barney ’60, M.S. ’65; 5/16
Elizabeth A. (Hess) Feist ’60; 6/16
Beverly K. (Shimkus) Loomer ’60; 6/16
LeRoy L. Boseneiler Jr. ’62; 7/15
Joan (Fleming) Tanner-Winter, M.S. ’62; 6/16
Gloria J. (Benson) Mikyska ’63; 3/16
David A. Theesfeld ’64; 4/16
Martha “Marti” L. (Eskra) Schaefer ’65; 6/16
Robert Courtney ’66; 5/16
Philip A. Whitley ’68; 4/16
Michael M. Orr ’69; 2/13

70s
Mary E. (Patton) Gilfillan ’70; 4/16
Marlan C. (Nicol) Jones ’70; 7/16
Richard E. Kohn ’70; 7/16
Robert A. Shaffer ’70, M.S. ’86; 5/16
Robert G. Blass ’71; 5/16
L. Bevlyn (Phillips) Donahue ’71; 4/16
Joseph A. Nohl ’71; 7/16
Jane (Nygood) Plum, M.A. ’71; 5/16

Three easy ways to submit your information

1) Go online to Alumni.IllinoisState.edu/ClassNotes and click on “class notes.” Information submitted using this method will also be posted online.

2) Email your news to sjblyst@IllinoisState.edu.

3) Mail your news to Class Notes, Illinois State University, Alumni Relations, Campus Box 3100, Normal, IL 61790-3100. Please include your graduation year, major, maiden name when applicable, and daytime phone number for verification purposes. News releases and information from published news clippings may also be used. Engagements and pregnancies will not be published.

For additional information, contact Alumni Relations at (309) 438-2586 or (800) 366-4478, or by email at alumni@IllinoisState.edu.
'Tis the season

Another holiday is quickly approaching, which means efforts to find that perfect gift for family members and friends have begun again. Think beyond the traditional shopping routine this year. A gift to Illinois State is a unique way to honor a loved one, while also creating an opportunity for students to soar in the year ahead.

Support your passion with an investment in the University.

Finalize your gift by December 31 to gain tax benefits. Use the envelope enclosed in this issue of Illinois State, visit IllinoisState.edu/Giving, or call (800) 366-4478.
Junior acting major Thomas Russell transferred to Illinois State after one year at an acting conservancy in New York. It was an excellent move that allowed for unique opportunities, such as an internship this past summer with the nationally acclaimed Illinois Shakespeare Festival (ISF).

The experience came as a result of the Sutter Family Shakespeare Scholarship, which provides a renewable financial award and an internship at the festival. Longtime ISF patron Craig Sutter created the scholarship in memory of his parents, H. Everett and G. Jean Sutter.

A standout theatre student from Chicago, Russell was the first Sutter scholar. He worked side-by-side with professional actors, augmenting his training from faculty in the School of Theatre and Dance.

He learned as an understudy, in weekly meetings with cast and crew, and with small roles in the festival’s three shows. Russell also moved one step closer to his dream of working as a fight choreographer after being named a fight captain by veteran ISF fight director Paul Dennhardt.

“It’s definitely good practice for what I want to do,” said Russell, who is grateful for the financial support. “To all donors, thank you. Help like this is so appreciated.”

Will you make a difference by supporting your passion? Make a contribution using the enclosed envelope, online at IllinoisState.edu/Giving or call (800) 366-4478.
Marching on

The Big Red Marching Machine is a favorite at every home football game and has done shows across the country as well. Redbird fans can support the band by having members spell out their name or create an image for display at home or work. Find out more about this unique opportunity to back the BRMM by calling (309) 438-2166.