‘Here is Water’
An engineering class turns into an impromptu baptism
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Many years ago, George Fox launched a new program called Juniors Abroad. Back in the late ’80s the idea of traveling abroad for three weeks with a faculty mentor was something students immediately embraced, as they do to this day.

Over the years, I have taken part in six trips with students. Some may wonder why a president would spend time on a student trip. We certainly aren’t traveling in style, our hotels are modest, and we use our legs and public transportation to move in the cities we visit.

The answer is quite simple: I get to know students intimately over three weeks. We live and travel from place to place together. We learn each other’s stories, play together and worship together. Students and faculty become known to each other on Juniors Abroad – even the president.

This May, I took part in a trip through Ireland and the United Kingdom. What did I learn about our students? First, they are genuinely good people. They listened well and engaged in thoughtful conversation with each other and the people we met. Second, they were willing to explore – to do and try things that they had never done before.

Finally, we often hear how this generation is leaving both the church and the Christian faith. That may be true in some broader sense, but it was not true of the students who traveled with us. They embraced different worship experiences and found God in new circumstances. They were open to learning and risk in ways that I find uncomfortable. I did not grow up in an expressive religious tradition and several of the churches we went to, although Anglican, bordered on a Pentecostal experience. Pastors invited us to open our hands to receive a blessing or to raise our hands to acknowledge the power of God. Students embraced these calls far easier than I did. It was clear that they loved the Lord and cared deeply about what God was calling them to do.

At George Fox, we come to work every day to build a university that knows its students and teaches them about Christ and his kingdom. In order to accomplish this, we need to know them and to also understand how God is working in their lives. Faculty get to do this every day in their academic programs. Juniors Abroad allows us to enter into the lives of students even more deeply by living, worshipping and discovering together.

I hope you enjoy the stories of faith transformation presented in this issue of the George Fox Journal. Whether it’s a three-week study abroad trip or a simple interaction on the quad, it’s a privilege to get to know students, to enter into their stories, and to see them become the people God meant them to be.

Robin Baker
President
Physician Assistant Program Holds First White Coat Ceremony

The university’s new physician assistant program reached a significant milestone in November, holding its first White Coat Ceremony for 19 Master of Medical Science students.

The celebration, attended by more than 100 friends and family, marked the transition from classroom learning to clinical rotations, where students put into practice the skills they learned during the first year of the program.

“It’s a personal and professional turning of the page,” says College of Medical Science Associate Dean Curt Stilp, noting that in addition to hands-on learning in hospitals and clinics, students will also continue to turn in assignments and take exams every four weeks.

The program’s first cohort is set to graduate in December 2022 after completing 11 months of clinicals.

Launched in January 2021 to meet the high demand for medical professionals in Oregon, the physician assistant program will soon be joined by another master’s-level healthcare offering, occupational therapy, set to begin in the fall of 2024.

University Breaks Enrollment Record

Despite a pandemic that complicated in-person education last fall, George Fox shattered its enrollment record in 2021-22, maintaining the institution’s status as the largest private college in Oregon. In doing so, the university recorded its largest incoming first-year class, its biggest transfer class, and its highest graduate program enrollment in history.

All told, 4,295 students enrolled last September, eclipsing the previous enrollment high of 4,129 set in 2018, and marking a 5 percent increase over 2020-21. George Fox welcomed 2,284 traditional undergraduates, including 651 freshmen – a 25 percent increase over the previous year’s 487 freshman total – as well as 280 degree-completion students and 105 transfers.

The university also saw a big boost at the graduate level, with last fall’s figure of 1,731 representing a 6.5 percent increase over 2020-21. George Fox welcomed 874 master’s students and 854 doctoral students, including 105 first-year graduate students.

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Following a two-year pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a memorable student activity reemerged in March as dozens of tents popped up on the quad.

Campus Campout, formerly called Tent City, continues a tradition where sophomores spend a night in tents on the quad in order to secure their Juniors Abroad trip of choice. Each tent of five students is randomly assigned a number, which determines the group’s priority order for trip registration. Then, throughout the evening, the bottom five tents compete with each other for the chance to move their group to the front of the line.

After setting up camp, students participated in a scavenger hunt, gurry sack relays and capture the flag, and enjoyed some quality time with friends around the campfire. The next morning, they crowded into the Stevens Center to get some coffee and view monitors with the final lists of participants for each trip.

Campus Campout: Longtime Tradition Returns

The Princeton Review ranked George Fox as a “Best Regional College” for the 34th consecutive year, with the highest ranking of any Christian university in the Northwest.

George Fox also ranked among the “Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs,” “Best Undergraduate Nursing Programs,” “Best Online Bachelor’s Programs” and “Top Performers in Social Mobility” (schools that enroll and graduate large proportions of “economically disadvantaged” students).

Money magazine ranked George Fox No. 3 in Oregon and No. 3 among Christian universities on the West Coast in its “Best Colleges” list.

Niche ranked George Fox No. 1 in Oregon in its “ Safest College Campuses” list.

The Wall Street Journal / Times Higher Education included George Fox for the first time in its “Best U.S. Colleges” rankings.

The Princeton Review ranked George Fox as a “Best Regional College” for the 34th consecutive year. *Defined as Council for Christian Colleges & Universities governing members.

2022 Rankings Roundup

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George Fox athletics has earned its share of team and individual titles, but the 2021-22 academic year marked a first for the university— the capturing of the Northwest Conference's McIlroy-Lewis All-Sports Trophy, awarded to the school that accumulates the most points based on league finishes across all sports.

George Fox earned 262 total points between its 19 conference teams and led all NWC members in championships with seven. Points for the all-sports trophy are awarded in descending order for first through ninth place. The Bruins were league champs in men's tennis, women's golf, women's lacrosse, and men's and women's track and field in the spring, after winning conference titles in men's and women's cross country in the fall.

"Winning the conference's all-sports trophy is a tremendous accomplishment," says George Fox Athletic Director Adam Puckett. "It doesn't just represent the success of one or two sports, but rather the overall accomplishments of our entire athletics program. All credit goes to our incredible coaching staff and student-athletes who have put in the work to elevate our programs to where they are today."

George Fox was the only conference school to qualify all of its spring teams for NWC postseason play, and none of them finished lower than fourth in their respective final standings. In addition to their champions, the Bruins notched a runner-up finish in softball, third-place finishes in men's golf and baseball, and a fourth-place showing in women's tennis.

Collectively, 130 George Fox athletes earned All-Northwest Conference honors in 2021-22. The Bruins also sported three NWC Players of the Year, three Freshman of the Year, and six Coach of the Year honorees.

"This award recognizes more than the success of our talented student-athletes and coaches," says George Fox Athletic Director Adam Puckett. "It also reflects the great support we receive from our faculty, staff and community. As a university, we can enjoy this honor together."

Lacrosse Goes Unbeaten ... Again
It seems the only thing that can slow the women's lacrosse team of late is a pandemic; the 2020 season was shortened to three games due to COVID-19. For a fifth straight campaign, the Bruins went unbeaten in Northwest Conference play, going 12-0 to earn a third consecutive NCAA Division III postseason berth. George Fox hasn’t lost a NWC contest since the 2016 season and has gone 50-0 in league play since 2017.

Women’s Golf Team Takes Third at Nationals
For the fifth time in six years, the women’s golf team earned a top-three finish at the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament, landing third place with a 1203 team total— the Bruins’ lowest four-round score at the national tournament in school history. Leading the way was sophomore Alison Takamiya, who earned a runner-up individual finish.

Hollen Notches 300th Win
A 3-1 defeat of conference foe Whitworth on April 15 marked the 300th victory in softball head coach Jessica Hollen’s career. The Bruins finished the year 31-12 overall and 22-6 in the Northwest Conference, marking their ninth straight winning season. Hollen now stands as the fourth-winningest coach in the history of Bruin athletics.

Baseball’s Meffert Named NWC Freshman of the Year
Noah Meffert’s play on both the mound and in the field caught the attention of Northwest Conference baseball coaches, who voted him the NWC’s Freshman of the Year. The talented newcomer also earned a second-team all-conference nod after leading the Bruins with a .375 average at the plate and winning five games, recording three saves and posting a 1.26 ERA as a pitcher.

Strickland Earns Runner-up Finish at Nationals
Senior Christine Strickland closed out her George Fox career on a high note, placing second in the javelin at the NCAA Division III Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Geneva, Ohio, in May. The Eugene, Oregon, native uncorked a throw of 146 feet, 6 inches to establish a personal record and earn All-American honors in the process.
The university has launched a new podcast and video series, George Fox Talks, which invites experts in culture, leadership, theology and wellness to engage in pressing conversations from a smart and faithful Christian perspective.

This year, hosts from the George Fox community were joined by notable guests that included political commentator David French, legal scholar Erika Bachiochi, author Nancy Pearcey and New Testament scholar Mark McMinn. In addition, the program includes three face-to-face intensives, called “Advances,” over the course of study. Upcoming Advances are tentatively scheduled in Cape Town, South Africa (2022), London (2023) and Washington, D.C. (2024).

“This degree provides an opportunity for us to meet the needs of a wider population of Christian leaders,” says Loren Kerns, director of Portland Seminary’s Doctor of Ministry programs. “When we did our market research, we discovered very few leadership degrees that engage the discipline of leadership from a Christ-centered, theologically informed and faith-affirming perspective. The seminary is uniquely qualified and best positioned to offer such a terminal degree.”

## IN PRINT

Tennille Hostetler (biology/biochemistry) in July 2021 published A Guide to Greener Pastures: A Devotional Bible Study on the 23rd Psalm. The devotional mines the depths of one of the most cherished passages in the Bible and presents it in a fresh new light.


A Time to Build

The university’s academic quad will soon get its most extensive facelift in years, with work scheduled to begin in the fall of 2022 and continue through 2024. Among the many changes planned, Brougher Hall, originally constructed in 1947 and the current home of the art and design program, will be demolished and replaced by a new rose garden, opening up the quad to Bauman Auditorium.

Next, Minthorn Hall, which in 1892 was rolled across town on logs behind horses to its current location, will go for yet another ride – but this time a much shorter distance. In the summer of 2023, the historic building will be moved and resituated just a stone’s throw away, then remodeled in 2024 for use by the university’s growing honors program.

Meanwhile, Carlton Way, the service road that runs parallel to Hess Creek Canyon behind several campus buildings, will be closed and turned into a pedestrian area. This change, combined with the move of Minthorn Hall, will open up the quad to the chapel and create a significant amount of new greenspace for students to enjoy in the fall of 2023.

Art Annex

The vibrant and growing art and design program – housing the university’s graphic design, studio art and arts administration, illustration, and interior design majors – will have a new home in the fall of 2023.

Art Annex

Featuring a large studio for pottery and ceramics, another space for glass and sculpture, and a partially covered outdoor courtyard work area – which will include a new ceramics kiln – the 6,000-square-foot facility will be located between the Engineering Maker Hub and Pennington Hall.

Chapel

Slated for completion in the fall of 2023, a new 7,000-square-foot chapel will serve not only as a space for worship, teaching and prayer, but as a visual representation of the university’s commitment to remain deeply rooted in Christ.

Situated behind the Maclean Library where the tennis courts currently reside, the chapel will feature traditional floor-to-ceiling stained glass, an organ, and an exterior garden for prayer and contemplation.

The chapel project is a priority for President Robin Baker. “In a world of constant change, we have a deep desire for the eternal,” he says. “The emerging chapel represents our effort to create a sacred place of enduring beauty, where employees, students and alumni may experience the presence of God in new ways. Student-designed stained glass windows, the use of natural elements, the soaring height of the building and the location near the wooded canyon all provide a unique experience that will connect the community with God for generations.”

The chapel is being built with the support of donors. If you would like to contribute to this important project, email development@georgefox.edu or call 503-554-2115.

Reimagining the Quad

Campus has changed quite a bit in the last decade, adding a new football stadium, bridge, dining hall, engineering facility and fitness center, to name just a few. As George Fox continues to grow – this year setting an enrollment record with 4,295 total students (see page 4) – new plans have been set in place to meet the needs of an ever-growing and changing student population.

Beginning this summer and continuing through late 2024, work will begin on a new chapel, a facility for the art and design program, and a reimagining of the academic quad.
Violet Herrick isn’t big on being the center of attention, but it isn’t every day you get singled out to celebrate a milestone 130 years in the making.

Days before graduating, Herrick learned she would be the 30,000th degree recipient in the history of the university, putting her in the spotlight for a surprise bash that included an appearance from President Robin Baker, Pennington the bear mascot, her psychology professors, and a handful of George Fox employees and friends.

“Going into this spring, George Fox was 403 graduates shy of 30,000; Herrick was, alphabetically, the 403rd student to receive a degree or certificate in 2022.

Herrick smiled as she was presented a gift basket full of sweets and George Fox swag, as well as a custom-made framed piece of artwork based on a campus mural designed by alumna McKenzie Young.

She was recognized again during her commencement ceremony on April 30 in front of the Stoffer Family Stadium crowd. The big event signified the start of a new chapter for Herrick, who plans to pursue a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy. “I’ve really enjoyed my George Fox experience, so this is a bit of a sweet time for sure,” says Herrick, a psychology major from Sacramento, California. “In a community like this, you get to meet so many amazing people. I loved hanging out in the quad and coming across five to 10 people I knew on any given day. I’ll miss my amazing psychology professors – Kelly Chang and Jordan Fastenau were especially supportive and really helped me grow while challenging me. Be Known really struck a chord and was real for me. A worldwide pandemic in the spring of 2020 changed his perspective. Without warning, he was sent home to his native Sacramento, California, as universities across the country made a sudden shift to online learning. The carefree days of college life were, for the foreseeable future, over.

“The day I was sent home was the most pivotal moment for me,” he says. “I realized how much I wanted to get back to football, school, friends and have that normality prior to COVID.”

McCoy returned to campus his sophomore year determined to expand that and have his own shop,” he says. Looking ahead, McCoy will return to campus in the fall to suit up for the Bruins and conclude his studies. After graduating he plans to open his own barbershop, continuing a business he’s pursued throughout college. “I cut hair out of my apartment. It’ll be nice to get back to the mean mugging and aggressive posturing the university marketing team asked for during the photo shoot. “When I make a play, I just laugh or smile.”

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When he arrived on campus as a freshman in the fall of 2019, everything seemed to be going Chris McCoy’s way. He was fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing college football, discovering the beauty of the Pacific Northwest on hikes, and “nerding out” with his newfound friends – “this boys,” he calls them – as they binge-watched one Star Wars movie after another.

There was only one problem: McCoy didn’t realize how good he had it. “To be honest, I wasn’t making the most of this opportunity and was taking things for granted,” says McCoy, a senior-to-be business administration major. “I was quiet and timid, and there were days I questioned why I was here. I didn’t realize what I had.”

McCoy’s play earned him an opportunity – to be the subject of a photo shoot that will land him on university billboards across the state this summer. “It’s kinda funny, because I’ve never been that super-aggressive, pumped-up kind of guy,” he laughs, thinking back to the mean mugging and aggressive posturing the university marketing team asked for during the photo shoot. “When I make a play, I just laugh or smile.”

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By Sean Patterson
George Fox computer science and engineering students are developing an autonomous robot that could drastically change the way vineyard owners predict their harvest. By Kimberly Felton

They’re calling it the Vitibot. The name isn’t official, but a student designed a sticker with the name and it stuck – a clever combination of the term “viticulture” (the science of grapes) with “robot.”

One of the longest-running senior design capstone projects for George Fox computer science and engineering students, the Vitibot moves closer each year to the goal – a product the wine industry surrounding the university is eager to see: a rover that can autonomously traverse a vineyard, gathering image data, to accurately predict the grape yield months before harvest.

A 1 to 10% margin of error is considered a good estimate by most wine growers. Last year, the Vitibot predicted a yield with a 2 to 3% margin of error.

A Roomba for Grapes

Every year, wine growers closely monitor their vines to predict grape yield. Weather, soil, vine disease and pests like birds and deer affect that yield – but regardless of these elements, vineyard owners need to know if they can meet their commitments to buyers, and if they will end up with enough grapes. In the risky business of growing crops, their success hinges on an accurate prediction.

Iterations of the Vitibot have been around longer than most senior design projects, which usually begin in the fall semester and end in the spring.

“It started here in 2015, and already then it was a thing,” says computer science professor Brian Snider.

Bob Harder, dean of the College of Engineering, had brain-stormed with local entrepreneurs and vineyard and winery officers, developing the technology for a few years before Snider’s arrival at the university.

“From the beginning, it was first and foremost a mechanical engineering project,” Snider says. “But Bob knew there was a need for machine learning, and that’s where I became involved.”

Two teams of seniors – new teams each year – worked on parallel endeavors with the Vitibot. The hardware, or data collection, team made up of mechanical and electrical engineering students designed and built the rover. The software, or data analysis, team of computer science and information systems students worked on the machine learning and autonomous navigation – not just the robotic intelligence. Finally, this year, the two teams merged into one, stitching together the mechanics and sensor data. “And that’s when we got the thing to drive by itself,” Snider says.

Snider and other faculty in the College of Engineering envisioned a rover they can sell, that has a package of sensors, and can be maneuvered by remote control or drive autonomously (currently the Vitibot uses LiDAR sensors for navigation and GoPro cameras for data collection).

“It’s like a Roomba, almost, but for your crops,” Snider says. “You let it navigate the vineyard rows by itself and collect data as it goes.”

A Community Effort

To create a rover that could take digital images, feed those images into a machine learning model, and use the trained model to predict yield, the teams needed a testing ground. David and Jeanne Beck, owners of Crawford Beck Vineyard, willingly offered their vineyard. Scientists, researchers and educators themselves, they’re equally interested and invested in the technology that can assist their vineyard, and the process of allowing students to learn.

The Vitibot’s accuracy in grape yield prediction is dependent on two things: weekly photos of the vines and machine learning built into the rover’s “brain.”

The past three summers, a student or faculty advisor walked the rows at Crawford Beck Vineyard, carrying an eight-foot high stick with three GoPro cameras strapped on. Each week, from July until harvest in mid-September, they took a photo of each vine. Eighty-three plants per row, 21 rows, 10,000 images to process.

“We have an algorithm, a piece of code, that accepts as input the pictures,” Snider says. “And we have code that learns relevant numerical features from the images. That information goes in; we call it training data. Then, because we’re doing supervised learning, we tell it, ‘Given these images, here’s the correct answer you should predict.’”

The “correct answer” given to the algorithm is the grape weight at harvest. After uploading images all summer, the actual weight is added to the algorithm at the end of the season. This is where the Becks’ contribution looms large.

In most vineyards at harvest, workers run the rows, dropping clusters into buckets, emptying buckets into bins, getting credit for each bucket they pick. It’s competitive and it’s fast. It saves labor costs.

But to validate the rover’s software, the premium no longer is on time; it is on harvest weight accuracy, not just by the vineyard, but also by the winery – in this case, Winderlea.

“They’re willing to weigh all those bins of harvested grapes and give us the data,” David says. “That’s what ties it all together and validates the success of the software.”

The process is time-consuming but absolutely necessary in order to develop an accurate model. The Becks and Winderlea are willing. How does it know? But that’s the thing; we don’t need to know. We’re going to let this algorithm learn what’s relevant.”

Their software is better than our actual measurements,” David says. “We count clusters and we weigh clusters, and we gross that up by the number of vines. We do an informed calculation, but we’re making assumptions about how evenly the fruit is spread.”

Like most wine growers, Jeanne handles grape yield prediction herself. It is tedious, time-consuming and not as accurate as she would prefer.

“As for the margin of error that winemakers want, the answer is zero,” she says. “That not being possible, we strive for both labor conservation and maximal accuracy. Given this inherent inaccuracy, some growers opt for optical assessments, walking the rows and estimating by eye. This is not satisfactory, so we constantly search for better methods.

“And that is the beauty of the work the George Fox students have done. Their estimation was within 8.1% of the actual weight. Mine was only 72% of the harvest amount. Add to that the labor savings and you can see how impressive this is.”

The Vitibot isn’t ready for market yet, but the software has consistently produced accurate yield predictions, and this year was able to drive autonomously. “Now that we’ve broken through that wall, the next step is to get it out to the vineyard every week and train it to drive in an actual, real-life environment,” Snider says. “And we’re pretty optimistic that next year we’ll get there.”

Visit georgefox.edu/vitibot to see the Vitibot in action.

From left to right, students Troy Moon and Jedidah Perry, along with professor Brian Snider, test the Vitibot with vineyard owners Jeanne and David Beck.

“You don’t necessarily know what features it’s latching onto. Is it counting grapes? How does it know? But that’s the thing; we don’t need to know. We’re going to let this algorithm learn what’s relevant.”

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Student events at George Fox have changed quite a bit over the years – most notably the addition of dances, an activity that wasn’t allowed on campus until 1995. But one thing hasn’t changed: the lasting memories made when students get a chance to set academics aside for a few hours and have a little fun with friends.

This balance of academic and career pursuits, spiritual growth and service – seasoned with a healthy dose of fun and human connection – has been a hallmark of the George Fox experience for years, whether it’s racing a makeshift raft down the Willamette in 1972 or running through explosions of bright-colored powder in 2022. Here’s a taste of what student life at George Fox looks like today.
Five decades ago a federal law was passed, creating opportunities for countless women to do what many had long been denied – the chance to compete.

By Sean Patterson

“‘Our goal as a program is to create an environment of personal growth – a place where every person who leaves our program is more comfortable with who they really are. That is what sports can do.’”

– Jessica Holken, head softball coach

MaryJo McCloskey remembers the day her beloved sport was cut. A member of the University of Oregon women’s golf team, she was deflated to learn that the game she loved – a passion instilled in her by her father and nurtured by a nun – had been eliminated because of budget constraints.

But McCloskey, who today serves as head coach of George Fox’s highly successful women’s golf team, wasn’t about to abandon her dream of competing at the collegiate level.

“They decided to cut women’s golf after my first year, but I stayed and fought for the program,” she reflects. “Fortunately, they reinstated it the following year, thanks to Title IX support. That experience – and my love for sports and all the benefits from competing – is why I continue to fight for more opportunities for women in sports today.”

McCloskey, and all the female athletes and coaches of her generation, owe a debt of gratitude to a congresswoman from Hawaii, Patsy Mink, who authored a legislative draft that ultimately became Title IX, the federal civil rights law passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972. It prohibits sex-based discrimination in any school or education program that receives federal funding, and has since paved the way for equal opportunities for women in education and, as a byproduct, sports.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the law – a seminal event that revolutionized the athletics landscape. You see it in the explosive growth of girls’ and women’s sports, the popularity of the...
Women’s World Cup, the WNBA and the LPGA Tour, and in the faces of the women who leveraged their opportunities in athlet- ics to become household names – Serena Williams, Lindsey Vonn, Simonie Biles, Alex Morgan, Michelle Wie and Katie Ledecky among them. Although not originally drafted to address the disparity between men’s and women’s athletics, Title IX’s impact has arguably been most profound in the arena of sports. Upon passing, many colleges’ athletic programs found themselves out of compliance, requiring they reallocate resources to offer equal opportunities for women to compete.

The numbers tell the story: Today, women make up 44% of all NCAA student-athletes. In 1971, fewer than 30,000 women played sports at the collegiate level, represent- ing just 15% of all student-athletes – and many colleges offered few or no women’s teams.

Ahead of Her Time
At George Fox, women athletes had a cham- pion in Marjorie “Doc” Weesner long before the law passed. In fact, eight years prior to Title IX, Weesner, coach of the college’s volleyball, women’s basketball and softball programs – yes, simultaneously – led all three of her 1964-65 teams to conference titles. Combined, they lost just one game.

“Marjorie was definitely the matriarch of women’s athletics at George Fox, and a tireless advocate for equal opportunities for women in sports,” says Craig Taylor, the university’s athletic director from 1988 until his retirement in 2017. “Even prior to 1972, Doc fought fiercely for the opportunities that Title IX eventually mandated. The suc- cess we enjoy today in women’s athletics was built on the foundation Doc laid.”

Weesner, an alumna from the class of 1953, campaigned for her athletics to receive better coaching; access to quality practice facilities; competitive schedules; equitable opportunities to travel, compete and earn athletically related financial aid; and press coverage.

All the while, she was highly supportive of men’s athletics as well. “Her approach was never to reduce men’s opportunities, but for the institution to step up and offer the same opportunity for female student- athletes,” says Taylor, whom Weesner hired to teach and to serve as coach of the college’s women’s basketball and softball teams. “She did not refer to herself as a feminist, but as an advocate for fairness and doing the right thing for all. Title IX reinforced and codified her message: ‘Be fair and do the right thing.’”

Weesner served as George Fox’s wom- en’s athletics director and helped form and chair the Department of Health and Human Performance. She retired in 1993 after 31 years of service to the university. “She was, without question, the single most influen- tial person in my professional life,” Taylor says.

“My Life Would Look Incredibly Different’’

Although born long before Title IX was passed, Elise Trask believes it steered the course of her life.

“Title IX is about so much more than equality – it’s about opportunity,” says Trask, the university’s associate athletic director and a member of the 2009 Bruin Performance. “Even prior to 1972, Doc fought fiercely for the opportunities that Title IX eventually mandated. The success we enjoy today in women’s athletics was built on the foundation Doc laid.”

“It’s also about people – the relationships here that trans- formed my life,” Trask says. “I was a basketball player, I may not have a college degree, I’m not sure that I would have a relationship with Christ, and there’s no way that I would be an associate athletic director at any level.”

With that said, Trask believes “we still have a long way to go” when it comes to giving women equal opportunities in ath- letics. “Sometimes I wonder if the previous generation would be proud or disappointed in where we are now. A lot has happened in 50 years, but there’s still work to be done. I’m so thankful that I get to serve in a role where my everyday work has the ability to continue to move the needle forward.”

The Cultural Impact

Jessicah Hollen, George Fox’s head softball coach the past 14 years, echoes Trask’s belief that the opportunity to compete is a springboard to bigger things. Ultimately, the chance to take the field develops character, results in lifelong friendships, and opens up career opportunities the pre-1972 generation could only dream of.

“Sports reveal character, but you quickly find that they give more opportunity to succeed and achieve success,” Hollen says. “If you do it right, you can use those opportuni- ties to build your character into who you really are called to be,” says Hollen, who led the Bruins to a 23-15-2 league record and Northwest Conference regular-season title in 2021. “Our goal as a program is to create an environment of personal growth – a place where every person who leaves our program is more comfortable with who they really are. That is sports coaching.”

As a ripple effect, Title IX’s passage helped change cultural expectations and beliefs. Gone are the days when women had to choose between pursuing a career and raising a family – a common misconception in the post-World War II era.

Hollen says now it’s a matter of generation balancing a coaching career and a home life. As the mother of two, she admits that being a mom, a mentor to young women and a coach at the collegiate level isn’t easy – but possible.

“We had many women who chose not to pursue coaching for long term because of the family sacrifices it takes to make it hap- pen – and the guilt of feeling like you are either not doing enough for your team or not doing enough for your family,” she says. “But I feel it’s important that our athletes see and know that they can pursue a career whether they’re in coaching or not – or be a mom if that is what they want. It is OK and pretty amazing to do both.”

To honor the legacy of Title IX, Hollen says the female athletes of today have a responsibility to “carry the torch” by finan- cially supporting women’s sports and pursu- ing coaching positions. “Buy the tickets and the jerseys, and chase the dream of coaching if that’s what you’re passionate about,” she says.

Room for Improvement

Members of the George Fox women’s golf program are most likely unaware of the fact that a Catholic nun is partially responsible for their success. Twelve years before they were born – in the early days of the post-Title IX era – Sister Jean Rose took an eager St. Mary’s Academy high school golfer under her wing.

The player was McCluskey, and the lessons she learned in those formative years have stuck with her to this day. “Because of my competitive nature, she instilled in me a lot of great things about emotional resilience and humility, and helped me become a better player – and person,” McCluskey says of her former coach. “She also taught me that you don’t have to be a professional golf instructor to be a great coach.”

Sister Jean Rose was among the few women high school coach- es who then – a pioneer of sorts. And although many great strides have been made in the area of women’s athletics in the last 50 years, McCluskey believes there is still plenty of room for improvement.

“I must admit, I have been a little disap- pointed that it actually has taken so long for programs to establish women’s teams,” says McCluskey, who has led the Bruins to 12 straight Northwest Conference titles and six top-four finishes at the NCAA Division III Women’s Golf Championships. “In the NWC alone, men’s golf teams had been around for 30 to 40 years before women’s golf teams formed in the 1980s. What took so long? Universities have also been slow to follow the lead of George Fox in terms of hiring more female coaches.”

It’s true: Golf coaching continues to be primarily dominated by men. That’s slowly changing, though, and McCluskey credits Title IX for that change. “I’m so appreciative of Title IX for giving me – and all women – the opportunities to continue to play in college and to coach as well,” she says.

In turn, her players have turned opportu- nity into success. One of McCluskey’s players qualified for a pro tournament, the Cambig LPGA Portland Classic. Another competed on a Golf Channel TV show and fared well. Still another, Makenzie Toole, won the 2021 NCAA D-III individual golf championship – the university’s first indi- vidual NCAA national champion outside of track and field. Toole went on to play in the U.S. Women’s Amateur in New York last August.

“We don’t know anyone’s potential unless we give them the opportunity,” Trask says. “Just like Title IX has forced the hands of universities to equally provide and fund oppor- tunities for girls and women over the last 50 years. And the impact? Women are break- ing down barriers and shattering expec- tations. Can you imagine if we were never given the opportunity? We would never know our potential.”
Inside the Medical Sciences Building

The university’s commitment to becoming a regional leader in educating future healthcare practitioners took a giant step forward last fall with the opening of a brand new, 43,000-square-foot, three-story facility near the Providence Newberg Medical Center on Werth Boulevard in Newberg.

A dedication ceremony in September marked the opening of the Medical Sciences Building, home to George Fox’s physician assistant (PA) and physical therapy (DPT) programs. Featuring state-of-the-art classrooms and technologies, the facility provides a space where students are equipped to address the glaring regional and national shortage of primary-care health professionals.

Looking ahead, the university will add yet another healthcare offering in 2024, when a masters-level occupational therapy program is scheduled to launch.

Anatomical models, such as this one of a human arm, are used to give physician assistant students a realistic replication of human anatomy. This is one of several such models used by the program.

Students in the physician assistant program explore the intricacy of human anatomy with an Anatomage Table, used to simulate cadaver dissection. The table is regarded as one of the most technologically advanced 3D anatomy visualization and virtual dissection tools in the industry.

Physician assistant students consistently practice skills utilized in clinical care, such as applying a leg cast as part of the program’s casting and splinting lab.

Physician therapy clinic director Jaydee Romick utilizes the PT program’s three-dimensional motion capture biomechanics lab in the assessment and treatment of a patient. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the physical therapy program’s launch in 2012.

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Q: What inspired you to teach?
A: College was not an easy time for me. I felt underprepared and out of place with many of my fellow students. The faculty in the art department gave me a home and welcomed me into their lives. Also, the wisdom and thoughtfulness of my professors in literature, German and Bible, as well as an amazing psychology prof, embodied for me what being a man of character and integrity looked like. I had never been surrounded by such a loving group of mentors who cared for me academically and also on a personal level. They gave me hope, encouragement and direction for my life, and also modeled for me how to be an honest, creative and loving man of God. I thought to myself that if someday I could do the same for others, I would be honored to walk alongside the next generation in the same manner.

Q: What is your favorite class to teach and why?
A: I teach a wide range of classes, from sculpture, painting and illustration, to Latin American art history, to a faith and integration class we call “Art and Christ.” It’s hard for me to pick out a favorite course, because simply, I love to learn and what I’m asked to teach always provides for me an opportunity to keep honing my skills, as well as making new discoveries. My favorite type of assignments to give are those that combine a variety of methods of ideation and influences to get to a creative outcome. This could be an assignment in painting where we look at how artists current and past solve creating a narrative painting, as well as having students read contemporary poets. The assignment then may be creating a work that embodies the wisdom of the methods employed by the artists, but the content of the work is to be inspired by a poet that the student found a passion for. I love seeing students make connections, learn new skills, find a broad range of influences and push themselves further than they thought they could go.

Q: What is your biggest hope for students?
A: My biggest hope for George Fox students is that they find their voice, what they are passionate about, and aren’t afraid to pursue who God is calling them to be.
Brandon is 19 years old. He likes to play video games, make fried Oreos with his foster care provider, and go to the movies. His favorite character? Iron Man.

Brandon also lives with cerebral palsy, which makes it difficult to manipulate objects with the fingers on his right hand. A surgery that fused the bones in his wrist further complicates matters, making daily tasks that require the use of both hands nearly impossible.

That’s where the “gauntlet” comes in. A synthetic fiber glove married to a tension-assisting exoskeleton strengthens Brandon’s finger movements, allowing for greater extension. As a result, he can use both hands for his favorite activity, video games, and much more.

The gauntlet is hand-sewn and 3D printed – the outcome of months of trial, error, research and observation. It’s a one-of-a-kind design, much like Tony Stark’s first Iron Man prototype. And when Brandon wears it he feels like a superhero. Or, in his own words, “awesome.”

The Servant Engineering team at George Fox University wouldn’t have it any other way. Because it’s not just about the device – it’s about the human wearing it.

Established in 2010, Servant Engineering is a required course for all junior engineering and computer science majors. Some projects seek solutions to greater humanitarian needs. But in many cases, such as Brandon’s, students are paired with a single “client.” One team of student engineers. One faculty advisor. One full academic year.

At any given time more than a dozen projects are in motion. A postural assist device for students at the Oregon School for the Blind. An accessory that allows a client with hemiplegia – a condition that prevents the use of half his body – to use a wheelchair. A series of solutions for a young girl with a rare genetic disease called Bruck syndrome to independently eat, clean her teeth, and use a computer mouse.

In each case, the process begins with a simple but powerful concept: human-centered design.

“In the first three to four weeks of the class, I don’t want students to think about a single solution,” says professor Todd Curtis, faculty advisor to the team that created Brandon’s gauntlet. “I only want them to understand the problem, to get to know the client, to empathize with the client.”

In the case of Brandon, who sometimes has trouble articulating his needs, that meant hours of observation – and some creativity. “Part of the process of project discovery is what we call empathy exercises,” Curtis explains. So, student engineers taped a sock over their dominant hand for a weekend to experience what it’s like to live without the use of their fingers.

Just as important, they took the time to get to know Brandon as a person. “At first we looked at devices to help Brandon in the kitchen,” recalls senior Dawson Williams. But that didn’t spark much excitement. “Then one day we discovered that he really enjoyed playing video games.”

Brandon loves tech, from his PlayStation to his tablet and smartphone. “Our goal was to simply get him using his right hand a little bit more,” explains Williams. “That way some of the muscle atrophy could hopefully over time be reversed.” And so the solution became clear.

In addition to the gauntlet, they created a specially designed stylus that allows Brandon to use a computer trackpad or tablet with his right hand. Both solutions help Brandon live a better life while over time strengthening his hand.

But the Servant Engineering program benefits more than just the client. Willems’ ability to articulate what he learned over the course of the project helped secure an internship with Intel, with a possible full-time offer forthcoming. Wherever he lands, the lessons he learned from Brandon will last a lifetime.

“Using your engineering skills to help real people, to solve open-ended problems, is something you can only learn by doing,” Curtis says. “These experiences are priceless for our students.”
A man hobbles barefoot down the hallway in a mint-green gown. One hand clutches two flimsy pieces of fabric that keep the garment from flying open in the back while the other firmly grasps the doorway of the room he is about to enter. Above his head, the faint, familiar buzzing of fluorescent lights can be heard.

Climbing onto a bed, the patient gives a thumbs-up to the long, rectangular mirror directly across from him. Like clockwork, two nurses walk in. The man smiles at the nurses and proceeds to show them what appears to be a deep, colorful gash in the middle of his left shin.

After noting that the patient’s pain level has risen from a three to a six, one of the nurses places a few pills into a cup. Suddenly, the patient leans back into his bed and grimaces. His whole body constricts as he bites down on his lip and his hands grip the sheets. Immediately, the nurses jump into action, taking vital signs and scribbling down notes before stepping aside and talking with each other. They think the man is beginning to develop a staph infection.

In the neighboring room, a woman sits behind multiple computer screens, peering through the one-way mirror into the patient’s room. She nods in approval, adjusting her glasses while leaning into a microphone on her desk. She utters a few words and the patient immediately relaxes, his smile returning as he hops off the bed and walks straight out the door.

*Immersed in the Simulation*

While this plot twist may seem like it’s straight out of a movie, it’s actually part of a simulation for George Fox nursing students. Housed in the university’s Roberts Center – which, ironically, used to be a hospital – a new state-of-the-art facility called Fox Health allows nursing students to experience real-world healthcare scenarios under the watchful eye of professors.

Fox Health is made up of three separate facilities: the Skills Lab, the Home Health Room and the Simulation Center. Each is meant to provide students with an immersive learning experience, which is why every aspect of Fox Health, down to the handrails and floor tiles, was designed to replicate a real-life hospital. There is a nursing station and a fully stocked supply closet. Even the patient rooms are outfitted with all the knobs and gadgets that would be used in an actual hospital.

“We wanted to make it as realistic as possible,” says Pam Fifer, dean of the College of Nursing, whose 25 years of experience in the nursing profession proved invaluable to the design of the facility. “We want students to feel like they are immersed in the simulation – that they are a part of a real functioning hospital.”

In a “sim,” students have the opportunity to be in charge – to ask questions, take vitals and develop their clinical judgment skills. Fox Health is centered around this idea of ownership, which is often in sharp contrast to clinicals, the portion of nursing school where students are placed in hospitals to gain hands-on experience.

Sometimes, due to the nature of a real operating hospital, nursing students can be pushed aside or overlooked entirely. There can also be a great deal of apprehension as a student nurse works to apply knowledge gained in the classroom to an actual hospital setting for the first time. Unlike clinicals, sims allow students to be the sole decision makers for their patients, and if those decisions are wrong, to fail, learn and try again – all with a safety net.

**The Human Element**

While the Fox Health Simulation Center boasts several high-fidelity simulation rooms with high-tech equipment, it’s the presence of patient actors that makes the experience seem real.

In each room, “patients” are instructed to describe specific symptoms, such as coughing, physical pain, cuts or bruises. And because the sims are comprised of three to four scenarios, students learn to see the consequences of their actions.

**Fox Health allows nursing students to gain invaluable real-world experience in a controlled environment**

By Jessica Daugherty
If a student misses a patient’s blood pressure dropping, then suddenly spiking, the subsequent simulation will result in that patient going into septic shock. It’s the job of the simulation operator, usually a clinical instructor who observes from a control room, to direct how the scenarios play out according to the student’s actions.

For future nurses, understanding the consequences of each action is key to gaining confidence and growing in their knowledge and clinical judgment. “I am able to learn because I am the one taking responsibility for what is going on,” says Whitney Mayworth, who will enter her senior year in the program this fall. Sims also allow professors to gain insight into a student’s thought process and to either affirm or correct it. “Sometimes we watch students do the right thing, but if we don’t ask them why then they may be doing it for the wrong reason,” Fifer explains.

Beyond the Simulation Center
The Simulation Center isn’t the only environment within Fox Health where future nurses can practice what they have learned in a safe environment. Located right next door, the recently redesigned Skills Lab is outfitted with nine beds that allow students to practice their bedside manner, professionalism and assessment skills.

Here, students can act out scenarios with each other or can use one of many mannequins that can simulate breathing, crying out, vomiting, bleeding and more. By practicing their skills on the mannequins, students are able to develop the critical muscle memory required of certain procedures before practicing on real patients.

“In the Skills Lab, we can guarantee what students are going to see, as opposed to off-campus clinicals which are more haphazard because we don’t know what kinds of patients they are going to encounter,” Fifer says.

Creating controlled scenarios that were previously left to chance at a clinical location allows Fox Health proctors to curate specific scenarios that they deem most important for learning. This became especially important during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in limited clinical placements, making it a challenge for students to meet the clinical hours needed to graduate. Now, with access to the Simulation Center and revamped Skills Lab, students can gain the hands-on practice they need to develop clinical competence – ensuring the pipeline of future nurses does not stall.

Likewise, the Home Health Room allows nursing students to experience a wide variety of potential settings and scenarios within the profession, such as telehealth, home visits and hospice care. It also gives them the opportunity to work through a wide variety of micro-ethical issues, like how to handle stressful family dynamics that are often a part of in-home care.

“We must prepare students well for their profession, which has a high turnover and burnout rate, while they are still protected and have a safety net,” Fifer says.

Looking to the Future
From classroom theory to simulation, to feedback and group discussion, to practicing new skills and asking hard questions, all elements of the Fox Health facility come together to create an environment where nurses are prepared to not just survive, but thrive in their profession – at a time when they are needed more than ever.

Considering the high rate of turnover and burnout for nurses, Fifer sees these sims as essential to preparing skilled nurses who not only stay in their profession, but become leaders in it.

“We want our students to treat every patient with dignity and respect – to treat them as Christ would,” she says. “After all, sooner or later they will be taking care of all of us.”
Eight George Fox students and alumni, eight different stories, one common theme: God is faithful.
“Being on the football team has been the best time of my life,” he says. “Just being able to have guys that are brothers and going to be lifelong friends, that’s the biggest joy I’ve ever had since being at Fox.”

Then, in an instant, football was taken away.

“My vision started going blurry, and I wasn’t really sure why,” Pasion says. “I ended up going into OHSU and they found out I had this thing called optic neuritis, which is inflammation of my optic nerves.”

The cause: an anti-MOG disorder in which the immune system mistakenly attacks healthy proteins in the eye. Pasion first felt the effects in his left eye at the end of his sophomore year, then as a junior in his right eye as well. More trips to see specialists and heavy doses of medication followed.

“I was scared,” he says. “I didn’t really know what to do, I didn’t know what was going on, and I didn’t know if my sight was ever going to come back.”

Worse yet, in the winter of 2020, at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pasion’s family felt the full force of the deadly virus, as his father, mother and sister all tested positive.

“My mom was in the hospital for two weeks, and then my dad was in the hospital for a month,” he says, reliving the horrific experience. On Christmas day, his father passed away.

“That was the hardest thing I’ve ever had to go through in my life,” he says. “I’m still trying to deal with that every day. I was like, ‘Why would God do this to me? Why would he take away my dad?’”

Even though he wasn’t playing, Pasion leaned on his teammates, coaches and George Fox family like never before.

“God is always going to be there”

“Each time I’ve gone through something hard, I’ve grown from it. I’ve become stronger because of it,” he says. “The main thing that stands out to me from this experience is God is always going to be there. You may not realize it in the moment, and it may not feel like he’s always there, but he’s always going to be with you.”
Stories of Faith, Grit and Joy

Dayana Caamal Perez

A first-generation college student with a heart for others, Perez felt that she had been called to George Fox for a purpose. But when she arrived on campus, self-doubt set in. “My freshman year, it was very hard to see anything positive,” she says. “There were a lot of changes, and also I didn’t really know who I was in this new space. I knew that God had called me here, but I didn’t really know what that would look like.”

Struggling with low self-esteem, Perez felt that she would never be good enough to pursue God’s purpose for her life. “I always saw God through a conditional lens,” she says. “I thought you had to do certain things before you could meet with God or before you could be good enough for him to use you. I honestly didn’t think that God could have used me in any way. I didn’t think there was anything to me.”

It wasn’t until she applied for an internship with the university’s spiritual life office her sophomore year that Perez began to understand what she was capable of. “I was scared to go into the spiritual life office, but I knew I had to get work experience somehow,” she says. “They poured into me in various ways, unpacking some of the beliefs that I had about God that were untrue.”

And as Perez began to grow in her relationship with God, she also gained confidence in her abilities and learned to face her fears head-on. A self-described servant leader who would rather be in the background, Perez got her first opportunity to preach in chapel her senior year. “It was very scary, but it was also very life-giving because I was able to see that I could use my strengths and deliver the message God wants me to say in that moment,” she says. “I’ve been able to see myself in a different light, with confidence, because I understand who I am.”

And even more important, she’s understands how God sees her. “I now genuinely believe that God sees me with compassion and grace, but also capable of a lot more than I imagined,” she says. As Perez enters this next chapter of her life as a new college graduate, the path ahead is once again uncertain. She may pursue grad school and a career in counseling – “In the church, we need more people who can help with mental health,” she says – or she may put her marketing degree to work in the business world. “I do know that helping people is going to be the primary focus of whatever I do,” she says. “I didn’t realize how much I loved others until I got to Fox. I’ve discovered it’s an actual gift that I have – to be able to listen to others, to understand where they’re coming from. It’s one of the skills that I’ve definitely grown into.”

Whatever the future may hold, Perez now looks to the unknown with hope and excitement. “It’s going to be scary, but I’m excited for the growth and to see where I end up going,” she says. “God’s taken me this far. I believe he’s going to take me farther.”

I f recent graduate Dayana Caamal Perez could go back in time and talk to her freshman year self, she’d have a lot to say. But first, “I’d give myself a hug.”

By Jeremy Lloyd

‘Capable of a lot more than I imagined’
“When I was looking at colleges, I was looking at three things,” she says. “I wanted to be able to swim, I wanted to be able to study the Bible, and I wanted to take ancient languages as part of that education.”

A competitive swimmer in high school who has always felt a call to vocational ministry, O’Grattan was able to check all the boxes as a biblical studies major at George Fox.

“Fox was the perfect fit for me because I could play my sport, I could study what I wanted to study, and I could participate in the honors program,” she says. “Plus there were so many bonuses – it was just beautiful and I fell in love with the campus.”

But just months into her freshman year, O’Grattan’s plans quickly began to unravel.

“The first couple months of the swim season were hard because it’s a college sport, but it was also really fun,” she says. “But pretty quickly I realized I was having some severe neurological symptoms. I was losing vision when I was racing, and I was really dizzy all the time. It was getting to the point where I wasn’t sleeping and I had chronic migraines.

My brother, who also goes to Fox, would come to my dorm and walk me to my classes because he was worried I would fall and not be able to get back up.”
Sharing Culture Through Worship

I grew up in a community in California where the population was majority Latinos. Growing up in church, I learned to pray, sing, and listen to the pastor preaching in both English and Spanish. In my city, there were fruterias and carnicerias galore, people blasted mariachi and banda from their stereos, and salsa was eaten with every meal. This was my home, this was my comfort zone, and I loved it. I knew coming to Fox would be a shift in environment for me. However, I wasn’t prepared for how big a shift it would be – especially during worship. Latino churches can be very different from most churches. At my home church we are used to getting loud and rowdy during worship. Preaching can often feel more intense, and 
I think I had to change who I was to be a part of the group. To believed the way I acted or served God might be looked down upon. I was strongly encouraged.

engaging with God with all of our hearts, bodies and emotions is strongly encouraged.

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Because my upbringing was very different from the majority, I knew coming to Fox would be a shift in environment for me. That same semester I joined the Vespers chapel band. I remember the first time I led a song in Spanish, a Latina student came up to me and expressed how special it was for her to be able to worship God in her first language.

Saturn Macias

Growing in Community

A way that I have grown in my faith this year is through community. I am a transfer student and this was my first year at George Fox. During my freshman year at another university, I struggled to make meaningful friendships, and it was a very lonely time in my life. I decided to transfer, and I knew that I wanted to go to George Fox.

Over the summer I prayed almost every day asking that God would provide me with meaningful friendships that would help me to become more like Christ. It was honestly difficult for me to pray that prayer after my freshman year of college because I did not have a ton of hope.

When I got to George Fox I was welcomed with open arms. I have met some incredible people here. I meet with two of my best buddies once a week, where we check in on each other and challenge each other in our walks with the Lord. We ask each other intentional questions, and it has been a great opportunity for me to grow.

Brian and Grant are two guys I know I could talk to about anything – they have truly been friends that have spurred me on to be more like Christ. On the first day of class this year, I wrote down prayers I wanted God to answer. Meaningful, Christ-centered friendships was the top one. I recently went back to my journal and put a big checkmark next to that prayer request!” – Kade Sorenson

TrustinGod in the Unknown

Due to financial troubles, my family and I couldn’t afford tuition the fall semester of my sophomore year. I struggled to understand God’s plan at that moment because I felt deep in my heart that this was the place God called me to, and yet I was faced with having to leave the very place I grew to love and call home.

As I left class that morning with a heavy heart and so many questions, I found myself walking to the spiritual life office to see a campus pastor and talk things through. I met with Jamie Noling-Auth, and it was that day and that moment that I truly felt the Be Known promise – that I felt seen.

Jamie sat with me, she heard me, she provided spiritual guidance, and she offered resources to help with the transition. I was a scared 19-year-old and not so sure what was next. Jamie reminded me that God is present and near. She reminded me that in all things, God has a plan, even when we don’t understand it. One thing I will never forget is how she so confidently believed that I would walk across that stage one day.

A semester later, God opened the door for me to return, and Jamie got me a job as a campus chapel greeter to help get me on my feet.

This spring, I graduated from George Fox. I am so thankful to Jamie for her compassion and prayer. My faith was tested and challenged, but Jamie showed me what it looks like to truly trust in God – even in the unknown.” – Isabela Flores

Stories of Faith, Grit and Joy

I feel seen.
“Nothing was going to stop me”  
By Rachel Brumfield

Take it from Annika Pears, a graduate of the George Fox Adult Degree Program. In 2015, she was hospitalized with a severe stroke that changed the course of her life. Pears was eleven weeks pregnant with her second child and living in Kansas, where her husband was stationed in the military. The two were just months away from a dream they’d invested hours of time and most of their savings into – opening a coffee shop together.

Then, in an instant, it was all wiped away.

“I remember looking at the MRI and the entire left side of my brain was just completely black,” Pears recalls. “It was just pure shock. I had to start from the very beginning. Our life literally took a 90-degree turn.”

It took weeks for her memory to start to come back. She had to learn how to recall certain words, manage her emotions and navigate daily life. Eventually, stroke rehabilitation brought the Pears back to Oregon to be closer to family support. There were numerous appointments and therapies, not to mention a 3-year-old and a newborn to care for.

“The first time I said my ABCs, I was so slow. It was like pulling them from the very recesses of my brain,” Pears says. “My emotional center was wiped out, so I was basically a 2-year-old in terms of my emotions. Once you realize what you’ve lost, you can’t imagine that anything is going to get better. The stroke wiped the slate clean, but it also broke me down to this point where I had to build back up.”

An important step in her journey to healing came through helping others who had suffered a similar fate. When a friend’s mom had a stroke, Pears quickly offered to meet with her. Then, through another friend, she was connected with a pastor who had suffered two strokes and lost the ability to speak.

“There’s something about connecting with someone who’s on the other side of it,” she says. “I knew what it’s like to be trapped in your mind and how frustrating it is to not be able to get words out.”

“Through these two scenarios, I realized, ‘Wow, I have a story that can actually really help people. So why wouldn’t I?’”

As she began to come to terms with her stroke, Pears made an important promise to herself: to go back to school and get her bachelor’s degree.

“You realize that you don’t want anything to hold you back,” she says. “I could either let this stroke completely stop me, or I could become the best version of myself. I decided my two daughters, my husband – and really myself – deserve nothing less than who I knew I was supposed to be. I knew I was supposed to finish my degree. Nothing was going to stop me.”

As a teenager, Pears hadn’t considered herself qualified to pursue college.

“College was always something I really wanted to do, but like a lot of people I didn’t think I could do it,” she recalls. “I didn’t think I was smart enough. A lot of my friends were really smart, and I didn’t see myself that way. Now I know that’s a lie.

“It was a process to overcome these lies I’ve been telling myself for years. They were embedded and entrenched. I think the stroke helped, because I had to rewire my brain.”

Part of stroke recovery is helping the brain make new connections to circumvent pathways that were damaged – a process called neuroplasticity, or “rewiring the brain.” A close friend encouraged Pears to see rehabilitation as a way to “rewire her brain for God’s truth.”

“It doesn’t matter what anybody thinks. You’ve got to do what God is asking you to do,” Pears says. “I don’t want my girls to think that anything can hold them back – that they’re not good enough or smart enough. I want them to know that they can do it.”

In 2020, Pears enrolled in the Adult Degree Program to pursue a bachelor’s degree in social and behavioral studies. Like many adults who return to school, it was a daunting experience – but for Pears, even more obstacles stood in her way.

“I had no idea everything that 2020 would hold,” she says. “Literally, I was diagnosed with cancer, we opened a new business, and there was a pandemic. I also had two kids at home, so I was trying to figure out Zoom and home-schooling, too.”

For the next 16 months, Pears persevered through surgery, brain fog from radiation, schedule changes due to the pandemic, and the demands of parenting two kids with schools shut down – all while completing presentations and assignments for her program.

“The Lord uses all of these things to continue to heal my mind – to push me, even when I don’t want to push myself,” she says. “Getting my degree showed me that I was always worth it. God used George Fox to instill that belief in me.”

In April of 2021, despite all the obstacles, Pears graduated with her bachelor’s degree.

“I want it to be a stake-in-the-ground moment for my girls,” she says, “so they can look back and think, ‘My mom finished her degree, and she did it when it was so hard. How can I let anything stop me?’”

Pears firmly believes that God guided her steps and brought her to this place for a reason. “I did this with the Lord. He led me, and I did it – with a stroke brain, in the middle of a pandemic, with wildfires and an ice storm, while homeschooling two kids and helping launch our new coffee business.

“I feel so much more capable now. Nothing can stop me from the places that I know the Lord wants to take me. It’s a belief that has taken root so deep inside – I know that I’m capable of whatever I want to do next.”
Mathematics professor Pete Rusaw remembers frost on the windows that August morning. The water would be chilly, and he didn’t know if anyone would accept his invitation to step, fully clothed, into a metal trough to be baptized.

The students in his engineering statistics class did not expect this invitation from their professor. Instead, they were prepared to sail their newly designed concrete canoes in the trough as part of a class project.

Rusaw didn’t know what would happen, but he knew he had to be faithful. He grabbed one towel from the linen closet on his way out the door, thinking it may be one too many.

So when, three hours later, a clear, confident voice responded to his invitation with, “I want to,” Rusaw, somewhat startled, searched to identify the source.

An Unlikely Volunteer

The response was immediate. Usually reserved and quiet in class, the voice belonged to Emma.

“She stepped forward and I was like, ‘Whoa, OK,’” Rusaw recalls. “I said, ‘Why do you want to do this?’ And she said, ‘My life’s been hard and it’s time.’”

That’s all it took to make Rusaw’s faithfulness worth it — though he would say faithfulness does not require results.

The former pastor and current professor had not planned baptisms into his class schedule that morning. Looking back, he shrugs and says maybe the idea of turning an engineering canoe competition into a baptism service stirred the night before, during the three hours it took to fill the 150-gallon trough with two hoses connected to faucets inside the university’s Engineering Maker Hub.

Rusaw had borrowed the six-foot-long metal tank from a local church that uses it as its baptismal. When he asked to borrow it for the canoe project, the pastor offered the heating element as well. Rusaw turned him down. After all, canoes don’t need warm water.

But then something happened the morning of the competition. Rusaw was up early, as usual, listening to the coffee drip and inhaling the aroma, taking time to be with God with no agenda. That’s when Acts 8 came to mind, where Philip shows up just as an Ethiopian in a chariot wondered what the Scriptures about Christ meant. As Philip showed from Scripture that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Ethiopian looked up, saw water, and said, “Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?” (Acts 8:36).

Rusaw drank his coffee and pondered, “Here is water — what can stand in the way?” He wasn’t sure anyone would do it, but the idea of baptisms pressed on his heart and mind, and he was sure he needed to offer the opportunity.

Faithfulness Matters

At 8 a.m. Rusaw welcomed his first class gathered outside the Maker Hub, wearing jackets and sweatshirts to stay warm. Each team brought a foot-long canoe constructed primarily of concrete. They waited to see which of their designs, propelled by a powerful fan at the end of the trough, would float and carry a load and which ones would simply crumble and sink.

Rusaw opened his Bible to Acts 8 and read the story of Philip and the Ethiopian. He told the class that after the competition they would have the option to be baptized. Then the competition began, with cheers and groans, success and defeat.

Stories of Faith, Grit and Joy

A professor and three students chose to answer God’s call, turning an engineering class into an impromptu baptism

By Kimberly Felton

A George Fox Digital camera crew, on hand to record a class project, captured the moment Patrick was baptized.
At the conclusion of the class, Rusaw said again, “Here is water. Does anyone want to be baptized?”

No one accepted.

“And it was like, ‘Hey, it’s OK, nothing wrong with that,’” he says. “It may have been a link in someone’s faith chain in the first class, but they weren’t ready. It reminded me that faithfulness to the Spirit’s voice cannot put conditions on God’s answer.”

The lack of response in the first class was a neutral outcome, Rusaw says, neither good nor bad. “But even if it turns out badly, it doesn’t necessarily mean we didn’t act in obedience and faith.”

Still, he considered skipping the baptism invitation at the next class. “There was a slight temptation to say, ‘No one will respond anyway. You’re running a little late and you don’t really need to do this,’” he says.

But faithfulness matters.

Opening the next statistics class, Rusaw again reads Acts 8, telling his class that they, like the Ethiopian, had the opportunity to use this water. Again they held the competition of confident, vocal undergrads, it was the quiet one who stepped forward first. The lion, he says, who looks like a lamb.

“Seeming to forget the courage he himself chose to exercise, Rusaw, months later, still expresses wonder that in a class full of confident, vocal undergrads, it was the quiet one who stepped forward first. The lion, he says, who looks like a lamb.

“She’s the kind of person who is in engineering because she has resolved. It took more courage to do what she did than even what the other two people did. She’s just one of those students who’s like, ‘I’ve got to do what I’ve got to do.’”

Courage breeds courage, Rusaw says. “Some people are given a measure of faith to go first, and that encourages others who may have wanted to obey but not had quite enough courage to step forward. Few are willing to step up first, but many want to and are waiting for the lions to exercise their gift.”

Rusaw holds with some reverence the courage he himself chose to exercise, to dunk them in the tank that morning, to stop people from treading water, to baptize. “I’m glad it didn’t, because it was a very good experience. I’m very glad I did it.”

Zack laughs when he hears he could have stopped into heated water that morning. “The water was pretty chilly, but I didn’t notice it much,” he says. “I had a little bit of adrenaline going.”

As Zack swiped at his wet skin with the towel Emma handed him, yet another little bit of adrenaline going.

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Rusaw holds with some reverence the trust the students put in him, allowing him to “drive me instead of letting God guide me,” he says. “I hadn’t seen that for what it was until last semester. I realized that is not how I want to live, nor is it healthy.”

“Before the semester started, I had been praying. ‘God, if there’s anything, any development I need to have in my life, if you could have that happen sooner than later, that would be great.’ The baptism was part of that, that I didn’t foresee at all, but it definitely was part of it.”

The Courage to be First

Rusaw grinned, seeing puddles form under dripped students. “This is kind of your family, right?” he asked the class, motioning to the Maker Hub behind him, where engineering students spend hours working on projects and interacting with classmates. “This is kind of your home? And this is kind of your family, right? I think that in this world, there are all these opportunities – but because it’s tough to have courage, sometimes somebody wants to do whatever it is that God wants them to do, but they need somebody else to step first.”

For Zack, the baptism signaled the beginning of God leading him into greater courage.

“I’d come to the realization that, in certain areas of my life, I’ve been letting fear drive me instead of letting God guide me,” he says. “I hadn’t seen that for what it was until last semester. I realized that is not how I want to live, nor is it healthy.”

Much like Rusaw did that chilly August morning.
When someone has worked at one place for more than 40 years, you can forgive them if they lose track of how many titles they’ve held. Such is the case with Dave Adrian, the development officer who retired last December after dedicating his entire adult life to the mission of George Fox University.

After graduating from George Fox with a degree in Christian ministries in 1960, Adrian got the opportunity to work at his alma mater when Maurice Chandler, director of development, hired him as a “development associate.”

“I was a product of the Be Known promise before we ever officially adopted that brand.”

Adrian’s love of George Fox comes honestly. During his college years he played basketball and sang in both the school choir and Dayspring, a touring ensemble. Along the way, he interacted with fellow students, alumni, church leaders and potential givers, making him uniquely qualified to join the development staff right out of college.

“I firmly believe in the mission, values, vision and promise of the university, and, as an alumnus, this is my school,” he says. “As such, I wanted to help all students have the same experiences I had, being challenged academically, socially, athletically and spiritually.”

He did so by connecting donors to what they were most passionate about. “Endowed and annual scholarship calls were always enjoyable for me, because we allowed donors to set the scholarship criteria based on their academic interests, geographical locations, extracurricular activities or denominational background,” he says.

Over the past 10 years, Adrian was instrumental in raising money for athletic facilities, including the soccer/lacrosse field, Stoffer Family Stadium, and making improvements to the baseball and softball fields. “As a former Bruin athlete, I thoroughly enjoyed calling on former Bruin athletes and those passionate about athletics,” he says. “It was a personal joy for me.”

He says he’ll miss two things the most: the longtime donors who became friends and the many colleagues “who believed in and encouraged me.” But Adrian doesn’t plan to go away. You will still see him at university events, athletic contests and his weekly “geezers” lunch on campus. He and his wife Pat also plan to travel more extensively.

Phil Smith retires this summer after teaching full time at the institution for 30 years, but the past three decades represent only a fraction of his George Fox journey.

In truth, Smith’s connection to the college began in the summer of 1965, when, between the fourth and fifth grades, he joined pastors from his church to attend the Yearly Meeting on campus. Years later, his impressive test scores in high school prompted numerous recruiting letters from colleges, but they fell on deaf ears: He had already made his choice.

“I applied to just one college,” says Smith, a 1977 George Fox alumnus who describes himself as a “GFU lifer.” “To be clear, I do not recommend this as a strategy for choosing a college!”

During his undergraduate years, Smith discovered a passion for philosophy under the tutelage of longtime professor Arthur Roberts, who “gave me a model of the Christian intellectual life and a sensible approach to epistemology that valued the sensible, rational thinking and intuition,” he says of his mentor.

Smith went on to pastor a Friends church in Portland in the 1970s, while concurrently teaching part time at his alma mater. Later, after earning a PhD in philosophy from the University of Oregon in 1991, he decided to teach full time in 1992.

Since then, he’s taught a wide range of philosophy and religion courses, as well as one health class, Introduction to Marathon Training, in which the “final” was to run a marathon or half-marathon, reflecting another of his life’s passions: running.

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In a word, “community” kept him at George Fox all these years.

“We seek to become an educational community that demonstrates the meaning of Jesus Christ,” he says. “I like the emphasis on ‘seeking to become.’ We are not there yet. We are on the way, which is an ongoing mark of Jesus’ people. We seek to be learners – all of us, including the professors – and we want our learning to honor Christ. For me, that has been an inspiring vision; I’m grateful to be part of such a community.”

Even as he “retires,” Smith will teach two courses, Logic and Virtue Theory, in the spring of 2023, and is considering teaching on an adjunct basis in future years. He also plans to shift his writing focus from philosophy to fiction, with the first project being a revision of his science fiction novel, Castles.
Eloise Hockett
24 Years

He’s traveled the world on behalf of George Fox, establishing educational partnerships in Kenya and presenting research both domestically and internationally, but College of Education professor Eloise Hockett’s most indelible memory in her 24-year career is the story of one student.

A few years ago, she learned of an undergraduate struggling to complete the requirements to earn a teaching license. As department chair, Hockett creatively crafted a plan to help him get on track, part of which involved setting up weekly accountability meetings.

“At first I was skeptical if the student would succeed, but he rose to the challenge and through sheer grit, determination and perseverance, met all of the requirements,” Hockett recalls. “I became a coach, mentor, mom, cheerleader and whatever was needed to help him maintain forward progress. I cried at graduation and his achievement.”

On her George Fox experience, Hockett says the “truly enjoyed my colleagues” and that “the students kept me going.”

“I have gained lifelong friendships, especially from those who have mentored me along the way,” she says. “It’s also been so amazing to watch students work toward their goals, achieve those goals, and then go out into the world and make a difference for students in the field of education.”

In looking to the future, she plans to return to Kenya, where she helped develop a peace curriculum for Quaker secondary schools, delivered professional development training for teachers, and promoted education efforts for girls and women in rural areas.

Mike Magill
20 Years

For 22 years, Melissa Terry committed to several administrative positions on campus, most recently serving as chief of staff in the president’s office. She announced her retirement last fall, ending a career that left a lasting impact both logistically and relationally.

Fellows will recall her role as coordinator of numerous faculty conferences and commencement ceremonies, as the person who helped launch Serve Day and the Women’s Leadership Development Initiative, as co-leader of the Welcome Weekend planning team during the two pandemic years, and as organizer of the university’s 125th anniversary celebration.

Students remember her for other reasons — for her listening ear and for the friendship she offered over dinner or tea at her and husband Mark’s home. The Terrys opened their home to several students over the years and remain friends with many of them to this day.

“Being plugged into the university, collaborating with people, bringing them together and mentoring students,” she says. “My personal mission is empowering with commitment, integrity and light. I hope I lived that out.”

Terry was hired as an administrative assistant in the academic affairs office, was later promoted to executive assistant, and moved to the president’s office soon after Robin Baker took office in 2007, later being promoted to chief of staff. In addition to her administrative duties, she also served as board of trustees secretary. Melissa and Mark are looking forward to more travel and welcoming another grandson in June.

When it came to getting acquainted with his students, Mike Magill had a simple formula: learn their names by the end of the first week of classes, and commit to memory at least one thing about each individual, whether that be their hobby or hometown.

“It seems that if I know their name and at least one thing about them, I can start connecting faster,” says Magill, who retires this summer after 20 years as a professor of mechanical engineering. “My class style is asking lots of questions. I like dialoguing with the students in class and using their names.”

Magill arrived at George Fox after teaching at Oklahoma State and Purdue. What he found — and what kept him in Newberg for two decades — was an engineering program with a Christ-centered focus that allowed him to freely express his faith and connect with students on a spiritual level. “Many years ago, I started praying out loud for my students before tests,” he says. “Year after year, students have commented about how much they appreciate it, so I’ve never stopped.”

During his tenure, Magill taught 15 different classes, served for 16 years as the engineering program’s faculty point person for recruitment, and was department chair for several years. He also led eight Juniors Abroad excursions and participated in several projects with Engineering Ministries International, including one trip that involved taking civil engineering students to Nicaragua to design a steel structure — a large horse arena — for a steel structure — a large horse arena for a ministry for disabled children. What he’ll miss most are his colleagues and his students, one of whom had trouble accepting the fact he wouldn’t see Magill after graduation. “In a moment of genuine emotion, I communicated to students that perhaps we might never see each other again and I would miss them,” Magill says.

“It was dead quiet for several seconds, then one student said, ‘Dr. Magill, I’m going to come live with you.’”

Magill’s plans don’t include having students move in. Rather, they involve enjoying the slower pace of life in the mountains of Eastern Oregon, where he has moved with his wife Lisa, and continuing to volunteer with Engineering Ministries International.

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Stay Known at George Fox

Stay Connected
Share Your News!

Alumni can take advantage of great discounts at the Nike Employee Store from July 9 through 31. Visit alumni.georgefox.edu to learn more and download your pass.

Claim Your Benefits
Nike Employee Store

1950–59
Marion Whitte (rei) had his life and Navy experience highlighted in a Veteran’s Day tabloid special in the Pamplin Media Group newspaper in Oregon. The headline read “Newberg sailor among few remaining WWIII veterans in the United States.” He served in Guam from 1945-46, just as the war ended, and was later a banker for more than 35 years, starting in Newberg.

1960–69
Brian Beals (B68) and Janice (Kennon) Beals (n66) received attention last summer when The View newsletter of Friendsview Retirement Community highlighted them during the 90th anniversary celebration of the retirement center adjacent to the George Fox campus. Both worked for Friendsview during its early years, Brian on the grounds crew to help fund his college tuition and later on the construction crew, and Janice earning income as a waitress in the dining hall. His father, Charles, was the founder and first executive director of Friendsview.

1970–79
Shirley (Robert) Hadley (B78) and Dale Hadley (B78) are both continuing to work part time in their careers. She is a bookkeeper with Grace Community Church in Gresham, Oregon, and he continues with The H Group as a certified financial planner.

1980–89
Scott Widing (B84) and Wendy (Forman) Widing (n83) had their home featured in a July article in the Yakima Herald newspaper, titled “Yakima Abode: A New Life in an Old House.” Their 1942 house has been updated by respecting its original style.

1990–99
Tina Graham (B90, M09) in April was hired as the new principal of the Forest Grove (Oregon) Community Alternative Learning Center, the non-traditional route for earning a high school diploma. He is helping guide the renovation and expansion of its facility as it grows to house 160 students in

Honored as the “Critic of the Month” for the Portland Tribune newspaper. She is the first woman of Hispanic heritage and the first woman of color to serve on the court of appeals. In May she was reelected for her fourth six-year term, winning 64 percent in a rare contested race.

Steven Kostad (B86) is president of Frontier Gratings and an independent nonprofit development professional in Atlanta, in his third year. But he may be better known as a member, since 2019, of the Gwinnett County Public Schools Board, serving Georgia’s largest district, with 173,000 students in 141 schools.

Matt Mraz (B88) is audit partner and SEC reviewing partner with KPMG in Dallas. He’s worked for the international audit and tax advisory services company for 13 years. His expertise is with healthcare entities and companies in the insurance and biotechnol- ogy fields.

Doreen Dodge-Magee (B87) in October released her new book, Ressler: Designing a Healthy Post Pandemic Life. It was the subject of a lengthy question-and-answer interview on Oregon Public Broadcasting on March 19. She is in her 31st year as a psychologist, based in Lake Oswego, Oregon, but with a national and international pres- ence as an author and speaker who focuses on how technology shapes people.

Brian Gardner (B89) is in his third year as vice president of advancement with Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Massachusetts, after two years as senior philanthropic advisor with Gordon College. His background includes advancement roles at Wheaton College, Indiana Wesleyan University and George Fox, where he was the vice president of advancement from 2012 to 2014.

News and Life Events  By Barry Hubbell
In the early 2000s, the chemistry lab was a separate building sometimes described as a “shell” and stood alone to prevent the spread of fire in case of an emergency. Chemistry, biology, history and physics were all taught in the lab which, according to the 1999-2000 course catalog, had recently been upgraded with “some sidewalk new apparatus.”

In her second year as principal of Bandon High School, she oversaw the district’s funding coordination for 17 state community colleges. She also served on the 15-member Education Coordinating Commission Office governing board of the Oregon Institute of Technology.

Celia Núñez-Flores is the founder (2007) of Pacific Academy, the forerunner of Pacific Academy Prep. She is in her fifth year as a business consultant working on the impact of social determinants of health for San Mateo County, California. She received a doctor of ministry degree in spiritual formation with a concentration in spiritual direction and was part of the leadership team.

In 2010 she moved to Portland, acquired by the Weir Group in 2021. Since then, as senior director for sustainability, she has led its sustainability initiatives, including energy reduction programs.

Konna (Fesker) West (B95) is a new member of the League of Oregon Cities Board of Directors, starting in January with the Salem-based association of 242 cities. She is in her fifth year as the city manager of Willamina, a town of just over 2,000 in Yamhill County. She also is co-owner of the Double Bar W Ranch in Amity, Oregon, started in 2007 with a focus on raising, training and racing barrel horses.

Aaron Downs (B97) started last July as superintendent of the Canby (Oregon) School District. For the past 22 years he was nearly West Linn-Wilsonville School District, where he was a teacher, principal and High School for four years, then assistant superintendent for secondary schools starting in 2015.

Jon Burgi (B92) in February was named by Brian Casey, director of marketing/manufacturers’ representative firm Hollabaugh Brothers & Associates. It is a manufacturer’s representative firm connecting plumbing and HVAC wholesalers with end users.

He’s been with the company since 2004 and has served as president since 2013. He is director of marketing/manufacturers’ representatives firm Hollabaugh Brothers & Associates, in his second year as principal of Bandon High School, and is working on a chapter on self-care for teachers, part of a book being prepared by a doctor of education cohort friend.

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Heroes Like Me

Jordan Ifueko creates stories for a new generation of fantasy fiction readers

By Andrew Shaughnessy

As a child, Jordan (Enobakhare) Ifueko (B13) breathed books. She inhaled stories like oxygen, drawing life from the pages of the British literature that crowded her Nigerian immigrant parents’ shelves. Fairy tales and fantasy novels filled her with wonder and painted her imagination in bright shades of magic.

It wasn’t long before she was swimming with verbs and plots and characters, exhaling stories of her own, crafting worlds in ink and paper. She started writing Raybearer – the young adult fantasy novel that would eventually land Ifueko on the New York Times Bestseller List – when she was just 13.

“I’m still not sure what it is in different children’s brains that makes some of them automatically want to recreate what they’re reading, while others are content to just enjoy those worlds,” Ifueko says. “Both of those impulses are natural and great. But for me, as soon as I loved books, I had to make them. I think maybe it’s about loving something so much that you want to be a part of it.”

And yet, for all her love for fairy tales and epic fantasy, Ifueko couldn’t help but feel that the genre refused to love her back. While she was Black, the heroes and heroines of her favorite novels were invariably white. The plots were Eurocentric, set in cool green hillocks and forests scattered with Cinderella castles – calling to mind the Britain or France of yore, but rarely Nigeria or India.

“I didn’t feel like I even had permission to write stories about people who looked like me until I was much older,” she says.

Fantasy stories, it seemed to Ifueko, were narratives where they did not belong.

When she was 12, Ifueko’s family moved from Los Angeles to Newberg. At 16, she enrolled at George Fox as a freshman. There, she dove headfirst into the English program, devouring literature courses and continuing to hone her craft as a writer, both in and out of the classroom.

“You could see the gifts she had,” recalls English professor Gary Tandy. “She had this whole different level of intensity. She was really hard questions about things you’ve ever believed or felt to be true.”

Even as Ifueko was learning and growing in her love of literature and skill with the pen, she was learning and growing as a person, too. As her worldview expanded and her faith grew deeper, the way she grappled with the complexities of race and representation in literature and history became more complex as well.

“When I was there, George Fox tried to expose the student body to lots of diverse narratives,” Ifueko says. “But being a majority-white environment, it was all places where my eyes were opened to how insidious imperialism can be.”

Even amidst the joy and wonder of the stories she loved, Ifueko began to notice the tension between competing narratives all around her – more traditional, Western-dominated perspectives squaring off against non-Western traditions in everything from literature to history to theology. It played out not just in her own mind, but in classrooms and conversations across campus.

Ultimately, I am so grateful for my time at George Fox, because I could see these conflicts happen, and see how many Christians were wrestling through these things,” Ifueko says. “George Fox became a place where it was safe for me to struggle with that. I think if I had gone to a secular university it would have been easier for me to compartmentalize and say, ‘Oh these views that question things, of course they do that, because they’ve not Christians.’

Whereas, because most everybody was a Christian within George Fox, it made it easier for me to say, ‘Hey, questioning doesn’t negate faith. You can be someone whose faith is very important to you and still ask really hard questions about things you’ve believed for a long time.’”

All the while, she kept chipping away at the novel she had started as a young teenager. And as Ifueko grew and changed, the book changed with her, transforming from a mirror of the Eurocentric fairy tales on which she was raised into a vastly more complicated – and vastly more interesting – story about a young heroine deconstructing the myths she once believed about empires and power and destiny, and ultimately finding the courage to fight for and build a better world.

After college, Ifueko spent a few years working for an academic publisher, but she kept on writing and dreaming. When one of her short stories was picked up by the Hugo-nominated magazine Strange Horizons, a literary agent reached out to ask if she had written any other fiction. When she offered the first few chapters of her novel, the agent saw Ifueko had something special. Within two weeks, she had a deal with a major publisher.

The end result, Raybearer, has since become a New York Times bestseller, was named “best book of the year” by People, Buzzfeed and Strange Horizons, including Publishers Weekly, Buzzfeed and People magazine, and was nominated for the prestigious 2020 Nebula Award for Middle Grade and Young Adult Fiction.

“We’ve just really proud of her,” Tandy says. “It’s amazing what she has accomplished. But also – especially in this current environment where the humanities are perhaps not as respected as professional degrees – we want our students to know that they can pursue their love of writing, that there are possibilities if they work hard at it.”

These days, Ifueko is still breathing books. Still inhaling graphic novels, young adult fiction and fantasy novels from a growing pantheon of diverse authors. She’s exhaling her own stories, too – stories where heroines who look like her grapple with nuance and struggle for justice in worlds of magic and wonder.

Redemptor, the sequel to Raybearer, was released in August 2021. Netflix has announced it will be adapting the books into a streaming series, while Ifueko herself is working on young new adult and middle grade fantasy books.

When it comes to representation, Ifueko believes the world of publishing and literature still has a long way to go, but she is determined to be part of that change, harnessing the power of story to build a better world.
Jennifer (Bezdicek) Finnison (Boo) and her husband Joseph are in Bavaria, Germany, where he is a U.S. Department of Defense teacher on the Army base there. They have authored two children’s books: Adventures of Joseph and Esther: Mask of the Red Ninja, and Adventures of Joseph and Esther and Poo in the Case of the Missing Spy Boy.

Shana Horn (Mo, Dao), describing herself as “The Shamebusting Psychologist,” is a speaker and writer in addition to her private practice as a licensed psychologist. She was a TEDx speaker in October in Spokane, Washington, and has launched a podcast, Inspired Living. She also has a YouTube channel, is host of a TV show, Uncovered; and is a columnist for the Kitsap Sun magazine, a health and wellness website.

Since 1997, she has been in residency with the University of Washington School of Medicine.

Andrew Wilton (Boo) is the new executive director of the safety and security division of TriMet, the Portland-area mass transit system. He was appointed in January and oversees the departments of safety, transit, tram police and environmental services.

Byron Brewer (Mo) is in Spokane Valley, Washington, where he was a youth and young adult director with Downriver Church in Spokane, Washington, for more than two years until April 2023. He is now a chief operating officer for Pinnacle Investigations, started in 2018, and also serves as a pastor, speaker, emcee, host and podcaster.

Jewel Coleman (Boo) has launched Opt Real Estate, announced in January in partnership with Sotheby’s, a real estate technology company. She is a collaboration specialist with the Advanced Research Center.

Rya Danner (Mo) has returned to her alma mater, Stanford, where she is an associate professor of history. He holds a PhD in history from the University of Utah, received in 2009.

Shara Hays (Boo) is on campus again, now as associate dean of student life, starting last fall. The previous five years she was at Rochester University in Rochester Hills, Michigan, where she held the positions of accommodation officer, title IX coordinator, dean of students and adjunct professor.

Nellska Szczepan (Mo) is an account manager in Englewood, Colorado, at the headquarters of the health insurance company Anthem, which is changing its name to Vive Health. She started in 2021 after several years in Portland and two years in Honolulu with Kaiser Permanente.

Matt Center (Boo) is now in Dallas, where he is involved in global corporate social responsibility with Gartner, an information technology research and consulting company. His focus is on measuring and amplifying the impact of the company’s 110,000 employees worldwide, seeking to increase volunteerism, charitable giving and impact communities. He is currently in a dual doctorate (PhD, DBA) program through the University of St. Gallen, providing technical inputs that begin strategic development and impact communities in Switzerland.

Karen Liet (Boo), an information technology operations engineer with ICON plc in Portland, reports his company was the primary lab for the development of the Pfizer COVID vaccine. He has 25 years of experience in information systems, IT consulting and project management.

Deb (Waterman) Marines (Boo) is owner/man-ager of Adaptability in Life in Woodburn, Oregon, offering licensed professional counseling, NLP and coaching.

Angela Pleshek (Mo, Dot) is owner and clinical psychologist, in her ninth year, with Capacity Solutions in Portland, which offers therapeutic services related to issues of aging. Recently, she was a candidate for the new Oregon U.S. Congressional District 6 position, but did not win the Republican Party endorsement in the May 17 Primary Election.

Benjamin Gorman (Moa) has taught English at Oregon State University and a school in Independence, Oregon, for 20 years. He’s also the president of the Central Oregon Education Association, the local teachers’ union. He may be better known as owner of Not a Pipe Publishing, started in 2013. His success with the company was detailed in a December feature article in The Oregonian newspaper.

Betty in Steele (Boo, Mot) is now serving as a pulp supply minister for area churches following her retirement in January and moving to Salem, Oregon, after working as a chaplain at Silverton (Oregon) Medical Center since 2004. Previously, she was a dental hygienist for 27 years.

Carla Minn (Mos) is a new leadership coach with BuildLife, an executive coaching firm in Lake Oswego, Oregon. He started in August, leaving Portland Bible College after nearly 15 years, the last two years as vice president for advancement.

Joseph Agyei Mensah (Doo) is a senior associate pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Accra, Ghana, with a membership of 2,500. In that position since 1995, he guides ministry programs and has 25 pastors under his supervision.

Trevor Bemis (Boo), in Portland for the last 10 years as an associate professor in the School of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering, was promoted to technical manager for global off-highway and America’s fluid power division and continues to provide technical inputs that begin strategic development and impact communities.

Abigail (Koak) Forre (Boo), dean of George Fox’s College of Humanities since 2020, has left the position to become a faculty member at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at Notre Dame University, starting July 1. She started at George Fox in 2011 as a professor of English and later directed the honors program for two years before being named dean. An avid speaker, she has recently been a Life and Divinity Writing Fellow at Notre Dame.

Malorie (Wilson) Ivason (Boo) in November became the first theatre manager for Riverfront Playhouse in Redding, California. She has been involved as an actor with the all-volunteer theatre organization for 10 years.

Laura Douglas (Boo) is a child, family and adolescent therapist with Deschutes County Health Services in Bend, Oregon, in her ninth year. She started in parent/child interaction therapy. She is approved to supervise licensed clinical social workers and is launching a consulting business to assist them.

Christina Estrada (Mot) has made the move from government service to private practice as a licensed professional counselor. In January 2021, she joined New Springs Counseling Service in Tigard, Oregon, after nearly 12 years with the Oregon Department of Corrections as a licensed mental health counselor and program manager.

Dasee Balick (Boo) is the new police chief at Jerome, Idaho. He was chosen to oversee the Idaho head law enforcement in the city of 12,500 and moved up from his position as captain. He has worked in the department for 20 years, serving as a patrol officer, detective and sergeant.

Jillian Crow (Blankenship) Straight (Boo) is in her second year as senior manager of lab operations with CRISPR Therapeutics, a biotech company in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Mallory (Wilson) Nielsen (Boo) is a podcast producer and manager of Traditionally Rooted, a catering and event planning firm.

Audrey (Nigara) Williamson (Boo) and Trevor Williamson (Boo) live in Central Point, Oregon, where she is an assistant production manager with Darco, a manufacturer of sharpening tools in Ashland, Oregon. He is also the co-owner of Solara Systems, a company that provides solar operations for Empire Medical in Medford, Oregon, a technology company that simplifies and monitors the safety of orthotic and prosthetic devices for the medical professions.

Krista (Sandoval) Mitke (Boo) in February was presented the American School Superintendents Association Distinguished Service Award. She is the principal at Madras High School. She’s been the principal at Madras since 2017.

Kirsten Green (Boo) is in her fourth year as manager of commerce product management with Apple in Cupertino, California. She has been with the company since 2015.

Anariz (Treonq) Lengrue (Boo), after serv- ing as an assistant coach for three years, became the new head coach for girls’ soc- cer at Chelan High School in Washington last fall, following the school’s softball program after playing both sports at Texas Tech University. In addition to coaching, she is the owner of Traditionally Rooted, a catering and event planning firm.

Kathleen Nguyen (Mo) was named a part- ner in her law firm, Dickinson Wright, in Phoenix in January. She joined the firm in 2015, just after graduation from the Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law at Arizona State University. She specializes in com- mercial and business litigation.

Yenneff Tapat (Boo) in December passed the professional engineer examination and is an engineer and associate project manager with the Wilson Okamoto Corporation in Honolulu. She is in her sixth year with the civil, traffic and transportation, and plan- ning firm.

Juan (Vega) Alvarez (Boo) and Trevor Williamson (Boo) live in Central Point, Oregon, where she is an assistant production manager with Darco, a manufacturer of sharpening tools in Ashland, Oregon. He is also the co-owner of Solara Systems, a company that provides solar operations for Empire Medical in Medford, Oregon, a technology company that simplifies and monitors the safety of orthotic and prosthetic devices for the medical professions.
association. She has been superintendent of the Buckeye (Arizona) Elementary School District since 2011, after serving as assistant superintendent for three years.

Caitie (Kaitlynne) Bennett (B10) started July as director of human student experience in the honors program at John Brown University in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. She started with JBU in 2018 as interim director of student engagement.

Holli Fox (B10) earned a doctor of nursing practice in 2019 from Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington, and last July started as a family nurse practitioner at the Neighborhood Health Center in Beaverton, Oregon.

Scott Gragg (M08, D21) started as executive director at Love Justice, a consulting firm near Nashville, Tennessee.

Alumni Connections

Therapy in Prineville, Oregon, opening a second round by the New York Giants, which provides mental health and substance abuse treatment, support and prevention services.

Kristine Cole (B09) in August was highlighted by the Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business as one of the top “Young Professionals for 2022.” She is back in the Tri-Cities, Washington, area since 2011, and in August started with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory as a staff development consultant, moving from a position as assistant director of career services at Washington State University Tri-Cities after nearly three years.

Sara Reim (B09) is using her writing and literature degree at Auburn University, where she is a lecturer in the Department of English and Philosophy. In May 2011, she earned a PhD in rhetoric and composition with the University of Arizona, where she also taught writing-related courses and was named English Department Graduate Student of the Year in 2019. Previously, for five years, she was a part-time instructor at George Fox.

Nick Laffie (B10) published his article “Five Steps to Make Telehealth Work for Physicians and Patients” in the March issue of Medical Economics, a monthly magazine, for physicians. Also was published in Dermatology Times. He is director of virtual care with Pivot Point, a healthcare IT consulting firm near Nashville, Tennessee.

Andrea Byerley (B10) started in 2017 with George Fox University, in May became senior associate registrar at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon.

Justin Callistini (B10) is a silicon validation specialist at Covington Middle School. She started in 2011, this spring opened a second store, this time in downtown Vancouver, Washington. The business features a drink extracted from the root of a Pacific islands plant, served in coconut bowls.

Jordan Schatz (B10) started in August with the Washington (Pasco) School District, where he is a math teacher at Pasco High School following long-term substituting in nearby Kennewick schools.

Henry Balsunfer (B10) is using his political science degree as the mayor of Warrenton, Oregon, a city of 6,000 on the northern Oregon Coast. He started with the city as a commissioner in 2013 and was elected mayor in 2017. He is manager of marketing and government relations with LEXTRON in Warrenton, a manufacturer of loadbearing aircraft towing vehicles, with the company since 2014.

Maria Balloone (B10) is a teacher in the Mt. Angel (Oregon) School District, serving the last nine years as a mentor to 61 teachers, two counselors and six administrators.

Andrea Byerley (M08, D21) is an assistant professor of systematic theology at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology in Indiana. She started in 2010 after earning a PhD in systematic theology from the University of Notre Dame in 2009. Her dissertation, “The Eucharistic Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar,” which addresses the significance of contemporary sacramental theology.
Deep in the Sepik River Basin of Papua New Guinea, past the Torricelli Mountains and through the winding jungle waterways, lies the remote village of Baku – only accessible by boat or seaplane. Here, far beyond the reach of civilization’s grasping concrete tenticles, George Fox alumna Mary (Owen) Grimm (B14) and her husband, Ben, serve side by side as missionaries with Word Made Flesh International.

Mary, who has a master’s degree in linguistics, is working on translating the Bible (as well as other reading materials) into the local language and developing a literacy program in five area villages. Ben, who serves as the Word Made Flesh field director for Papua New Guinea, focuses on community health and development: clean water supply projects, sustainable agriculture, first aid education and more. It’s a holistic ministry – one in which talking to neighbors about Jesus goes hand in hand with addressing their tangible needs.

For most, living and ministering in an area with no running water, cell service or even paved roads would be extraordinarily difficult, to say the least. But for Mary and Ben, it’s just one more chapter in their adventure-fueled lives. Ben began his career in Air Force special operations before eventually discovering a passion for community development. As for Mary, her love for the outdoors and for Jesus have served as twin through lines interwoven in her story.

“I grew up loving the wilderness and expecting life to be an adventure,” she says. “If you could say that I’ve been preparing for this since before I was born.”

Mary’s interest in global ministry was first sparked by a week-long youth missions trip to Mexico, then fanned to flame by a series of short-term trips to Papua New Guinea, where she first learned about the need for Bible translation.

“After those trips she was certain of two things,” says Mary’s father, Bruce Owen, who works in the finance office at George Fox. “The first was that God had called her to a life of missionary service, and the second was that she never wanted to wear shoes again. From that time on she only wore them if absolutely necessary or when compelled.”

During her time as an undergraduate at George Fox, she developed a reputation as a free spirit and daredevil, chasing adrenaline and natural beauty wherever it could be found: skydiving, bungee jumping, caring, and even free climbing the outside of buildings in Newberg. It was not uncommon for Mary to disappear into the woods for days at a time to revel in God’s glorious creation, rarely telling anyone where she was going or how long she would be gone.

“She lived her life joyfully,” as she would put it,” says Mary’s mother, Shelli (Bau) “She considered fear anathema. God had made her life an adventure and she was going to embrace that adventure with abandon.”

Mary’s parents were confident in her skills as an outdoorswoman, but they worried about the potential consequences of her carelessness.

“God has called me to be a missionary,” she would say whenever they gave voice to their concern. “He’s not going to let me die before I do what he has given me to do.”

For years, Mary walked the razor edge that runs between courage and recklessness. In 2015, that balancing act nearly killed her.

One Thursday morning in the middle of Mary’s final spring break at George Fox, one of her roommates called Mary’s parents to ask if they knew where she was. No one had seen her for days, and though her friends had grown accustomed to her occasional disappearances, they were starting to worry. It soon became evident that Mary was missing.

Her parents filed a missing person’s report, put out the word on social media, and started a globe-spanning prayer chain. By the next day, police had found the pickup truck Mary had borrowed from a friend. Its location indicated that she was likely somewhere in the vast wilderness surrounding Mount Hood. The search began.

Four days earlier, without telling a soul, Mary had set out to climb the mountain – a goal that had eluded her for years. She originally connected with a guide to take her to the summit, but when they postponed the climb – citing unfavorable weather conditions – Mary decided to push for the unfamiliar peak alone. High on the mountain, she was caught in a whiteout. Blinding snow fell thick and fast, and soon Mary lost her bearings,esdakening the wrong side of the mountain, and fell.

Mary lay injured, freezing and alone in the snow for six days, before she was miraculously found by an Air National Guard helicopter crew. The brush with death marked a turning point in her life, changing her perspective forever. Faced with her mortality, she realized that her story was not her own, but that she belonged to God; that life was precious and fragile and not to be risked unnecessarily. More than anything, she realized the urgency of her call to share the gospel with others.

She still lived the wilderness and adventure, but no longer would she take death-defying risks purely for the thrill. God had forged her to be an adventurer, but an adventurer with a purpose.

After graduating from George Fox and marrying Ben – whom she had met while both were working at a group home for foster teens – Mary dove straight into graduate training at the Canadian Institute of Linguistics. Near the end of her masters program, a man named Clemence Kornapsi from the village of Baku helped her with some research. As their project drew to a close, he asked whether she and Ben would consider moving to Papua New Guinea to join him in his work of translating the Bible into his people’s native language and serving the physical needs of the local community.

“We prayed,” says Mary, “and God said ‘Go!’”

These days, Mary and Ben are happiest at their home in Baku. They hold first aid trainings and literacy meetings, tend their garden, and share their meals and love their neighbors. Their children spend their days outside, playing in the muddy jungle mountains. For many, the Grimms’ life of primitive isolation would be a hardship. For them, it is a blessing – a perfect fit for the nature-loving, adventure-driven humans that God made them to be.

“I have not sacrificed to come here to Papua New Guinea,” Mary says. “Jesus sacrificed to bring me to him, and he has honored me with the calling and the provision to tell others of his love and sacrifice for them. I will never forget what he showed me on the mountain. There is no person on this planet that is not worth it to God. He has moved heaven and earth to bring us to him. Crossing the globe is nothing.”

Read more about Mary’s harrowing experience on Mt. Hood in a new book written by her mom, Shelli Owen, entitled Mountain Rescue: A True Story of Unexpected Mercies and Deliverance, available on Amazon and in the Bruin Store.
Krisha (Gordon) Eise (Bu, M4) already had eight years of experience at George Fox in admissions roles, now is a program officer with the Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation in Wilsonville, Oregon. She started at George Fox in 2012 as an assistant women’s basketball coach, became an admissions counselor the following year, and rose to senior associate director of undergraduate admissions her fifth year.

Kara Bettsman (Bu) is lead pastor of Saints’ Hill Church in Newberg, started in 2018 at a church plant by Bridgeview Church in Portland, where he was a youth pastor.

Jason (Rogers) Bu was named Inovon’s 2021 “First Citizen” in May, recognized for his involvement as member, chair of the city’s parks and recreation board; member, then chair, of the city’s planning commission; member of the Washington County Parks and Recreation Board; and for his involvement in Boy Scouts and the American Legion. He is with Medical Teams International in Tigard as a U.S. programs emergency response manager.

John Sawyer (Mu) is associate pastor/campus pastor at Bon Air Baptist Church, James River campus, near Richmond, Virginia. He is also the founder and chair of the nonprofit Bridging RVA, which was featured in a December issue of the Richmond Free Press newspaper for making more than 7,000 deliveries of food to doorsteps of those quarantined during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ben Tocci (Mu) has two careers going: as an actor/musician/director and as a program director for a youth camp. Since 2019, he’s been on the staff of Trout Creek, a Bible camp for youth in Corbett, Oregon. His professional performing career includes singer/songwriter for two full-length albums and five EP’s. In October, he took the stage as lead with the Broadway Rose Theatre (Tigard) performance of Les Mis.

Brenna Altrager (Bu) is now in Frisco, Texas, starting in February as director of audience development with Complexity Gaming, an esports franchise located in The Star, the headquarters of the Dallas Cowboys.

Rachel Bradstreet (Bu) returned to campus in December to work as the director of marketing content for George Fox Digital in the marketing communications department.

Previously, she was assistant director of communications at Pacific University in Forest Grove, Oregon. Previously, she opened two businesses in McMinnville, Oregon, during the year. Last June, she and four others started Elina’s Wine Bar, where she is manager. Ten weeks later, she opened Alt Coworking, offering shared work space for those not needing full-time office locations. This follows a career turnaround during which she and her husband sold all their possessions and road-tripped America’s 48 contiguous states for 14 months, traveling 3,500 miles while visiting Mexico, Canada and the Bahamas.

Stephen Kenyon (Bu) begins his second year in his assignment in Southern Oregon as parochial vicar at St. Anne Catholic Church in Grants Pass. He also serves missions at Our Lady of the River Rogue River and St. Patrick of the Forest in Cave Junction.

Amanda (Weinkauf) Howard (Bu) has returned to campus, where she is the director of marketing content for undergraduate programs. She started in September after working for three years as director of marketing and admissions at Westside Christian High School in Tigard, Oregon.

Daniela (Silentres) Jones (Bu) remains in the aircraft industry but has changed jobs. She is now a senior technical program manager—aircraft development for her new firm, Volcani, a drone delivery development company in Bend, Oregon. She relocated last July after nine years with Columbia Helicopters. She is now responsible for managing the design, development, integration and validation of the Volcani Mu unmanned aircraft program.

Jacquie (Pickett) Lai (Bu) is a professional portrait photographer who owns her own business, Jacqueline L Photography, and teaches photography in Columbus, Georgia. She started the business in 2018 in the Washington, D.C. area, but relocated last summer when her husband, who is in the U.S. Army, was reassigned.

Rachel returned to campus in December to work as the director of marketing content for George Fox Digital in the marketing communications department.
George Fox students of the 1970s majored in everything from education and the sciences to the arts, religion and home economics. At front and center of this photo is Marge Weesner, affectionately known as “Doc,” who was instrumental in helping to establish women’s athletics at the college and fought for equal access for female students.

**SUMMER 2022**
The Warrior’s Path
Kiana Rasubala fulfills a childhood dream of competing on “American Ninja Warrior”

By Andrew Shaughnessy

Ever since she was a child, Kiana Rasubala (B20) dreamed of becoming a ninja. But it wasn’t the sword-wielding, masked assassins of yore that captured the George Fox alumna’s imagination. Instead, it was the high-flying obstacle course athletes of the reality show American Ninja Warrior.

The TV series, now in its 15th season, features competitors from across the U.S. who attempt to complete challenging obstacle courses in front of a live audience and commentators. They run across balance beams, leap from precarious platforms high in the air, clamber over moving walls, swing from rope to rope over chasms of foam or water, and perform devilishly difficult feats of strength and dexterity. Those who succeed with fast-enough times advance to progressively more demanding stages of the competition, ultimately culminating in a notoriously difficult finale in which the victor wins a $1 million prize and the coveted title of “American Ninja Warrior.”

The whole production looks both incredibly fun and absurdly difficult, requiring a rare combination of agility, strength and skill. For a longtime fan and athlete like Rasubala—a devoted viewer for the last 10 years—seeing other women literally overcoming obstacles proved inspiring.

“In the earlier seasons there were a ton of guys who really excelled, but just a few girls, and they weren’t quite at the same level,” she says. “But then in Season 6, Kacy Catanzaro became the first woman to ever complete a qualifier course. That was the moment where I was like, ‘Wow, girls really do have a shot at this.’”

“Honestly, I’ve made quite a few life choices because of American Ninja Warrior,” Rasubala says. “Rasubala began structuring her life around training for the show. On weekdays she rock climbed, built up her core and upper-body strength with bodyweight circuits, and even trained on local playgrounds to simulate obstacles. Every weekend she hopped in her car and drove three or more hours to reach the closest ninja gym, alternating facilities to explore new cities and vary her training. Within a year, she was driving 4,000 miles to train at different ninja gyms in nine cities across four states.

When it came time to apply for the show, Rasubala was ready. She filled her application video with clips of her swings, leaps and climbing her way through seemingly every obstacle course in the American Southwest and played up her story of dedication and grit—her very last training session, the day before she was scheduled to fly to Texas, Rasubala had fallen in an attempt to run up the “warped wall” obstacle at a ninja gym, injuring her foot.

“I was freaking out, so I immediately called Mary Imboden, one of my exercise science professors at Fox, and said, ‘Hey, this just happened. What can I do?’” Imboden helped as much as she could, advising ice, rest and tape for the injured foot, but when Rasubala stepped up to the stage to make her first official American Ninja Warrior attempt, she could still feel that her foot wasn’t doing well. The very first obstacle was a lower-body intensive balancing act, involving running up a series of steps, grabbing onto a rope and swinging onto a platform.

Rasubala took off. At first, it seemed that things were going well, but as she made it across the final steps, she started to lose her balance. Catching the rope too low, her momentum was gone and her trajectory off-killer. She jumped, stretching to reach the platform, but came just short, falling back onto the water below and failing to complete the first obstacle.

Though disappointed, she remains undeterred.

“I’m definitely going to keep training and go for it again next year,” says Rasubala, who one day hopes to open her own ninja gym, sharing her love for the sport and the lessons she’s learned with others. “I only had six months of training under my belt, while others have been doing this for years, so I know that there is still tons of room for growth.”

The way she sees it, this isn’t the end of a dream, but rather just another chapter in her lifelong story of athletic pursuit and personal growth.

“My whole sports and fitness journey has been one of growing in self-confidence and pushing past my self-doubt and the fears that creep in,” she says. “In track I would compare myself to others a lot. Even if I had a good day at a track meet, I would always think, ‘Oh but this other person did so much better.’ Completing these physical obstacle courses builds me up to feel more confident in my daily life. I see it as, if I can tackle that, then I can do anything.”

“American Ninja Warrior” is scheduled to air on NBC in early 2023.
from Kingston University in London and is now a marketing executive in Fulham Palace. She started last June, working in a structure that started in 1885, the Hoover House, now an author with the Hoover Institution. The house, built in 1885 by Herbert Hoover, the 31st U.S. president.片段从肯辛顿大学在伦敦和现在在Fulham宫工作。她于今年六月开始工作，工作在一个于1885年建立的结构中，即赫伯特·胡佛故居，美国第31任总统。)

Meggan Buchanon (Btg) has moved across the country, starting in November as a child life specialist with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She also is from the 1985-88 class at the University of British Columbia, where she was an admissions counselor for the George Fox’s undergraduate admissions office, as well as a student she was an admissions intern for three years. She spent her first year after graduation as the social media specialist with the Fairwood Golf & Country Club, where he started in the fall after graduating. She works as a graphic designer. He worked previously for four years as a graphic design freelancer, most recently with the Opus Agency on assets for the Amazon Re shuttle event.

David Fischer (Bsg) last year received a master’s degree in astronomical engineering from the University of Southern California and has a fellowship to continue there as a PhD student in the same field. He is a research engineer with the school’s space engineering research center with a focus on studying entry, descent and landing systems to enable interplanetary exploration.片从美国西海岸的加利福尼亚州立大学，他在那里获得了天文学硕士学位，并在那里获得了研究生奖学金，继续在该领域从事研究。他是学校太空工程项目研究的中心的研究工程师，专注于研究进入、下降和着陆系统，以实现星际探索。

Samantha Marston (Bz) is a mental health specialist with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She is executive director of Babies R Us in Portland, a mortgage transaction firm where he started in the fall after graduation.片段Samantha Marston (Bz)是一名心理健康专家，目前在孟菲斯/田纳西州圣约翰儿童的研究医院工作。她是波特兰的“宝贝”执行董事，一家抵押贷款交易公司，他于今年秋天开始工作。

The college didn’t have an official mascot in the early days, although its athletic teams were informally referred to as the “Prune Packers” and “Quakers” at different times in its history. In 1912, student Will-Howes created a character he named “Foxy George,” which he featured in editorial cartoons in the campus newspaper, The Crescent. In 1910, the college began promoting “shooin A bushes.” It was removed this time a bush mascot was formally adopted.在早期，学院的体育团队并没有正式吉祥物，尽管在不同时期分别被称为“Prune Packers”和“Quakers”。1912年，一位名叫Will-Howes的学生创造了一个他命名为“Foxy George”的角色，他在校园报纸《晨星报》上发表了这幅漫画。在1910年，学院开始推广“shooin A bushes”。这次，一个灌木吉祥物被正式采用。

The year 2020 marked the centennial of George Fox College, triggering many on-campus celebrations. In this case, students came up with their own way to “celebrate,” launching water balloons at unsuspecting passersby.片段2020年是George Fox大学的百年校庆，触发了许多校园庆祝活动。在这种情况下，学生们想出了自己的庆祝方式，“庆祝”，向不速之客发射水球。

John Kimb (Dgr), despite retiring in 2020 as principal of The Greenschool Group in Vancouver, Washington, continues in a third career, now as an adjunct professor at the University of British Columbia. He was in the research and consulting field for seven years with Greenschool after 32 years with Liberty Mutual Insurance.片段John Kimb (Dgr)于2020年退休，成为不列颠哥伦比亚大学的兼职教授。他在咨询和研究领域工作七年后在Greenschool工作，这是他32年在Liberty Mutual的第三职业生涯。

Sarah King (Bz) became George Fox University’s first female Olympian with a silver medal in 2000. She will be in the research and consulting field for seven years with Greenschool after 32 years with Liberty Mutual Insurance.片段Sarah King (Bz)成为George Fox大学的第一位女性奥运选手，获得2000年的银牌。在随后的七年里在Greenschool工作，这是她32年在Liberty Mutual的第三职业生涯。

Karina Kreider (Dgr) is a mental health specialist with St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She is executive director of Babies R Us in Portland, a mortgage transaction firm where he started in the fall after graduation.片段Karina Kreider (Dgr)是一名心理健康专家，目前在孟菲斯/田纳西州圣约翰儿童的研究医院工作。她是波特兰的“宝贝”执行董事，一家抵押贷款交易公司，他于今年秋天开始工作。

Noah Fitzsimmons (Bzg) has “brought ever-deepening grace while enhancing my patience and empathy beyond words.”片段Noah Fitzsimmons (Bzg)带来的“越来越深的恩典，同时增强了我的耐心和同理心，无法用言语形容。”
Beaverton, Oregon, which manufactures Chromokey, laptops, desktops and PCs. He was promoted from manager of its digital sales team, a position held for a year after he joined the company in 2019.

Kassandra Lasage (BA) started last August as a junior scientific data scientist with Asimio Data Science in Anchorage, Alaska, an informatics and software development firm.

Anthony Latihan (MBA) started in November as a behavioral health technician with CODA, Inc. in Portland, a treatment center for substance abuse disorder.

Nathan Leib (BS) is now in Texas as the service team and care coordinator with Fellowship Bible Church in Dallas. He helps members find service opportunities, schedule events, and is the primary contact for volunteering.

Hannah McCormick (MBA), after interning at Laurelhurst Elementary School in Portland, is using her degree as a social worker with the Oregon City School District, starting her second year.

Brena McAuliffe (BA) continues at George Fox after graduation, where she is an admissions specialist for honors programs in which she participated as a student.

Chris McMillan (MBA) last June started as a medical social worker at Williamette Valley Medical Center in McMinnville, Oregon.

Cam Oliver (BA) has found an immediate position to use his degree in theology, as youth director at Living Hope Church in Vancouver, Washington.

Jared Partz (MBA) is in his second year as a residence planning counselor with Friendsview Retirement Community in Newberg. This follows nearly three years with the Hillsboro (Oregon) Police Department as a domestic violence advocate.

Savannah Sexton (BA) is a graduate assistant athletic trainer for the football and golf teams at Wingate University in North Carolina, while she is pursuing a master’s degree in sport management and athletic administration.

Santina Sison (BA) is in Boston as part of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, working at Playworks New England, where she is creating curriculum for kids to remain active during the school year. Playworks is a youth development nonprofit program for students ages 10 to 14 in low-income areas, helping them build social and emotional skills through play.

Anna Snell (BS) is using her music degree with Salem-Keizer (Oregon) Public Schools as a choir director at Waldorf Middle School.

Megan Stewart (BA) is staying in Newberg, using her journalism and psychology degrees and her experience as editor of The Crescent student newspaper in her position as a reporter for the Newberg Graphic newspaper. She started in November.

Caroline Strate (BA) has stayed in Yamhill County and is now a psychological therapist with Therapeutic Associates, Inc. in McMinnville, Oregon.

Kody Ulrich (BA) is using his interior design degree in his first year as a junior home designer at Wise Owl Home Plans in Vancouver, Washington.

Jen Wright (BA) spent last summer on the news team at KCLC FM, an Oregon public radio station in Eugene, and is now a staff writer for the magazine of Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, a private arts college of 1,800.

Paul Cosaunt (BA) is a system validation engineer with Intel Corp. in Hillsboro, Oregon. He started in the role officially after graduation but was an intern in the position during his senior year. He has been with the company for nearly 10 years in a variety of roles.

Josh Hicks (BA) is a software engineer with T2 Medical in Portland, a medical devices manufacturer. He continues in the position he held as an intern his senior year.

IN MEMORY

Hazel Mary (Hess) Harrison (BA), Sept. 2, 2022, in Newberg.

Bill Stein (BA), June 28, 2021, in Corvallis, Oregon.

Robert Hurford (BA), Sept. 27, 2021, in Newberg.

Laurie Fortelli (BA), April 28, 2022, in Newberg.

Erin Briggs (BS), Dec. 16, 2021, in Milwaukee, Oregon.

Harold Magee (BS), Aug. 11, 2021, in Mount Angel, Oregon.


Martha (Jones) Antin (MBA), Jan. 22, 2022, in Newberg.

Maribeth (McCrae) Hansen (BS), April 17, 2022, in Newberg.

Carmen Purcutzer (MBA), March 8, 2022, in Independence, Oregon.


Savannah Sexton (BA), Nov. 15, 2021, in Greenleaf, Idaho.

John Byrd (BA), June 13, 2022, in Newberg.

Caroline (More) Parker (MBA), Jan 26, 2022, in Newberg.

Loren Winkle (BA), Jan. 15, 2022, in Roseburg, Oregon.

Sherrill (Hilli) Comfort (BS), Aug. 15, 2021, in Newberg.


Nick Maurer (BS), Jan. 11, 2022, in Newberg.


Sara (Wix) Grant (BS), Aug. 11, 2021, in Newberg.


Angel (A) Angeles (MBA), Jan. 27, 2022, in Newberg, Oregon. George Fox planning summer student.


Jody Henderson (BA), Jan. 4, 2022, in Salem, Oregon.


Michael Brigisch (BBA, BLS), July 19, 2021, in Sisters, Oregon.

Dana Chastain (BS), Sept. 8, 2021, in Portland, Oregon.

Steven Greath, also known as Steven Shang (BS), Feb. 12, 2021, in Longview, Washington.


Carolyn Streby (MBA), Aug. 15, 2021, in McMinnville, Oregon.

Christopher Clouse (BBA), Dec. 10, 2021 in Franklin, Tennessee.

Daniel (Daniel) O’Hara (MBA), Nov. 12, 2021, in Dallas, Oregon.

Sharon Shaw (BS), Aug. 5, 2021, in Newberg.

Kyle Kassid (BS), June 19, 2021, in Newberg.

Kara Besh (MBA), June 29, 2021, in Boise, Idaho.


Isabel Garcia, June 19, 2021, in Manzanita, Oregon. Director of George Fox University Honors Program, associate professor of religious studies, 2016-2021.


There were times she had headaches, was outright sick, or just wasn’t feeling up to being cheery and fun. But all those feelings seemed to vanish when Marissa Flood strapped on that big beanie-capped head and floppy paws to become the university’s beloved mascot, Pennington.

Flood graduated this spring with a degree in marketing after working all four of her college years as Pennington. She leaves feeling the bear has made her a better person.

“When you’re in the suit, you have to be kind and personable – you can’t be in a bad mood,” she says. “I mean, can you imagine an angry bear walking around? It’s funny, because I’m not a big hug person. But when I’m Pennington those personal feelings go away. I just become a different character who loves to hug and encourage people.”

Flood didn’t plan on being a college mascot, but when she observed what she considered an uninspiring Pennington performance at her first football game freshman year, the thought entered her mind: “I could do this.” Friends encouraged her to look into it, and after expressing interest to the marketing communications department, she was hired for the job.

Since then, she’s led a double life – as Marissa Flood, the student, and as the high-energy, always-energetic Pennington. “A small group of friends know, but most people don’t know that I did this all these years,” she laughs. “I’d have people come up and start talking to me, asking me who I was. Others just needed someone to talk to. I couldn’t talk back, but I’d listen, nod my head and give ‘em a hug or high five.”

One of those individuals – the grandmother of a football player – was Flood’s favorite “target.” “That older lady just loved me, and I’d seek her out in the crowd and find her to give her a hug,” Flood says. “One day, her grandson came to me and told me how much he appreciated me giving her that attention, with tears in his eyes. It just made me think, ‘Wow, you really can have an impact on people. We all can. We just need to take the time to do so.’”

Flood was honored for her work, receiving an “MVP award” at a mascot camp she attended, but the joy of being Pennington is what inspired her to continue suiting up. “People love Pennington, so how can you not love the job?” she says. “That’s what made it great. You didn’t feel like you were working. You were just out there having fun.”

Ivette Uribe isn’t quite sure what the future holds, but the recent George Fox graduate knows one thing for certain: She wants to serve others. In the short term that means moving to Spain to become an English teacher. “Learning a new language is a vulnerable process,” she says. “I’m ready to help my students build a healthy relationship with language and learning.”

In many ways, Ivette has had the opportunity to be vulnerable, learn and flourish during her time at George Fox thanks to the Intercultural Resource Center (IRC), which exists to serve students by creating and sustaining an active and engaging intercultural campus life.

Will you prayerfully consider giving to the IRC? Your generosity will make a direct impact on students like Ivette. Visit giving.georgefox.edu, call 503-554-2115 or text SecureGiving to 41444.
BEST IN THE NORTHWEST

For the first time in school history, George Fox can lay claim to the best athletic program in the Northwest Conference. Thanks to five spring season championships, two fall titles, and a series of high league placements, the Bruins won the 2021-22 McIlroy-Lewis All-Sports Trophy, awarded to the NWC school that accumulates the most points over the course of an entire academic year, based on league finishes across all sports. Big contributors were George Fox’s men’s tennis, women’s golf, women’s lacrosse, men’s and women’s track and field, and the men’s and women’s cross country squads, all of which won conference titles. Read more on page 6.