

# GRACE STORY

SPRING 2026

Business students discuss  
Grace College Water Testing,  
a student-run business housed  
in the Gordon Center for  
Enterprise Development. ▶



*Honoring Legacies  
and Inspiring Futures  
Through Business*



**GRACE**  
COLLEGE

# leg.a.cy

**NOUN:** The long-lasting impact of particular events or actions that took place in the past, or of a person's life.

As I've met with numerous alumni from the School of Business over the years, it's interesting to hear them recount what it was like studying business at Grace in the '70s and '80s. Some have shared a sense of being sidelined, feeling that those preparing for traditional ministry roles held a more 'sacred' calling. Whether intended or not, the underlying impression was that business exists primarily to resource ministry, rather than being recognized as a meaningful expression of ministry in its own right.

Over the decades that followed, due to the intentionality of many individuals at Grace, I am thankful this perspective

has dissipated, and the School of Business is known for quite the opposite! Leaders like Professor Bill Gordon, Dr. Roger Stichter, and Dr. Jeff Fawcett worked to create a ministry-centric School of Business, raising up godly leaders and ethical businesspeople for the glory of God. Holding fast to His Word, the school has trained thousands of men and women to be salespeople who love their neighbors (Matt. 22:39), accountants who pursue excellence (1 Cor. 10:31), and entrepreneurs who serve people made in the image of God (Gen.1:27).



In this issue of Grace Story, we will honor the legacies of those who paved the way for where we are today, including past presidents Dr. John Davis (M.Div. 62, Th.M. 64, Th.D. 67) and Dr. Ron Manahan (M.Div. 70, Th.M. 77, Th.D. 82), who have recently gone to be with our Lord and Savior.

We will also look toward the future of business at Grace, which includes the plans for our new Business Innovation Center — an academic building designed specifically for collaborative learning, community engagement, and meaningful mentorship to take place.

I find it fitting that the Business Innovation Center will be housed in a historic church. As we look forward to the next 10, 25, and 50 years of business at Grace, the school's new

home will serve as a physical reminder of how and why we do business. Equipping marketplace professionals ready to approach the business world with strong biblical character, sharp professional competence, and a passion for service — this is what our School of Business is all about.

Enjoy this issue of Grace Story. I think you will be encouraged.



*Drew Flamm*

Drew Flamm, Ph.D.  
President



**The School of Business has been located in the MOCC since 2007. Soon, renovations to a recently acquired historical church building will mark the beginning of a new era of business at Grace.**

**VISION**

To Know Christ and To Make Him Known.

**MISSION**

We are a Christ-centered community of higher education applying biblical values in strengthening character, sharpening competence, and preparing for service.

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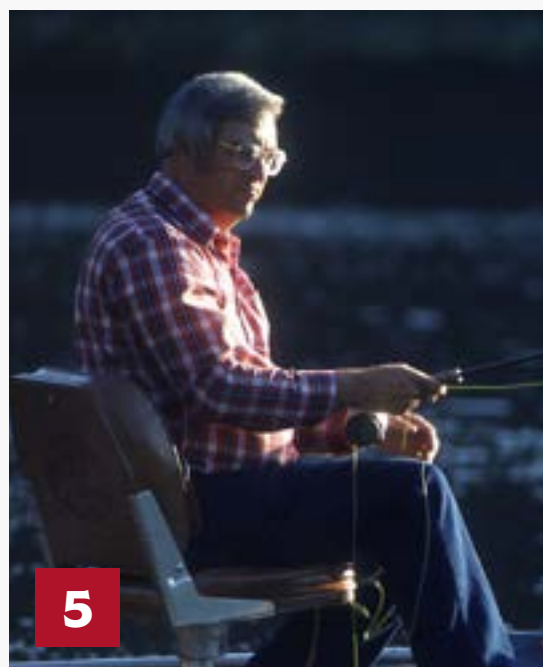
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**On the Cover:**

Left to Right: Trey Avey (BS 26), Gabe Klein, and Grace Kmitta discuss Grace College Water Testing, a student-run business housed in the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development.





# REFLECT

We honor the legacies of past presidents Dr. John Davis and Dr. Ron Manahan and highlight the history of business at Grace since 1948.

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# DISCOVER

A new dean, a new building, and the launch of the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development — there's a lot to discover in the School of Business.

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# CONNECT

Enjoy these profiles, written by close colleagues/friends, to "meet" a student, faculty member, and staff member through their eyes.

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# REMEMBERING DR. JOHN DAVIS

## The Theologian for the Man in the Pew

WRITTEN BY MADISON MAXWELL

On February 11, 2026, Grace's fourth president, Dr. John Davis (MDiv 62, ThM 64, ThD 67), stood before His Lord and Savior and heard the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Davis was a student at Grace Theological Seminary before becoming a professor of Old Testament and Hebrew. He had a robust knowledge of the land of Israel and of Old Testament

law, literature, and prophecy. Throughout his career, Davis taught in 45 countries, and his students enjoyed learning from someone so well-studied, well-published, and well-traveled.

John McIntosh (BA 71, MDiv 87, DMin 25) still remembers the impact of the Old Testament Survey course he took with Davis in 1968 as if it were yesterday.

"Dr. Davis quickly opened my mind to the incredible nature of the Scriptures that permeated my education for the next seven years," said McIntosh. "It was his class that made the Bible come alive to me and encouraged me to demonstrate a love for truth."

Davis took the Scriptures very seriously, but pertaining to anything else, he had a great sense of humor. Often referred to as a "renaissance man," Davis had a wide array of interests. He shared remarkable stories from his time abroad, like the time the King of Jordan invited him to go fishing while on an archaeological dig. He was a talented string musician, recording 15 CDs and performing special music for his church until he was 87. And he was an avid outdoorsman; he hosted fishing clinics and wrote a weekly newspaper column, "Outdoor Scene," for 31 years.

He served as a translator for the New International Version of the Bible and contributed to the study editions of the NIV, the NASB, and the Christian Life Edition of the NKJV. He authored 18 books over his lifetime, several of which have been translated into other languages. His study of Genesis, "Paradise to Prison," is still used as a textbook at Grace and Liberty University.

Throughout his 39-year tenure, Davis was willing to fill a variety of roles

to help Grace thrive. He served as the seminary's director of admissions and the executive vice president before becoming president in 1986 — a challenging time for the institution. He also served as the moderator of the Grace Brethren Fellowship Council during some turbulent days. Although Davis' time in leadership was marked with difficulty, many look back and remember his steadfast reliance upon the Lord.

"Davis was the helmsman at a time when the wind was whistling through the sails, and the waves were crashing over the bow of the boat, and everybody was scrambling to know what to do," said McIntosh, who served alongside Davis on the council. "That's when my respect for him really grew as I saw him function in the heat of controversy. I saw his teachings and beliefs about the Scriptures come to a head. To me, that's the test of a man's leadership."

Even after his formal tenure ended, he remained a faithful supporter of Grace's mission. Dr. Tiberius Rata, former professor of Old Testament Studies, arrived shortly thereafter. "I was told I had big shoes to fill," said Rata, who didn't hesitate to respond, "Nobody can fill his shoes."

A young 35-year-old, Rata needed someone to mentor him, and Davis was happy to do it. Over the next

20 years, the two would meet for lunch, and Davis would answer Rata's questions. Even up to his 70s, Davis was a guest lecturer in Rata's classes.

Amidst becoming a world-renowned theologian, archaeologist, and author, Davis never lost his love for the local church. He preached his first sermon at 17 years old and his last at 87. He attended Dutchtown Bible Church in Warsaw for twenty years, where he served as "the elder's elder," providing insights into Scripture and church polity.

"His theological writings were up to par with any commentary on the market, and he could relate to the highest level of scholars, yet when he preached, there was no question he taught to the person in the pew," said Dave Robison (M.Div. 95), the preaching elder at Dutchtown and former student of Davis'.

Even as Davis was moved into healthcare, he was adamant about taking his commentaries with him; he wanted to keep researching the end times for the encouragement of the saints.

"To the very end, he was devoted to the Scriptures and the One Whom they are all about," said Dr. Drew Flamm, president of Grace. "His fidelity to God's Word is a legacy that continues to shape how we go about higher education to this day."



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# HONORING DR. MANAHAN

## The Transformational Servant Leader

WRITTEN BY MADISON MAXWELL

November 30, 2025, was a grief-filled day for many. Some were losing a mentor; others were losing a friend, a pastor, a family member, an advisor, or a partner in innovation. That day, Grace Schools lost its fifth president — a transformational servant leader who invested in Grace for more than 50 years. The rippling impact of his passing testified to the truth that Dr. Ronald E. Manahan (MDiv 70, ThM 77, ThD 82) had an uncanny, quiet way of leaving places — and people — better than he found them.

Manahan began his tenure at Grace in 1977, joining the faculty as a professor of biblical studies. Two years later, David Floyd (BS 84, S 84) arrived at Grace as a freshman. Ignoring the suggestion of his academic advisor, he enrolled in Manahan's sophomore-level course, Philosophical Foundations. The first day of class, Floyd realized he had no idea what he had gotten himself into. After struggling through lectures

on metaphysics and epistemology, Floyd discovered that Manahan took Christian thinking very seriously, and by the end of the course, he did too.

"I realized that his purpose wasn't just to acquaint us with the discipline of philosophy, but to train us to think critically and biblically about the great questions of life on our way to being transformed by the renewal of our minds that we might discern the will of God," said Floyd. "For the remainder of my time as a student, I enrolled in every one of his classes I possibly could."

Floyd recalls spending most of Manahan's courses with his head buried in his notebook, trying to write down everything he said. "I was in awe of him as a student," said Floyd. "He was the smartest man I had ever heard, and he had this way about him when he lectured. Other than my father, no man has had a greater impact on my life than he did."

Over the next several decades, Manahan used his wisdom and strategic thinking to serve the college and seminary in a wide range of roles, including chair of the biblical studies department, associate dean, academic vice president, and provost. His extensive leadership experience prepared him for his presidency, which officially began in 1994.

For Suzie Light, who had recently stepped into her role as assistant director at the Kosciusko County Community Foundation, Manahan's inauguration was her first official assignment. She recalls being impressed with his vision for Grace and his aura of kindness, grace, and humility. His next 10 years serving on the Community Foundation's board confirmed Light's first impression was spot-on.

"Dr. Manahan became a dear friend and advisor," said Light. "I knew I needed to lean in, listen carefully,

and be ready to roll up my sleeves and get to work when he said, 'Suzie, I've been thinking.' He knew the power of a good question, and he transformed our community with the questions he asked."

One of his most crucial asks was "What can Grace College do for the community?" This simple question paved the way for countless realities that Grace and the broader community enjoy today. This includes the establishment of the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams, which created a replicable framework for Centers of Excellence at Grace — a key component of the school's current strategic plan. And in 2007, the question "What would happen if the orthopedic industry left our community?" resulted in the creation of OrthoWorx, which exists to keep the \$17 billion industry in Warsaw and advance its status as the Orthopedic Capital of the World®.

"I was a student when Dr. Manahan was president, but I had no idea at the time that he was so involved

in expanding Grace more into the community," said Ryan Christner (BS 10, MBA 21), the current president and CEO of OrthoWorx. "To now be on the receiving end of his visionary leadership, my hope is that I can play a small role in continuing this legacy through both OrthoWorx and Grace College."

His rapport within the orthopedic industry led to perhaps the most shocking accomplishment of all — bringing together Biomet, DePuy Synthes, and Zimmer to fund the state-of-the-art Orthopedic Capital Center (which was aptly renamed the Ronald and Barbara Manahan Orthopedic Capital Center in 2013 upon his retirement).

When Manahan's former student Floyd returned to the community to serve as president of DePuy in 2007, he was stunned by the partnerships Manahan had forged. "He tore down the walls and filled in the moats," said Floyd. "I was shocked that all of the orthopedic companies had come together to put their names on the

building. It's an intensely competitive industry, but Ron's approach to help the industry before asking the industry to help Grace resulted in something really quite amazing."

According to Floyd, who was asked to join the school's first president's advisory council, Manahan was "always seven chess moves ahead of you." Many of his strategic ideas revolved around academic excellence, campus development, and affordability initiatives that continue to shape Grace today. During his tenure as president, the campus added numerous student life facilities, including Westminster, Mount Memorial, Kent Hall, Indiana Hall, the Gordon Recreation Center, the MOCC, Encompass, and the Lodge. In the academic space, he established the "Grace Core," a set of foundational courses required for students of all majors. He also formed several strategic partnerships to expand major offerings, including engineering with Trine University and nursing with Bethel University.



Before Dr. Manahan was known as president, students were challenged by him in the classroom as a professor.



Under Dr. Manahan's leadership, the MOCC began construction in 2006 and was completed in 2007.

Again and again, he gathered smart, faithful people and created consensus around a compelling vision, and as a result, the community flourished, and the school flourished. Enrollment more than doubled over his 19-year presidency. Despite challenging headwinds in the education landscape, he shepherded the institution with unwavering faith and wisdom.

Beyond administrative leadership, Dr. Manahan was known for his pastoral presence on campus. He invested deeply in students, mentoring countless young men and women to pursue lives of character, competence, and service. His colleagues remember him as a man of prayer, humility, and steadfast devotion to Christ.

After retiring from the presidency in 2013, Dr. Manahan continued to serve Grace and the local community. He held the title of president emeritus and remained active in teaching, board leadership, and ministry involvement. Many of Grace's long-standing traditions and values bear the imprint of his influence.

"Dr. Manahan embodied the mission and heart of Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary in every season of his leadership," said President Dr. Drew Flamm.

"Under his guidance, Grace experienced remarkable growth, innovation, and renewed commitment to its biblical foundations. His influence on our students, faculty, and community is immeasurable, and his legacy will endure for generations."



"When I think of Dr. Manahan, I don't simply think of a president; I think of a faithful shepherd. His life was marked by generosity, quiet strength, and a deep love for God's Word. We rejoice knowing he is in the presence of his Savior, and we give thanks for the extraordinary impact he had on this institution and all who knew him."

**Dr. Drew Flamm**

President, Grace College & Grace Theological Seminary



"Many people are brilliant and unable to communicate that brilliance. But Ron could. He'd start with the simplest premise and end with a very complex conclusion, and he brought you along from start to finish."

**Les Lofquist** (BA 79, MDiv 82)

Executive Pastor, The Shepherd's Church  
Professor of Practical Theology, Shepherds Theological Seminary



"Dr. Manahan had a skill in listening to people, getting to the kernel of what they were saying and thinking and praying about it. If he could do something about it, he did. While some leaders can get a little bit full of themselves, that wasn't Dr. Manahan."

**Suzie Light**

Former CEO, Kosciusko County Community Foundation



"Growing up in this community, Grace seemed so isolated. But Dr. Manahan connected so well with businesses that they are now coming to us asking for interns. As business faculty, we want to continue that legacy. We want to be a part of the business community, and we want to serve them however we can."

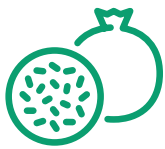
**Melissa Chappell** (BS 11, MBA 13)

Chair, Business Department

CREATED TO BE

# *Different*

WRITTEN BY DR. HEIDI MILLER



**When I was offered the job as a marketing professor at Grace College in 2020 to help develop and grow the digital marketing concentration, I initially wondered if it would be too difficult to teach this field at a Christian college.** The marketing world often feels far removed from the values we strive to live out as followers of Christ.

During my first semester, I began leading the Women in Business club at Grace and chose to study what it means to live counter-culturally as Christians. That idea quickly became central to how I think about and teach marketing at Grace. My motto is simple: be different.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 7:14 that “the gate is small and the road is narrow that leads to life, and only a few find it.” The path to Heaven is called the narrow road for a reason. Following Christ was never meant to look like blending in with the crowd.

Over time, I realized something important: digital marketing absolutely belongs in a faith-based institution. In fact, the industry desperately needs believers who are willing to live and work differently. In a space filled with noise, pressure, and messages that often drift far from biblical truth, there is a real need for Christ-like people who approach their work with integrity, wisdom, and a commitment to honor God.

We were never called to simply participate in the culture around us — we were called to stand apart from it. Our lives should reflect the difference Christ has made in us. Being different involves how we respond. We live in a

world where every word we type and every post we make can travel farther and faster than we ever imagined. Proverbs 21:23 reminds us, “Whoever guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.” Today, our keyboards are often our “tongues.”

The way we communicate online reveals our character, our integrity, and our maturity. Just as mature believers speak with grace and wisdom, mature marketers communicate with the same care. Disagreement is inevitable, but how we respond defines us. Sometimes the wisest response is restraint.

Being different also means understanding the power of digital marketing without letting it become an idol. As a former pastor of mine wisely said, “When a good thing becomes a god thing, it’s no longer a good thing.” We are blessed to live in a time of unprecedented technology and new digital opportunities. As followers of Christ, we must embrace these tools, but never let them replace the ultimate source of life and purpose: God himself. Colossians 4:6 reminds us, “let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Being different means more than standing out. It means guarding your heart, your words, and your actions in every part of your life, including the digital world. Thoughtful in your words, discerning in your use of technology, and committed to integrity, you can stand apart. It won’t always be popular. But being different is exactly what God calls us to do.



### **DR. HEIDI MILLER**

Associate Professor of Marketing, MBA Program Director

Miller holds a doctorate in business administration with a focus in marketing from Anderson University. She has taught business for more than twelve years and has extensive experience in the marketing industry, working with organizations of all sizes, from start-ups to large corporations. Passionate about both experiential learning and life outside the classroom, Miller treasures time with her family, enjoys all things water-related, delights in baking sourdough bread, and loves getting lost in a good book or movie.

# THE HISTORY OF *BUSINESS* AT GRACE

School of Business Majors



“Something New Has Been Added,” read a blurb in the 1948 Heritage yearbook. In the words that followed, the Collegiate Division of Grace Theological Seminary was introduced, and its enrolled students were described as “pioneers.” Administrators likely didn’t imagine the college becoming anything more than a pre-seminary education. But God had

other plans. Over the next several decades, God sent new waves of pioneers who saw a larger space at the intersection of faith and learning. Men and women relentlessly pursued excellence in business and dared to see entrepreneurship as a means of serving others. Faithful step by faithful step, Grace’s largest academic school began to take shape.

1948



Grace Theological Seminary adds Collegiate Division. Despite little advertising or notice, nearly 30 students enroll in the division.

1950s



Over the next decade, the advertisements section of the Heritage yearbooks is the only business-related content.

1957



Grace offers an economics class taught by teaching fellow William Yeager.



Dr. Alva J. McClain

1937-1962



1968

The liberal arts portion of a business administration degree is offered in affiliation with Indiana University's School of Business, allowing students to attend Grace for the first two years and then transfer to IU for business-specific coursework.

1970

1972



Professor Stanley Myers is hired as chairman of the business department.

Grace launches its first business major housed under the School of Social Sciences. In addition to 30 hours in business courses, students are required to take Introduction to Sociology, Math of Finance, and Probability and Statistics.

1976



As of March, Grace College is fully accredited by the North Central Accrediting Association. The major in business is enlarged to 36 hours of business courses.

1978



Grace adds a 30-hour major and an 18-hour minor in accounting, and Professor Bill Gordon is added as the second full-time professor in the department.

1986



Dr. Rick Koontz (BS 86) graduates from the business program.

1980

The business and accounting degrees undergo significant revisions, and Lowell Owens is hired to replace Myers. Students begin interning at local orthopedic companies.

1979



Over the summer, Myers suffers a fatal heart attack, and Gordon assumes the role of department chair.

1980

School of Business Students



Dr. Herman A. Hoyt  
(ThM 39, ThD 46, BDiv 50)

1962-1976



Dr. Homer A. Kent, Jr.  
(MDiv 50, ThM 52, ThD 56)

1976-1986



Professor Bill Gordon meets with a student in his office.



The Manahan Orthopedic Capital Center is constructed; the School of Business is moved from the Science Building to the MOCC; and Stichter assumes the role of department chair.

400 —  
300 —  
200 —  
100 —

School of Business Majors

2007

2000

Grace adds a sport management major.

1998



Grace Business Department receives initial accreditation from the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education.

1995



Dr. Roger Stichter begins teaching at Grace; Grace adds an international business major; Professor Anthony Avalone is named department chair; and Gordon is promoted to division chair.

2002



Three new majors are added: finance, marketing, and general business. Dr. Thomas Pycraft (BS 02) graduates with his bachelor's degree in accounting.

1993

Grace adds a management of information systems major.

1992

The Indiana Business Magazine recognizes the Grace business program as one of the four best programs in the state.

1999

The School of Business surpasses milestone of 100 business majors.

1990

2000



Dr. John J. Davis (MDiv 62, ThM 64, ThD 67)

1986-1993



Dr. Ronald E. Manahan (MDiv 70, ThM 77, ThD 82)

1994-2013

2013



Joy Itiola (BS 14) wins the first annual Business Plan Competition, and Professor Melissa Chappell (BS 11, MBA 13) earns her MBA from Grace.

2025



The School of Business earns ACBSP Accreditation; Dr. Jeff Fawcett passes away on June 27; and Dr. Rick Koontz (BS 86) assumes role as interim dean.

2011



Dr. Jeff Fawcett is named dean of the School of Business.

2016

The School of Business surpasses milestone of 300 business majors and adds a management major.

2023



2026



Grace launches the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development at the Gordon Center and Student Entrepreneurial Showcase event. Pycraft is named the dean of the School of Business.

2010



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) is launched in partnership with Lake City Bank, and Grace adds an MBA.

The school launches its orthopedic MBA to develop a local talent pipeline for orthopedic companies and raises \$1.5 million for the Dr. Roger Stichter Endowed Chair of Accounting.

2009



OrthoWorx is founded with a \$7 million grant from The Lilly Endowment, and Gordon retires after 31 years as a faculty member at Grace.

2018



Accountedu.org recognizes Grace as the most effective and efficient accounting program among all private colleges and universities in Indiana, and Grace ranks in the top 7% nationwide for first-time, small-program CPA pass rates. Professor Danielle (Deal BS 18, MBA 23) Duff graduates from Grace.

2008

Grace hosts the first annual Accounting Career Fair.

2010

2020



Dr. William J. Katip (BA 74)

2013-2021



Dr. Andrew R. Flamm

2021-present



# MEET THE DEAN

Written by Madison Maxwell

**Dr. Thomas Pycraft (BS 02) is the new dean of the School of Business.** The announcement, made in mid-April, came at the conclusion of a national search that began last summer after the passing of former dean Dr. Jeff Fawcett. Pycraft is a Grace College alumnus who, after 14 years as a litigation lawyer, returned to his alma mater in 2023 to serve as an assistant professor of finance.

“Dr. Pycraft brings a deep love for the Lord and a long-standing commitment to Grace College’s mission,” said Dr. Kevin Roberts (BS 93, MA 96), provost at Grace. “I am confident that his leadership will be a tremendous asset as we continue to grow the school and serve our business students.”

With a 24-year history with the School of Business, Pycraft is confident the school is well-positioned to build upon its growing momentum. “We have the potential to be a leader in Christian business education as we embrace the technological advances of our industry and prepare our students for success, all while remaining committed to our mission,” said Pycraft. “Looking forward, I want to focus on increasing our alumni engagement with our students and creating networks

for collaboration and support that last beyond graduation.”

Pycraft studied accounting at Grace under former accounting professor Dr. Roger Stichter. He went on to attend law school at Cleveland State University and took the Florida Bar Exam, where he lived for 14 years, working as a litigation attorney at a law firm covering civil law, real estate, financing sales, and purchasing cases.

When he recognized his desire to teach and began pursuing a doctorate in business administration at Jacksonville University in 2021, his first call was to Stichter. Although no positions were open at the time, a few months later, the finance teaching position opened, and Pycraft knew he wanted to return to Grace.

“If I had to reduce what I love most about the School of Business to one word, it would be culture,” said Pycraft. “All of the faculty are wonderful to work with, and the students are amazing. Grace is an ideal place to work and build relationships that last, and I am fully aligned with the direction the college is headed.”

Dr. Drew Flamm, president of Grace, agrees that Pycraft is well-suited for his new role.

“We are confident that Dr. Pycraft will continue to build on the strong biblical foundation that has been established for all of our business courses,” said Flamm. “He recognizes that faith integration is a cornerstone of Christian business education and seeks to advance the mission of Grace, sending out students who seek to know Christ and make Him known, wherever they end up.”

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Pycraft is originally from Elyria, Ohio, and was drawn to Grace for its Christ-centered community.
- Originally a “Beta boy,” Pycraft was among the first group of students to live in Indiana Hall the year after it was constructed.
- Pycraft met his wife, Jessica (Bonham BS 03), at Grace, and they now have two daughters.
- In his free time, he enjoys fishing, woodworking, and coffee roasting.



# ***A PLACE TO CALL HOME***

Written by Madison Maxwell



**When the Manahan Orthopedic Capital Center was constructed in 2007, the business faculty were eager to move out of the Cooley Science Center and have an identity of their own.** The building was beautiful; it had a large lecture hall, new technology, and an exterior adorned with red and white. But if the faculty and administration could peer into the future, it would be apparent that three classrooms and six offices would not be enough to accommodate nine full-time faculty and nearly 500 students belonging to the school in 2026.

As the School of Business grew, courses were being held all across campus, from the MOCC to the Science Center to McClain. As Dr. Rick Koontz (BS 86), professor of management, put it, the business students were functioning as nomads. "To have a home is to have an identity," said Koontz. "It cultivates a new culture for the school, allowing students to network with each other and build the connections that come from being in the same place."

As the drawings for the new Business Innovation Center take shape, the renovation of the historic Free Methodist church across from Westminster Hall beautifully reflects the heart of the School of Business: business is ministry, and every calling is an opportunity to serve Christ.

"When I look at the renderings, it represents us so well because what sets us apart from other institutions is that we keep the main thing the main thing," said Professor Melissa Chappell (BS 11, MBA 13), assistant professor and chair of the business department. "God's Word is the foundation of everything we do. We use the same textbooks, we teach the same theories, but we start with the Word. Those theories have to fit into God's Word, not the other way around."

Students in the school are equipped to serve God and go wherever He calls them. Recognizing that the business world can be an increasingly dark and difficult place, faculty train students to enter their careers as missionaries.



In stark contrast to many who cut corners or fudge the numbers, Grace graduates work with integrity and excellence, not to make much of themselves, but to make much of Christ.

While the building renovations will uphold much of the church's old character, they will also include new, innovative features, including cutting-edge technology and dynamic spaces that promote collaboration. The Business Innovation Center will have numerous study rooms where students can work together on projects both outside of class and during break-out times within a class period. In one class alone, Professor of Marketing Dr. Heidi Miller has her students working with professionals from 22 different community businesses. The new space will allow the 22 teams to spread throughout the building to hold these meetings without distraction.

"A dedicated space for classes and collaboration will be a tremendous benefit to business students, but it will be much more than that," said Scott Moodie, associate professor of marketing. "It's a timely and natural fit with the launch of the Gordon Center and our increased collaborations with local business leaders, entrepreneurs, and business-as-ministry initiatives. It will provide a home for these programs, which have the potential to enrich students, faculty, and the community alike."

One such idea is to utilize the building to provide programming for aspiring high school entrepreneurs.

"We would love for this new space to host high school students, as

well as a variety of events with our local business community," said Dr. Emiko Kreklau, executive director of the Catalyst Corridor. "Our design plan includes an innovation lab that will function as a hands-on, entrepreneurial 'think tank' and launchpad for future new businesses."

The new center will also feature a dedicated space for Grace's orthopedic MBA students, who gain hands-on experience through internships with local orthopedic companies. Within the Innovation Center, thoughtfully designed meeting areas will bring industry professionals and students together,

creating opportunities to reflect on internship experiences and explore future career paths. Ultimately, these spaces are meant to encourage the very values Grace holds dear: mentorship, academic excellence, and community engagement. At last, the largest academic school at Grace will have a place to call home.

**Our leaders have modeled what it means to integrate biblical faith and business, showing students that business leadership can be a powerful expression of discipleship. Check out these opportunities to honor their legacies.**





## William P. Gordon

Colleagues Describe Him As:  
Real-World, Practical, A Visionary

Gordon joined Grace’s faculty as an assistant professor of business in 1978. He has since served on the Academic Affairs Committee, the International Business Committee and the first Provost Council. Gordon was a charter member of the International Business Institute and helped develop the Christian Business Faculty Association. One of his greatest accomplishments was establishing the Gordon Institute for Enterprise Development.

“Through applied-learning, internships, mentorship, and student-run businesses, the center equips future innovators to apply biblical principles to enterprise at the local, national, and even international levels,” said Professor Glenn Grossman, director of the Gordon Center. “As I lead the center into its next chapter, I am grateful for the vision Bill Gordon had years ago.”

*Support the Gordon Center’s new home through a \$1.5 million match.*



## Dr. Roger Stichter

Colleagues Describe Him As:  
Authentic, Relational, A Mentor

The growth of the accounting program under Stichter's 28 years of service is extraordinary. His leadership resulted in a more than fivefold expansion, top-10 national CPA results, recognition for excellence and efficiency, and a network of more than 300 alumni he continues to mentor through faithful, monthly communication. Program graduates consistently attribute their values of integrity, discipline, and service to his influence.

“Dr. Stichter has been such a mentor to me,” said Dr. Heidi Miller, professor of marketing. “It’s my hope and my aim to develop rich relationships with students as he did. He was such a humble leader, and he shared real-life stories that students could relate to. Students need to hear from their professors that we have struggles just like them.”

*Support the \$1.5 million match for the Dr. Roger Stichter Collaboration Lounge.*



## Dr. Jeffrey Fawcett

Colleagues Describe Him As:  
Engaged, Brilliant, A Guardian

Fawcett’s leadership as dean was marked by clarity of mission and unwavering faith. From the beginning, Fawcett set three ambitious goals: to double the School of Business enrollment, to earn ACBSP accreditation, and to help build a new facility for the School of Business. Two of which he accomplished before passing. Above all, Fawcett loved his Savior and sought to honor Him in everything, from the classroom to the boardroom.

“When Fawcett came, he made business as part of God's kingdom the focus and the priority,” said Dr. Rick Koontz (BS 86), professor of management. “He wanted our program to grow, but he never wanted us to lose our mission or our academic rigor as we were growing. He didn't want us to get sloppy in any way, and I appreciated that.”

*Give to the \$150,000 match for the Dr. Jeffrey Fawcett Dean's Office and School of Business Faculty Suite.*

**These legacies inspire each of us to consider how we can use our gifts, abilities, and resources to make the Business Innovation Center a reality. Learn more about how you can get involved at [www.grace.edu/businesscenter](http://www.grace.edu/businesscenter).**



# LAUNCH



GORDON CENTER FOR  
**Enterprise  
Development**

# CHING

## THE GORDON CENTER FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

WRITTEN BY MADISON MAXWELL

◀ Professor Glenn Grossman meets with leaders of the student-run business, Grace Water Testing.

**Grace held its official launch of the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development at the Gordon Center and Student Entrepreneurial Showcase event on Wednesday, March 25, at the Manahan Orthopedic Capital Center.** More than 250 students, faculty, employees, alumni, and local community members attended as Grace introduced its fourth Center of Excellence to the public.

"The student entrepreneurial showcase was a resounding success," said Professor Glenn Grossman, director of the Gordon Center. "It was a true privilege to bring students, faculty, alumni, and local community leaders together for an evening of vision casting. We're just getting started, but there is much excitement surrounding what the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development could accomplish."

Grossman brings more than 30 years of real-world experience in banking, fintech, and product development to his role, equipping students with practical insight into today's financial landscape. He has held various roles at corporations such as Zafin, Payzer, and FICO, and has first-hand experience in product development, including leading the rollout of products at Bank of America and Ticketmaster.

The Centers of Excellence at Grace rely on distinguished faculty and staff members, such as Grossman, mentoring students as they conduct academic research and serve the broader community. Through the Gordon Center, students from all majors have opportunities to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and are given an incubator to create new enterprises.

Through the Gordon Center, Luis Loera-Arambula, a finance major, and Luke Nier, a sports management major, were awarded \$7,000 to launch L&L Pressure Washing Company at the 2026 Business Plan Competition (BPC). "I am so thankful the investors saw the same value in my business I did," said Loera-Arambula. "God has opened up paths for me that I couldn't see for myself. I am very thankful for what He has allowed me to accomplish and for the Gordon Center giving me an avenue to develop my ideas."

While the BPC is an established program that will continue under the Gordon Center, there are a myriad of growing and newfound programs that connect students with real-world business problems.



**"Through our recent interactions with Grace College administrators and faculty, we have clearly seen Christ-centered leadership in action. The Gordon Center is grounded in a commitment to honor the Lord while equipping students to integrate faith and business in practical, real-world ways. We are grateful to play a small part in what is unfolding at Grace College and look forward to continued collaboration with the faculty, staff, and students within this vibrant business community."**

**Wes Gorsuch**

Account Executive at Nuway Construction  
Goshen, Indiana



**"I believe the implementation of the Gordon Center at Grace College provides students with an exclusive opportunity to witness firsthand how businesses grow and expand into new markets. On the flip side, businesses receive fresh, unfiltered ideas from students that could spark innovative solutions and breakthroughs in their respective industries. I personally am looking forward to working with students in the future on upcoming expansion ideas for Three Birds Casual."**

**Tad Varga**

President of Three Birds Casual  
Albion, Indiana

# ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



## STUDENT-RUN BUSINESSES

The center will provide operational and governance oversight to student-run businesses (SRBs), defined as profit-generating enterprises that deliver products and services to Grace and its regional communities. Last spring, the first SRB was established to test well water using the Indiana Department of Health-certified laboratory capabilities at the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams at Grace College. The business ensures residents' drinking water is safe by testing for coliforms and E. coli. Six students took the reins on the business this past school year and learned the ins and outs of capitalizing on market opportunity.

"This practicum experience is different from an internship, where you're only there for two months, and you're thrown the bottom-of-the-barrel busy work," said accounting major Trey Avey (BS 26). "The difference here is that you bump into real friction points that you have to navigate around, and ask, 'How are we going to solve this?'"

As new ideas emerge, student leaders in these SRBs will gain relevant professional skills and help manage a diversified portfolio of client-facing businesses.

The center's ultimate goal is to prepare future business leaders and innovators who create lasting value in their industries, which is only possible by partnering with the thriving enterprises in our area.



**Partner with the Gordon Center today!**



## LANCER LABS

Lancer Labs are design teams focused on researching and developing a product or service prototype. The Gordon Center provides training, financial resources, and industry liaisons to assist teams on their design journey. Grace alumnus Lucas Fonseca (BA 20) is currently using students through Lancer Labs to conduct research for his business, Language Matters.

"Working with Lancer Labs has been extremely beneficial," said Fonseca. "As a business owner, I manage so many moving pieces, and naturally, there are opportunities I'm not able to devote my full attention and time to. Lancer Labs is an opportunity for businesses to engage with students dedicated to solving real business issues and to gain new perspectives from young people, enabling us to innovate and keep our offerings relevant to younger generations."



## BUSINESS RESEARCH

The Lilly Center will also benefit from the Gordon Center's research arm. Several students are working to update the Lilly Center's economic impact data, which is crucial for grant applications and donor reporting. Currently, the Lilly Center is using a 2013 report, and it's projected that the 2027 report will show a significantly larger economic footprint.

"Ongoing research is vital because local economic conditions are constantly in flux, and many local, state, and regional organizations make decisions based on these economic drivers," said Dr. Nate Bosch, Creighton Brothers endowed director of the Lilly Center.

The Gordon Center will also provide research-based education to the local community through seminars and services that help small businesses establish new enterprises.



Dr. Flamm introduces Professor Grossman at the Gordon Center launch event on March 25.



Chelsea Manuel presents her business plan as part of the entrepreneurial showcase.



◀ **TYLER BRECHBIEL**  
2025 BPC WINNER

# **BPC WINNERS:** **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

**The Grace College Business Plan Competition (BPC) got its start in 2013, the year that Joy Itiola (BS 14) claimed victory with her impressive pitch featuring her design company using African textiles called “Eulalie.”** Since then, the competition has facilitated mentorship for dozens of students as they have honed the four “Ps” of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion, in order to perfect their pitch for the judges and secure a several-thousand-dollar check.

For some, the competition launches them directly into their full-time pursuit after graduation. For others, the business remains a side passion or leads them to do something they never expected. But for all who participate, the competition sharpens their skills, expands their network, and prepares them for Kingdom-focused entrepreneurship.

“I believe entrepreneurship is a calling for many to step into the marketplace and bring Kingdom impact through creativity, leadership, and service,” said Justin Farrell (BS 12), founder of Lemon Labs Digital and a 2026 BPC judge. “When entrepreneurs lead with purpose, they don’t just

build businesses — they create opportunities, influence culture, and point people to something greater.”

For finance major and 2025 BPC winner Tyler Brechbiel, this couldn’t be more true. The opportunities that have come from the competition are far beyond what he could have imagined.

Brechbiel entered the competition as a freshman with his recovery-and-performance supplement business, Recvry+. The business idea stemmed from a baseball injury. His search for recovery supplements exposed the young entrepreneur to a market opportunity before he even knew the BPC existed.

“I’ve always had an entrepreneurial spirit,” said Brechbiel. “As a teenager, I worked at a retirement home, and I hated everything about it. So, since the age of 14, I’ve tried to start my own businesses on the side. I’ve made money here and there, but nothing has really taken off.”

But this time, things were different. The freshman walked away from the competition with a \$5,000 check in hand and immediately used it to purchase inventory. In the meantime, Brechbiel followed a mentor's suggestion and sought to help other consumer packaged goods brands scale up their marketing efforts while awaiting the product's arrival.

Brechbiel decided to start his own agency managing TikTok Shop and Meta ads alongside his baseball teammate, Alex Rudolph. They called it TBAR Partners. After a few LinkedIn posts went viral, the business exploded, and the students were putting in ten-hour days to keep up with the demand. They both decided to step away from baseball to pursue the business full time.

"If you had asked me when we first started this thing if we'd be at where we're at now, I would be like, 'No way,'" said Brechbiel, still in shock.

Referrals for TBAR Partners kept coming in, and the size and scope of the companies continued to grow. Less than a year in, the agency employs 13 full-time employees, serves 25+ ecommerce clients, and is projected to generate more than \$1 million in revenue and more than \$60 million in sales for its clients this year. They have run ads for the No. 1 Christian clothing brand on TikTok Shop, as well as supplement, food, and beverage brands such as Vita Coco, Equip Food, Gruns, Ridge Wallet, David Protein, and many more.

"People in the industry say we're one of the fastest-growing agencies they've seen," said Brechbiel. "We're helping generate over \$5 million in revenue for our clients each month, working with 8- and 9-figure brands we grew up using and consuming, and partnering with professional athletes we used to watch on TV. It's all been surreal."

According to the sophomore entrepreneur, this is just the beginning. The duo plans to scale TBAR Partners until it's in a good place to sell before moving on to the next venture, perhaps returning to Recvry+. Whatever it is, stewardship is top of mind for Brechbiel.

"I know our gifts and talents are from the Lord," he said. "And so I'm trying my best to steward those — and the resources He's given me — for Him."

**Learn more about TBAR Partners at [tbarpartners.com](http://tbarpartners.com).**



**2016 WINNER**  
**Wesley Gensch (BS 16, MBA 16)**  
Global Key Account Manager | Ecoclean  
Johnson, Tennessee

After using the competition earnings to pay for a patent, Gensch ran CoolCorp, a personal cryotherapy business, for four years before selling the patent and transitioning into a career as a global key account manager for Ecoclean, a market leader in industrial parts cleaning. He enjoys working with Warsaw-based orthopedic companies, but as an entrepreneur at heart, it's no secret that another start-up endeavor is in Gensch's future.

***"The competition not only jump-started me professionally, teaching me how to work with those managing projects, timelines, and deliverables, but now I'm in a space where my counterparts are in their late 50s, early 60s. The fact that I get to sit here at age 32 is a testament not only to the Grace School of Business but also to what entrepreneurship can do."***



**2023 WINNER**  
**Kiersten Martin (BS 24, MS 24)**  
All ABoard Educators  
[allaboardeducators.com](http://allaboardeducators.com) | Plainfield, Indiana

All ABoard Educators allows teachers to decorate their bulletin boards instantly, saving teachers time and allowing them to focus on what matters most — their students. The instant bulletin board decor turns a several-hour process into an under-five-minute task for teachers, producing beautiful, washable bulletin boards that last for years. With steady growth over the last three years, Martin's product has now been sold in 14 states. She hopes to expand into other products that help make teachers' lives easier.

***"Going into the competition as an elementary education major, the concept was motivated mostly to save myself time, but the judges helped me turn it into a viable business plan. The finances allowed me to build a website and invest in the software needed to get it off the ground while still in college."***



**2024 WINNER**  
**Quinisha "Q" Williams (BS 25)**  
Visions of Q Studio  
[visionsofqstudio.com](http://visionsofqstudio.com) | Winona Lake, Indiana

Williams launched her business, Visions of Q Studio, with a mission to provide high-quality custom apparel printing. Since the competition, Williams has been in a "quiet phase" of her business, printing for select small businesses while completing her degree. A public opening of her shop at 25 Kings Highway is in the works, and she will offer a number of new marketing materials, including tents, tablecloths, flags, banners, and more.

***"Long term, I want to turn Visions of Q Studio into a family business and teach my five daughters the tricks of the trade. It's fun for them because they love being creative. Plus, they get to make some money and learn what it takes to run a business along the way."***



*“Our community  
is better with Grace  
College involved.”*

**TORI PLATT,**

First Vice President and Learning  
& Development Manager  
Lake City Bank

## GRACE IN TAX SEASON

**If you’ve been around the Warsaw/Winona Lake Community for a number of years, it’s likely you have heard the acronym VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).** The program, sponsored by the Gordon Center for Enterprise Development at Grace College since 2010, provides free tax preparation to elderly, disabled, and low-income individuals filing a basic tax return. It’s one of the long-standing programs in which the school accomplishes its mission to serve the surrounding community.

When Dr. Al Grossnickle took over the program in 2012, he saw a unique opportunity for students in

the “Introduction to Tax” course to put their learning into practice. Students are now required to volunteer with VITA for 15 hours during the session — a crucial shift to help make the program viable. In addition to the 30 students involved each season, the program relies on help from professionals in the community to complete more than 325 federal and state returns.

Tori Platt, first vice president and learning & development manager at Lake City Bank, is one such volunteer. One of the 10 employees that Lake City sends each year, Platt has generously volunteered her time to the program every year since it

began in 2010. We sat down with her to learn more about why.

**How did you first learn about the opportunity to volunteer with VITA?**

Initially, I just thought it sounded interesting and wanted to try it out. They had sent out communications throughout the county, seeking professionals willing to be trained and certified in tax preparation to help kick off the program. That first year, we put in a lot of training hours together as an IRS agent from Indianapolis came up to help us with the program and tax law before we got certified online. We have since moved more to self-based training,

as all the information is available online, and we have a larger group of Grace students participating.

**Practically speaking, what does volunteering require of you? How much time do you put in during the season?**

Before the tax season starts, I spend time in December and January studying and completing my online advanced tax preparation certification. During tax season, I sign up for Saturday and Monday evening sessions, usually volunteering around 30-35 hours over the two months. In my role as a preparer, I work on people's tax returns and prepare them for our quality reviewers to finalize. I also enjoy helping students become familiar with the tax software and the VITA process and hopefully instill in them the importance of volunteering to help others.

**What has kept you coming back to volunteer with VITA for 17 consecutive years?**

The people, the community, and the students. I could go on and on about the importance of this program and what keeps me coming back. I've made wonderful friends through this, whom I look forward to visiting every year. I also enjoy getting to know a new group of outstanding Grace students. And most importantly, I see the look on people's faces when they realize they can get their return prepared and transmitted for free. If there is anything worse than having to pay taxes, it's having to pay to get them prepared. This program serves so many taxpayers of all ages, and it is a blessing to be a part of it.

**How have you seen the program evolve to meet the community's changing needs over the years?**

As with any program, it took some time to learn how to make this work. This included trying out different locations and even having multiple locations in a single tax year. We then moved to a single location at the MOCC, with a designated space for VITA. Due to health concerns in 2020, we transitioned to having taxpayers drive up and drop off their taxes. We realized this was a more efficient approach and allowed students to take the reins more. It now feels like a well-oiled machine: students put in the hours needed for their tax class, gaining valuable hands-on, real-world experience, while professionals volunteer their time to help manage the VITA process overall. The community has come to rely on and appreciate VITA for being there during the tax season.

**Do you have any favorite stories from your time with VITA?**

I still remember the people who would come in each year to sit with me and get their taxes prepared. I enjoyed talking with each one and getting to know them. And now, I see some of those same names come across my desk. I smile each time I see their names and remember who they are after all these years. I am so thankful for the Grace College School of Business and Professor Danielle (Deal BS 18, MBA 23) Duff for understanding the importance of this program. It is not an easy endeavor; however, it is such an important one for our community. Thank you. Our community is better with Grace College involved.



*"Students are able to convert what they learn in the classroom to practical application, loving their neighbors through Christ-like character and competence, literally living out the Grace College mission. Our hope is that they impact hundreds of people in Kosciusko County in a meaningful and practical way."*

**Danielle (Deal BS 18, MBA 23) Duff**  
Assistant Professor of Accounting



*"VITA turns tax work into a hands-on, people-centered experience. We gain technical skills while also seeing the human side of finance. We earn clients' trust, hear their stories, and get to see the impact of our assistance. The fast learning curve and meaningful interactions make the experience both challenging and deeply rewarding."*

**Austin Barnett**  
Third-year finance major



# HOMEGROWN LEADERSHIP

WRITTEN BY MADISON MAXWELL

## **You may remember him from his early years as an Eagle Scout.**

You might have seen him on the sidelines coaching at a youth baseball or football game. Or perhaps you know him from one of his roles in the orthopedic industry over the last 15 years, including his current role as the president & CEO of Orthoworx, where he works to advance Warsaw's status as the Orthopedic Capital of the World®. If you live in Kosciusko County, there is a good chance you have heard his name, because Ryan Christner (BS 10, MBA 21) is a community man.

Born and raised in Syracuse, Indiana, he has been a Kosciusko County resident for practically his entire life. He's living proof that sometimes the right leader isn't recruited from afar but raised from within.

## **Foundations at Grace**

Ironically, Christner was ready to leave Northern Indiana behind for college. He began his education at the University of Southern Indiana to play baseball, then transferred to IPFW for a year. Working diligently to grow his landscaping business, he soon wondered if higher education was right for him. At this crossroad, a

good friend urged him to give Grace College a shot.

"I went in uncertain," said Christner, who had been to several Grace athletic camps growing up. "But it only took three weeks of classes to fall in love."

The experience was timely for Christner and his fiancée, Sara (C 12), giving them a solid foundation as they began their independent life and connecting them to strong leaders along the way. He cites the prayer class with Dr. Roger Peugh (BA 65, BDiv 68, DMin 06) and accounting

with Dr. Roger Stichter as especially formative.

"I enjoyed the biblical application in my courses at Grace," said Christner. "The idea of using our gifts to further the Kingdom has stuck with me to this day."

As a sports management major, Christner interned with Grace Athletic Director Chad Briscoe. He helped host the NCCAA basketball tournament and developed organizational skills he still uses today. But most of all, Briscoe's leadership gave him a model of servant leadership to follow.

"You could tell that Ryan had a strong desire to learn and serve from the beginning," said Briscoe. "His passion for others was evident, and you could tell that he would be successful no matter what door the Lord opened for him professionally."

Originally interested in becoming an athletic director, Christner wasn't eager to relocate to pursue a career. As graduation approached, he began looking for ways to pair vocation with place. Orthopedics seemed to be the clear choice.

### **Learning the Industry from the Ground Up**

Christner landed his first job in orthopedics at Symmetry Medical (now Tecomet) as a production scheduler. He was responsible for scheduling jobs on the manufacturing floor and providing clear lead times to companies they manufactured for, such as DePuy Synthes, Zimmer Biomet, and Medtronic. "I remember going in on day one, walking through



Ryan enjoys fishing with his wife and four kids in his free time.

the shop and thinking, 'How am I going to keep this right?'"

Determined to learn, Christner offered to work overtime on the floor. For the next three years, he clocked in at 4 a.m. to do any job that was needed, from polishing to CNC machining to quality inspection.

"That was pivotal in really understanding the industry," said Christner. "It gave me an appreciation for the people who manufacture parts every day to be used all across the world. As my career continued to evolve, it helped me understand how to be a good leader in that space by understanding the manufacturing process and how critical it is to have highly skilled people throughout the process."

Subsequent roles at Precision Medical Technologies and Medartis expanded his responsibilities and influence. Along the way, he began serving on OrthoWorx's Academy Advisory Board, and in 2023, he traveled to Switzerland with state leaders as part

of the Richard M. Fairbanks-funded iLab initiative to explore youth apprenticeship education models.

"Throughout the three-day event, I was just thinking, 'Man, I really enjoy this,'" said Christner. "I would love to someday work with OrthoWorx as a full-time job helping build a pipeline for future generations of engineers, manufacturers, and leaders."

That trip led to ongoing conversations and support of OrthoWorx alongside President Bob Vitoux, but Christner never imagined there'd be a job at the end of it. Through a series of unexpected industry shifts, many prayers, and God's perfect timing, Christner was offered a role at OrthoWorx as the executive director of the Orthopedic Industry Retention Initiative (OIRI). He effectively took over 11 projects spanning \$30 million to solidify Kosciusko County's position as a global center of orthopedic excellence.

"It felt like I was ushered precisely where I needed to be, like God

had placed me in all these different roles to build toward this one," said Christner.

Within months of joining OrthoWorx in late 2024, Christner was named president and CEO in June 2025. Today, he leads OrthoWorx's efforts in talent attraction, workforce development, community engagement, and industry collaboration — work he describes as deeply aligned with his calling.

### The Power of Mentorship

Ask Christner how he arrived where he is, and he quickly rattles off the names of mentors who have shaped him along the way, people like Kim Nguyen, Larry Downs (BS 79), Ryan Bricker (C 02), Bob Vitoux, Rich Haddad (BS 87, MS 16), Stephanie Overby, Susie Light, Dr. Drew Flamm, Dr. Emi Kreklau, Cory Colman (BS 83), Bill Gordon, Dr. Darrell Johnson (BS 74), and Jim Kessler (BS 70). So when Christner sees an opportunity to pay it forward, he does.

Alan Ter Molen (BS 26), a management major preparing to enter Grace's Orthopedic MBA program, met Christner's father-in-law, a retired orthopedic machinist, at a local tackle store last spring. It was evident that Christner and Ter Molen, who is a member of Grace's fishing team, would connect in more ways than one. An introduction was made, and that was the beginning of a budding mentorship.

Christner has not only included Ter Molen in events for his nonprofit organization, Youth & the Outdoors United, but he's also invited him to industry networking events and offered professional guidance.

"Ryan has been a great leader and someone I can lean on to ask questions," said Ter Molen. "Having someone to talk to with experience in the industry provides reassurance that you're making the right decisions."

Looking back on his own story and the uncertainty he felt as a college student, Christner counts it an honor to be a voice of encouragement along the way.

"I was in his shoes not long ago, navigating what may be next for me, and some wonderful people helped me along the way," he said.

"As an industry liaison, it has been rewarding to see the quality students Grace is producing and watch them find success in their careers in our community and industry."

Every day, he works alongside Grace alumni Allyn Decker (BS 85, MA 86), Amaris (Longenecker BS 19) Ackermann, and Lukas Rife (BS 21,

MBA 21) who share similar stories. "It's a special connection with other Grace alumni, knowing we serve with the higher purpose of building the Kingdom by having impact and influence in the workplace," said Christner.

With five of the 11 OIRI projects being in collaboration with Grace's Catalyst Corridor initiative, Christner finds himself frequently on Grace's campus again. "It's rekindled a lot of love for my alma mater, and it's empowering to see how influential Grace can be in our community," he said.

Whether he recognizes it or not, Christner is part of that influence.

Once unsure of his path, he now wakes up excited about the work he gets to do each day — investing in others, strengthening an industry, and leading in the community he's always called home.

## OrthoWorx



**Allyn Decker**

VP Operations & Engagement



**Lukas Rife**

Orthopedic Industry Retention Initiative Project Manager



**Amaris Ackermann**

Marketing & Communications Manager

The OrthoWorx team that Ryan Christner leads is made up of a few faces of Grace you might recognize.



## Lilly Center to Benefit from \$10 Million Grant from Lilly Endowment

**Grace College received a \$10 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams kickstart a new program to revitalize Kosciusko County lakes called Lake RX™.** The program will create custom, holistic prescriptions to address the health challenges facing lakes and will focus on the most strategic solutions to ensure the wellbeing of the lake and its surrounding communities.

Lake RX projects fall into three categories: solutions on land, solutions in the water, and solutions in the community.

By following Lake RX prescriptions, Lilly Center scientists anticipate outcomes that include increased

lake access, reduced health threats, and increased economic value. The Lilly Center will work carefully to help residents and local businesses, including farmers, and other stakeholders understand the benefits of healthy lakes and ensure that prescriptions benefit all.

Under the grant agreement, \$8 million will be allocated to an endowment to support Lake RX on an ongoing basis as a permanent addition to the Lilly Center. The remaining \$2 million will seed the initial on-the-ground and in-the-water projects.

“Lilly Endowment’s founders cared deeply about the wellbeing of communities in Indiana and had a special connection to Lake

Wawasee in Kosciusko County,” said Ronni Kloth, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for community development. “We are pleased to support the Lilly Center for Lakes & Streams’ comprehensive, research-based efforts to ensure that future generations of Hoosiers and visitors to the area can enjoy the lakes of north central Indiana.”

Projects will include partnerships with lake stakeholders who share a vision for healthy lakes. Partners include lake associations, environmental nonprofits, local government, and state and federal agencies.

**For more information about Lake RX, visit [lakes.grace.edu/LakeRx](https://lakes.grace.edu/LakeRx).**

# Grace & KCV Break Ground on Community Fieldhouse and Bike Park

Grace hosted a joint groundbreaking with Kosciusko County Velo (KCV) on April 23 to celebrate the start of two highly anticipated community projects. The Community Fieldhouse will provide an indoor turf field capable of supporting U-12 soccer games with a divider curtain for younger age youth soccer. The space will also contain six total batting cages for baseball and softball, as well as a weight-training room.

The KCV bike park will include a pump track, a kids bike playground, jump lines, a skill zone, and more. The project transforms 15 acres into a space where riders of all ages and skill levels can ride, learn, and grow. It builds on KCV's 10+ miles of mountain bike trails and expands access to safe, structured riding experiences for the entire community.



# "Love Your Neighbor" Events Reinforce Recruitment Efforts



Grace recently introduced its new "Love Your Neighbor" events, designed to introduce prospective students to the distinctives of a Grace education by meeting them in their own communities. For each event, the marketing team packs up a van full of students and brings free food to the school during its lunch period. As the high schoolers eat their Chick-

fil-A nuggets or favorite local pizza, they have an opportunity to interact with Grace students and a chance to win Grace-branded Bose Bluetooth speakers, AirPods, Grace-branded longboards, and more. Over the past year, the team has visited Christian schools, public schools, and churches in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio.

**Are you connected with a Christian school that you think would benefit from the Lancer Direct plan? Do you want to host the next "Love Your Neighbor" event at your church or school?**

**To learn more, contact [matt.metzger@grace.edu](mailto:matt.metzger@grace.edu).**



## GTS Launches Columbus Seminary Site

This fall, Grace will launch a new seminary site at Grace Polaris Church in Columbus, Ohio. The site will offer a Residential Master of Arts in Christian Ministry, expanding Grace’s mission to equip biblically grounded leaders while serving students in Columbus and across the Midwest. The program meets students where they are while maintaining the academic excellence and spiritual depth for which GTS is known.

[READ MORE HERE](#)



## CCCU Names Grace Grad Young Alum of 2026

The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities named Lucas Fonseca (BA 20) the 2026 Young Alumni Award winner among alumni from 150+ institutions. Fonseca was recognized for his work assisting individuals, families, and businesses in breaking down language-related barriers through his business, Language Matters. Dr. Drew Flamm joined Fonseca at the CCCU International Forum in Dallas, Texas, to receive the award in January.



## School of Education Earns Top Tier Ratings

Grace’s School of Education earned exceptional ratings following a multi-phased audit administered by the Indiana Department of Education. As a result of the rigorous study, Grace received an A+ rating from the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), and its elementary education literacy programming received 100% “strong” ratings overall from the Teacher Preparation Inspection (TPI-US).

[READ MORE HERE](#)



# Recent Published Works



## “The Wisdom of God: Revealed, Reviled, and Reverberated” by Dr. Matt Harmon

Crossway

In 125 pages, Dr. Matt Harmon, professor of New Testament Studies, explains a recurring pattern in the Bible, where God reveals His wisdom to us as human beings, we revile it because we think we know better, and God reverberates, or vindicates, it by demonstrating its value and truthfulness.



## “The Future of Love” by Dr. John Poch

Slant Books

A collection of poems written over the last 20 years by Dr. John Poch, professor of English, this book is primarily inspired by Poch’s wife, Meghan. The work is rooted in and inspired by the Spanish landscape, Federico García Lorca’s surrealism, and Pablo Neruda’s eros.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FAMILIES OF THESE ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF GRACE WHO RECENTLY PASSED AWAY:

**Kermit W. Anderson** (BA 62)

**George "Sandy" A. Andrews** (MA 81)

**Jean "Jeannie"** (Knight C 76) **Beeson**

**Norma Buhler** (Former Employee)

**Rev. John P. Burke** (BDiv 59)

**Darwin E. Call** (C 66)

**David J. Christen** (BS 88)

**Larry D. Christner** (C 72)

**Carla K. (Landolt C 03) Collins**

**Dr. Stephen K. Gibson** (DMin 99)

**Rev. Ronald W. Graef** (BDiv 62)

**Mary Jo (Whitacre BS 62) Hall**

**C. Gaylord Kramer** (BA 76)

**Rev. William Carl Miller** (MDiv 58)

**John J. Montgomery** (BS 70)

**Sandra L. (Cale BS 63) Shoemaker**

**Carolyn S. (Postle C 79) Starkey**

**Erin M. (Pugh C 09) Steck**

**Roger D. Tew** (Former Employee)

**Chester A. Weigle** (BA 59, S 61)

**Marilyn J. (Juday BS 60) Weltmer**

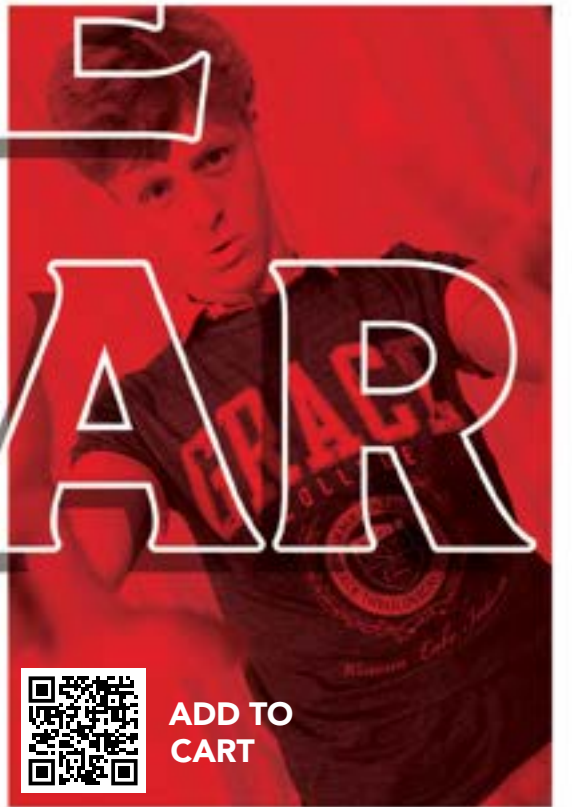
**Robert E. Woodward** (C 77)

*In the Fall 2025 issue, Karen (Lentz BS 84) McClellan was mistakenly listed as deceased due to a name mix-up. The notice should have referred to Karen Lynette McClellan. Karen (Lentz BS 84) McClellan lives in Aurora, Ohio, with her husband, Dave. We sincerely apologize for the error.*



Need a new hat, hoodie, or mug to rep your alma mater? Browse the latest at Grace Gear. Designed by current students with an eye for what's on-trend, the latest line, "Vintage Vault," harkens back to apparel of decades past. Who knows? Maybe your favorite apparel has made a comeback!

Visit the shop in Westminster Hall or order online at [gracecollegegear.com](http://gracecollegegear.com).



ADD TO CART



# HOME COMING 2026

SAVE THE DATE OCT. 2-3, 2026



All Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary alumni and friends are invited to celebrate Homecoming 2026 on Friday and Saturday, October 2-3, 2026. Save the date for a weekend filled with fun and activities for all ages.

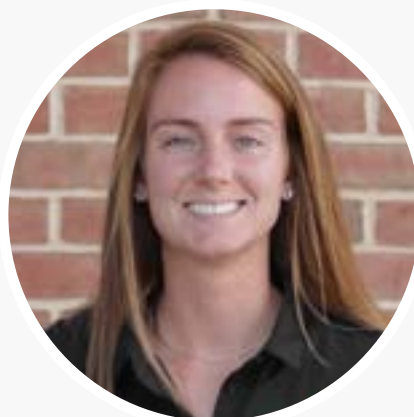
#### REUNIONS

This year we will recognize the graduating classes of 2016, 2006, 1996, 1986, and 1981+, and hold reunions for School of Business graduates, those who served in residence life as students, and a women's soccer 30-year reunion.



Registration is now open!  
Scan the QR code to visit  
the Homecoming website  
for event details and updates.

## Two Spring Coaches Wrap Up Their Debut Seasons



**Amanda Jones**

Head Softball Coach



**Ellis Gallion**

Head Track & Field Coach



Grace's athletic department was bolstered by the hiring of two top-notch coaches for the 2025-26 season. Amanda Jones was chosen to lead Grace's softball program, and Ellis Gallion was hired as Grace's next track and field head coach. Both coaches experienced success both as collegiate athletes and as coaches before choosing to make Winona Lake their home.

Gallion and Jones have made an immediate impact on the programs, guiding their student-athletes with excellence and a deep commitment to Christ. Their leadership has gone far beyond the field of competition as they have modeled their faith and encouraged their teams to grow spiritually and competitively.

Grace's track and field team enjoyed multiple school-record

performances during the indoor and outdoor seasons this spring, and Cece Mitchell earned NAIA All-American status in the indoor 5,000-meter race. The softball program was filled with young talent, typically starting five or more freshmen each game. Despite their youth, Grace collected multiple impressive victories, including a win over a ranked team less than a month into the season.

"We are thrilled to have talented, mission-aligned coaches like Amanda and Ellis leading their programs," said Grace Director of Athletics Chad Briscoe. "These two, along with the rest of our coaching staff, are committed to building programs that put Christ first. They are using the platform of their sport to share their faith on a daily basis."



## Volleyball Completes National Title Three-Peat

Grace's volleyball team captured its third straight NCCAA national championship with a thrilling 3-0 victory over Columbia International. The Lancers seemed to be a team of destiny after pulling a pair of dramatic comebacks in both the first and second sets of the championship game. Under head coach Katie Hill, Grace became the second team to ever three-peat as NCCAA national champions and the first to do so in 34 years. Liz Schmidt (BS 26) and Molly Hofmann were named to the NCCAA All-Tournament Team following the win. The title is the fourth NCCAA championship in Grace volleyball's history and marks the 23rd national title in athletic department history.



## Men's Basketball Wraps Up Memorable, Trophy-Winning Campaign

Men's basketball will need to make room in the trophy case after a memorable season, despite having zero seniors on the roster. Under head coach Scott Moore (BS 08), Grace posted a sterling 31-4 record. In the regular season, Grace claimed the regular-season championship for the Crossroads League for the fourth straight time. Grace then won its fifth consecutive CL Tournament title, extending the longest streak in league history. At the national tournament, Grace advanced to the NAIA national quarterfinals for the third year before ending its season. At the conclusion, Moore was named the NCCAA National Coach of the Year, and Ian Raasch was the NCCAA National Player of the Year as well as an NAIA First Team All-American.



## Grace to Add Competitive Cheer in 2026-27

Grace's athletic department is excited to announce the addition of competitive cheer to its varsity sport offerings, beginning in the 2026-27 academic year. The Lancers' co-ed cheer team will continue to have a sideline game-day unit, but the program will now add a competition team that competes in the Crossroads League and the NAIA. In recent years, the squad has competed as an exhibition team, helping pave the way for its transition to full competitive status.

"This team has worked for multiple years to enter the competition space and has thrived in their opportunities to showcase their hard work and talent," said coach Jessica (Hand C 16, MBA 18) Durando, in her fifth season guiding the Lancers. "As always, may this program glorify God in all that we do."

# Olivia Davis

## STUDENT PROFILE

Written by Elizabeth West

**Surrendering control of our lives is a daunting task.** Liv Davis knows this well. In her senior year of high school, Liv tore her labrum in her left shoulder. While treating her injury, a small lump was found near her collarbone. Her doctor was unable to identify the abnormality and recommended some tests.

During this time, Liv began her freshman year at Grace, where she had been recruited to run track. In the midst of first-year orientation and adjusting to classes, Liv also had several doctor appointments and a biopsy. In September, she got a call with a conclusive diagnosis.

"It's a desmoid fibromatosis tumor," said the doctor, who went on to explain that desmoid tumors are not cancerous, but treatment plans were limited. The only viable option was to use an irreversible ablation to electrocute the tumor and stunt its growth.

"At this point, my relationship with Christ was stagnant, mainly because I didn't trust Him," said Liv. "I was putting all of my trust and faith in the doctors."

The night before the procedure, she prayed for the first time in a long time, "Lord, I have no idea if you hear me or if you're listening, but I don't feel right about this procedure." Liv went on to have the surgery the next day, and when she woke up, she was unable to feel her left arm and had excruciating shoulder pain. The neurologist determined they had hit her brachial plexus, and her entire left arm was temporarily paralyzed.

Liv's recovery process was slow and painful as she balanced medication, occupational therapy, and online college courses.

"I was just absolutely helpless and hopeless," said Liv. "I was not leaning on the Lord."

As Liv's pain became more manageable, she returned to school in March of 2025 and found a job in the Grace Marketing Office. "That environment is where I think

I started to actually heal," said Liv. After witnessing the joy of the Lord in her coworkers, Liv began to invest more deeply in her relationship with Christ.

That summer, after a disappointing visit to the Cleveland Clinic, Liv decided to go on a run. As she looped around the track, she prayed, "Lord, at the end of this workout, would you show me exactly what it is you want me to do? And would you help me not to

have any doubt or fear about it?" After completing the sprints, she realized she had no pain at all. As tears of joy ran down her cheeks, she decided she was going to live as if she were already healed.

That fall, Liv shared her story with renewed joy, even with ongoing pain and growth of the tumor.

"When God is in control of the situation, the outcome is always going to be good," Liv said. "When you have the hope of heaven and the joy of the Lord, pain is just temporary."

Although Liv is still searching for potential medical treatments, she is running track again, taking in-person classes, and working in the marketing office. Even in the midst of the unknown, Liv trusts that whatever happens is in God's hands — and that is *always* enough.

*"When you have  
the hope of heaven  
and the joy of the  
Lord, pain is just  
temporary."*

OLIVIA DAVIS



# Dr. Rock LaGioia

## FACULTY PROFILE

Written by Dr. Freddy Cardoza

**Not long after I arrived at Grace, I remember thinking: here is a man who loves the pulpit as much as he loves the classroom — and refuses to separate the two.** For my colleague, Dr. Rock LaGioia, preaching is not merely a professional interest or weekend pastime; it is an embodied sacred trust. It is seen in Rock's joyful burden of heralding the Word of God to the people of God in Grace classrooms and Bible-believing congregations nationwide. This conviction shapes every course he teaches and every doctoral student he mentors.

Since 2010, Rock has served as Professor of Pastoral Studies and Director of Doctoral Programs at Grace Theological Seminary. He has cultivated a substantial teaching portfolio, including Expository Preaching and Teaching, Expository Preaching Labs, Systematic Theology, Church History, Apologetics, and a wide array of doctoral seminars. Rock's undergraduate and doctoral students alike know his expectations are high, his theology is careful, and his heart is pastoral.

Under his leadership, our doctoral programs have grown to more than 75 students, including pastors, missionaries, and ministry leaders from around the globe. Whether guiding a dissertation on discipleship multiplication or mentoring a pastor navigating complex cultural pressures, Rock brings uncompromising commitment to doctrinal clarity and practical faithfulness.

His own academic journey reflects that same depth. Rock is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and Trinity International University, where he completed a Doctor of Ministry in Preaching. With a lifelong interest in great

preachers of church history, he recently wrote a multi-part series called "Legacy Preachers from the Early Church." Through the series, offered as part of Grace Seminary's Proclamation Project, he invited students and alumni to sit at the feet of those who shaped Christian proclamation across the centuries. Rock's love for Christian eschatology also surfaces in lectures, writing, and chapel messages, serving as a reminder that preaching is done in light of Christ's glorious return.

Rock is an ordained minister within the Evangelical Free Church of America and has preached in churches across the Midwest and beyond. For all his scholarly societies and journal publications, Rock remains, at heart, a lover of the local church.

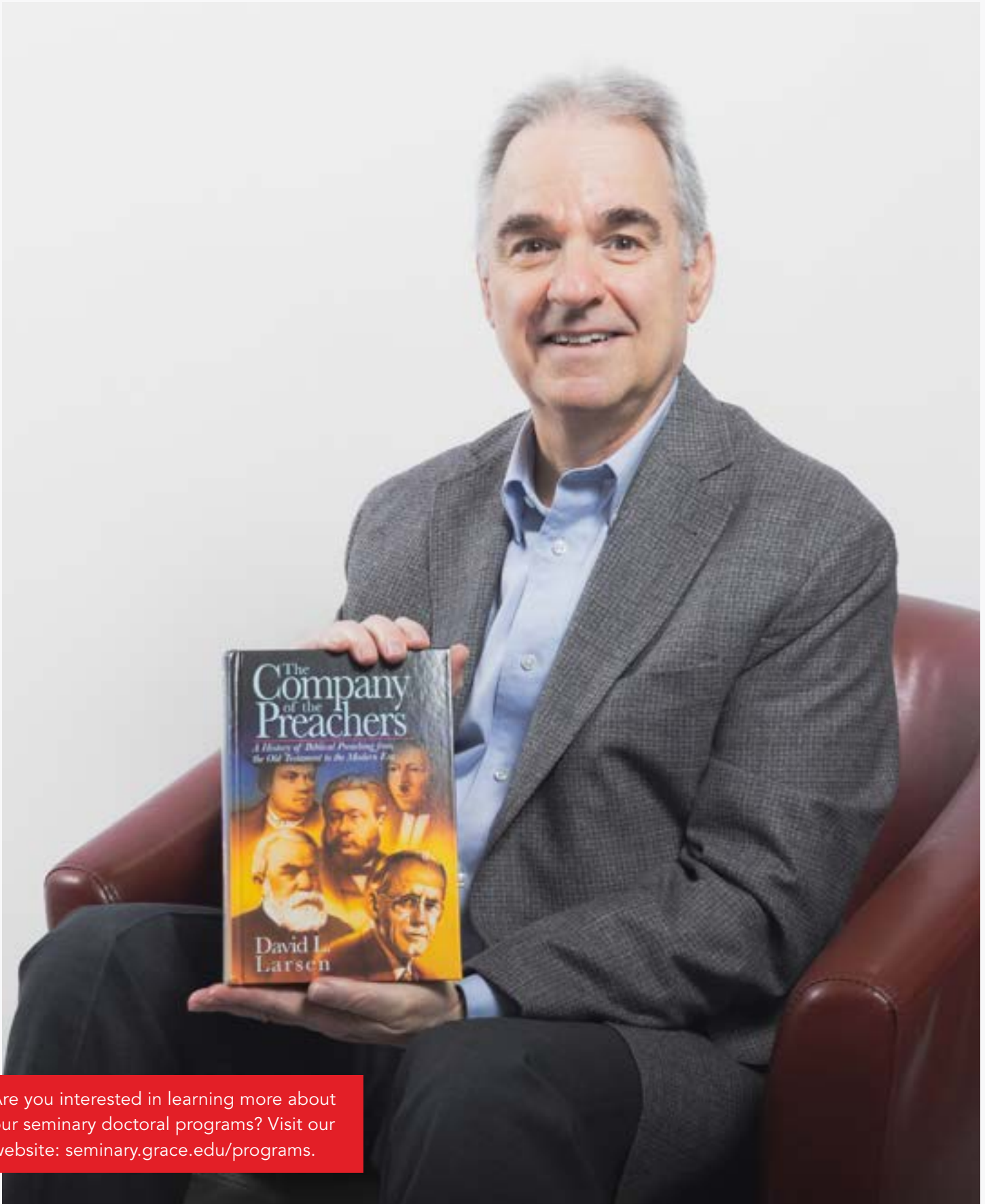
Close to Rock's love for his Christian heritage is a love for his ethnic

heritage. Spend a few minutes with Rock, and you will encounter a deep affection for his Italian ancestry. Stories about his family, and even the cadence of his speech, reflect his gratitude for God's providence through generations. Mention his grandchildren, and the seasoned professor quickly becomes a delighted grandfather. Those young lives are, in his words, part of the legacy that matters most.

In his commitment to his family and to our students, Rock models his commitment to legacy each and every day through mentoring groups, faculty devotions, recruitment conversations, and quiet encouragement toward younger colleagues. If you have ever wondered what it looks like when doctrinal conviction, pastoral warmth, historical awareness, and personal joy converge in one life, you would do well to visit a Rock LaGioia class.

*"Rock's undergraduate and doctoral students alike know his expectations are high, his theology is careful, and his heart is pastoral."*

DR. FREDDY CARDOZA



Are you interested in learning more about our seminary doctoral programs? Visit our website: [seminary.grace.edu/programs](http://seminary.grace.edu/programs).

# Dr. Deb McEvoy

## STAFF PROFILE

Written by Dr. Aaron Crabtree (BA 99)

**When I returned to Grace in 2003 as a resident director, Deb (Musser BA 89, MA 00) McEvoy was my first boss.** Although much has changed since then (somehow, I have supervised her for the last decade), Deb has become one of my most valued mentors, trusted colleagues, and treasured friends. Over three decades at Grace, she has shaped students, staff, and future counselors with her rare blend of wisdom, honesty, compassion, and faith.

A 1989 elementary education graduate, she returned to campus in 1994 to serve in admissions and residence life. From there, she led as associate dean of women, associate dean of residence life, and in 2005 became dean of students. At that time, she was the highest-ranking female administrator in the history of Grace College. She later joined the faculty full time, earned her doctorate in clinical psychology, and served as chair of the graduate counseling department. In 2013, she returned to student affairs as director of health and counseling. But Deb's influence runs deeper than a résumé. She mentors and counsels with curiosity. She gives people permission to feel what they are feeling without judgment, then helps them move toward healing. People leave conversations with Deb feeling seen, safe, and genuinely cared for.

Part of what makes Deb such a trusted guide is that her wisdom has been forged through honest suffering. She is refreshingly candid about the hard seasons of her own life and the ways those experiences have tested and refined her. That courageous vulnerability, combined with her emotional presence

and Spirit-filled steadiness, has made her a deeply credible voice to students and colleagues alike.

Now, in her thirteenth year as director of health and counseling, Deb has helped Grace serve students in their deep pain and challenges. Alongside our outstanding nurse, Laura Green, she helped lead the campus through the COVID-19 pandemic. Under her leadership, counseling services have expanded to meet students

in moments of crisis while also providing outreach, training, and supportive spaces for reflection. As student mental health needs have increased, Student Health & Counseling Services has moved four times to meet the growing needs of our campus. Last fall, Grace opened a beautiful new center in the renovated Gordon Health and Wellness Center. The center includes inviting spaces for students and employees, along with a wellness room, The Harbor, for those who need a place to rest, recenter,

or stabilize. The new space truly reflects Deb's leadership. I am not sure which Deb builds first, the healthy spaces or the healthy team. What is clear is that she knows how to create conditions for growth.

If you know Deb, you can attest that, beyond her professional skills, she is a superb human being. She loves her husband and family, serves beyond the walls of Grace, and lives with integrity and intentionality. Whether she is enjoying a Christmas rom-com, spending time in the sun, or cheering on the Buckeyes, Deb lives life abundantly. She brings her whole self to her work, and Grace is better because of her faithful service. I count it a gift to serve Jesus alongside her.

*“Part of what makes Deb such a trusted guide is that her wisdom has been forged through honest suffering.”*

DR. AARON CRABTREE





## *Commencement 2026*

Almighty Father, Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer, we stand here before You thanking You for the accomplishments – not just the academic representations of regalia and diplomas – but also the life lessons used by Your sovereign hand to make these students, now graduates and alumni, prepared to affect the changes so desperately needed in our world.

Father, grant to each one strength for the day, grace for the moment, and a focus toward that which is eternal as they function as salt and light before a lost humanity. Dismiss us now with Your blessing, and with the reminder that You Who has called us is faithful.

These things we pray in the name of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.





Golden Grads return to campus 50 years after their Grace commencement.



Associate Professor of Communication Mike Yocum is honored for his 26 years of service by presenting the ceremonial mace.



Dr. Knute Larson (BA 62, BDiv 66, DDiv 26) is bestowed an Honorary Doctorate of Divinity by Grace Theological Seminary.



Presidential Fellow Isabella Giunta (BA 26) addresses the student body as the undergraduate representative.



Campus Safety Director Glenn Goldsmith embraces his daughter Genevieve (BA 26) as she is awarded her diploma.



Dr. Roger Stichter walks in his final commencement after completing his last year of teaching part time.

## COMMENCEMENT RECAP VIDEO



Leah Bos (BS 26) exudes the joy of a fresh college graduate.



Joshua Lewis (MDiv 26) celebrates earning his degree with his family.



**Grace College**  
1 Lancer Way  
Winona Lake, IN 46590

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# COLLEGE CREDIT

## IN HIGH SCHOOL

Grace College's dual enrollment options allow you to earn real college credit while in high school. You can graduate sooner, save thousands on tuition, and explore your calling with confidence in a Christ-centered community. Our online options allow high school students to earn college credit anywhere.

Dual Credit Classes   Associate Degree in High School

Take the next step:  
[www.grace.edu/dual](http://www.grace.edu/dual)

Did you know Grace offers bachelor's degree completion, master's, and seminary programs online?

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**GRACE**  
COLLEGE