

# *the Bridge*

2017 • Volume 70, Number 2

FINLANDIA  
UNIVERSITY



**DONOR EDITION**



FROM THE PRESIDENT  
**PHILIP JOHNSON**

Dear Finlandia Alumni and Friends,

Greetings from campus!

I know you will enjoy this issue of the Bridge. It comes to you as Finland prepares to officially commemorate 100 years of independence on December 6. This donor edition gathers up various expressions of Finlandia's commitments to its Finnish American heritage. You will also find in these pages appreciation for how this valued heritage continues to be relevant and meaningful today for our students, alumni, faculty and staff.

For 99 uninterrupted years Finlandia has observed Finland's independence. I invite you to read on, as well as visit our website, for more information on our 100th.

Again, and always, thank you! I'm grateful to all our readers who enthusiastically engage, support and champion Finlandia's mission.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Philip Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "P" and "J".

Philip Johnson  
President



## FEATURES

- 2 FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE DAY NEVER FORGOTTEN**
- 9 NURSE WITH SISU**
- 10 FINN FOUNDED**
- 14 HEIKINPÄIVÄ, A KEWEENAW TRADITION**
- 24 FINNISH ALUM'S JOURNEY TO NHL'S FLYERS**
- 28 FINNISH AMERICAN FOLK SCHOOL**

### CAMPUS NEWS .....3-7

- Finlandia named 2017 Best Value School
- Finlandia expands community enrichment offerings
- Small class sizes a huge advantage
- Meet the new faculty members

### ADVANCEMENT SECTION .....12-13

- \$158,600 raised for the U.P. commitment grant

### DONOR SECTION .....15-23

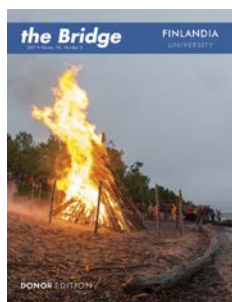
- Fiscal Year 2016-17 Donors (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017)

### ATHLETICS NEWS .....26-27

- 2017 softball team takes home many recognitions
- MIAA accepts Finlandia as football affiliate beginning 2018
- The Lift announced as official voice of Finlandia University athletics

### NEWS FROM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION .....28-29

- Alumni board raises \$45,000 for Old Main



#### Cover Photo:

A photo of the kokko during the 2017 Juhannus celebration at Agate Beach on the shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula. Juhannus is the annual mid-summer celebration famous in Finland, and also celebrated each year here in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Throughout this edition of the Bridge we'll explore the deep Finnish roots that define Finlandia University.

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## FINLAND'S INDEPENDENCE DAY NEVER FORGOTTEN

*Suomi College president Ralph J. Jalkanen speaks to the first ever FinnFest crowd celebrating Finland's bicentennial on Finlandia campus in 1976.*

**A**s Finland celebrates its centennial of independence this year, there have been special events taking place around the country honoring this milestone, in all corners of the United States where there are Finnish-settled communities.

A century ago, there weren't as many celebrations honoring Finland's independence taking place in the United States – except in Hancock at Suomi College, which was founded by Finnish immigrants 21 years earlier.

In fact, Suomi (now Finlandia University) is likely the only place in the world outside of Finland that has recognized and honored Finland's Independence Day each year since Finland became independent in 1917.

Some years, the celebration was held in conjunction with other local organizations, like the 1919 event that took place at Electric Park, where Suomi's John Wargelin was among the keynote speakers. For the past few decades, though, the annual celebration has taken place at the Finnish American Heritage Center (FAHC) on the university's campus, and featured an eclectic mix of artistic performances, including music, dance, theater and readings.

Even before the FAHC opened in 1990, the campus was abuzz each year in preparation for this annual celebration, and that activity drew attention from well outside the region. Take, for example, this excerpt from a Detroit Free Press article from December 1984:

*Things Finnish are booming here at Suomi College. Planning is proceeding apace for the third annual national FinnFest in July, which is expected to attract visitors from the United States and abroad. And tonight, the community will celebrate the anniversary of Finland's independence from Russia in 1917. All of that is as it should be, according to*

*Dale Chapman, Suomi's vice-president for administration. "This area is the Ellis Island for Finns," he said. "This is like no place else in the United States for Finns."*

The university's celebrations have established outreach well beyond Michigan's state borders, too. As examples, for the 2005 celebration, Finlandia Foundation National's then-president John Laine traveled to Hancock to deliver the keynote address, while in 2011 Anneli Halonen of the Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C. was the featured speaker.

Whether it's a scene from a Melvin Kangas-directed play, or a dance demonstration by the Kivajat Youth Folk Dancers, one thing has remained consistent throughout the 100 years of celebrating Finland's independence at Suomi College/Finlandia University – it's always about the community. Hancock is known for its distinct "Finnishness," and the university is the epicenter of those expressions of culture.

This year, the staff at the Finnish American Heritage Center has raised the bar, so to speak, and developed a program that is fitting for a once-in-a-lifetime celebration, and therefore has a need for larger seating capacity. That means the program has outgrown its typical venue of the Finnish American Heritage Center. Instead, on December 2, 2017, Finns and Finnophiles from across the Copper Country will gather at 6 p.m. at the Rozsa Center on the Michigan Technological University campus for the 100<sup>th</sup> celebration of Finland's independence.

Regardless of venue, one thing remains true for each of the 100 Finnish Independence Day celebrations Suomi College and Finlandia University have conducted – the university has never forgotten where it came from, or what it took to get there.



### FINLANDIA NAMED A 2017 BEST VALUE SCHOOL

Finlandia University is one of 80 schools nationwide to be recognized by University Research & Review as a 2017 Best Value School.

"We work extremely hard to make sure Finlandia University

remains affordable to people of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and Midwest as a whole," said Director of Student Financial Services Sandra Turnquist, who noted that 100 percent of the university's full-time domestic students received financial aid during the 2016-17 academic year. "We're one of the most affordable four-year private universities in the Midwest, which is something we're proud of."

### FINLANDIA RANKED AMONG 30 MOST AFFORDABLE ONLINE PRIVATE NURSING BACHELOR'S DEGREES

Finlandia University has been ranked among the 30 most affordable online bachelor's in nursing degrees from private colleges by Best Degree Programs. The ranking was published on the organization's website in August. This ranking was created using the National Center for Education Statistics' College Navigator database. From a list of 158 private colleges and universities with an undergraduate tuition under \$25,000 per year offering online bachelor's in nursing or online RN-to-BSN degree programs, the top 30 were selected and ranked based on affordability. Learn more about FinnU's program at [finlandia.edu/rn-bsn](http://finlandia.edu/rn-bsn).

### NORTH WIND BOOKS INTRODUCES TO EVENT SERIES

North Wind Books, the official bookstore of Finlandia University, introduced Bakers & Books and Children's Unique Books (CUB) this year. The series featured weekly events highlighting unique aspects of the bookstore. CUB took place in July with guests from across campus and the community coming in to read themed children's books to local youth, while Bakers & Books introduced unique Finnish foods to guests.



### FINLANDIA FRIDAYS BACK FOR 2017-18 YEAR

Finlandia Fridays, the weekly interview series at Finlandia University, is back for a second season. Each Friday an episode is released telling one of the countless unique Finlandia University stories. The season kicked off in September with Student Senate President Charles Patch, and has gone on to include interviews with many students, faculty and staff members since. You can find a full archive of episodes at [finlandia.edu/fridays](http://finlandia.edu/fridays), and subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcasts or wherever you regularly find podcasts.

### TWO U.P. STUDENTS WIN 2017 BRULE SCHOLARSHIP

Aspiring artists from around the Midwest gathered on Finlandia University's campus last spring for the annual Brule Scholarship portfolio competition, and when it was all said and done two students from the Upper Peninsula stood out and earned the \$20,000 scholarships.

"This year we were excited to have an incredible group of artists apply for the Brule Scholarship," said Denise Vandeville, Dean of Finlandia's International School of Art & Design. "It was a terribly difficult decision for our faculty to choose winners, and I am excited that a majority of those artists who competed have chosen to come to our school regardless of their placing in the competition. This year we're proud to be welcoming an incredibly strong freshmen class."



The scholarship winners are Jessica Gill of Escanaba (left) and Chloe Haataja of Houghton. In addition to other funding and scholarships – including the U.P. Commitment Grant – each student was awarded \$20,000 courtesy of David and Elsa Brule.

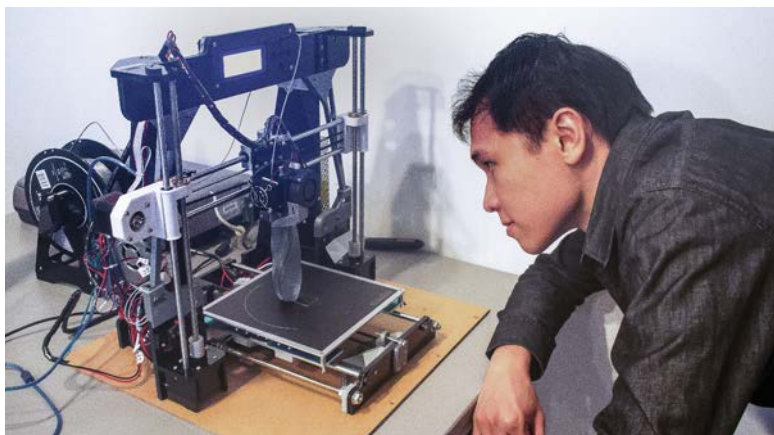


## INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS FROM RABBIT ISLAND ART RESIDENCY VISIT JUTILA CENTER

Finlandia University welcomed international artists Martin Schick and Mirko Winkel to campus for a work presentation in September. Winkel is from Germany, while Schick hales from Switzerland. The two international artists visited the Jutla Center immediately after completing the Rabbit Island Art Residency program, on nearby Rabbit Island. The duo is just the latest example of the international artists Finlandia's art and design students are introduced to during their time at the university.

## TRIO UPWARD BOUND RECEIVES \$1.77 MILLION GRANT

Finlandia University has been officially notified by the U.S. Department of Education of the successful grant submission for another five year TRIO grant for \$353,718 per year (\$1,768,590 total). TRIO Upward Bound will be funded from 2017 to 2022 with this new proposal, and aid students from Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties find success in high school to prepare for beyond.



## 3D PRINTER BROUGHT INTO ART & DESIGN SCHOOL

The most innovative design experiences come from utilizing cutting-edge technology, and that's exactly what students in Finlandia University's International School of Art & Design have at their fingertips with a new 3D printer.

"This will be critical as we advance our aim of adding more 3D elements into the program that we offer," Assistant Professor of Graphic Design Tom Adolfs said. "The possibilities are endless, which helps display our future vision for the graphics department and the International School of Art & Design as a whole. We're always aiming to offer the most state-of-the-art programs possible."

## FESTIVAL RUSKA INCLUDED CHOIR FROM HANCOCK'S SISTER CITY OF PORVOO

The third annual Festival Ruska was a memorable one, most notably for the incredible finale on Saturday night at the Calumet Theatre as an all-male choir from Hancock's sister city of Porvoo, Finland performed to a packed house. Prior to the choir starting, a flash mob made up of members of the Copper Country Chorale welcomed the visitors with a moving rendition of "Kotimaani Ompi Suomi," a Finnish-language song that was actually written here in Hancock. In addition to the choir, there was a book signing, French-Canadian dance, presentation on U.P. dialect, mölkky tournament, and movie night in Wargelin Hall. Learn more about the annual festival at [finlandia.edu/ruska](http://finlandia.edu/ruska).

## FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN ATHLETES CHAPTER LAUNCHED

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes is a new group on Finlandia's campus that held its first meeting in late October in the Shawn Wickersheim Memorial Student Lounge in the Paavo Nurmi Center.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) allows for students to have spiritual growth and fellowship in a positive and fun atmosphere! FCA focuses on equipping, empowering and encouraging student-athletes, coaches and adult leaders to impact and influence their campus for Christ. This organization will help students grow in their spiritual growth. FCA's core values are integrity, serving, teamwork and excellence.



## MOBILE FOOD PANTRY HOSTED AT BARAGA SCHOOL

Finlandia University Campus Ministry, Feeding American West Michigan, Western U.P. Food Bank and Baraga Area Schools hosted a mobile food pantry in late September. The event was well attended with dozens of students and staff volunteering. 16,000 pounds of food was given to people in need. Campus Pastor Rev. Soren Schmidt helped to organize the event, and said he hopes to bring it back again in the spring of 2018, this time in Ontonagon.

## JIM KURTTI FEATURED IN FINNISH EMBASSY'S CENTENNIAL VIDEO SERIES

The Embassy of Finland in Washington D.C. posted an 80-second video of Jim Kurtti, Director of the Finnish American Heritage Center, as part of its #100FriendsOfFinland Centennial Video Series. The embassy has a total of 100 videos that will be shared leading up to the 100th anniversary of Finland's independence. Others featured in the series include late-night television host Conan O'Brien, National Hockey League players Pekka Rinne, Mikko Koivu and Mikael Granlund, and former Finlandia Foundation Lecturer of the Year and multi-talented performer Taina Elg, who visited the Keweenaw in 2015.



## ISAD GRADUATE HAYLEY LABAN HONORED AS TOP 50 GRAPHIC DESIGNER UNDER 30

The publication The Drum named International School of Art & Design graduate Hayley Laban ('11) as one of the top 50 graphic designers under 30 years old. Laban was recognized in an article on the publication's website that highlighted the first group of designers, which all come from the western portion of the United States.

Laban, a Houghton native, is a senior graphic designer at Warehouse Twenty One in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Her design skills and hard work caught the attention of Finlandia University in October 2015 when she was highlighted in the inaugural Finlandia Success story.



## M.S.P. GRANT FUNDS IT'S ON US SERIES THIS FALL

This fall Finlandia University teamed up with the national It's On Us campaign to raise awareness about the realities of sexual violence on college campuses. A generous grant of \$25,708 was awarded from the Michigan State Police Let's End Campus Sexual Assault initiative, and it funded the Finlandia It's On Us campaign event series. "The national It's On Us campaign was started in 2014 as a means to encourage college students to stand together against sexual violence. Through our programming during the 2017 academic year, Finlandia students will recognize that we all have a role to play in prevention and that small actions lead to meaningful results. It's on all of us to speak up, intervene and support survivors of sexual assault," said Dean of Students Erin Barnett.

## MOBILE MENTORING PILOT PROJECT WITH FINNISH EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY EXPERT MESENSEI IS UNDERWAY

Beginning in November, Finlandia students and alumni are participating in an innovative pilot project utilizing a mobile mentoring application developed by the Helsinki-based Mesensei – a leader in education technology.

Mesensei co-founder and CEO Tuukka Ylälahti and co-founder and board chair Eeva-Liisa Ylälahti (pictured to the right) visited Finlandia from October 24-27 to kick-off the project. According to Kevin Manninen, dean of the International School of Business, "this is an amazing opportunity for Finlandia. It allows students to connect with alumni and others on a regular basis virtually anywhere in the world. A well-run mentoring program can have a positive effect on student retention as it enables students to connect and relate with mentors who have been in the same situation they are currently facing."

Students and mentors from all different majors are needed for the project. For more information or to volunteer, e-mail Manninen at [kevin.manninen@finlandia.edu](mailto:kevin.manninen@finlandia.edu).





## MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM RECEIVES CONTINUED ACCREDITATION

This summer the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) informed Finlandia University of its vote to award continuing accreditation to the university's Medical Assisting Associate Degree program. Finlandia's Certified Medical Assistant Program has been continuously accredited since its introduction in the fall of 2012. This accreditation provides graduates the proper credentials needed to serve as a certified medical assistant at clinics across the United States.

## FINLANDIA EXPANDS COMMUNITY ENRICHMENT OFFERINGS

This fall Finlandia University introduced two new community enrichment courses, "The Gospel of Luke: Then and Now" and "Spiritual Formation in Everyday Living." "We hope these classes attract adult learners who are open to new ways of thinking, curious about life's bigger questions and thrive on conversation and dialogue," President Philip Johnson said. "These classes will be highly interactive, intellectually stimulating and just plain enjoyable."

Finlandia has long been known for its fall and spring community enrichment classes offered through the Finnish American Heritage Center, and last spring announced the addition of community fitness courses at the Paavo Nurmi Center. These classes reflect the university's guiding language of "fostering enduring positive change in how we think, act and feel in matters of the self, others and the wider world."



## ISAD HOSTING STUDIO DAYS FOR ASPIRING ARTISTS

Throughout the 2017-18 academic year, Finlandia University's International School of Art & Design will host immersion opportunities for prospective art students to meet staff and students, gain experience as artists, and explore Finlandia's first-class studio spaces.

Each session will feature directed studio time with Finlandia faculty in one of five specialties – graphic design, fiber and fashion design, intermedia, integrated design, or ceramic design. The studio time will be hosted by the faculty member, and will allow students the opportunity to work side-by-side with current FinnU art students. Learn more about Studio Days at [finlandia.edu/studiodays](http://finlandia.edu/studiodays).

## FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY INTRODUCES NEW PLATFORM FOR ONLINE LEARNING

With the new school year comes a new online platform for Finlandia University. The university is moving its online courses and online resources used in traditional courses, to Schoology, a state-of-the-art online learning management system.

"Schoology is going to provide us with many more options in how we deliver course content, such as embedded video communication capabilities," said Mark Miron, Program Director for Finlandia's RN-BSN program, which is available 100 percent online for associate degree nurses seeking to advance their careers with a bachelor's degree in nursing. "In addition, Schoology's platform is very similar to popular social media platforms, which will make it familiar to most students and encourage higher adoption and engagement rates."

The move was tested in some classes last academic year, and is being used campus wide for online learning this fall. The program is being lauded by professors across campus for its ease of use and cross-platform availability, including native apps on iOS and Android devices.





## BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS OF AMERICA CHAPTER LAUNCHED

Early this school year, Finlandia University saw the founding of a university chapter of Business Professionals of America. BPA is a national organization aimed at preparing students for careers in business and related fields through participation in regional, state and national professional, civic, service and social endeavors. BPA has 45,000 members in more than 1,800 chapters in 25 states and Puerto Rico at both the high school and collegiate levels. The new chapter at FinnU includes more than a dozen students.

## SMALL CLASS SIZES A HUGE ADVANTAGE

Finlandia University has long been known for delivering an extraordinary amount of attention to each student it welcomes to campus. During the 2016-17 academic year that shown through with an average class size of 11 students.

"Our ratio of students to faculty provides a great system of faculty support, and an opportunity to offer students uncommon attention," Vice President for Academic Affairs Fredi de Yampert said. "Sometimes students can feel lost at a larger school with large class sizes. Being smaller allows us to work more closely, help our students feel at home."



## PERHO COLLEGE VISITS

Finlandia University hosted a delegation from the Perho Culinary, Tourism, and Business College in Helsinki, Finland in June. The delegation of 32 faculty members had tours of both the Quincy Mine and the FinnU campus before lunch and presentations at the Finnish American Heritage Center. The visit for these faculty members served as professional and personal development. For Finlandia, the visit stemmed from an invitation to collaborate between the two schools. Currently, Finlandia sends and receives exchange students to Finland through cooperation with Perho and other schools. International School of Business Dean Kevin Manninen intends to broaden the relationship with Perho with shared lectures and faculty exchanges.

## FACULTY AND STAFF NEWS

Finlandia University's intimate atmosphere for learning is made possible by dedicated and passionate faculty and staff. We invite you to read updates below to learn more about these instructors and staff.

### PROFESSORS

#### BROWN TO LEAD PTA PROGRAM

Finlandia University's Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) program is now being led by experienced physical therapist Pam Brown, PT, MPT, CIMT.



"Her combination of education, clinical and leadership experience will serve the students, program and faculty well," VP for Academic and Student Affairs Fredi de Yampert said.

Brown came to Hancock after more than 20 years at Helen Newberry Joy Hospital, located in Newberry, Michigan.

#### DYLAN EVANS WEILER JOINS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN



The International School of Art & Design has welcomed Dylan Evans Weiler as Assistant Professor of Studio Arts/Intermedia.

"The Upper Peninsula is a unique place and being back in the area that I began my artistic journey has had a profound effect," said Weiler.

His practice includes a diverse set of media including printmaking, historical photographic process, sound and installation to name just few.

#### HISTORY PROFESSOR KNOBLAUCH RELEASES FIRST BOOK

Finlandia University Assistant Professor of History Dr. William Knoblauch has released his first book, *Nuclear Freeze in a Cold War: The Reagan Administration, Cultural Activism, and the End of the Arms Race*. The book has struck a nerve for many as it compares politics of the 1980s to today's political climate. Dr. John Carl Baker, a political engagement strategist for the antinuclear group Ploughshares Fund, cited Dr. Knoblauch's book in an article titled *Arms control in the age of Trump: Lessons from the nuclear freeze movement*.



## NATHAN EKDAHL JOINS MEDICAL ASSISTANT PROGRAM AS INSTRUCTOR

The Medical Assistant Program welcomed back alumnus Nathan Ekdahl ('14) to serve as an instructor and practicum coordinator.

"I wanted to join Finlandia University to continue to help others further their education," said Ekdahl, an advocate for the healthcare profession. "A career in healthcare will always be needed as our population ages. I'm excited to start my journey here at FinnU."

## DR. VIRTANEN SPEAKS AT SYMPOSIUM AT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Finlandia University Assistant Professor of Finnish and Nordic Studies Dr. Hilary Virtanen was one of three panelists at the Library of Congress for a symposium celebrating the history and future of the Finnish language in October.

"It is an honor to take part in this symposium and to use research and experiences with Upper Midwestern Finnish in celebration of Finland's centennial," Dr. Virtanen said. "While it is true that many aspects of Finnish language have disappeared since the time of mass immigration, there are some vocabulary sets that are still quite strong, and circumstances in which Finnish still lingers, even when not in active use."

The event was hosted by the Library of Congress European Division together with the Embassy of Finland as part of the centennial celebration of Finland's independence.



## PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM WELCOMES KAMARA TAYLOR

Finlandia University's psychology department welcomed award-winning professor Kamara Taylor to begin the 2017-18 academic year. Taylor arrived at Finlandia after three years at Illinois Central College, where she earned the Teaching Excellence Award and Faculty Fellowship.

"Coming to Finlandia from a community college has been a natural move, as I wanted to be at a college that was teaching and relationship focused," Taylor said. "Being in this role we get introduced to students at the beginning, when they have so much growth to do, and you're with them hand-in-hand as they grow."

## LANG MOVES FROM ADJUNCT TO FACULTY ROLE IN SCAS

After 18 years in education, including 15 as a high school teacher and one year as adjunct professor at Finlandia, Tracy Lang has been promoted to a full-time faculty role at the university. She teaches mathematics and speech classes.

"I love the variety of our students," Lang said. "Each of them has such a unique background and story. The student body as a whole here is a lot of fun."

Lang earned her master's degree in mathematics education from the University of Minnesota.



## POLAKOWSKI BRINGS 28 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE TO NEW ROLE IN FINNU'S PTA PROGRAM

Finlandia University is delighted to welcome Nicole Polakowski as Administrative Coordinator for Clinical Education, Physical Therapist Assistant.

"My goal is to provide the best education to our PTA students as possible," explained Polakowski.

Polakowski grew up in nearby Ontonagon, and was a physical therapist for 28 years prior to accepting a position at Finlandia.

## STAFF

### KAMRAD PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF TRIO PRE-COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Dave Kamrad accepted the position of Director of TRIO Pre-College Programs.

"I have seen a lot of good that these programs can do for our students," Kamrad said. "I'm looking forward to continuing to build relationships with schools and students to see sustained success for our programs."



### BARNETT NAMED DEAN OF STUDENTS

Erin Barnett has been named Dean of Students. Barnett has been with Finlandia since September 2013, advancing from Coordinator of Academic Support Services to Director of Academic Success and Student Life in May 2014, before accepting this position in July 2017.

"Working with Erin over the past three years in her director's role, I have seen much growth in her leadership working with our students and her continued compassion for our students," said Fredi de Yampert, VP of Academic Affairs. "She brings to the Dean of Students position a wealth of experience and vision in building a community that supports educating the whole student."





## NURSE WITH SISU

*Experience at Finlandia key to Kathleen Harmon's success*

Anyone from the nursing program's 1986 class would have a hard time forgetting Kathleen Harmon's inspirational finish to her collegiate experience. Harmon had her first child on January 6, 1986 and less than a week later she reported to her first class of her final semester. Like so many stories at FinnU then and now, it's one of sisu that ended with a stirring graduation ceremony.

It was just the start of an incredible 31-year nursing career. She now serves as the Chief Nurse Executive of Sphere3, a consulting firm that does work nationwide focused on informatics.

"The experience I had at Suomi was exactly what I needed to get started," Harmon said. "Still today I am thankful to have the backbone of my career religiously rooted and community based."

Harmon spent the first 15 years of her career as an Emergency Department (ED) nurse, doing what so many nurses do. She worked 12-hour shifts, including many years of night shift, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. She learned so much during these years and experienced the heartbreaking moments of life and death.

"You don't ever get over those experiences," Harmon said. "They hurt your heart still. You care for them using all the skill and training you have as well as say prayers with the patient and family and just be there, fully present."

*"As a nurse, you need to be all-in all the time, and the difference you can make is amazing."*

That mindset was instilled within her at Finlandia University with professors like Barbara Whitman, Helen Lord, Patricia Alkire, Elizabeth Reynolds and Brenda Parker who made a distinct impact on her. In 2003

Harmon's career took off in a slightly different direction. She earned her B.S. in Healthcare Administration and M.S. in Administration and Leadership. She took on multiple leadership roles at Trinity Health, including ED/Trauma Director as well as Corporate Senior Level Management Roles, specifically Informatics.

That introduction to technology helped shape her view of the future of healthcare, and eventually she moved on to serve as Chief Nursing Executive at Burwood Group, Inc., headquartered in Chicago and her current position at Sphere3. She focuses on healthcare informatics, which she calls the No. 1 growing field in nursing. Harmon is based out of Kansas City, Missouri, but regularly travels to healthcare facilities across the country. Harmon and her team have assisted organizations such as University of Chicago and Yale-New Haven Hospital offering expertise to their clinical communication roadmap, implementation plan and the ability to have access to real-time analytics.

"My foundation at Finlandia helped propel me to this," she said.

### ROOTED IN FINNISH TRADITION

Harmon grew up in the Detroit metro area, but her grandparents all immigrated to the Copper Country from Finland. One was a miner, and the other farmed in Liminga.

"My parents didn't learn English until they were in elementary school," Harmon said. "My grandparents only spoke Finnish."

When Harmon's parents, who are both alumni of Suomi, were married, the ceremony was completely in Finnish. She's related to many of the Heinonen and Maki families that still reside in the Copper Country, and remains extremely active in her Finnish roots. Kathleen and her husband Alan have a sauna in the house, they make many Finnish foods at their home, she's traveled to Finland and the family has even hosted five Finnish exchange students.

One of those exchange students invited Kathleen and Alan to Finland for her wedding. The student asked Alan to act as her father during the ceremony, an emotion-filled moment that's telling to the close relationships they have with the exchange students. The couple hosted the exchange students in their Detroit home, and did their best to bring them to the U.P. while they were in the U.S.

"The first time we did that, our exchange student was crying," Harmon said. "She became instantly home sick because the Copper Country is so similar to her home."

Harmon continues to be an advocate for all things nursing and Finnish, and is proud to come back to the Copper Country several times each year to visit her family.

# FINN FOUNDED

J. K. NIKANDER, THE SUOMI SYNOD, AND SUOMI COLLEGE



*In May 1899, the cornerstone was laid for what is now Old Main, and in January 1900 students and faculty moved into the new building.*

**A** copper boom in the mid- to late-1800s and the early 1900s brought tens of thousands of immigrants to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, many of them Finns.

One immigrant, Church of Finland pastor Juho Kustuaa Nikander, would help lead the formation of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Suomi College and Theological Seminary. Nikander, born in 1855 in Hämeenlinna, Finland, graduated from Helsingfors University in 1879 and spent five years as a pastor in Finland before arriving in Hancock in 1885 to serve Finnish Lutheran congregations around Hancock.

Three Church of Finland pastors joined Nikander in the Upper Peninsula: J. J. Hoikka in 1885, K. L. Tolonen in 1888, and J. W. Eloheimo in 1889. The four men met regularly for fellowship and discussion of the problems arising with the rapid increase of Finnish immigrants.

Fearing that many immigrant Finns were in danger of becoming lost to the church because there were so few pastors to serve them, the four pastors soon began plans for the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or Suomi Synod. In December 1889, a constitution was adopted and articles of incorporation were filed.

In March 1890, at the first meeting of the Suomi Synod, Nikander was elected Synod president. The Synod's constitution included a provision to found an opisto, or school. A committee immediately began drafting plans and investigating locations.

The mission of the school, as outlined in the Synod's constitution, was to cultivate a true Christian spirit in its students, to give training in religion and general cultural subjects, to prepare young men as pastors, to train teachers, and to prepare its students for other callings as practicable.

In 1895, the school was formally named Suomi College and Theological Seminary. The original course of study was seven years, followed by a two-year theological course. In September 1896, the new college admitted its first 11 students in rented quarters on Quincy Street in Hancock. Nikander was the first Suomi College president and he taught classes in Christianity, Latin, German and Greek.

Edward J. Issac writes of Nikander in the 1946 *Fiftieth Anniversary Publication*, "His quiet persistence in the face of obstacles, his calm conviction, self-effacing



devotion to his task, and his vision qualified him for the position of leader of the school. His humble trust in divine guidance and conviction that the call of the college was from God was a source of inspiration and strength to many others."

As enrollment rose, the school began to outgrow its rented quarters. In May 1899, the cornerstone was laid for what is now Old Main, and in January 1900 students and faculty moved into the new building. The three-story sandstone structure housed resident students, a house mother, the president's quarters, a chapel, business offices, classrooms, and a kitchen, dining room, and laundry. For many years, Nikander resided in Old Main, living and dining with the students.

Funding the college was a challenge from the beginning, and substantial debt was incurred in the building of Old Main. Nikander and others traveled widely, spreading the word about the college and soliciting donations. One story tells of a Sunday evening when, returning from a trip and worried about the burdensome debt on Old Main, Nikander asked the driver to stop and kneel with him as he prayed that God would bless Suomi College. (*Finns in Michigan*)

Three laymen in particular were active in the early days of Suomi College. Alex Leinonen (1846-1902) was a friend from the start, serving as treasurer of the college board until his death. Leinonen is described as a faithful and modest friend of the school, "as steadfast in adversity as in prosperity." (*Fiftieth Anniversary Publication*)

Businessman Juho Jasberg (1861-1928) was "Nikander's right hand man and the college's first business manager ... He was the one who went himself or sent others to get money for Suomi ... For years Mr. Jasberg worked together with Nikander in harmony ... They complemented, strengthened, and helped each other." (*Fiftieth Anniversary Publication*) Jasberg was Nikander's brother-in-law, having married Nikander's sister, Wilhelmina.

Isaac Sillberg (1857-1913) never missed a meeting of the college board and was a generous contributor to the college. "The Sillberg's spacious and lovely home was always open to friends of Suomi College and Suomi Synod ..." (*Fiftieth Anniversary Publication*)

Five students completed the original seven-year course of study in spring 1903, and 4 more in spring 1904. Seven completed the theological course in 1906. By 1906 the academic program was reduced to six-years, and a Commercial Department offered business training. Years three through six, later the Academy, were the equivalent of high school grades nine through twelve. By 1910, 243 students had attended the college. In 1919, the student body numbered 165.

Nikander died January 13, 1919, two days after suffering a stroke, leaving behind his wife, Sanna Kristiina (Rajala), two sons, Toivo and Viljo, and a daughter, Aino.



J. J. Hoikka, K. L. Tolonen, Juho Kustuaa Nikander, and J. W. Eloheimo (not pictured) the founders of the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, or Suomi Synod.

When Nikander became president of the Suomi Synod in 1890, there were four pastors and nine congregations. At the time of his death, the Synod had 44 pastors and 54 congregations. From 1906 to 1958, 199 men graduated from the seminary, all entering the ministry of the Suomi Synod.

"Dr. Nikander's greatest work as a Church leader was accomplished, after all, through his labors in Suomi College and Theological Seminary," writes Raymond Wargelin in *Faith of the Finns*. "His work here meant that educated people could assume the leadership in the immigrant Finnish community."

Today, Finlandia University's history and heritage anchor and enrich her learning community, even as the university responds to 21st century realities and the needs, expectations and aspirations of today's students. Learn more about Finlandia's

history at [finlandia.edu/finnishhistory](http://finlandia.edu/finnishhistory).

#### Sources:

Heikkinen, Jacob W. *The Story of the Suomi Synod: The Finnish Evangelical Church of America, 1890-1962* New York Mill: self-published, 1985.

Jalkanen, Ralph J., ed. *The Faith of the Finns: Historical Perspectives on the Finnish Lutheran Church in America, Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1972.*

Suomi College. *Fiftieth Anniversary Publication of Suomi College and Theological Seminary 1896-1946*, Hancock: Finnish Lutheran Book Concern, 1946.



Friends and alumni who generously supported this initiative hold similar commitments. "When there are deserving U.P. students who need assistance, we are pleased to help them study at Finlandia," was a comment recently shared by long-time supporters Ron and Lou Helman. "This was an easy one," Ken Seaton mentioned, "because the funds go directly to helping meet the financial needs of a new student." Finlandia's friends and alumni have always responded generously when the cause is student scholarships. There are other individuals and couples who have over recent years, given at extraordinary levels, to support the Finlandia Fund from which annual scholarships are funded.

Scholarships such as the U.P. Commitment Grant attract collegiate-prepared students who want to meaningfully engage both campus and community

while earning their degrees. They tend to stick! It's a win-win. This is, in part, Nancy Fenton's point: "Finlandia students are important to Hancock. I have always believed," she said, "that Finlandia's future and Hancock's future are tied together. They need each other." A growing student body makes Finlandia stronger. A stronger Finlandia is a stronger Hancock. Campus and community matters for building an enduring quality of life for all those who choose to make their lives in the U.P.

### **\$158,600 RAISED FOR THE U.P. COMMITMENT GRANT**

A total of 41 special gifts were received this past year to provide additional grant funds for the fall 2017 class of new students graduating from high schools in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Each recipient received an additional \$5,000 to help meet the cost of attendance at Finlandia. This initiative belongs to a constellation of programs aimed at affordability, including the commitment to keep tuition, room and board fees flat for the second year in a row.



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### **THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS UP 37 PERCENT**

We continue to make good progress toward our annual goal for Thrivent Choice Dollars. The ambitious goal of \$20,000 was not realized in 2016 though we climbed from \$8,700 to \$12,000. Finlandia wishes to thank those who responded generously to

our July letter. As a result, \$3,135 in Choice Dollars were received compared with \$136 for the same period last year. These figures may appear to be too small to make a real difference. However, over the years this program has raised nearly \$90,000 for Finlandia students and programs. Your Choice Dollars do make a real difference! Thank you for designating Finlandia as a recipient for your Thrivent Choice Dollars. Finlandia supporters who are Thrivent Financial members are encouraged to contact their agent with any questions. You may also call Ross Rinkinen at (906) 231-4630.



## "TOO OFTEN LIFE GETS IN THE WAY!"

"I remember a stewardship talk at church some years ago ..." DJ Boyd of Northville, Michigan begins. He, together with his wife, Shannon, were asked: Why have you set up an electronic funds transfer to make your gifts to Finlandia? DJ went on to explain. The speaker that Sunday morning at worship mentioned how important it is to be sure to first set aside those things that matter most. "Too often life gets in the way and your best intentions are not realized," Shannon added. "Once we made the commitment to Finlandia we wanted to be faithful to that commitment. This makes it so easy."



DJ and Shannon are among a growing number of Finlandia supporters who are choosing a method of electronic funds transfer to make their gifts. Regular electronic transfers from checking or savings accounts are especially helpful because they allow Finlandia to more reliably predict gift levels throughout the year and to plan accordingly. Finlandia's employees and other supporters also utilize payroll deduction options.

When DJ and Shannon were asked what influenced their giving practices and now shapes their giving priorities they spoke of parents, of Finnishness, and of faith. And, they included one other determining factor: how much will their gift "move the needle." That is, for these two, they wish to give where they know their gift makes a substantial difference, where they know their gift moves the needle at Finlandia. After all is said and done, however, the two of them agreed that giving is simply something enjoyed.

## \$120,000 GIFT FROM A FAITHFUL CENTENARIAN

*(Finlandia is grateful to Rev. Les Niemi who shepherded this gift and agreed to provide a brief story about this special couple.)*

The story of Arvo and Laila Heino of Chatham, MI is noteworthy. They were both born in 1916, the former in Kipling and the latter in Cobalt, ON and both the only children of immigrant parents. Having a late start together they met in Montreal, and were married in Munising, Michigan at ages 49. Arvo had served in the freedom movement of Gen. Douglas MacArthur in 1944 in the Philippines. Following a business degree at Northern Michigan University, they settled into serious dairy farming in Colds Springs on Chatham's south side. Laila died in 2005. It was sometime later that Arvo, looking his trustee in the eye commented, "I'm going to live to a hundred."

Arvo John Heino died on December 12, 2016 at age 100 and five months. But not before he and Laila created a family trust in 1993. On Friday, September 22, Finlandia's Board of Trustees was presented a check from the Heino trust for \$120,000 by board member Dan Niemi.

Christian Scripture teaches that God loves cheerful givers, which may have been a big reason for their longevity. Arvo was baptized by Dr. Alvar Rautalahti as an infant, and confirmed at Sion in Chatham in 1931 by the Rev. J. Heimonen. Was it the good water in Cold Springs which sustained both man and animals? Was it God's grace? Who has the last word? Perhaps all of the above.

We pay herewith special honor and gratitude to God and to two humble servants who took the low road in life, planned well, lived to be a hundred years old, and became outstanding philanthropists locally in 2017. They excelled in the "gift of giving." Incidentally the family name in Finland was "Sankari." Perhaps we might suggest going back to the old name, for Sankari means "hero" in Finnish. So we may well say that at Finlandia the Heinos are heros.





# HEIKINPÄIVÄ

A MID-WINTER CELEBRATION

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," urges the well-known phrase. In Michigan's Copper Country, the saying might be revised, "When life sends as much as 300 inches of snow each winter, celebrate!"

That's what the Finnish Theme Committee of Hancock decided to do in January 1999 when it hosted the first annual Heikinpäivä - a celebration of mid-winter and the area's deep-rooted Finnish heritage and identity.

The celebration's themes are borrowed from folk sayings associated with Finland's name day for Heikki (Henrik's day, January 19). One of them, "Karhu kääntää kylkeä," means "The bear rolls over to the other side," or in other words, winter is (thankfully) half over.

Heikinpäivä is typically celebrated on the last Saturday in January, but related activities take place from mid-January to early February. One of the region's largest winter events, the festival draws people from throughout the Midwest for Finnish crafts, music, food, films, classes, performances and games.

Everyone is an honorary Finn during Heikinpäivä, especially if you brave the elements and march in the polar parade through downtown Hancock. And your bragging rights are multiplied if you choose to take the plunge in the Polar Bear Dive in the Portage Lake Shipping Canal.

Every parade needs a marshal. Enter Hankooki Heikki (Heikki of Hancock), who presides over the festivities. Chosen annually by the Finnish Theme Committee to recognize significant contributions to Finnish-American culture in the Copper Country, Hankooki Heikki heads the Heikinpäivä parade riding Big Louie, the world's largest kick sled, sporting a fur-trimmed robe and a crown, and waving a copper scepter.

Hankooki Heikki is joined in the parade by a host of Finnish folk characters, including St. Urho in green and purple chasing the grasshoppers from Finland; Joulupukki, the Finnish Santa Clause, in a red velvet cape; and Väinämöinen, an aged character from the Kalevala, Finland's epic poem, who plays the kantele and sings ancient songs.

Many more down-to-earth marchers also join the pageant to express their cultural pride, including community leaders, Finlandia students and student athletes, area clubs and organizations, and the Michigan Tech Pep Band.

Following the parade, the revelers enjoy a Tori Market featuring Finnish food and crafts, a lighthearted wife-carrying contest, kicksled races, a traditional Finnish meal, and a dance, among many other activities.

David Maki, Finnish Theme Committee member and associate editor of The Finnish American Reporter, says the family-friendly festival is growing and attracting more and more visitors each year.

In addition to the traditional activities, Maki said the 2018 mid-winter festival will include a musician-in-residence to conduct classes and give performances. Maki also announced that Michigan Tech fraternity Phi Kappa Tau, whose house is in Hancock, will be leading the 2018 Polar Bear Dive.

The 19th annual Heikinpäivä mid-winter festival will take place Saturday, January 27, 2018, in Hancock, at Finlandia University's Finnish American Heritage Center and Quincy Green, and at numerous other locations in the surrounding community.

The City of Hancock's Finnish Theme Committee is the Copper Country chapter of the Finlandia Foundation. For more information, visit [finnishamericanreporter.com/heikinpaiiva](http://finnishamericanreporter.com/heikinpaiiva).



## DONOR RECOGNITION

In each donor edition of the Bridge, we are pleased to recognize and thank the many individuals, organizations, churches, clubs, associations and businesses that generously donated to Finlandia University in the preceding fiscal year ending June 30. Some have pledged deferred giving, or named the

university in their wills. Some have given in memory of loved ones or to honor a special date, event or person. We are grateful for the thoughts and prayers of our friends and alumni, and for their gifts in support of our students' educational goals.

## GIVING DATES

Sincere thanks to all who have supported Finlandia University between **July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017**, and in years past.

## ANONYMOUS GIFTS

Names of donors who have made anonymous gifts do not appear in the lists below. Finlandia, however, wishes to acknowledge their generosity.

## CUMULATIVE GIVING

## PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

(\$50,000 AND ABOVE)

Lifetime membership in the President's Circle is granted to those who have given \$50,000 or more to Finlandia University during any five-year period, and to those who have named the university in their estate plans for \$50,000 or more and informed the university of their intentions.

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WE CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE THOSE WHO HAVE DIED AND HAVE LEFT A LEGACY OF GENEROSITY AS MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE SINCE JULY 2007. THESE INCLUDE:  
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JOHN & ROMA SILLER  
LAILA THOMPSON  
ALPO TOKOLA  
DANIEL WILKMAN

## DISTINGUISHED GIVING

## NIKANDER CLUB

(\$10,000 AND ABOVE)

Juho Kustaa Nikander (1855–1919), born in Lammi, Finland, helped found Suomi College and served as president from 1896 to 1919. An ordained Lutheran pastor, Nikander traveled to the Copper Country from Finland in the fall of 1884. As a national leader of Finnish-American communities, he helped advance local congregations and fight the discrimination many of the immigrants faced.

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## NISONEN ASSOCIATES COUNCIL

(\$5,000-\$9,999)

In 1922 Martti Nisonen (1891–1946) left Finland with his wife and four children to become Suomi College's music instructor. He created a music program that drew many Finnish-American musicians. A noted composer and arranger of cantatas, operas and several orchestral works, Nisonen is remembered as a tireless and dedicated instructor, not only of music, but also of cultural and moral development.

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## WARGELIN COUNCIL

(\$2,500-\$4,999)

Dr. John Wargelin (1881–1970) was president of Suomi College from 1919 to 1927 and 1930 to 1937. In 1896, at the age of 15, Wargelin enrolled in the college's first class, graduating in 1904. In 1906 he graduated from Suomi's former seminary. Wargelin served as a Suomi College trustee for 36 years. In 1966 the university's library and science building was officially named for him.

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## WAINO "POP" LEHTO LEAGUE

(\$1,000-\$2,499)

Waino "Pop" Lehto graduated from Suomi College in 1918. From 1920 until 1962 he served as instructor and dean of the business, commerce and liberal arts programs at Suomi College.

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continued on page 17



**WAINO "POP" LEHTO LEAGUE** (continued)

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**OLD MAIN SOCIETY**

(\$500-\$999)

Built in 1899, for many years Old Main was the sole Suomi College building. In its early years it housed classrooms, a chapel, offices, a cafeteria and a dormitory. Today it is the home of administrative offices.

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Minnie Perttula-Maki (1880-1957) was Suomi College's only woman president to date, serving from 1922 to 1923. She was born in Lohtaja, Finland, and was a member of the college's first class, graduating in 1904. She continued her education in Chicago, Duluth and at the University of Helsinki.

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continued on page 18

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continued on page 19



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continued on page 20

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continued on page 21



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## SETTLER'S CO-OP AND FINNISH-AMERICAN COOPERATIVE DOCUMENTARY

When she was approached about creating a documentary about Settler's Co-op in Bruce Crossing in honor of its centennial, Kristin Ojaniemi – herself a Bruce Crossing resident – immediately agreed, initially imagining the project as somewhat simple, as far as filmmaking goes.

"I didn't have any other projects going on, and it was close to home," she said. "I didn't think I'd have to travel much, but I ended up going to Finland."

About 12 months – and a few thousand miles – later, Ojaniemi has completed a documentary titled "Co-operatively Yours," which explores not only the history of Settler's Co-op in her hometown, but also the history of the Finnish-American cooperative movement.

The film was screened as part of the Nordic Film Series at the Finnish American Heritage Center (FAHC) on November 9; Ojaniemi planned to be at the screenings. And the film itself also will be going back to Finland. In late October, Finnish national

broadcasting company YLE announced they were interested in showing the film on their airwaves in 2018.

Ojaniemi had plenty of help with this project, including fellow Bruce Crossing native and FAHC Director Jim Kurtti, who hatched the idea for the film. With Kurtti's guidance, Ojaniemi began researching the history of Settler's Co-op, including hours delving into records at the Heritage Center, and seeking out funding to allow her to travel to Finland to interview experts in the field.

Two of Ojaniemi's grant applications were successful, and she used financial awards from Suomi Seura of Helsinki, Finland and Finlandia Foundation National of Pasadena, California to fund a week-long trip to Finland in March, during which she interviewed Finnish scholars Auvo Kostainen and Hannu Heinilä, both of whom dedicated much of their academic careers to the topic of cooperatives.

Copies of the film can be purchased through North Wind Books, with all proceeds benefiting the Finnish American Heritage Center.

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## JUNE'S MOST GENEROUS & CREATIVE GIFT

June Rawn has deep roots in the Copper Country. Though born downstate in the early 30s, she virtually grew up outside of Pelkie on her grandparents' farm with "pigs, cabbage, and cows" she says. When she was entering 9th grade her parents moved the family up to Pelkie from Ashland Park. She began attending Baraga High School. When her parents decided to return downstate after only two years, she returned with them ... initially. After her first day back to school she came home and declared that she was quitting. She simply could not tolerate the large and impersonal quality of high schools in southeastern Michigan. Her mother would not hear of it. She straightaway returned her to Pelkie where two years later she graduated from Baraga High School.

Following graduation she worked a few years downstate but began to "feel like there wasn't a future" for her there. At the age

of 25 she packed up all her worldly belongings and set off on her own to "start from scratch" in southern California. Eventually she landed her first property management job in Torrance when put in charge of a 248 unit apartment building. This was only the beginning. With an eye for property value and potential she soon began buying and selling commercial properties. Years later, decades later, this young but daring 25-year-old single woman retired from a very successful and rewarding career of property ownership and management. Now she looks for ways to give back.

June has been supporting Finlandia in extraordinary ways for many years. One of June's most generous and creative gifts to Finlandia was her townhouse on Navy Street in Hancock. Today Finlandia's visiting artists, researchers, and scholars regularly enjoy this beautiful home on the Portage Canal. Special guests of the university, leadership retreats, and so many other university functions are planned year round in this home. This in-kind gift allows Finlandia to practice hospitality in very special ways. June continues to come up from her home in Torrance to enjoy the Copper Country. And when she does, she stays at the townhouse.

Together with her gift of the townhouse, June has chosen to name Finlandia as beneficiary in her estate plans and generously, predictably supports the Finlandia Fund with unrestricted gifts each year.

From those earliest summers spent on her grandparents' farm outside of Pelkie, June had heard about Suomi College. She remembers extended family attending and graduating from Suomi. Decades later, these connections remain lively and important to her. Finlandia is deeply grateful for her legacy of generosity. Thank you, June!

## FINNISH AMERICAN HISTORICAL ARCHIVE &amp; MUSEUM COLLECTION DONORS

While Finland celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> year of independence in 2017, Finlandia's Finnish American Historical Archive is celebrating another fruitful year of adding new voices to the conversation of Finnish-American history and heritage.

In the past 12 months, the Archive has received nearly 130 donations from across North America and Finland. This successful year of preservation and outreach proves once again that there are still unique and valuable materials out there.

Highlights from these recent donations include the records of the Ft. Bragg, California Kalevala Lodge and temperance society collected by Dennis Tuomala; historical records and other materials highlighting the century that Bruce Crossing's Settler's Co-op has been in operation; the congregational records of the former Suomi Synod church in Almena, Wisconsin; a collection of historic photos from the Finnish farming community of Toivola, Michigan given by the Toivola Senior Citizens group; and unique pieces like a

program from the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, which is signed by all of the Finnish participants, donated by John Wetzel.

Thanks to the generosity of members of Finlandia University's Finnish Council in America, and grants from the Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission, Finlandia Foundation National, and Suomi Seura, the Archive was also able to purchase a digital microform reader, which allows us to further fulfill our mission to make accessible the hundreds of rolls of microfilm, microfiche, and slides that reside in the archive's holdings.

The FAHC promotes Finnish culture in North America in a variety of ways. For further information about how you can donate, contact Archivist Joanna Chopp at (906) 487-7347 or joanna.chopp@finlandia.edu, or FAHC Director Jim Kurtti at (906) 487-7302 or james.kurtti@finlandia.edu.

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Mark & Riikka Hepokoski Family, Hancock, MI	Edith Maki, Hancock, MI		
	Alice Margerum, Hancock, MI		

## GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Finnish Theme Committee-Finlandia Foundation Copper Country Chapter, Hancock, MI  
 Immigrant History Research Center - Univ. of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN  
 Kenton-Sidnaw Historical Society, Trout Creek, MI  
 Mattila Rock & Dock, Hancock, MI  
 Mission United Lutheran Church, Pelkie, MI  
 Salolampi Finnish Language Village, Bemidji, MN  
 Settlers Co-Operative, Bruce Crossing, MI  
 St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Marquette, MI  
 The Center For Art in Wood, Philadelphia, PA  
 Toivola Senior Citizens, Toivola, MI





## FROM FINLAND TO FINLANDIA PHILADELPHIA

### *Finnish exchange student Ilkka Kortessluoma's path to working for NHL's Philadelphia Flyers*

**I**t was 4 a.m. in August 2005 when Ilkka Kortessluoma first arrived in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula. The Senior Director of Ticket Sales for the Philadelphia Flyers still remembers stepping off that bus into the fresh middle-of-the-night late-summer Keweenaw air.

The late night soon gave way to morning light, and the once-in-a-lifetime experience for the Finnish exchange student began. He finished his last year of university in Finlandia University's International School of Business. It didn't take long for the outgoing Finn to fall in love with his new surroundings.

"It's easy to feel like you're at home at Finlandia," he said. "It's welcoming. It's a good size. It's a tight-knit community."

Kortessluoma said he considers himself to be a Finlandia graduate first, even though he spent most of his undergraduate career at Seinajoki University of Applied Sciences in Finland. That's in large part because of the Sports Management focus at FinnU.

"I was swayed to attend Finlandia because of the sports management program and I had classmates in Finland that spoke very highly of their experience while at Finlandia," he said. "I loved it. I found the curriculum to be very engaging, and it aligned to my interests better than I thought possible. I also made the university's NCAA Division III hockey team. Even though I mainly watched the games from a press box, I made some great friends, and those guys were a big part of my experience at Finlandia."

#### **PATH TO PHILADELPHIA**

Even before attending FinnU, Kortessluoma had a strong desire to chase a career path in the growing sports management industry. That desire didn't instantly lead to success, though. Instead it was a long path of low-yield job applications, low-pay and hard work.

While finishing his last semester at Finlandia, Kortessluoma sent his resume and cover letter to 50 or so companies looking for a way to get into the sports industry in the United States. While already back in Finland, he got a call from Wilson Sporting Goods in Chicago, and was offered a summer internship with the company. Kortessluoma moved to Chicago to pursue the opportunity as a marketing intern in Wilson Sporting Goods' Racquet Department. After completing the internship, it was back to Finland, where he had landed an incredible opportunity. He was able to intern with Helsinki IFK, a hockey team that plays in Finland's premier professional league. While

working that internship he completed his thesis and graduated from Seinäjoki.

When the season with Helsinki IFK ended, he had hoped to stay on as a full-time employee, but openings at the organization, like many in the sports industry, were scarce. Instead he looked elsewhere, eventually landing a sales job with a sports marketing firm in Helsinki that setup unique hospitality experiences for sports fans in Finland and other European countries. After a short time with the company, his wife, who is from the United States, and he were ready to make the move back stateside.

The couple moved to Philadelphia, and the eager young professional called back to his friends at Helsinki IFK to see if anyone could help him find a job in sports in the area, specifically with the National Hockey League's Philadelphia Flyers. As luck would have it one of his former co-workers was friends with a player scout, and eventually he was put in touch with the team's assistant general manager. It was a start, but it was only a start.

"It took me six months of pure networking, hitting the phones and calling before finally getting an opportunity," he said. The opportunity wasn't even with the Flyers, instead it was with the Flyers minor league squad, the Philadelphia Phantoms. He started with the Phantoms in 2008, and after seven months he was given an opportunity in sales with the Flyers. He seized the chance, and after four-and-a-half years with the Flyers another opportunity was presented to him – a director of sales position with the Hartford Wolf Pack, the minor league affiliate of the New York Rangers. The position with the Wolf Pack lasted two years until eventually he got a call from his old team in Philadelphia, who asked him to begin as Director of Sales with the Flyers.

## WORKING IN HOCKEY

This season is Kortessluoma's 10th in the professional hockey industry, and third in his current role with the Flyers.

"I am fortunate to work for a good company," he said. "If you do your job, you have opportunities to move up. I love the job. We work long hours, but for me this is more of a lifestyle. I'm passionate about sports business. The people in this industry are good people, and once you get in it's like a fraternity or sorority. Everyone is similar minded, hard-working and ready to make a difference."

## ADVICE FOR SPORTS MANAGEMENT MAJORS

Often Kortessluoma is asked to talk with sports management programs, and meets with people

interested in getting in the field. He gives them all the same message.

"People need to realize this is not a glamorous job," he said. "They think we hang out with the players and watch the games all the time, but really we're quite separated from the team. The team practices off site, and we only see the players at special events. I tell every candidate that wants to get into this industry that you're not going to have success if you're not going to work hard. It's a lot of long hours, and it's certainly not 9-to-5."

The hours he spends at the job are all over the place, especially during the Flyers season.

"You have to absolutely love it, otherwise you're wasting your time," he said. "Often people get into this industry for the wrong reasons, they want to watch their favorite team play or meet their favorite players, but it really doesn't work like that. You're running around and making things happen. On business side, it's your job to make sure the building is full and your patrons are having a great experience."

The chances of success, Kortessluoma said, are all about staying persistent, being positive, working hard and then being a sponge by learning from people already in the industry. "Ultimately, it's about being yourself, being a good person and having a good, positive attitude and taking pride in what you do."

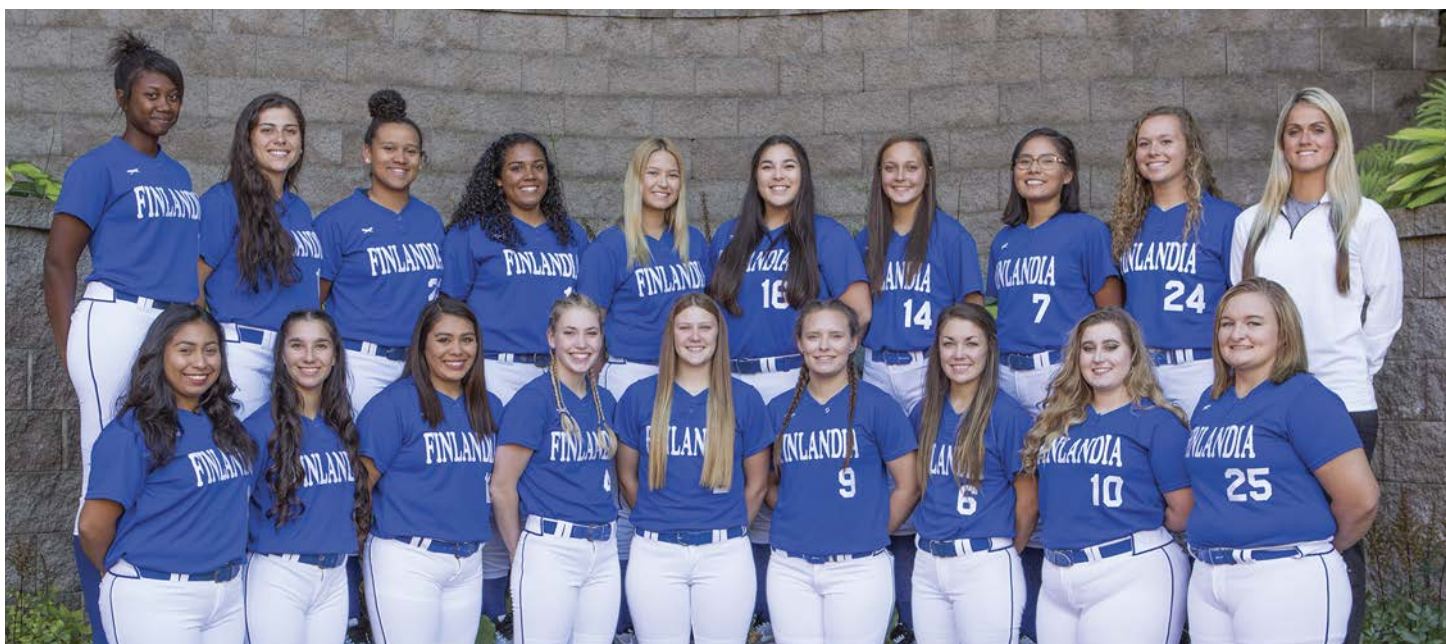
## FINN PROUD

Unfortunately for the proud Finn, he'll be in Philadelphia working during the centennial celebration of Finland's independence this December. While he won't actually be in his home country for the celebration, he isn't going to let that slow him down.

"I plan to have a great Independence Day celebration here in the states," he said. "I consider myself to be 100 percent Finn, and I make that known to those around me. I am proud of my country and my heritage, and it means a lot to me to celebrate this anniversary."

The young Finn may call America home now, but it's clear his path was forged by the Finnishness that defines him. From attending the only remaining college in the U.S. founded by Finnish immigrants, to Finns offering him his first opportunity in the industry of professional hockey and eventually his fellow countrymen helping him land a job in the National Hockey League, he has a lot to celebrate in his roots.





## 2017 SOFTBALL TEAM TAKES HOME MANY RECOGNITIONS, INCLUDING ALL AMERICAN HONORS

The 2017 season will go down as one of the best seasons in school history for Finlandia softball. The Lions went from 5-19 in 2016 to finish 25-13 and win the American Collegiate Athletic Association Championship in 2017.

It was just the second conference title in school history and the improvement of +13 ranked fifth in NCAA Division III. The Lions broke 11 individual and team school records and had 34 additions to the record book.



## Bent and Nguyen earn softball All-American Honors

Emily Nguyen and Denia Bent capped off amazing freshmen seasons by being named to the FastPitch News NCAA Division III Softball All-American team. Nguyen made second team offense while Bent made honorable

mention offense. This is just the second time in program history that Finlandia has had an All-American. In 2014, Alexis Lawley was named to the NFCA All-American third team.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg for both these student athletes," coach Katherine Hannagan said. "Their work ethic and drive to get better on and off the field are going to help this program sustain success for years to come."



## Lions place six on All-AD3I Team; Hannagan named Coach of the Year

The Finlandia University softball team was well represented on the All-Association of Division III Independents team. Sophomore Serena Jaime and freshmen Cassandra Avila, Denia Bent, Makenna Lloyd and Emily Nguyen made first team while freshman Karri Johnson made second team. Katherine Hannagan was named Coach of the Year in her second year guiding the team.



## MIAA ACCEPTS FINLANDIA AS FOOTBALL AFFILIATE BEGINNING IN 2018

Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association Commissioner Penny Allen-Cook announced today the addition of Finlandia University as an affiliate member to the conference for football, beginning with the 2018-19 academic year.



"We are excited to add Finlandia as a football affiliate member to the MIAA," said Allen-Cook. "We feel this addition is in line with the mission of the MIAA and our member schools, and will improve the collegiate experience of our student-athletes. We will continue to partner with the NACC (Northern Athletic Collegiate Conference) in our annual Conference Challenge Series held the third weekend of the season."

The addition of Finlandia will give the MIAA eight institutions that sponsor football, including seven institutions that are part of the MIAA's current full membership: Adrian, Albion, Alma, Hope, Kalamazoo, Olivet and Trine.



## THE LIFT ANNOUNCED AS OFFICIAL VOICE OF FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Finlandia University is proud to announce that 99.3 FM "The Lift" will be the voice of Finlandia University Athletics.

"This agreement between The Lift and Finlandia is a great opportunity not only for our athletic department, but for the university as a whole," said Athletic Director Curtis Wittenberg. "Having a voice for Finlandia athletics is another piece to the growth of our department."

For the 2017-18 year, the station will broadcast around 24 athletic contests, during new "Finlandia Game of the Week" programming. In addition, there will be weekly interviews with coaches and athletes during the station's morning show with Rick Allen. The full broadcast schedule is available on [fulions.com](http://fulions.com) and [993thelift.com](http://993thelift.com).



## BRANDT ELEVATED TO HEAD BASEBALL COACH

Evan Brandt has been named the head baseball coach at Finlandia University. He had spent the last two years as the assistant coach for the Lions.

"We're fortunate to have someone like Evan to take

over our baseball program," said Athletic Director Curtis Wittenberg. "He is very familiar with Finlandia and the area having played and coached here. Evan's passion and enthusiasm for the game along with his contacts in the Midwest will be an asset to the team and university."

## MOTHERWELL FINALIZES WOMEN'S BASKETBALL STAFF

John Motherwell, head coach of Finlandia University women's basketball, has filled out his coaching staff. Zach Baid, Chad Brenna and Rodney Palmer will be joining "Coach Mo" for his first season with the Lions.

"Deciding on your assistants is very important," said Motherwell. "For myself, I want to bring in people who believe in Finlandia University and the Upper Peninsula. I also need people who are positive in their coaching style and personalities. I feel FinnU has hit a home run with the addition of Zach, Chad and Rodney." The Lions first game was November 10 against Mid Michigan.

## FINLANDIA DONATES \$12,500 TO HOUGHTON COUNTY ARENA

Finlandia University has made a \$12,500 donation to Portage Lake Multi-Educational Services, Inc. (PLM-ES) to assist with several major improvements to Houghton County Arena. "We've been here 17 years, and to see these kinds of improvements being done is great," Athletic Director Curtis Wittenberg said. "This is our home rink, and it's nice to be able to pitch in."

Improvements to the arena this past summer include a new roof, a new dehumidifier, new bleachers, improvements to the core of the building's structure and organizers are still hoping to also install a new ice plant, which might be a summer 2018 project. PLM-ES is a non-profit organization that is organizing the fundraising efforts

## FINNISH AMERICAN FOLK SCHOOL

TO ENSURE TRADITIONS REMAIN RELEVANT IN FUTURE



**A**s the Finnish American Heritage Center at Finlandia University intensifies its mission to preserve and promote Finnish culture in North America, it's not only increasing efforts to preserve the culture through archival practices, but also through the development of the Finnish American Folk School.

The Folk School concept was created in response to a decline in the numbers of people in Finnish America with the knowledge of traditional Finnish folk arts and the skill sets with which they could perpetuate these traditions. By bringing in experts from Finland, or within the Upper Midwestern United States, to teach these traditions in an organized setting, the FAHC intends to establish a new cadre of tradition bearers who will have learned the necessary skills from these masters to not only continue the traditions themselves but also to teach others both in their local area and beyond.

While the Finnish American Folk School concept materialized from the Finnish American Heritage Center, the Center itself isn't going it alone. The Folk School will utilize partnerships with local high schools, Finlandia University faculty members, and education-oriented community organizations such as the Copper Country Community Arts Center, among others. The goal of the Folk School is to provide anyone and everyone interested in perpetuating a Finnish folk tradition with the skill set necessary to do so. The school is open to all age and experience levels.

Folk School activities began in 2017 with a pair of music-oriented workshops. In January, a pair of experts in the *viirikannel* (single-stringed *kantele*) taught nearly a dozen area musicians how to construct their own instrument, and then how to play it. And in June, Finland's premiere *Pelimannit* style fiddler Arto Järvelä filled the room twice when he gave workshops on that famed fiddling technique.

In the early part of 2018, a builder from northern Minnesota is planning to teach a course in constructing a Finnish-style boat; this course will be taught at the Jeffers High School woodshop in nearby Painesdale, and is open to not only high school shop students but also interested community members. Plans for the next two years include a course in log building (sauna) construction, the musical instrument *jouhikko*, and numerous other options, such as birch bark weaving, straw art and more.

Through the decades of preserving and promoting Finnish culture in North America, the FAHC staff – led by Kurtti – has an awareness of what traditions are most in peril of fading into history and has targeted those as Folk School offerings. However, the FAHC staff is open to ideas for upcoming courses; folks with ideas are encouraged to share them with Heritage Center staff.

For further information about the Folk School, call (906) 487-7302 or visit [finlandia.edu/fahc](http://finlandia.edu/fahc).



## ALUMNI PUSH LEADS TO RECORD VIDEO VIEWS AND \$1,500 IN DONATIONS

A social media push by International School of Art & Design (ISAD) alums in July ended with more than \$1,500 in donations or pledges, 16,000 video views and more than 500 video shares. The drive took over social media feeds of those associated with the university in July, and the results are unprecedented at the university. The 16,000+ views the video received are 10,000 more views than any other video the university has published on Facebook. In total, more than 35,000 people were reached through the campaign. The video is available to view at [finlandia.edu/art](http://finlandia.edu/art).

## CARE TO SHARE YOUR STORY?

Have you wondered what became of your college roommate, or the study-buddy with whom you spent so many hours? Chances are good that someone is thinking of you, too. Now is the perfect time to send a note and provide FinnU with your professional, personal or Finlovedia update to publish in the next edition of the Bridge. Enquiring minds want to know what you've been up to! We also invite you to connect with the Suomi College/Finlandia University Alumni Association on Facebook.

## OBITUARIES

### PAUL TERVO

Sterling Heights, MI, May 9, 2016

### GAIL POUTTU

Hancock, MI, Sept. 19, 2016

### SYLVIA BAUGH

Pensacola, FL, Oct. 30, 2016

### GLORIA YOUNG

Charlotte, NC, Jan. 30, 2017

### WILLIAM DROTT

Aurora, CO, Feb. 1, 2017

### MARY BERGERSON

Marquette, MI, Feb. 22, 2017

### MAVIS ANDERSON

Grass Lake, MI, Mar. 26, 2017

### KATHY MCLEAN

Houghton, MI, Mar. 31, 2017

### ERMA CASPARY

South Range, MI, Apr. 14, 2017

### PAMELA KUGLER

Montreal, WI, May 10, 2017

### JOAN NICHOLLS

Houghton, MI, May 31, 2017

### LORRAINE FOWLER

Calumet, MI, June 8, 2017

### LES HAATAJA

L'Anse, MI, June 9, 2017

### JOHN HAMAR

Chassell, MI, July 17, 2017

### DONALD HEIKKILA

Painesdale, MI, July 22, 2017

### JIM KANGAS

L'Anse, MI, July 28, 2017

### CARL KUKKA

Homosassa, FL, Aug. 26, 2017

### LYNN SOMERO

Dollar Bay, MI, Aug. 26, 2017

### PHYLLIS WEISINGER

Munising, MI, Sept. 5, 2017

### EVA LAHTI

Mohawk, MI, Sept. 20, 2017

### DOROTHY BONEN

Tamarack City, MI, Sept. 22, 2017

### DEBORAH (FRANKI) USITALO

Houghton, MI, Oct. 20, 2017

### KATHERINE LANCTOT

L'Anse, MI, Oct. 20, 2017



## ALUMNI BOARD RAISES \$45,000 FOR OLD MAIN

*Money raised to complete preservation work on FinnU's original building*

The Finlandia Alumni Board came together in the fall of 2016 for their annual on-campus meeting and set a goal: Help with restoration efforts of Old Main, the school's iconic, original sandstone building on Quincy Street.

That effort would include a new roof on the south side of the building, maintenance on the building's parking lot, landscaping around the building and more. After a seven-month effort on GoFundMe, the Finlandia Alumni Board has reached its goal of \$45,000. A total of 45 donors came together to make this possible.

"This successful effort is a testament to the collaboration of the Finlandia Alumni Board and the university working together for a common goal," said Steve Szuber, who served as co-president during the 2016-17 academic year. "Saving the roof is the first step in preserving this iconic building which requires further creative initiatives to continue with restoration project."

Work began at Old Main in early October. It's expected that work will be completed during the fall of 2017.



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## FINLANDIA UNIVERSITY NORTH WIND BOOKS



### APPAREL & GIFTS

#### U.P. Finlandia Tee

- 100% Cotton tee
- Sizes Available: S-XXL
- Color: Royal

Made by J. America Sportswear.....\$15.00

#### Finlandia Custom Pom Winter Hat

- 100% Acrylic
- Shape: 6 topseam knit
- One size
- Royal / White / Grey

Richardson Sports.....\$20.00

#### Northern Lights, Finnish dish cloth

This biodegradable kitchen cloth is made of ecological materials (cotton/cellulose) and creates no waste! It can be washed in 140 F degrees over and over. Size 6 3/4" x 4".

Made in Finland.....\$7.00

### BOOKS

#### Walking Paths & Protected Areas of the Keweenaw: 3rd Edition

A guide to sanctuaries and preserves in Houghton & Keweenaw Counties open to non-motorized recreation by the public.

Paperback.....\$14.95

#### Upper Peninsula of Michigan: A History by Russell M. Magnaghi

For the first time in over a century, a complete history of the U.P.-from prehistoric origins to the present-is available. The Upper Peninsula of Michigan: A History, is an extraordinary book celebrating this unique sense of place.

Paperback.....\$25.00

#### Sunburns to Snowstorms: Upper Michigan Weather in Pictures & Stories by Karl Bohnak & Jack Deo

Sunburns to Snowstorms contains nearly 300 photos along with stories of locations and events surrounding the images. It's an essential book for those who love the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Paperback.....\$28.30



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