

# *the Bridge*

2018 • Volume 71, Number 2

FINLANDIA  
UNIVERSITY



**DONOR** EDITION



## FROM THE PRESIDENT **PHILIP JOHNSON**

Greetings from campus! I am confident you will enjoy our fall issue of the Bridge. Among many other stories, its pages contain this year's advancement theme of Finlandia's student learning support, a programmatic center of excellence here at Finlandia.

We have also dedicated this issue's cover and special feature to former Finlandia University president, Dr. Robert Ubbelohde (1942-2018). Bob's imprint is everywhere on Finlandia's campus today. The Finlandia community is deeply grateful for his faithful, visionary leadership.

We also wish to introduce new leadership in this issue. In 2018, Finlandia elected five new Board of Trustee members:

**Stephen Nikander** resides in Santa Clarita, California. Steve, a chartered financial analyst (CFA), brings to Finlandia's board a wealth of experience and executive leadership in investment management. Steve's great grandfather, Rev. Juho Kustaa Nikander served as Finlandia's first president from 1896 to 1919. See this year's spring issue of the Bridge for more on Steve. Steve serves on the committee for administration and finance.

**John Niska** divides his time between Providence, Rhode Island and Ontonagon, Michigan. He describes how his Finnish grandparents "instilled in their children and grandchildren the value of education, the importance of hard work and pride in their heritage." John spent his entire professional career in K-12 and higher education. John serves on the committee for academics and assessment. There is a feature on him and the new position he's taken with the Finnish Council in America on page 14.

**Ross Rinkinen** ('04) resides in Chassell, Michigan. While a student at Finlandia, Ross majored in business administration and competed in men's ice hockey. Today Ross is a financial associate with Thrivent Financial. Prior to launching his own practice in Hancock, Ross served on Finlandia's advancement team. Ross' current specializations include retirement planning, life insurance, wealth management and end-of-life financial needs. Ross serves on the committee for advancement.

**Marilyn Clark** lives in Hancock, Michigan. Since 2011, Marilyn has served as the CEO of one of Michigan's 20 high tech business incubators (MTEC). Marilyn has also owned her own consulting enterprise, taught for three years as assistant professor in Finlandia's International School of Business and spent 22 years at Cummins. Marilyn serves on the committee for trustees and governance.

**Kathleen (Maki) Harmon** ('84) lives in South Lyon, Michigan. Her roots are Finnish and local (Liminga and Dollar Bay). She earned her nursing degree at Suomi College. Today Kathleen is a chief nursing executive with 32 years of experience in the healthcare industry. Kathleen serves on the committee for academics and assessment.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Philip Johnson  
President



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the Bridge • 2018  
Volume 71 No. 2

the Bridge is published periodically  
by Finlandia University.

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#### Cover Photo:

Robert Ubbelohde smiles while presenting to the community in 2007. Ubbelohde was president at the university for 16 years. He passed away on June 2, 2018. The legacy he left on campus includes the name change from Suomi College, advancing the university to a four-year institution, the acquisition of the Juttila Center and more. Read about his legacy on page 10.





## Copper Country **STRONG**

FINLANDIA JOINS COMMUNITY  
IN RESPONSE TO CRISIS

**E**arly on the morning of Sunday, June 17, 2018 the Copper Country was changed forever.

About seven inches of rain came down that night mostly between 2 and 5 a.m. For some, it was a night they'll never forget, as thunder boomed like a rock band hitting its mark right in people's bedrooms, water streamed into basements and first floors after rushing down our tree-covered hills, and the four walls of houses that are usually safe, secure and dependable began to literally cave in.

One family lost a son that night. Several families lost their homes. Countless more will never think of rain the same way.

The intensity of that night gave way to a mess 10 times worse than any snowstorm. Over the next few months, the Copper Country community came together in a way that showed true *sisu*, a belief in community and the kind of tenacity that you'd expect to see in a proud community like ours.

Neighbors helped neighbors move rocks and debris from yards, thousands of people grabbed shovels and face masks to empty ravaged basements, and supporters all over the world donated money, cleaning supplies, building supplies and food. Area residents looked on as the Portage Health Foundation and Keweenaw Community Foundation started funds to make sure no homeowner had to pay for the damage out of their pockets. Local and national politicians stood up and demanded our area receive the funding needed to rebuild, eventually getting President Donald Trump to sign an executive order for Houghton County to receive federal disaster relief funds. Recently, Michigan's Governor Rick Snyder guaranteed that the State would pick up 100 percent of the needed match.

Finlandia University was basically physically unscathed from the event. Small flooding and exterior damage was easy to fix. With that, the university looked to spread its wings to help others who weren't so fortunate.

The week of the flood, Finlandia University employees left their offices to volunteer in homes, community areas and help clean up roads. When student athletes returned to campus, they helped fix public trail systems that had suffered damage. Many employees volunteered throughout the summer to help where it was needed.

### FEMA WELCOMED TO CAMPUS

While all of that was helpful, one of the biggest ways Finlandia University has continued to help in the recovery efforts is by offering office space in the Jutila Center to more than a dozen people in town with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The group gathered at the Jutila Center in late August, and will likely be on campus through the end of November.

"When we found out that space was needed, we wasted no time in making sure they knew that we were available," Vice President of Advancement Karin Van Dyke said. "Our community is in need, and these people are here to help us."

While much progress has been made and most people have been able to fix their houses or move into a new house, the scars are still all too real. Every bolt of lightning and far-off thunder has people on edge as we together move on from what will always be remembered as one of the most difficult days in Copper Country history.



### SMALL CLASS SIZES PROVIDE VALUABLE OPPORTUNITIES

When it comes to student-to-faculty ratio, the smaller the better. Fewer students per class means more individualized attention, feedback from professors, better networking opportunities, and it allows students to connect with classmates and build friendships that will last a lifetime. For Finlandia University students, the average classroom size was eight students during the 2017-18 academic year.

"Our faculty know students on a first name basis, cheer on the Lions at home games and connect struggling students with academic support staff by walking them to an office after class," said Dean of Students & Enrollment Erin Barnett.

### TENURE STATUS AWARDED TO DR. GEE AND DR. KNOBLAUCH

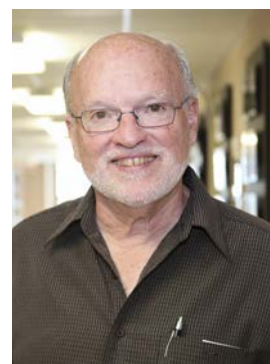
Finlandia University is proud to announce that Dr. William Knoblauch and Dr. Richard Gee have been granted tenure status.

Dr. Gee is an Associate Professor in Finlandia's Criminal Justice program. He came to Finlandia in 2012, and has taught more than 30 courses in his time at the university. He also leads a group of students to Europe each year to explore the differences in criminal justice from country to country. During his travels he has taken students to Finland, Russia, Great Britain and more.

Dr. Knoblauch also came to Finlandia in 2012, and is an Associate Professor in FinnU's History program. He teaches 17 courses, including History of Rock & Roll, Energy and World Power, and Rise of American Capitalism. He received the Board of Trustee's Distinguished Faculty Award at the 2018 Commencement Ceremony.

### FATHER CORBIN EDDY IS NOW VISITING CAMPUS PASTOR

Finlandia University has named Father Corbin Eddy Visiting Campus Pastor for the 2018-19 academic year.



"Over the past few years while working with Corbin, a Copper Country native, I have come to respect and admire his intellect, perspective and genuine, caring openness to spiritual traditions other than his own," President Philip Johnson told employees of the university in a memo. "I have also come to appreciate, while he serves as a member of Finlandia's part-time faculty, his deep interest in our students and their success."

This fall Rev. Soren Schmidt accepted a call to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in nearby Chassell.



### VIRTANEN ELECTED TO FINLANDIA FOUNDATION NATIONAL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At their March board meeting in Dallas, Finlandia Foundation National trustees elected Dr. HilaryJoy Virtanen to a three-year term on the board. Virtanen, a native of nearby Toivola, is the Finnish & Nordic Studies professor at Finlandia University. She holds a Master's and Ph.D. in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, an MA from Indiana University, and a BA from Michigan State University.

Dr. Virtanen will serve as the chair of the Lecturer of the Year committee and as a member of the History and Future committees. She is the assistant editor of the Journal of Finnish Studies, a member of the Finnish Theme Committee, Hancock's FFN chapter, and the board of directors of FinnFest USA 2013. The Finlandia Foundation National is the most important source of support for Finnish culture in the United States and boasts 58 chapters nationwide.





### BEST VALUE SCHOOL ONCE AGAIN

Finlandia University has been named a 2018 Best Value School by University Research & Review. This marks the second consecutive year Finlandia has made the list.

Director of Student Financial Services Sandra Turnquist said the fact that 100 percent of traditional full-time students receive some form of financial aid is a big factor in the decision. "We gave out \$4.15 million in scholarships and grants in 2017," said Turnquist. Turnquist credits the different price structures and unique scholarships FinnU offers to transfer, part-time and full-time students, including the \$15,000 Promise for the RN-BSN online program as another reason for the award.



### NURSING PROGRAM AWARDED TOWSLEY GRANT FOR MANNEQUIN

Finlandia University's nursing program just grew by one. Not one person. One mannequin. Thanks to a grant by the Harry A. and Margaret D. Towsley Foundation, FinnU's nursing program was able to purchase a new state-of-the-art HAL S3000 simulation mannequin for students to practice on.

The HAL mannequin is the newest on the market, and has the ability to be programmed by instructors to create different scenarios for students to work through.



### FILM CREW VISITS AS PART OF NATIONAL HAZING PREVENTION WEEK

Finlandia University's campus will be featured by a film crew as part of National Hazing Prevention Week. The crew was with documentary filmmaker Byron Hurt (pictured above), and footage captured at FinnU will be used in his latest documentary project, HAZING. HAZING is a 60-minute documentary film that will explore why the controversial practice of hazing continues to be widely seen as a meaningful and legitimate rite of passage, despite mounting lawsuits, fraternity/sorority chapter suspensions, increased media coverage, serious injuries, arrests and tragic deaths.

### INTRODUCING THE SISU BULLETIN, FINLANDIA'S EVENT AND NEWS E-NEWSLETTER

Finlandia University is pleased to unveil its community-focused e-newsletter, The Sisu Bulletin. The twice-monthly e-mail newsletter will feature upcoming events and important news stories from FinnU. To subscribe visit [finlandia.edu/bulletin](http://finlandia.edu/bulletin).

"There are so many exciting things happening here at Finlandia University, and we hope The Sisu Bulletin will help people keep up to date on all of them," Director of Marketing and Communications Michael H. Babcock said.

### CAT FULLER TO SPEARHEAD GLOBAL INITIATIVES

Finlandia welcomed Cathleen (Cat) Fuller to the newly established role of Director of Global Initiatives this fall. The new role is an expansion upon Finlandia's growing international presence. Fuller brings to Finlandia a vast background in international higher education.

"Cat embodies the expertise and leadership needed to successfully foster Finlandia's emerging international strategic plan," said Erin Barnett, Dean of Students & Enrollment. "Her global connections and relationships with colleagues in international higher education are invaluable. With travel planned to the Netherlands, China and Finland, her passport will be well worn."

## SECURITY MEASURES ADDED FOR RESIDENCE HALL

Finlandia Hall got a much needed update with the installation of a card reading system on the doors. Students will no longer be issued keys to the building; instead they will tap a newly issued card to grant them access to the residence hall.

The cards contain an RFID chip that will allow students to access the hall during closed hours. Only students who live in the dorms will have access to the hall during these hours to ensure that any additional persons in the building are accounted for. Additionally, the added system will give campus security the ability to lock down the building from anywhere at any time and, if students lose their ID card, it can be shut down as soon as security is notified.



## FINLANDIA NAMED TOP 10 FOR CAREER IN SPORTS AND ATHLETICS

The Knowledge Review, an international education magazine for universities, students, teachers and parents, named Finlandia

University one of the Top 10 Best Institutes for a Career in Sports and Athletics 2018. Non-athlete careers in athletics can range anywhere from sports marketing and sales to physical therapists and trainers.

The Knowledge Review cites Finlandia's major offerings as one of the main reasons for the ranking. While FinnU does offer a sports management program, its marketing and graphic design, physical therapist assistant and biology programs can also open doors into the sports world. FinnU's 13 NCAA Division III athletic programs also give students a unique opportunity to get involved.

Experiences in hosting events, marketing, game management, customer service, NCAA eligibility and coaching allow students to have the opportunity for hands-on learning in whatever they might be interested in.



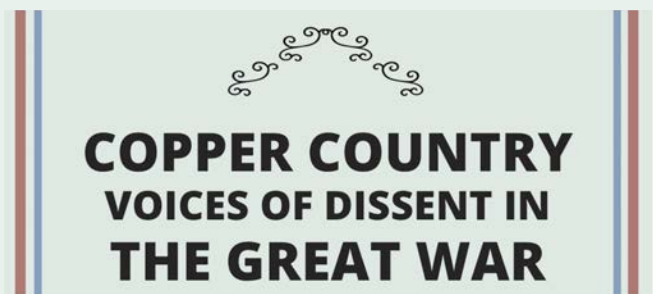
## TRANSFER FOCUS CONTINUES WITH PRIORITY REGISTRATION AND \$10,000 SCHOLARSHIP

As part of its commitment to be a transfer-friendly leader, Finlandia University made two sizable changes during the spring semester – first the school introduced the \$10,000 Finnish Strong Scholarship for Transfer Students. Secondly, FinnU enacted a new policy that allows students transferring into the university to have priority registration. Learn more about Finlandia University's commitment to being a transfer-friendly leader by visiting [finlandia.edu/transfer](http://finlandia.edu/transfer).

## FINNU PROFESSORS COLLABORATE ON WWI EXHIBIT

The interpretive exhibit Copper Country Voices of Dissent in the Great War opened at the Finnish American Heritage Center in September with a talk by Dr. Hilary-Joy Virtanen. The exhibit examines the ways in which Copper Country residents expressed dissent to the United States' entrance into World War I and the ways in which these activities reflected America's reaction to the war nationally.

The exhibit was researched and designed by students in Finlandia University's Finnish & Nordic Studies program and International School of Art & Design under the direction of Dr. Virtanen and Dr. Tom Adolphs. The exhibition will remain on display until December 1. This event is part of the World War I & the Copper Country public humanities program and is sponsored by the Finlandia Foundation National and the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs/Copper Country Community Arts Center.







## RN-BSN PROGRAM AT FINNU NOW OFFERS EIGHT-WEEK CLASSES

Finlandia University is now offering eight-week classes and twice as many start dates each year for its online RN-BSN program.

"Working nurses need programs that are specially designed to suit their needs, and we're working hard to make sure that's exactly what our program does," said Program Director Lori Sullivan, DNP, MSN, RN.

## FINNISH-AMERICAN DOCUMENTARY WINS PRESTIGIOUS ECLIPSE AWARD

An Eclipse took place in early May in Grand Rapids, and in this instance no special glasses were needed for viewing – just a DVD player and an interest in the history of Finnish-American co-operatives.

"Co-operatively Yours," the 2017 film by Kristin Ojaniemi and the Finnish American Heritage Center, took home the "Best Documentary" honor at the 2018 Eclipse Awards, an annual event created to honor Michigan's creators in film and television. The Eclipse Awards are chosen by past winners in the entry's particular category, as well as independent judges from Michigan, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

## FINNISH ROCKERS STEVE 'N' SEAGULLS PERFORM IN KEWEENAW

The Copper Country may never be the same after Finnish rock legends-in-the-making Steve 'n' Seagulls visited the Rosza Center for the Performing Arts on Wednesday, September 5. Tickets sales were incredible, and a packed crowd welcomed the band, which is known for high-energy bluegrass versions of well-known rock and metal songs from a decidedly Finnish perspective.

"The group has racked up millions of views with their unique antics on YouTube," said Kevin Manninen, Dean, International School of Business, one of the driving forces to bringing the band to the area. The event was hosted in conjunction with the Finnish American Chamber of Commerce Upper Michigan, Finlandia University and Copper Island Engraving.

## TOTAL ENROLLMENT UP NEARLY 14 PERCENT FOR 2018-19

It was a successful year both in terms of recruiting new students and retaining those already at the university as the institution is up 13.9 percent in total enrollment. Diving deeper, the numbers continue to look better as retention is up 20 percent, Finlandia Hall is up about 25 percent in headcount and enrollment by Upper Peninsula students is also up.

Below you'll find additional details on what the 2018-19 student body at Finlandia University looks like.

- 50.6% of the student body identifies as female
- 34% of our student body is on campus
- 8.3% of the student body identifies as Lutheran
- 13.8% of the student body identifies as a minority
- 26.4% of the student body is from out of state
- 75.8% of degree-seeking students are enrolled in a bachelor-degree program

## FINNISH BAND SPICED UP JUHANNUS

Finland's "spice girls" brought added flavor to the Copper Country this summer. The Finnish folk band Jepokryddona ("Spice of Jeppo") headlined the area's 2018 Juhannus celebration, performing the upbeat, lively tunes that represented the heritage of their part of Finland, and offered workshops in their region's music tradition.

Jepokryddona is a folk group made up of Swedish-speaking Finns who, for the most part, play traditional wedding music from Jeppo. Led by Christine Julin-Häggman — a Sibelius Academy graduate and native of Jeppo — the band (which was founded in 1994) consists mostly of students of the region's music school, where Häggman teaches.





## NEW FACULTY

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



### INTRODUCING DR. MICHAEL REAY, PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

Finlandia University is pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Reay as the new Assistant Professor of Sociology. Reay comes to Finlandia with over 20 years of higher educational teaching experience.

He earned his BA in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge and his Master's and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago. He began his teaching career at the University of Chicago and has taught at a number of other universities including Reed College, Colorado College, Swarthmore College and, most recently, the University of Pennsylvania.

### MEET ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY, DR. ASHOK KHANAL

Finlandia University is pleased to welcome new Assistant Professor of Chemistry Dr. Ashok Khanal. Khanal brings a wealth of experience in teaching and chemistry to the position. Originally from Nepal, Khanal earned his Bachelor's of Science and Master's of Science in Organic Chemistry from Tribhuvan University. Although he is an accomplished chemist with a provisional U.S. patent on the solid phase stepwise synthesis of polyethylene glycols and numerous articles in scientific journals, his true passion lies in teaching. Khanal said he employs a 'learn-with-fun' strategy in the classroom so that students are attentive and don't get bored.



### LAURA SIEDERS PROMOTED TO INSTRUCTOR OF ACCOUNTING

Laura Sieders started this fall as a full-time faculty member at Finlandia University in the role of Instructor of Accounting after serving as an adjunct last year. Sieders, a Calumet native, moved to Washington D.C. shortly after graduating from Michigan Tech

with her bachelor's in business administration and a

focus in accounting. She worked her way up the ranks at various nonprofits including being the accountant for the Partnership for Public Service, director of accounting at the National Recreation and Parks Association, director of finance at the Reserve Officers Association of the United States and the controller at the International Association of Fire Chiefs. She enjoyed working for nonprofits because "she wasn't working for a bottom line, but for a reason."

### INTRODUCING PAUL WERNER, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF MARKETING

Finlandia University is happy to welcome Paul Werner as its new Assistant Professor of Marketing in the International School of Business. "Finlandia is the premier college in the Upper Peninsula, so I am very glad to have the opportunity to work here," said Werner. Werner's past experience includes Senior Marketing Manager at Ho-Chunk Casino Resort and Convention Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin, Marketing Director at Seven Clans Casino Hotel and Waterpark in Thief River Falls, Minnesota, and General Manager at Superior Marketing. He has also taught at the collegiate level since 2005. Werner obtained his Bachelor's of Science in Marketing from Northern Michigan University and a Master's in Business Administration from the University of Minnesota.



### ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY DR. PATRICIA GROSSE MOVES FROM PHILADELPHIA

Finlandia University welcomed new philosophy professor Dr. Patricia Grosse to its family this fall. Grosse, who moved to Hancock from Philadelphia, is teaching Intro to Philosophy, Ethics, and Philosophy of Sex and Love this semester. "I was excited when I saw the position at Finlandia because it's a small school in a small town, and it seems like the university is incredibly dedicated to educating their students," said Grosse. Grosse grew up in Tybee Island, Georgia and earned her associates degree from Oxford College of Emory University, her B.A. in Philosophy and Religion at Emory University, and her Master's and Ph.D. in Philosophy from Villanova University. She previously worked at Drexel University before coming to Finlandia.





**T**RIO Student Support Services (SSS) has three goals: help students persist from one grade level to the next, remain in satisfactory academic progress and graduate with a bachelor's degree.

TRIO SSS, a federal Department of Education grant program, created out of the Civil Rights Act of 1965, considers family income level, education level of the parents, and the possession of a physical or learning disability to determine eligibility to become a TRIO SSS student. The project is funded for five-year cycles and has been at Finlandia since the 1980s as a result of the success it's seen.

"We are funded to serve 180 students and we always hit that number," said Director of TRIO SSS Cindy Cowell. "Always."

The numbers for the program are impressive. Nationally, 33 percent of first generation learners leave college after their first or second year. For Finlandia TRIO SSS students, that number is 20 percent. Just about 80 percent of Finlandia's TRIO SSS students persist from one grade level to the next. As far as academic standing, 79 percent of TRIO SSS students remained in good academic standing in the 2017-18 school year.

While TRIO does provide tutoring, Cowell says their holistic approach to the student is what ultimately helps them to succeed. Cowell and her team try to meet with students a minimum of three times per semester. They meet with every student at the beginning of the semester and fill out an academic career plan. They also fill out a detailed form to address potential challenges, likes and dislikes when it comes to academics, and any resources used in the past that helped them.

The second time they meet with students is at midterms to discuss how they're progressing.

"At midterm time, I'll say, 'You can still hit your goals, it took you seven weeks to earn this grade. You still

have equally as much time to improve or maintain it,'" said Cowell.

Cowell and the TRIO academic coaches also try to meet with students before finals to see if they need any additional support going into finals week, are registered for their next semester and if they still feel confident about their major.

"We're really good at the behind-the-scenes support," said Cowell. "If someone is struggling, they may not know or realize there are resources on campus that can help them."

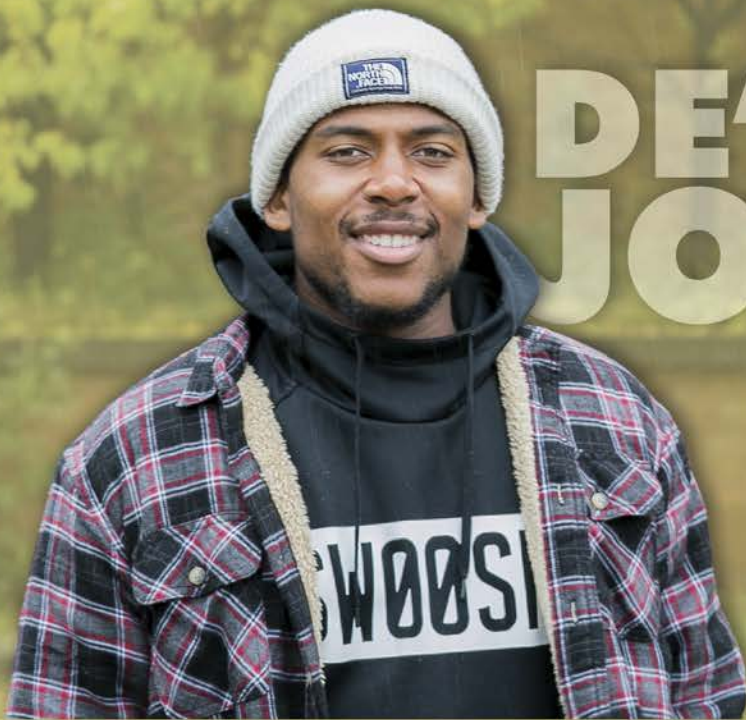
Cowell is hopeful for the future of TRIO SSS and the success they've seen. This year, the National Center for Education Statistics released an important statistic about first generation college learners.

"When first gens earn their bachelor's degree and go out into the world of employment, there's no difference in earnings between the continuing generation bachelor learners and the first gens," Cowell said. "Once they get that degree and are employed, the playing field has been leveled out."

The goals and work of the program lay in walking with students until they cross that graduation stage. Cowell's best analogy for what TRIO SSS does revolves around a chair.

"The chair you sit on has to have four legs all the same length to stand solidly on the floor," she said. "The students we serve, everything about the chair is the same, but one leg is a little short. It could be in academic preparation, social or emotional skills, cultural experiences, or knowledge of majors and resulting career opportunities. Over the four or five years that the students are enrolled at Finlandia, we work with them, assist with skill building or offering experiences and this builds on the chair one skill at a time. Students stand solidly on the ground by the time they graduate."





# DE'LLONTAE JOHNSON

## FINDING SUPPORT, EXPERIENCES AND FAMILY

**D**e'Llontae Johnson is working to discover his purpose in life. He is using his time in college to learn more about himself, better his community and experience as much as he can.

Johnson, a sophomore nursing student, member of Student Senate and quarterback of the football team, came to Finlandia after joining fellow student Tyler Browner, who Johnson describes as a brother, on a campus tour of FinnU.

"While Tyler was talking to the basketball coaches, I went and talked to the football coaches," said Johnson. "I showed them my tapes and told them to call me if they wanted me to play for Finlandia."

He eventually decided to explore Finlandia's health sciences majors.

"I feel like I have to have a job that has meaning, and I love helping people and caring for them," said Johnson. "I heard how Finlandia has a great health sciences program and how everyone who goes through it is successful."

After Johnson made his college decision, a TRIO packet appeared at his doorstep.

"I didn't know what it was and I was going to throw it away," said Johnson. "But I read through it and it sounded like the program might help me through college, so I signed up."

Johnson quickly found it was one of the best decisions he's ever made.

"TRIO has been the main reason I'm still here," said Johnson. "They've done a lot for me financially, academically and personally. It's the best thing at Finlandia that is helping me stay here and become a better student and person."

Johnson has taken advantage of a number of programs and trips TRIO has been on including going to Grand Valley State to explore graduate school options, a leadership conference at Battle Creek and, most recently, the Men of Excellence conference at Northern Iowa University.

"The Men of Excellence conference had a big impact on me because they showed you that no matter where you came from and who you were before, you can have a positive impact on your life and the lives of those around you," said Johnson.

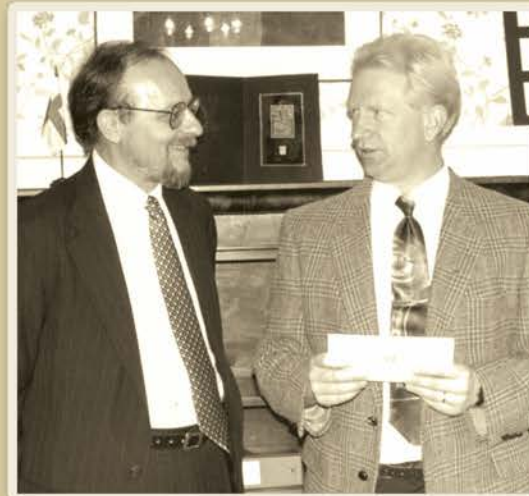
TRIO supplied the airfare, transportation and spending money for Johnson while he attended the Men of Excellence of Conference. All Johnson had to do was "send in my information."

Johnson looks forward to attending graduate school in the future, although he says he has to pass his undergraduate classes first. As a TRIO student, Johnson is required to log two hours of group study and two hours of monitored study every week. If he doesn't, he isn't allowed to play football. In an effort to stay on top of his classes and avoid not playing football, Johnson is recording 12 plus hours per week of dedicated study time.

When he's not studying or playing football, Johnson is playing the popular video game, Fortnite and practicing his curling, which he was introduced to through TRIO.

"I had never been curling before and saw it on the Olympics, and TRIO took us last year and I enjoyed it so much, I went back three more times," said Johnson.

With an abundance of opportunities and support afforded to him, Johnson should have an exciting final two years at Finlandia.



# Bob Ubbelohde

## LEFT A LASTING MARK

**T**his summer the Finlandia University community was devastated to learn former president Bob Ubbelohde had passed away at the age of 75.

The former president is still fondly remembered on campus, especially by employees walking behind the Hoover Center to the area where he was often found and available for the kind of casual conversation you just can't have in a board room. While those memories are warm, Ubbelohde will always be remembered for two

incredible accomplishments - advancing Suomi College from a two-year to a four-year institution and changing the name to Finlandia University.

"He felt, quite rightly, that it was the way to save the school," said Donald Bays, who worked closely with Ubbelohde as the university's lawyer before joining the board of trustees. "He led. He was intent and committed. To say that there was pressure was a gross understatement. He was under a ton of pressure."

While Bays' statement might seem overstated, the decision to move from a two-year to a four-year school was widely seen as a key strategic decision for the university that was far from optional if the university was going to move away from depending on endowments and donors for survival. It also wasn't a new idea.



"At the 50-year anniversary of the school, the president at the time (Viljo K. Nikander) said in his writings that the school would have to become a four-year institution," said Susan Ubbelohde, the late President's wife. "If the school was going to survive long term, it had to offer baccalaureate programs so people could start and finish."

The undertaking was big, which is why presidents between that writing and Ubbelohde didn't make the move. Ubbelohde was the person for the job.

"I found him to be a brilliant leader and a positive motivator," said Norma Nominelli, a board of trustees member at the time.

His motivation was the key.

"He worked to improve programs that were already strong like art & design and business, and it was vital to get nursing to a four-year program," Susan said. "The people in those departments put in incredible amounts of work to make it happen because they thought it was important too. It was a lot of work."

"He honestly felt for the school to survive it had to happen. In terms of a serious focus that he felt was absolutely necessary, that was it."

When the school hosted its centennial celebration in 1996, Nikander's writing was made true. Suomi College was granted accreditation as a baccalaureate degree-granting institution in February of that year.

While this change was seen as vital for the institution's survival, Ubbelohde's vision for the name modification came from a different perspective.

"Most people we were trying to reach didn't know what 'Suomi' was or meant," said Mike Lahti, current longtime board member. "He thought Finlandia would resonate better. It was unanimous to do that, and the timing was good for us to change to university because we were moving to a four-year institution."

The move was a peculiar one for many whose support of the university stemmed mostly from its unique Finnish history.

"It was a rather bold step on his part," Pauline Kiltinen said. Kiltinen and her husband John were longtime leaders of the Finnish Council in America, which was created to ensure that the university's Finnish heritage is always celebrated. "All in all I think it was a good step, but very difficult."

Some had confused Suomi for a Native American name. Many had trouble pronouncing it. Research showed that

many people not close to the university didn't realize it had any ties to Finland. Outwardly showing that heritage was important to Ubbelohde.

"Once they got here the meaning of Suomi College could all be explained, but if you were at a college fair or somewhere else you had no way to know," Susan said. "It was important that the name had a strong connection with Finland for people who didn't know a lot about Finland or Finnish language."

That was just a hint of the dedication to the Finnish heritage that Ubbelohde had. In 2000 he helped bring the Finnish American Reporter to Finlandia. From 2003 to 2007 he served as the Honorary Consul for the Republic of Finland in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. In 2003, he was instrumental in bringing the sitting President of Finland, Tarja Halonen, to campus as the commencement speaker.

"He really loved Finland," Nominelli said. "He was German, but he became a true Scandinavian during his time here."

He was able to visit Finland more than 50 times during his 16 years as president, welcomed many Finnish visitors to Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula and, maybe more importantly, he lived the culture on campus.

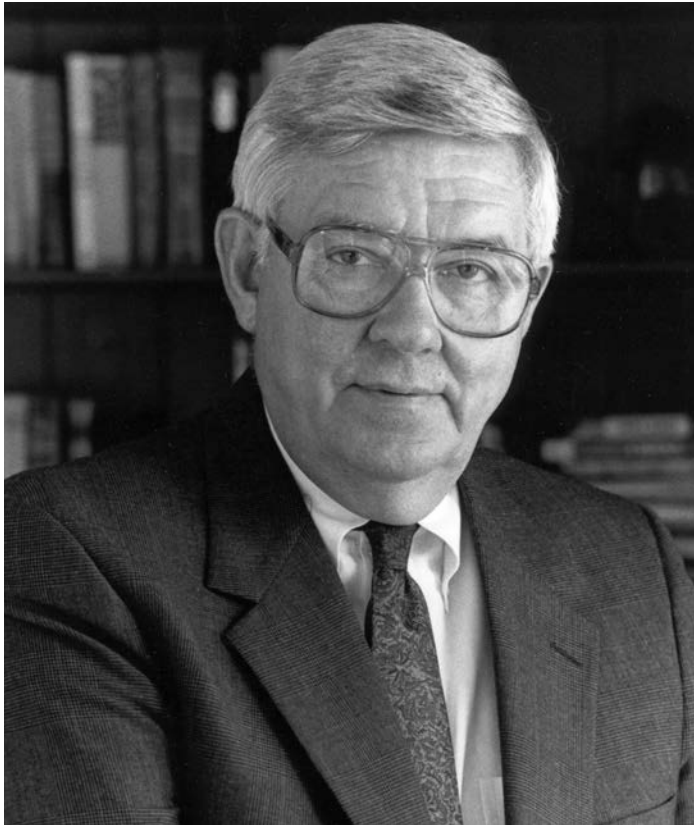
"I knew nothing about Finland (before starting at Finlandia), but I was impressed seeing the history of that country and what an amazing country it is with design, high tech and education," Susan said. "One of Robert's things was trying to make the students particularly aware of that. For young people it was exciting. When I think back on it I had a lot of amazing experiences in my life that I never would have expected. Things like the Sibelius Music Festival, and having direct contacts with people at Sibelius Academy."

Under his presidency he also brought back intercollegiate athletics and was a key person in the university's acquisition of the Juttila Center, which was formerly a hospital. The list of accomplishments is long and there's no doubt Ubbelohde left an unforgettable mark on Finlandia University. However, that wasn't all that kept him motivated.

What he cared about most was teaching.

"His greatest joy in his professional life was teaching," Susan said. "That's what he liked the most. While he was president, he always made sure he taught one class a year. Nothing could cancel that class. He felt that, at Finlandia, teaching students and the commitment to students was the strongest thing about the school."





## THE VALUE OF EDUCATION

Lois and Dick Lindgren have been part of Finlandia's family of supporters for decades. Their legacy is one of leadership and generosity. Dick, a trustee from 1990 to 2007, and trustee emeritus from 2007 onward, died this past January 12, at the age of 90. During this time, Lois and Dick provided extraordinarily generous financial assistance to Finlandia.

While visiting with Lois recently, Lois talked about the affinities that she and Dick shared over their 67-year marriage. When asked about their longtime support for Finlandia, she remarked, "It was important to both of us that we give where we believe there is need and purpose."

### Matching Programs

Every year Finlandia receives matching gifts which make a big difference for Finlandia – this past year the total was over \$22,000. These matching funds, available through a donor's employer, former employer, or other association, allows alumni and friends to exercise faithful stewardship while multiplying their gift. If you aren't sure if your company offers a matching gift program, please give a call to your Human Resources Department. In doing so, you are helping us realize an extra \$20,000 in matching gifts each year.

Lois and Dick, together, shared strong affinity for their local congregation, education and small town America, especially communities such as those in the upper Great Lakes region. Both are Minnesota natives. Dick was born in Two Harbors, on Lake Superior's north shore. Lois was born in Minneapolis. They met at the University of Minnesota.

Dick realized early on that in order to advance he would need further education. He enrolled in Harvard's MBA program. "Dick was driven," Lois said, "not to make money, but to achieve." He always wanted to be a company's chief executive, and that he did, three companies in fact.

After holding executive leadership positions at Ford Motor Company, Mead Corporation and Allis Chalmers, he became president and CEO at Koehring Company, Cross and Trecker Corporation, and Lorr Corporation. In addition, at various times, he served on numerous business boards and non-profit organizations.

During six decades of business experience, Dick developed a set of building blocks for success. His list of nine was more to him than mere practical advice for aspiring business professionals. It was his life philosophy:

- Always be learning; build your skills
- Manage money wisely; keep a clean credit history
- Travel an ethical path; good ethics is good business
- Build a strong team; business success now requires team effort
- Know your God; He is your strength beyond your own capabilities
- Give of your time and talents
- Avoid harmful addictive habits
- Cultivate a wide circle of friends
- Choose your mate carefully

For Dick, business success comes as a result of living curiously, ethically and generously.

In Dick's honor and in his memory, Lois has pledged \$1 million to support the Finlandia Fund. The pledge will be completed in January 2019. In recognition, a legacy naming will formally be announced in 2019 for the International School of Business.

"Dick was social, kind, giving and held true to Christian values," Lois said. "Our parents were frugal. We were frugal. We worked hard and supported one another."

Finlandia is grateful to have been the recipient of Dick's service, and for his generosity. Thank you Dick. Thank you Lois.



## HIRVONEN'S PLEDGE TO SUPPORT HEALTH SCIENCES

Those who know or worked with Ray Hirvonen while a Finlandia trustee know that Ray was not, well let's just say, wordy. Quotable quips were more his style. His wisdom (some of his friends might say, opinions) tended to come in short bursts. Norma Nominelli, a fellow trustee emeritus recalls, while smiling, "At board meetings I remember his one-liners. Wise? Sometimes."

Ray is a retired business owner from Marquette. He has been trustee emeritus since 2009 following 15 years of service on Finlandia's Board of Trustees and Finnish Council in America. His roots are Finnish. Ray's mother and father; (Hilda and Matti) came to the United States from Finland in the late 1800s.

Matti, in 1914, enrolled in business courses when Finlandia was Suomi College. Ray married Peg (Margaret) Johnson in 1951 and had three children. Around that same time Ray took over his father's business which he had run since 1917: Marquette Bottling Works, Inc. After successfully growing the business Ray sold it in 1989 and retired.

Ray and Peg lived generously. Since 1993 Finlandia has received over \$500,000 from the Ray and Peg Hirvonen Charitable Foundation. Peg died in 2002. Some years later Ray married Rachel Hetico, whom he met on Finlandia's Board. Rachel and Ray also continued to support Finlandia in their life together. On November

30, 2017, Rachel, who died just two weeks later, was presented with her trustee emeritus plaque (photo).

Earlier this fall, a small band of friends from the Copper Country went to visit Ray at his home in Negaunee. Coffee and nisu, of course, were served. True to form, Ray was not the chattiest one in the bunch. Ray's son, Mark Hirvonen also joined. Serendipitously, Mark's son Corey, happened to stop by to visit his grandfather as well. Corey is a Finlandia graduate. He earned his business degree in 2009. Three of the four generations of Hirvonens that built and continue to sustain the family's legacy at Finlandia were enjoying nisu that morning.

In spring of this year, Ray pledged \$1 million to the Finlandia Fund, accompanied by an initial distribution of \$400,000. At a time yet to be announced, Finlandia's College of Health Sciences building will be named in recognition of the Hirvonen family's legacy of leadership and generosity, and to honor Peg and Rachel for their healthcare careers.

When asked why this particular gift was important to him, Ray simply said "I just wanted to do more, and do it now." Few words. Straight to the point. Again, true to form.

Finlandia is deeply grateful to Ray and the entire family for a relationship that stretches over four generations, and counting. Thank you, Ray.



## Second Finlandia building on National Register of Historic Places

In July, the City of Hancock and Finlandia University received good news when the National Park Service added the future College of Health Sciences building to the National Register of Historic Places.

This designation comes after a nomination from the Hancock City Council in April. The council is hoping the designation will promote heritage tourism, economic development and encourage grants. The listing does not create a legal restriction, but does open up federally assisted projects and federal tax benefits. Built as Hancock's High School in 1923, the building was designed by architect George Lionell Lockhart.

The building joins Old Main as Finlandia University-owned properties on the list. It became Finlandia property in 2009 as part of an innovative partnership between the university and Hancock Public Schools.

# NISKA NAMED NEW LEADER

## OF FINNISH COUNCIL IN AMERICA

**T**he Finnish Council in America elected John Niska as its new president this past May. Niska was raised on a beef and horse farm in Green, MI, just west of Ontonagon. His parents were bilingual and often spoke Finnish in his home, shared in Finnish customs and were extremely proud of their Finnish heritage. Niska went to Michigan State University for his undergraduate degree and worked in the education realm until his retirement from Rhode Island College as a professor and director in July 2017. Learn more about the council at [finlandia.edu/finnishcouncil](http://finlandia.edu/finnishcouncil).

**Q: When and why did you become involved with the Finnish Council?**

**Niska:** My good friend, the late Carl Kinnunen, nominated me to become a member of the council in 2009. Carl told me he felt my strong interest in the Finnish culture and community, together with my work experience in university education, could benefit the council's work. I soon realized my appointment to the council would be an opportunity to help a Finnish American institution. A focus on the importance of education and pride in our Finnish heritage have always been strong values of my family.

**Q: What do you enjoy most about it?**

**Niska:** I enjoy both working with the council members who are a smart, talented, dedicated and convivial group and supporting the college and the Heritage Center. Serving as the leader of a group which is preserving, maintaining and promoting our Finnish culture and heritage is also important to me. I also keep abreast of news from Finland and hope to share significant items with our members. The Finlandia staff is also very supportive, of which I am appreciative.

**Q: What do you hope to accomplish as president?**

**Niska:** I have three main goals for the next year: to continue to build on my predecessors' foundation and expand the influence of the council; to increase both internal and external communication; and to strengthen the work of our four committees (Academic, Outreach, Historic and Heritage Center).

**Q: Why do you think the Finnish Council is important?**

**Niska:** We are living in a very challenging, changing time. Finlandia, in its second century as an institution, is unique being the only private college in the U.S. founded by Finns and its curriculum and program can help to keep Finnish culture and interest alive. The Heritage Center, with its artifacts, activities and home for the Finnish American Reporter, serves an important role in its outreach to the Finnish American Community. As a council, we need to support both.

**Q: What can people do to support it?**

**Niska:** A number of things: take part in activities at Finlandia and the Heritage Center, donate to the artifacts at the Center, encourage college-age relatives and friends to examine what courses of study Finlandia has to offer, contribute to scholarships at Finlandia, subscribe to the Finnish American Reporter, or gift a subscription to a family member or friend and finally, consider to become a member of the council.





## 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 between **July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018**, and in years past. 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.

## ANONYMOUS GIFTS

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



**THRIVENT  
FINANCIAL®**

## THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS ARE IMPORTANT

While monies received during the 2017-2018 year were under the annual Thrivent Choice goal of \$20,000, Finlandia was able to tip the scale over the \$100,000 mark in Thrivent Choice Dollars received to date over the years. This past year, 11 individuals directed over \$11,400 to FinnU to provide assistance and support to our students and programs. Every little bit helps, and in selecting to use your Choice Dollars, you are making a real difference. Finlandia supporters who are Thrivent Financial members are encouraged to contact their agent with any questions. You may also call Ross Rinkinen or Travis Hanson at (906) 231- 4630.

## 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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LOIS SEATON  
JOHN & ROMA SILLER  
LAILA THOMPSON  
ALPO TOKOLA  
ROBERT UBBELOHDE  
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)**
**(\$1,000-\$2,499)**

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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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**QUINCY CLUB**
**(\$250-\$499)**

Quincy Mining Company helped develop the region that Finlandia University serves. The company employed thousands of Finnish immigrants, including many who helped establish and support Suomi College. Finlandia University's campus on Quincy Street in Hancock sits on a hillside once mined by the Quincy Mining Company.

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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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Energized by the Finland 100 celebrations of 2017, the establishment of the Finnish American Folk School, and increased media attention from the "Mother Country," the Finnish American Heritage Center (FAHC) has seen a notable increase in visitors both international and domestic, and has stepped up its efforts to provide tangible expressions of the preservation and promotion of Finnish-American history and culture.

Along with providing a full scope of services to researchers and tourists, as the Center has since its opening nearly three decades ago, the FAHC staff during 2018 has delved fully into media productions. The first of these endeavors was an award-winning, feature-length documentary about Finnish-American cooperatives produced last year; the second run of DVDs of "Co-operatively Yours" are now at the Center and available for sale. And just in time for the Christmas shopping season, the Center will have available a historic photo book about the Finns of the Upper Peninsula, as well as a photography-based cookbook that is a homage to Finnish American life and foodways in the Copper Country.

A byproduct of this increased attention is that the past year has been a banner year in terms of visitors and donations. Our one-of-a-kind collections aided researchers from across the country and across the world including novelists,

filmmakers, script writers, academics, students and genealogists. And our commitment to creating a new generation of tradition bearers has been enhanced through the ongoing Finnish-American Folk School programming.

In the past 12 months, the Archive has received nearly 140 donations from across North America and Finland. Not all donations are material in nature; among the folks you'll find listed in this section are not only those who've brought us unique items to help tell the story of Finnish-American life, but also those who've shared their talents, whether it's to install a new sink in the Center's prep kitchen, to provide repair and maintenance of our outdoor exhibit pieces such as our Midsummer pole, or to introduce a new line of public cultural programming – and the folks who come along with it – to the Center.

Our donations this past year have been unique and varied. Some examples of the treasures that have been generously gifted to our care include: a spinning wheel from Florida, a vara (log scribe) from Idaho, historic photos from Michigan, glass and textiles from Wisconsin, carvings and weavings from Ohio, paintings from New York and an immigrant's trunk from Illinois.

The FAHC staff greatly appreciates this group of donors who've helped us carry on our mission of preserving and promoting Finnish-American life and history. We hope you'll be inspired to add your name to this list in the year ahead.

Claudia Adkins, Tampa, FL  
Roy Aho, Trenary, MI  
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Tom Alanen, Mass City, MI  
Steve Albee, Hancock, MI  
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Frank Eld, Boise, ID  
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Lillian Hoika, Ukiah, CO  
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Garleen Uusitalo, Moran, MI  
Dana Varney, L'Anse, MI  
Juha Vidgren, Vieremä, FI  
Timo Villanen, Helsinki, FI  
Manu & Liisa Virtamo, New York, NY  
Dean & Joyce Wennberg, St. Paul, MN  
Thomas Wickstrom, Ishpeming, MI  
Duane Wiita, Minneapolis, MN  
Dawn Wilder, Marquette, MI  
Marjorie Wright, Shelburne, VT  
Donald Wuori, Columbia, SC

## GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Astabula Finnish Heritage Museum, Astabula, OH  
Beaumier UP Heritage Center, Marquette, MI  
Central Upper Peninsula & Northern Michigan Univ. Archive, Marquette, MI  
Chassell Historical Organization, Chassell, MI  
Delta County Historical Society, Escanaba, MI  
Finnish American Club of New Port Richey, New Port Richey, FL  
Gallen-Kallela Museo, Espoo, FI  
Gentlemen's Choice Barbershop, Hancock, MI  
Immigrant History Research Center - Univ. of MN, Minneapolis, MN  
Iron County Historical Society, Caspian, MI  
Keweenaw National Historical Park, Calumet, MI  
Mission United Lutheran Church, Pelkie, MI  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Newberry, MI  
Quincy Mine Hoist Association, Hancock, MI  
Society of St Vincent de Paul, Hancock, MI  
US Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame, Ishpeming, MI  
Wartburg Theological Seminary Archive, Dubuque, IA  
Zion Lutheran Church, Fairport, OH  
Zion Lutheran Church, Hancock, MI



### BENT AND KRUG SELECTED AS STUDENT-ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Denia Bent (softball) and Joey Krug (baseball) were named the 2017-18 Finlandia University Female and Male Student-Athletes of the Year.

Bent helped the Lions go 21-12 and repeat as ACAA (American Collegiate Athletic Association) Tournament champions. Bent had 12 doubles, five triples, scored 61 runs, drove in 32 runs, stole 31 bases and batted .506. In the circle, she had a 10-5 record, threw the second perfect game in school history, struck out 72 batters and had a 2.55 E.R.A. in 104.3 innings. Bent led NCAA Division III with 1.85 runs per game. She was also second with a .669 on-base percentage and ranked among the top 15 in four other categories.

Krug helped FinnU qualify for the CUNYAC (City University of New York Athletic Conference) tournament, the first post-season bid in school history. Finlandia entered as the sixth seed and finished in third place. Krug had eight extra base hits, scored 11 runs, drove in 19 runs and hit .330. On the mound, his 2-4 record does not show how dominate he was for the Lions as he had six complete games, struck out 37 batters and had a 2.57 ERA in 42 innings. Krug finished the season ranked among the top 15 in NCAA DIII in complete games (7th) and hits per nine innings (14th - 5.57).

### FROELICH AND KRUG EARN CUNYAC ALL-STARS HONORS

Senior Aaron Froelich and junior Joey Krug were named to the 2018 Baseball All-Stars team, as announced by the CUNYAC and presented by Municipal Credit Union. The Lions are an affiliate member of the CUNYAC in baseball only. This is the second time that Froelich has been recognized, and the first time for Krug.

### HOUGHTON COUNTY ARENA COMPLETES UPGRADES

Over the last two years, the home of Finlandia University hockey, Houghton County Arena, has seen major improvements including two new scoreboards set to be installed this fall. The arena's new updates include a roof, lighting, dehumidifier, ice plant, bleachers and the heating system was brought up to date.

"There are so many improvements," men's hockey coach Joe Burcar said recently on This Week in Finlandia Athletics podcast. "It's pretty amazing compared to what it was two years ago, it looks great."

The two new scoreboards will be especially useful to fans who are members of the Blue Line Club, as one of them will be in direct sightlines for the Dave Wiitanen Room. This room is exclusively open for Blue Line Club members during home games. The Blue Line Club is always looking for new members. If you're interested in joining the Blue Line Club, contact Travis Hanson at [travisehanson@gmail.com](mailto:travisehanson@gmail.com) or (906) 370-4613.



### JESSIE DIAZ BREAKS SCHOOL RECORD IN DIGS

"Just dig it" should be the motto of Finlandia University volleyball senior Jessie Diaz, who is now the all-time record holder for digs. On September 8 against Hope College, she racked up 26, putting her three over the previous record of 1,183 that was set by Katelyn Anderson (2013-16).

"Jessie is like a ball of fire on the floor for us," coach Cindy Cavanagh said. "She has made some amazing digs due to her energy and discipline. She has helped establish consistency in our back row, which in turn has helped our offense in finding more opportunities to score."

Since breaking the record, Diaz has continued to pick up dig after dig. She is averaging 5.48 digs per set in 2018, ranking among the top 40 for NCAA Division III at the time of printing.



## PEYTON MANNING GIVES SHOUTOUT TO FINNU AS FOOTBALL RECEIVES GRANT

Riddell and brand ambassador Peyton Manning selected the Finlandia University football team as one of the 18 recipients of the 2018 Smarter Football equipment grant. Finlandia is the first collegiate program to have been awarded a grant in the four-year history of the program. The Lions join Brimley High School (2016) as U.P. programs that have been recognized.

"We are beyond excited and honored that the people at Riddell and Peyton Manning chose us for the 18 in 18 grant," coach Travis Wiltzius said. "My staff and I believe in teaching proper techniques in blocking and tackling and this grant will help us tremendously in teaching those techniques. We will be using this grant money on expanding on our protective equipment as well as field equipment."

## CINDY CAVANAGH NAMED VOLLEYBALL COACH

Cindy Cavanagh has been named the head coach of the Finlandia University volleyball team. She has spent the last two years as program manager of Top Flight Volleyball Club (Ill.), and completed a strong career as a player with Carthage College in 2011, when her team won the CCIW and NCAA Central Region tournaments. She received the Erin Calteux Most Inspirational Women's Volleyball Player award. While at Top Flight, her team was the national championship runner-up at AAU Nationals in 2017. In 2018, the team finished 17th at AAU Nationals.

"Finlandia University has an incredible atmosphere that I instantly fell in love with," said Cavanagh. "It's a place that believes in me and I believe in them. This new opportunity as the head coach will allow me to grow both personally and professionally. I have an opportunity to help young women further develop their natural resiliency, leadership skills, respect for others, confidence, discipline, grit and cohesive unity, not only in competition, but in life."

This fall, the Lions earned the No. 2 seed in the American Collegiate Athletic Association tournament during Cavanagh's first season.



## FORMER D-I PLAYER, MARIAH LAPOINTE-DUNHAM COACHING WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Mariah LaPointe-Dunham has been named head coach of the Finlandia University women's basketball team. LaPointe-Dunham comes to Finlandia after two years with AAU Level UP Express

Basketball. She started the program in March 2017 with two teams (23 athletes) and grew it to five teams (45 athletes) in 2018.

LaPointe-Dunham earned three letters as a student-athlete at the University of Wisconsin. As a freshman, she helped the Badgers reach the WNIT championship game. LaPointe-Dunham played her senior year at Northern Michigan University. She averaged 14.1 points and 5.2 rebounds a game and helped the Wildcats advance to the NCAA Division II Midwest Regional Semi-Finals.

Following graduation, LaPointe-Dunham was a volunteer coach at Finlandia as well as coaching girls and boys basketball at Baraga High School. She was an assistant coach at Lake Superior State (2013-14) and Northern Michigan (2014-16). During LaPointe-Dunham's tenure at NMU, the Wildcats qualified for the GLIAC Tournament both years.

## MATT FARRELL RETURNS TO LEAD SOFTBALL

Matt Farrell has been named head coach of the Finlandia University softball team. Farrell is no stranger to Finlandia as he spent 2018 as an assistant coach for the baseball team, and was the first head baseball coach for the Lions, coaching from 2004 to 2010.



"Matt's familiarity with Finlandia will help ease the transition for the program," said athletic director Curtis Wittenberg. "He has extensive playing and coaching experience in the Copper Country which will help to continue the success built by coach (Katherine) Hannagan."

Farrell was a member of the Concord, N.H., team that won the 15-year-old Babe Ruth State Championship. He was a three-time All-Copper Country Conference American Legion selection and the conference MVP in 1988. Farrell was a pitcher and second baseman for two years at UW-Superior.





## LEADING THE PRIDE ALUMNI PODCAST **KICKS OFF** WITH BEST-SELLER ASHA TYSON ('90)



**F**inlandia alumni have their own podcast on Finlandia's Podcast Network. Leading the Pride features accomplished Finlandia and Suomi alumni who provide insight on what Finlandia/Suomi did to help prepare them for life after college.

The first episode premiered in September with guest, Asha Tyson ('90). Tyson is the international best-selling author of "How I Retired at 26" and a Fortune-500 motivational speaker.

In the podcast, host and coordinator of external relations for Finlandia, Olivia Myers, talks to Tyson about how a homeless 17-year-old Tyson turned her life around with a one-way Greyhound bus ticket to Suomi.

"I went to a college that was not expecting me and basically begged my way in," said Tyson. "I went into Old Main and I just told the truth. I probably failed every college entrance exam you can imagine, if I even took the right ones because I have no idea, but I told them 'I am a hard worker. I am willing to do what it takes. I just need a shot. I don't need a handout, if you will let me into this school I will do something with my life, or I'll die trying.'"

"And that worked. I was given a shot and I wasn't going to blow it. So with that ticket, I began a new life."

In the podcast, Tyson describes how she decided to study Liberal Arts and the extracurricular activities she participated in, including a traveling gospel choir.

"I decided to focus on getting a good solid general education and learn to be a student and go from there," said Tyson. "It gave me an opportunity to learn enough about other things and see what I was good at. I just loved my experience there."

After Suomi, Tyson went to Northern Michigan University where she earned her bachelor's in political science and master's in public administration.



"I really did buy into that idea that school was going to be the ticket to at least options, even if it didn't guarantee an awesome job," said Tyson. "What it did guarantee was being looked at as someone who was serious and committed and capable of finishing something I knew I started. I knew somewhere in this world somebody would have to respect that."

In the podcast, Tyson describes her career path, which was leading her to become a university president by the age of 30, and her decision to retire at 26 and become a corporate speaker.

Tyson also discusses her faith, her mentor Aretha Franklin and the one time she was a finalist for "The Apprentice" but decided to tell Donald Trump, "You're fired!"

Listen to Tyson's full story online at [finlandia.edu/leadingthepride](http://finlandia.edu/leadingthepride).



**ALUMNA JAMIE THYRION  
OVERCOMES  
OBSTACLES  
ON PATH TO SUCCESS**



**A**s a student at Finlandia University, Jamie Thyron ('08) balanced raising an infant son, working a part-time job and tutoring other students all while working toward her business degree. Making that work takes *sisu*, and there's no shortage of it for this exceptional FinnU graduate.

An Ahmeek native and Calumet High School graduate, Thyron decided to attend Finlandia in order to be close to home.

"I wanted to be close to my friends and family while raising a family," said Thyron.

At the age of 19, Thyron gave birth to her first son, Brenden, and worked her way through Finlandia's business program while raising him.

"I think it was easier going to college with a child back then instead of now," said Thyron. "I wasn't in class all day every day so it allowed me to take care of him, with a lot of support from my family."

Thyron also received support from her advisor and TRIO coordinator.

"My advisor and I came up with a plan to reach graduation based on my interests," said Thyron. "TRIO supported me through the process and followed up after graduation to ensure I had resources available to be successful such as mock interviews and resume assistance."

Thyron chose Finlandia's business program because of the opportunities it could afford her and her family.

"I wasn't exactly sure what I wanted to do with my career, but felt like business was so broad that I could learn the foundations and lead the way to growing my career within a variety of avenues depending on my interest and skills," she said.

While she was focused on her career goals and

schooling, she also realized the importance of helping others, which she continues to do in her current role.

"Between classes I helped tutor other students in the Tutoring and Learning Center and met with English as a Second Language students, engaging in conversation and helping with homework assignments," said Thyron.

After Finlandia, Thyron accepted a part-time job as a teller at Wells Fargo in downtown Houghton. Within a year, she was promoted to a full-time personal banker at the College Avenue branch where she stayed for five years before moving to River Valley Bank.

"I accepted the position at River Valley because it's a family-owned and operated bank located throughout Northern Wisconsin and the Western Upper Peninsula," said Thyron.

In 2017, Thyron was promoted to assistant market manager in Calumet. In the summer of 2018, she earned another promotion and was named market manager.

As market manager, Thyron oversees the Calumet branch and serves as the face for the organization while helping it be a good steward for the community. An example of Thyron's efforts sits in her office in the form of an oversized check for more than \$40,000 for Portage Health Foundation's "Flood with Love" initiative.

Thyron's advice to others stems from her time at Finlandia and the lessons learned while tutoring others.

"Find ways to stay involved with your community," she said. "Whether you're volunteering for a local organization or attending Rotary meetings, it's a great way to connect with people and give service to others."



## FAB ELECTS MONICA HILL AS NEW PRESIDENT

Monica Hill ('76) has been elected as the new Finlandia Alumni Board (FAB) president, taking over for Jordan Siegler ('09). Hill is from South Carolina originally and attended Suomi

College in the late 70s.

What a wonderful time it was in the Copper Country, getting an education at Finlandia University, or Suomi College for me. I received my AA degree in 1976, studying Finnish. Being trilingual never helped my working life as a Real Estate agent, but it made travel a much richer experience.

It is an honor to be serving as the new President of the Alumni Board. My involvement on the FAB started when the 1975-78 class years, known affectionately as the Suomi Roomies, got together to plan a reunion for 2013. The Finlandia Alumni Board's goals this year are to reach out to more Finlandia and Suomi alumni and to hold events where we can meet you all face to face. For me, reconnecting with classmates has been exciting and I'd like to ensure everyone has the opportunity to do that. We all have memories that recall that special time. Please feel free call me if you need help finding someone, or would like more information about serving on the Alumni Board.

Sincerely,

*Monica Hill*

Monica Hill  
(864) 497-0134

## ALUMNI & FRIENDS NEWS

### AMICUCCI NAMED DIRECTOR OF ART ALLIANCE

**Jaimianne Amicucci ('10)** has been named the Director of the James Renwick Alliance, an independent national nonprofit organization that celebrates the achievements of America's craft artists. Amicucci earned her BFA in ceramics.

### ARTHUR ACCEPTS NEW POSITION AT STARTUP

**Adam Arthur ('12)** accepted a new position as Online Marketing Manager for Pantheon Platforms in Minneapolis. Arthur earned his bachelor's in business administration.

### BLANCK BEGINS GRADUATE STUDIES

**Chelsea Blanck ('17)** started graduate school this fall at Illiff School of Theology in Denver.

### ISAD FINDS NEW COORDINATOR IN BREWER

Finlandia's International School of Art & Design welcomed **Gini Brewer ('13)** to its staff this summer. Brewer, who earned her BFA, is part-time admissions and part-time administrative.

### ENSTAD PROMOTED AT FREUD AMERICA

**Walker Enstad ('17)** received a promotion this year from MEP Sales Rep to District Manager at Freud America, which produces premium cutting tools and abrasives in San Francisco. Enstad was an international business major.

### FISH VP OF NORTHERN INTERSTATE BANK

**Gary Fish ('06)** accepted a position as the Vice President - Business Banking of Northern Interstate Bank in Iron Mountain.

### HANES NAMED MARQUETTE OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Officer **Mark Hanes ('87)** was named Marquette's Officer of the Year. Hanes has been with the Marquette City Police for 20 years. Hanes graduated with an associates in criminal justice.



## MYERS TAKES LEADING ROLE WITH ALUMNI EFFORTS

Alumni of Finlandia University are set to see a major upgrade in alumni services as the university has welcomed Olivia Myers to the role of Coordinator of External Relations. Myers is the lead contact for all alumni relations efforts, is assisting with fundraising activities and is the coordinator of the Jutila Center. She is an alumna of Indiana University where she graduated with distinction with a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and a focus in public relations.

One of her first activities in the new role was organizing Homecoming 2018, which took place the first week of October.

"Pulling together a homecoming weekend full of events in five weeks was a challenge, but we now have solid foundation on which to build next year's event," said Myers. "The students and alumni who did attend had a blast and made great connections. My goal for Homecoming 2019 is to grow, so mark your calendars now for October 3-5, 2019."



## HUMMEL THROWS FIRST PITCH AT COMERICA PARK

**Ryan Hummel ('08)**, an international business major and now Vice President of Business Development for FitTeam Global, threw the first pitch at a Detroit Tigers vs. Minnesota Twins game at Comerica Park this year.

## MARTIN ACCEPTS POSITION AT GETPRIME

**Sara Martin ('17)** accepted a position at GetPrime in Durango, CO as a Data Advocate. Martin graduated with a degree in business administration and management, and had been working as an intern with Finnish company, Ponsee, prior.



## PIETILA CREATES NEW SEGMENT AT TV6/FOX UP

As Digital Content Manager and Web Producer for TV6/Fox UP, **Alissa Pietila ('14)** has created a new 5 o'clock live segment called "First Look on the Web." Pietila earned her bachelor's in communication.

## SCHMIDT NEW PASTOR AT HOLY TRINITY

Finlandia's former campus pastor, **Soren Schmidt ('94)** accepted a call to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Chassell. Schmidt began his new position on Oct. 1.

## SIEGLER PROMOTED AT WPT

**Jordan Siegler ('09)** was promoted to Corporate Giving Manager at Wisconsin Public Television this year. Siegler graduated with a BFA in sustainable design.

## 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 or contact Olivia Myers, Coordinator of External Relations at [olivia.myers@finlandia.edu](mailto:olivia.myers@finlandia.edu) or (906) 487-7499.

## OBITUARIES

### ANNA M. ANTILA '52

Brighton, MI, 8/2/2018  
(former Finnish Council)

### DR. MARION (WISTI) BROWN

Cincinnati, OH, 9/1/2018  
(former Finnish Council)

### LEONA (MOUNTJOY) BYERS '52

Newport, MI, 9/14/2018

### ROBERT A. "COUGAR" CLOUTIER

Calumet, MI, 9/9/2018

### HENRY E. FREDD '42

Hancock, MI, 8/31/2018

### MINERVA HEITALA

Chassell, MI, 6/1/2018

### FRANCES HELLA

Allen, TX, 12/20/2017

### THOMAS HEINONEN

Trenary, MI, 9/12/2018  
(former Finnish Council)

### PAUL KEMPPAINEN

Salo Location, MI, 7/3/2018

### LAINA L. KOLJONEN '34

Queen Creek, AZ, 7/7/2018

### ELMA K. "ELLIE" (KALLIOMAA) LONG '49

Traverse City, MI, 7/3/2018

### REV. NORMAN LUND '48 & '51

Houghton, MI, 6/27/2018

### KEITH MUGFORD '60

Lake Linden, MI, 6/9/2018

### CHARLES R. MYERS

West Bloomfield, MI, 6/12/2018

### MARIE (POSIO) SALO '92 & '00

L'Anse, MI, 6/27/2018

### MAEBELLE SCHMITZ

Hancock, MI, 6/1/2018

### SYLVIA (HALTTUNEN) SODERSTROM '39

Lake Worth, FL, 6/7/2018

### PAMELA (SAWYER) SOWKA '84

Appleton, WI, Aug. 2018

### BEATRICE (WILMINKO) TAMMINEN '55

Cornucopia, WI, 12/19/2017

### HELEN M. TOIVONEN '68

Mass City, MI, 9/24/2018

### WILBERT "HAUSI" WAINIO

Atlantic Mine, MI, 8/6/2018

### REV. A. DUANE WESTFIELD '53 & '58

Salem, MA, 8/28/2018

# FINLANDIA

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