

# *the Bridge*

2018 • Volume 71, Number 1

FINLANDIA  
UNIVERSITY





## FROM THE PRESIDENT **PHILIP JOHNSON**

Welcome to our 2018 Spring issue of the Bridge! Those of you who receive seasonal greetings from me will recognize we are continuing to share stories about Finlandia alumni.

As I write this brief note, I am sitting in the Detroit airport preparing to depart with Finlandia's students enrolled in our Service and Learning in Tanzania course. In preparation for this course, students receive reflections offered from Finlandia alumni who enrolled in previous years. I wish to share excerpts from one alumna's reflection sent to this year's class:

What I think most about looking back is that photos are cool but the connections and memories you make are far more substantial than any Instagram or Facebook post... Don't take pictures of your food! Talk to the people you are eating with!... Observe culture. It's hard to observe or absorb culture from behind the screen on your phone or the lens of a camera... Don't judge. Learn... Journal everyday. When I read my entries I am amazed at my observations and how I felt then still shapes decisions I make today, three years later... Practice being in the moment before you leave.

I find these insights inspiring. They embody one of Finlandia's highest aspirations: "to foster enduring positive change in how students think, act and feel in matters of the self, others and the wider world." This is our vision for our students, our alumni, our entire learning community.

Enjoy reading.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Philip Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Philip Johnson  
President



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#### Cover Photo:

Alexis Hegstrom hugs Associate Professor Geri Hawley after receiving her diploma during the 2018 Commencement Ceremony. Hegstrom is from the Upper Peninsula city of Crystal Falls. She will finish her third and final clinical in June, and will take her national certification exam in July.

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the Bridge • 2018  
Volume 71 No. 1

the Bridge is published periodically  
by Finlandia University.

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### FINLANDIA BRINGS MOBILE FOOD PANTRY TO ONTONAGON

On April 19 Finlandia students and staff traveled to Ontonagon High School to help feed 271 individuals, representing 1,050 family members in the community. All 16,115 pounds of food were given away by the end of the night. Finlandia University students were bussed from campus to the event.

This is the fourth time in three years Finlandia University has partnered with Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, to bring the Mobile Food Pantry to the area.

### NEW: IN-STATE TRANSFER TUITION PRICING FOR MICHIGAN AND NON-MICHIGAN RESIDENTS

Finlandia University announced in November the implementation of "In-State Transfer Tuition Pricing," available to Michigan and non-Michigan residents. This first-of-its-kind tuition reset helps establish FinnU as a transfer-friendly leader in the Midwest and beyond. Beginning with the January 2018 semester, Finlandia has reset tuition to \$12,594 per year or \$6,297 per semester for students bringing in at least six transferable college credits. The tuition reset price is the median in-state tuition price for public, four-year institutions in the state of Michigan.

Finlandia's In-State Transfer Tuition Pricing applies to Michigan and non-Michigan residents alike. For students who live in the state of Michigan, they may also qualify for the Michigan Tuition Grant, an additional \$1,000/semester (2017-18 grant level) in grant funding available only to students attending private colleges. Michigan and non-Michigan students may also qualify for federally funded programs such as work study to further reduce their college expenses.

"Most college students today attend two or more institutions prior to graduation," said Dr. Philip Johnson, President of Finlandia University. "Finlandia values the passion, drive and maturity that transfer students offer our campus. In addition to our transfer student tuition reset, we are launching a friendlier application process and streamlining our transfer credit process. Blended with up-close and personal attention from our admissions and financial aid offices, and our engaged faculty advisors, transfer students can be confident they will complete their degree on time while minimizing their expenses. We intend to lead as the friendliest transfer college in the country."



### DR. WILLIAM KNOBLAUCH WINS BOARD OF TRUSTEES DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD

Dr. William Knoblauch was honored as the Board of Trustees Distinguished Faculty Award recipient at the 2018 Commencement on Sunday, April 29. Knoblauch, an assistant professor of history, joined Finlandia in 2012. He teaches 17 courses including History of Rock & Roll, Energy

and World Power, and Rise of American Capitalism. He also chairs the History department.

"Winning this award is really nice because my peers nominated me and that feels good," said Knoblauch,

adding that his peers told him they nominated him for the award because of the amount of scholarship and publishing he does, and because he cares about the students. "I think it's a really nice gesture by the board of trustees, and for them to say 'we recognize what you're doing,' I really appreciate that. I can't wait to see who wins it next year."

Knoblauch received his B.A. in Business & Economics and History from Northland College in 2003, his M.A. in U.S. History from Northern Arizona University in 2006 and his Ph.D. in 20th Century U.S. History from Ohio University in 2012. He researches and writes about Cold War politics and culture, has been published in 11 book chapters and journal articles and is currently working on three more pieces set to come out this year.

## BUSINESS STUDENTS SERVE AS JUDGES AT BPA REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE COMPETITION

The fall 2017 semester was the first semester of the new Finlandia University Business Professionals of America (BPA), and it was a busy one. In addition to all of the tasks involved in launching a new organization, the club found time to host guest speakers and make a visit to Somero Enterprises.

The spring semester started on a high note as BPA members Kyle Niemi, a senior in marketing, and Tyler Borkadi, a senior majoring in sports management, served as competition judges at the BPA Regional Leadership Conference for high school students on January 5 at Bay College in Escanaba. Over 325 students from 11 schools across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan attended the conference and competed in various business skill areas. Niemi and Borkadi judged the teams in the presentation management competition.



## FINLANDIA CELEBRATES FINLAND'S 100<sup>TH</sup> IN GRAND STYLE

Renowned pianist Craig Randal Johnson (pictured) was the headline performer at the centennial celebration of Finland's independence, which was hosted in the Copper Country for the 100th consecutive year by Finlandia University. Jim Kurtti, who is the Honorary Consul of Finland for the U.P. and the director of the Finnish American Heritage Center, developed the plan for and hosted the gala concert, which also featured the Copper Country Chorale and the Kivajat Dancers. The celebration drew interest from a crowd so large the event had to be staged at the Rozsa Center at Michigan Tech to accommodate everyone interested in attending.



## FINNISH PASTOR SPENDS SABBATICAL AT FINLANDIA

Longtime friend of Finlandia University, Rev. Bror Träskbacka spent five weeks in Hancock as a guest researcher of Finlandia University. Träskbacka is the Coordinator for Tourist Ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, National Church Council, Department for International Relations, Ministry to Finns Abroad.

Träskbacka researched Finnish-Swedish emigration to the Upper Midwest, finding "many treasures" in the Archives of the Finnish American Heritage Center. He took part in the community's annual Heikinpäivä Celebration in January, and spent the next month meeting with area historians, clergy and townspeople to learn more about their heritage. Along with Finlandia colleagues, he traveled to northern Minnesota to take part in the Sisu Heritage Day in Embarrass. Despite the deep winter snow in February, Träskbacka was able to visit the Duluth gravesite of his Finn-Swede great uncle, a personal journey which allowed him to be the first and only family member to ever visit the cemetery.

While back on campus, Träskbacka met with students and various other groups to share his knowledge of the church within Finland and abroad, including his perspective of the evolving relations between the church of Finland and the country's indigenous peoples, namely the Sami.

Träskbacka also shared some personal anecdotes from the time he spent as one of former Finnish President Urho Kekkonen's in-home nursing staff; these will be shared in an article in an upcoming edition of The Finnish American Reporter. Träskbacka had never shared these stories before.

Träskbacka's visit strengthened the existing relationships between the university and the church, friends and colleagues in Finland. It also helped to develop new friendships in a community which Träskbacka noted was very much like Finland. A new home.



### **KARIN VAN DYKE STEPS INTO NEW ROLE**

Finlandia University is pleased to announce Karin Van Dyke is stepping into the role of Vice President of External Relations and Advancement. Van Dyke has been at Finlandia for five years, starting

as the Human Resources Director in 2013.

While Van Dyke will be managing a number of different tasks, she's most excited about working on the advancement team.

"I love working for an organization where small is good," she said. "Finlandia is a unique university that provides a niche in which great opportunities can happen. I greatly value our traditions and our 'Finnish-ness'; past, present and, most excitedly, the future."

### **COLLIN SAINT-ONGE NAMED DIRECTOR OF ADMISSIONS**

Finlandia University has named alumnus Collin Saint-Onge ('14) to the role of Director of Admissions.

"I'm excited because I hope to make an impact not only on Finlandia, but the surrounding community as well," Saint-Onge said. "I see this as an opportunity to change the landscape of Finlandia for the better."



Saint-Onge graduated with his Bachelor's of Business Administration with a focus in accounting from FinnU's International School of Business in 2014, and began shortly after as an Enrollment Officer at the university. While moving through the ranks at Finlandia, Saint-Onge earned his Master's of Business Administration from the University of Bridgeport.

### **DR. JORMA KALLIOKOSKI RECOGNIZED BY ISAD**

In December during a First Thursday event, Dr. Jorma Kallioikoski was recognized and thanked for his generous support of Finlandia University's International School of Art & Design and Sulo & Aileen Maki Library. Dr. Kallioikoski was presented with a certificate for his donations over the past 12 years.

"We had a wonderful time at the special first Thursday ISAD luncheon for Dr. Kallioikoski," Head Librarian Rebecca Daly said. "We were able to acknowledge the contributions of Dr. Kallioikoski to the Maki Library for Finnish and other art and design books."

### **RN-BSN IS UNDER NEW LEADERSHIP**

Finlandia University's online RN-BSN program is now under new leadership as long-time nursing faculty member Lori Sullivan, DNP, MSN, RN, has been named director of the program. In her new role, Sullivan will continue the nursing program's mission to prepare professional nurses dedicated to academic excellence, spiritual awareness and the practice of nursing.

"I am passionate about nursing and assisting nursing students to meet their professional and educational goals," Sullivan said. "Leading this program will be a wonderful challenge and opportunity as we continue to grow our online RN-BSN program."

Sullivan has over 20 years of nursing experience, working in hospital and community settings before beginning her career in academia in 2007. She joined Finlandia University in 2009, teaching both on-campus and online.

Finlandia introduced the RN-BSN program in the early 2010s for associate degree nurses who are looking to advance their careers. At the time it was offered as a hybrid program, and over time it increased its online offerings. In 2016 the program became accredited to be offered fully online.

### **BEIHAI COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN OFFICIALS TOUR FINLANDIA CAMPUS**

On May 5, International School of Art & Design Dean Denise Vandeville, Dean of Student Affairs Erin Barnett, and Chief Financial Officer Angela Price, led officials from the Beihai College of Art & Design in China on a tour of the Finlandia University campus. The visit to the school reflects a growing partnership between Beihai and FinnU.

"We're very excited about future collaborations with Beihai College," said Vandeville. "They have been wonderful guests and we have enjoyed hosting them."

The initial relationship between FinnU's International School of Art & Design (ISAD) and Beihai College began fall 2017 with a visit by Beihai officials. In November, FinnU officials were invited to the Beihai campus for a reciprocal experience. Beihai currently works with universities in Russia and Britain, FinnU, however is the first United States art school Beihai will work with to develop international experiences for their students.



## FINNISH & NORDIC STUDIES PROGRAM RECEIVES GRANT

The Finnish & Nordic Studies Program at Finlandia University is the recipient of a Michigan Council on the Arts and Cultural Affairs Mini Grant, administered by the Copper Country Community Arts Center. This grant will help to support the production of Copper Country Voices of Dissent in the Great War, an exhibit researched and designed by students in the Suomi College of Arts and Sciences and the International School of Art & Design at Finlandia.

This exhibit will explore the ways in which Copper Country residents expressed anti-war sentiment during World War One, and the ways in which such ideas were received by the wider public. The exhibit will be on display at several sites on Finlandia's campus beginning in September 2018. It is part of the World War One and the Copper Country public humanities program, which will offer exhibits, films, lectures and a symposium on this subject from June to November 2018.

## DR. CAROLYN DEKKER FEATURED IN LAKE SUPERIOR REGION JOURNAL

Finlandia University Assistant Professor of English Dr. Carolyn Dekker was featured in Volume 5 of Upper Country, a Journal of the Lake Superior Region with her essay titled *"Survival is Insufficient: Northern Michigan as a Post-Apocalyptic Final Frontier."*

This essay compares two works of post-apocalyptic science fiction set in northern Michigan. The first, Emily St. John Mandel's Station Eleven, is set along Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The second is the web-based

television series Northbound, which is filmed near Iron Mountain and on the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Dr. Dekker joined Finlandia's faculty in 2015 after earning her doctorate in English Language and Literature from the University of Michigan in 2014. A full list of publications and additional information about Dr. Dekker can be found at [carolyndekker.com](http://carolyndekker.com).



## INTERNATIONALLY RESPECTED LUTHERAN BISHOP LEADS PUBLIC EVENT

Finlandia University welcomed Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) to the Copper Country on Monday, April 2.

Bishop Younan spoke during a public presentation held in the Chapel of St. Matthew titled *"An Interfaith Perspective: Christian-Jewish-Muslim Dialogue."* In addition to the public event, Bishop Younan spoke in several classes, met with FinnU students and with representatives from several local Lutheran churches.



## CLASS OF 2018 RECOGNIZED

The most memorable moment of the year took place Sunday, April 30 as the Class of 2018 was recognized during the annual commencement ceremony at the Paavo Nurmi Center. At the ceremony, 73 students were conferred degrees, while they heard from Alumni Speaker Kathleen Harmon '86, Student Representative and Nursing Major Melissa Helppi, and Commencement Speaker Marilyn Clark.

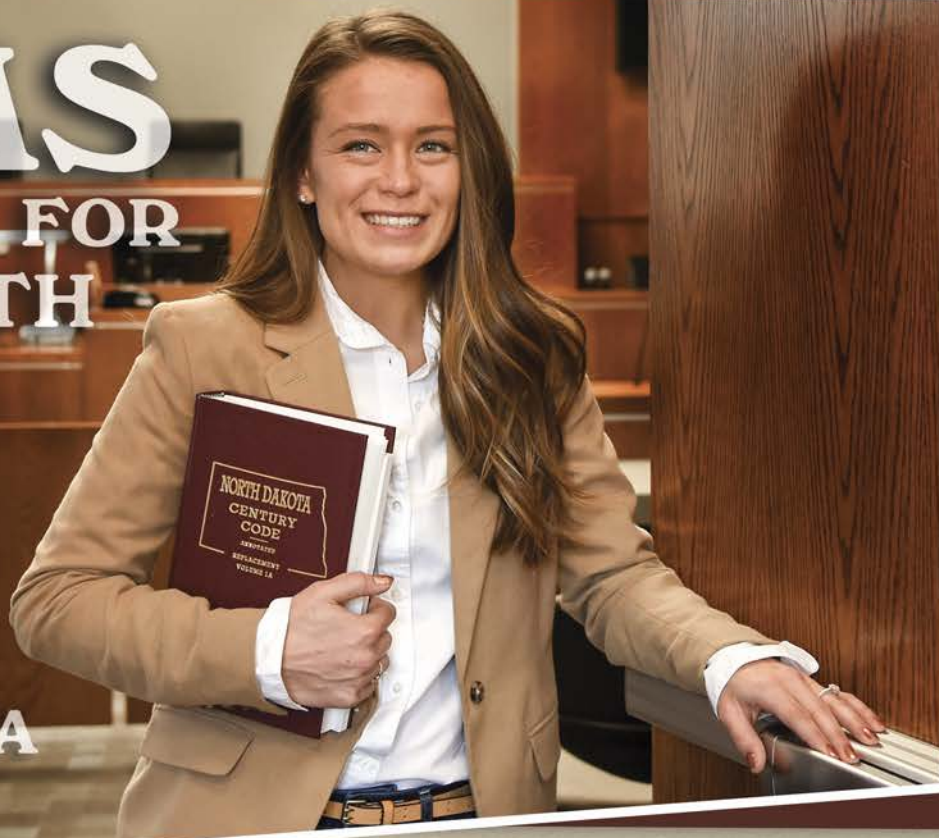
Clark, CEO of MTEC SmartZone and former FinnU professor in the International School of Business, spoke to the students about the importance of finding the right life balance. "Figure out how you want to live your life, and have the courage to go out and do it," she said.

Helppi spoke in depth about the need to live your best life. "Live the life that you want to tell someone about," she said. "Make mistakes, not regrets. Life would be boring if we knew the whole story from the start. Life is meant to have ups and downs. I know, the highs are a lot higher if you've had the lows."

Harmon, who graduated with a nursing degree and has now been in the industry for more than 32 years, spoke in depth about the gift of *sisu* that Finlandia instills upon its students. "*Sisu* isn't something that can be turned on or off," she said. "It's not a work thing. It's an all-the-time thing. If we are hungry enough we can (do anything)."

# ALUMS MAKE A CASE FOR PRE-LAW PATH

**BRIERRA  
RUSKA**



**B**eing at a close-knit, liberal arts school students get the opportunity to explore different options for their futures. These alumni saw their path to law school through Finlandia, while one Upper Peninsula lawyer has already proven that track as she followed her childhood passion.

**BRIERRA RUSKA**, a 2015 Finlandia graduate, and current University of North Dakota Law School student was asked a question that changed her life two weeks before graduation.

"Dr. (Richard) Gee (head of the Criminal Justice department) asked me, 'why aren't you going to law school?'. Law school had never crossed my mind but, when he asked me, I didn't have an answer for why not," Ruska remembered.

Ruska started off wanting to be a police officer, but as she went through the Criminal Justice program, she found herself concerned more with policies and the aftermath of an offender who had been charged.

She wants to help those who are in a tough spot in life. "Their worst moment is not their defining moment and the way most people think about crime, just creates a system of reoffenders," she said. "I want to do it differently."

While Ruska didn't study for her LSAT during her time at Finlandia, she credits the faculty and staff relationships she formed here as one of the driving reasons she decided to pursue a law degree.

The best thing she took from her time here at Finlandia was her ability to have an open mind. The style of

teaching that Ruska experienced taught her to see the justice system differently. This characteristic now differentiates her from a lot of other law students.

Ruska encourages current students not to take the small school and community for granted, to embrace it, to take things as a whole and respect others.

**THOMAS KERR**, a 2017 Finlandia graduate, is currently in law school at Michigan State University. Kerr came to Finlandia to play hockey, but after injuries plagued his athletic pursuits, he turned to a dream of law school.

"People are wrong not to think of Finlandia for pre-law," he said. "I'm shocked at how many people here [at Michigan State] have heard of Finlandia and our Criminal Justice program. It's not as big of a secret as we think it is."

The faculty had a lot to do with what made the experience at Finlandia special for Kerr. Through learning about the criminal justice system and social policies, he discovered that he could make a difference with a career as a lawyer.

Kerr knew he had a network of fellow students and staff that were there for him to lean on. That one-on-one level of support made all the difference in preparing for both the LSAT and law school.





**BRANDON LOERA**, a 2016 Finlandia graduate and now at Valparaiso University Law School, started as an athlete looking for a path and found himself drawn to Criminal Justice during the introductory course. It wasn't until his junior year, however, that he began thinking about law school.

With the realization that he had all of the tools he needed to be a successful law school candidate, he began asking more about taking the LSAT and how to prepare for it.

"I had everything I needed - subject matter, great faculty and drive," Loera said. "It's all about what you do with what's in front of you."

**ERICA PAYNE**, former Vice President of the Finlandia Alumni Board, 2007 Finlandia graduate and 2010 Western Michigan University Cooley Law School graduate, wasn't the first Finlandia University alum to become a lawyer. However, she is pretty sure that she was the first to have entered a program at Finlandia with the intention of becoming a lawyer.

There was no formal path to a law degree at Finlandia when Payne started, but with the dedicated staff helping her the whole way, she was able to create that path for herself. It led her to two internships with a local law office, the law office of David M. Gemignani, PC, and helped her "find that grit" she needed to study for her LSAT, get into law school, find a job and create a successful career.

Payne started as a graphic design major but was drawn to shift her focus to one of her earliest passions in life: politics and law. She began work with political parties as early as the fourth grade but also found a love for art as she grew up. "Practicing law is the marriage between thinking creatively and applying the law to help people through some of the hardest times in their lives."

She credits Finlandia with helping her effectively apply creativity and grit to get through law school and to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with her partners, who attended much larger undergraduate and law schools.

"The system of due process can be lengthy and complicated. It's my job to understand how to navigate people through that process," Payne said. "I get to hold their hand through some difficult times and say, 'I understand.' I help people in a way that most people won't ever get to. It's a wonderful opportunity to get to practice law, a wonderful profession and I'm still opening that box."

Her advice for those Finlandia students considering practicing law? Have grit. Have a great work ethic. Take advantage of the support that is available to you.

The common voice from all of these Finlandia University graduates is that they want to practice law in a way that makes a difference in the world. They've found their vocation. The path to law school that can be found at Finlandia encourages future lawyers to see law differently; as an endeavor to make the legal system better.

## A CHALLENGE MATCHED

"Oh, I'm not generous at all, really! I'm Norwegian!" This tongue-in-cheek remark made recently by trustee Eric Sauey ('75) is not lost on those who know him and his parents, VWR (Bill) and Floy Sauey. What is it about those of Nordic stock who tend to have an aversion for self-promotion and oftentimes a reputation for being, well, a bit stingy? The latter is simply not true, at least in Finlandia's case.

Eric, VWR, and Floy came together last year to meet a \$500,000 challenge match made by Pat and OC Boldt. VWR, now trustee emeritus (look for trustee updates in the Fall 2018 Bridge), served on Finlandia's Board of Trustees from 1968 to 2012. Eric has been a trustee since 2012. There are only a few families that have achieved such a legacy of leadership and generosity at Finlandia.

VWR and Floy, together with other family members built what is today the Nordic Group of Companies.

In his own words, VWR, now age 90 recalls, "I've always been sellin' stuff. I was a star salesman at the age of eight, selling the Saturday Evening Post. There were many recent Italian immigrants where I lived. I was so successful because I went door to door persuading them that the Post was the best way to learn English. It worked!" Even today, if VWR has his way he will begin the conversation with this question: "Have you sold anything today?"



Eric's collegiate start was at Finlandia, then Suomi College. "Suomi offered me the opportunity to find my motivation, to figure out my life. I wasn't a stellar student," he admits. "But Suomi was a safe harbor, a place where I could grow and get my bearings." And he did. Today Eric is President of Seats Incorporated in Reedsburg, Wisconsin, one of the most successful companies of Nordic Group.

The Sauey and Boldt families were brought together by a challenge match. Their common ground was a deep commitment to Finlandia, higher education and the Upper Peninsula. Together this gift of \$1,000,000 has positioned Finlandia for greater success in reaching and recruiting adult learners, transfer and international students. Both families have chosen to live generously. Finlandia is grateful.



## GIVING: AN EARLY START

Allen Freis ('76) and his wife, Julie, are members of Finlandia's President's Circle. Their impact reaches across Finlandia's campus and across its student body. Their two most recent major gifts provided support for Finlandia's emerging opportunities with online programming and completing an alumni campaign to furnish a new roof for Finlandia's Old Main (Bridge, Fall 2017).

They recently shared some thoughts on their affinity for Finlandia. Al grew up on a dairy farm in the U.P. His parents encouraged him to give some of his 'own money' each week to church. Julie was raised to "Do unto others, as you would have done unto you." These good habits were practiced early in life and endured through adulthood.

"Today," Julie shared, "we have a unique outlook on life following a health challenge Allen experienced in 2003. We had to learn to accept help

during Al's recovery, which was difficult for this independent couple. Family, friends and even strangers provided acts of kindness that made our lives easier at a difficult time – leaving a deep impression. We realize everyone needs help at some point in their lives. Now, we try to make a difference in the lives of others that cross our paths."

Al fondly recalls his days at Finlandia (Suomi College), as a first-generation college graduate. Al shared that he appreciated the role that Finlandia's mentoring faculty played, along with small class sizes, in fostering his success and growth. "We are extremely blessed and excited," they remarked, "to be able to offer financial support, to see progress across the campus, and to watch students achieve their goals and dreams."



There was a buzz around campus in the summer of 2017 when one day, seemingly out of the blue, a person with a familiar name walked into North Wind Books. The staff at the bookstore couldn't help but ask all kinds of questions, when they discovered that Stephen Nikander is the great grandson of Juho K. (J.K.) Nikander, the first president of Finlandia University, and grandson of Viljo K. (V.K.) Nikander, the fourth president of the university. Stephen was visiting the Copper Country for the first time.

"I was still a kid when my grandparents passed away in the 1970s, but my parents had told me stories," Stephen said. "My parents had nice things to say about the school and the area, and I wanted to reconnect. My first experience was wonderful."

It didn't take long for the first experience to lead to much more. Since that visit, he's been in the Keweenaw twice coming for the January and April meetings of the Finlandia University Board of Trustees, a group he's now a part of.

"My family is really proud of my involvement with the school," he said. "They're glad someone is rekindling that. Especially my mother, she's as proud as anyone. She thought my grandfather was such a wonderful man."

The entire family, including his father who was a commencement speaker at FinnU in the 1970s, had the chance to meet with President Philip Johnson last fall. In less than a year, Finlandia has gone from a distant and enchanting family memory, to a central focus for Nikander. He wasn't looking to get involved only to check a box or reminisce about his family's heritage. Instead, he's looking to bring some unique perspective to the board.

Nikander attended Drake University in Iowa for Actuarial Science and, after playing a little bit of semi-professional baseball, moved to Los Angeles where he started as an investment accountant and eventually earned the designation of chartered financial analyst.

"I understand that collegiate finances are different than many industries, but I believe I can use my financial background to see how we can adjust and optimize the school's financial challenges," he said. "To me, higher education is like healthcare in many ways in that costs in both industries keep rising at rates above the normalized rate of inflation, and I'm interested to see what the dynamics are that cause that. So far, I've enjoyed learning about it and am happy to bring a fresh perspective."

Ultimately, his goal is to be part of a stabilizing force for the university's finances.

"The school doesn't have as big of an endowment as other schools do, and there's historical reasons why," he



*Stephen Nikander*

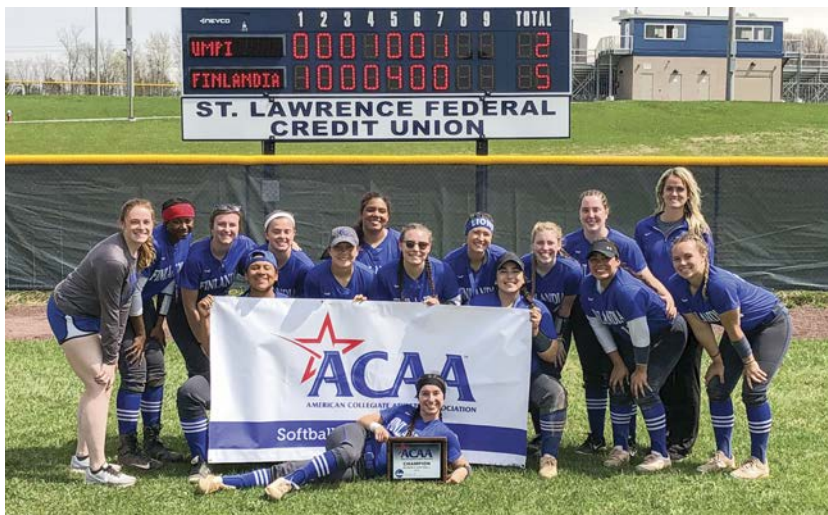
CONTINUES FAMILY LEGACY

DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN FINANCE  
AND MORE THAN A CENTURY OF FAMILY  
HERITAGE TO BE ASSETS TO FINLANDIA

said. "I'd like to change that if at all possible and help produce something that the school can rely on moving forward."

While board governance will be exciting for Nikander, it hasn't stopped him from enjoying his family history.

"When I arrived for my January board meeting, one of the trustees gave me a book of letters my great grandfather had written to people back in Finland," he said. "It was an enlightening experience. The words in those letters most people in my family had never heard him say. To read his perspective on coming to this country, you put yourself in that time period. It is interesting how things started from something so small to what Finlandia is today."



## SOFTBALL TEAM GOES BACK-TO-BACK AS CONFERENCE CHAMPS

There were no second chances allowed as the Finlandia University softball team beat Maine-Presque Isle 5-2 to repeat as American Collegiate Athletic Association champions.

Four players made the ACAA All-Tournament team during the impressive outing; Kassandra Avila, Denia Bent, Makenna Gorham and Emily Nguyen. Avila, Gorham and Nguyen were second-time selections.

## 15 NAMED TO NCHA ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM

Finlandia University had a total of 15 athletes named to the Northern Collegiate Hockey Association All-Academic Team. To be eligible, student-athletes must have at least a 3.30 G.P.A. and be at least a sophomore.

For the men, Finlandia had 11 selections. Selected for the second time were juniors Timo Kocar, Bryce Mitzel, Alex Rezanoff, Daniel Spencer and Cam Wirick. First-time recipients were juniors Matt Arnold and Brady Peterson and sophomores Jaysen Dahlquist, Danny Hill, Garrett Nichol and Nick Tobey.

For the women, the Lions had four selections led by senior Sierra Meiners who was recognized for the second time. First-time recipients were junior Sarah Hockings and sophomores Kait Ryyanen and Jordan Thoma.

## CHRYSAFIDIS TO LEAD MEN'S SOCCER

Scott Chrysafidis (chris-a-feed-us) has been named head coach of the Finlandia University men's soccer team. He most recently was head assistant coach at New England College.



"I am very excited to become a part of the Finlandia University family," said Chrysafidis. "I'm grateful for this opportunity that the university has provided me."

Chrysafidis was the head assistant coach and head JV coach at New England College (2012-15). During his four seasons, the Pilgrims went 45-26-7 and reached the North Atlantic Conference semifinals three times.

"I'm confident that Scott will continue the recent success of our men's soccer program," said athletic director Curtis Wittenberg. "He is very passionate about the game of soccer. That passion, together with his previous DIII experience, will work well here at Finlandia."

Chrysafidis played one year of soccer at New England College before moving to the coaching staff. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Sport and Recreation Management from New England College. He is finishing a Master's in Business, specializing in Sports Recreation Management.

Chrysafidis replaces Brent Chase who accepted the head job at Georgetown (KY).



## MCDERMID MAKE BIG IMPACT

Kelsi McDermid was named All-American Collegiate Athletic Association women's soccer Freshman of the Year as well as making All-ACAA first team. She is the first player in program history to win an individual award.

McDermid, the only freshman named to first team, scored five goals with four assists for 14 points. She finished among the top five in single-season school history for goals, assists and points. McDermid set the school record for points in a game (10) and tied the goal record (4) vs. Silver Lake (Sept. 26).



## MEMBRENO EARNS HONOR

Moises Membreno was named All-American Collegiate Athletic Association men's soccer Defensive Player of the Year, only the third player in school history to win an individual award. He also earned first team honors.

Membreno played in 16 games for the Lions, scoring three goals and adding four assists for 10 points. He led the team with 36 key defending moments. In addition to the season-long honor, he was a two-time ACAA Defensive Player of the Week.



## LIONS SHINE BRIGHT IN THE CLASSROOM

The Finlandia Lions have put forth a strong work effort which has led to a good deal of success on the playing fields during the 2017-18 school year. That same effort has produced impressive results in the classroom as well. Twenty student-athletes made the Honor Roll while 27 were on the Dean's List.

In addition, between the American Collegiate Athletic Association and the National Collegiate Hockey Association, 29 student-athletes earned academic honors.

"I'm proud of the accomplishments of our student-athletes in the classroom," said Athletic Director Curtis Wittenberg. "Trying to balance practices, games and academics is not always easy. These honors are a testament to their hard work and dedication."



## LILLY REPRESENTS IN WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Finlandia University women's hockey team had a presence on the world stage this year as freshman Rebecca Lilly is playing for New Zealand at the 2018 IIHF Women's World Championships. Lilly scored her first goal in international play during the tournament.

For her Finlandia season, Lilly scored six goals, four of which were in the last several games of the season. She was named to the NCHA All-Freshman team, released by the league office. She is the first Lion to make all-freshman in league history and the first all-conference selection since 2007-08.

## BASEBALL PLACES 3RD IN CUNYAC CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Finlandia University baseball team fought the entire way in a 19-11 loss to Staten Island at the City University of New York Athletic Conference CUNYAC Championships. The Lions finished the CUNYAC Tournament in third place after being seeded sixth.

The tournament was a double elimination tournament and the Lions defeated Lehman College in the first round before falling to John Jay College in the second round. The Lions then defeated Baruch before being eliminated by the eventual champions.



## WILTZIUS NAMED INTERIM HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

Finlandia University has named Travis Wiltzius Interim Head Coach of the university's football program. Wiltzius, an Escanaba native, has been with the team since its first season in 2015. He has served as offensive line

coach, recruiting coordinator and in the spring of 2017 added assistant head coach to his title.

Wiltzius began his coaching career at Central Michigan University. He started as an undergraduate student offensive intern, moved to offensive quality control and in 2014 offensive graduate assistant coach. The Chippewas played in two bowl games and won the 2012 Little Caesar's Pizza Bowl while Wiltzius was involved. Wiltzius helped coach three All-Mid-American Conference first team selections, including the 2013 NFL first overall pick, Eric Fisher.

The Finlandia football program is heading into its fourth season this fall, and will be full participants in the historic Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association. The team's home opener is Saturday, September 1 at McAfee Field against Concordia University Wisconsin.

## ANDREWS NAMED HEAD WOMEN'S SOCCER COACH

Jordan Andrews has been named head coach for the Finlandia University women's soccer program. Andrews has been an assistant coach for the men's team for the last three seasons and women's team for the last two seasons.



He's seen success with the women's team as an assistant, including the 2016 NCAA leader in saves per game in Haley Makela, the 2017 ACAA Freshman of the Year in Kelsi McDermid, 14 all conference award winners and three All-ACAA Academic Award Winners during the 2017 season.

"I'm excited to be taking on a new role here at Finlandia University," Andrews said. "This is a terrific opportunity, and I look forward to the challenge of building this program. I will be leaning on the successes and experiences I've had while at Finlandia to lead the program into this new era."

In addition to his experience at FinnU, Andrews has worked for the Columbus Crew, Detroit Tigers and for the last two summers he has worked for Detroit City FC where, in 2017, he was named Assistant Coach and Director of Player Development. Andrews played college soccer for NCAA Division III Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio.



## DAWN KILIC **WORLDLY ADVENTURES** **KYRGYZSTAN**

**W**hen Dawn Kilic leaves her home, it feels like she's in a utopian globalist world. Her four children, who range from ages 3 to 15, speak several languages, including English, Turkish and Russian. She's surrounded by people from Korea, Nigeria, all over Europe and her husband, Veysel, hails from Turkey. Life in the relatively new country of Kyrgyzstan has a feel quite different than the Finnish-American upbringing she had in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul suburb of Burnsville. It's an experience she absolutely loves. When she thinks back to what made it possible, she can't help but focus on her time at Suomi College/Finlandia University, and specifically the time spent with longtime English professor Lauri Anderson.

"We still keep in touch with him," she said. "He's not simply someone I look back at as just a teacher or a professor, but he's turned into a lifelong friend and mentor. He's actually my second child's godfather."

Kilic remembers fondly the time spent with Anderson and history professor Dan Maki, both of whom pushed her outside of her comfort zone to gain a deeper understanding of not just English and literature, but life. "If I didn't go to Finlandia, and meet and have classes with those two, I would not be where I am today," she said. "My kid's wouldn't exist. I wouldn't be married. I certainly wouldn't be here in Kyrgyzstan."

Kilic earned her associates in English from Suomi in 1999, and stuck around for two more years to be among the first bachelor-degree graduates at Finlandia, earning a degree in the short-lived, but oft-remembered program "Great Books, Great Voices." She moved overseas in 2003, and hasn't looked back since. She's now leading the next generation as a teacher at Oxford International School, which is a Council of British International Schools (COBIS) school that's currently a

IBDP candidate. She earned her master's degree in English Language and Literature Teaching to help give her the training in methodology she needed. The work is paying off. In January, she was recognized as Secondary Teacher of the Term.

"It was humbling because I just do my job teaching English," she said. "I had three pages of comments about why I was deserving of the award. Hearing what people had to say about me was pretty nice."

Kilic's story is a great example of the amazing things that can come from a liberal arts education, especially when small classes allow you to get to know your professors at a deeper level. "Finlandia is exactly how I would hope any liberal arts college experience would be. It was the teachers that brought the program to life in its students," she said. "Without that, I wouldn't be teaching the next generation of kids English and critical thinking skills."

Ultimately, Kilic's story is another beautiful chapter in the *sisu*-inspired world of Finlandia University.

"The idea where I'm a single parent at the time, very shy still, and I was able to take the *sisu* that I have and fly halfway across the world to start a new life the way I wanted to and be successful despite the fears that I had and despite the lack of knowing the native language," she said. "I had the guts and determination that comes from the experiences I have as a proud Finn and the experiences I had at Finlandia."

While she loves to point to her Finnish heritage, the utopian mix of cultures she surrounds herself with today proves that the stories of *sisu* come from any background. Kilic smiles knowing the next generation of Finlandia students, who come from an ever-increasingly diverse background, are still being instilled with that *sisu*.



## ALUMNI UPDATES



For the first time in 35 years, nine graduates from the Suomi College classes of 1982 and 1983 got together in Brethren, MI last August. Those gathered together included Mark Lektzian, Dan Satow, Mario Hernandez, Don Walters, Chris Colombo, Lance Grinnell, Bud McCreary, Randy Diem and Mark Wheeler.

**AHO PROMOTED TO UNIT MANAGER**

Kelly Aho, RN, BSN, CDE ('18), has been promoted to Unit Manager-Surgical Practices at UP Health System-Portage in Hancock. Aho has been with the hospital since 2012.

**ANDERSON NAMED RISING STAR**

Dickinson County Healthcare System Nursing Team Leaders were on hand in early May to present Richard Anderson, RN, ('17) with the 2018 Rising Star Award. The Award is given for outstanding performance to a newer member of the nursing staff that has shown great potential and promise.

**THORESON PROMOTED AT OPENTABLE**

Tucker Thoreson ('08) accepted a new position at OpenTable, where he's been

working since May 2014. Thoreson is now the Manager of Inside Sales after working as a sales/account manager for the first four years with the company.

**LIGHTNING PROMOTE ANDERSON**

Reece Anderson ('13) has moved to the role of Partnership Development Manager with the National Hockey League's Tampa Bay Lightning. Anderson earned his BBA at FinnU before earning a MBA and M.S. in Sport and Entertainment Management from the University of South Florida. The promotion is his second since joining the Lightning in 2015.

**PAKKALA, NP, NOW AT ASPIRUS**

Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital and Clinics proudly welcomed Clint Pakkala, NP, ('11) to its orthopedic team early this year. He earned a Master of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain College of Nursing.

**WORKMAN TO COACH NCAA D-1**

Cole Workman ('15) has joined the coaching staff of NCAA Division I Bemidji State University, serving as an assistant coach in charge of video and goaltenders, and director of hockey operations. Workman joins the Beavers after spending the last two seasons as the head coach and director of player personnel for the Thief River Falls Norskies of the Superior International Junior Hockey League.

## OBITUARIES

**DEBORAH J. AHO**

Hancock, MI, Mar. 17, 2018

**ARBUTUS BLEISE**

Calumet, MI, Apr. 13, 2018

**BRIAN (MAC) BRADY**

Marquette, MI, Apr. 10, 2018

**ALICE L. (PEYMBROECK) CLISHE**

Skaneateles, MI, Jan. 20, 2018

**DOUGLAS LeROY FILLPULA**

Ontonagon, MI, Apr. 3, 2018

**JOHN FINGER**

Houghton, MI, Feb. 27, 2018

**SUSAN E. FRY**

Mount Morris, IL

**DENNIS J. GEDVILLAS**

Houghton, MI, Mar. 13, 2018

**WALLACE HEIKKA**

Phoenix, AZ, Nov. 24, 2017

**RACHEL HETICO HIRVONEN**

Marquette, MI, Dec. 15, 2017

**ELSIE E. HUBER**

South Lyon, MI, Jul. 9, 2017

**PHYLLIS E. KOIVU**

Lanse, MI, Jan. 7, 2018

**EDWARD C. KOKKILA**

Hancock, MI, Mar. 8, 2018

**JEANNE KULJU**

Esko, MN, Sept. 26, 2017

**REV. WAYNE W. NIEMI**

Tucson, AZ, Mar. 8, 2018

**ERIKA R. NIEMI**

Tucson, AZ, Apr. 16, 2018

**IRENE MACKIE STORVES**

Bloomfield Hills, MI

**LILLIAN G. TERVONEN**

Hurley, WI, May 21, 2018

**"A PIZZA-STARVED HEART"**

Barbara Regan ('66), a member of Finlandia's Alumni Board, remembers while attending Suomi that she could not afford, like some other students, a late-night pizza. An article by Campus Pastor Soren Schmidt last year caught her eye. Schmidt was championing Finlandia's student needs pantry located in the lower level of the Chapel of St. Matthew. This food-plus pantry was started in response to a growing need on campus, and across campuses nationwide, for addressing food insecurity among college student populations.

Regan wanted to direct her support to help Finlandia's pantry, called The Table. She noticed an advertisement from a nearby Costco, promoting home delivery service. She

asked if she could order and pay for food from her zip code but have it delivered to Finlandia. They looked into it, and agreed to do it. "They loved the idea," Barbara recalls.

Food and other items now arrive each month for The Table. Being so far away and unable to interact with students regularly, I just feel like this is making a real and direct difference for students."

What's more, Barb has also sent gift cards to The Table. This too has been very rewarding for her and helpful for students using The Table. "Wouldn't it be great," she suggested in a recent email, "if Suomi and Finlandia alumni sent four gift cards once a year! What a difference that would make."

# FINLANDIA

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### NORTH WIND BOOKS

- A Lagom:** The Swedish Art of Living a Balanced, Happy Life by Niki Brantmark, hardcover .....\$19.<sup>99</sup>
- B Little Book of Lykke:** Secrets of the World's Happiest People by Meik Wiking, hardcover .....\$19.<sup>99</sup>
- C Little Book of Hygge:** Danish Secrets to Happy Living by Meik Wiking, hardcover.....\$19.<sup>99</sup>
- D Pro-Weave Sweatshirt Blanket** MV Sport, 11 oz 80% Cotton/20% Polyester Sweatshirt Fleece, 54"x84" Royal Blue, Navy Blue, Dark Stripe .....\$29.<sup>95</sup>

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