

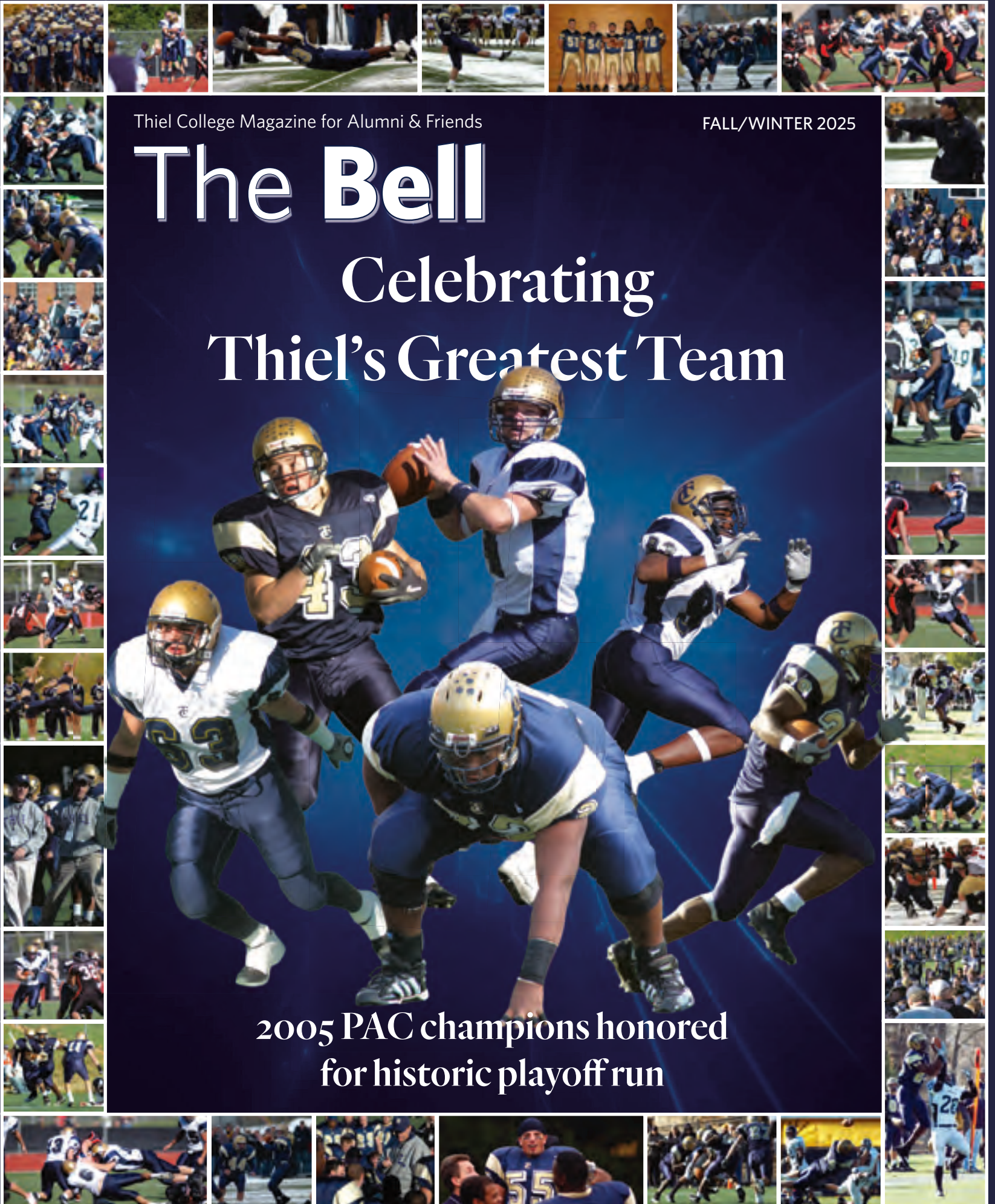
Thiel College Magazine for Alumni & Friends

FALL/WINTER 2025

# The Bell

## Celebrating Thiel's Greatest Team

2005 PAC champions honored  
for historic playoff run





# Grand Tomcat opening

*Homecoming got off to a great start with a fireworks display that felt like it was the grand finale from the opening salvo. The display was sponsored by Delta Sigma Phi, Zeta Tau Alpha, and Phantom Fireworks.*



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## ***The Bell***

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Thiel College is a liberal arts, sciences and professional studies college affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

## Dear Alumni and Friends,

The Thiel community shines brightly, and this year's Homecoming was proof of that as fireworks lit up the skies over Greenville. The magnificent display on the Friday of Homecoming was more than a dazzling spectacle;



it was a fitting metaphor for how boldly Thiel illuminates our region and how deeply our College spirit resonates with all who see it. The cheers of students, alumni, faculty, and friends reminded us that Thiel's light is not only visible but unforgettable. Hundreds of people returned to campus to join in the celebration of "There's No Place Like Homecoming." The community participated in meaningful ways, including the members of the Greenville VFW Post 3374 entering a float in the parade and the Mercer County Shrine Club bringing their wheel patrol to the parade.

That sense of wonder has marked the fall as we celebrated milestone anniversaries that reflect the heart of Thiel's traditions and enduring spirit. This year, we marked the 20th anniversary of the Joining Generations program, which has connected alumni, students and St. Paul's senior residents in meaningful mentorships for two decades. The members and alumni of Chi Omega, a sisterhood that has shaped the lives of women at Thiel for generations, celebrated their 75th anniversary.

We gathered on Oct. 11 to remember one of the College's most exciting athletic achievements—the 2005 football season. That remarkable team carried Thiel onto the national stage with two NCAA Division III playoff appearances, including the program's first NCAA playoff victory. The echoes of the Victory Bell rang again this fall as we revisited that remarkable season. While athletics are just one of the many excellent social, academic, artistic, leadership, or spiritual opportunities our students enjoy at Thiel, that celebration reminded us of the unity and pride that athletic success brings to a campus.

In this issue of *The Bell*, you will find features on these and other milestones that underscore Thiel's lasting impact on the lives of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These anniversaries are not only about looking back; they are reminders of the strength of our traditions and the foundation they provide for future generations.

We also invite you to take a quick look back to 1963, when the Thiel Choir embarked on its first international trip. That pioneering spirit of cultural exchange and musical excellence continues today, and we eagerly anticipate the Choir's March 2026 trip to Europe. Supported by alumni and friends like you, our students will once again bring Thiel's voice to an international stage.

Thank you for being part of this community that shines so brightly. Together, we honor our past, celebrate our present, and look forward to a future filled with promise.

Go Tomcats!

Susan Traverso, Ph.D.

# The Bell

... FALL/WINTER 2025 ...

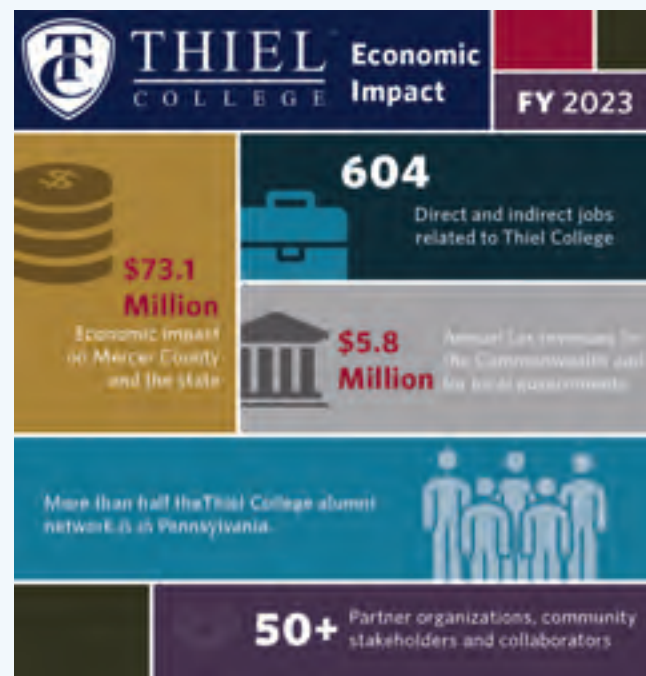
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## On the Cover



The Fall issue of *The Bell* honors the 2005 Thiel College football team, the only squad in school history to finish the regular season undefeated, capture the Presidents' Athletic Conference title, and win a national playoff game. The design is a collage of images from that remarkable season, highlighting memorable moments, standout plays, and the energy of game day. While the team boasted several individual stars, the breadth of photos underscores that the success of 2005 was built on

collective effort, resilience, and the spirit of football as the ultimate team sport.



# ON THIS DATE

The Sports Information Department's social media team relived the magic of the 2005 Thiel Tomcat football season. Each week, they shared the highlights, wins, and unforgettable moments from that historic run.







*Read more about the 2005 team on Pages 14-17*

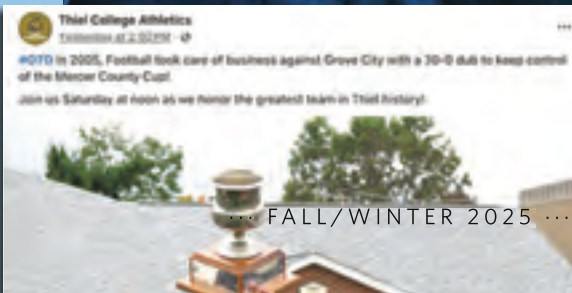
## Letters to the editor

Thiel College welcomes feedback regarding *The Bell*. Letters must contain a contact number (not for publication, but to allow for verification of the sender). Letters can be mailed to **Thiel College, Office of Communications and Marketing, 75 College Ave., Greenville, PA 16125**; or emailed to **pr@thiel.edu**. Letters accepted for publication may be edited for length and clarity.

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# Choir continues tradition of international tours with upcoming trip

By Molly (Shepler) Rowan '22

Thiel College has long promoted international travel as a powerful tool that assists in cultivating a vibrant, well-rounded, contextualized liberal arts student learning experience. The College strives to provide students with an education that extends beyond academic studies to encourage them in establishing their own well-informed worldviews that guide their lives, develop their respect for the world's peoples and cultures, and provide for them a sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging in humanity's vast landscape of knowledge and history.

Thiel students greatly benefit from the College's commitment to liberal arts education and international experiences, and historically, the Thiel Choir is one group that especially prioritized foreign exploration for many years. However, for a number of reasons, the choir has not traveled extensively in several decades, a misfortune set to be remedied in March 2026 when the choir travels again to Europe for seven days in Austria and Switzerland.

"[This trip] is a long time coming," said **Brianne Samson**, Director of the Thiel Choir. "Traveling abroad was a

beloved tradition for the Thiel Choir back in its early years. It has been the thing alumni remember most fondly as I've spoken with them."

One such alumnus is **James "Jim" Van Orden '66** who attended Thiel as a freshman in 1962 and described

performances at notable locations in between their explorations of London, Amsterdam, Cologne, Munich, Hanover, Berlin, Stockholm, and the surrounding towns and sights.

Samson, who has assisted the Thiel Choir since 2020 and became its

“This choir trip will be my very first international trip. I believe traveling is important. It opens up a whole new world full of opportunities for Thiel students. I am beyond excited...one thing I am looking forward to the most is singing some of our most loved pieces in the beautiful scenery of Switzerland and Austria.”

| Lillian Groover '28

joining the Thiel choir as "one of the best decisions [he] ever made." In a small essay titled "Inscriptions from the Catacombs," Van Orden recollected his memories of the choir's adventures during their six-week European excursion in the summer of 1963 that featured several of their own

full-time director in 2023, has always looked forward to leading a European tour for choir students and expressed her excitement at having the support to make it happen next semester.

"It has been about a decade since [the choir] last traveled abroad," Samson said. "The benefit to

students is immeasurable. I look forward to being part of something great like this, and sharing this experience with my students, who will hopefully carry it with them for the rest of their lives and possibly inspire future generations to travel with the Thiel Choir."

The choir's upcoming international tour of Austria and Switzerland in March 2026 will include seven days of busy travel with an agenda that includes visits to the cities of Vienna, Salzburg, and Zurich. Students will explore medieval castles, observe local monuments and churches, and visit historic spots including the residence of Ludwig van Beethoven and the birthplace of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The choir will also give their own choral performances at three historic venues which are yet to be determined. Thirty-five students, most of whom will be performing, are currently set to attend this tour of Europe.

To support the choir's travel, the College directed proceeds from the Oct. 30 performance of the GRAMMY-winning vocal ensemble Chanticleer at the College's David Johnson Memorial Chapel to the Thiel Choir and its students. This performance was hosted at the College as part of its Con Spirito Chamber Music Concert Series, which has brought top chamber music performers from around the world to campus for student and public enjoyment for nearly 20 years. The Con Spirito Series has long brought value to the Thiel and Greenville communities and now will specifically benefit students preparing to travel abroad with the choir to showcase the College's tradition of musical excellence on an



## Traveling Tomcats headed to Scandinavia this spring

By Molly (Shepler) Rowan '22

Another international trip is scheduled for May 2026 where students will travel to Scandinavia with stops in the cities of Oslo, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. Professor of Environmental Science and Associate Director of the Dietrich Honors Institute **Anna Reinsel, Ph.D. '06** will lead the trip and encourages students and anyone else interested in learning more to contact her at [areinsel@thiel.edu](mailto:areinsel@thiel.edu).

"Thiel students benefit from international travel by gaining fresh perspectives and building a sense of global citizenship," Reinsel said. "These experiences can be transformative in broadening their worldview."

Reinsel looks forward to "leading an adventure" to Scandinavia where students can take in the natural beauty of the area, appreciate the region's unique Viking heritage, and learn more about the environmentally sustainable practices that the countries of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden have committed to in their cultures and societies.

"We will have many guided tours of Oslo and Stockholm and a canal cruise around Copenhagen," Reinsel said. "We will go from modern to medieval as we travel back in time visiting 13th century fortresses."

Anyone in Thiel's network of alumni and friends who may be interested in taking the trip or providing support to enable more students to attend this trip to Scandinavia or other international trips is kindly encouraged to contact the College or Reinsel directly.

international stage.

"This choir trip will be my very first international trip," said **Lillian Groover '28**, a second-year Thiel student and member of the choir. "I believe traveling domestically and internationally is important. It

opens up a whole new world full of opportunities for Thiel students, and that is what makes it important. I am beyond excited...one thing I am looking forward to the most is singing some of our most loved pieces in the beautiful scenery of Switzerland and Austria."



Anyone interested in other sponsorships or donor arrangements to help the College support the students on the trip should contact the Office of Alumni Relations at [advancement@thiel.edu](mailto:advancement@thiel.edu) (724) 589-2160.

## College awarded \$200,000 ARC grant to expand nursing program



The College was awarded nearly \$200,000 from the Appalachian Regional Commission to expand its Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, strengthening the region’s healthcare workforce and addressing nursing shortages in northwestern Pennsylvania.

The three-year, \$399,836 project to modernize the labs and classrooms in the Daniel and Dorothy Spence Academic Center will add state-of-the-art simulation and skills training equipment. ARC funding of \$199,918, secured through an application with the Northwest Commission, will be matched by the College.

The grant supports the purchase of adult, pediatric and infant simulators, as well as advanced training tools such as

a chest drain simulator, automated medicine dispensing cabinet, and fully equipped skills labs.

The initiative builds on the program’s 2024 approval from the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing and accreditation from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Vice President for Academic Affairs **Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D.** said the investment allows students to gain cutting-edge training and clinical experiences at a time when the state faces a critical nursing shortage.

### Study finds Thiel College generates \$73.1 million in annual economic impact

Thiel College contributes \$73.1 million annually to Pennsylvania’s economy and supports 604 jobs statewide, according to an independent study released by the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania.

The analysis, conducted by Parker Strategy Group, measured the College’s direct spending on operations, wages, benefits and capital projects, along with student

and visitor spending. The report also considered the ripple effects of Thiel’s activity, such as supplier demand and household income growth.

The study found that Thiel supports full- and part-time jobs on campus and indirectly through contractors, service providers and local businesses including restaurants, hotels and retail stores. Economic activity linked to the College also generates an estimated \$5.8 million in annual tax revenues for state and local governments.

“As this study affirms, Thiel College is a vital driver of opportunity for our region and our state,” President

**Susan Traverso, Ph.D.**, said. “That impact is strengthened by substantial improvements underway on our campus, including more than \$60 million in construction and renovation projects. Much of this work is being completed by local firms.”

**Rod E. Wilt '86**, trustee and executive director of Penn Northwest Development Corp., said the report confirms Thiel’s role as an important anchor institution in the region.

“Thiel’s investment in facilities and academic quality supports jobs, attracts talent and strengthens the regional economy,” Wilt said.

### Graduate PA student appointed to national veterans’ caucus leadership role

**Julianna Sloan '25 M.S.'26** is the student representative to the veterans’ Caucus of the American Academy of Physician Assistants—a national

leadership position that supports veterans and military-affiliated students where she will help mentor, introduce educational resources, and support military-connected PA students nationwide.

After graduating from Edgewood (Ohio) High School in 2021, she

completed EMT training. In 2022, she enlisted in the Army National Guard and is a fire direction control specialist in an artillery unit and certified as a Combat Lifesaver and has earned honors in several Army training programs.

### Alumnus featured in *Record-Argus* for launching veterans' scholarship

**Mitchell Mason '25** launched the "Mitch" Mason Kappa Sigma Scholarship, which supports fraternity brothers who significantly contribute to veterans' causes. A recent graduate and valedictorian, Mason was inspired by his family's military service—his father is a U.S. Army veteran and his grandfather a longtime VFW leader. The scholarship reflects the Kappa Sigma Xi Epsilon chapter's long-standing support for veterans, including fundraisers and community relief efforts.

### SLP association donates assistive listening device to the College

During the 2025 Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology Commencement, the College's chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association presented a Williams Sound FM assistive listening system to President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.** on behalf of the graduating class.

The system improves accessibility for individuals with impairments

by transmitting sound directly to hearing aids or earbuds, reducing background noise. It is designed for use in classrooms, auditoriums, and event spaces, supporting the College's commitment to inclusivity.

NSSLHA President **Emma Park '24 M.S. '25** said that the \$1,000 cost was raised through bake sales and popcorn fundraisers.

### Professor awarded Fulbright grant to teach and research in Georgia

**Lana K. Kulik, Ph.D.** Associate Professor of Communication, was awarded a Fulbright Scholar grant. Fulbright is the U.S. government's flagship international academic exchange initiative, aimed at an understanding between the U.S. and other nations. She started at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs in Tbilisi in September.

Kulik is teaching intercultural communication, advanced public relations, and ethics of communication. She is focused on the impact of Russian propaganda in post-Soviet regions and the role of women in Georgian politics.

## NEH grant will advance digital literacy in the humanities

Thiel College received a \$59,857 National Endowment for the Humanities grant in May to support the integration of digital tools and literacy into humanities courses.

The project, "Integrating the Digital into Thiel College's Humanities," is directed by **David Buck, Ph.D.**, Professor of History and department chair. Faculty collaborators include **Jay Donis, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of History; **Sheila Gross, Ph.D. '10**, Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Dietrich Honors Institute; **Jared Johnson, Ph.D.**, Professor of English; and **Matthew Morgan, Ph.D.**, Professor of Philosophy.

The initiative focuses on expanding student access to digital tools, strengthening digital literacy, and encouraging campus-wide discussion about the role of technology in the humanities. Planned courses and modules will incorporate artificial intelligence, website design and other platforms while reinforcing critical thinking, reading and writing skills.

"Our goal is to help students become more engaged and informed digital citizens by grounding digital learning in the values and practices of the humanities," Buck said.

The grant was one of 68 awarded nationwide through the NEH's Spotlight on the Humanities in Higher Education program, which distributed \$9.55 million to colleges and universities in support of teaching, research and public engagement.

## Add your voice to Thiel's history

### Contribute a 25-word memory by December 15

Thiel College is preparing the second edition of its official history, building on the original volume that chronicled the College's story through 1974. Alumni are invited to share Thiel Tributes—25-word reflections on a person, place, or event that was central to their Thiel experience from 1975 to the present. Submissions will be considered for inclusion in the new edition of the history book. Due to space limitations, not all entries will be published, and those selected may be edited for length or clarity. Each submission must include your name (with maiden name if applicable), class year, and an email address for confirmation.

**Submissions can be made here:** <https://www.thiel.edu/thieltributes>

**Deadline:** December 15



## *There's No Place like Homecoming!*

Thiel College's Homecoming 2025 weekend, themed *"There's No Place Like Homecoming,"* brought alumni, students, and friends of the College together for a vibrant celebration filled with tradition, fellowship, and new memories.

The festivities began Thursday afternoon with a spirited kickoff rally. The Thiel College Marching Band performed the Thiel fight song along with selections inspired by *The Wizard of Oz*, setting the tone for the weekend. A welcome stretch of sunshine followed morning rain, leading into three days of clear skies and warm autumn weather.

Friday evening featured a full slate of special events, including the Alumni Awards Dinner, a pep rally, and a spectacular fireworks display described by attendees as an entire show of "grand finale" bursts.

On Saturday, campus was alive with activity. The day opened with the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Frangakis Business Hub in the Daniel

and Dorothy Spence Academic Center. The tailgating zone offered food, fellowship, and the anticipation of Tomcat football. Later that evening, class reunions offered meaningful moments for classmates and friends to reconnect.

The Homecoming parade featured the Mercer County Shrine Club of Pennsylvania, who entertained the crowd with their scooters, along with members of Reynolds VFW Post 3374.

Sunday's Service of Remembrance and the Presidents' Tree Walk closed the weekend, honoring Thiel's traditions and alumni legacies.

First-year student **Alayna Nale '29** captured the spirit of the weekend, saying, "At registration, I realized that no matter when you left, everyone always comes back."

Director of Alumni Relations **David Hummel '83** said, "Homecoming is always a reminder of the lifelong bonds created here. Seeing so many alumni return to campus, reconnect with classmates, and share their pride in

### Three alumni recognized for contributions during award dinner

At the Homecoming Alumni Awards Dinner, **Danielle (Hillwig) Doheny '10** received the Distinguished Alumni Award. She serves as Director of Public Policy and Advocacy for the International Myeloma Foundation.

**E. William Matthews '74** was presented with the Service to Thiel Award. A Certified Public Accountant, his career spans decades of leadership in healthcare finance.

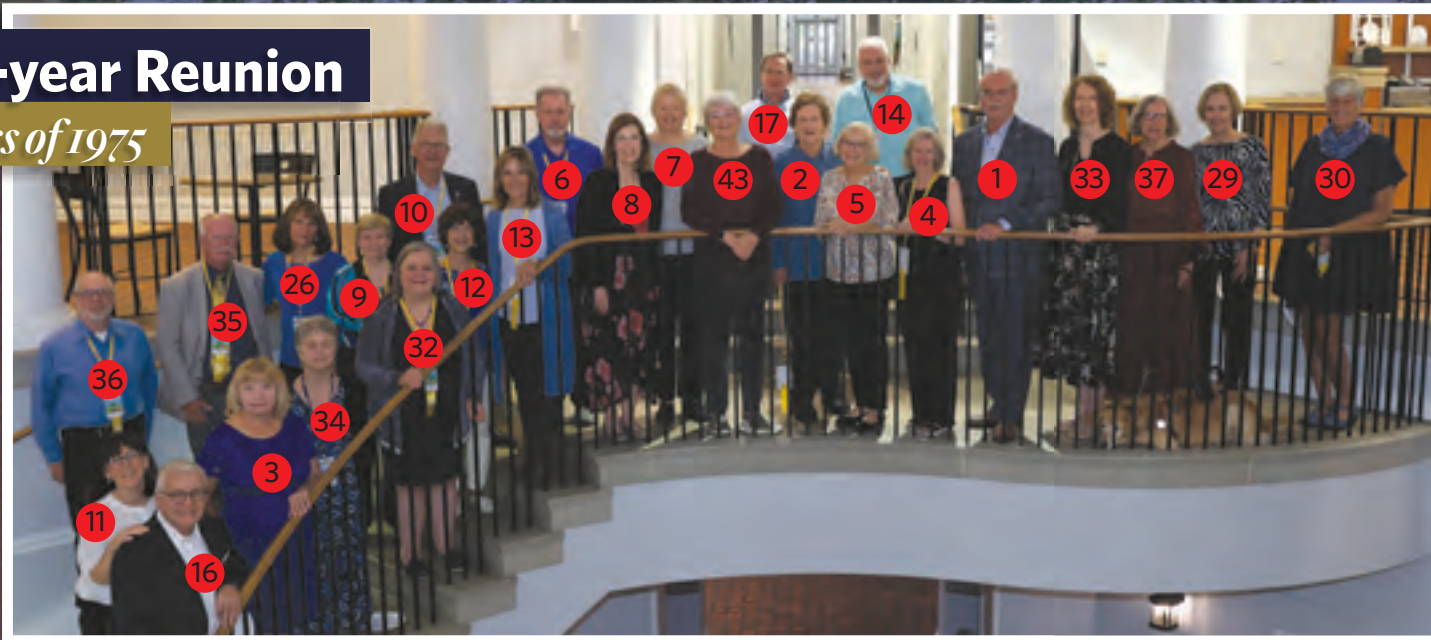
**Steven Morgan, Ph.D. '15** earned the Young Alumni Award. He is a research scientist at Meta specializing in public affairs and data analytics.

Thiel made this weekend truly special."

One participant summed it up best: "It is truly a team effort that welcomes so many to such a special place, Thiel College."

# 50-year Reunion

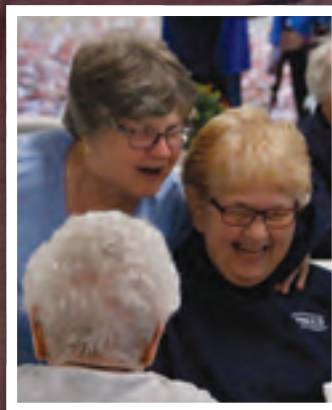
Class of 1975



1. Jack Martin; 2. Nancy (Gibson) Hauser; 3. Carol (Sereday) Heben; 4. Deborah (Brown) Bernardini; 5. Evey (Schlosske) Crain; 6. Paul Eberhardt; 7. Diane (Conner) Williams; 8. Gretchen (Bricker) Brobek; 9. Kathy Held; 10. Tom Wickerham; 11. Amy (Duff) Zeffiro; 12. Susan (Verdecchia) Matteson; 13. Linda Ebling; 14. Patrick McGrogan; 16. Tim Zeffiro; 17. George Schuler; 26. Sharon (Guca) Skolaski; 29. Jan Hathaway; 30. Linda (Dean) Oman; 32. Aleta Ann (Wadlinger) Sultana; 33. Eileen (Lyon) Moore; 34. Sheryll (Weiss) Ross; 35. Philip Gustafson; 36. Gary Alwine; 37. Nancy (Byers) Leverett; 43. Lynne (Morrissey) Smith



HOME COMING





# Chi Omega marks 75 years at Thiel

by Ireland Anderson '27



In conjunction with Homecoming, Chi Omega hosted a special event on September 27, 2025, honoring tradition and sisterhood. Members gathered at Hez's Rock, located outside the Flo West dorm, for a brief ceremony in memory of **Heather (Hez) Ehrman '99**. The meaningful tradition offered an opportunity to reflect on her legacy and the lasting impact she had on the chapter.

After the ceremony, the celebration continued in Greenville Hall with a reception. Food was provided by AVI, creating a welcoming space for Chi Omega sisters to reconnect, share stories, and celebrate their bond.

"One of the beautiful aspects of a sorority is that women join from all backgrounds and contexts and become united as sisters with shared values and ideals," **Audra Franley '17** said. "It's amazing to think of the unity of sisterhood and Chi Omega's values reflected across the eight decades."



The weekend also served as a reminder of Chi Omega's historic role at Thiel in advancing inclusion. **Denise Terry '71**, the first African-American student initiated into Thiel's Chi Omega chapter, faced adversity when the local chapter was subsequently placed on probation for "inadequate alumni recommendations, poorly trained officers, and ignorance of the rules." Despite this, the Beta Delta chapter of Chi Omega stood as part of the fight for racial equality within the national organization. Thiel President **Chauncey Bly, Ph.D H'84** supported the chapter and attempted to intervene on its behalf.

It was not until 1971, during a national Chi Omega conference in Chicago that included students and alumnae, that a resolution passed opening Chi Omega membership to all women, regardless of race. The Beta Delta chapter's perseverance and commitment to inclusivity remain a significant part of its history.

In addition to these gatherings, the College library featured a 75th anniversary display in front of Jeffrey Blanc's office. The exhibit highlighted the founding of Chi Omega at Thiel and celebrated the enduring legacy of the chapter.



# A SEASON TO REMEMBER

2005 football team celebrates 20th anniversary

by Ed Topoleski '02

It was the best of times and the best of teams. A team of student-athletes expertly assembled and singularly focused on winning the Presidents' Athletic Conference championship. What the 2005 football team ultimately achieved was beyond measure. That team became more than a conference champion; it put Thiel on the national scene. The 2005

Tomcats were the first in program history to qualify for the NCAA Division III playoffs, host a playoff game and win a playoff game.

The atmosphere on campus during Thiel's 28-3 first-round playoff win over Johns Hopkins on Nov. 19, 2005, as well as the second-round game the following weekend, was electric. The home playoff games were the apex

and enduring legacy of the team—in an unparalleled way it brought together generations of Tomcat fans from all walks of life.

Enshrined in the Thiel College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2021, the 2005 football team was recognized for its 20th anniversary on October 11 when this season's Tomcats hosted the Geneva Golden Tornadoes.

*Pictured above: About 20 players and coaches were among the more than 40 people who came to campus to celebrate the achievements of the 2005 football team. The 2005 team won the Presidents' Athletic Conference, completed an undefeated regular season and is the only team in school history to win a national playoff game.*



**Nelton Neal '06**, a 2025 Hall of Fame inductee, was among the players who returned for the halftime celebration and 2005 team reunion on Oct. 11.

"I am very thankful that our players and coaches are getting this recognition—they truly deserve it," said **Jack Leipheimer '74**, who served as head coach from 2001-08. "It makes me feel extremely honored, humbled, and appreciative. It's also very gratifying to know that the vision you had for your program was achieved, and that maybe you made a difference."

"It just brings back a lot of great memories from years ago," said **Danny Hess '09**, who was a first-year running back on the 2005 team. "It really reminds me of how special those moments were, and how special it was." There was still adversity in 2005 including a trio of overtime games that defined the season. The first of those games was against sixth-ranked Washington & Jefferson, which had won 23 straight games over Thiel entering the contest on October 1, 2005. In a streaky back-and-forth game, Thiel's defense "The Dark Side," came up with an interception on the first possession of overtime. **Steve**

**Minton '08** carried five times on Thiel's possession, setting up an easy 22-yard game-winning field goal by **Sammy Koyl '09**.

"...we finally beat W&J and 'got over the hump,'" said **Darrell Satterfield '06**, quarterback and one of the 2005 team captains. "It's one of the most complete games and true total team wins I can remember.

"They were great and the standard of our conference, No. 6 in the country, their place, their homecoming," said Satterfield, who lives in Georgia. "So much adversity we overcame that day with the back-and-forth. After we beat them, I truly believe we felt we could beat anyone in the country."

Two weeks later the Tomcats found themselves in quite a pickle, down 21-0 to the Waynesburg Yellow Jackets near the midpoint of the second quarter. Thiel kept Waynesburg from scoring again through the remainder of regulation and scored the game-tying touchdown with a little more than five minutes to go in the fourth quarter on a 38-yard

touchdown pass from Satterfield to **Brandon Chambers '06**. Both teams scored in the first overtime session. Thiel went ahead in double-overtime on a six-yard run by Minton and secured the win when Waynesburg turned the ball over on downs on its last possession.

With the PAC title secured after defeating Thomas More 24-14 on October 29, the Tomcats shifted focus to their next goal of qualifying for the playoffs. Thiel's Week 10 game against Carnegie Mellon may have seemed insignificant but, at the time, the conference did not have Automatic Qualification status, a guarantee for the league's championship team to compete in the NCAA Division III playoffs. So, to be certain of a postseason berth, Thiel needed to polish its résumé with a win over CMU.

"After the Thomas More game, the coaching staff decided we were going to treat the last two non-conference games of the season as the start of the playoffs," Leipheimer said. "I think that was one of the best coaching decisions



**Ed Topoleski '02**, head coach for the 2005 team **Jack Leipheimer '74** and **Hugh Ringer** were among the friends, alumni and former staff members who came to campus to celebrate the only team in Thiel history to win a national playoff game.

we made—our kids really bought into it, and it enabled us to maintain an edge to finish the season undefeated.”

In another contest that resembled a championship boxing match with hard punches thrown and even harder counterpunches, the Tomcats used two fourth quarter touchdowns to force overtime, ultimately winning the game in triple overtime. The difference was a successful 2-point conversion in the third extra session.

“I would say, for me, the final regular-season game, the triple-overtime victory at CMU,” said Hess,

who is now a project manager for PNC Bank, recalling his favorite memory from the 2005 season while noting an abundance of Thiel fans in attendance from the Pittsburgh area. “It was a crazy back-and-forth game. It wasn’t guaranteed that we were gonna make the national bracket ... it was the most exciting game I was ever a part of.”

Now adults, gone their separate ways, many married with kids of their own and working in their professional fields, members of the team agree that they still utilize lessons learned 20 years ago.

“There’s no question, to me, that anyone would tell you it was the overarching theme of RYFP—Reach Your Full Potential,” Satterfield said, repeating Coach Leipheimer’s mantra. “The process of daily improvement in everything that you do in pursuit of your goals and aspirations. This, to me, allows us to be the best versions of ourselves on a daily basis in all we do.”

“As a generality, being a part of that football program under Coach Leip really prepared me for life,” Hess said. “The coaches talked a lot about things you can’t learn in the classroom—overcoming adversity, working as a team and doing your part. I use those life lessons today.”

In 2019, offensive tackle **Dave Hendricks '05** and Minton were the first members of the 2005 team to be inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame. Leipheimer was enshrined in 2024, and Satterfield and offensive tackle **Nelton Neal '06** are slated to be inducted in January.

The Tomcats, who set 24 school records in 2025, ranked No. 15 by Don Hansen’s Football Gazette’s Top 40, No. 16 by the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) Coaches’ Poll and No. 17 by D3football.com’s Top 25 at the end of the season.

Leipheimer was the PAC Coach of the Year, the AFCA Division III Region II Coach of the Year and the Football Gazette’s South Region Coach of the Year in 2005. Twenty Tomcats earned All-PAC recognition in 2005 while five players received All-American and All-Region accolades.

Though hard to believe 20 years have passed since the Tomcats rang the Victory Bell after winning the first playoff game in program history, the

time to reminisce on a job well done and catch up with old teammates and coaches has come.

"I get filled with emotion whenever I see former players and they genuinely care about you and appreciate some of the life lessons you tried to instill in them," Leipheimer said. "I am extremely proud of the men they have become and the impact they are making in their families and communities. I'm honored to have been their coach."



A reception was held prior to the game for members of the 2005 football team and friends and family who were on campus on Oct. 11.



**John Adams '09** (left) and **Steve Minton '08** (right) played pivotal roles for the Tomcats during the team's 2005 run.



**Kurt Reiser** (left) is principal at Knoch (Pa.) High School, and **Antonio Quarterman, Ed.D. '08** is the Director of Identity Networks & Special Projects for the Pitt Alumni Association.



Revisit the 2005 football season and the team's hall of fame induction ceremony here: <https://www.thiel.edu/football-2005>





# Twenty years of Joining Generations'

benefits Thiel students  
and community

By Molly (Shepler) Rowan '22



In the time since it began 20 years ago, the Joining Generations program has maintained its mission of promoting intergenerational connections between the students at Thiel College and the residents of the nearby St. Paul's Senior Living Community. As a result, Thiel and St. Paul's have cultivated a remarkable relationship that fosters genuine friendships between older and younger adults by providing meaningful social, academic, and community service opportunities.

Started by **James H. "Jim" Shaffer, Ph.D.**, who served as a professor of psychology at the College for 39 years before his retirement in 2009, Joining Generations began as an opportunity for students and residents to simply come together to form friendships and appreciate each other's life experiences. In his later years, Shaffer became a resident himself at St. Paul's, which is where he passed away earlier this year on March 19. His legacy continues in part through the continuation of Joining Generations, which has grown over the years

and is now characterized by several collaborations between St. Paul's and the College's clubs, alumni groups, the nursing and Speech-Language Pathology programs, and others.

"For 20 years, our Joining Generations program has brought together the wisdom and life experiences of St. Paul's residents with the energy and curiosity of Thiel College students," said **Tammy Lininger**, Vice President for Senior Living Services at St. Paul's. "What began with the vision of Dr. James Shaffer has grown into a cherished

tradition filled with learning, laughter, and friendship. Our residents delight in the energy of young people and love connecting with them, just as students find inspiration in the life stories and talents of our residents. Together, they create something truly special — a blessing that continues to enrich both communities in countless ways."

The opportunities for academic enrichment made possible by Joining Generations is incredibly valuable to Thiel students. Many Thiel professors incorporate projects into their courses which encourage students to collaborate with St. Paul's residents, such as planning events that will benefit residents or completing biographical assignments. St. Paul's welcomes Thiel students looking to complete internships in a wide variety of fields, and students also have the option to volunteer at St. Paul's for events and activities, which may

include anything from weekly Bingo games to going on walks or assisting with crafts.

Certain departments at the College have special relationships with St. Paul's through Joining Generations that allow for professional and clinical learning opportunities. The College's Speech-Language Pathology program is one such example; because many residents at St. Paul's suffer from communication or age-related disorders, students in the SLP program learning to assess and treat patients with those disorders can gain real world experience by working with St. Paul's residents. The residents, in turn, benefit from the therapeutic services they receive. **Julie Kobak**, Director of Clinical Education and Associate Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, is highly involved in Joining Generations on behalf of the SLP program.

"Experience in the Joining Generations program equips students with skills that are transferable to medical, rehabilitation, home health, and community settings," Kobak said.

"Direct interaction with older adults builds empathy, patience, and active listening skills."

Aside from its academic and service-oriented collaborations, Joining Generations also plans fun activities throughout the year for both residents and students to enjoy, including Sip and Paint and "Bleacher Buddies" events in which students and residents pair up to make paintings or watch Thiel sporting events together.

"The residents and staff of St. Paul's thoroughly enjoy the Joining Generations events that are held throughout the year," said **Mike Allen**, Director of Life Enrichment at The Villas at St. Paul's. "The students bring a very positive and uplifting energy to the residents, who are often contending with health challenges from day to day. The relationships that have been formed through the Joining Generations program over the years have been truly priceless."

"I've enjoyed the Bleacher Buddy football games," said **Dave Varner**, a resident at St. Paul's. "I've also really liked talking with the medical

students. They act professionally and are friendly. They are always respectful."

"I enjoy the students because they bring a fresh new outlook on life to me," said **Janeen Denmark**, another resident at St. Paul's who receives therapeutic services from the clinic operated by the College's Speech-Language Pathology program.

Twenty years later, Joining Generations is still fostering intergenerational friendships, enriching the lives of students and seniors in Thiel's local community, and supporting the next generation of clinicians, nurses, professionals, and citizens who will make up the future of our communities and our world.

"I am truly grateful to be part of an organization that has such a meaningful impact on everyone involved," said **Olivia Giardina M.S.'26**, a student in the Speech-Language Pathology program. "The residents at St. Paul's represent the generation that worked tirelessly to build the foundation of our small town. I look forward to seeing how it will continue to grow in the years ahead."



**Sally (Fox) Roth '65** and **Martin Roth '66 H'06** are two St. Paul's residents who are also alumni involved in the Joining Generations program.



Speech-Language Pathology students **Katabella Byers '25 M.S.'26** (left), **Abigail Smagala '25 M.S.'26** (center), and **Rachel Hause M.S.'27** (right) were among the students helping at the Bleacher Buddies football game in October.



## Roosa leads 2025 Hall of Fame class

By Dante Parente



Few names resonate in Thiel College football history quite like **Joe Roosa '80**. Playing for the Tomcats from 1976 to 1979, Roosa became synonymous with defensive excellence, grit and an unyielding work ethic that set the standard for generations of Thiel players. From the first snap of his freshman season, it was clear that Roosa was a special talent—one who could change the course of a game with his intensity, instinct, and physicality.

A two-time All-PAC selection, Roosa consistently demonstrated an uncanny ability to read opposing offenses, make decisive tackles and lead by

example on every down. By the end of his career, he had amassed 404 tackles—a record that still stands at Thiel nearly 50 years later. This remarkable total places him third in the history of the PAC and makes him one of only three players in the league's 70-year history to surpass 400 career tackles.

Roosa's single-game performances were equally impressive. He holds the Thiel and PAC record for single-game sacks with six, and he occupies two spots in the Thiel record book for single-game tackles. These feats highlight not only his physical dominance but also his consistency and ability to rise to the occasion when the stakes were highest.

Coaches, teammates and opponents alike remember him as a fierce competitor whose preparation and discipline were unmatched. He was not just a defensive force; he was a leader who inspired those around him to elevate their game. His presence on the field demanded attention, and his ability to make pivotal plays in critical moments often swung games in Thiel's favor.

Beyond the numbers and accolades, Roosa's legacy is defined by the way he embodied the Tomcat spirit: resilience, determination and pride. Even decades after his playing days ended, his record-setting achievements remain a benchmark for aspiring players. His career serves as a reminder that success in football is as much about heart and perseverance as it is about physical skill.

### Class of 2025 left an indelible mark at Thiel

Each year, the Thiel College Athletics Hall of Fame celebrates the athletes who have left an indelible mark on Tomcat history, and the Class of 2025 is no exception. Seven outstanding individuals will be honored at the 44th induction ceremony on January 24, representing a wide range of sports and eras but sharing a common thread of excellence and commitment. Their stories are woven into the fabric of Thiel athletics—moments of grit on the football field, leadership on the volleyball court, and versatility across multiple sports. **Kristen Benjamin '05** showcased a rare ability to compete at a high level in track & field, soccer, and basketball. Football standouts **Nelton Neal '06**, **Darrell Satterfield '06**, **Joe Roosa '80** and **Jeff Sorenson '92** brought strength and consistency to one of Thiel's cornerstone programs. Volleyball stars **Madison (Chylik) Smith '11** and **Christina Toth '01** added to the program's tradition of success through their skill and leadership. Together, this remarkable class reflects the tradition, pride, and enduring spirit of Tomcat athletics.

### Women's flag football is coming

Thiel College will field a women's flag football team in spring 2026, Director of Athletics **Isaac Collins** announced in October.

Thiel becomes the sixth Presidents'

Athletic Conference school to offer women's flag football.

"Introducing women's flag football reflects our commitment to growing opportunities for student-athletes and staying ahead of the curve in collegiate athletics," Collins said.

Nationally, flag football has

experienced significant growth at the high school and collegiate levels. In February, the NCAA's Committee on Women's Athletics recommended that Divisions I, II and III sponsor legislation to add women's flag football to the NCAA Emerging Sports for Women program.

— 1960s —

**The Reverend James Stough '62** was honored by the Zion Lutheran Church, Hummelstown, Pa. on June 8, 2025, for his 60th anniversary of ordination into the Lutheran ministry. He was ordained in Greenville Pa., on June 10, 1965, by the Western Pennsylvania-Pa-West Virginia synod. He spent his whole active ministry in Lancaster, Dauphin, and Lebanon counties of Pa. Stough is retired now, but stays active assisting weekly with the Communion service and leads the service when the pastor takes a vacation.

**David Matthews '63** served as Parish pastor and Director of Counseling Services at The Lutheran Service Society of Western PA and Director of Community Counseling, Glade Run, Zelenople, Pa. He has been retired for 12 years. He and his wife, Barbara, have lived in their "starter house" in Glenshaw, Pa. (north of Pittsburgh), for 50 years. The couple lives at their condo in the winter in Bonita Beach on the west coast of Florida.



**H. Jon Jones, Ed.D. '66** and his wife, JoAnn Hairston-Jones, recently celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary. Jones is professor

emeritus. He retired from his position as full professor and Director of the University Reading Clinic at Western Illinois University. Some of his and his wife's retirement activities include travel, nature/wildlife photography, kayaking, dancing and periodic trips to nearby Chicago for the urban

amenities offered there. They reside in Macomb, Ill.

**David '68 and Helen (Dolly) (Skezas)'69 Whelan** send a photo with **Dick Wardian '67**



preparing for their annual Honey Harvest festival at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Great Falls, Va.

— 1970s —

**Mona (Betsy) E. (Fisher) Dalby '70** is a retired physical therapist. Her husband, **Kenton (K.C.) Dalby '71**, died in March 2025. She has six grandchildren. She resides in Freehold, N.J.

**Kevin Meistickle '73** has been the owner/manager of the Atlanta Crackers for 43 years after bringing the team back from extinction in 1982. He has helped produce 300-plus professional baseball players and more than 1,000 wins for the Crackers, earning an induction into the National Semi-Pro Hall of Fame in 2017. Meistickle is also part of Thiel's 1991 Hall of Fame class for his athletic achievements in baseball. He was a four-year letter winner, a three-time All-PAC nominee, and became Thiel's first professional baseball player when he was drafted by the New York Mets in 1973.



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<https://www.thiel.edu/alumni/keep-in-touch>



**G. Leah (Glessner) Dever '74 H'25** was reappointed to the Board of Trustees and began her new term in November. Dever retired as Associate Director of

Safety, Security and Infrastructure at the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Science, where she oversaw operations for the federal government's system of ten national laboratories. Over her career, she held leadership roles in managing large-scale activities at science laboratories and nuclear weapons facilities across the country and earlier worked in environmental engineering and higher education. A biology major at Thiel, Dever earned her master's degree in biology and

ecology from Penn State University. She received an honorary Doctor of Science degree during the College's 2025 Commencement Exercises, adding to her past recognition as the recipient of the 2001 Distinguished Alumni Award and the 2024 Service to Thiel Award.



**Richard Callaway '75** recently retired after 42 years of teaching. The past 40 years were at Eastside High School in Paterson, N.J. He resides in Rutherford, N.J.

**David L. Palesky, Ph.D. '77** is retired. He and his wife, Cindy, celebrated

their 47th wedding anniversary on a Carnival Cruise to the western Caribbean. Cindy works for NGS/Medicare and spends her time being Grammie to their five-year-old grandson. David spends his time volunteering at the Totem Pole Playhouse in Fayetteville, Pa., playing golf and HO model railroading.

**Donna Wagle '78** had her art displayed during June at Salida Regional Library in Salida, Colo. "My artwork runs from realistic to quirky—often full of bright colors and light. I'm mostly known for my rusty old trucks, wildflowers and plein air landscapes depicting the wonderful Colorado scenery," Wagle said in a press release. Originally from



## Hannah (Uschock) '22 and Charlie Lichtenwalter '22

**Residence:** Clearfield, Pa.

**Professional Experience:** Charlie is a Certified Public Accountant and a Senior Accountant at CNB Bank.

Hannah is a secondary social studies learning support teacher at Clearfield Area School District and is working towards Pennsylvania principal K-12 certification.

**Thiel Involvement:** Charlie was president of Kappa Sigma, senior class president, Supplemental Instruction leader, Super Tutor, and captain of the golf team. He was a member of Thiel Team, Order of Omega and the business honorary society.

Hannah was the Student Government Association president, vice president of Women Inspiring the Next Generation and held various leadership positions with Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. She was also a member of the TSSN, Phi Alpha Theta, and the Haller Enterprise Institute. She was a multi-year student-worker in the Office of Communications and Marketing and a Vira I. Heinz Women in Global Leadership Scholarship recipient.

**Reasons We Give Back:** "Thiel has given us so much! Because of our education and involvement, we have been able to accomplish a lot in a short amount of time—personally and professionally. We give because we want the next generation to have the same incredible opportunities that we had. Go Tomcats!"

## The Thiel Fund File

*A short profile of the people who donate to The Thiel Fund, the College's largest source of unrestricted funds.*

Western New York, Wagle grew up in a small town on Chautauqua Lake (N.Y.), surrounded by an artistic family. She began teaching art in Ripley and Sherman, N.Y. after graduating from Thiel. While visiting a friend in Colorado one summer, Wagle decided to move to Denver and began teaching in Douglas County, and later in Pagosa Springs and Salida. After 28 years of teaching art, Wagle is retired and said she can now focus on her artwork.

**Cummins McNitt '79** retired from the Tyrone Area School District in 2024 after 17 years of teaching history, economics, geography, and driver's education. A lifelong community leader, he has also served as a counselor, Boy Scouts professional, curator and executive director of the Railroaders Memorial Museum, and co-owner of the Stony Point Bed and Breakfast with his wife, Peg Baldrige. McNitt was named Tyrone's 2024 Hometown Hero for his volunteer leadership with Camp Anderson, the Boy Scouts of America, and First Presbyterian Church of Tyrone. He remains active as a ruling elder at his church, vice president of Camp Anderson Corp., and assistant district commissioner for northern Blair County Boy Scouts.

**J. Scott Miller '79** retired from parish ministry at the end of February 2025 and will be moving with his wife Sally to Harrisburg, Pa.



**Gary J. Witosky '79 H'24** was appointed to the Thiel College Board of Trustees in November. A longtime

faculty member, administrator, and supporter, Witosky returned to Thiel in 2002 after more than 20 years in public accounting and private industry, including leadership roles at Ernst & Young, American Axle & Manufacturing, and Colfor Manufacturing. He later served as senior vice president, chaired the Department of Business Administration and Accounting, and became the first David M. Miller Endowed Chair of Accounting. Recognized with multiple honors—including the Service to Thiel Award, Professor of the Year, and an honorary doctorate—Witosky was named Professor Emeritus in 2023. He and his wife, Kate, live in Chardon, Ohio, and have two adult children.

— 1990s —

**Michael Allen '90** is a video editor for ABC News Washington, D.C. He has spent more than 30 years in the television industry, working for companies such as Black Entertainment Television (BET) and Discovery Communications. He serves as a Director At-Large on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. Allen spoke to students at the Erie Center for Arts and Technology on Thursday, Sept. 25. He grew up in the lower eastside of Erie, Pa. and spoke about his journey from college to Erie's WSEE to ABC News in Washington, D.C., with an array of work in between.

**Ron Legler '90** was featured in *Baltimore Style* in July. He is the France-Merrick Performing Arts Center President in Baltimore. For his time at Thiel he says, "A freshman-



year elective class changed my life forever," Legler explains. "I was cast in 'Spoon River' as several characters and by senior year I had the honor of playing Artie Shaughnessy in 'The House of Blue Leaves.' That stage lit a fire in me that still burns today."

**Scott Hartman '93** was promoted to county administrator for McHenry County, Ill., after serving as deputy county administrator since 2014. A Thiel honors graduate, Hartman previously held leadership roles in Highwood, Pingree Grove, and Marengo, and was a driving force in developing McHenry County's strategic plan.



**Shane Snyder, Ph.D. '94**, internationally recognized water researcher and professor at Georgia Institute

of Technology, returned to Thiel College on Oct. 9 to speak on global water quality issues. Snyder, the 2021 Clarke Prize winner and one of the world's leading experts in potable water reuse, presented "Exploring the Great Unknown: Identification of Chemical Mixtures in Drinking Water." His talk explored how scientists are using new technology to detect trace chemicals, study their impact on people and the environment, and address emerging threats to drinking water safety. A chemistry major at Thiel, Snyder went on to earn his Ph.D. at Michigan State University and has built an internationally respected career in water research and environmental engineering.

## CLASS NOTES

**Laura L. Smith '95** works as a training coordinator for ZOLL LifeVest. She resides in Avonmore, Pa.

**Alison M. Boyle '97** is a marketing liaison for Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Naples. She started working for Encompass in April 2024. She resides in Estero, Fla.



**Shannon Saylor '98** is the U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Virginia. He was nominated by President Joseph R. Biden and

approved by the United States Senate in 2023. Saylor was also a member of the United States Army, serving as a Sergeant with the Army's 75th Ranger Regiment and completing a tour in Afghanistan.

### — 2000s —

**Clyde J. Morgan '00** is the Director of Track & Field and Cross Country/ Assistant Athletic Director of Scholar Athletes Development at Wabash College. Morgan shares that Wabash captured its 11th North Coast Athletic Conference outdoor track and field championship, and 20th track and field title overall by winning the 2025 NCAC Men's Outdoor Track and Field Championship at DePauw University. The 11 outdoor titles extend the Wabash record for NCAC titles. The Little Giants have won five championships in the past seven years. Coach Morgan and his staff were named the NCAC Staff of the Year. Coach Morgan has won the most outdoor championships

in the history of the North Coast Athletics Conference. He and his wife, **Jennifer (Barnes) Morgan '03** have three children and reside in Crawfordsville, Ind.

**Michael J Mazurkiewicz Jr. '03** is a teacher and assistant athletic director

at Maple Heights City Schools (Ohio). He and his wife, Elizabeth, have three children and reside in North Royalton, Ohio.



**Scott A. Lykins '05** was recently named principal at Warm Springs Intermediate School in Berkeley Springs, W.Va. He and his wife, **Mariah (Matson) Lykins '07** reside in Berkeley Springs, W.Va. Lykins majored in biology. He was a co-winner of the Mary Linn Fox First Year Teacher Award and later earned a master's degree in elementary education with a focus on science and character education from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania.

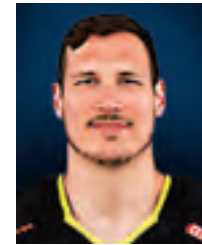
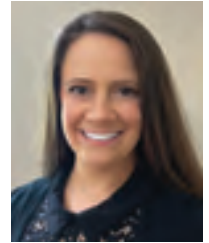
**Kathryn E. Brashear '06** is the Director of Bureau Administration for the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission in Harrisburg, Pa. She resides in Mill Hall, Pa.

### — 2010s —

**Evan J. Sanzari '11** and his wife, Nicole M. (Calvert) Sanzari, have three children and reside in Meadville, Pa.



**Michelle A. Blose '12** works as a clinical neuropsychologist at Alexandria VA Health Care System. She received her doctoral degree in 2020. Michelle served as Chief Resident at her neuropsychology fellowship. She was recently appointed Chair of Early Career Neuropsychologist Committee for the Society of Clinical Neuropsychology (APA Division 40).



**Berend Grube '14** is a professional football player for the Stuttgart Surge in the European League of Football (ELF). He was

ranked the ninth best player in the league in 2023, and the 90th best player in 2024. In the offseason, Grube works as a Personal Trainer for Holmes Place Deutschland in Germany.

**Aimee (Gillispie)**

**Oxenham '14** was recently hired as the head coach for the Lakeview Sailors girls volleyball team in the Lakeview School District (Pa.). She works for Mercer County as the Specialty Courts Coordinator in the Intermediate Punishment program, which works with the mental health, veterans and treatment courts. Oxenham and her husband, Ryan, are expecting their first child together while her stepdaughter, Natalie, is starting second-grade.





**Andrew Denson '15** was hired as the assistant women's rugby coach at Norwich University. He previously coached both men's and women's rugby programs at Union College and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

**Robert James Malson '15** is in his sixth season as the defensive line coach for the Norwich University football team, having recently added recruiting coordinator and video coordinator responsibilities after joining the coaching staff in August of 2020.

**Amanda K. Hautmann '17** started graduate school in August at Indiana University of Pennsylvania to pursue her doctorate in clinical psychology. She resides in Indiana, Pa.

**RayShaun Nevins '17** was hired as Firestone football's head coach by Akron Public schools. Nevins was an assistant coach on Firestone's football staff for the last six seasons under former Falcons coach Eric Mitchell, who is Nevins' uncle.

**Sara Matczak '17** was appointed to the Thiel College Board of Trustees and began her first term in November.



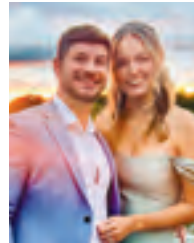
A mathematics and business administration graduate, Matczak earned her M.S. in Finance from Loyola University Chicago in 2018. She launched her career with Sycamore Ridge Capital Partners before joining Volordige Investment Management in Jupiter, Fla., where she now serves as Lead Trader

overseeing trading software projects, operations data, and treasury strategy.

**Hilary J. (Leipold) Holt '18** and her husband, Austin Holt, reside in Wesley Chapel, Fla.

**Isabella Bungo '19** was hired as the new head coach of Cecil (Md.) College's softball program.

**Kristyn M. (Kinner) Miller '19** is the Director of the Office of Medical Education for the University of Pittsburgh. She and her husband, Jason Miller, 19 reside in Monroeville, Pa.



— 2020s —

**Zach Oliver '20** was named boys soccer coach at Massillon Washington High School (Ohio).

**Scott Alan Simcoe Jr. '20** was recently hired as the business manager for Greenville School District. He resides in Greenville, Pa.

**Alexandrea (Geraci) Casile '21** is a Project Scientist with Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc. She leads wetland delineations and rare plant surveys, helping clients balance development with environmental stewardship. She assists with stream and wetland delineations for natural gas, mining, and residential companies. She conducts biological stream monitoring with macroinvertebrate sampling, electroshocking, and water sampling.



**Abigaile (Triskett) Crooks '22** is head volleyball coach at Grand Valley High School, her alma mater in Orwell, Ohio. She is in her fourth year of teaching at Grand Valley Middle School as a fifth-grade intervention specialist this year.

**Daniel Myers '22** was hired as Student Success Associate at the Spire Academy in Geneva, Ohio. In this role, he supports and guides students through academic and personal challenges. He previously spent time as Director of Football Operations and Head Assistant of Athletic Facilities at Wilkes University and before that he was assistant coach for Thiel football.

**Samantha DiBucci '23** finished principal shooting for the movie "Mister X" (sequel to "SpookT") this summer. After finishing wrapping the movie, she helped run a summer camp teaching teenagers on how to get into the media/film world.

**JC Govannucci '25** was named head boys volleyball coach at Pittsburgh Central Catholic.

**Chad Morningstar '25** was hired to teach 9th grade U.S. history and 11th grade civics at Tussey Mountain High School in Saxton, Pa. He is also the offensive and defensive line coach for the football team, the head coach of the junior high basketball team, and the throwing coach of the track & field team. Morningstar earned four PAC Academic Honor Rolls and three CSC Academic All-District honors as a student, and as an athlete, he earned three All-PAC honors as a defensive lineman.

**Madeleine G. White '25** is a patient care technician at UPMC Mercy. She resides in Pittsburgh, Pa.

– marriages –



**Dawn M. (Pastorius) Kefauver '16** and Cory Kefauver were married on October 28, 2023, in Baltimore, Md. Other Thiel alumni who were in attendance included **Ryan Ball '19, Casey Schultz '17, Joe Kelsey '17, Ashley Seem '18, Audrey (Rickard) Roberts '17**. Dawn began work at Meehan & Roby in December 2024. Prior to her role at Meehan & Roby, she was at JP Morgan Chase Bank, N.A for five years as a Branch Operations Lead. They reside in Timonium, Md. and their two cats, Arthur and Lorenzo.



**Victoria (Foeks) Wood '16** and **Zachary Wood '17** were married on August 17, 2019, in Mercer, Pa. Their son, Jace was born on June 2, 2024. The family lives in York Haven, Pa.



**Brant Dencher '17** and Kathryn Dencher were married on August 17, 2024. They dated before he attended Thiel and throughout his entire time at college. They got married at Heinz Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. They reside in Cleveland, Ohio.



**Madison (Murray) Long '23** and **Logan Long '22** were married on August 2, 2024, in West Farmington, Ohio. They had many Thiel alumni and current students attend their special day, some of whom were in the wedding party - Bryce McCloskey, **Hunter Thompson '23, Hunter Martz '23, Maddison Neely '22 MBA'23, Alaina Harpst '25** and **Allie Walsh '24**. Also in attendance were Kylee Jordan, **Maria Torres '25, Erica Gregory '25**, Carlee Reynolds, Devin Rhoades, **Jessica (Peters) Burkley '21, John Burkley '21, Gavin Sankey '25, Frank Gill '24, Hunter Baxter M.S.'23, Bailey Fritz '24, Jake Alberts '24, Evan Whiteside '24, Jared Curcio '24, Dylan Proper '22**, Peyton Hearn, wrestling coach **Craig Thurber, Gage Gladysz '20 M.S.'21** and **Natalie Zgurich '23**. The couple resides in Greenville, Pa.



**Autumn (Gourley) DeVault '24** and Isaac DeVault were married on August 30, 2025.



**Allie Walsh '24** and **Gavin Sankey '25** were married June 4, 2025, in Winsor, Ohio. **George Branch-Trevathan, Ph.D.** was the officiant. Dinner prayer was offered by **Gary Witosky '79 H'24**. Maid of Honor was **Victoria Young '22**. Bridesmaids were Charlotte Rhodes, **Madie (Murray) Long '23**, **Jess (Peters) Burkley '21**, **Sarah Carlson '21**, **Meghan Nice**, **Alaina Harpst '25**. Best Man was Joe Benedek. Groomsmen were **Chad Morningstar '25**, Levi Becker, Philip Harris and Riley Patterson. Many Thiel alumni and students, including **Toby Atwood '26**, were among the guests.

– births –



To **Cassie (Graham) Thomas '15** and **Ryan Thomas '15**, a daughter, Nora, on March 20, 2025. She joins brothers Evan and Gabriel. Ryan work as a vice president – senior compliance manager at PNC Bank. The family resides in Ligonier, Pa.



To **Tylor M. (Whitely) Takacs '18** and **Jason Takacs '18**, a daughter, Lucie, on April 11, 2025. She joins older brother Elias. Tylor is a third-grade teacher in the Mars Area School District. The family resides in Freedom, Pa.



To **Haley M. (Tokich) Thorp '19** and **Jason R. Thorp '18**, a daughter, Ayla, on May 22, 2025. The family resides in Coraopolis, Pa.



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<https://www.thiel.edu/alumni/keep-in-touch>

≡ CLASS NOTES ≡



To **Jacqueline E. Galford '21** and Robert Brougher, a daughter, Raegan, born February 7, 2025. Jackie is currently completing her final year of Chatham University's Entry-Level Occupational Therapy doctoral program.



To **Maddie (Sollers) Feciuch '20** and **Tyler Feciuch '19**, a daughter, Annisten Lynn, on June 18, 2025.



**Allie (Gloor) Wakley '16** and **Aaron Wakley '15** welcomed their second son, August Joseph, on February 19, 2025. He joins big brother Asher (3). The family resides in Erie, Pa. Aaron works as a financial advisor at Equitable Advisors and Allie works at LECOM as a human resources generalist/recruitment specialist.

– gatherings –



Some members of the Class of 1970 gathered in Bethany Beach, Dela. in July. Around the table from left: **Chris (Olsen) Snyder '70**, **Marnie Gill Joseph '70**, **Jane Ross-Stempel '70**, **Jo Spiker Devlin '70** and **Carol Sue Carlson-Jones '70**.



On Monday, Aug 11, several brothers of Delta Sigma Phi fraternity from Thiel and some friends got together to play golf at Wenango Country Club in Oil City and have a picnic at brother **Bob Witherup's '74** in Franklin. In the picture from right to left are **Bob Witherup '74**, **Rick Encapera '71**, **Joe Monarch '70**, **Bill Johnston '72**, **Dave Petak '72**, Ron Kapich, **Chuck Young '72**, **John Wotus '74**, **Don Walters '71**, **Wayne Mathias '72**, Rick Bournias, **Frank Kimmel '71**, Rich Hancox and Bruce Smeal.



The Reverend **William B. Henry Jr. '79**, his wife, **Debra (Wilson) Henry '80**, and **Rev. Randall Frenz '79** met up on campus.

**The 11th Annual Sigma Memorial Golf Outing will be held Saturday, June 6, 2026, at Pine Hills Golf Course in Greenville, Pa. The event begins with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start. Cost is \$100 per person or \$400 per team, with mulligans, a 50/50 raffle, and other prizes available. Please contact Elliott Beach '15 for more details (ebeach93@gmail.com or 317-903-4625).**

≡ CLASS NOTES ≡



First row (left to right): **Dominick DiRienzo M.A.'22**, **Kent Taylor**, President **Susan Traverso, Ph. D.**, **JoAnn Borg '78**, **Amy (Myers) Noble '83**, **Catherine Mott**, **Roberta Leonard**, **Lindsey Bona '07**, **Martha (Fraas) Vorse '06**, **Greg Vorse '06**; second row: **Richard "Dickie" Erickson '84**, **Walter Holtgreffe '22**, **Joe Roosa '80**, **Brent Agett '84**, **Tyler Buffington '16**, **John Logan '65**, **Beth Wickerham '76**, **Ellen (Brown) Agett '85**, **Lou Vizza '74**, and **Mark Batt '87** were among the attendees at an alumni event in Chautauqua Lake, N.Y. on Sunday, August 10.

– legacies –



**Ronald Park '94** and his daughters, **Ava Park '22** and **Emma Park '24 M.S.'25**, gathered for a legacy photo in the Sawhill Georgian Room of the Howard Miller Student Center after the Commencement Exercises for the Master of Science in speech-language pathology were held on July 31, 2025.



**Jake Weber M.S.'25** celebrated his graduation from the Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies program with his sister **Jackie (Weber) Schaade '12** on September 6, 2025.

**TOMCAT  
CALENDAR**



**72nd annual  
Christmas  
Festival**

Thiel's cherished holiday tradition begins at 3 p.m. Dec. 6 in Johnson Chapel.



**Founders' Day**

This convocation honors faculty and staff members as well as a Louis and Barbara Thiel recipient on Feb. 5.



**Academic  
Honors  
Convocation**

The recognition of Thiel's top academic students is Feb. 20.



**Theater  
Performances**

Thiel Theater presents "Much Ado About Nothing" April 17-19 and 24-25.



**Commencement**

Thiel College celebrates its 152nd Commencement Exercises on Saturday, May 9.

**Homecoming is Sept. 24-27, 2026**

– in memoriam –

## Friends and family gather to remember Atwood

The Thiel Community came together on Sunday, September 21 at the William A. Passavant Memorial Center for a Service of Remembrance to honor the life of **Toby Atwood '26**. President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.** joined faculty and staff members and students, including members of her sorority, Zeta Tau Alpha, and her tennis teammates. Her mother, **Brandi Atwood**, was the final speaker. The Thiel Choir performed, a video montage was displayed and **Audra Franley '17**, the former Thiel pastor, concluded with a prayer and benediction. A candlelight procession to the Tomcat Tennis Courts followed.

Atwood passed away Sunday, July 20, after collapsing during the Presque Isle Half Marathon in Erie, Pa. Atwood, of Kittanning, Pa., was a business administration and accounting double major. She had a 4.0 GPA.



*Members of the campus community and friends and family of **Toby Atwood '26** attended a candlelight vigil and memorial service for Atwood on Sept. 21 at the Passavant Center and Tomcat Tennis Courts. Atwood was a rising senior from Kittanning, Pa. and the captain of the tennis team.*

### A REMEMBRANCE OF ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF THE COLLEGE WHO HAVE RECENTLY PASSED

Jacqueline M. (Craig) Abrams '70	Joanne Manvell
Evelyn Amon	Joan R. McElhinny
Toby Marie Atwood '26	Harold B. Means
Timothy Beres	Albert Meeker
Christopher Todd Boyer '09	Richard P. Meeker '66
Robert L. Burdette '69	Caroline J. (Jones) Montgomery '44
Darlene Cook	Lana R. (Huey) Mozes '61
Harley J. Cook	Joanna Pauline Pedas
Eric D. Dahl '75	Harry S. Philson
William S. Duff '66	Kay Ann Philson
Guy W. Duffield	Myrta Wiley (Wiley) Price
Nancy (Perzak) Duffield '54	Rose M. (Young) Rager
Shirley S. (Scott) Duncan '53	Debra J. (Mosher) Ralston '75
Joan F. Evans	Howard Redfoot '60
John H. Evans	Lillian (Pfaff) Redfoot '59
Doris A. (Heidenreich) Fiedler '53	Marjorie M. (McDonough) Reichhold '43
Gerald Flohr	Tim Robbins
Evelyn J. (Walleck) Folta '48	James G. Robertson
David A. Fox '77	Ronald M. Sanden '62
George A. Fulton '62	Beverly Saunders
James T. Harman '61	Joseph L. Scafuri '56
Eunice (Ament) Herrington '53	Richard See
Michael T. Hirst '79	Cynthia J. (Levering) Shafer '72
Mary Johnson	Velma C. Splitstone
Marie Julian	Ronald L. Stainbrook
Nancy J. Knapp	Linda G. (Mott) Tennis '63
Joseph Lightner	Glenn R. Van Schooneveld

### College Advancement assistant Rager passed away in August

**Rose Marie Rager**, 86, of Hermitage, Pa., passed away on Aug. 28, 2025 in Whispering Oaks after an extended illness. She was an administrative assistant for College Advancement. She retired in 2010 after 15 years of service to Thiel.



She married her husband of 53 years, Donald G. Rager Sr. on January 21, 1956, and he preceded her in death May 30, 2009.

Rager also had careers at the G.C. Murphy Store, Mercer, then was an administrative assistant at Penn State Shenango. She started working at Thiel in 1996.

Rager is survived by four children: Donna (Walter) Fetty, Donald G. (Patty Ann) Rager, Jr., Beatrice "Lori" (Dan) Morsillo and Karen Brodie along with sixteen grandchildren, seventeen great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

# You can persevere and enjoy your journey at the same time

By Mario Marini '91

As I write this, I look back on the last 36 years and realize how much has happened in that period of time as a student and employee.

I was a student from 1989-91, graduating with a degree in accounting and business administration. Those two years required a full commitment, and I came to know several professors who were very helpful. My accounting and business professors, **Jesse Ligo**, **Mary Jo Yusko-Howsare**, **James Garbart**, and **Dave Miller '61 H'20**, taught me a great deal about entrepreneurship. While attending school full-time and working full-time as a financial consultant and stockbroker, I managed to open new accounts and place stock trades using the rotary dial phone in the library or the payphone by the student bookstore. My education here was very rewarding, first supporting my early roles, including my time at the FNB Trust Department. In 2002, I began my career at Thiel in College Advancement, marking the start of a new chapter. I would not trade my combined student and professional journey for anything else.

Since joining Thiel in 2002, I have enjoyed working with and getting to know alumni and friends while building valued relationships. With that in mind, you have to have an attitude of gratitude. Watching new buildings arise and seeing major improvements to existing ones, it is clear that the campus remains the familiar place we remember from our student days. Also, over that time with the new majors, master's degree



**Mario Marini '91** retired this September. In 2017, he celebrated the graduation of his daughter **Shaina '17** from Thiel College with daughter **Nicolette '14**, who is also a Thiel College alumna.

programs and other developments, the College continually provides students an avenue to further their future careers. Thiel has a lot to offer future potential students, not only a degree but a lifetime of achievements, career endeavors, and the chance to be an asset in the communities in which they reside.

Take time yourself and look at what Thiel has meant to you, and if it has been some time since your last visit plan to do so soon. Also, consider how you can help the College, maybe it's your time, talent or by means of a gift.

My Thiel experience also includes the growth of my family. I am very proud that my two daughters, **Nicolette '14** and **Shaina '17**, both graduated from Thiel. They live in Pittsburgh and Erie, which

means plenty of chances to see grandchildren and potential future Tomcats, Bryce and Harlow.

As I reflect on this journey and look ahead, I carry deep gratitude and pride for all that Thiel has given me and my family. Thank you for being part of this incredible experience, and I look forward to staying connected with you all, now and always. Go Tomcats!

**Mario Marini '91** retired as the Director of Planned Giving in September. His connection to Thiel College has spanned many roles, including student, alumnus, employee, parent of Thiel students, Greenville resident, and as the face of Thiel for many alumni who are looking to support the College with a gift.



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