

The Bell

N589ME

Flight Path to the Future

Campus-based BSN program preparing students for careers

DANIEL AND DOROTHY SPENCE ACADEMIC CENTER

Opening Possibilities



Members of the Thiel College community gathered on May 10 to cut a ribbon and celebrate the completion of the first phase of the Daniel and Dorothy Spence Academic Center. The next phase continues this summer. See Page 18 for what's on tap this summer.



Thiel College

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

A MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumni and Friends,

Each spring, we are reminded of the growth, transformation, and promise that define the Thiel experience. This year's Commencement was a vibrant celebration of those ideals—filled with laughter, inspiration, and moments



that will linger in memory for years to come.

We applauded the achievements of the Class of 2025, who joined the Thiel community in the midst of the pandemic and whose confidence and belief in their future has left an indelible mark on our campus. Our student speaker, **Sydney Linhart '25**, reflected on her journey as a Thiel student and asked everyone to consider how being strong and overcoming setbacks might be “the unseen architect of your legacy.”

We also honored two exceptional alumni whose lives embody the spirit of leadership and service. The **Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow '85 H'25**, Bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, delivered a stirring Commencement address and received an honorary degree for his lifelong dedication to ministry and the College. **G. Leah (Glessner) Dever '74 H'25** was also recognized with an honorary degree, celebrating her trailblazing career and her work to support the largest class gift in Thiel's history, which will provide scholarships for future educators.

Early in the spring semester, we celebrated our Academic Honors Convocation. We were privileged to award an honorary degree to **Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25**. An acclaimed author and professor of education, Guskey shared powerful messages about resilience, courage, and kindness with our students and their families. His visit also enriched our Education Summit, where he offered thoughtful remarks about the best practices and bold ideas shaping the future of learning.

In April, we cheered on a historic win from our men's volleyball team—the inaugural champions of the Presidents' Athletic Conference tournament! Their teamwork and tenacity earned them a spot on the national stage as one of the 19 teams invited to the NCAA Division III tournament. The Tomcats lost a hard-fought play-in game but have still earned a well-deserved place in Thiel athletics history.

During Commencement weekend, we cut the ribbon to celebrate the completion of the first phase of the new Daniel & Dorothy Spence Academic Center. The unfolding transformation of that space highlights the College's commitment to academic excellence and student engagement.

In addition to all this exciting news, I'm also thrilled to highlight our campus-based Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, which is preparing future nurses through hands-on clinical training, top-notch simulation labs and rigorous academics, right here in Greenville.

Thank you for being part of the Thiel story.

Go Tomcats!

Susan Traverso

Susan Traverso, Ph.D.

The Bell

... SPRING/SUMMER 2025 ...

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On the Cover






As part of the experiential learning process in Thiel College's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, students toured a STAT MedEvac helicopter in Grove City, Pa. Beyond campus, nursing students complete clinical rotations at hospitals and health systems throughout the region. They also take part in professional development opportunities such as the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Ohio State Conference and the Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania

LEAD Workshop in Harrisburg. Thiel students may also participate in international medical outreach trips—most recently to the Dominican Republic, with another trip planned for October 2025.

THE CLASS OF 2025 BY THE NUMBERS

Let's take a look at a few fun facts about the members of the Class of 2025.

 <p>Most common names</p> <p>Zachary 4 Jacob 4 Emily 3 Kaitlyn 3</p>	<p>Top 3 states with the most grads</p> <p>PA 119</p> <p>OH 30</p> <p>MD 6</p>
 <p>Most common majors</p> <p>Exercise Science 21 Elementary/Special Education . 17 Nursing 19 Business Management 15</p>	
 <p>Most Common Hometowns</p> <p>Greenville 24 Pittsburgh 5 Erie, Farrell, Sharon 4</p>	

Launching Leaders

The Launching Leaders social media campaign is in its fourth year of celebrating the successes of Thiel graduates. Follow Thiel College's social media channels for regular updates about the great things the College's newest alumni are achieving. **Damion M. Grinnell '25** also shared the letter shown at the right of this page.



Online & Offline Insights

New alumnus shares the pivotal role Thiel played in his journey

Dear Thiel College Community,

With graduation recently passed for me, I stand on the threshold of a new chapter in my life. As I reflect on the incredible journey that has brought me to this moment, it is impossible to do so without acknowledging the unwavering support, kindness, and encouragement that each and every one of you has provided me throughout my time at Thiel College. This letter is my humble attempt to express my deepest gratitude to the entire Thiel College family.

From the moment I first set foot on campus, I was met with a warmth and camaraderie that made Thiel feel like home. Whether it was a simple hello in passing, a word of encouragement before an exam, or a shared moment of understanding, each interaction—intentional or not—played a role in shaping my experience. You have been my strength, my pillar, and my support system in more ways than you may ever realize.

There were days when the weight of balancing work and academics felt overwhelming, but because of you—professors, colleagues, classmates, and friends—I found the resilience to push forward. Your belief in me fueled my determination, and your kindness lifted me in moments of doubt. When I faced one of the greatest hardships of my life—the passing of my father—it was this community that carried me through. The compassion and solidarity I felt during that time were nothing short of extraordinary, and I will never forget the way you surrounded me with care and understanding.

I wish I could personally thank each and every one of you, but since that is impossible, this letter will have to suffice as my love letter to Thiel College. Please know that your presence, no matter how small or fleeting, has left an indelible mark on my heart. Everything I have achieved—both in my education and in my career—has been made possible because of this remarkable community. As I move forward into the next phase of my life, I will carry your kindness, your encouragement, and your belief in me everywhere I go, in everything I do.

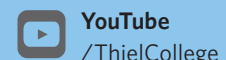
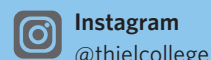
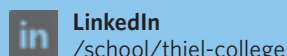
Thiel College, you have given me more than an education—you have given me a family, a foundation, and a sense of belonging that will stay with me for a lifetime. From the bottom of my heart, thank you.

With all my gratitude and love,
Damion M. Grinnell '25

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.

Follow us on social media





Damen Taylor '95 (center) and members of his Thiel 'family' (from left to right) **Alexis Brown '26**, **Renee Bair '99**, **Lindsey Bona '07**, **Jim Frank '88**, **David Hummel '83** and **Hayden Tucker '26** following the announcement of the scholarship named for Taylor's parents.

Taylor surprised with scholarship to honor his parents

Damen Taylor '95 remembers arriving at Thiel College as a first-year student in 1991 not sure what the future held for him. If he had been told it would include graduating with bachelor's degrees in business administration and accounting, life-changing encounters with faculty, including Thiel icon **David Miller '61 H'20**, recurring speaking roles at the Ruth Miller Senior Seminar class, a leadership position on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and now a scholarship endowed by an anonymous donor to be named in honor of his parents, James Henry Taylor Jr. and Theresa Linn Weston, he would have been skeptical.

"If you said in 1991, this is where we landed; I would tell you, 'You are crazy!'" Taylor said.

Taylor was at the May 3 Alumni Board meeting when Vice President of College Advancement **Roberta Leonard** told him about the donor's plans for the scholarship.

“Somebody was that moved by my story... I am still pinching myself. It still doesn't feel real.”

| **Damen Taylor '95**

"This scholarship is a powerful testament to the lasting influence one generation can have on the next," Leonard said. "Damen Taylor has been a loyal and thoughtful alumnus whose presence is felt at so many Thiel events. Honoring his

parents through this scholarship is a meaningful way to recognize both his accomplishments and the values they instilled in him. We're deeply grateful to the anonymous donor for celebrating this legacy and supporting future Thiel students."

Taylor, rarely at a loss for words, is still stunned and speechless when he thinks about the opportunity for a student to get a life-changing scholarship.

"Somebody was that moved by my story...I am still pinching myself. It still doesn't feel real," he said. "Education opens doors. It took me to other places than my street. I basically owe my livelihood to Thiel, and to know that I might be able to do the same for another student now is incredible."

Some of the details remain to be worked out with the scholarship, but Taylor is prepared to help in any way he can to bring it to fruition.

Taylor is a senior budget analyst

for the Department of Human Services of Allegheny County. He never misses an opportunity to return to Thiel, which included his appearance at the February 19 Miller Senior Seminar.

And he made an impression on the students.

"DT is the true embodiment of school pride, legacy, and inspiration. He returned to his alma mater for the 10th year to speak to the senior seminar class. His energy lit up the room," sophomore **Anna Kavulla '27** said. "His passion for Thiel was evident from the beginning of his presentation."

Senior **Cora Post '25** was struck by how the Thiel community helped Taylor deal with the adversity he faced while a student.

"Damen faced a lot of hardship while at Thiel, as he lost a few loved ones during his college career. He spoke to us about how Thiel is a family. He "found his world" at Thiel, and that Thiel saved his life, as it pulled him out of a bad spot and gave him a purpose, passion, and a family," Post said.

The new scholarship has now combined his two families, his biological one and his adopted one.

"Thiel has always been a second home," Taylor said. "There are not a lot of places in the world where you feel safe and wanted and Thiel has always been that place for me."



New scholarships added for band and science students

The Connie Christy Danko '69 Science Endowed Scholarship is awarded annually to a student majoring or minoring in biology, chemistry or physics.

The David B. Mogle '71 Endowed Band Scholarship is given to students who play an instrument in the College band and are from western Pennsylvania or eastern Ohio.

Anyone interested in contributing to existing scholarships or creating a new one, should contact Vice President for College Advancement **Roberta Leonard** at rleonard@thiel.edu.

Travel with Thiel in 2026

Sing and Explore: Thiel Choir Austria/Switzerland Tour

Alumni, families, and friends of the College are invited to join the Thiel Choir on a once-in-a-lifetime international tour as students perform in iconic venues in Vienna, Salzburg, and Zurich from March 6-14, 2026.

It is a great opportunity to to experience Europe's cultural and scenic beauty while supporting Thiel's talented student musicians.

Read more about the trip and the cost <https://tinyurl.com/thielchoirtrip26>

Support the Thiel Choir:

Fundraising has begun with the Thiel Alumni Office to help defray the travel costs for students.

- The spring flower and bulb sale is going on now. <https://tinyurl.com/thielflowerfundraiser>. Proceeds from purchases can be dedicated to a specific student or to the general fund.
- 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 alumni@thiel.edu or 724-589-2160.

Scandinavia Awaits: Oslo, Copenhagen & Stockholm

Alumni, families, and friends of the College are also invited to explore the capitals of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden with Anna Reinsel, Ph.D. '06, Professor of Environmental Science and Associate Director of the Dietrich Honors Institute.

- Dates: May 11-18, 2026
- Cost: \$4,380
- Registration: tinyurl.com/ThielScandinavia26
- For more information, contact Reinsel at areinsel@thiel.edu



New Match Day donor record set



Marching the Thiel Day banner at Match Day

Thiel College's annual fundraising event, Match Day, reached a new milestone with 676 donors contributing \$215,649 to support the institution. The theme, "Match to the Future," inspired the College's community to break last year's record of 670 donors and reaffirm its commitment to student success. A key driver of this year's success was the competitive spirit fostered by fundraising challenges, with members of fraternities, sororities, clubs, and organizations engaging in spirited rivalries to secure the top spot as the leading donating group. Greek-affiliated donors played a

significant role, with 327 individuals contributing to the cause.

The College also tripled its goal for first-generation college student donors with 75, and athletes and former athletes turned out in large numbers with 167 donors. **David Mogle**, Director of the Thiel Fund, said that this year's Match Day was an incredible demonstration of the generosity and commitment of the Thiel College community. Since its inception in 2014, Match Day has raised more than \$2.1 million for the College.

Orteza named library director

Micheline Orteza began in January as the new Director of Langenheim Memorial Library. Orteza, who previously served as the Circulation Librarian, has a decade of experience in libraries, including operations, budgeting, staff supervision, and was awarded a Distinguished Staff Award in 2023.

English professor attends conference

Professor of English **Jared Johnson, Ph.D.**, presented at the 47th Annual Ohio Valley Shakespeare Conference,

where he discussed Shakespeare-related issues such as teaching, adaptation, psychoanalysis, and cognitive literary studies. Johnson's paper, "Redeeming time when men least think I will: Loki's Henrician Redemption in Marvel Studios' *Loki*," examines Tom Hiddleston's portrayal of Prince Hal in "*The Hollow Crown*" and his recurring role as Loki in "*Loki*" (2023).

Nowinski appointed academic dean

Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D., was appointed as Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College in January. Nowinski has been instrumental in shaping the College's future and has

served on numerous faculty committees. She has expertise in French history and has a bachelor's degree from Boston College and a Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame.

Collins named Director of Athletics

Isaac Collins was appointed as the Director of Athletics in December. He brings more than 31 years of experience in college coaching, athletic administration, fundraising, and leadership development, most recently from Albright College in Reading, Pa.



Biology students share discoveries on the international stage

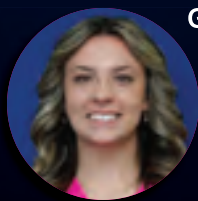
Eight biology students recently stepped into the global spotlight to present their research at the 2025 Howard Hughes Medical Institute Science Education Alliance International Symposium, held April 25–27.

Their work—part of the international SEA-PHAGE program—focused on the discovery and analysis of bacteriophages, viruses that infect bacteria and may hold the key to addressing antibiotic resistance. The students, all enrolled in BIO 396: Advanced Biotechnology Methods, conducted semester-long research under the mentorship of biology professors **Mary O’Donnell, Ph.D.**, and **Jennifer Broderick, Ph.D.**

“This group has worked tirelessly to complete meaningful research that not only expands their scientific knowledge but also contributes to real-world clinical and scientific applications,” said O’Donnell and Broderick.

The student researchers—**Triston Barr ’26**, **Dorian Briggs ’28**, **Meghan Columbus ’25**, **Karigan Hager ’25**, **Daisy Jenness ’25**, **Amya Oliver ’25**, **Adrianna Rossi ’27**, and **Briney Stilinovich ’27**—each contributed to genome annotation and laboratory work that will be archived in the National Institutes of Health’s GenBank database. They also purified and amplified bacteriophages and extracted DNA to lay the groundwork for future studies.

PA student accepted into state honors program



Grace Jones ’25 M.S.’26 was accepted into the Pennsylvania Area Health Education Center Scholars Program. The program offers free opportunities for health profession students to achieve healthcare equity through social determinants, cultural competence, interprofessional education, and community engagement.

There’s more online.

Visit <https://www.thiel.edu/newsroom/press-releases>



Fourth cohort of PAs receive white coats

Thirty-nine students in Thiel College’s fourth cohort of Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies received their white coats as part of the program’s White Coat Ceremony on Friday, April 11 in Bly Hall of the Daniel & Dorothy Spence Academic Center on campus

The following students received their white coats during the ceremony:

- **Caitlin Augustine M.S.’26**, of Cranberry Township, Pa.
- **Abigail Bernhardt M.S.’26**, of North Ridgeville, Ohio
- **Patima Blagmon M.S.’26**, of Clinton, Md.
- **Benjamin Byers M.S.’26**, of Grove City, Pa.
- **Ashley Chambers M.S.’26**, of Warren, Ohio
- **Peyton Eckenrode M.S.’26**, of York Haven, Pa.
- **Gabrielle Geinzer M.S.’26**, of Pittsburgh, Pa.
- **Sarah Ghazi M.S.’26**, of Galena, Ohio
- **Ryan Harcourt ’25 M.S.’26**, of Hermitage, Pa.
- **Chloe Herrmann M.S.’26**, of Meadville, Pa.
- **Mustafa Hosseini M.S.’26**, of Carmichael, Calif.
- **Leah Jensen M.S.’26**, of Harrisburg, Pa.
- **Grace Jones ’25 M.S.’26**, of Clarks Mills, Pa.
- **Hannah Jones ’24 M.S.’26**, of Clarks Mills, Pa.
- **Alexander Kampo M.S.’26**, of Pittsburgh, Pa.
- **Jasmine Le M.S.’26**, of Columbia, S.C.
- **Charlotte Lister M.S.’26**, of New Haven, Conn.
- **Alycia Lynch M.S.’26**, of West Mifflin, Pa.
- **Lauren McCleary M.S.’26**, of Corsica, Pa.
- **Connor McInnis ’25 M.S.’26**, of Southington, Conn.
- **Renee Meuschke M.S.’26**, of Murrysville, Pa.
- **Randall Miller ’25 M.S.’26**, of Mineral Ridge, Ohio
- **Hanna Mueller M.S.’26**, of Hermitage, Pa.
- **Carli Orcutt M.S.’26**, of Marana, Ariz.
- **Anna Paul ’25 M.S.’26**, of Zelienople, Pa.
- **Ruben Perez M.S.’26**, of Hobe Sound, Fla.
- **Safa Piracha M.S.’26**, of Herndon, Va.
- **Ashlynn Randolph M.S.’26**, of Portersville, Pa.
- **Alyssa Rocha M.S.’26**, of Allston, Maine
- **Karina Rogers M.S.’26**, of Clark, Pa.
- **Julianna Sloan ’25 M.S.’26**, of Kingsville, Ohio
- **Jacob Smith M.S.’26**, of Portville, N.Y.
- **Steven Smith M.S.’26**, of Smyrna, Del.
- **Alexandra Steele M.S.’26**, of New Castle, Pa.
- **Devin Thomas M.S.’26**, of Ramey, Pa.
- **Lydia Webb M.S.’26**, of West Middlesex, Pa.
- **Nazifa Yar M.S.’26**, of Murphy, Texas
- **Gabrielle Younes M.S.’26**, of Bethlehem, Pa.
- **Victoria Young ’22 M.S.’26**, of New Castle, Pa.

To view an album of photos from this event go to <https://tinyurl.com/ThielPAwhitecoat25>

‘A multi-generational place of belonging’

Graduates, honorary degree recipients celebrate Thiel during Commencement speeches

Under the high rafters of the William A. Passavant Memorial Center, the Thiel College community gathered on Saturday, May 10, to celebrate the achievements, resilience, and promise of the Class of 2025. In a break from recent history, this year’s Commencement Exercises took place on a Saturday. The ceremony recognized the 174 graduates, including 12 who earned Master of Business Administration degrees.

The ceremony recognized not only the academic accomplishments of the graduates but also the lifelong bonds formed and the enduring values of the institution.

Senior orator **Sydney Linhart '25**, a criminal justice major from Plum, Pa., embodied the spirit of the day in a moving address. A four-year member of the cheerleading team and a participant in all four of Thiel’s podium finishes at the National Cheer Association nationals—including the 2022 national championship—Linhart urged her classmates to embrace life’s inevitable set-backs.

“So, to all of us in this room who are standing on the edge of a new beginning, let us promise ourselves to fail, fail again, and then fail some more,” Linhart said. “For it is these failures that make us stronger. Handle each day moving forward like using a camera: focus on what is important, capture the great moments, develop the negatives, and if things don’t work out, take another shot.”

She ended with a call to action that resonated deeply in the room: “Dare to be different. Because the hallmark of your legacy is not just in what you achieve, but how you inspire others to dream more, do more, and become more.”

The ceremony also included the conferral of honorary degrees to two distinguished alumni whose lives and careers reflect Thiel’s mission of service and excellence.

The **Rev. Kurt F. Kusserow '85 H'25**, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, delivered the keynote address. Kusserow, who has served as bishop since 2007 and was

re-elected in 2019, reflected on the role Thiel played in shaping his journey, both professionally and personally.

“This institution has been and continues to be a kind of extended family for its students and for its alumni a multi-generational place of belonging,” Kusserow said.

In a nod to fellow honorary degree recipient **G. Leah (Glessner) Dever '74 H'25**, he added, “Dr. Dever, you and I now stand among the host of luminaries graced with honorary degrees from Thiel College, including Fred Rogers.”

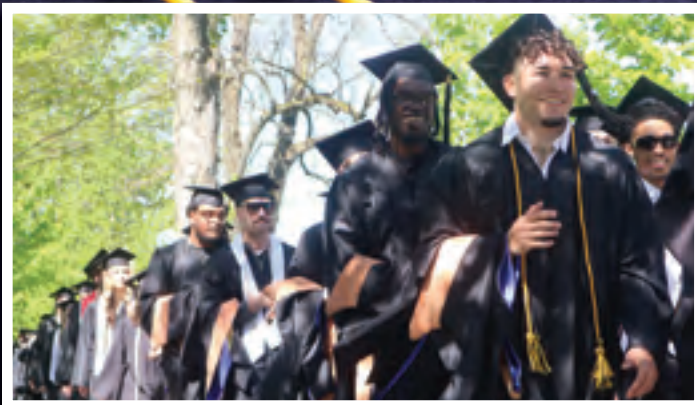
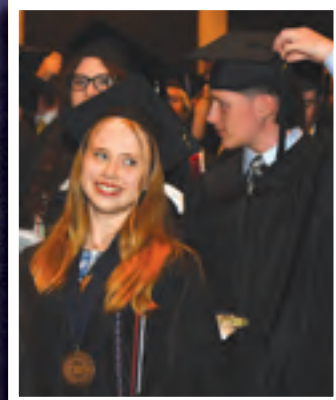
Kusserow challenged the graduates to think beyond their degrees and job titles. “Consider who you were when you came to Thiel,” he said, “and then ask yourself, ‘Who’s the who you are still becoming?’ I will not presume to answer these questions for you, but I can speak with confidence about something we all have in common—each of us is a human being who shares with the whole species the project of living into a strange and marvelous puzzle.”

He concluded with a simple, profound affirmation: “Congratulations! The challenge of becoming who you are has reached a new starting point.”

Dever, a retired associate director with the U.S. Department of Energy, was recognized for her decades of federal service and her sustained commitment to the Thiel community, including her service on the Board of Trustees and as a past recipient of the College’s Service to Thiel Award.

“There are many physical and academic changes on campus,” Dever said, “but what has not changed is the

≡ COMMENCEMENT ≡



LEGACIES

Families celebrate their Thiel College connections



Josh Ickes '25 with his parents, **Jamie (May) '99** and **Jim Ickes '99**



Madeleine White '25 and her sister, **Amanda Dengler '08**



Ryan Andrew Philip Harcourt '25 and his father, **Andrew Harcourt '95**

Continued from Page 10

amazing alumni and the way they support the College... but the most important thing that has not changed is the value we place on the academic environment here of small classes and caring professors."

As the graduates turned their tassels, the College also honored three faculty members with emerita status:

- **Fatimata Pale, Ph.D.**, professor of biology, who joined the faculty in 1998 and retired this year, was

recognized for her dedication to student learning and research in the biological sciences.

- **Nancy Antonino, Ph.D.**, former lecturer and coordinator of the Communication Sciences and Disorders program, concluded a career of more than 30 years that saw her play a key role in developing the CSD program. She retired in 2024.
- **Mary Reames**, a former lecturer in education and a longtime educator in the Jamestown Area School

District, was also granted emerita status. Reames, who retired from Thiel in 2019, received the Louis and Barbara Thiel Distinguished Service Award in 2022.



Cheer coach recognized as a top Shenango Valley leader

Head Cheer and Dance Coach and Adjunct Professor **Randall Burnett M.A.'22** was named to the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce's Under 40 Distinguished Impact Awards list. Burnett was recognized by the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Now entering his eighth year leading the cheer and dance programs, Burnett has led the Tomcats to a national championship title at the 2023 National Cheer Association College Nationals and a program-record score of 94.99 to finish third in the Spirit Rally Division III at this year's tournament. The Tomcats were third in 2024 and second in 2022.

Pilipovich gets NCAA win; moves on to Colorado State

Thiel College alumnus **Dave Pilipovich '86**, an assistant coach for the University of New Mexico Lobos men's basketball team, helped the Lobos play the role of Cinderella this year in the first round of the NCAA basketball tournament when the 10th seeded Lobos upset seventh-seeded Marquette University, 75-66, on March 21 in Cleveland. The run ended in the second round with a 71-63 loss to Michigan State. Pilipovich is now the Director of Player Development with Colorado State University. At Thiel, Pilipovich was a four-year member of the basketball team and was team captain his senior year. He's been a coach for nearly 40 years, including a nine-year (2011- 20) stint as the head coach at Air Force.

Nordenberg elected to American Academy of Arts and Sciences

Mark Nordenberg, J.D. '70 H'97 spoke at the first Miller Lecture Series in 2023. He was recently elected to the American Academy of Arts of Sciences.



By Ryan Acosta MBA'25

Mark Nordenberg, J.D. '70 H'97 was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences this spring.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, established in 1780, is one of the nation's oldest and most prestigious honorary institutions, recognizing exceptional individuals in academia, the arts, business, government, and public affairs who have made meaningful contributions to society. Its membership includes more than 14,000 individuals, among them Nobel laureates, Pulitzer Prize winners, U.S. presidents, and prominent global leaders.

Nordenberg joined the 2025 class of elected members recognized for their leadership, scholarship, and public service. His election stands as a testament to a lifelong career dedicated to legal education, civic engagement, and transformative leadership in higher education.

Nordenberg earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Thiel College in 1970 and later went on to receive his law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1973, setting groundwork for a renowned career in law and academics. His entrance into higher education began in 1977 as a visiting professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law. Over the next few decades, he held numerous leadership roles at the University, culminating in his appointment as the seventeenth Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh in 1996. During his tenure as Chancellor, which lasted until 2014, Nordenberg led the University of Pittsburgh through a period of exceptional growth in academic reputation, research output, and community impact. Under his leadership, the University became one of the nation's leading research institutions, while also deepening its civic and global engagement.

Nordenberg's dedication to Thiel College remained strong throughout his career. He joined the Thiel College Board of Trustees in 1987 and served with distinction for a decade. In 1997, the College honored him with an honorary doctorate. In recognition of his continued engagement and legacy, he was named Trustee Emeritus in 2019.

Nordenberg's election places him among a class of exceptional leaders and thinkers across disciplines, all chosen for their excellence and enduring impact on the world. It is a moment of pride for the Thiel College community and a milestone in the College's 160-year legacy of shaping servant-leaders who make a difference.

College's nursing program charts its own course

'For the past four years, Thiel College has been committed to preparing future nurses, and the growth and success of our Bachelor of Science in Nursing program is a reflection of that dedication.'

At Thiel College, nursing is more than a major—it's a mission. In just a few years, the College's Bachelor of Science in Nursing program has become one of its most dynamic academic offerings, blending cutting-edge instruction, hands-on experience, and the full benefits of a residential liberal arts education.

"For the past four years, Thiel College has been committed to preparing future nurses, and the growth and success of our Bachelor

of Science in Nursing program is a reflection of that dedication," said President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.**

Originally launched through an academic partnership, the program underwent a significant transition in 2024 after the abrupt closure of that partner institution. In response, Thiel took decisive steps to secure the program's future, earning approval from the Pennsylvania State Board of Nursing in December and receiving initial accreditation

from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education in April 2024. The result: a fully independent, Thiel-delivered BSN program that builds on the College's strengths in student-centered education, community engagement and hands-on learning.

The College went before the PA Board of Nursing, with the program we developed and received approval for our own traditional BSN program, said Program Director **Nicole Olshanski, D.N.P.** "It's been a time of growth and



Students walk in the updated Nursing wing of the Daniel and Dorothy Spence Academic Center.

change for the better.”

That growth is visible in both student outcomes and the physical footprint of the program. The nursing wing of the Daniel & Dorothy Spence Academic Center, which opened in 2024, provides an academic home for nursing students. The wing includes classrooms, collaborative spaces, and a high-tech simulation lab. The lab was funded by the **Hirtzel Memorial Foundation** and is a centerpiece of the College’s

hands-on learning philosophy.

Simulation is an increasingly vital component of nursing education, allowing students to practice clinical scenarios—from routine care to critical emergencies—on high-fidelity manikins in a safe, controlled setting.

“The simulation lab allows students to make real-time decisions, apply what they’ve learned, and develop confidence before entering a live clinical environment,” Olshanski said.

An observation room is strategically

placed between the two simulation labs and enables classmates and instructors to watch simulations unfold in real-time, offering opportunities for peer learning and debriefing.

Beyond campus, Thiel’s nursing students complete clinical rotations at hospitals and health systems across the region, including UPMC Horizon, Meadville Medical Center, Bon Secours Mercy Health, and St. Paul’s Senior Living Community. Students

“Students get a great clinical experience and flexible schedules. Thiel’s small nursing program allows the students to get extra help and materials to help guide them through the program.”

Kaitlyn Stamp '25

also benefit from professional development events like the Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses Ohio State Conference and the Student Nurses Association of Pennsylvania LEAD Workshop in Harrisburg. The workshop is designed to help emerging nursing leaders develop leadership and professional skills. It’s aimed at first-year students and sophomores from local chapters across the state. Thiel students can also participate in international medical outreach trips, most recently to the Dominican Republic with another planned for October 2025.

“One of the unique aspects of our BSN program is that students can complete their degree in just three



Students toured an Amish birthing center this spring.



Students got a first-hand look at the STAT MedEVAC critical care transport system facilities in Grove City, Pa. and spoke with flight nurses and members of the staff.

and a half years,” Traverso said. “This allows them to enter the workforce sooner, which benefits both our students and the communities they will serve.”

For students like **Hanna Lasher '25**, that combination of academic rigor and personal connection is what sets Thiel apart. “The first thing that stands out is the intimate class sizes,” said Lasher, a transfer student. “I’m in a cohort of around 20 students, and I have Dr. Olshanski as my advisor, professor, and mentor throughout my whole academic career. That kind of relationship is rare.”

Kaitlyn Stamp '25, a student-athlete who balances nursing with volleyball, echoed that sentiment. “I chose Thiel because of its small, close-knit community. The professors and coaches made it easy to manage



Kaitlyn Stamp '25 and Hanna Lasher '25 work in the simulation lab, a specially designed educational space equipped with advanced, life-like patient simulators (manikins) and technology to replicate real-world clinical scenarios in a safe, controlled environment.

sports and academics. And the opportunities we have—like visiting an Amish birth center or touring a STAT MedEvac helicopter—are truly unique.”

Both students are already looking toward the future. Lasher plans to continue learning and growing in the profession, while Stamp hopes to work in an ICU. “I’m drawn to the fast-paced environment and the challenge of applying critical thinking to help critically ill patients,” she said.

These students are part of a growing legacy of Thiel-trained nurses who are stepping into roles across western Pennsylvania and beyond. Graduates are already making a difference in hospitals, clinics, and care centers—from small towns like Greenville to urban hospitals in Pittsburgh and Erie. Their impact is especially important amid the ongoing nursing shortage, which has strained health systems both locally and around the country.

“The demand for skilled nurses has never been greater, and Thiel College is meeting that need head-on,” Traverso

said. “Our graduates are ready to provide compassionate, high-quality care in healthcare settings across the region.”

The program’s success also reflects the strong mentorship model that Thiel faculty embrace. “We’re with our students every step of the way,” Olshanski said. “From the first anatomy class to their final clinical rotation, they know that they have a support system here. That consistency matters—it builds trust, confidence, and a deeper commitment to learning.”

As the program expands, so too does the investment in health sciences education at Thiel. The Daniel & Dorothy Spence Academic Center—named in honor of longtime Thiel supporters—has become a hub for nursing and other allied health disciplines. Its development was made possible by generous philanthropic support, underscoring the alumni and donor community’s belief in the College’s mission and in the need for healthcare professionals.

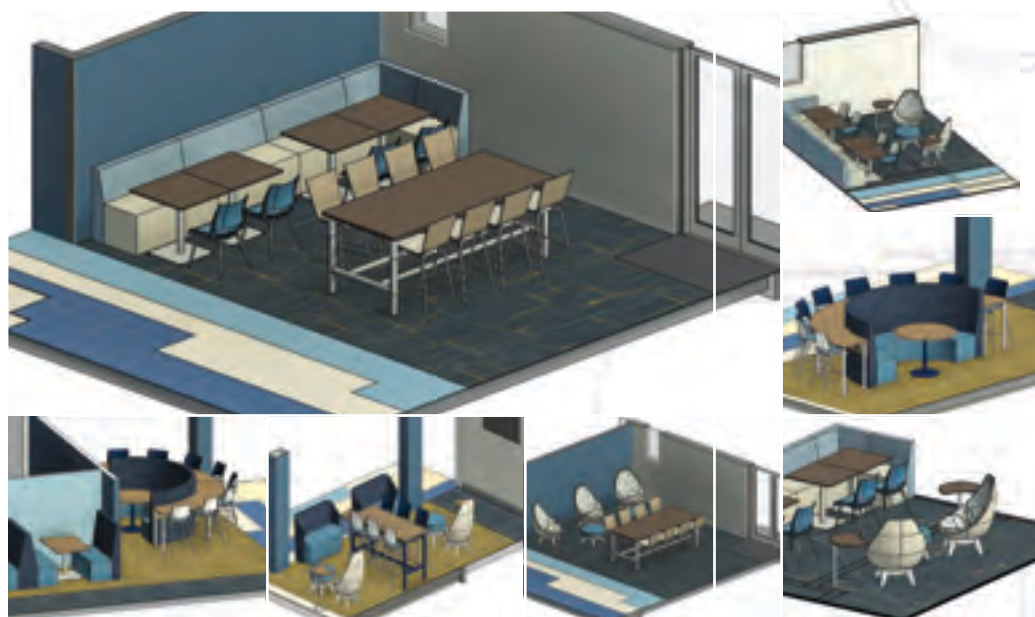
Looking ahead, Thiel plans to continue enhancing the nursing experience with additional clinical partnerships, expanded simulation capabilities, and increased access to scholarships and financial aid. “We are committed to making a high-quality nursing education accessible to as many students as possible,” Traverso said. “Investing in these students is an investment in the future of healthcare.”

At its core, Thiel’s BSN program combines academic excellence, hands-on practice, personal mentorship, and a supportive campus culture—a blend that is producing nurses who are not only clinically prepared but deeply compassionate.

Whether they’re learning in a simulation lab, attending a medical conference, assisting in a rural birth center, or providing care on a hospital floor, Thiel’s nursing students are gaining the skills and perspective to make an immediate difference.

A Sound Business Decision

Second phase of Spence renovations will bring department to the first floor



Several spaces named, but opportunities remain

The second phase of the project is underway and the move for the departments of business administration and accounting and math should be complete and ready when students return in August.

As part of the project several areas have been named:

- Carol and Lynn Adams '83 Classroom
- Frangakis Business Wing
- Melissa Oakes '03 Collaborative Area
- Dominic Dionisio '74 Classroom
- Michael '79 and Vicki Zawoysky Classroom
- Luca Pacioli Portico donated by Gary '79 H'24 and Kate Witosky
- The greenspace will be dedicated to the Class of 1974

For more information about dedicating a space, contact Vice President for College Advancement **Roberta Leonard** at 724-589-2024 or rleonard@thiel.edu.

This fall, the Arthur McGonigal Department of Business Administration and Accounting is making a strategic move—upstairs. After years in the lower level of the Daniel & Dorothy Spence Academic Center, the department will occupy a newly renovated space on the building's first floor, offering improved visibility and a more dynamic environment for students and faculty.

The relocation signals the acknowledgment of the College's historically strong business programs and a commitment to providing modern, professional learning spaces. The new suite includes updated classrooms, faculty offices, and collaboration areas.

"This move places business students at the heart of campus activity," Vice President for College Advancement **Roberta Leonard** said.

Architectural renderings show glass-walled meeting rooms, flexible workspaces, and enhanced technology—features intended to foster group learning, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

This phase of renovations should be completed over the summer and include the Frangakis business area, office suites for business, accounting, mathematics and computer science. The plans also call for office suites and a physio lab for exercise science. An entryway will be created to open the courtyard surrounded by the Haer Family Science and Arts Connector, Rhodehouse Science Building and the Spence Center. The remodeling and updates have been completely funded by donations and grants.

Educators shine during Honors Convocation



Kaitlyn Schmidt '25 was among the 300-plus students honored during Academic Honors Convocation in February.



Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25 was awarded an honorary degree for his service to Thiel and accomplishments in the field of education.

During a ceremony recognizing students for academic accomplishments, it is fitting that current and future educators took center stage during the College's Academic Honors Convocation on Feb. 21 in the William A. Passavant Memorial Center.

A mathematics major seeking her secondary education credential, **Kaitlyn Schmidt '25**, of Pittsburgh, Pa., was the student speaker.

"I was deeply honored to be chosen as the student speaker for the 2025 Honors Convocation. Reflecting on my journey and the many opportunities I have had at

Thiel over the past four years made the experience truly unforgettable."

Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25 was the honorary degree recipient.

Every year since 1928, Thiel College has recognized the achievements of students in academics as well as granting honorary degrees to outstanding individuals and alumni.

Beginning his career as a middle school teacher, Guskey has had a storied career in education. He earned his doctorate in educational measurement and evaluation at the University of Chicago. Guskey is a

Professor Emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky and as Department Chair, Head of the Educational Psychology Area Committee, and President of the Faculty Council. Furthermore, he has Visiting Professorships at 10 universities in the United States, as well as Visiting Scholars at universities in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. He has authored or edited 30 books and more than 300 professional papers and articles, focusing on educational assessment and classroom effectiveness.

Explore further

See a gallery of photos from Honors Convocation at: <https://tinyurl.com/2025honorsconvo>
Read more from the keynote address by **Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25** on Page 30.



Education Summit focused on energizing future teachers

Thiel College hosted the Empowering Youth to Change the Future education summit on campus in February. Assistant Professor of Education **Kara Schreckenghost** helped organize the event that brought together high school students from

Greenville, Sharpsville, Sharon, West Middlesex, Keystone Charter, and Conneaut Area schools to explore careers in education.

Among the speakers was **Jennifer Toney, Ph.D.**, a veteran elementary school teacher and finalist for the 2025 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year.

The summit also featured internationally recognized education

expert recipient **Thomas Guskey '72 H'25**, who received the 2005 Thiel Outstanding Alumnus Award and an honorary degree in 2025.

Read more online.

Kara Schreckenghost's essay on dealing with the teacher shortage.
<https://tinyurl.com/Thielteacheressay>

FOREVER NO. 1

Tomcats win inaugural PAC men's volleyball tournament



PHOTO: Chris & Heather Mook

Thiel swept Grove City, 3-0, to claim the inaugural Presidents' Athletic Conference men's volleyball tournament championship.

When the history of Presidents' Athletic Conference men's volleyball is discussed, one team will always be No. 1—the Thiel Tomcats.

The men's volleyball team delivered a record-breaking season that culminated with the program's second conference championship when the Tomcats won the inaugural Presidents' Athletic Conference season-ending tournament title. Those wins also led to the team's first NCAA Division III Tournament appearance. In 2019, the Tomcats won the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference title.

The Tomcats finished the year with a 22-7 record, setting a new program mark for wins in a season. Along the way, Thiel rattled off a school-record 15 consecutive victories.

Led by PAC Coach of the Year **Dylan Lasher '15**, the Tomcats

dominated the PAC Championship Tournament, sweeping Saint Vincent College in the semifinals and Grove City College in the title match. First-year sensation **Ezra Oesterling '28** (Shelocta, Pa./West Shamokin) played a starring role throughout the season. Oesterling earned PAC Player of the Year, PAC Newcomer of the Year, and All-PAC First Team honors while also being named to the FrogJump National All-Freshman team. He led all NCAA Division III first-year players in kills and set the Thiel single-season record for service aces. Setter **Ben Lowell '25** (Portland, Ore./Sunset), an All-PAC First Team selection, surpassed 1,000 career assists during the season.

While the Tomcats' season ended in the NCAA Play-In round against Saint Joseph's-Long Island on April 17, the loss did little to diminish what the team accomplished.

TOMCAT RECAP



Softball

The Tomcats (18-18) won two games in the PAC tourney to complete their season.



Baseball

The Tomcats (14-27) earned the 6th seed for the PAC tourney to end the year.



Lacrosse

The Tomcat women (11-5) capped their season with a PAC quarterfinal appearance.



Track & Field

First-year Imogen deBlois '28 won the PAC Indoor 400m title.



Wrestling

Joey King '25 (197) won his first and Seth Phillips '25 (285) won his third straight PAC title.

CLASS NOTES

— 1950s —

George A. (Jay) Sharp '54 resides in Norristown, Pa.



William Sowers '58 participated in the 55th Greater York Walk on Oct. 13. He welcomes individuals to join his team—75

percent of all donations support Church World Service relief efforts, while 25 percent benefit the York County Food Bank. Visit his page at <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/cropwalks/wsowers-sowers> to learn more and view a video of the CROP Farms and the beginning of the walk.

— 1960s —

Nancy (Bloss) Perrine '60 and her husband, Neal, reside in Avon, Ohio.

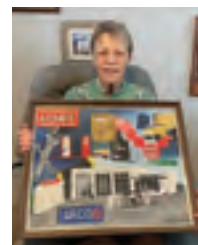
Linda S. Belote, Ph.D. '62 was selected for inclusion in Marquis Who's Who for her six-decade career in anthropology and higher education. A former Peace Corps volunteer, she held academic and leadership roles at multiple institutions and retired as professor emerita from the University of Minnesota Duluth. She is recognized for her commitment to student development, diversity, and international fieldwork.



Phillip E. Vender '67 and his wife, **Harriet J. Porter '67**, reside in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Karen R. (Runniger) Barney '67 resides in Reno, Nev.

Lowellyn (Whipple) Weidner '68 retired in 2017 after 23 years as assistant manager at the Greenville House. A mother of two, she is shown holding one of her paintings from 1981. She resides in Greenville, Pa.



— 1970s —

Raymond Young '70 resides in Beaver Falls, Pa.

Roy Lloyd '65

Residence: Springfield, Mo.

Professional Experience: I'm the President of the International Forgiveness Institute. I've received the International Peace and Justice Award from the Rainbow Push Coalition and contributed to DreamWorks' *Prince of Egypt*. As a commentator on New York City radio, one of my opinion pieces was named Best of the Year. I hold graduate degrees in communications, education, theology, psychology, and philosophy, and I occasionally teach at Missouri State and Drury University. I also serve as a hospital patient advocate and lead dialogues with Wounded Warriors, supporting first responders and military personnel.

Time at Thiel: I was honored to be named a distinguished alumnus of Thiel, where I once served on the board. My time at Thiel was defined by my experience in the Thiel Choir, which is what first drew me to the college thanks to Marlowe Johnson. I also performed with the Thiel Players, joined Sigma Phi Epsilon, worked in the dining hall, played organ for Chapel services, and had an incredible college experience guided by outstanding professors and administrators.

Reason For Giving Back: "I give back to Thiel because of the opportunity to help pave the way for another generation of students who will be encouraged to blossom into who they can be through the encouraging environment of Thiel."



The Thiel Fund File

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

CLASS NOTES

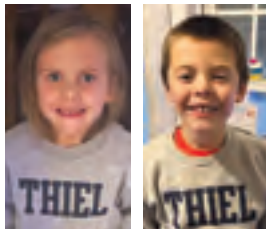


John Hauser '71 H'20 was the speaker at the March 5 Ruth A. Miller Senior Seminar. He is the College archivist and previously served as director of admissions and an advancement officer.

William J. Totaro '71 is president and CEO of TOT Enterprises. He and his wife, Rebecca, live in Hamilton, N.J.

Dave Zackey '71 and his wife, JoAnn, are volunteering for two months at the African Inland Mission retirement community in Minneola, Fla. One day, a resident joined them—renowned missionary doctor **Tim Fader '69**. Dave says, “You never know where you’re going to find a Thiel grad!”

Karen (Faas) Marovich '74 shares photos of her grandchildren in Thiel gear.



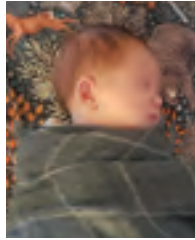
Barry '74 and Linda (Dean) Oman '75 share a photo of their grandson, Bryson Zuschlag, age 9, who visited them in Greenville,

Pa., from Myrtle Beach, S.C. All he wanted was to see snow—and he did!

Larry Waite '74 was misidentified in the Fall/Winter 2024 Edition of *The Bell* in the Class of 1974 group photo. Larry was No. 18 in the photo.



Jim Cunningham '77 was recognized by Pittsburgh’s WQED public radio during its 71st anniversary celebration. A LinkedIn post gave him the superlative “Most Likely to Keep the ‘Class’ in ‘Classical.’” He’s been with WQED since the ‘70s and serves as morning show host and senior executive producer.



Celia (Phillips) Garland '77 writes, “Our family is now one person larger!” Her granddaughter, Ashley James, was born Nov. 4. “She is,

of course, a real treasure. Everybody is doing fine—our daughter, Meghan, and her husband, Jake, are now adjusting to the joys of parenthood!”

Margaret “Maggie” Norris '78 was the featured speaker at the Feb. 12 Ruth A. Miller Senior Business Seminar. She is a principal at Indigo B, LLC in Charlotte, N.C., and serves on the Thiel College Board of Trustees.

Marilyn D. Crockett '79 and her husband, David, reside in Winnemucca, Nev.



Joseph Nairn, D.Mgt. '79 recently began a new role as business development specialist at Finger Lakes Community College.

— 1980s —

Joe Scarpitti '80 was the featured speaker at the April 2 Ruth A. Miller Senior Business Seminar, which included the Chi Eta Sigma induction ceremony. Scarpitti is a senior vice president at American Funds and a

member of the Thiel College Board of Trustees.

John '83 and Joanne (Gable) MARRS '85 spent a sunny March vacation snorkeling and exploring Cozumel, Mexico.



Zee Snyder '84 and husband Todd Travis '84 met Hoda Kotb during a visit to the Today Show. “She took a little extra time

to get the photo with us, even with directors rushing her. Hoda is one of a kind,” they said. The couple resides in Rockville, Md.

Shannon (Jackson) Pursel '89 and her husband, Kevin, reside in Renfrew, Pa.

— 1990s —

Brian K. Spencer '91 is seeking re-election as Prothonotary and Clerk of Courts in Clearfield County, where he lives with his wife, Christine. Their children are Logan, a real estate agent and field agent for the Knights of Columbus, and Breanne, a student-athlete at Juniata College. Spencer was a political science major and is active in civic and church groups.



KEEP IN TOUCH
NEW JOB, NEW TOWN,
ANY NEWS!
SEND UPDATES TO
ALUMNI@THIEL.EDU

CLASS NOTES

Lisa M. (Green) Elliott '92 and **Stephen Elliott '93** reside in Meadville, Pa.

Victor J. Carter '93 and his spouse, Nicole, live in Moon Township, Pa.

Jason Jurinsky '94 lives in Oil City, Pa.

Damen Taylor '95 was the Feb. 19 speaker for the Ruth A. Miller Senior Business Seminar. He has more than 25 years of nonprofit and government accounting experience and is vice president of the Thiel Alumni Association Board.



Juli A. (Dukic) Burchard '96

earned her MBA from Willamette University in August 2024.

She is an account manager for Apria Healthcare. She and her husband, Jon, live in Salem, Ore., with their three children.

Curtis Jones Jr. '98 was the speaker for the March 19 Ruth A. Miller Senior Seminar. He is the director of government affairs for the Erie Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Brian Cook '98 and his spouse, **Maggie (Weaver) Cook '99**, live in Mentor, Ohio with their two daughters. Brian is a Construction Manager for Lake County Utilities. He has served on the City of Mentor Planning Commission for seven years and has served as the Chairman for four years. Maggie is a speech language pathologist for Chardon Schools. She is President of the Mentor Exempted Village School District Board of Education.

Chris Wright '99 was the March 26 speaker for the Ruth A. Miller Senior Business Seminar. He is president and CEO of St. Paul's Senior Living Community in Greenville, Pa. Seminar namesake **Ruth Miller H'20** also attended.

— 2000s —



Christina Toth '01 shares a photo of her and her father in Thiel gear.

Joe Dunn '01 was recently profiled for his involvement with the Ohio Legislative Service Commission Fellowship. In 2002, he was assigned to the House Republican Caucus. Dunn earned a degree in political science with minors in theater and sociology. He currently works as a strategic account executive for Tableau.



Meghan M. Speer '02 has been named executive director of Nonprofit Hub, an organization focused on

supporting nonprofit leaders through education and professional development. Speer resides in Pittsburgh, Pa.

Ryan Renwick '05 of Jamestown, Pa., was featured in the *Youngstown Business Journal* for his work at Jamestown Coating Technologies.

A double major in business administration and chemistry, Renwick joined the company in 2003 as an intern and was hired full-time in 2005. Renwick's role is not the only Thiel connection. Board of Trustees member Michael Walton is the CEO.

Amy Lynn (DelFratte) Clark '04 is director of development for ALS United North Carolina. She and her husband, Chad, live in Raleigh, N.C.

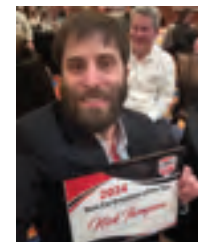
Ashley D. (Hickman) Rogers '06 became the owner and supervisor of Redmond Funeral Home, Inc., in Freeport, Pa., in April 2024. She and her husband, Charles, and their children live in Freeport.

Anthony Cancro '07 resides in Greensburg, Pa.

Molly B. (Darr) Kirby '07 is a teacher and, along with her husband, Andrew, owns Stone Crest Cabins in Cook Forest, Pa. The family resides in Strattanville, Pa.

Pace C. Warfield '08 (formerly Joshua Warfield) will receive their Ph.D. from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Calif., in May 2025. Their dissertation, "Our Greatest Glory," explores a queer theological perspective on Martin Luther's Genesis lectures. They reside in Brooklyn Center, Minn.

Nicholas Thompson '09 was named New Car Employee of the Year at Kings Toyota. The award was presented during the company dinner in 2025 at the Hard Rock Casino in Cincinnati, Ohio.



CLASS NOTES

— 2010s —

Kalisha I. (Johnson) Miller '11 resides in Erie, Pa.



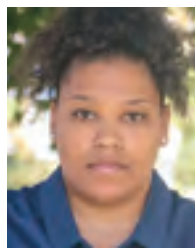
Kayla A. Emanuelson '13 was promoted to senior manager at SSB CPAs. She specializes in multistate taxation and works closely with clients in brewing, manufacturing, construction and mining. Emanuelson is a recipient of Thiel's 2022 Young Alumni Award and belongs to multiple CPA groups.

Joseph F. Klinger '13 was installed as pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Coatesville, Pa., on Oct. 20, 2024. He previously served for seven years in northeast Philadelphia. He and his family now live in Coatesville.



Joslyne Counselman '14 was the Feb. 26 featured speaker for the Ruth A. Miller Senior Business Seminar. "What

an honor to return to my alma mater and share my journey with such an incredible group of students. This feels like a full-circle moment for me. (Kudos to **Gary Witosky '79** for the invite!" A financial advisor at Thrivent in Pittsburgh, she shared a heartfelt reflection on her Thiel journey and the loss of her father during her first semester. She encouraged students to "turn pain into purpose."



Cimone Reid '15 and **Jessica Lovell '17** are making their mark as head women's basketball coaches at Penn State Shenango and

Penn State Greater Allegheny. Reid recently led Shenango to a second straight USCAA national tournament, while Lovell earned her first conference win in her debut season. Thiel, who is coached by alumna **Jessica Vormelker '19**, played Penn State Shenango this year. "Coaching against Jessica was special," Reid said. "Our connection has lasted well beyond college." Lovell echoed that sentiment: "Cimone took me under her wing when I got to Thiel and has been guiding me ever since."

Kasi (Wagler)

Shawgo '16 shares a photo matching with her daughter and reflects, "I am blessed to have received my education from Thiel's wonderfully knowledgeable accounting professors."



Randy L. Santarelli '19 lives in Collinsville, Ala., with his wife and kids.

— 2020s —

Alyssa (Hilliard) Metzger '20 and her husband, Mark, live in Pearl City, Hawaii.



Jonathan Burkley '21 is a beloved science teacher at Charter School of Excellence in Erie, Pa. Formerly a language arts

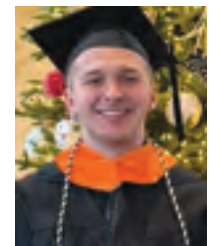
teacher, he also founded the school's Video Game and Anime Club. He's known for his spirited participation in dress-up days and is married to **Jessica (Peters) Burkley '21**.

John M. Ganiear Jr. '22 is executive director of the Meadville Housing Corporation, which has served the Meadville community since 1936. He resides in Greenville, Pa.

Patrick Kregeloh, M.S. '23 was inducted into the Pleasant Valley High School Hall of Fame on Jan. 24. He is a 2010 graduate of Pleasant Valley and currently lives in Coplay, Pa., with his wife, Ashley, and their two sons, Brook and Cole. He works as a physician assistant with St. Luke's University Health Network.

Michael A. Aches '23 graduated from Penn State-Harrisburg in December 2024 with a master's in civil engineering.

He works as a civil engineer at T3 Global Strategies in Bridgeville, Pa., and lives in Pittsburgh. Aches was a math major at Thiel and a member of the baseball team.



Roy W. Wilt III '23 is a financial representative for Northwestern Mutual. He resides in Greenville, Pa.

≡ CLASS NOTES ≡

– marriages –



Shelly (Hendrick) Pfrommer '02 married Matt Pfrommer on May 25, 2024. Thiel alumni in attendance included **Kevin Goist '02**, **AH Davis '03**, **Kristie (Smith) Flannery '02**, **Niki (Forsythe) Clarke**, and **Maureen (Grady) Marinakies**. The couple lives in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Sheila M. Gross, Ph.D. '10, and **Sean P. Oros '15** were married Dec. 21, 2024, at the Peter Allen Inn in Kinsman, Ohio. The wedding included many Thiel connections: **Andrew Gaul '15** was best man, **Ashley Johnson '17** was a bridesmaid, and faculty members **George Branch-Trevathan, Ph.D.**, and **Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D.**, participated in the ceremony. The couple, who both teach in the Thiel English Department, live in Hermitage, Pa., with their cats, Freya and Frigg.

– births –



To **Elizabeth (Martin) Mulligan '11**, a son, Brian Adam Mulligan ("BamBam"), born Nov. 20, 2024.



To **Kathryn (LaMark) Noland '16**, a daughter, Margaret Louise, born May 16, 2024

– gatherings –



THIEL REUNION — Feb. 22 at Clifford's Restaurant, Evans City, Pa. Attendees: **Jim Frank '88, Tina (Goedeker) Frank, Deborah "Deb" (Daugherty) Carr '90, Dan Carr '88, Jodi (Fisher) Thigpen '87, John Thigpen '86, Dave Duff '86, Susie Duff.** "Just an amazing night for four fraternity brothers and their wives."



DELTA SIGMA PHI '74 HOLIDAY PARTY
Pictured are: **Diane Matthews, Bill Matthews '74, Becky (Koch) Goodrick '75, Becky Mayton, Tom Mayton '74, Becky Witherup, Joyce Fleischer, Chuck Goodrick '74, Carmen Pompeii '75, Debbie Pompeii, Bob Witherup '74, and Robert Olson, Ph.D. '60 H'09.**

Ruth Ann Miller Senior Seminar Speaker Series

Interested in participating?

Any alumni interested in learning more about the Ruth Ann Miller Senior Seminar in the spring semester or the Entrepreneurship Seminar in the fall should contact Mario Marini '92 at mmarini@thiel.edu or 724-589-2022 or Roberta Leonard at rleonard@thiel.edu or 724-589-2024.



PITTSBURGH ST. PATRICK'S DAY GATHERING

Sandy (Trasferini) Peace '87 shares a photo from an alumni gathering in Pittsburgh.

– gatherings –



DEMOS GATHERED AT HOMECOMING 2024

Front row: **Mike Zawoysky '79**, **Ivin Rohrer '79**, **Gary Witosky '79 H'24**, **Dick Valesky '80**, **Luke Randall '81**, **Dave Allison '79** Back row: **Anthony Vaccaro '80**, **Tyler Buffington '16** (son of the late **Dave Buffington '79**), **Tim Reese '82** (son of the late Prof. **George Reese**) Go Demos!



VISION ATTIRE FILM PREMIERE — MARCH 7

Devyn Giovengo '22, owner of Vision Attire, held a film premiere at The Forge Urban Winery in Homestead, Pa. Attendees included **Malik Beckford '22**, **David Hummel '83**, **Devyn Giovengo '22**, and **Che Fuqua '25**.

2025 Alumni Award Winners

2025 Alumni Award Winners Dinner

Friday, September 25

The 2025 Annual Alumni Award winners have been announced. Homecoming weekend is Sept. 25-28.

Distinguished Alumna

- **Danielle (Hillwig) Doheny '10**

Service to Thiel

- **E. William Matthews '74**

Young Alumnus

- **Steven Morgan '15**

For more information, contact Alumni Relations at alumni@thiel.edu or 724-589-2027.

CLASS OF 1975

50th Reunion during Homecoming, Sept. 25-28

Tentative Event Schedule

Thursday, Sept. 25

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Campus-wide Pep Rally

Friday, Sept. 26

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Campus Tours

2-4 p.m. Alumni Wine Tasting (hosted by the Class of 1975)

Saturday, Sept. 27

9-10:30 a.m. All-Class Reunion Breakfast

10 a.m. to Noon Campus Tours

Noon-3 p.m. Alumni Tent at Alumni Stadium

3 p.m. Thiel vs. Waynesburg football game

6:15 p.m. Class of 1975 Reception and Dinner (Classes of '74 and '76 invited)

Sunday, Sept. 28

11 a.m. to Noon Service of Remembrance

More details to come.

Class of 1975 Reunion Planning Committee:

Ed Batten, Deb (Brown) Bernardini, Evey (Schlosske) Crain, Kate Fuhrer, Nancy (Gibson) Hauser, Linda (Dean) Oman, Tom Wickerham



Service for Thiel athletic icon Manes held in May at Johnson Chapel



A funeral service for retired **Air Force Colonel Charles H. "Bud" Manes '58** was held at David Johnson Memorial Chapel on campus on May 1.

He died April 22, 2025. He was 93 years old.

He is survived by his wife Ann Stanonis-Manes, of Greenville; his sister, Carol Excel of Wellsville, Ohio; sons **Don '78** (Lori) of New Port Richey, Fla.; **David '80** (Shelley (Palmer) '80) St Petersburg, Fla.; Tim of Orlando Fla.; and daughters **Pam (John) Manes '85** Darley of Orlando Fla.; and Megan (Andy) Manes of Delaware, Ohio; also survived by his former wives **Myrtie Manes '57**, and

by Marilyn Cotton, plus nieces and nephews, and one grandson.

Manes lettered in football and basketball at Thiel College and earned a master's degree from Case Western Reserve University. He taught health and physical education at Thiel from 1959-1997, coached basketball, track & field, and cross country, and served as Director of Athletics. Manes was named Small College Basketball Coach of the Year for the 1967-68 season. He helped form the Thiel Athletic Hall of Fame and was inducted in 2008. Thiel named its track in his honor in 2019. A U.S. Army and Air Force veteran, Manes retired as a colonel in 1983 and later served as chaplain for the Department of Pennsylvania ITAM and as national chaplain.

Benefactor, brother of Trustee emeritus, Ted Pedas dies

Theodore "Ted" Pedas passed away on March 21, 2025. He was 93 years old.

Pedas, along with his brother, **James Pedas '50 H'89**, was a contributor to the \$6.8 million James Pedas Communication Center. The Center was dedicated in 2014 and is a collaborative learning community where students engage in film, TV, radio, news production and other multimedia-rich experiences preparing them for today's information society.

Pedas graduated from Youngstown State University in 1953 and received his MBA from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School in 1954. He then moved to Washington, D.C., to join his brother and best friend, Jim. While they both attended

George Washington University Law School, Ted and Jim became business partners establishing a recording company known as Colt 45 Records. It was during this period that they became involved in the movie industry by purchasing drive-in theatres in West Virginia.

Ted and Jim established Circle Releasing Corporation and the production company, Circle Films, distributing foreign and art films. In 1986, Circle Releasing distributed "Blood Simple," one of the first films of Joel and Ethan Coen. Circle Films went on to produce the Coen Brothers' "Raising Arizona," "Miller's Crossing" and "Barton Fink."

Joining Generations founder, psychology Professor Shaffer passes

James H. "Jim" Shaffer, Ph.D.

passed away at The Colony at St. Paul's Senior Living Community, Greenville on March 19, 2025.

He was born in Beckley, W.Va. on November 9, 1942. Shaffer earned his B.A. in mathematics and his M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology all at West Virginia University. He retired from Thiel College in 2009 following a 39-year career as a Professor of Psychology.

Shaffer started the "Joining Generations" program that connects students and residents at St. Paul's. Shaffer said of the program "I thought it was good to get Thiel students involved with older people, and now I'm one of them."

On May 6, 1972, he married the former **Lucy M. Pearson '72**; she survives. In addition to his wife, Jim is survived by three daughters: Patricia (Ralph) Robb of Fort Worth, Texas, Pamela (Chuck) Marusic of Pendleton, Ind., and Gwen (David) Horth of Indianapolis; four sons: Thomas Horth of Greenville, Pa., Timothy (Dawn) Horth of Zionsville, Ind., Paul Horth of Greenfield, Ind., and Jamie (Cherry) Shaffer of Greenville, Pa.; a brother, Hu (Ann) Shaffer of Charlottesville, Va.; 14 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Memorial contributions may be made to The Thiel College Shaffer Psychology Scholarship Fund, 75 College Ave., Greenville, Pa. 16125 or The Pearson Shaffer Scholarship Fund at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 1 Trinity Pl. Greenville, Pa. 16125.

CLASS NOTES

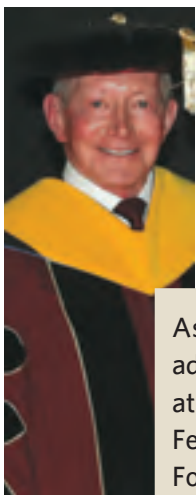
— in memoriam —

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

Maren R. Alexis '77
John Buckler Auten '57
Annelise (Thorsen) Bacher '52
Barbara (Holste) Barker '60
Dr. Donald E. Beck
George W. Beil Sr. '50
Denise E. Bendle '73
William A. Billingsley '60
Janice Billingsley '58
Robert David Bittle '75
Magdalene Blaschak
Fr. Thomas Blaschak
Stephen M. Boligitz '75
Carol M. Brosius
Dennis J. Bryson '69
William C. Bubeck '62
Elaine Buckiso
Michael A. Buckiso '64
Mary E. Callahan '64
Pamella M. Campbell
Lois (Applegate) Carine '56
Donald W. Chase, Jr '64
Ruth (Benzenhoefer) Chesley '57
James E. Cool '75
Arthur Crichton
Sarah (Reichard) Crichton '48
Ethel R. Dale
Fred G. Daniel, Sr. '75
Patricia A. Dignall '77
Ronald J. Diurba '68
Rev. David A. Dobi
Joanne E. (Haag) Eide '67
Richard E. Erhard '64
Lesley Anne Fisher '91
Fred Eugene Fitze '74
Rev. Ralph G. Fogal '50
Carol Kay Forbes '55
Patricia Ann (Rhoades) French '68
Gary L. Fusco '75
Edward A. Gamble '56
John L. Ghindea '75
Don Goertzen

Richard L. Gregory
Rachel A. (Haun) Griffin '78
Deborah (Molnar) Gunia '61
Robert P. Habel Sr. '58
Mark W. Hammerstedt '75
Sarah L. (Frankenfield) Hauth '60
Kal W. Helou '67
Betty Louise Herwick '59
Kenneth E. Hinderliter '75
Judith A. (McNutt) Hodge '95
Kenneth W. Humphrey
Merton W. Hutton
George Johnston
John J. Kalchthaler
Susan (Vachout) Kane '65
Mark J. Karr '79
Donna Kroner
Rod Kulp
Patricia (Totzke) Kulp '60
Cordell V. Landrum '88
John J. Larkin '75
Dawn C. Larson '76
William J. Lausterer '75
Patricia L. (Carmen) Lieberman '74
Jodeen A. (Gilmore) Limber '79
Helen F. Lochra
Dr. Albert P. Lochra '49
David R. Maddy '79
Col. Charles H. "Bud" Manes '58
Marcia Lee Mann '65
Edward L. Marini '57
James N. Markitell '83
Rev. Judith A. (Kennedy) McKee '70
Doris B. (Barnes) Miller '53
Eugene W. Miller Jr. '65
Mary Ann Miller
John E. Miner '73

James Morgan
Karen (Oill) Moury '79
Robert Timothy Muhleman '75
Timothy H. Muller '64
John M. Mundsinger '75
Theodore "Ted" Pedas
William Edward Phillips '54
Elda L. (Wilhelm) Pierpan '63
Ella Mae (Cooke) Pollier '65
Barbara Poolos
Roland Victor Raham '62
Kathleen M. Reeve '69
Royce R. Reinhart '70
Sharon L. (Hetrick) Roemer '70
Norman Roskos '53
Joseph M. Scarlato '69
Dr. Doris L. (Foster) Scava '53
Samuel Scava '50
Dennis F. Schavolt
Dr. Richard A. Schroeder
Roxanne (Kruse) Senick '75
Dr. James H. Shaffer
Kenneth H. Shaner '60
Joanne C. Shannon
Orris Wright Sheldon III '68
James Glenn Smetana '03
H. Marlene (Wente) Speicher '85
Charles Stepp
Betty Stewart
Pamela E. Stubing '66
Judith Turner
Dr. Federico P. Vallesteros
William T. Walhour '56
Dana C. Waterson '94
James T. Weller Sr.
Joan M. Wentling
Muriel E. (Jones) Wilson '51
Christopher L. Worley '75
Sandra (Smith) Young '56
Donald Young
Samuel M. Zeno '60



Guskey shares ideas on overcoming fear of failure, resilience and kindness

By **Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25**

As an honorary degree recipient, I had the privilege of addressing the students being recognized and their families at the Thiel College Academic Honors Convocation on February 21 in the William Passavant Memorial Center. Following is a condensed version of the three ideas I shared with those who attended. My hope is that a broader audience may find these ideas useful as well.

This evening, I have three ideas to share with you. These three things I've learned, not easily, have made a difference for me as a graduate of Thiel College. I believe they may for you, too.

First, we are here tonight to celebrate your success—and should take pride in that success. But there is a danger that comes from success: It can make you afraid to fail. The most stifling trait in the human psyche is our fear of failure. That fear keeps us from more joy and more fulfillment in life than anything else. Most of our regrets in life come from that fear.

There will be times in your life when you will look back and say, "I tried that, and it didn't work out. I just couldn't do it." But I promise this: You will be a lot angrier and have a lot more regret if you look back and say, "I think I could have done that, but I never tried." In your life, you will find that you learn very little from success. There's not much to learn from success. You learn the most from the times you fail.

Second, when you fail, when you are defeated, when you get knocked down, get back up! Your success in the world today will not be defined by your intelligence, by your innate talent, or by your achievements. It will be defined by your resilience.

Most of the truly remarkable achievements in the history of human kind have occurred when, in the face of failure, suffering, and loss, people got back up. They were resilient.

Don't let setbacks and failures cause you to fall into the trap of quiet resignation. Don't be afraid to take on new challenges when the outcome is uncertain. And even

when that outcome is disappointment, defeat, and utter failure, find the strength to get back up. Be resilient!

Third, perhaps most important, and what will make the biggest difference in your life is this: Be kind.

Every day in your life, you are going to face situations when you will choose a course of action. What will come to you naturally and automatically is to do the selfish thing, because it's easier. As human beings, we are programmed to look out for ourselves.

And never mistake kindness for weakness; it is not! Weakness lies in selfishness, in disregard, in arrogance. Kindness requires true strength! Every day you are going to find that the hard thing to do, and the kind thing to do, are usually the same thing. But I promise you, you will never regret doing the kind thing.

There have been many times in my life when I have bent the truth in order to be kind—and I don't regret a single one of them. Because in my life, I find that I have always been a lot surer of what is kind than I am of what is true.

If you are not afraid to fail, are resilient and kind, with a little luck, you may come to a time in your life when people of the caliber of **John Hauser '71 H'20** and **Robert Olson, Ph.D. '60 H'09**—both graduates of Thiel and among that elite group of outstanding individuals who have been awarded honorary degrees from Thiel, and who I have admired for their strength, their character, their integrity, and their kindness for my entire life—nominate you to join their ranks.

If you are not afraid to fail, are resilient and kind, with a little luck, you may one day stand before your family and friends from Thiel, who always believed in you, who never gave up on you, who loved you and forgave you when you deserved neither, and say "Thank you!"

Thomas R. Guskey, Ph.D. '72 H'25 is a Professor Emeritus in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky. He has served as Department Chair, Head of the Educational Psychology Area Committee, and President of the Faculty Council. Over his career, Guskey has held Visiting Professorships at 10 universities in the United States, as well as Visiting Scholars at universities in Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Guskey is one of seven alumni who have been inducted into the Thiel College Athletic Hall of Fame and awarded an honorary degree.

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