

The Bell



OLYMPUS

*A transformative gift from the Pedas family
will shape Thiel's future for generations*



Back-to-Backflip!

First-year student Kaftan Samm '29 celebrates Thiel's second consecutive Presidents' Athletic Conference men's volleyball championship in April. The Tomcats advanced to the NCAA Division III playoffs for the second straight season. See Page 20.



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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,

Spring is always a season of transition at Thiel College, but this year's Commencement carried a particularly meaningful sense of continuity. On May 9, following the College's 152nd Commencement Exercises,



we gathered as a community for the groundbreaking of the Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center—a day that symbolized both the culmination of our graduates' work and the beginning of what lies ahead.

Commencement marks the completion of one chapter, but it also affirms a truth we hold dear: learning, growth and discovery do not end with a degree. In many ways, the Olympus Center will stand as a physical expression of that idea. Made possible through the lead gift from **Wanda and James Pedas '50 H'89** and the extraordinary generosity of the Pedas family, this project reflects a deep and enduring commitment to Thiel's future.

The \$10 million and 40,000-square-foot Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center will be a transformative building for Thiel. It is designed not as a competition venue, but as a place of purpose and possibility. It will provide a recreational court, walking track, fitness studio and gathering spaces for students, faculty, staff and community members.

At the same time, the facility will enhance the experience of our student-athletes in meaningful ways, including expanded locker room capacity and team spaces that are essential to recruitment and retention. These investments strengthen our ability to attract and support students who will contribute to the vibrancy of our campus.

Tangible examples of the College's recent positive momentum abound across campus. We celebrated the men's volleyball team, which won its second consecutive Presidents' Athletic Conference championship, and our cheer team earned a third-place finish at the National Cheerleaders Association championships in Daytona Beach, Fla., marking the program's fifth straight top-three finish. Our Moot Court team also delivered an outstanding performance, finishing seventh nationally.

These accomplishments, alongside the many academic and co-curricular achievements of our students, reflect the strength of a Thiel education and the dedication of our faculty, staff and alumni network.

As we look ahead, the groundbreaking of the Olympus reminds us that while each class completes its journey on campus, the work of becoming, of learning, growing and striving, continues. With the support of alumni and friends like you, Thiel College remains a place where that lifelong journey is nurtured and sustained.

Thank you for your continued commitment to Thiel College.

Go Tomcats!

Susan Traverso
 Susan Traverso, Ph.D.

The Bell

... SPRING/SUMMER 2026 ...

Social Media	5
Academic Highlights	6
Scholarship	8
Commencement	10
Feature Story	14
Campus Highlights	17
Athletics	18
Class Notes	22
In Memoriam	29
Final Word	30

On the Cover



James "Jim" Pedas '50 H'89 and his wife, **Wanda Pedas**, participate in the May 9 groundbreaking ceremony for Thiel College's Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center near Stoeber Field. The Pedas family provided the lead \$5 million gift for the project. Construction on the \$10 million, 40,000-square-foot facility is scheduled to begin this summer, with completion targeted for 2027.

Game, Set, Match Day!

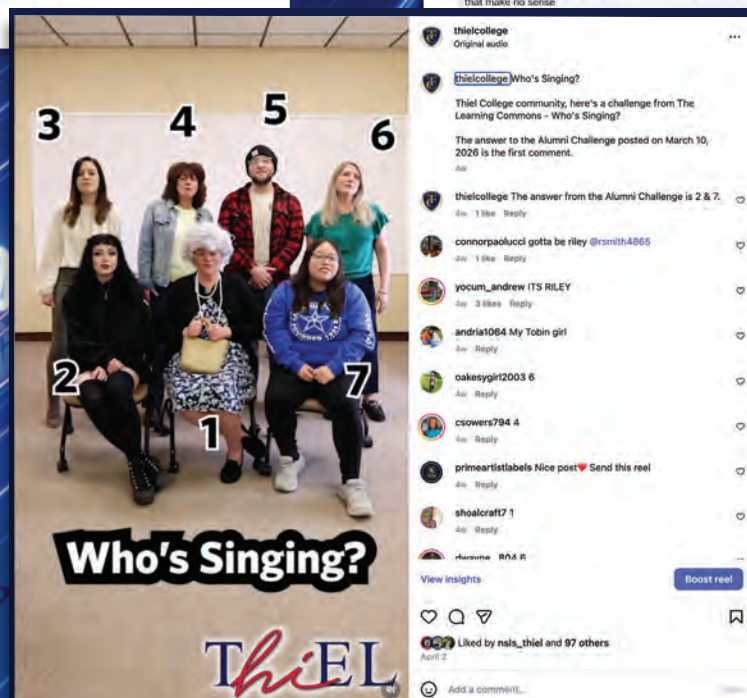
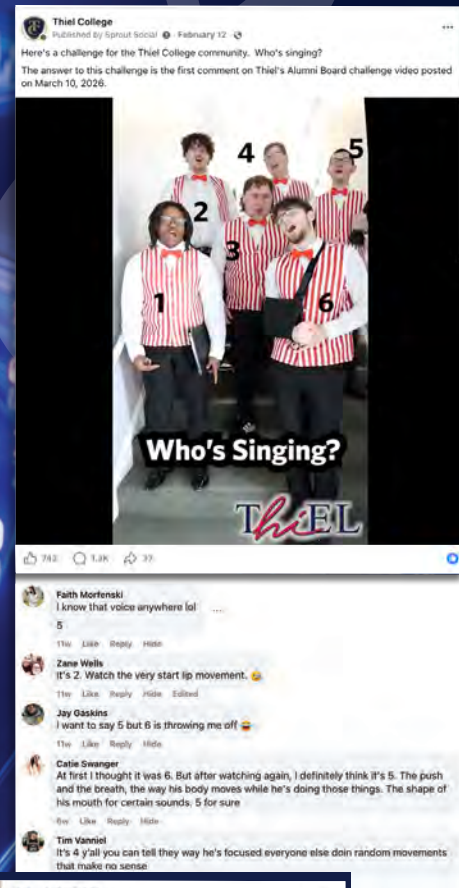
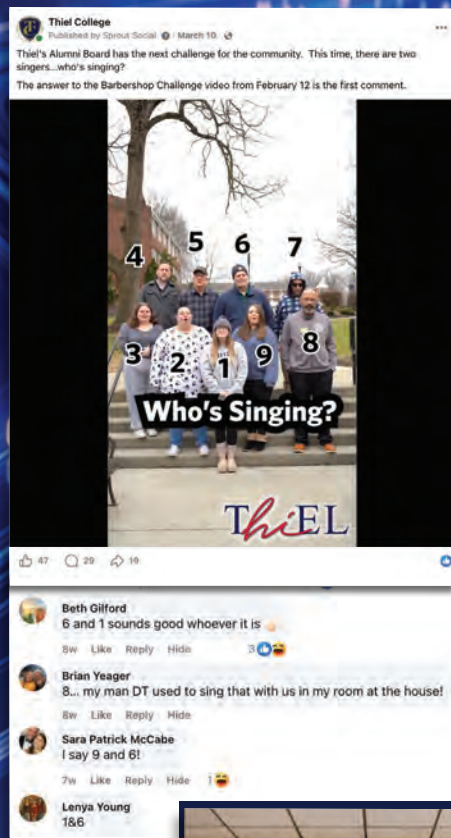


Read more about the record-setting day on **Page 17**.

Tomcats in tune: Who's singing?

It's not as big a hit as television's "The Masked Singer" or "The Voice" but Thiel's "Who's Singing" campaign has been more than a one-hit wonder! The campaign has generated more than 540,000 social media interactions and video views across Thiel College's social media channels. It was launched by the Barbershop singers. Later, members of The Learning Commons and Alumni Association Board of Directors joined the fun, singing classic pop tunes and the theme to the "Golden Girls." Social media users are asked to guess which person in the video is singing among the lip-syncers. Stay tuned; more are coming, so make sure you are following Thiel College's social media channels.

The Thiel community is invited to keep the momentum going! Record and share your own "Who's Singing?" video. Tag @ThielCollege on Facebook and Instagram. The more voices, the better. Let's see how many Tomcats we can get singing along!



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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From the classroom to the locker room and boardroom

New sports management program combines experiential and class learning

Students from the sports management course visited 7 17 Credit Union Field in Eastwood, Ohio this spring.

Thiel College is preparing students for careers in one of the country's fastest-growing industries with the launch of a new bachelor's degree in sports management beginning in Fall 2026.

The program blends business, communication, leadership, and experiential learning to give students a broad foundation for careers across athletics and recreation. Opportunities in the field extend far beyond professional sports, including positions in college athletics, community recreation, nonprofit organizations, sports marketing, event operations, public relations, and facility management.

"The Sports Management program reflects the strengths that define a Thiel education—small class sizes, personalized mentoring, and hands-on learning," said Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College **Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D.** "Students will engage in real-world internships and experiential projects that connect theory to practice while developing the critical thinking and decision-making skills that are the foundation of a liberal arts education and essential to professional success."

The four major professional sports leagues are each multi-billion-dollar enterprises and then factor in scholastic, collegiate, recreational and minor league opportunities with these professional institutions and it is not a surprise that according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in sports management-related occupations is projected to grow 7 percent through 2029, with about 108,900 job openings each year. Median annual wages for experienced professionals are near \$85,000.

The program will be led in part by **TJ Albright '04**, who returns to his alma mater as assistant professor of sports management in Fall 2026. A former wrestler and environmental science and chemistry major at Thiel, Albright brings a diverse professional and academic background that includes graduate degrees in health and safety, business administration, and strategic management and analytics. He has a Master of Science in health and safety from Columbia Southern University, an MBA from the University of North Alabama and a Ph.D. in strategic management and

analytics from the University of the Cumberlands. Experiential learning already is playing a central role in the program's development. Students in BADM 105 – Sports Management traveled to 7 17 Credit Union Field at Eastwood for a behind-the-scenes look at the operations of the Mahoning Valley Scrappers organization.

The Scrappers play in the MLB Draft League. They are not a traditional Minor League Baseball affiliate but feature top draft-eligible college prospects playing with wood bats, aiming for professional baseball. During the visit, students met with Community Engagement and Merchandise Manager **George Kirby** and learned about game-day operations, sponsorships, promotions, fan engagement, and facility management while touring the ballpark and its recent upgrades.

The visit highlighted the program's emphasis on connecting classroom learning with practical experience and industry exposure — a growing priority as the sports business industry continues to expand nationally.



Program director for the Bachelor of Science in nutrition program **Katheryn E. Willey** discusses career opportunities for nutrition majors with Thiel students during a presentation this spring.

When Thiel College approved a new Bachelor of Science in nutrition program in February, the move reflected more than the addition of another major. It marked another step in the College's expanding investment in health sciences, career-focused learning and programs tied to growing workforce needs.

The program, which welcomes its first students in Fall 2026, is designed to prepare graduates for careers in nutrition, dietetics, community health and related healthcare fields. Trustees also approved plans for a Master of Science program in nutrition and dietetics, which is expected to launch in 2027 pending accreditation approval.

To lead the initiative, the College appointed registered dietitian **Katheryn E. Willey** as program director for both the undergraduate program and the planned graduate degree.

Willey arrived at Thiel with experience spanning clinical nutrition, higher education and healthcare leadership. A registered dietitian, licensed dietitian and certified diabetes care and education specialist, she

brought a background in chronic disease management, medical nutrition therapy and telehealth counseling. She also served as founder and CEO of Simply Science Nutrition Counseling LLC, a multi-state virtual nutrition practice serving clients across the United States.

Her appointment helped position the new program around both scientific rigor and practical application.

The nutrition curriculum is built around human biology, food science, metabolism and nutrition across the lifespan. Students also are expected to gain hands-on experience through labs, internships and community-based learning opportunities designed to prepare them for professional practice or graduate study.

The program offers both a traditional four-year track and an accelerated three-year pathway, giving students multiple options for completing the degree while preparing for careers in hospitals, clinics, corporate wellness programs, community nutrition organizations and other healthcare settings.

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College **Sheila**

Nowinski, Ph.D. said the addition reflected the College's continued focus on developing academic programs connected to student interests and workforce demand.

"The addition of the nutrition major reflects Thiel College's commitment to developing forward-looking academic programs that meet student interests and workforce needs," Nowinski said. "This program blends scientific rigor with experiential learning and personalized advising, preparing students to make meaningful contributions in healthcare, community wellness and graduate study."

At the time of her appointment, Willey was pursuing a Doctor of Education in leadership, health and wellness through American College of Education, with research focused on evidence-based nutrition education and improving health outcomes.

Scan the QR code to see an interview with **Katheryn E. Willey**.





‘Give it another year’

Lutheran bishop urges Miller Lecture attendees to remain faithful and hopeful

When **The Rev. Yehiel Curry** visited Thiel College in April as the featured speaker for the third edition of the Professor David M. Miller ’61 H’20 Distinguished Lecture Series, his message resonated with both campus and community audiences navigating uncertain times.

Clergy members and church leaders from Lutheran congregations and secular community members from northwestern Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio filled the Lutheran Heritage Room in the Howard Miller Student Center to hear Curry’s presentation, “Give It Another Year.” Many in attendance were eager to hear the perspective of the newly elected presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as congregations across denominations continue to confront declining membership and changing patterns of religious participation.

Drawing from Luke 13:8-9 — the biblical parable of the barren fig tree — Curry encouraged listeners to approach leadership, ministry and community life with patience, persistence and faith rather than despair.

Curry, who began serving as presiding bishop of the ELCA in October 2025 after being elected earlier that

year, reflected on the importance of continuing to nurture people and communities even during seasons of uncertainty. As the church’s fifth presiding bishop and first African American leader in the role, Curry spoke about leadership rooted in compassion, perseverance and hope.

The ELCA is one of the largest Christian denominations in the United States, with approximately 2.7 million members across more than 8,400 worshipping communities in all 50 states and the Caribbean region. Before his election as presiding bishop, Curry served as bishop of the ELCA Metropolitan Chicago Synod, where he provided pastoral leadership to more than 160 congregations.

His path to ministry was not a traditional one. Curry shared how he discovered his calling after careers in professional sales, social work and education before eventually helping to grow a start-up congregation into a fully recognized ELCA member church. He earned a bachelor’s degree from Lewis University and a Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

While the evening lecture drew a large audience,

Curry's visit extended well beyond the podium. During his time on campus, he met with students following the presentation and participated in additional meetings and conversations with students both on the day of the lecture and the following day. Those interactions reflected one of the central goals of the Miller Lecture Series: creating opportunities for students to engage personally with accomplished leaders whose experiences span public service, scholarship, faith and professional life.

"The Professor David M. Miller Distinguished Lecture Series reflects Thiel College's commitment to preparing students for impactful lives beyond the classroom," President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.** said. "The close-knit nature of our campus means students can engage on an individual basis with internationally accomplished leaders. These experiences enrich a supportive community where students are known by name and encouraged to grow."

The lecture series was endowed through a gift from **Jagdish N. Sheth H'07** and his wife, **Madhu Sheth**, and honors longtime Thiel professor **David M. Miller '61 H'20**, who retired in 2020 after a 57-year teaching career — the longest in the College's history. Miller, who passed away in 2022, taught and advised more students than any faculty member in the history of Thiel College.

Former University of Pittsburgh Chancellor and Thiel alumnus **Mark Nordenberg, J.D. '70 H'98** delivered the inaugural Miller Lecture in 2023. **Rear Adm. Richard Childs, M.D.**, served as the 2024 speaker.

Lauritsen speaks as part of Crutchfield series



This spring, nationally recognized criminologist **Janet Lauritsen, Ph.D.** visited Thiel College as the featured speaker for the Dr. Robert Crutchfield '71 Lecture Series, continuing a tradition that has brought leading voices in sociology and criminal justice to campus since 2019.

Lauritsen presented "Fifty Years of Violence: How Has Violence Against Women and Men Changed Over Time?" during an April lecture in Stamm Lecture Hall in the James Pedas Communication Center. Her talk examined long-term trends in violent victimization and how patterns of violence have shifted over time across gender and society.

A Curators' Distinguished Professor Emerita of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri–St. Louis, Lauritsen is widely regarded as one of the nation's leading scholars on criminal victimization trends and crime measurement. Her research has focused on the causes and consequences of violence, the development of crime data systems and the importance of improving national crime statistics to better inform public policy and public understanding.

The lecture series is supported by distinguished alumnus **Robert Crutchfield, Ph.D. '71**, a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Washington. Crutchfield's scholarship has explored the relationships among labor markets, inequality, race and the criminal justice system, and his support has helped connect Thiel students with nationally prominent scholars whose work bridges sociology, criminology and public policy.

Although not formally part of the lecture series itself, Crutchfield also returned to campus in 2021 to deliver a Common Hour presentation titled "Race and Justice: Black Lives Matter?" His visit extended the broader conversation around crime, inequality and social justice that has become a hallmark of the program.

The series began in 2019 with a lecture by sociologist **Ruth Peterson, Ph.D.**, professor emerita at The Ohio State University and former director of its Criminal Justice Research Center.

Support and celebration

Alumnus, faculty member, graduates, and Tomcat family share moments during 152nd Commencement Exercises



Shane Snyder, Ph.D. '94 H'26 urged graduates to keep in mind that their future is much larger than their plans.



Chemistry and Biochemistry double major **Riley Smith '26** delivered the senior address.

The Class of 2026 marked Commencement on May 9 at the William A. Passavant Memorial Center in a ceremony that blended celebration, humor, gratitude and reflection as graduates, families, faculty and alumni gathered to recognize the achievements of the graduating class and the community that supported them along the way.

Among the day's honors was the recognition of Professor of Chemistry **Guru Rattan K. Khalsa, Ph.D.**, who was awarded emerita status following her retirement after 46 years of service to Thiel College. Khalsa spent more than four decades teaching and mentoring generations of students, including the Commencement speaker and honorary degree recipient, **Shane A. Snyder, Ph.D. '94 H'26**, in the sciences while becoming one of the institution's longest-serving faculty members.

Snyder returned to campus after building an internationally recognized career in environmental engineering and water sustainability. Snyder serves as the José Domingo Pérez Foundation Chair and Professor in the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology. He has authored more than 300 peer-reviewed publications

and amassed more than 41,000 citations during his career.

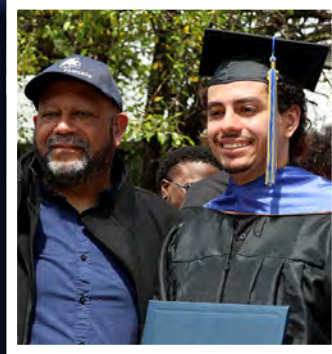
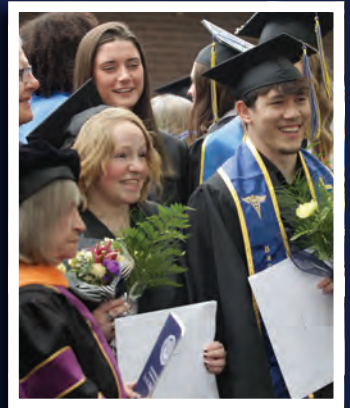
In his address, Snyder reflected on his own path to higher education and how his time at Thiel reshaped his perspective on the world.

"It's hard to believe that 22 years ago I was here, like all of you, excited, ready to be done, ready to take on the world, ready to make some money, ready to start a career," Snyder said.

Snyder told graduates that he did not enroll in college immediately after high school. Instead, he entered the workforce as a phlebotomist and purchased a Z28 Camaro, which he described as something he initially admired before realizing material success alone was not fulfilling. He said his liberal arts education at Thiel exposed him to new ideas, including

Continued on page 13

COMMENCEMENT



Scan the QR to see more photos or go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thielcollege/albums>.

LEGACIES

Families celebrate their Thiel College connections



Bryce Knauf '26 with his aunts, **Jessica Peterson '03** and **Jaclyn Peterson-Rice '01**; and great aunt **Kathleen Frederick '93**



Amy E. Batt '26 and her father, **Mark S. Batt '87**



Kelly Oros '26 and her brother, Lecturer of English **Sean Oros '15**



Josie Gadsby '26 and her father, **Justin Gadsby '98**, with future Tomcat **Arliss Gadsby**.



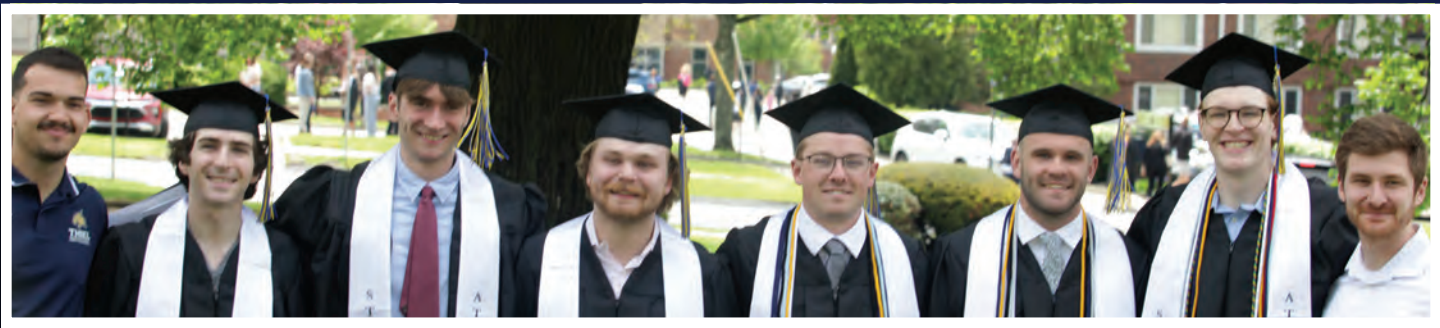
Charlee May '26 and her mother, **Deborah (Phillips) May '97**



Taryn Vergnola '26 and her sister **Kylie Vergnola '24**



Nathaniel Turner '26 and his father, **Todd Turner '98**, and mother, **Stephanie (Smith) Turner '98**



The parents of **Toby Atwood '26**, **Brandi (Ogden) Atwood** and **Joseph Atwood Jr.**, accept the \$1,000 gift from the Class of 2026 to the Toby Atwood '26 memorial scholarship from Student Government Association President **Lexi Brown '26** and Senior Class President **Jordan Wilhoit '26** during Commencement.

Continued from page 10

art, music and culture that expanded his worldview.

"Thiel changed who I was," Snyder said. He encouraged graduates to remain open to possibilities beyond the plans they currently envisioned for themselves.

"For all you graduating, your future is bigger than the plans that you have," Snyder said.

The senior address was delivered by chemistry and biochemistry double major **Riley Smith '26**, who highlighted the close-knit nature of the Thiel community with humor and sincerity.

"Looking back, we have all undergone significant transformations," Smith said. "We've gained new perspectives, new skills, new friends, and in my case, significantly faster morning routines," Smith said before removing his mortar board to show his shaved head. The moment drew

laughter from the audience before Smith reflected on how the College's small campus community helps students feel recognized, supported and welcomed throughout their college experience.

"In all seriousness, going bald is a very literal way of being stripped down to basics," Smith said. "At a larger school, I might have been just another person in a 300-person lecture hall, who suddenly started wearing hats, but you can't really hide at a place like Thiel... when you change people notice. But more importantly, they lean in and support you through the change."

While the ceremony celebrated achievement and new beginnings, it also included emotional moments of remembrance for **Toby Atwood '26**, whose death in July 2025 deeply affected the campus community. Atwood's name was read during the presentation of diplomas and a brief moment of silence followed.

Earlier in the ceremony, Atwood's parents, **Brandi (Ogden) Atwood** and **Joseph Atwood Jr.**, accepted a \$1,000 gift from the Class of 2026 for the Toby Atwood '26 Memorial Scholarship. The presentation was made by Student Government Association President **Lexi Brown '26** and Senior Class President **Jordan Wilhoit '26**.

Together, the moments of celebration, reflection and remembrance underscored the lasting bonds shared by the graduating class and the broader Thiel community as the Class of 2026 officially joined the College's alumni ranks.

"The world is small," Snyder said. "The things you can do, the things you are empowered to do with your education now is do great things. Congratulations. You did it, now go change the world."



Construction set to start this summer on new athletic and recreation center

Join the Team!

Support the Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center

Fundraising for the project remains ongoing as Thiel works toward fully funding the \$10 million facility through donor support. Opportunities are available for alumni, businesses and community partners interested in becoming involved with the project and its long-term impact on student wellness, recreation and campus life.

Individuals and organizations interested in supporting the Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center through sponsorships, naming opportunities or donations may contact:

Roberta Leonard
Vice President for College Advancement
rleonard@thiel.edu
724-589-2024

By Dominick DiRienzo M.A.'22

Late in the afternoon on May 9, the air on campus was still charged with the good vibes from the College's 152nd Commencement Exercises when attention shifted across campus to the future site of the Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center. On a windy but pleasant spring afternoon, the College community gathered near Stoeber Field for a different kind of milestone: the ceremonial beginning of a project designed to reshape student life at Thiel College for decades to come.

"The groundbreaking represents far more than the start of a construction project," President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.** said. "It reflects our belief in the future of this institution and the strength of our region and in the importance of creating spaces that bring people together."

The \$10 million Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center is expected to begin construction this summer and open in 2027. Planned as a 40,000-square-foot facility, the

building will add new recreation, wellness and gathering space to a section of campus long associated with Tomcat athletics.

"The Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center will stand as a symbol of what can be achieved when a community comes together with purpose and pride," Chair of the Board of Trustees **Robert Burns, M.D. '74** said. "The (Olympus Center) will provide much needed practice and recreation space and will be a huge benefit to all our students who seek a place to grow, to connect and to be well."

The building will include a multipurpose court, walking and running track, fitness areas, meeting and collaboration spaces and additional locker room capacity. The project also will envelope the area currently occupied by the concession stand and restrooms near Stoeber Field.

The project is a response to growing demand for shared recreation and wellness space on campus. The facility is intended to support student



life, intramural and recreational programming and the College's athletics programs while also creating additional room for training and community use.

The groundbreaking drew students, alumni, trustees, coaches, staff members and community members to the site. Speakers emphasized the project's role in student recruitment, retention and campus life, while also noting its potential impact beyond the College.

"The Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center will serve as a place where students will compete, collaborate, grow healthier, build lifelong connections and make friends," Traverso said. "The impact of this building will extend well beyond campus. This Center will strengthen our ability to recruit and retain students. It will support regional wellness initiatives, and it will deepen our partnerships throughout Mercer County and the Shenango Valley. At Thiel College, we believe higher education has a responsibility, not only to educate students but to serve as a catalyst for upward mobility and

community development."

Vice President for Enrollment, Student Life and Athletics and Dean of Students **Mike McKinney, Ed.D. '02**, described the building as a hub for wellness, recreation and competition that would serve both students and the surrounding community.

“There are little things you can do and sometimes you can do a little bigger thing, but as long as you put your heart and your soul into it, it will always turn out good.”

James Pedas '50 H'89

The name Olympus, inspired by lead donor **James Pedas '50 H'89**, evokes the ideals of achievement while honoring his Greek heritage. For the College, the project has a more earthly and practical purpose: provide needed space for faculty, staff and students.

"From the multipurpose court and walking track that will serve our students and community members

alike to the dedicated locker rooms that give our teams the facilities they deserve to the fitness studio and training room that will support health and wellness, this center embodies our commitment to being a vital part of this region," McKinney said.

The Olympus Athletic and Recreation Center is scheduled for completion in 2027.

"This is a transformational time in the history of Thiel College. We are excited to have a space that is going to impact our community as well as our student-athletes on a daily basis," Thiel College Director of Athletics **Isaac Collins** said. "We have gotten tremendous support from the



community. I can't say enough about the generosity of the Pedas family to really engineer and get this thing kicked off. This building represents our commitment to providing a first-class student-athlete experience, enhancing recruitment and retention and creating a space where all students can reach their highest potential."

Fundraising for the project remains ongoing, with the goal of fully funding the facility through donor support. Among the lead contributors are **Dr. James "Jim" Pedas '50 H'89** and his wife, **Wanda**.

"This project is deeply personal for one family in particular. (Jim Pedas) has spoken movingly about what Thiel has meant to him and the doors it opened," McKinney said. "Jim and Wanda's generosity along with the Pedas Family Foundation ensures that Thiel can open doors for generations to come."

Pedas, a Farrell, Pa., native and longtime entertainment executive, has maintained ties to the College for decades. He was the lead donor for the James Pedas Communication Center. The \$6.8 million state-of-the-art communication facility is home to campus media, classrooms, computer labs and the Office of Admissions. Along with his brother Ted, he built a career that ranged from music and film distribution to real estate to theater ownership and independent film production. Their company, Circle Films, became known for backing several influential independent films of the 1980s, including the Coen brothers' "Blood Simple" and "Raising Arizona."

Still, Pedas framed philanthropy in simpler terms during the ceremony.

"There are little things you can do and sometimes you can do a little bigger thing, but as long as you put your heart and your soul into it, it will always turn out good," Pedas said.



To see more photos scan the QR code or go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/thielcollege/albums>

Donor challenges record drives Match Day success

A record number of participation challenges fueled the success of Thiel College's 13th annual Match Day on Tuesday, March 3, as 19 affinity and group challenges were issued and all 19 were completed, marking the most challenges ever created and fulfilled in the event's history.

The milestone highlighted the growing impact of donors who create and support participation-based matches tied to affinity groups such as alumni decades, athletics, Greek organizations and campus programs. The community-wide effort ultimately generated \$254,000 from 640 donors during the one-day campaign.

Momentum around Match Day remained strong even with the College hosting a smaller one-day giving campaign tied to the global Giving Tuesday movement in early December. Giving Tuesday, celebrated annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving—Dec. 2 in 2025—encourages charitable giving worldwide. The continued growth

of Match Day demonstrates the sustained enthusiasm surrounding one of Thiel College's most popular annual philanthropic traditions.

This year's Match Day was held on the Maenpa Family Court at Beeghly Gym and featured the theme "Game, Set, Match." Participation across several affinity groups reached new milestones. Greek-affiliated donors totaled 363, the highest number in Match Day history, while 112 campus community donors—including faculty, staff and students—set another record. In addition, 95 first-generation graduate donors, 181 student-athlete donors, and nine decades of alumni participation each established new benchmarks for the event.

Among the day's competitive highlights, Delta Sigma Phi led all fraternities in donor participation, while Zeta Tau Alpha finished as the top sorority.



Myron appointed finance vice president

David Myron was appointed vice president for finance and administration in January.

Myron was selected following a national search and brings extensive experience in higher education finance, regional economic development and public accounting.

Most recently, Myron served as vice president for business and finance at Illinois Wesleyan University, where he was a member of the president's cabinet and oversaw all business and administrative operations.

Previously, Myron was vice president for finance and administration at Mercyhurst University, where he guided the institution from a multimillion-dollar deficit to profitability, managed major capital projects, refinanced institutional debt, and strengthened operational efficiency across divisions.

Moot Court team finishes seventh in national event

The Thiel College Moot Court team delivered a standout performance at the 2025-26 Preliminary National Tournament Finals, finishing seventh overall among 32 teams representing 20 colleges and universities nationwide, topping an Ivy League school and several Division I heavyweights.

The tournament, held January 22-24, 2026, was conducted entirely online using virtual courtrooms due to severe winter weather. Despite the unusual format, Thiel distinguished itself by placing ahead of several nationally recognized institutions, including Yale University, Baylor University, Texas Tech University, the University of Michigan, the University of California-Long Beach, the University of Texas-Dallas and others. Thiel also finished first among all NCAA Division II and Division III institutions.

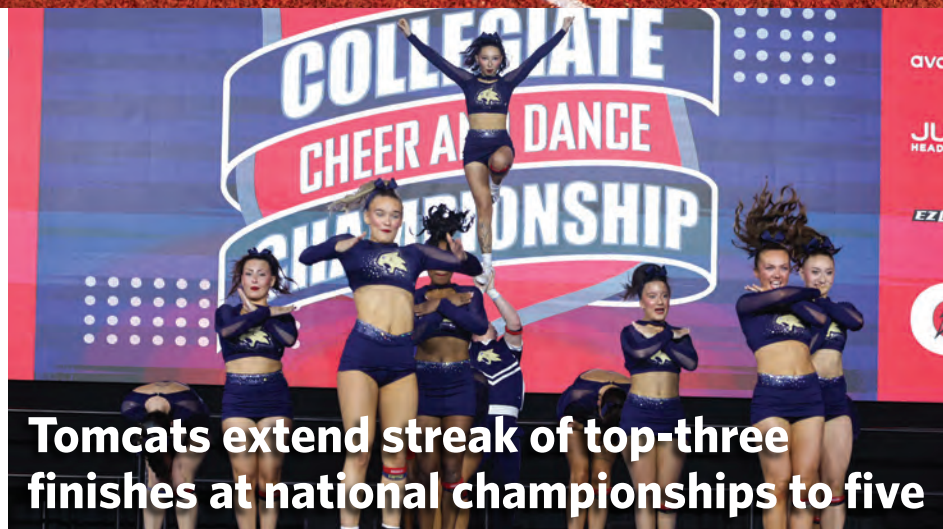
In the preliminary rounds, the

Thiel team of **Rex Dugan '27** and **Anna Kavulla '27** earned split ballots against Georgetown University and the University of California-Long Beach, and defeated Texas Christian University by a 2-0 decision.

Thiel advanced to the octa-finals, where the team narrowly fell to Patrick Henry College, a perennial powerhouse and 10-time national champion, by just four points out of a possible 1,600.

Both Dugan and Kavulla received individual orator scores of 396 out of 400 in the octa-final round, reflecting the team's high level of preparation and performance.

Thiel College's Moot Court team earned a third-place finish at the Midwest Regional Moot Court Finals in Columbus, Ohio, in November to advance to the National Semi-Finals.



Tomcats extend streak of top-three finishes at national championships to five

Thiel College's cheerleading program added another chapter to its growing national legacy in April, earning a fifth consecutive top three finish at the NCAA College Nationals in Daytona Beach, Fla.

Competing in a new division — Intermediate Small Coed Division III — the Tomcats placed third nationally with an average score of 89.12 after delivering one of the strongest performances in program history.

Thiel opened the competition with a score of 89.18 in the preliminary round, placing second heading into finals. The Tomcats followed with an 89.06 performance in the championship round to secure third place overall against a competitive national field.

The appearance marked another milestone for a program that has steadily established itself as a

consistent national contender under the leadership of head coach **Randall Burnett M.A.'22**, who completed his ninth season at the helm this year. The Tomcats' top-five run includes a national championship in 2023.

"We were incredibly proud to finish among the top three teams in the nation in our first year in this new division," Burnett said. "This achievement spoke volumes about the commitment, resilience, and belief this team showed all season. To make history with the best traditional routine Thiel has ever put on the floor was something truly special."

The move into the Intermediate Small Coed division reflected the continued growth and evolution of the program, which had become a recognizable presence on the national stage through multiple appearances at NCAA Nationals over the years.

Leadership team assembled for women's flag football

Thiel College continued building its new women's flag football program during the 2025-26 academic year with the addition of its inaugural coaching staff.

Director of Athletics **Isaac Collins** announced the hiring of **Jon Bevier**

as the program's first head coach in December. Bevier previously served as an assistant football coach at Thiel and brings experience from both the high school and NCAA FBS levels.

Thiel also added **Toriano Bogan** as the program's first defensive coordinator. A Cleveland native, Bogan

Thiel adds STUNT as Newest Varsity Sport

Thiel College announced in March the addition of STUNT as the College's newest varsity sport, with competition scheduled to begin during the 2026-27 academic year under the leadership of cheer head coach **Randall Burnett M.A.'22**.

Derived from cheerleading, STUNT focuses on the technical and athletic elements of partner stunts, pyramids, basket tosses and tumbling in a head-to-head competitive format. Unlike traditional cheerleading, teams compete directly against one another while performing the same routines simultaneously.

According to stunthesport.org, STUNT is among the fastest-growing women's sports in the country and recently received championship status across all three NCAA divisions. Director of Athletics **Isaac Collins** said the addition of STUNT expands competitive opportunities for student-athletes while continuing to support the growth of women's athletics at Thiel.

Thiel joined Presidents' Athletic Conference member Hiram College as the only schools in the conference to offer STUNT.

brings more than 20 years of football playing and coaching experience, including national championship experience in competitive flag football. Bogan also served as founder and director of the Ohio Flag Football Academy, a youth and women's development organization.

Thiel grads Vormelker, Saur, Muffley lead PAC women's basketball teams

By Ed Topoleski '02

Leadership development has been a central part of Thiel's mission throughout the years and a distinctive trait of many of its alumni. A strong example of that ideal can be found among the Presidents' Athletic Conference women's basketball head coaches.

Three Thiel alumni led PAC women's basketball teams during the 2025-26 season, including **Jessica Vormelker '19**, who has the honor of coaching at her alma mater. For comparison, there are only four other PAC school alumni coaching women's basketball in the conference and no other school has more than one representative.

Rebuilding the program, Vormelker has righted the ship at Thiel after leading the Tomcats to six wins in 2025-26. A D3hoops.com All-America selection and two-time finalist for the prestigious Jostens Trophy, she got her start in collegiate coaching as the graduate assistant coach at Waynesburg before



serving as the assistant coach at Allegheny under Thiel alumna **Kelly Muffley '11**.

David Saur '11 is the head coach of the Chatham Cougars while Muffley just finished her fifth season as head coach of the Allegheny Gators.

Saur has transformed the Chatham women's basketball program into a perennial power since taking the helm in 2018-19. The program's all-time wins leader, he led the Cougars to three consecutive appearances in the conference title game. Chatham won the PAC title in 2023-24 and earned a berth in the NCAA Division III Championship Tournament; Saur was rewarded with PAC Coach of the Year accolades. Prior to his time at Chatham, Saur made stops at Stetson University, UMass Lowell, the University of Louisiana Monroe, Indiana University (Pa.) and California



University (Pa.). While a student at Thiel, Saur worked with men's and women's teams.

Muffley was a two-time All-PAC honoree at Thiel, including First Team accolades as a senior in 2012-13. She ranks sixth in program history in points scored (1,238).

Named Allegheny's head coach in June 2021, Muffley has led the Gators to four straight PAC Tournament appearances and the 2024-25 Eastern College Athletic Conference Championship. Muffley began her coaching career at St. Lawrence University. In 2017, she returned to Thiel where she served as the women's basketball assistant coach as well as the assistant coach for men's and women's tennis. She went on to serve as the top assistant women's basketball coach at Case Western Reserve for three seasons.



Reunion hosted to honor members of three-time PAC champion women's basketball teams



Members of Thiel's three 1980s women's basketball Presidents' Athletic Conference championship teams were honored Feb. 14 with a pregame reception and halftime recognition during the Tomcats' game against the Washington & Jefferson Presidents. Thiel won PAC titles in 1984-85, 1985-86, and 1987-88.

Present at the celebration on Feb. 14 were **Christine (Schau) Sutliff '89**, **Marlana Tice '87**, **Cynthia (Bynum) Underwood '88**, **Julie Sierota '90**, **Tracey (Ralph) Webster '90**, assistant coach **Woodie Pippens '85** and sports information director **David Bryan**. **Gie Parsons**, head coach of all three teams, was unable to attend but sent along a video message for the team and spectators.



NET GAINS

Tomcats exceed expectations with record-win total, second straight PAC title

By Dante Parente

The blueprint said Thiel would be successful in 2026. That was a given, but what wasn't a given was that they would be this good.

When **Henry Gorton** took over a program fresh off a conference title, the expectation was continuation, not escalation. Compete for the Presidents' Athletic Conference crown, stay in the mix nationally and build toward something bigger.

Instead, it all happened at once. Thiel didn't just sustain success, it elevated it, piling up a program-record

23 wins, winning the conference title for the second-straight season and becoming the first team in school history to make back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances.

For a first-year head coach, it wasn't just an ideal start. It was a statement.

"I knew I had big shoes to fill stepping into this year," Gorton said. "I wanted to carry through the momentum from last season, while adding my piece to it."

Those changes showed up immediately. First-year transitions

typically come with adjustment periods as new systems, voices and expectations come into play. Thiel skipped that phase. The Tomcats looked connected from the jump, playing with a confidence that only grew as the season unfolded.

"The guys really stepped up," Gorton said. "The leadership on this team from our captains, **Kaleb Proudfoot**, **Tyler Hussey** and **Ezra Oesterling** really helped ground the guys. They held each other accountable, and that allowed us to



Loomis retires after 20 seasons

Men's basketball coach **Tim Loomis** announced his retirement in early May, following 20 seasons leading the Tomcats.

Loomis concludes his tenure as the longest-serving head coach in program history, recording 200 career victories. During his time at Thiel, he led the Tomcats to a Presidents' Athletic Conference championship game appearance in 2011 and was named conference Coach of the Year that same season.

"I'm incredibly grateful for my time at Thiel," Loomis said. "This institution, our players and the Greenville community have meant everything to me. It's been an honor to coach here and be a part of so many student-athletes' journeys."

During his time in Greenville, Loomis produced 10 double-digit win seasons and coached six All-Region performers, two All-District players, two conference Players of the Year and 30 all-conference players.

"On behalf of Thiel College Athletics, I want to thank Coach Loomis for his 20 years of service and commitment to our men's basketball program," Director of Athletics **Isaac Collins** said. "Leading a program for two decades requires dedication and persistence, and we appreciate the time and effort he invested in Thiel College. We wish him the best as he moves into the next chapter of his life."

Loomis was the head basketball coach at Kennedy Catholic High School (2001-06), and his collegiate coaching career has included stops at both the NCAA Division I and II levels.

raise the standard every single day."

Rather than overhauling a championship foundation, Gorton sharpened it. The result was a team that didn't just win, it controlled matches. By applying maximum pressure from the service line and sprinkling in a few, or 240.5 to be exact, monster blocks, the Tomcats rose to the occasion when it mattered most.

"We had a lot of five set matches this year," Gorton said. "Every time we were tested, we responded. It's rare for a team to go to seven fifth sets and win each one."

Simply put, more than just a good team it was.

The Cats secured the top seed in the PAC Championship Tournament for the second-straight season and

record three wins over nationally ranked opponents, firmly placing the Tomcats on the national radar.

Thiel cracked the AVCA Coaches' Poll for the first time since 2014, climbing as high as No. 17, the second-highest ranking in program history. When it was all said and done, the Tomcats finished the season receiving votes in the final AVCA poll, their highest finish to date.

With team success came individual recognition. Proudfoot earned AVCA All-America Honorable Mention honors, becoming the first Tomcat in program history to do so, while also being named PAC Player of the Year. He and Oesterling garnered AVCA All-Region II and All-PAC First Team honors. **Bryce Lizanich** and **Will Zimmerman** were named to the All-

"The leadership on this team from our captains, Kaleb Proudfoot, Tyler Hussey and Ezra Oesterling really helped ground the guys. They held each other accountable, and that allowed us to raise the standard every single day."

Head coach Henry Gorton

capitalized on home-court advantage with a dominant sweep of Hiram that saw Thiel hit a program-record .576. The momentum carried into a four-set win over Chatham to claim the second-ever PAC crown.

Thiel wasn't just dominant in conference play. A challenging non-conference slate produced a program-

PAC Second Team, while **George Schwalm IV** earned Honorable Mention recognition.

For a team that was expected to be very good, the 2026 Tomcats became something more. And in year one, Gorton didn't just keep Thiel on track, he helped push it into a new tier and usher in an era of Tomcat greatness.

The Thiel Fund File

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

Tom Wickerham '75

Residence: Rush, N.Y.

Professional Experience: Wickerham spent 13 years in industry as a petroleum geologist, then went to work for the N.Y. State Department of Environmental Conservation. First, he was a minerals specialist (oil & gas regulation), and then he became an air pollution specialist. He worked for the DEC for 34 years.



During that time, he also earned a master's degree in environmental health and safety management from Rochester Institute of Technology. He also served part-time as an adjunct professor in their Environmental Health and Safety Management Department. In 2025, he joined the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

Time at Thiel: He majored in geology, served on the yearbook photography staff and became a member of Phi Theta Phi. He joined the Thiel Alumni Association Board of Directors in 2025.

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."

CLASS NOTES

— 1950s —



Helen (McCullough) Hopkinson '57 and Jackie (Shrift) Brickner '57 write that they are both 90 years old. They were elementary education majors. They were both in the choir and Chi Omega. They both enjoy golf as a hobby and are best friends who enjoy getting together. They live close by and are Thiel Fund donors.

— 1960s —



Members of the Class of 1965 met at Homecoming for lunch. Starting on the left are going around the table are **Signe (Olson) Mitchell '65, John Belohlavek '65, Nancy Bittel, and James Bittel '60.**

Karen L. (Sundberg) Schrank '68 has retired. She resides in Shallotte, N.C.

— 1970s —

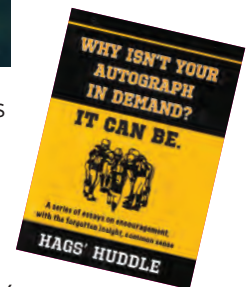
Sharon L. Wenger, Ph.D. '71, a retired cytogeneticist, published her first novel, *Gene-ius*. The book received an



honorable mention for best fiction at the 2026 Southern California Book Festival. She resides in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Bob Hagmann '77 has published a book that is available in both paperback and electronic formats. The book, "Why Isn't Your Autograph in Demand? It Can Be by Hags' Huddle," is available on Barnes & Noble and Amazon in electronic format. Uplifting tales from today and yesteryear, this book is meant to identify with all ages but those who have experienced some time after their school days may find it even more relatable. A career in sales has afforded Hagmann ample opportunities to experience human interaction and the joy of laughter. Hagmann is married to **Hope (Slezak) Hagmann '79**. They reside in Greensboro, N.C. Anyone who would like to connect with Hagmann can email him at bob.c.hagmann@gmail.com.



— 1980s —

Patricia A. (Fennell) Petitti '83 is President of PF Financial. She resides in Boyertown, Pa.

Donna (Davis) Wright '83 is President of Davis Wright and Associates, Inc. She and her husband, Tom, reside in Gibsonia, Pa.



Poet **David Crowley '83** held a reading of his work at the College's Langenheim Memorial Library on campus on April 13. He

read pieces from his two published works "Solid as an Oak, yet like a Willow, Weeping" and "Lanterns."

Jana P. (Phillis) Grimm '84 and her husband, Bob, reside in Bridgeville, Pa.

Elizabeth M. (Sedor) Houpt '84 is a flight attendant for American Airlines. She resides in Harmony, Pa.

Janet (Anne) (Smith) Lawson '86 and her husband, Mike, reside in Kinnelon, N.J.

Rod Wilt '86 is the Executive Director for Penn-Northwest Development Corp. He and his wife, **Jill (Gardner) Wilt '85**, reside in Greenville, Pa.



Larry Smith '87 was recently elected as Secretary for Maryland Realtors. He is an Associate Broker with Bailey Realty in Deep Creek

Lake, Md., and the Broker/Owner of DCL Referral Company. He lives and works in Deep Creek Lake with his wife of 36 years, Kimberly. Their three

Michael Miller '92

Residence: Cleveland Heights, Ohio

Professional Experience: Miller began his career as a software developer, joining Microsoft in 1996. He spent nearly 15 years there across two separate periods (1996–2006 and 2007–2012), working on large scale, industry defining technology. He is the Vice President of Information Technology for Fleet Response in Hudson, Ohio, where he leads enterprise technology strategy, AI and software development, and IT operations.

Time at Thiel: "My connection to Thiel began long before I was a student—I grew up on campus. Some of my earliest memories are walking the halls of the Academic Center with my father. I started taking classes at Thiel when I was 16 and enrolled full-time in the spring of 1989. While at Thiel, I was active in the theatre, the campus radio station, and the pep band. I am now in my third round of service on the Thiel Alumni Board of Directors. Thiel has been a constant presence throughout my life. My mother, **Ruth Miller H'20**, and I have joked that Thiel is the family business. I believe I've only missed six or seven Homecomings ever.

Reason for Giving Back: "Thiel gave me an exceptional education. Throughout my career, I've worked alongside graduates of MIT, CMU, Caltech, and other top institutions, and those experiences only reinforced how well Thiel prepared me for success. The liberal arts foundation I received shaped not only my professional life but also my ability to experience and appreciate the world beyond my career. In the words of my father, **Prof. David M. Miller '61 H'20**, 'Thiel has given me everything.' I feel the same. Thiel shaped who I am, and giving back ensures that future generations can experience the same opportunities, community, and transformation."



The Thiel Fund File

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

daughters are all married and they have four grandchildren.

Erin K. (McClurkin) Kachersky '89 is a teacher and lives in Youngstown, Ohio.

— 1990s —



Bill Barber '91 is retiring from full-time teaching after 35 years of dedicated service at Mt. Pleasant Area High School. Throughout his career, he had the privilege of coaching football, basketball, and

track, roles that he held for his entire tenure. In addition to teaching and coaching, he also served as the school's event director, helping to plan and manage numerous athletic and school-wide events. As Bill transitions into retirement, he is pleased to continue his work in education by teaching part-time at Seton Hill University beginning this fall. He resides in Mount Pleasant, Pa.

Russell Rogg '91 was named vice president of TotalWorx Accessories at Shaw Industries Group Inc. in December. According to a news release he leads product strategy, innovation and growth for the company's flooring accessories brand. He oversees the product portfolio, strengthens industry partnerships and supports training initiatives for installers, dealers and customers.

Rogg brings more than 30 years of executive leadership experience in the flooring and building materials industry, including previous roles as president of HMTX Contract + Trade

and Metroflor Corporation. He has also served on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Floor Covering Distributors and as chairman of the Resilient Floor Covering Institute.

— 2000s —

Cynthia L. (Zuschlag) Maynard-Solis, Ed.D. '00 was named Executive Director of Exceptional Student Services of Santa Fe Public Schools.



Nathan R. Shrader, Ph.D. '03 has served as the head of the Politics Program at New England College in Henniker, N.H. since July 2022, where he works as Associate Professor of Politics and Co-Director of the Center for Civic Engagement. Shrader was elected in November 2025 as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of 603 Forward, a New Hampshire-based nonprofit organization which supports the Granite State's next generation of leaders with diverse identities and lived experiences to run for office and serve their communities at every level of public service.



Sarah L. Meader) McCracken '09 met up with fellow sorority sister **Ashley (Ahrens) Chase '11** in Maine.

Ally Russell

'09 spoke at an April 9 Thiel College Common Hour event about her career as a marketing professional and a bestselling children's book author.



Nakisha (Logan) Peoples '02, of Columbus, Ohio, continues to cheer on her son James Peoples as he pursues his collegiate football career. James transferred from The Ohio State University to Penn State University after rushing for 541 yards and five touchdowns in two seasons with the Buckeyes. In November 2025, James earned national attention with a 19-yard touchdown run against UCLA that featured a hurdle over a defender. Online reports quoted him as saying hurdling "is in my genes," a nod to his mother's decorated track and field career at Thiel College. Nakisha was inducted into the College's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2017 after excelling as a hurdler for the Tomcats.

— 2010s —

Audrey L. Rattay

'12 writes that after beginning her international travels in 2010 while studying abroad at Thiel, she completed her journey to all seven continents in February 2026 — proudly bringing a piece of Thiel with her to Antarctica. She resides in Cranberry Township, Pa.





Rebecca (Campbell) Dougherty '16 is the owner of her own business called Mrs. Dougherty Designs. She preserves flowers in epoxy resin into keepsakes. **Sarah Padula '21** came

to see Rebecca at a bridal show in November 2025. The surprise meeting uncovered other coincidences. They are both teachers and sisters of Sigma Kappa, who met their husbands in a Thiel Department of Education class of former Professor **Doug Hazlett, Ph.D.** and will be married to their Thiel College sweethearts, who both were in a fraternity. Information on Mrs. Dougherty Designs is available on Facebook and Instagram.

Shelby E. Friedel '19 was named head girls volleyball coach at Woodridge High School (Peninsula, Ohio).

Zach Stiglitz '19 was featured in an article in a hometown media outlet about his success in competitive



bodybuilding as he pursues professional status. A Knox, Pa., native, Stiglitz was a three-year member of the Thiel

College football team before shifting his focus to strength training during his senior year. Encouraged by a peer, he entered a collegiate bodybuilding competition at Slippery Rock University, launching what has become a dedicated pursuit. Since graduating, Stiglitz has refined his training, nutrition and competition strategy, leading to steady progress in



Alumni, College friends make up Ruth Miller Seminar speaker list

The Ruth A. Miller Senior Seminar provides an opportunity for students to meet and interact with alumni and friends who have enjoyed distinguished careers in the corporate, non-profit, and government spheres. Special emphasis is placed on developing and refining business etiquette, interviewing, and networking skills.

This year's speakers were:

Thiel College Vice President for Advancement **Roberta Leonard**; **Melissa Oakes '03**; **Damen Taylor '95**; **Ricardo Daley '96**; **Alan Shepard '03**; Young Alumni Panel (**Evan Gerber '23**, **Allison (Walsh) Sankey '24**, and **Madison Yurich '24 M.S.'25**); Thiel College Trustee **Bruce Hartman, D.Min.**; **Jim Miale '85**; **Jaclyn Kuzma '17**; **Rod Wilt '86**; **Danielle (Hillwig) Doheny '10**; **Grant Gawronski '96**; and **Mario Marini '91**.

Read the all the students' comments regarding the speakers at <https://www.thiel.edu/miller>.

Any alumni interested in speaking at or participating in the Ruth Miller Senior Seminar in the spring or the entrepreneurship seminar in the fall should contact Roberta Leonard at rleonard@thiel.edu or 724-589-2024.

the sport. After relocating to Florida, he placed second in his class at the 2023 NPC Ruby Regional Championships, qualifying for national competition. In 2025, he won both the Class B Classic and light heavyweight divisions at the Ruby Championships. He lives in Ocala, Fla. and is a data update consultant for ClearGov, a government tech company.

— 2020s —

Alexandrea F. (Geraci) Casile '21 and her husband, **Andrew Casile '18** reside in Coraopolis, Pa.

Zachary Lyons, DPT '22 graduated from Slippery Rock in May of 2025 with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree. He has been working as a licensed physical therapist since June

2025. He and his wife, Nicole Lyons, have been living in Rocky Grove and been involved with their church. He said, "Doing well overall!"

Autumn DeVault '24 was featured in the *Warren Times Observer* newspaper as part of their "You're your Neighbor" feature. She returned to her hometown of Warren, Pa., to begin her career as a licensed funeral director. DeVault earned a bachelor's degree in business through a consortium program with the Pittsburgh Institute of Mortuary Science, also completing an associate degree in Funeral Service Arts and Sciences. DeVault and her husband, Isaac, who also works in the field, married in August. She became licensed in October.

— marriages —



Megg E. (Andrews) Glinka '13 and Ryan Glinka were married on Jan. 17, 2026. Among the many Thiel alumni and friends in attendance were **Lauren (Downs) Duncan '15**, **Patrick Duncan '15**, Olivia Barger, **Megan (Kay) Wagner '12**, **Jeremiah Wagner '10**, Heather (Reichenback) Phillips, Ian Phillips, **Bailey (Holmes) Jackson '16**, **Randy Jackson '14**, **Samantha Hoffman '14**, **Amanda (Miller) Tinken '14**, **Hillary (Hambleton) Gress '14**, **Alyssa (Chine) Gainey '13**, **Dan Gainey '13**, **Sarah (Weikart) Vanaskey '12**, **Joe Vanaskey '10**, **Chelsea (Meister) Anderson '13**, Jim Anderson, **Kelly (Barzak) Hiscox '13**, and Brian Hiscox. Glinka is a senior manager of Vertical Operations at The Walt Disney Company.



Zachary Lyons '22 and Nicole Lyons were married in May of 2025.

— births —



To **Sarah L. (DiFrango) Kane '11** and **David J. Kane '11**, their third son, Cooper Jameson Kane, on July 31, 2025.

— gatherings —



Sigma Kappa sorority sisters, **Kay (Wood) Hrivnak '65**, **Billie (Dragan) Hollenbaugh '66**, **Pat (Daugherty) Hauser '63**, and, standing, **Signe (Olson) Mitchell, '65**, reunited at an organ recital to honor Signe's 60-year tenure as organist at First English Lutheran Church in Butler, Pa., on September 27, 2025. The recital was given by David A. Billings, Signe's organ instructor. The picture was taken by **Bill Hauser '63**.



In September 2025, after more than 60 years, **Luigi Tiberio '65** and **Linda Person Zwicke '66** enjoyed a warm, sunny, Italian day, reminiscing about Thiel. Stories shared included Luigi's teaching Linda how to dance "his way" before the fall '62 Homecoming dance to his harrowing, snowy trips driving OD Anderson buses for the Tomcats. Tiberio and his wife, Franca, acted as hosts, travel guides and interpreters for Zwicke and her sister, Judy, on their visit to Livorno, Lucca and Pisa.

KEEP IN TOUCH

email us at alumni@thiel.edu or
visit us online at [https://www.thiel.edu/
alumni/keep-in-touch](https://www.thiel.edu/alumni/keep-in-touch)

– gatherings –



A Thiel College Zeta Tau Alpha gathering was held on Oct. 30, 2025. Attendees represented the classes of 1974, 1975, and 1976. They met at the Iron Bridge Inn in Mercer, Pa. Sisters came from as far as Florida, New Hampshire, New York, and from several locations in Pennsylvania. Pictured from left to right: **Cathy Wilkie '74**, **Leah (Glessner) Dever '74**, **Ginny (Olsavicky) Moszkowicz '74**, **Becky (Anderson) Pomeroy '74**, **Julie (Benedett) Dudgeon '74**, **Cindy (Evans) Andrus '76**, **Kathy (Garofolo) Sourbeer '74**, and **Sheryll Weiss Ross '75**.



Jim Frank '88 shares that **Bill Patterson '89** texted him and said his daughter is playing music at the Harmony Inn, in Harmony, Pa., and that he should come see her. Coincidentally, **Dave "Chet" Widenhofer '89** showed up. They had not seen each other since '88.

It was a great evening. **Sylvie Patterson '25** played in the band Grant Street Exit.

Now, if that name sounds familiar, in 1987, Grant Street Exit played Greek Week at Thiel. A stage was set up in the quad. On Friday night, many students were up late and then woke up for the Greek Olympics that Saturday only to discover more than a foot of snow on the ground. Olympics cancelled, the band performance moved into the Delta Sigma Phi basement for its performance and a killer toga party.



Paul Saternow '71 and Director of Development **Mark Batt '87** hosted a Thiel College meet and greet at Duffy's Sports Grill in Port St. Lucie, Fla. in early March. The event was attended by alumni, Thiel baseball players, coaches, parents of players and friends of the College. The Tomcat baseball team holds its annual spring training at nearby Lawnwood Sports Complex. If you would like to attend this event in the future or other events in your area, please contact Batt at 724-589-2157 or by email at mbatt@thiel.edu.

– in memoriam –

Former chair of the Board of Trustees, Anderson, passes at 91

Ronald Burnett Anderson, 91, of Indiana, Pa., died Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026, in Indiana. Anderson served 18 years on Thiel College's Board of Trustees, including as chair from 2003-07, and was a member of the Chapel Cabinet that raised funds to build the David Johnson Memorial Chapel.

He also created the Ronald B. Anderson Endowed Scholarship at Thiel.

Born Sept. 17, 1934, in Geneva, Ill., Anderson was a mathematics and physics graduate of Augustana College (Illinois), where he served as senior class president and captain of the basketball team. He spent much of his career with General Electric and later served as vice president for manufacturing with Watson Laboratories.

In retirement, Anderson returned to Indiana, where he was active in Zion Lutheran Church, the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Jimmy Stewart Airport board. He also served on the Indiana Free Library Board and supported youth aviation programs.

Anderson is survived by two children, five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Nancy (Wolfe) Anderson.



Greenville community leader, Thiel trustee Roth leaves lasting legacy

The **Rev. Martin M. Roth '66 H'06**, 81, of Greenville, Pa., died Dec. 26, 2025, at the Villas at St. Paul's.

Roth, a 1966 graduate of Thiel College, remained closely connected to the institution throughout his life. He met his wife, **Sarah "Sally" (Fox) '65**, at Thiel. Roth was widely respected for his ability to recognize and cultivate the gifts of others.

His impact extended beyond the church into the broader Greenville community. Roth served on the board of Horizon Health System and its ethics committee, which helped inspire the creation of the Community Medical Ethics Project. What began as a partnership between a local congregation and the hospital grew to include Thiel College and St. Paul's Senior Living Community. The program continues today, providing public education on contemporary medical and ethical issues.

About 200 people attended a memorial service for Roth in early January at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Greenville.

Roth was also active in community organizations, including the Good Shepherd Center, and was remembered as a mentor and servant leader whose influence shaped generations of students and parishioners.



2025 Service to Thiel award winner dies

E. William Matthews '74, 73, of Gibsonsia, Pa., passed away on Friday, April 10, 2026, following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Matthews was recognized this past year at Homecoming with The Service to Thiel Award.

Matthews was president and treasurer of the Delta Sigma Phi alumni chapter, secretary of the Thiel College Alumni Association Board of Directors, and was a member of the Class of 1974 planning committee for its 50-year reunion.

Generous Thiel College supporter remembered

Denise E. Bendle '73, 73, of McCandless Township, passed away on January 16, 2025, in UPMC North Hills Passavant Hospital. Bendle was a longtime and generous supporter of the College who worked for PPG during her professional career.

She was a math major and a member of Alpha Xi Delta as a student. Her brother, **Rev. Philip Bendle III '72**, was a Thiel graduate and preceded her in death.

Longtime member of Alumni board passes

Janet (Mullin) McRoberts '57, 90, of Nesquehoning, Pa., died Friday, Jan. 2, 2026, after a battle with cancer.

She was a member of Sigma Kappa sorority and spent several years on the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

She spent 18 years at Rider University as the Director of Learning Resources Center for the College of Education. She married her college sweetheart **Jim McRoberts '58** in 1958. He survives. Her granddaughter's name is spelled Tiehl but is pronounced like Thiel.

CLASS NOTES

— in memoriam —

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

John Michael Ackelson '86
The Rev. Arthur Benjamin
Ackerman Jr. '54
Ronald B. Anderson
Robert E. Armstrong
Glen A. Augustine
Elton R. Barnett
Mary Elizabeth (Spear) Beight '63
Diann M. Beilstein
Nancy Jean (Mowry) Bender '56
Denise E. Bendle '73
Janet W. Bloomfield
Ralph M. Bonam '86
L. Kinch Bowman '68
Mont Bowser '48
David H. Brown '61
Sharon L. (Goelz) Chambers '68
Ronald Cooper
Mona E. (Fisher) Dalby '70
James M. Diehl '75
Carolyn Dunlop
Constance Erdelac '63
Oliver W. Erickson '60
Jan E. Erling '69
Steven M. Evakich '64
Douglas L. Fairfax '62
Bonita M. (Hovis) Farley '86
James E. Farney
Ralph C. Faust '52
Lt. Col. James R. Frantz '64
George A. Fulton '62
Donald F. Gajdek '57
Darrin Scott Gartner '90

Janet Gosnell
Philip E. Gotham '68
Lynn L. (Hudson) Hale '72
Timothy A. Hilster '90
Sarah Elizabeth Hofen '11
Harry T. Jacobs '64
Curtis R. Jenkins '60
Marilyn (Hogue) Johnson
Michael H. Johnson '66
Sally J. Johnston
Nancy H. (Herrick) Keck
Warren R. Keck III
John H. Kerr
W. I. Lackey
Gloria (Beckstine) Lang
Norma Leary
James Thomas Lerch '59
Rebecca (Rogers) Lerch '61
James Thomas Lerch '59
E. William Matthews '74
Virginia Ginny (Lancaster)
McGarvey '56 H'05
Paul C. McGaughey '64
The Rev. Dr. Clyde A. McGee '61
Donald H. McGee '72
Janet (Mullin) McRoberts '57
Clarence H. "Bud" Miller '50
Terri A. Miller
Sue E. (Small) Mills '56
Wendy Moats '94
LeRoy H. Monper '59
Charles D. Montgomery '57
Thomas E. Moog

Patricia C. (Cavanaugh) Morelli '60
Michael Richard Morelli
Col. Stephanie E. Mudge '65
Frances Neal
Bernadine "Tina" O'Brien
Robert Sutherland Ohr '84
Darlene (Zabish) Pany '69
Clark Pearson '72
Henry W. Phillips Jr. '71
George E. Rasmussen '61
Howard Redfoot '60
Lillian (Pfaff) Redfoot '59
Tonya L. Riddell '91
Edna Riffe
The Rev. Martin M. Roth '66 H'06
Robert E. Royal
Raymond D. Schroer '60
Dr. Robert D. Scott '75
The Rev. Brian F. Shirey '75
John G. Shutter '65
Alan C. Snyder '63
David W. Snyder '57
Gretchen W. (Wittenmaier) Snyder '85
John E. Sourbeer
Diane (Bost) Spencer '62
Sara L. (Miller) Strait '57
Ronald Tripson '61
William Upton '75
Sarah E. (Hicks) VonHofen '11
The Rev. Dr. Paul L. Wescoat Jr. '81
Roger W. Wilson '70
Wendy M. (Moats) Wolfe '94

Recommended reading for Homecoming

Book project recounts past 50 years at Thiel College

By John Hasuer '71 H'20



Mark your calendars now for Homecoming 2026: September 24-27. Yes, it a celebration of Thiel's 160th anniversary and 111 years since the first Homecoming was held in 1915. But it is also the unveiling of the sequel to History of Thiel College 1866-1974, written by **Dr. Roy H. Johnson H'69**. This book chronicles the life of our beloved College over the past 50 years and is written by those who lived it – five alumni and one professor with a combined experience of 267 years of being part of this institution.

Chaired by our 18th President and Professor Emeritus of History **Robert Olson, Ph.D. '60 H'09**, the group has been meeting monthly for almost two years compiling information, sharing stories about our individual experiences as students, alumni, and/or employees, discussing what should be included in Thiel's unique story and writing, editing, re-writing and more editing to what we think will be an informative look at the past half-century of people and events which made an impact on where we are today.

Each of us came from our unique perspectives. Olson's 70-year viewpoint as a student, faculty member, coach, vice president of the college/academic dean, and president was invaluable because of the breadth and depth of his experience. **Don Achenbach '77** served as vice president of strategic planning and facilities and has been involved with Thiel athletics since his student days, now serving as the announcer at our home football games. **Dominick DiRienzo, M.A. '22**, Director of Communications and Marketing, guided us through the process of preparing what we had written for printing as well as sharing his experiences as a graduate student and staff member. Professor of English and Dr. James Pedas '50 H'89 Chair in Communication **Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D.**, provided insights into the Thiel's academic life over the past 26 years and served as our editor-in-chief, making us all better writers. Professor Emeritus of Business Administration and Accounting **Gary Witosky '79 H'24** has also served in multiple roles: student, faculty member, de facto spokesman for the Demos, senior vice-president and executive assistant to the president during his time at Thiel and took on the task of keeping our ever-changing narratives current as we wrote, edited and re-wrote. And I, as a student and serving in the admissions and development operations at

Thiel and, as the college archivist, had access to many of the resources we needed to verify what we remembered in our different roles. We also had the help of a number of others who provided research and writing: **Ireland Anderson '27**, **Cynthia McClelland**, **Molly (Shepler) Rowan '22**, **Allison Walsh Sankey '24**, and **Roberta Leonard**, Vice President for College Advancement, and her staff.

We chose to write the book on a thematic basis, drawing upon Thiel's enduring spirit, to highlight how Thiel has changed since 1975. SPIRIT represents the six chapters of the book: Scholarship, Philanthropy, Involvement, Recreation, Infrastructure, and Tributes. Each chapter explored how these areas evolved during the past 50 years so that we can understand why we are where we are today: a vibrant educational community that has a life-changing impact on our students.

We asked alumni and friends to share their experiences (in 25 words or less) in the last chapter: Tributes. While the quantity of responses wasn't what we had hoped, those who responded showed the impact that Thiel has had on their lives both as students and as alumni.

The book is currently in the hands of the "paginator" (we used to call it a type-setter, another sign of changes in the workforce) and will be ready for printing this summer and distribution at Homecoming.

From the introduction to the book: "We hope you enjoy acquainting—and re-acquainting—yourself with the story of Thiel as told from the perspective of the people who helped to shape its history from 1975-2025."

See you at Homecoming!

John Hauser '71 H'20 graduated from Thiel with a degree in psychology. He worked at Thiel from 1971-1986 and from 1996-2007 in admissions, alumni and advancement roles. He has served as Thiel College's archivist since his retirement in 2007. Hauser won the Lifetime Service Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in 2007. Hauser and his wife, **Nancy (Gibson) '75**, were honored with the Louis and Barbara Thiel Distinguished Service Award in 2017, and he was awarded an honorary degree by the College in 2020.

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For more information, contact Director of Alumni Relations David Hummel '83 at alumni@thiel.edu

