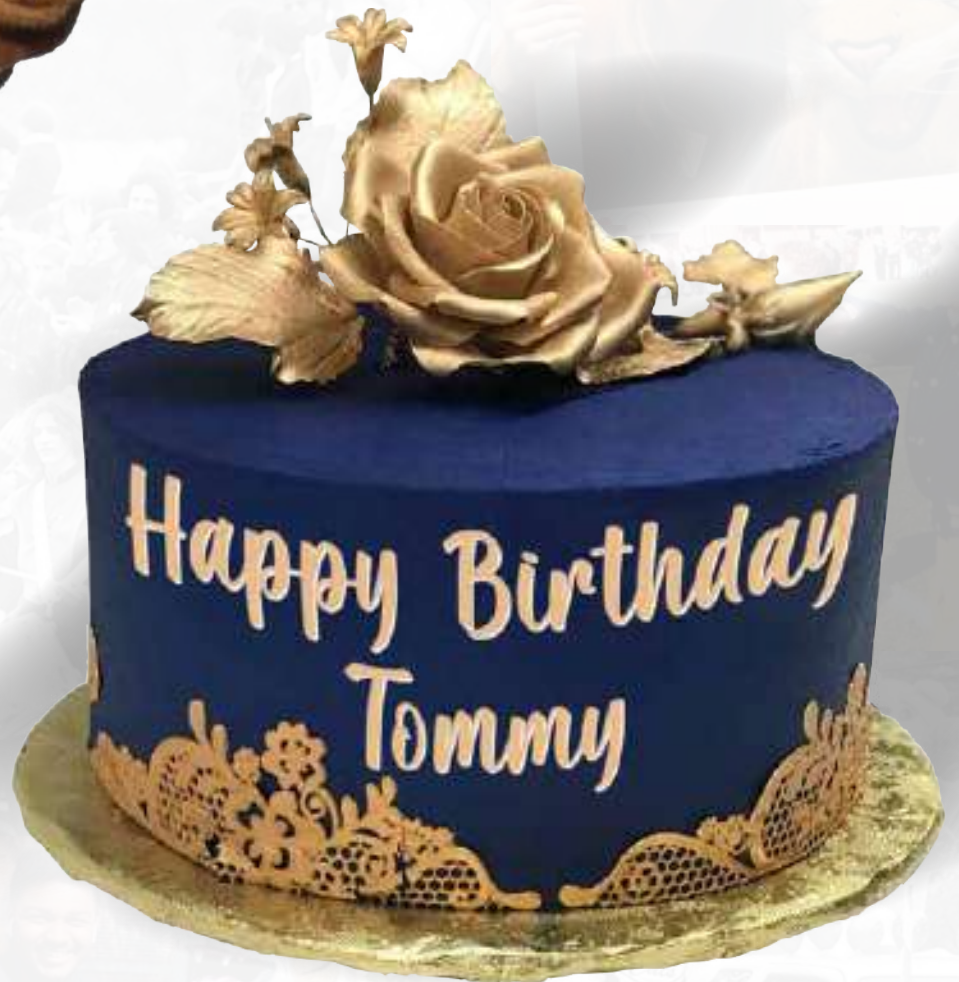


The Bell

A Century of **Tomcat** Pride

How the Tomcat became a beloved campus symbol



Field of Dreams, Tomcat Teams

The campus community came together on Sept. 26 for Thiel National Spirit Day for a photo on the new playing surface at Stoeber Field at Alumni Stadium. The new turf was made possible by generous contributions from alumni and friends of the College. Read more about the new playing surface on Page 20.





Thiel College

75 College Avenue
Greenville, Pennsylvania 16125
800-248-4435 • www.thiel.edu

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

Dear Alumni and Friends,

The fall semester brought new energy and excitement to campus. We welcomed more than 275 new undergraduates, from across the country and across the world, eager to join the Thiel community. Our graduate students, 117 strong, study year-round on campus in master's programs in physician assistant studies, speech-language pathology, and business administration. Together, the undergraduate and graduate student body of more than 950 steadily continues to grow in the face of tremendous competition (Read more on Page 9).



Students have lots of choices when it comes to selecting a college or graduate program. That Thiel continues to attract motivated and talented students is a testament to the strength of our academic programs and the compelling opportunities Thiel offers students. Supporting students through merit scholarships and financial aid is crucially important to attracting and retaining students as well. The College's alumni and friends play a vital role in spreading the good news about Thiel and in giving generously to the Thiel Fund and supporting endowed scholarship aid. Thank you for helping us open opportunities for students. Their accomplishments at the College and as alumni reflect your generosity.

This year marks two inspiring milestones. Our mascot, Tommy Tomcat, turns 100. Inside, you will read about the experience of students portraying Tommy at campus and athletic events. You will also see how we celebrated Tommy at Homecoming, when hundreds of alumni, along with families and friends, returned for a remarkable weekend in Greenville. There were birthday festivities for Tommy along with class reunions, alumni awards, special events and memorials, bringing us together around the College we love. The second annual Presidents' Tree Walk during Homecoming acknowledged the College's status as a tree campus and highlighted Brother Martin's Walk, which celebrated the 150th anniversary of its planting and was featured in the Spring 2024 edition of *The Bell*.

Thanks to the tremendous support of alumni and friends, campus never looked better. Over the summer, we installed a brand-new turf surface at Stoeber Field, embarked on the first phase of the renovation of the Daniel and Dorothy Spence Academic Center, continued enhancements at the Barry and Carol Stamm Track & Field Complex, and upgraded campus Wi-Fi. The impact of these projects is already being felt across campus, improving the student experience in meaningful ways.

As you enjoy this edition of *The Bell*, I hope you will celebrate your connections to the Thiel community. Whether you are a freshly minted undergraduate, among our new graduate alumni, a longstanding graduate, or a friend of the College, you share a Thiel story, Tomcats all!

In appreciation of your continued support,

Susan Traverso

Susan Traverso, Ph.D.

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On the Cover

In 1924, the Thiel College Tomcats were born. A century later, the Tomcat remains a vital part of the Thiel College experience. The Tomcat legacy is still evolving and enduring. The story of the Tomcats reads like a script: it has a lovable main character,

Tommy, with twists, turns, and enough mystery and intrigue to keep the audience engaged.

Throughout this year, celebrations, gatherings, and mascot meetings were held to honor the Tomcat and Tommy. These festivities culminated in Homecoming's grand celebration of 100 years of Tomcats, marking the mascot's centennial birthday.

There is only one Tommy, but there are other Tomcats



Sports teams at Blazer High School in Ashland, Ky. also use the Tomcats nickname. Squads at St. Thomas University (Minn.) use Tommies as their nickname and have a costumed cat as a mascot, but Thiel is still singular as the Tomcats.

One of the few other uses of Tomcat as a nickname comes courtesy of the U.S. Navy. The F-14 Tomcat was introduced by the U.S.

Navy in the 1970s and as Thiel was growing into its nickname, the jet was symbolizing American air superiority.



"Tomcats" was a 2001 movie starring Jerry O'Connell. You can be forgiven if you didn't know about it. It got 3.3 out of 10 on the movie review site "Rotten Tomatoes."



#AACCUP #Mascot Day at the @Pennsylvania Capitol
 @KingsCollege.PA @junietatCollege @WaynesburgU @VillanovaU
 @LafayetteCollege @thielcollege @SusquehannaU @MisericordiaU
 @ManorCollege @Lafayette @LaSalleU @StJosephU @GenevaCollege @ElwynCollege



More than a dozen mascots from The Association of Independent Colleges & Universities of Pennsylvania partner schools celebrated at the Pennsylvania Capitol in October with Tommy.



Tommy didn't win or place during the Mercer County Food Bank's mascot race in September, but it was still a great show as the mascots wished Tommy a "Happy Birthday!"



Check out Thiel College's YouTube channel for a video recap of the 100th birthday celebration.

[youtube.com/thielcollege](https://www.youtube.com/thielcollege)

Online & Offline Insights

Visit to his adopted campus reminds author of Thiel's unique sense of community

I visited Thiel College this past July. It has been 54 years since I left Greenville, Pa. to take a teaching position in St. Augustine, Fla. When I was a student at Clarion and California universities, I came to Thiel College several times, mainly because of wrestling matches. I visited the campus regularly on weekends while my girlfriend attended Thiel College. Over that period, I met many interesting students and attended several fraternity parties. Thiel was more my campus than either Clarion State or California State were to me when I attended those two colleges.

After I graduated from California State I rented an apartment in Greenville, while my girlfriend lived on campus with her roommates. They are all still long-life friends. During my girlfriend's senior year, we got married. While she attended classes in accounting and marketing (she was one of two women studying accounting & marketing that year at Thiel). Later, she earned her master's degree and opened her own CPA and tax consulting business. I was teaching fifth grade and coaching wrestling at Commodore Perry School District. Throughout my girlfriend's senior year, we attended football games, concerts in the gym, and college-sponsored dinners. Back then Livingston Hall had a room filled with sofas and lounge chairs. Some of my best memories were of us just sitting near each other studying quietly.

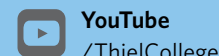
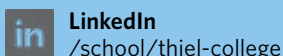
Being part of Thiel that year was something I have carried all these years with fondness. Recently seeing the Thiel Campus in excellent condition warmed me.

Rick Gillmore

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



The Thiel-Resch connection opens opportunities for students



Photos courtesy of the Greenville Record-Argus

Kal Eastley '23, Destiny Merriwether '23 and Daija Jackson '23 returned to campus this summer to work as counselors for the Youngstown Early Identification Program at Thiel. All three are also graduates of that program.

By Colin Schroyer '26

The joy of advancing one's education is undeniable, but helping others prosper—especially younger students—can be even more rewarding. Since 2000, the Marion G. Resch Foundation has embraced that mission by creating life-changing opportunities for students in the Mahoning Valley. In partnership with the Youngstown Early Identification Program and through its science-based scholarships, the foundation has empowered students to pursue higher education. Thiel College, which has collaborated with the foundation since 2006, is one of several institutions benefiting from this vital partnership.

Rod Wilt '86 Endowed head wrestling coach and program advisor at Thiel **Craig Thurber** said the impact of the foundation's work is undeniable.

"It's about giving them a chance to earn scholarship money, get a college education, and better their future." Students in the YEIP visit multiple colleges, including Thiel, spending a few days on campus to experience college life. "We bring the kids on campus—they tour, take classes in the same classrooms they would as students, and eat in the cafeteria," Thurber said.

The program is designed to open doors that might otherwise remain closed. Scholarships play a pivotal role, especially for students interested in the sciences. "Many kids want to leave the environment they grew up in," Thurber said. "Sometimes their situation is OK, but sometimes it's not—and the Resch Foundation wants to give them the chance to go to college, get an education, find a job, and build a successful life."

Craig and his wife, **Kristin**, have been deeply involved in the early identification program for years, forging lasting relationships with students. Now in his 22nd season as Thiel's head wrestling coach, Craig stepped into the role of advisor after volunteering at a YEIP camp. When the previous advisor retired, Thurber accepted the opportunity to lead the program. Kristin has been by his side every step of the way, later becoming a co-director. "Having her with me has been really rewarding—not just for me, but for the kids too," Craig said.

The Thurbers treat the students they mentor like family, often guiding them throughout high school and into college. Many of these connections endure well beyond the program, particularly for those who attend Thiel College. "We treat these kids like they're our own," Thurber said.

The Marion G. Resch Foundation works tirelessly behind the scenes to reduce financial barriers that might prevent students from pursuing higher education. **Stephanie Shaw**, Executive Director of the foundation, said their goal is to support students who are just short of the funds needed to reach their academic goals.

The foundation's financial support goes to both students in the identification program and students pursuing science-related fields. Qualifying students must enroll full-time in programs such as biology, chemistry, environmental sciences, physics, neuroscience, communication sciences and disorders, secondary education in science, or affiliated pre-professional tracks at Thiel College. Additionally, half of the available Resch Science

Scholarships are reserved for women to promote greater access and equity in the sciences.

Shaw, who began her tenure as a trustee in 2020 before becoming Executive Director, highlights the financial impact of the foundation: "Our funds have grown to nearly \$30 million. Each year, we distribute about \$1.2 to \$1.3 million to help students."

The foundation's support reflects the vision of Marion G. Resch, who, despite not having children of her own, was deeply committed to helping young people thrive. "Her heart was with the children of Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana counties," Shaw said. Many of these students have gone on to attend Thiel College, continuing the legacy Mrs. Resch envisioned.

Seth Phillips '25, a senior environmental science major and science scholarship recipient from Hubbard, Ohio, said the Resch Scholarship changed his life.

"It definitely (was) a deciding factor in allowing me to come to Thiel," Phillips said. "If it wasn't for that, it probably wouldn't have turned out like it did. It helped so much with



Joyce Guzman '28 was on campus this summer as part of the Youngstown Early Identification Program. She is a first-year student studying accounting and a member of the Dietrich Honors Institute.

financial aid."

Whether its offering science students a pathway to college or early identification students an opportunity to go to college, the Thiel community got a sobering reminder of the challenges some of the students in the Resch program are facing.

Early identification program student **Te'nya Mckinley '27** was killed in an act of gun violence this summer after completing her first year at Thiel College on a Resch Scholarship.

"Te'nya was in our program for four years," Thurber said. "She was always super sweet. I worked closely with her—talked to her on the phone a few times a month and saw her at the gym. I miss her a lot."

Mckinley's story underscores the significance of the foundation's mission. For many students, higher education offers not just an opportunity but a way out of difficult environments.

The Marion G. Resch Foundation has made a profound impact at Thiel College and throughout the Mahoning Valley. Through its partnership with the YEIP, students have found paths to personal and academic success that might otherwise have remained closed. With Thiel as a key partner, the foundation's work continues to ripple across Ohio and Pennsylvania, helping students build better futures.

This summer three 2023 Thiel graduates — **Daija Jackson '23**, a psychology major; **Destiny Merriwether '23**, an accounting major; and **Kal Eastley '23**, a sociology major— returned to campus to help as counselors with the program.

All three were interviewed in the *Greenville Record-Argus* in a story about the YEIP program and attributed their success at Thiel to their

involvement with the program.

"College was a big fear of mine; I needed the extra push," Merriwether told the newspaper. "I did not want to leave that nest."

East High School student **Joyce Guzman-Torres '28** participated in the YEIP program and is studying accounting at Thiel this year.



Scholarship recognition event brings together students, donors

The Annual Endowed Scholarship Recognition was October 24 in the Lutheran Heritage Room of the Howard Miller Student Center. This year's event was a dinner held on Thursday evening. In the past it had been held on a Saturday morning. The event is a unique platform for students, who receive scholarships, to personally connect with the generous families and individuals who have endowed the scholarships.

Throughout the event, students shared their personal stories, aspirations, and experiences with the scholarship donors.

Thiel College's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive community was evident as students expressed their gratitude to the scholarship donors.

Anyone interested in contributing to or creating an endowed scholarship can contact the Office of Advancement:
 (724) 589-2160
 advancement@thiel.edu

New majors will link graduates with growing career fields



Students will develop media and content creation skills as well as writing and editing skills through the College's new communications media major.

Comm media major focuses on content creation skills

The new Bachelor of Arts in Communications Media program is designed to graduate skilled and ethical communicators equipped to navigate a media-saturated, diverse, and complex global environment.



Scan the QR Tommy to learn more.

The enhanced curriculum emphasizes integrated storytelling and media creation skills across written, visual, and oral communication, while also fostering critical thinking, research and leadership abilities.

The new major prepares students to excel as communicators in a media-rich world. It will build skills and confidence in the traditional pillars of writing and speaking for careers. The new program unifies media production, journalism and interpersonal and mass communication techniques.

"The new communications media major will open career paths in advertising, marketing and social

Communications Camp put H.S. students in the Pedas Center

In June, the College hosted students from seven Mercer County high schools as part of an innovative communication camp that gave students access to the state-of-the-art equipment in the James Pedas Communication Center.

Students from Grove City, Greenville, Commodore Perry, Jamestown, West Middlesex, Sharon, and Mercer high schools got an in-depth introduction to all phases of the broadcasting profession. The camp was a collaboration of the United Way of Mercer County and Thiel College. Students learned about the podcasting, video recording and broadcasting and radio equipment available at the James Pedas Communication Center.

media as well as traditional and new media," Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College **Greg Q. Butcher, Ph.D.** said.

Healthcare administration program serves huge potential regional market

A new Bachelor of Arts degree in Healthcare Administration is offered through the prestigious Arthur McGonigal Department of Business Administration and Accounting. This program is designed to meet the growing demand for skilled business professionals in the healthcare industry, equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in various roles.



Scan the QR Tommy to learn more.

"We are excited about this new degree in Healthcare Administration as we see the tremendous career opportunities that exist regionally.

"The largest nongovernment employer in Pennsylvania is headquartered in Pittsburgh. UPMC employs about 100,000 people in addition to the 5,000 doctors on its roster, while the Allegheny Health Network, also in Pittsburgh, employs another 21,000 people. Thiel graduates will be ready to step into this growing field immediately," Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College **Greg Q. Butcher, Ph.D.** said. "The healthcare sector is one of the fastest-growing industries, and there is a significant need for professionals who can navigate the complexities of healthcare management. Our program is designed to produce graduates who are knowledgeable, flexible and ready to lead."

Nursing program awarded national nursing education commission accreditation

The nursing program was recently granted accreditation by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education retroactive to the site visit in April 2024. The College will graduate its first cohort of seven Bachelor of Science in nursing students in December and three more will graduate in May. The College's nursing program has 59 students.

"The CCNE accreditation is a testament to the dedication of our nursing faculty and staff, who have worked tirelessly to build a program that meets the highest standards of nursing education," President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.** said. "Their commitment ensures that our students receive an exceptional education that prepares them to become compassionate, skilled healthcare professionals."

The CCNE, a national accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education, evaluates nursing programs based on their ability to provide effective educational strategies that prepare students for professional nursing practice. Achieving accreditation from CCNE assures the public and prospective students that the Thiel College nursing program meets or exceeds the standards for nursing education and continuous improvement.



Nursing major **Kaitlyn Stamp '25** is one of the 59 students in the program.

Growth of student population at Thiel outpaces national trends

The College has experienced another year of positive enrollment trends, with the release of the Fall 2024 census statistics showing significant growth in new undergraduate students and overall student numbers—highlighted by the growth of its total student population by 12.7% since 2021.

According to the latest figures, the number of new undergraduate students has increased by 9.9%, from Fall 2023 to Fall 2024. According to figures from the National

Student Clearinghouse Research Center, undergraduate enrollment at private, nonprofit, four-year institutions grew at just 1.9% in the first half of 2024.

In addition, the total undergraduate and graduate enrollment—encompassing new and returning students—rose by 2.6% from September 2023. In the past year, the total graduate population grew by 15.8% to 117 students.

Work underway on second volume of Thiel history book

Robert Olson, Ph.D. '60 H'09 has gathered a team to write the second volume of Thiel College's history as a follow up to "History of Thiel College, 1866-1974" written by **Roy Johnson, Ph.D.** Also collaborating on the project are Thiel Archivist **John**

Hauser '71 H'20, Professor of English **Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D.**; Professor of History **Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D.**; Professor of Business Administration and Accounting Emeritus **Gary Witosky '79 H'24** and Director of Communications and Marketing **Dominick DiRienzo M.A.'22**. They are chronicling the transformative years since 1974. The group aims to publish

the volume in time for Homecoming 2026, offering alumni and the campus community a window into Thiel's evolution. Stories from the community matter. As part of the effort, Thiel College community members with anecdotes, materials, or memories to contribute can reach out to DiRienzo (ddirienzo@thiel.edu) or Hauser (jhauser@thiel.edu).

DiTullio has the Pride marching in the right direction

By Molly (Shepler) Rowan '22

Scott DiTullio, Ed.D. became Thiel College's new Director of Bands in Fall 2023, and if you want to be assured of his dedication to his craft, look no further than his six to eight hours of daily trumpet practicing. Many mornings on campus, you can hear him rehearsing in his office in the Howard Miller Student Center.

"I do anything possible to play the trumpet," DiTullio said. "It's fun, and I like to do it... [music is] hard work and you have to be dedicated to it, but it takes you to a different world."

DiTullio has been passionate about music and musical education for many years. His titles during his 28 years in the field include Director of Bands for the Allegheny-Clarion Valley School District and the Clarion-Limestone School District and Adjunct Instructor at Saint Vincent College. DiTullio was also named Director of Bands and Director of the Prelude Band with the Pittsburgh Youth Philharmonic Orchestra in 2021, a role that took him to Ireland in the summer of 2023.

Considering DiTullio's experience and passion for music, performance, and connecting with students, he's just the right person to take on the job of growing Thiel's concert and marching bands. He has wasted no time pursuing that goal through recruitment days, festival participation, and by hosting concerts featuring new types of music.

One such recruitment day was

Marching Band Visit Day on October 12 where DiTullio had 18 local high school band students come to campus to perform along with the Thiel Tomcat Marching Pride before and during the home football game.

Special recruitment events at the College are not the only tools DiTullio is using to grow Thiel's

“ Recruiting [is] a fun aspect of what I get to do each day. I like promoting and talking about Thiel College. ”

Scott DiTullio, Ed.D.

band programs. Throughout the school year, he frequently invites Thiel students to rehearsals and performances to encourage their interest in the band programs, and he travels to local high schools to see their marching and concert bands in action during football games, festivals, and competitions.

"Recruiting [is] a fun aspect of what I get to do each day," DiTullio said. "I like promoting and talking about Thiel College, and when I get the chance to talk to students, parents, fellow directors, or anyone else who will listen, there are a lot of



Thiel College Director of Bands **Scott DiTullio, Ed.D.** is also an accomplished trumpet player.

connections being made."

In all his recruitment efforts, DiTullio always reminds students that they are welcome to join the band program no matter their level of musical ability. He believes the lessons students learn when playing music are highly transferable into other areas of life and can aid them in their future endeavors. "Incorporating music [into your life] isn't only about playing a musical instrument. It also teaches you a discipline and a structure...It requires you to have a great work ethic, and know that when you face failures, you can overcome them," he said.

Under DiTullio's leadership, Thiel's band programs strive to make beautiful music both on and off campus. Thiel students **Nola Blose '27** (Prospect, Pa. tuba), **Olivia Cedar '27** (Lower Burrell,



Scan the QR Tommy
to watch a video profile
of **Scott DiTullio, Ed.D.**

Pa., flute), **Brianne Coatsworth '24** (Washington, Pa., tenor saxophone), **Nova Firster '25** (Greenville, Pa., clarinet), **Shelby Gebhardt '27** (Bessemer, Pa., baritone saxophone) and **Riley Smith '26** (Edinburg, Pa., euphonium) participated in the Pennsylvania Intercollegiate Band Festival in the spring of 2024, which is a festival that brings together about 150 students of all majors from colleges and universities across the state to rehearse for two days before putting on a public concert.

Intercollegiate festivals and other events are certainly great opportunities, but band students under DiTullio's leadership perform concerts at Thiel as well. This fall, the Thiel band programs will be hosting two new Christmas concerts: the Thiel Brass Christmas Spectacular Concert on December 3, performed by Thiel brass players joined by local high school students, and an evening of Jazz Christmas Music on December 7 performed by the Thiel College Jazz Band. These new concerts will be open to the public, so all students, faculty, staff, alumni, community members, and friends are encouraged to attend to support Thiel music.

"The Thiel Band program is headed in a new direction, and we are building a foundation to continue that growth far into the future," DiTullio said.



Faculty Updates

Kulik, Lax awarded tenure

Associate Professor of Communications **Lana V. Kulik, Ph.D.** and Associate Professor of Neuroscience **Neil C. Lax, Ph.D.** were recently awarded tenure. Kulik has taught at Thiel College since 2016.

Lax has been with Thiel College since 2018. He was named chair of the Department of Neuroscience in 2020.

Four promoted to full professor

Thiel College has announced the promotion of four faculty members to the rank of full professor.

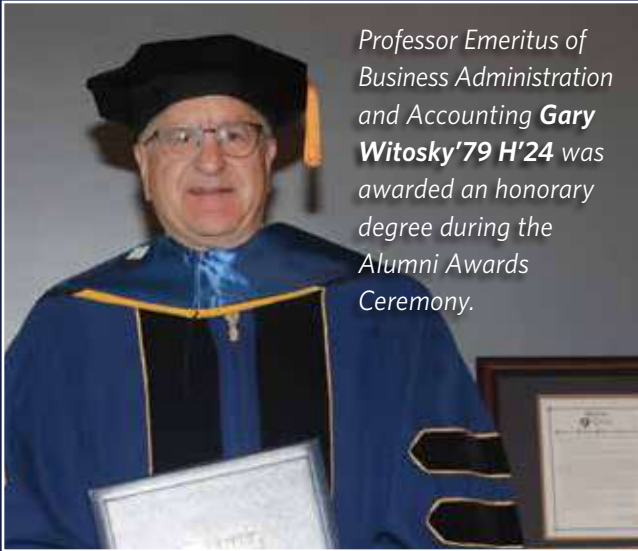
- Associate Dean of Academic Success and Professor of Sociology **Jared M. Hanneman, Ph.D.** has been with Thiel since 2014.
- Director of the Dietrich Honors Institute, Kenneth '31 and Marianna Brown '32 Dietrich Honors Institute Endowed Chair, and Professor of History **Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D.** joined Thiel College in 2015.
- Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science **Russell B. Richins, Ph.D.** has been at Thiel College since 2012.
- Professor of Physics **Eugene T. Torigoe, Ph.D.** joined Thiel College in 2012. Torigoe also serves as the chair of the faculty.

Seven new faculty members take positions

Seven faculty members, representing a diverse range of expertise in their respective fields, have joined the faculty at Thiel College.

- Anatomy and Physiology Lecturer **Daniel Dankovich, D.C.** is teaching in the Master of Science in physician assistant studies program.
- Assistant Professor of Exercise Science **Emily Erb, Ph.D.** is teaching as part of Thiel College's Bachelor of Science in exercise science major.
- Lecturer of Physician Assistant Studies **Gregory Hellier, D.O.** joins Thiel's physician assistant studies program.
- Lecturer of Physician Assistant Studies **Mary Honard, MPAS, PA-C** joins Thiel's faculty as a Lecturer of Physician Assistant Studies.
- Lecturer of Physician Assistant Studies **Omar Malik, M.D.** brings his expertise to Thiel's physician assistant studies program.
- Visiting Assistant Professor of Political Science **Eric Matthews, Ph.D.** is teaching in the Department of Political Science.
- Lecturer and Externship Coordinator, Speech-Language Pathology **Cassandra Shearer, CCC-SLP** is serving as both Lecturer and Externship Coordinator in the Speech-Language Pathology program.

Celebrations & reunions make Homecoming 2024 special



Professor Emeritus of Business Administration and Accounting **Gary Witosky '79 H'24** was awarded an honorary degree during the Alumni Awards Ceremony.



ABOVE: Brian Stamm, D.Min. '87 was given the Distinguished Alumni Award.



ABOVE RIGHT: G. Leah (Glessner) Dever '74 received the Service to Thiel Award.



RIGHT: Ryan Hart, Ph.D. '15 received the Young Alumni Award.

Witosky honorary doctorate highlights Alumni Awards event

An honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree was presented to distinguished alumnus and Professor Emeritus of Business Administration and Accounting **Gary Witosky '79 H'24** during the Alumni Awards Ceremony at Homecoming.

Witosky's professional experience includes more than 20 years in public accounting and private industry. In 2002, Witosky joined Thiel College—at the invitation of his former professor and mentor, **David M. Miller '61 H'20**—as an adjunct professor. He subsequently served as

the College's interim vice president of finance in 2004, and as the senior vice president of Thiel in 2007-2009. He returned to the faculty in 2009 and eventually became the Chair of the Arthur McGonigal Department of Business Administration and Accounting in 2015. Witosky was appointed Thiel's first David M. Miller Endowed Chair of Accounting in 2016 and has served as Executive Director of the Haller Enterprise Institute. In 2009, Witosky received the Service to Thiel Award from the Thiel Alumni Association and was recognized as the Professor of the Year by the College in

2016. Witosky has had a remarkable career in finance and leadership.

In addition to Witosky's honorary degree, several other exceptional alumni were honored. These awardees have shown exemplary dedication to their professions, communities, and alma mater, embodying the mission of Thiel College. The award winners were:

- **Brian Stamm, D.Min. '87** received the Distinguished Alumni Award.
- **Ryan Hart, Ph.D. '15** received the Young Alumni Award.
- **G. Leah (Glessner) Dever '74** received the Service to Thiel Award.



Athletes come together to remember Coach Vennis

Family, friends, former athletes and current Tomcat athletes, colleagues and other members of the community came together in the David Johnson Memorial Chapel for a celebration of the life of **Mark Vennis** during Homecoming.

Vennis passed away April 13. Vennis was a member of the Thiel community for 30 years and was inducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame in 2015. Vennis coached wrestling for 19 years.

HOMECOMING



Can't get enough
Homecoming? Scan QR
Tommy for more photos



Shinkman's support for athletics touchscreen celebrated

A touchscreen outside the Maenpa Family Courts was dedicated to **Chris Shinkman '62** and his late wife **Marsha (Friberg) Shinkman '65** during Homecoming. The screen has information about the Thiel College Athletics Hall of Fame and also information about current teams and schedules. Shinkman was a four-year letterman on the men's tennis team, competed on Thiel's first intercollegiate tennis team in 1959 and was inducted into the Thiel Athletics Hall of Fame in 2013.

Tale of the Tomcats



Born 100 years ago, the nickname embodies a unique spirit.

By Colin Schroyer '26

In 1924, the Thiel College Tomcats were born. A century later, the Tomcat remains a vital part of the Thiel College experience. The Tomcat legacy is still evolving and enduring. The story of the Tomcats reads like a script: it has a lovable main character, Tommy, with twists, turns, and enough mystery and intrigue to keep the audience engaged.

Throughout this year, celebrations, gatherings, and mascot meetings were held to honor the Tomcat and Tommy. These festivities culminated in Homecoming's grand celebration of 100 years of Tomcats, marking the mascot's centennial birthday. Tommy joined in the fun at a minor league ballpark, celebrated at a campus party at the Bistro, raced with other mascots in Sharon, Pa., appeared all over campus with alumni, and even took a trip to the Pennsylvania State Capitol in Harrisburg.

“Thiel’s team “played like wild, wild cats,” which then got reported by Melvin A. Blair of Greenville’s *Record-Argus* as “Thiel played like Tom’s cats!””

Before adopting the Tomcat moniker, the College lacked a unifying icon or symbol. Sports teams were often given individual names based on the game, such as the “Thiel Five” for basketball, and the “Fighting Lutherans,” drawing from the College’s Lutheran roots. Before becoming the Tomcats, Thiel’s teams were known as “the Huskies,” a nickname likely derived from a 1916

article that described the football players as “husky.” In 1926, the women’s basketball team was called the “Golden Phantoms.” After a perfect 13-0 season, which included victories over Temple University and the University of Pittsburgh, they were even rewarded with a visit to New York City.

But back to the Tomcats.

As the story goes, during one particular football match, the head coach of Carnegie Tech, Wally Steffen, said that Thiel’s team “played like wild, wild cats,” which then got reported by Melvin A. Blair of Greenville’s *Record-Argus* as “Thiel played like Tom’s cats,” referencing head coach **Dr. Thomas Holleran**. This moment, though paraphrased, marks the birth of the Tomcats, as recorded in **Dr. Roy H. Johnson’s** “The History of Thiel College 1866-1974.”

Although no official records in the



Tommy with the Greenville High School Trojan during the Mercer County Food Bank's inaugural mascot race in September.



Emily Baker '22 gets a selfie with **Tommy** in 2020.



Two Thiel legends Professor **David Miller '61 H'20** and **Tommy** in 2012.



Students joined **Tommy** in the Bistro for a birthday party in September.

Tommy through the years

From the super '70s...



To today!



Thiel archives confirm this story, the tale of “Tom’s Cats” persists, leaving the true origins of the Tomcat name in the realm of folklore. Regardless of where the name originated from, Thiel College became known as the Tomcats in 1924, and the Tomcats remain a proud part of campus life to this very day. Between then and now, the nickname and how it was used has undergone some changes.

In addition to naming sports teams and students as Tomcats, Thiel College’s student handbook was called *The Tomcat* as early as the 1955-56 academic year, and this name remained until the 1970s. Later, the handbook’s title was changed to *Tomcat’s Tale*, which was used until 1987. These handbooks, preserved in the Thiel College archives, feature a pawprint logo that further solidifies the Tomcat as a core symbol of Thiel’s identity.

No story of the Tomcats would be complete without their beloved mascot, Tommy! Thiel adopted the Tomcat name in 1924, but it wasn’t until the mid-1950s that a physical mascot made its debut. At first, the mascot was simply called “the Tomcat,” but the figure remained a constant through the years. The first mascot costume was used until the ‘70s, after which it was replaced, and another upgrade followed in 2006.

Along with the 2006 costume update, the Tomcat was officially christened “Tommy.” While this naming was a major moment, the exact origin of “Tommy” remains a mystery. The earliest recorded use of the name, according to the Thiel archives, dates to 2007. However, students and alumni recall the mascot being referred to as Tommy as far



*ABOVE: Tommy celebrates with The Mahoning Valley Scrappers minor league baseball team mascots Scrapper and Jade this summer.
BELOW: Tommy gets high fives from the crowd during the birthday celebration at the Pennsylvania Capitol.*

back as 1979. **Leslie (Vick) Evans '82**, a Thiel graduate and former Tommy, remembered that students in her time called the mascot "Tom." The name "Tom" or "Tommy" could have come from much earlier. To this day, the mascot's full name—whether "Tommy Tomcat" or "Tommy the Tomcat"—hasn't been officially cemented. Yet, despite these variations, Tommy's energy and spirit have endured.

Since Thiel first adopted the Tomcat mascot, Tommy has been a constant part of campus life. From social gatherings to sporting events, Tommy has been there, shaping Thiel's identity. **Denise (Wiles) Pesci '81**, who played Tommy in 1977-78, reminisced about her time as the mascot: "The costume was really hard



“The costume was really hard to move in, but it was a lot of fun at football games. The crowd loved my antics!”

Denise (Wiles) Pesci '81

to move in, but it was a lot of fun at football games. The crowd loved my antics!”

Forty-six years later, the experience remains very similar.

“It can be hot and uncomfortable inside the suit,” said health systems major **Che Fuqua '25**. “But some people definitely were excited to see the mascot in real life.”

During a trip to Harrisburg, Tommy posed for photos with other mascots as part of a birthday celebration at the Pennsylvania State Capitol, where he also met with Greenville’s state legislators, Senator **Michele Brooks** and Representative **Parke Wentling**.

“Wearing the Tomcat suit is overall a super fun experience. You’re the center of attention and everyone is wondering who you are, and you just must keep quiet,” said the student who wore the costume (the person inside the suit is being kept a mystery to add to the intrigue of Tommy). “It is extremely difficult to see out of the head. It honestly feels like you lose most of your senses. You cannot hear or see very well. Thankfully, you do have an escort, and it makes your life easier.”



Tommy got birthday wishes from area high school, community and civic organization mascots during the Mercer County Food Bank’s inaugural mascot race in September.



ABOVE LEFT: Pennsylvania state Senator **Michele Brooks** offers high fives and birthday cake.

ABOVE RIGHT: Pennsylvania state Representative **Parke Wentling** shares a birthday card.

LEFT: Cat mascots from around the state wish Tommy Happy Birthday.

Mascots represent the spirit of their organizations, and college mascots are no different. Across the globe, mascots become symbols of pride and tradition. According to Joby Giacalone, Executive Selection Committee Chairman at the Mascot Hall of Fame in Whiting, Ind., just south of Chicago, mascots like Tommy embody the essence of their institutions. Cats, along with birds and dogs, are among the most common kinds of mascots, Giacalone said, but Tommy stands alone as the only Tomcat.

In many ways, Tommy exemplifies the Thiel spirit that unites students, alumni, faculty and staff members, and friends of the College from around the nation.

“The fact that Thiel is a smaller school, everyone knew each other which made the experience of going there very special,” Pesci said.

Whether appearing in a national Coca-Cola commercial, attending admissions events, or cheering for the Thiel Tomcats at athletic contests—where Thiel is sometimes the underdog (or undercat)—Tommy represents the unity of the Thiel College community.

Thiel College wouldn’t be the welcoming, friendly place it is without a strong sense of Thiel Spirit. The Thiel community is proud of its rich history with its mascot—the cat with character! One hundred years later, the Tomcat remains a powerful symbol of everything Thiel College stands for: endurance, positivity, and community.

“It was (and is) a super fun way to cheer” for our community, Pesci said.

According to Joby Giacalone, Executive Selection Committee Chairman at the Mascot Hall of Fame, cats, dogs and birds are the most popular mascots. And while Tommy is a cat, he has an eye for what makes an interesting mascot. Here are a dozen of Tommy’s favorite peers.



Tommy's top picks

- No 1** University of California Santa Cruz Banana Slugs
- No 2** Take your pick from Division III's Hawk-centric names Coe College Kohawks, Loras College Duhawks, UW-Whitewater Warhawks.
- No 3** Georgetown University Hoyas
- No 4** Iona College Gaels
- No 5** University of Campbell Fighting Camels
- No 6** University of Akron Zips
- No 7** Arkansas-Monticello Cotton Blossoms (Women) / Boll Weevils (Men)
- No 8** University of Nebraska Cornhuskers
- No 9** Delta State University Fighting Okra
Officially their teams are called the Statesmen and Lady Statesmen.
- No 10** Williams College Ephs
- No 11** Evergreen State College Geoduck (pronounced gooey-duck)
- No 12** Concordia College Cobbers








Scan the
QR Tommy
to learn more.

Six Tomcats to be inducted into Athletic Hall of Fame

Six alumni will be inducted to the Athletic Hall of Fame during a banquet at 6 p.m. on Saturday, November 23, in the Lutheran Heritage Room of the Howard Miller Student Center.

This year's inductees are **Marsha Adams '89, Eric Boylan '09, Chris Dunham '09, Joe Herrmann '08, Jack Leipheimer '74, and Tim Taylor '13.**

Adams (Madison, Ohio) was a five-time All-PAC First Team athlete in softball and volleyball. In her senior softball season, she hit .346 with 14 RBIs, 14 stolen bases, and 16 runs. She also played on the 1984-85 PAC champion women's basketball team.

Boylan (McKees Rocks, Pa.) was a three-time All-PAC baseball selection and holds program records for hits (221), doubles (53), and total bases (360). He earned All-American honors and holds the record for the longest hitting streak (26 games).

Dunham (Conneaut Lake, Pa.) was named to the ABCA First Team All-American in 2008 and set the single-

season home run record with 15. He tied the program's single-season RBI record (63) and ranks third in career walks (64).

Herrmann (Hartstown, Pa.) was a three-time All-PAC basketball selection and is third in program history with 1,520 points. He also ranks third in blocks (112) and fourth in steals (148).

Leipheimer (Sharon, Pa.) served as Thiel's head football coach and athletic director. He led the team to its first NCAA Division III playoff win in 2005, earning multiple Coach of the Year honors. During his tenure as AD, Thiel added five sports programs and made significant athletic facility improvements.

Taylor (Girard, Pa.) was a three-time All-PAC defensive end and holds the program record for career sacks (34.5) and tackles for loss (66.5). In 2012, he earned All-American honors and was part of the winning team in the D3 Senior Classic.

Generous support drives new turf at Stoeber Field

The completion of the new turf project at Stoeber Field at Alumni Stadium came from the support from many alumni, friends, and community partners, Vice President for College Advancement **Roberta Leonard** said. This initiative was made possible through contributions from **60 individuals and groups**, with several areas of the field named in honor of key donors.

Tyler Hudson and the Hudson Companies supported the east end zone, Delta Sigma Phi sponsored the west end zone, **Dominic Dionisio '72** donated for the Tomcat logo at

midfield and **Leah Dever '74** backed the cheerleader area. Donations were made in memory of **Dr. Richard Bennett; George Benninghoff**, father of **Mark Benninghoff '82; Cam Cianci '83; Tracey Sutton Nichols '82, Leo Phillips '84; and Dick Wise**, father of **Sarah Wise '04**. Gifts were also made in honor of **Dreyvin Livingston '26 and Jack Leipheimer '74**.

Mercer County and the Coca-Cola Company also played key roles.

"We are deeply grateful for the community's overwhelming generosity that brought this project to life," Leonard said.



Faber presents at Pro Football Hall of Fame

Admissions counselor **Sam Faber '20** presented at the college fair on Aug. 29 at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio.

Faber was one of the five presenters who hosted a breakout session. Estimates were that hundreds of high school students from eastern Ohio attended the event.

During Faber's presentation, "How to Decide Your Major & Career," he told students to start by stepping back and reflecting deeply on who you truly are and ask yourself, "What is my true purpose behind all of this?"

As part of the presentation, Faber was quoted in the *Canton Repository*. Faber told the newspaper that finding a career path can be difficult, so he appreciated the chance to give his advice.

"The students here have great questions and really great ideas," he told the newspaper. "I love working with that."

"(I) never thought I'd get the chance to go to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, and I definitely didn't think I'd get the opportunity to present there," Faber posted on LinkedIn. "Educating and helping kids is without a doubt my goal in life, so to do this at such a large scale was something I'm absolutely grateful for. And, of course, being able to represent and introduce Thiel College to many students and educators in the process is especially rewarding."

— 1950s —



Ralph Fogal '50 celebrated his 99th birthday on April 22. He enjoyed a slideshow of his life and had angel food cake during a nice weekend in Iowa with his children and friends.

Charles Semroc '57 was posthumously inducted into the Greenville High School Athletic Hall of Fame on Aug. 30. Semroc was inducted into the College's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1991 following a distinguished football career. Semroc, also known to former classmates as "The Rock," was a four-time letterman for the football team as a two-way starter and linebacker, as well as co-captain during his senior season. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry in 1957. Semroc

worked for PPG Industries for 36 years as a research chemist. Thiel wrestling coach **Craig Thurber**, a 1991 graduate of Greenville, was also inducted to the Greenville High School Hall of Fame.

— 1960s —



Fred S. Pollier '66 has had a distinguished career in engineering, economics, and business administration. After completing his education, including the Penn State University Executive Management Program, Pollier began his career in 1966 with a Department of Defense contractor, eventually becoming a project engineer and general supervisor at Cooper Diesel. In 1968, he transitioned to the

energy sector, working in quality assurance and project management at Westinghouse, where he oversaw domestic and international fossil and nuclear energy projects. He ultimately became the Director of Marketing, Business Development, and Strategic Planning, retiring in 1997. After opting for early retirement, Pollier continued as a consultant for Westinghouse and became actively involved in community service, including church construction, Habitat for Humanity, and serving on homeowner's association boards. Post-retirement, he completed a graphic design program, co-owned a web design company, and held leadership roles in various organizations, such as the Summit Christian School Board and Lee Memorial Health Systems. Pollier was also a Church Deacon and was inducted into the Norwin

Alan Shepard '03

Residence: Sewickley, Pa.

Professional Experience: After a brief stint in public accounting, I've spent the bulk of my professional career working in accounting and finance roles in the energy industry. I am the Chief Financial Officer at CNX Resources.

Involvement at Thiel: I served as a student assistant in the Business Department for Professor **Jesse Ligo** during both my junior and senior year.

Reason For Giving Back: "Thiel College, the faculty in particular, has been one of the most important influences on my life both personally and professionally. The school is singular in its ability to transform the lives of the students in our region. Our responsibility as alumni is to ensure that it's able to continue to do so. My hope is that my gifts to date will look small in comparison to future gifts as I continue to benefit from my time at 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.

High School Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012. He played minor league baseball for the New York Yankees and received numerous Westinghouse Management Achievement awards. He and his wife, Janet, currently reside in Saint Augustine, Fla.

Albert R. Sloan '68 lives in Houston, Texas and just downsized after his roommate (nephew) moved back to Los Angeles. He is still traveling but now spends more time in southeast Asia than in Mexico.

Judith C. (Charlesworth) Thomas '68 resides in Somerset, Pa.

George L. Lyon '69 resides in Ft. Worth, Texas.

— 1970s —



Laura Ellsworth H'24 were recognized on June 23 by Pittsburgh's Rodef Shalom Congregation with

the esteemed Pursuer of Peace Award. They are the co-founders of the Eradicate Hate Summit held annually in Pittsburgh. The Pursuer of Peace Award, given by the Rodef Shalom Congregation, the oldest and largest Jewish congregation in Western Pennsylvania, acknowledges significant contributions to peace through fostering interfaith understanding, encouraging humanitarianism, and promoting social justice.



Jeanie (Cottrell) Phillips '71 recently published her book, *Grief Is Grief*, about her experiences.

"Jeanie Phillips' idyllic childhood had not prepared her for the loss of her son when he was only 25, his wife, and Jeanie's mother all within a 15-month period. Seventeen years later, she lost her husband of 33 years. Less than six years after that, her new husband died from COVID. Yet Jeanie continues to live her life, excited to see what is in store for her. She acknowledges that grief has been a part of her life, but she looks at each grieving experience as an independent episode and refuses to compare people's grief. To her, grief is not something you get over; it is something that one must get through. She shares her experiences with her readers in the hope that she will help others get through their grief experiences." It's available on Amazon.



Sue (Umstead) Early '71 and **Mike Early '69** returned recently from South America.

They visited, "the end of the world," Tierra del Fuego in Ushuaia, Argentina. They got a picture of Mike at a beautiful sign wearing his Thiel shirt. They were so close to Antarctica, "it was a little chilly. It was a great trip. On the cruise ship, Sue got on an elevator wearing her Thiel shirt, and a woman said her brother had graduated from there. What a small world."

Sally Pore '70 writes she is doing well in Peterborough, N.H.

Thiel College Trustee Emeritus and former Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh **Mark A. Nordenberg '70 H'97** and honorary degree recipient

Stephen G. Schroeder '71 lives in Warminster, Pa.

Kevin F. Meistickle '73 resides in Suwanee, Ga. He owns Meistickle Landscaping, and owns and manages the Atlanta Crackers Baseball (43 years) – crackerbaseball.com. He is a Lifetime member of the Association of Professional Ballplayers, and a Lifetime member of National Baseball Congress. He is a member of American Legion post 201 (Sons of the Legionnaires.), and a Lifetime member of the NRA (National Rifle Association). He still loves to hunt and fish, enjoy Theatre (especially Broadway), enjoys painting and sketching, loves to read, and is an avid football fan (high school, college, and pro). He stays active with his daughters, Melinda Meistickle and Melissa Rodriguez, and their families and just enjoys life. He has many wonderful memories of his life at Thiel College.

Meryl R. (Bailing) Barnett '74 resides in Greenville, Pa., with spouse, Elton Barnett. They have a son, Brent Reed Barnett.

Jack Leipheimer '74 stopped by campus this summer to take a lap at the Barry & Carol Stamm Track & Field



Complex and check out the newly installed scoreboard. The scoreboard carries the names of Leipheimer, for whom the infield was named, and **Col. Charles "Bud" Manes '58**, for whom the track was named.

Rev. Bonnie J. Peltomaa '76 has retired as an Evangelical Lutheran

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Church in America pastor. She resides in Dayton, Ohio.

Randy Spence '76 works with Design Force in Somerville, Ala. He resides in Laceys Spring, Ala.



David A. Fox, Ph.D. '77 retired this spring from teaching at the University of Florida, School of Forest, Fisheries,

and Geomatics Sciences. While still involved with some urban forestry research projects, he and his wife, Mary Ann (Heidrich) Fox, plan to travel more and spend time with immediate family, including three young grandsons.

— 1980s —

Douglas R. Campbell '81 resides in Costa Mesa, Calif., is a realtor with Douglas Elliman of California located in Newport Beach. Children include Reid and Kelly.



Susan J. McFeaters, Ph.D. '84, serves as Full Professor at Western New Mexico University School of Social Work. She is a

Licensed Clinical Social Worker. The professional designation that indicates a high level of competency and ethical standards in the field of social work. She teaches in the master's of social work program as a distance educator. She is the Director of Faculty Professional Development at WNMU and the recent past President of Faculty Senate. She serves on the New Mexico

Board of Social Work Examiners, appointed by the Governor of New Mexico. She is serving as the Chair of the NM-BSWE licensing board. She is also the New Mexico Delegate to the Association of Social Work Boards. She resides in Silver City, N.M.



Brian Staats '84 was named football coach at Mariner High School in April. He is a coaching lifer with more than 35 years of

experience at both the high school and collegiate levels. A native of northeast Ohio, Staats was the head football coach at seven high schools in the state, winning three Columbus City League Championships at both Mifflin and Northland. At Bedford, he helped mentor future NFL offensive lineman Rodger Saffold III. Prior to relocating to Florida and South Lake High in 2023, Staats was an assistant at a collection of small colleges, including Alderson Broaddus University in West Virginia, Capitol University in Ohio and Thiel College.

Dave Pilipovich '86 received the 2024 Athletic Alumni Commendation Award on August 5 during the Department of



Athletics' annual retreat, where he served as guest speaker. It is one of two yearly awards given by the Department of Athletics. It is presented to a former Thiel student-athlete who has been an outstanding role model for youth and has made a significant contribution to his or her community through the venue of athletics.

A native of Duquesne, Pa., Pilipovich was a four-year member of Thiel's basketball team, and served as team captain as a senior. He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration in 1986. He is an assistant men's basketball coach at the University of New Mexico and last season helped lead the Lobos to the Mountain West Championship and a berth in the NCAA Tournament. Pilipovich and his wife, Kelly, have two children, Kyle and Kelsey.

Dale Nye '87 is self-employed and resides in Dayton, Ohio.



Debra R. (Reiner) Thompson, Ed.D. '87 lives in Lincoln University, Pa., and earned her Doctorate in Education in Innovation and Leadership from Wilmington University.

Royce Groff '88 is a scientist. His son, Mark Groff, is 20 and a rising junior at Northwestern University studying economics and chemistry. He and his wife, Chi-Hua Chiu Groff, live in Solon, Ohio.

— 1990s —



Brian W. Boyer '93, included in *Marquis Who's Who*, has had a distinguished career in the oil and energy

industries. Inspired by his family, he began working in the field at a young age and pursued degrees in

geology, earth science, and business administration from Thiel College and Miami University. After earning his MBA, Boyer joined Marathon Oil Corporation, where he held various management roles from 1998 to 2015. He later worked with Chesapeake Energy and then moved to PennEnergy Resources, where he advanced through multiple senior leadership positions. Currently, he serves as the Senior Vice President of Production Operations, overseeing various departments and ensuring the company's production operations run smoothly. Boyer is actively involved in industry organizations like the Marcellus Shale Coalition and contributes to his community through volunteer work and charitable donations. He takes pride in helping others succeed in the industry and credits his success to his support system, trustworthiness, and dedication to inspiring others to achieve their full potential.

James D. Cook '95 resides in Aurora, Ohio.

Danielle M. (Lyle) Lilly '98 resides in Darlington, Pa., with her husband, Todd Lilly. She serves as special projects manager with The Bradley Center. They have three children, Trent born October 15, 2002, Chloe October 25, 2004, and Gabriel June 26, 2007.

— 2000s —

Justin M. Kuhar '03 resides in Homestead, Pa.

Zachery T. Goodwin '05 is a senior outside sales representative for Wesco Distribution. He and his wife, Dr. Taylor Hawkins-Goodwin, reside in Washington, Pa.



Justin M. Page '05 was recently promoted to Assistant Inspector in Charge of the Pittsburgh Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service. He and his spouse, **Julie (Greer) Page '05**, reside in Pittsburgh.

Laura Pavlot '06 is a program manager with CET. She and her spouse, Tina Loos, reside in Cary, N.C.

Lindsey D. Bona '07 lives in Greenville, Pa., and is employed with CDK Global as an account sales rep.

Angela P. (Bowe) Maranuk '08 is a physical therapist assistant with Diamond Healthcare in Effort, Pa. She and her husband, John Maranuk, reside in Kunkletown, Pa.



Kayla (Seidle) Coryea '09 "ran" into **Mei Williams '23 MBA'24** at the half marathon in Pittsburgh.

— 2010s —

Michelle A. Blose '12 is a clinical neuropsychologist. She resides in Tarentum, Pa.

Joslyne (Cook) Counselman '14 has been named to Pittsburgh Magazine's prestigious "40



Under 40" list for 2024. Counselman is a financial advisor at Thrivent Financial. She has been recognized for her professional achievements and

extensive community involvement in the Pittsburgh region. She graduated with degrees in mathematics and actuarial science.

Abby C. (Spriggs) Crystol '15 is employed as the marketing manager at Turner Construction. She and husband, **Jason Crystol '15**, live in Pittsburgh, Pa.



Thiel College First Year Curriculum Coordinator and Lecturer of English **Sean Oros '15** was recognized by the Shenango Valley

Chamber of Commerce as a member of its annual 30 under 40 awards in May. Oros was presented the award by The Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Greenville Area, Grove City and Mercer chambers, in recognition of his accomplishments to better the community and his profession.

Cassie (Graham) Thomas '15 and **Ryan Thomas '15** reside in Ligonier, Pa, with children Evan Thomas, born May 3, 2020, and Gabriel Thomas, born October 21, 2022.

Derek A. Runge '16 resides in British Columbia, Canada.

Kayla Welty '16 has been promoted to accounting manager for Cutco Cutlery Corp. She joined the company on July 15, 2019,



as a senior accountant for KA-BAR Knives, Inc., a subsidiary of Cutco. In February 2021, she transitioned to Cutco as a senior accountant,

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and was promoted to accounting supervisor on March 1, 2022. She lives in Portville, N.Y.

Audra Franley '17 is serving as Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion and interim Coordinator for Campus Ministries at the College.



Franley graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies and earned her Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School in 2020. Her role, which began this spring, will continue until December.



Jennifer Lippert '17 attended a Kenny Chesney concert in Pittsburgh. She has relocated back to Pittsburgh

and resides in Freeport, Pa. She is employment counselor at EDSI.

Hannah C. (Rossman) Arienzo '18 is a physician assistant and lives in Slippery Rock, Pa.

Victoria E. Thompson '18 lives in Chicora, Pa. She is employed as activities director at the Sunnyview Nursing Home in Chicora.

Haley M. (Tokich) Thorp '18 and her spouse, **Jason Thorp '18**, reside in Coraopolis, Pa.

— 2020s —

Visions Attire, co-founded by Thiel College alumnus **Devyn Giovengo '22** and his business



partner, Mikel Battles, held in July its second annual Youth Summer Jam at Highland Park in Pittsburgh, where they gave away backpacks and school supplies to local elementary students. The event was profiled in the Pittsburgh *City Paper*. During the two events, they have given away more than 400 backpacks.

Morgan Elizabeth Wood '23 is a behavioral health specialist with Beyond Healthcare. She resides in Toledo, Ohio.

Bennett Medyn '24 joined MMB + CO as an Associate I. He lives in Macedon, N.Y.



McKenzie F. Morrison '24 resides in Uhrichville, Ohio.

— marriages —

Chad M. Burnheimer '95 married Melissa (Hoepfner) Burnheimer on March 2023, in Las Vegas, and moved school districts from Vernon ISD (principal) to assistant principal of Burkburnett High School (August 2023). Children include Maquala Burnheimer, Jaxson Burnheimer, Grayce Burnheimer, step-dad to Kailey and Everleigh Hoepfner, and foster dad to Mia Jackson. He and Melissa have fostered a 16-year-old student, McKenny Vento, since December 2023. Chad received the all clear from brain cancer in 2022.



Kelly (Barzak) Hiscox '13 married Brian Hiscox at Shangri-La Event Center in Parkman, Ohio on July 26. **Bailey (Holmes) Jackson '16**, **Joy Metzler '11**, **Danielle (Dwyer) West '11**, Mia Gainey (flower girl), **Lauren (Downs) Duncan '15**, **Alyssa (Chine) Gainey '13**, Megg Andrews, **Chelsea Meister '13**, **Sarah (Weikart) Vanaskey '12**, **Kelly (Barzak) Hiscox**

'13, **Alexandra (Hall) McMahon '15**, **Leanna (Yeager) Meeks '14**, **Madison (Chylik) Smith '11**, **Abbey (Kiger) Zizzo '10**, **Ashley (Donnelly) O'Steen '10**.



Pictured left to right: **Kelly Muffley '13**, **Kelly (Barzak) Hiscox '13**, **Rianne Thornton '12**, **Robert Clune** (former Thiel women's basketball coach).

– births –



To **Jennifer (Keller) Reed '11** and her husband, **John A. Reed II '11**, a daughter, Josephine Mae Reed, on January 19, 2024. Josephine is welcomed by big brother John III.



Erica (Riola) Clements '12 and her husband, **Wyatt Clements '14**, welcomed Preston Clements on April 15, 2024. Preston has two older siblings, Annabelle and Mackenzie.



To **Morgan (Steiner) Bodnar '16 MBA'21** and her husband, **Michael Bodnar M.A.'24**, a daughter, Aria Kennley, on August 26.

– gatherings –



Joann Borg '78 hosted Thiel alumni and friends at the 2 Ames restaurant at the Chautauqua Institute. Pictured first row (left to right) are **Jim Cunningham III '78**, Laurie Cunningham, **JoAnn Borg '78**, President **Susan Traverso, Ph.D.**, Vice President for College Advancement **Roberta Leonard**, **Ellen (Brown) Agett '85**, **Brett Agett '84**, **David Hummel '83**; second row **John Logan '65**, **Dick Erikson '84** and **Walter Holtgreffe '22**.



Alexis Brown '26 went to Korea this summer. She did a full-time internship through the Vira I. Heinz Scholarship as well as the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship. While there, she worked with North Korean defector students where she helped assist them with their English. She also had the opportunity to meet up with several former Thiel international students, some of whom had the opportunity to meet her coworkers from her internship. Her two months in South Korea were a great opportunity that she will continue to share with the Thiel community.

Upcoming Events

2025 Annual Miller Golf Scramble

Saturday, May 17 Tee off at 9 a.m.

- Join Sig Ep actives and alumni for the 18th Miller Golf Scramble.
 - Expect 18 holes of fun at Pine Hills Golf Course in Greenville Pa.
 - Reconnect with friends and brothers.
 - Food will be provided at the turn and after the scramble by Underdog BBQ.
 - There will be raffle baskets and items to bid on. Not a golfer, no problem!
- Come and hang out with good friends and eat some good food!

For more information, contact **Dave Rafle '13** at 814-881-9452 or **Tom Faessel '89** at 412-852-2723.

These Alpha Xi Delta sisters met in Hocking Hills State Park in April for their annual reunion. The 20 women gathered a plethora of personal care supplies, clothes, drawing supplies, etc. to donate to Making Kids Count (MKC) which provides comfort kits for children entering the foster care system.



Bonnie (Wells) Bonner '80 and Carla (Gebhardt) Berg '83 at Making Kids Count in Boardman, Ohio.



Front Row: **Bobie (Drost) Cestoni '81**; Middle Row: **Carla (Gebhardt) Berg '83, Kate Albright '80, Mert (Erhard) Hellein '78, Mary (Cypher)Toalston '79, Gayle (Phillips) Smith '81, Beth (Beyer) Gilford '80**, Back Row (L to R): **Deb (Deaunovich) Madurski '82, Bev (Wright) Miller '79, Kim (Bodenhagen) Franz '80, Melissa (Pfender) Landis '79, Bonnie (Wells) Bonner '80, Martha (Lawrence) Morse '83, Kelly (DeLatt) Gheres '82, Ginger (Rex) Weaver '80, Barb (Mangine) Evenoff '80**. Missing from the photo: **Shirley (Boucher) Gamble '80, Alice (Frost) Cunningham '80, Gale (Kinya) Marcinko '79, Anne (Wilson) Coles '80**.

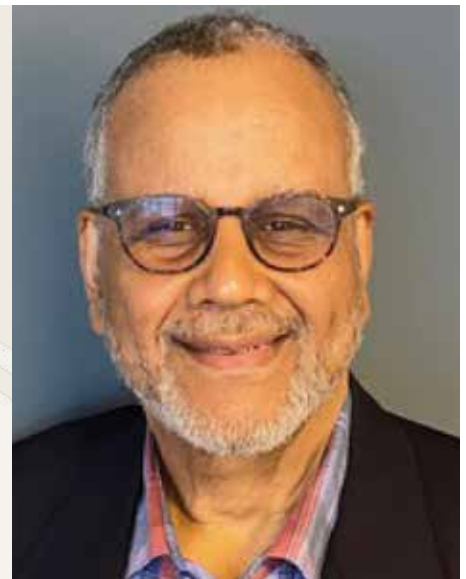
Marvin B. Prentice '71

Residence: Pittsburgh, Pa.

Professional Experience: I honorably served in the U.S. Marine Corps attaining the rank of Captain. I was employed for 28 years with United States Steel Corporation in the accounting and finance divisions, and various senior management positions. I was the Chief Operations Officer of the Hill House Association, a nonprofit agency, that served the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan communities. I am President of the Isshinryu Karate Academy, Pittsburgh, dedicated to teaching respect and self-discipline to adults and children through martial arts training.

Time at Thiel: I am a member of Phi Theta Phi fraternity and the Alumni Association Board of Directors. I ran on the Tomcat cross country and track teams and was inducted into the Athletics Hall of Fame in 1992. My involvement also included student government, Black Student Union, Spanish Club, and I was also a senior class officer.

Reason for Giving Back: "Giving back is my way of thanking Thiel for the opportunities that its solid education and the friendships developed during my time at this great institution aided me in my life achievements. I want to encourage Thiel to increase their efforts in recruitment and retention for minority students so that they may have the chances for greater success."



The Thiel Fund File

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

Former Board of Trustees member Dowhower passes away

The Reverend **Richard L. Dowhower '58 H'87**, who along with his wife, **Kay (Scanlon) H'87**, were the first couple in College history to be granted honorary doctorates, died on September 5. Ordained a pastor of the Lutheran Church in America, he was a graduate of Thiel and Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary of Minneapolis.

He was the chairman for his 50th

class reunion, served as a member of the Board of Trustees in the early 1990s and the Alumni Association Board of Directors in the 1960s and was a class agent.

Dowhower served Lutheran congregations in Ambridge, Pa., Baltimore, Md., Pittsburgh, Pa., Camp Hill, Pa., and Bowie, Md. In retirement, he served as an interim pastor in Duncannon, Pa.

For his 50th class reunion he said his favorite Thiel memories were working in sports information and taking photos, Spring Sing victories and The Four Freshmen concert. He was a member of Delta Sigma Phi. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Kay, two daughters Deidre Lenker (Brook) of Camp Hill and Andrea Dowhower (Phil Vollmer) of State College.



Hunter Baxter M.S. '23 was at the Mary Baker Eddy Library in Boston, Mass. when he met **Brad Hughes '71**. They talked for a long time and loved that they shared the Tomcat connection.



J.K. Rogers, Ph.D. (Director of Theatre) traveled to South Korea in July. While there, she spent time in both Seoul and Busan, and met up with several former and current Thiel students including **Jiwon Byeon, Minseo Kim, Haeun Yun, and Kyungmin Kim**. She also met up with **Alexis Brown '26** at the Dongdaemun Design Plaza for some Thiel Talk and lunch. Rogers also visited the campuses of Thiel sister schools Dongguk University and Duksung Women's University in Seoul to say, "Hello and promote Thiel's international student program."

Tim Fader, M.D. '69, and **Patti (Pinkerton) Fader '70** and their family were profiled in *On Call*, a publication by Samaritan's Purse focusing on medical missions. Tim majored in chemistry, and Patti studied biology. Tim was also named a Distinguished Alumni in 1985. The family's missionary journey began among the Navajo in Arizona, followed by 15 years at Kijabe Hospital in Kenya. Tim served as a physician and medical director, while Patti supported nursing administration. Their four children—Alyssa, Jason, Eli, and Caleb—now carry on their legacy, with many working as missionaries across Africa.



Alice (Getty) Dalmaso '70 shares the attached photo that shows four 1970 Thiel grads that gathered for Liz Smith's 50th wedding anniversary party on Saturday, July 27, 2024, in Canfield, Ohio. Each of us are holding a piece of our Thiel history.

Pictured are—Back left: Dalmaso, of Saegertown, Pa., holding our 1970 *Endymion* Year Book. Back right: **Nancy (Ferguson) Cavanaugh '70**, of Erie, Pa., holding our 1970 "New Faces at Thiel" booklet. Front left: **Elizabeth 'Liz' (Klotz) Smith '70**, of Canfield, Ohio, holding our 1969-70 Student Handbook. Front right: **Linda 'Pete' (Peterson) Daniels '70**, of Auburn, Pa., holding our 1970 Commencement Program. A grand time was had by all.



David Mogle, Director of the Thiel Fund, held an event in Montclair, N.J. in June. Pictured are **Val Dickerson '78; Dan Kuhar '93, Ted Manvell '69, Ken Fredeen '80, Opeyemi Akele '08, Marnie Joseph '70, Ben Strong '80, Nicholas Thompson '09**.

CLASS NOTES

— in memoriam —

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

Carol Adams
James P. Averill '76
Clifford F. Beil '75
Howard S. Bergesen, Jr. '67
Dana (Yapp) Billig '69
Evelyn (Drechsler) Binder '60
Robert J. Bithell '58
J. Michael Bovaird '68
Nancy H. (Gross) Braffett '68
David P. Brandt '66
Robert A. Brant '74
Jeffrey Alan Briggs
Frederick B. Brinkman '74
Nancy Ann (Wright) Brockman '66
James E. Buckner '74
Pamela J. (Casciato) Call '84
Debra Ann Carlini-Noel '88
Patricia (McCormick) Chick '52
Diane E. (Hoffman) Clark '80
Wilfrid Wilson Coleman '68
Daniel J. Crawford '74
Felix Cutruzzula '53
Rev. Richard Dowhower '58 H'87
Nancy C. (Cooke) Dumars '50
Mary E. Dunkle
Ruth (March) Dunmire '52
Michael A. Finchio '15
Cynthia L. (Poglein) Flach '74
Shirley M. (Bortz) Ford '50
Dale C. Ford '50
Patricia (Brew) Fouse '58
Orval Fouse
Holly A. (Humphrey) Frampton '93
Lois J. Frank '46
Curtis Yeager Frank
Anna May (Kobert) Frew '56
David C. Frew
David E. Frew Jr. '53
Rev. Thomas L. Funk '63
Nancy Helen Gross '68
Dr. Joel L. Haas '63
Scott Hawkins
Patricia G. Houpt '83
George Johnston
Gretchen (Arner) Klindworth
Walter N. Klindworth '50
Sandra L. (McClimans) Knapp '58
Edward J. Kroen '52
Carol W. (Wagner) Larkin '58
Patty (Henegan) Lederer '71
Donna Lenkner
Douglas J. Lewis '73
Julianna Linn
Jack David Linn '57
Roger Lupold
Robert K. Marburger '58
William Marsteller '66
Kristen (Kosisko) Martin '84
Kelly Jo (Shaffer) Martin '89
Joseph W. Massey '69
Darlene (Hengstenberg) McCormick '56
Sandra Kay (Martin) McCuen '67
Marilyn Louise (Buettner) McKay '54
Te'nya Janay Mckinley '27
Janet A. McParland
George Mendia
Rev. George W. Mendis
Joy Miller '90
Doris M. (Saul) Nagel '56
Karen (Kimpel) Naughton '64
Dolores Noble
John W. Noble '64
Ronald L. Oakes '60
Dr. Nancy (Kurtz) O'Hare '54
Frederick R. O'Polka '70
Donald L. Orr
Rebecca L. Osborne
Ralph E. Overly '57
Sandra H. (Heath) Pesavento '63
Harry R. Pfeiffer '74
Frank Pool '55
Priscilla Randolph-Haug '72
Howard Redfoot '60
Lillian (Pfaff) Redfoot '59
Daniel G. Reinke '62
David L. Riffer '58
Thomas R. Ririe '86
Frank Roberts
Mary Ann (Eddy) Roberts '65
Janet (Buck) Romich '67
Russell E. Ross '69
Frederick C. Rudolph '60
Pauline V. (Noe) Saternow
Linda J. Schall '74
Robert W. Schellhaas '74
Cynthia A. (Henry) Schindler '74
Lois Jean Schueltz
Jane (Reynolds) Schuetz '56
Deborah W. (Wiles) Sellman '67
Gerald M. Selzer '65
Nell G. Selzer
Thomas G. Sertik '58
Kelly Jo Shaffer-Martin '89
Carolyn A. (Neil) Shaner '61
Marilyn Shimp
Dr. Robert E. Shimp Jr. '64
Barbara L. Shumate '74
Agnes Smith
Samuel L. Smith '84
Susan L. Smith '86
Lois D. (Demi) Snyder
Carlene A. Soles '84
William R. Stewart '57
Robert W. Strobel
Elizabeth Tam '76
Sarah Lu Torrence '74
Renate L. Toth
Glen A. Vosler
Neil Ross Walker '60
Gary H. White '60
Anne P. (Jones) Wigton '57
David M. P. Wilson '92
David B. Wilson '67
Richard Earl Wise
Linda L. Wittman '69
Jill R. Yost '60
Stephen Gerald Zavatsky '59
Judy Y. (Arnal) Zeman '60



Largest Thiel class marks 50th with record donation

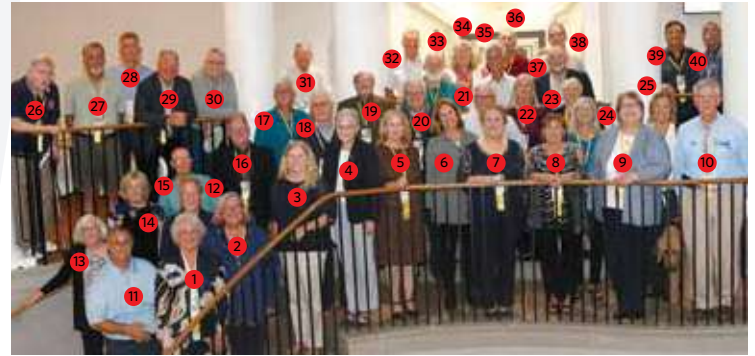
By Tracy Fair Robertson '74

It was a gray, overcast day that began in a dreary drizzle, but spirits were high as we headed back to our beloved college campus for the half-century reunion of the Class of 1974! This was our highly anticipated weekend. As we anxiously scanned the crowd nervously looking for those Class of 1974 golden lanyard name tags, we sought long lost Greek brothers and sisters, roommates, college crushes, fellow athletes, club members, and friends. Nostalgic for the past, we aimed to rekindle and revive old friendships in this place where we grew up. For 13 of us, the work for this reunion began a year ago, when we were tapped to be on the 50th Reunion Planning Committee.

The Alumni Office began planning our 2024 reunion as soon as the 2023 event ended. Those of us recruited were to be involved with several Zoom calls to plan and share ideas for class gatherings. The initial Zoom call was like a version of "Hollywood Squares." Many of us hadn't seen each other in 50 years! We all wanted to know about each others' lives, careers, marriages, children, grandchildren, etc. Getting us focused was like herding cats! We had a lot to achieve in less than nine months.

After the initial calls, we held Zoom calls every few weeks. We had to decide on the class gift and how best to acquire donations, readily agreeing we wanted to provide a scholarship. Several of us were lifelong educators, and with a national teacher shortage, it was a quick decision directing our scholarship funds to those students studying to be teachers. We sent letters, donation requests, emails, and called people announcing our efforts in as many venues as possible; our goal was \$120,000. Spring turned to summer, and the Zoom meetings continued planning the dinner, other homecoming events, and our class gift. The Alumni Office kept us apprised of the total amount raised; we were competitive and wanted to raise more funds than any other class!

Recalling that our Thiel education had served as a springboard for our careers and lives, we all wanted to give back to this extraordinary institution, expressing



1. Leah (Glessner) Dever; 2. Ginny (Olsavicky) Moszkowicz;
3. Jane (Davis) Minton; 4. Julie (Benedett) Dudgeon; 5. Joyce (Latshaw) Daughtery; 6. Becky (Anderson) Pomeroy; 7. Kathy (Garofolo) Sourbeer; 8. Vikki (Varner) Young; 9. Cathy Wilkie;
10. Rick Huether; 11. Steve Huzar; 12. Don Laughery; 13. Chris (Marshall) Van Dusen; 14. Tracy (Fair) Robertson; 15. John Lefever; 16. Bob Burns; 17. Greg Buzard; 18. Larry White; 19. Raymond Hanlon; 20. Stuart Sewell; 21. Mike Daughtery; 22. Sherry (VanSyoc) Hannevig; 23. Diane (Newman) Long; 24. Barbara (Schott) Senn; 25. Karen (Faas) Marovich; 26. Rick Speicher; 27. Lou Vizza; 28. Barry Oman; 29. John Wotus;
30. Anthony Warmus; 31. Chris Kirkpatrick; 32. Michael Miller; 33. Randy Geib; 34. Linda (Hamilton) Keller; 35. Bill Matthews; 36. Rich Bellas; 37. Joe Damore; 38. Joe Spagnola;
39. John Dertouzos; 40. Lynn Jones

our gratitude for the achievements made possible by our education. Thiel had provided us with small class sizes and tailored, personalized instruction. So, we shifted our mindset; rather than focusing on fundraising, we embraced the idea of giving back. As the Class of 1974 came together in the Howard Miller Student Center to honor one another, we also celebrated this incredible campus where we all came of age together. We proudly presented Thiel with the largest gift any class had ever made: \$184,105. We challenge future classes to adopt the same mindset and surpass our contribution!

Tracy Fair Robertson '74 graduated with a degree in English and was the Thiel Tomcat while she was a student. She has had a lengthy career in public education both in teaching and serving as a state administrator for English. She was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2022 and is pictured above with her Class of 1974 classmates.

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For more information on how to help,
Director of the Thiel Fund - **David Mogle** • 724-589-2140 • dmogle@thiel.edu
make your online gift at thiel.edu/giving

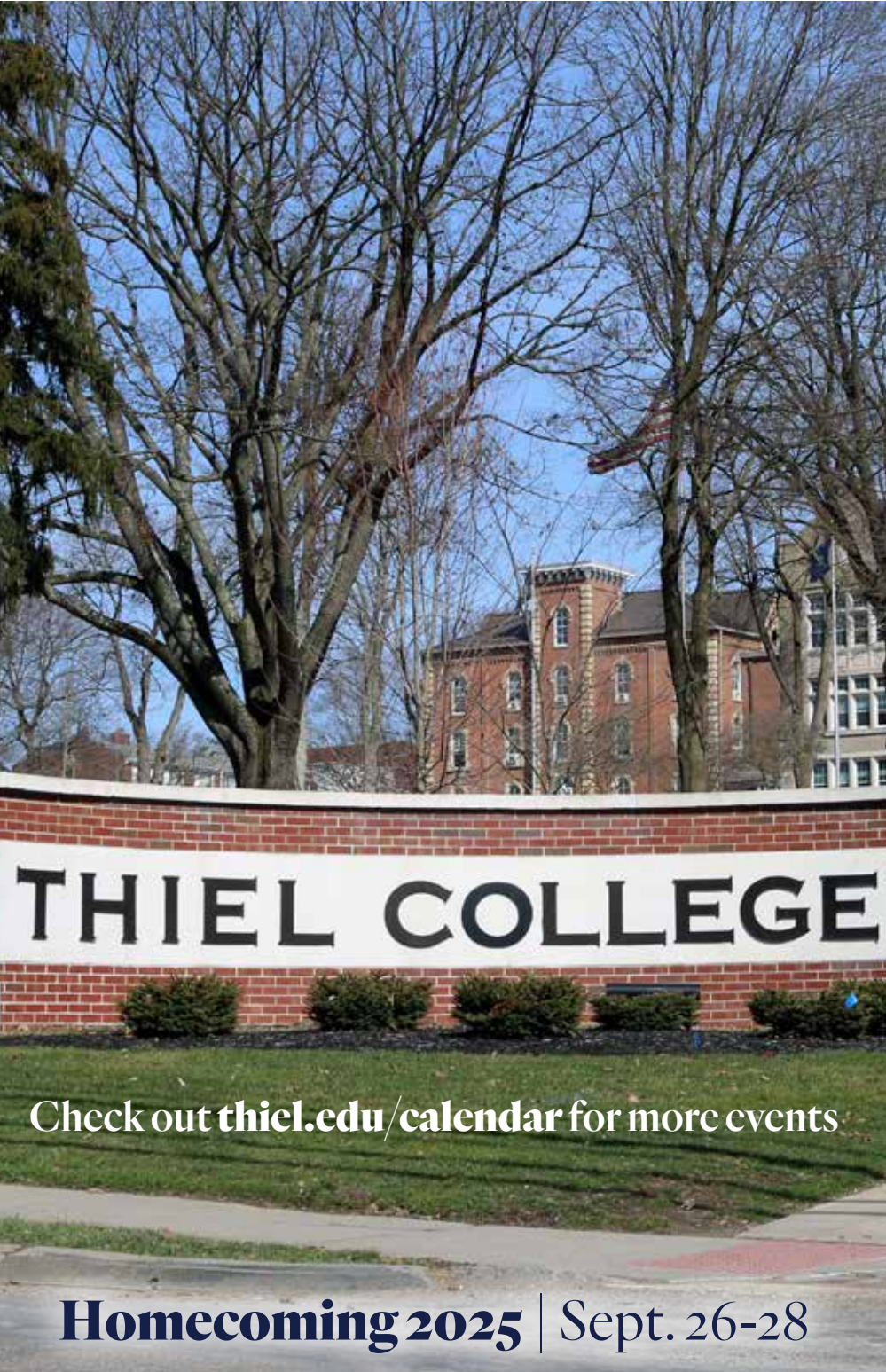


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Homecoming 2025 | Sept. 26-28

Save the Date

Upcoming Events

Thursday, December 5
71st Annual Christmas Festival

December 3 & 7
Band Concerts

Thursday, February 6
Founders' Day Celebration

Friday, February 21
Academic Honors Convocation

April 4-5, 11-12
Theater Performance

Thursday, April 24
Scholarship & Arts Symposium

Saturday, May 10
151st Commencement Exercises