

2024

Founders' Day



THIEL[™]
COLLEGE

Founders' Day Convocation

11 a.m. Thursday, February 1, 2024

Lutheran Heritage Room, Howard Miller Student Center

PRELUDE

Ralph Holtzhauser, *Pianist*

*PROCESSIONAL

*PLACING OF COLLEGE MACE Jared Johnson, Ph.D.
Faculty Marshall, Professor of English

*OPENING PRAYER..... Pastor Brian Riddle '07
Campus Pastor

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Rod E. Wilt '86
Chair of the Board of Trustees

WELCOME..... Susan Traverso, Ph.D.
President

CHORAL MUSIC

Bonse Aba (*arr. Victor C. Johnson*) Thiel Choir
I Sing Because I'm Happy (*arr. Rollo Dilworth*) Thiel Choir
Brianna Samson, *Director of Choral Activities;*
Ralph Holtzhauser, *Pianist*

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL STAFF AWARDS

Greg Q. Butcher, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the College
Richard T. Orr
Vice President for Communications and Marketing
Amy Arbogast
Vice President for Finance and Administration

Distinguished Staff Award..... Olivia 'Libbi' Brown
Admissions Counselor, Career Development Center Liaison

Distinguished Staff Award..... Dominick A. DiRienzo M.A.'22
Director of Communications and Marketing

Distinguished Staff Award..... Jacob Frantz '23 MBA'25
Solution Center Support Specialist

Distinguished Staff Award..... Stacy Gerber
Facilities Office Coordinator

Distinguished Staff Award..... Michelene Orteza
Cataloging & Reference Librarian,
Interim Director of the Langenbeim Memorial Library

PRESENTATION OF SPECIAL FACULTY AWARDS

Greg Butcher, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dean of the College

Distinguished Adjunct John Morettini '94

Adjunct Professor of Environmental Science

Distinguished Scholar Christopher Morgan, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Distinguished Service Mary Beth Mason, Ph.D.

Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders

SLP Program Director, Department Chair

Distinguished Teacher Gregory Kingston, Ed.D.

Assistant Professor of Exercise Science

Distinguished Professor Marie Courtemanche, Ph.D.

Professor of Political Science, Department Chair

PRESENTATION OF THE LOUIS AND BARBARA THIEL DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

President Traverso

Barry Oman '74 & Linda (Dean) Oman '75

An honor bestowed in recognition of
advocacy of the region, College & students.

***HAIL ALMA MATER.....** *Led by Thiel College Choir*

Music by Friedrich F. Flemming
and lyrics by E. Grace Hunton 1900

Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter, on thy hill en-thro-ned. Firm as a moun-tain, may'st thou stand en-dur-ing.
Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter, may thy torch for-ev-er. Shed light re-splen-dent for thy God and coun-try.
Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter, we thy children pledge thee. Here our de-vo-tion, loy-al, true, and ten-der.

Fair as the val-ley of thine own She-nan-go. Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter.
Send the flame on-ward to all gen-er-a-tions. Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter.
Thee will we cher-ish, praise thy name for-ev-er. Hail, Al-ma Ma-ter.

rit. on verse 3

***CLOSING PRAYER.....** Pastor Riddle
POSTLUDE

Ralph Holtzhauser, *Pianist*

***AUDIENCE WILL PLEASE RISE IF ABLE.**

The Louis and Barbara Thiel Distinguished Service Award is presented annually to community members who demonstrate exemplary character, continuity of leadership and long-term service to Greenville and its environs. The recipients must demonstrate a commitment to the common good above private interests. The award is named after Louis and Barbara Thiel, whose generosity made the founding of Thiel College possible in 1866. The Thiels dedicated themselves to the welfare of others. The German couple immigrated to western Pennsylvania in the 1840s, and as their work was blessed with success, they faithfully served family, community, and the church.

Barry Oman '74 & Linda (Dean) Oman '75



Linda (Dean) '75 and **Barry Oman '74** are two alumni who live the mission of Thiel College; as individuals and as a couple, they have made a difference in the world. Linda's care for her students is legendary. Numerous graduates of Jamestown Elementary School have stories about how Mrs. Oman changed their lives. Barry's work in his industry, most notably for the Werner Ladder Corporation and continuing today in his role at TC Consulting, creates an impressive professional resume. Their professional work is just a small part of the impact that this dynamic team has made on this region.



Thiel is blessed that a part of the story of Barry and Linda began here. In 1971, Linda came to Thiel College and continued her basketball career. As a sophomore, she contributed to the team's third undefeated season. Linda was a four-year letter winner and became the leading rebounder her senior year. She was inducted into Thiel's Athletics Hall of Fame in 1992.

While at Thiel, she met Barry. He was a four-year letter winner and a three-year starter at defensive back for the football team. Barry is third on Thiel's career list in interceptions (13) and also a 2006 inductee into the Thiel Athletics Hall of Fame.

Their connection to Thiel College did not end at graduation. Linda and Barry are two very familiar faces around campus. Their support of Thiel includes generosity of time, treasure, talents and service.

Barry has been a member of the Board of Trustees, a Blue-Gold Club committee member and a volunteer football coach. Linda was a former member of the Thiel Women's Club. She is a member of the Hall of Fame Committee. They regularly attend athletic events and have spoken to teams. Linda was a co-chair of the recent celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Title IX. Most recently, they have come back and spoken to the women's basketball team.

Both today's recipients have a passion for this region that extends beyond the borders of campus. The Greenville Area School District Education Foundation, Restore Riverside Park, Rotary Club of Greenville, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Relay for Life, Greenville Little League and Greenville Public Library Board have all benefited from the Omans' involvement.

They live in Jamestown, Pa. and have two adult children: a son, **Ryan**, and his wife, **Erin**, and their sons **Drew** and **Ben**; and a daughter, **Lauren** and her son, **Bryson**.

Olivia 'Libbi' Brown



Although she started in 2022, **Olivia "Libbi" Brown's** lasting impact can already be seen from her role in getting Simon's Closet open to collaborating with Information Technology on the switch to the internship and student-employment platform, Handshake, to flexibility in serving as both a liaison for the

Career Development Center and a counselor for the Office of Admission. She is married to **Anthony Brown**, and they have a daughter, **Madi**, 7. The family lives in Greenville, Pa.

She has an associate degree in business administration from Butler County Community College and graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science from Franklin University in 2021. She was executive director of the Shenango Valley Chamber of Commerce for a year and a half. She is involved with the Greenville Elementary PTO, Relay for Life and the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling. In her spare time, she supports the Cleveland Browns and Pittsburgh Penguins and enjoys camping and riding their side-by-side utility vehicle. She is grateful to the Director of the Career Development Center, **Liza Schaeff**, for the opportunity to work at Thiel.

Dominick A. DiRienzo M.A.'22



Dominick DiRienzo M.A.'22 is the Director of Communications and Marketing. He has been with Thiel College since April 2014. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree in communications from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and earned a Master of Arts in communication and leadership

from Thiel College in 2022. He began as Assistant Director of Communications and Marketing and was promoted to Director in 2022.

DiRienzo has volunteered with several youth sports organizations in the Meadville area including Meadville lacrosse, Crawford County Youth Hockey Association, Meadville Area Youth Baseball and Softball and Crawford County Youth Soccer Association. He lives in Meadville, Pa. with his wife, **Aubrey Minnis**. Their son, **Luca DiRienzo '27**, is in his first year at Thiel College. Their adult daughter, **McKenna DiRienzo**, lives and works in Pittsburgh. Although he is slow-footed and prone to commit many fouls and turnovers, he remains an avid participant in Thiel College's noon hoops program.

Jacob Frantz '23 MBA'25



Since coming to Thiel in 2019 as a student, **Jacob Frantz '23 MBA'25** has become a familiar face and a vital source of assistance for those needing tech help. He started working in IT the same year he started at Thiel and graduated in 2023 with double majors in computer science and information

systems. He is working on his MBA at Thiel and is set to graduate in the summer of 2025 while also serving the campus as a solution center support specialist. His nomination letter said Frantz “manages every piece of user technology on Thiel’s campus through the Solution Center. Jake’s job currently involves managing the Thiel Solution Center, student employees, computers and other forms of educational software. Jake has truly been the most vital component of the Solution Center during my time here. His passion for problem-solving and helping people embody the Thiel Tomcat Way and enhances the strength of the Thiel Strategic Plan.”

In his off time, his interests include computers, computer games and cybersecurity. His mother is Professor of Chemistry Emeritus **Kathryn Frantz, Ph.D.** and his father is **Raymond Frantz.**

Stacy Gerber



Stacy Gerber joined Thiel College in 2022 and is the facilities office coordinator.

She has been married to **Neil Gerber** for 22 years, and they have two children, **Garrett, 20**, and **Elaina '27, 17**. Gerber lives in Atlantic, Pa. Before coming to Thiel College, Gerber worked at Allegheny College for four years and was the office manager at the Meadville branch of Trumbull Industries, a wholesale plumbing distributor.

Her nomination letter said Gerber “goes above and beyond to support not only the facilities department, but also our students, staff, vendors, and community. Stacy is consistently a calm, professional, and helpful voice on the line to troubled students or staff as well as a smiling, inviting face” for visitors at the maintenance office. She volunteers with the children’s ministry for the Bethel Life Worship Center in Greenville. She advocates continuously for her son’s educational needs, and in her spare time, she enjoys kayaking, watching movies and caring for her family. Gerber is a believer in life-long learning and enjoys reading for both relaxation and educational reasons. She enjoys watching true crime and investigative shows.

Staff Awards

Michelene Orteza



Michelene Orteza is the cataloging and reference librarian and the Interim Director of the Langenheim Memorial Library. She has been with Thiel College since 2019. Her nomination letter said Orteza strengthens the College through “dedicated and quiet service.” She has worked to ensure accessibility to the library’s electronic resources, organized and displayed alumni and local author books and taken on several other important initiatives that connect the community to Langenheim Memorial Library. Orteza was a semantic indexer at Alexander Street/Pro Quest (2016-2019) and a librarian and textbook manager at Laurel Technical Institute (2010-2016) before coming to Thiel College. She is a member of the American Library Association and the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in music from West Virginia University and a Master of Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh. She has four adult children, **Silas, Dominic, Clarice** and **Frances**, as well as a daughter-in-law and a grandson. In her time away from work, she enjoys reading, playing the piano and gardening. She lives in Sharon, Pa. and is the music director at Christ Lutheran Church, Sharon.

Faculty Awards

Distinguished Adjunct John Morettini ’94



John Morettini '94 has taught as an adjunct for the Department of Environmental Science every other year since the spring of 2002. He earned a geology degree at Thiel in 1994. He has worked as a hydrogeologist for the Pa. Department of Environmental Protection for more than 20 years.

His nomination letter said, “He brings his real-world experience into the classroom, giving many examples and case studies. John works well with students and is dedicated to supporting them.” Morettini has been a licensed professional geologist in Pennsylvania since 2004. He was awarded a Master of Science in earth sciences from Emporia State University in 1999. Morettini lives in Meadville, Pa. with his wife, **Kristine**. Their daughter, **Kaitlyn '24**, is a senior conservation biology major at Thiel. He is an avid collector of vintage albums and retro video games.

Faculty Awards
Distinguished Scholar

Christopher Morgan, Ph.D.



Christopher Morgan, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Chemistry who joined Thiel in 2022. Over the past year, he authored/co-authored seven publications, including being the first author for the research of Streptothricin-F, which is a bactericidal antibiotic effective against highly drug-resistant gram-negative bacteria that interacts with the 30S subunit of the 70S ribosome. Completion of two of these projects was aided by a research computer purchased through a faculty development grant that was awarded to him during his first year at Thiel. Morgan was also a co-author on six other publications accepted for publication.

He is married to **Kayla Morgan**, and they have two children, **Luke**, 4, and **Elle**, 2. The family lives in Cortland, Ohio. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in chemistry from Youngstown State University in 2013 and a Ph.D. in chemistry from Case Western Reserve University in 2018. From 2018 to 2022 he was a post-doctoral scholar at Case Western Reserve University. He is a member of the American Chemical Society. In his spare time, he enjoys playing basketball, cooking and spending time with his family.

Faculty Awards
Distinguished Service

Mary Beth Mason, Ph.D.



Mary Beth Mason, Ph.D. is a Professor of Communication Sciences and Disorders, Speech-Language Pathology Program Director and Chair of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Mason was described as working “tirelessly to develop (Thiel’s) graduate program from the ground up, to ensure that the program was successful and that the program could attain accreditation earlier than expected.”

Mason lives in Edinboro, Pa. with her two children, **Ellie Baughman**, 17, and **Sam Baughman**, 14, and her boyfriend, **William E. Lemke**. Her mother is **Patty Mason**. She graduated from Clarion University with a Bachelor of Science in communication sciences and disorders in 2002 and a Master of Science in speech-language pathology in 2003. She earned a Ph.D. in speech-language pathology and a gerontology certificate from Kent State University in 2009. She was an associate professor, department chair and program director at Edinboro University from 2015 to 2019. She is a member of the American Speech-Language Hearing Association and the Pennsylvania Speech-Language Hearing Association. In the summer, she spends time at their cottage and boating. She also fosters dogs and cats for various Erie County animal organizations.

Faculty Awards
Distinguished Teacher

Gregory Kingston, Ed.D.



With his leisure time pursuing athletic activities, it is unsurprising that Assistant Professor of Exercise Science **Greg Kingston, Ed.D.** was cited for his commitment to exercise science in his nomination letter. Kingston joined Thiel in 2019 and has “overseen the growth of Thiel’s exercise science major from just a few students to one

of the largest majors on campus.” Kingston teaches most of the exercise sciences courses offered and oversees internships and independent study students. He has also worked with Dietrich Honors Institute students on their senior thesis projects, as well as teaching an honors course.

He received a Bachelor of Science in kinesiology from Pennsylvania State University in 2000. He earned a Master of Science in exercise science from California University of Pennsylvania in 2008 and a Doctor of Education in kinesiology from the University of North Carolina Greensboro in 2019. Kingston is a member of the American College of Sports Medicine and the National Strength and Conditioning Association. He and his wife, **Nichole Kingston**, live in Slippery Rock, Pa. They have two children, **Grant** and **Charlotte**. He also volunteers for his children’s school activities. He enjoys camping with his family, visiting national parks, hunting and participating in endurance races.

Faculty Awards
Distinguished Professor of the Year

Marie Courtemanche, Ph.D.



Since she began teaching at Thiel College in 2014, Professor of Political Science and Department Chair **Marie Courtemanche, Ph.D.**, has established herself as an eminent researcher and publisher of political science scholarship as well as an important member of the faculty. Her nomination information

included the question, “In what area has Dr. Courtemanche not made impressive impacts?” She worked to make the service load among faculty more balanced and equitable, spending an enormous amount of time writing and editing drafts, and meeting with various groups across campus for feedback.

She researches political behavior, public policy, identity and mass communication. Courtemanche published a paper entitled, “Religious Social Identity, Religious Belief and Anti-Immigration Sentiment” in the *American Political Science Review*, along with peers. This paper led to an article she co-authored for *The Washington Post’s* opinion section. Courtemanche received a bachelor’s degree in political science and economics from the University of New Hampshire in 2001 and a master’s degree and doctorate in political science from Stony Brook University in 2006 and 2010. She resides in Hermitage, Pa., and enjoys traveling, cooking, baking and hiking.

*Previous Louis and Barbara Thiel
Distinguished Service Award Recipients*

Paul J. Miller '69 ~ 1990
The Hon. Roy W. Wilt '59 H'85 ~ 1991
Richard L. Werner, H'87 ~ 1992
Donna C. Winner, James E. Winner ~ 1993
Joseph M. Walton, D. Michael Walton, Joseph P. Walton ~ 1994
Dorothea E. Anderson ~ 1995
F. W. Knecht III ~ 1996
James E. Feeney ~ 1997
Joseph A. George ~ 1998
James Weller Jr. Family ~ 1999
Peter Mortensen H'05 ~ 2000
Dr. Robert Baker, Dr. John Scullin ~ 2002
Archie O. Wallace, Esq., Jeff A. Wallace, Daniel P. Wallace, Esq. ~ 2003
The Rev. Martin M. '66 and Sarah "Sally" (Fox) Roth '65 ~ 2005
Paul E. O'Brien ~ 2006
Robert D. Robbins and Cynthia A. Robbins ~ 2007
James D. Bittel Jr. '60 ~ 2008

Luther John Kuder '59 ~ 2009
Fred '65 and Jill (Shackett) Haer '66 ~ 2010
The Frangakis Family Foundation ~ 2011
John M. Hudson ~ 2012
Harvey H'15 and Uta Childs ~ 2013
Mark A. Nordenberg, Esq. '70 H'97 ~ 2014
Robert Olson, Ph.D. '60 H'09 ~ 2015
The Dietrich Foundation ~ 2016
John '71 and Nancy (Gibson) Hauser '75 ~ 2017
Tom Roberts and Michael P. Walton ~ 2018
Sen. Michele Brooks & Rep. Mark Longietti, J.D. ~ 2019
The Pittsburgh Promise ~ 2020
Brenda Wallace ~ 2021
Mary Reames ~ 2022
Rod E. Wilt '86 ~ 2023

For lists of previous Distinguished Staff Award and Faculty Award recipients, go to www.thiel.edu/foundersday.



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