LUTHER COLLEGE
CLASS OF 1966
50th Anniversary Celebration

Homecoming 2016
September 30-October 2
TO LUTHER

To Luther let us sing
A joyous song of love and cheer,
May our voices loudly ring
In praise of Alma Mater dear.

Thy mem’ry dear we’ll cherish
And ever recollect thy care.
That thy fame may never perish
Is the burden of our prayer.

Our hearts are light and free
Whene’er we to Old Luther sing;
May she now and ever be
Faithful to our Heavenly King!

Chorus
May our thoughts to thee oft turn
When we’re absent far away
May we then sincerely yearn
To return to thee some day.

Tune: “There’s Music in the Air”

“PRI SEC”

Pri-sec-ter-qua
Hoopla! Boomla!
We yell Luther
Zip! Bang! Rah! Rah!

FIELD SONG

Our team goes in to fight and win,
The spirit of old drives them on.
With a “Pri Sec” shout
We all come out
To yell for Luther who wins today.
And Luther’s team is strong;
They fight as long
As victory hangs in doubt,
Opponents fall
‘Fore Luther’s wall,
All hail to our College dear!
After graduation I taught first grade in Rochester, New York (my hometown). I married a teacher I met my first day of teaching. I had taught for nine years when our son was born. After four years of staying at home, I started substituting in the lower grades and did so until three years ago. I have been very involved with our church—serving on a variety of committees. Other volunteer work also occupies some of my time. I enjoy reading, knitting, and playing at/with calligraphy. Interesting enough, our son and his wife now live in Madison, Wisc.

Fond memories of Luther include:

- Dorm meetings, floor meetings, and singing, *Jesus, Tender Shepherd*.
- S’mores being sold on the dorm floors.
- “Lights out” our freshman year and beanies.
- Three people in a room designed for two.
- Painting pictures on the dorm windows at Christmas.
- Required wearing skirts at -20 degrees F.
- Having to sign in and out of the dorm at night.
- “Man on floor!” being yelled.
- One telephone for the entire floor of girls.
- Sunbathing on the bottom of the empty swimming pool.
- Dear Dr. Strand.
- Saturday morning classes and required chapel in Valders basement.
- The long line walking to the field house in our caps and gowns on a sunny Sunday in May 1966.
Attending Luther College was a wonderful experience—many great memories that I cherish. Sometimes I wish that I had applied myself better as a student, but my life probably would not have turned out like it did.

Instead of medical school, I taught science in West Des Moines, Iowa. At this time, my sister introduced me to my sweet wife of almost 50 years. We have four children and thirteen grandchildren. After teaching for six years, I became a consultant for the State Department in Veteran’s Education for about six years. I then bought a business in Branson, Missouri, and taught and coached there for about six years. Then I became a pharmaceutical specialist for about 30 years and retired to Arizona in 2009.

I committed my life to Jesus Christ when I was 26 years old and He made all the difference in my life and my family’s lives. My children and grandchildren are all Christians. Two of my children are in full-time Christian service (a pastor and a missionary).

I am very blessed and all of my family is successful in their lives.
Ken Belanger

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My time at Luther was a very special time in my life. The beautiful setting on the Upper Iowa River and all the wonderful people at Luther made it special. Many of my fond memories involve participating in football and track and all of the great friends I made. Probably the best teacher I had at Luther was Dr. Roger Anderson, an education professor. The most “interesting” professor I had was Dr. Rebasso, one of my math professors. I think everyone that ever took one of Dr. Rebasso's classes has numerous interesting stories to tell.

In the fall of 1966, I was hired as a math teacher and head football coach at Zumbrota (later Zumbrota-Mazeppa) High School in Zumbrota, Minn. I held that position until December 2000, when I retired. I was then hired as the head football coach at Frederic High School in Frederic, Wis., and have been the coach there for the past 16 years. I am retired from teaching, but still do a lot of substitute teaching at Frederic.

Karen and I were married in August 1965 and spent our first year together in the old barracks. We have three children, Ken Jr, Stacie, and Jeremy, and they all graduated from Luther. Karen and I enjoy traveling and spend part of the winter in Florida.

I encourage the Luther students to cherish every minute of their college experience.
Over the past 50 years Luther’s impact on me?
Vast. Luther gave me, as a Chicago working class kid and the first in the family to go to college, a liberalizing education, a brace of professors who remain lodestars, a first experience living outside the U.S., a company of life-long friends, an exemplary first workplace, a standard to follow as teacher and administrator, and a good, patient, interesting wife.

Favorite Luther memories:
My favorite memory dates from 1995, thirty years after graduating. I found myself sitting with our younger daughter (Cordelia was no sweeter) at the Guthrie Theater as King Lear unraveled. Several rows below sat most of the English faculty who’d taught me: Professors Bale, Hull Mohr, Mohr, and Nelson (Jones and Paulson had died). I realized the dedication and faith they and all my other teachers—Bunge, Christenson, Cole, Jensen, Johnson, Leland, Linnell, Mostrom, Qualley—showed trying mightily to get me and classmates to think about ideas as big as those in Lear. They believed somehow we’d eventually understand such ideas fully and be strengthened by them.

Even though this memory is the most compelling, others come to mind of:
• classmates who introduced me to rural and small town life, to their unpretentious intellectual curiosity, and to civil rights and anti-war issues;
• Tri Omega members who offered serious friendships in an unconstraining, light-hearted fellowship;
• Hothorpe Hall associations with same-age Europeans, with refugees in England, and with Brits for whom WWII spelled loss of empire; and
• Upward Bound staff’s intensive efforts to acquaint bright kids from impoverished families with higher ed.

Worklife:
I’ve had more of a careen than a career. I retired as associate director of the American Swedish Institute (ASI) in July 2009 after serving in that capacity since April 2004. I have also worked as vice-president of administration for a software company, a grants consultant to a regional health care company, and, for thirty years, a higher education administrator and faculty member, most recently at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, from which I received a Ph.D. in American Studies.

After graduation, without planning or effort, I received draft deferments for both two years of grad study at the University of Kansas and the next four years teaching in and administering Luther’s Upward Bound Program. By 1971, my draft board was calling younger men. I was fortunate to be deferred from destructive national service. Nonetheless, I’m grateful both to those who did serve and to those who actively resisted. It was puzzling and troubling until the war’s end in 1975.
Immediate Family:
My wife, Margareta, is a native of Sweden who became a U.S. citizen in 2004. We married in 1970 after meeting while she was in Luther’s 1966 summer institute for Nordic educators. Margareta taught elementary, special education, and reading classes in both Sweden and the U.S. In 1976, we birthed a daughter, Kerstin, in Sweden and in 1980 a second daughter, Emma, in Saint Paul, Minn. Kerstin, her French husband, and their two sons, six and two, live in Minneapolis; Emma and her husband, originally from Seattle, live in Stockholm, Sweden, where their first child was born this morning as I write this.

Retirement and Travel:
Since retiring, Margareta and I are busy. She guides at ASI, participates in the American Association of University Women and two Swedish women’s organizations, and paints watercolors for exhibition and sale. I retired from ASI to join a Swedish filmmaker with whom I’ve made four films on Nordic America in the Upper Midwest. I’m currently on the board of the Swedish American Historical Society, tutor at the neighborhood middle school, and respond eagerly to calls when grandsons are sick or their schools are closed. We enjoy traveling and have done so in North America and throughout Eastern and Western Europe as well as in Chile, Egypt, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. We’d hoped to visit one of my old Luther roomies, Tom Tlou, in Botswana, but he died in 2010 before we managed. Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, the Faroes, and the Shetlands are all on our list for the future.

Advice for Current Luther Students:
Study and experience widely to see the good you can hope to do with your unique gifts, honed by your time at Luther. What makes our journey a pilgrimage rather than mere wandering is the goal of hoping to do the good that each of us can do uniquely and that meets a real need in the world. Hoping to do good authentically is as close as I know to the only practical vocation, the only calling that works life-long.
Susan (Jones) Bigalk

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My husband and I live in rural Harmony, Minn., where we are both retired. We do spend our winter in Goodyear, Ariz. Our two sons, Thomas and Hugh, and their families reside in Rosemount, Minn., and Goodyear, Ariz., respectively.

Following graduation from Luther, I began my lifelong career as an elementary music teacher (K-6) in the Albert Lea, Preston, and Harmony, Minn. school districts. I continue to serve as organist/pianist in our church.
Lois (Tangjerd) Bishop

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With the solid academic education I received at Luther, I was able to have a fantastic career! From teaching English for several years, I earned my masters and doctorate (University of Puget Sound and Seattle University) and became a High School Principal in the USA and five overseas International Schools—Peru, Mexico, Morocco, Uruguay, and Bahrain. I retired in 2014 from school administration—now I am living stress-free!

I am married with two stepchildren, and I have hiked, bicycled, and traveled throughout Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, Iceland, most European countries, and many Middle East countries.

A memory that stands out to me during my time at Luther includes my sophomore American Literature class when President Kennedy was killed. My advice to Luther students—dream big. You have a huge responsibility to impact our country!
The years since Luther have been filled with many blessings, wonderful experiences, and much happiness. In August, following graduation, I was fortunate to marry my lifelong bride, Dana Nelson ’65.

Next came a six-year service in the United States Navy Security Command—which was a privilege.

Education beyond Luther includes a graduate degree from Winona State University and a graduate degree from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Dana and I have been blessed with three absolutely fantastic children; Lisa (’92), Brian (’96), and his wife, Shannon Boyd (’96), and Laura (’98). They have given us seven wonderful grandchildren—perhaps carrying on the family Luther tradition. (See the “Luther Blue” in the Spring 2016 Luther Alumni Magazine, page 35.)

After serving in education for 35 years, I as a high school administrator and Dana as an elementary/secondary teacher, retired in 2006 and moved to Rochester, Minn.

Our children and grandchildren are geographically close enough for frequent visits. We can help out when needed and enjoy family fun with children and grandchildren.

Our “getaway” destination is a short distance away in Wisc. We thoroughly enjoy going there for boating, relaxation, hunting, and occasional “do nothing” time.

We are grateful, and often mindful, of the moral standards reinforced while at Luther (along with a solid education). Our time at Luther has given us very dear, lifelong friends enduring over fifty years.

For me, for Dana, and for our children, the memories of our times spent at Luther, the preparation for successful careers, preparing to face life’s challenges, and the enduring friendships gained at Luther are “priceless.”
**John B. Bodensteiner**

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My mother was a teacher at Luther so my brother and I both went to school tuition-free and then both went on to medical school. My older brother, Joe, is a general and vascular surgeon who retired in October of 2012. He practiced in Rhinelander, Wis., his entire career.

After I graduated from Luther College, I attended the University of Iowa (MD, ’71). Then my training included Internship and Pediatric residency at LACUSCMC (Los Angeles Children’s Hospital), Neurology and Pediatric Neurology at the University of Iowa, and a Clinical Neuromuscular Disease Fellowship at the Mayo Clinic.

I have been in academic medicine since and my faculty positions have included UTMB (University of Texas Medical Branch), University of Oklahoma, West Virginia University, Indiana University, and the William Pilcher Chair of Pediatric Neurology at the Children’s Health Center & Barrow Neurological Institute in Phoenix. Currently I am a consultant at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

I have been active in the politics of Child Neurology, having served as President of the Child Neurology Society, (2006-07), the Professors of Child Neurology (President 1995-96), Southern Pediatric Neurology Society (President 1988-90, 1998-2000), and Director of the American Board of Neurology and Psychiatry (2014-present).

I have contributed more than 450 papers, abstracts, chapters reviews, and commentaries to the literature covering a variety of subjects related to clinical aspects of Pediatric Neurology and served on the editorial board of several journals, as Senior Associate Editor of the Journal of Child Neurology and the Founding Editor of Seminars in Pediatric Neurology.

I have been married to Donna Berge Bodensteiner for 49 years now. She is a Decorah girl and we were high school sweethearts. We have two children and four grandchildren. Peter, our son, lives in North St. Paul and has three girls ages 10 (Adele) and two age 7 (Ilse and Hattie). Beth, our daughter, lives in Casa Grande, AZ, and has a five year old son (Ian).

We did a sabbatical in Mainz, took the family to Scandinavia, and lectured in Berlin, Santorini, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, and Australia. I also have visited most major cities in the US, giving board examinations and attending meetings.

The advice I would give to Luther students would be to consider the time at Luther as the beginning, not the goal, and that life is too short to do something you are not passionate about.
A classics major, as I was at Luther, would be the ultimate impractical degree today, at least in the opinion of some reformers. I was never sorry, however, that I chose that route. Not only was I able to teach Greek three times as a Luther Seminary student, but in my work as a pastor, reading the Gospel text in Greek became an intrinsic part of my weekly sermon preparation. Dr. O. W. Qualley demanded the best from us, of course, requiring us to be fully awake for the 8:00 a.m. class and leaving memories that endure. One morning he stormed out of the classroom, upset that we were not prepared. We sat there stunned. After we recovered and mulled “what next,” I drew the short straw, sucked in my breath, and knocked on his office door. I explained that we were so poorly prepared because he was one full lesson ahead of us! This explanation he accepted quite matter-of-factly. The next day he strode into our class, opened the text, and resumed as if nothing had happened.

I became a Lutheran pastor and served congregations in Wisconsin and Iowa for 38 years before my retirement seven years ago. One of those places was First Lutheran in Decorah, where Luther College staff and faculty members were gracious parishioners and wonderful ministry partners. Among them was my “old” Professor Qualley whom, after two years, I finally managed to address as “Pip” at his request.

The Wisconsin congregations I served were in South Wayne, Elroy, Mauston, and Holmen. There, Mary and I raised our three sons, although all three graduated from high school in Mauston. Mark works for Alum-Line in Cresco, Iowa; Erik is a graphic designer for Marshfield Clinic, Marshfield, Wis.; and Michael teaches technology education in Mauston High School. Mark and Erik are married, and we have six grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

Mary and I have already spent seven winters renting a condo in Englewood, Fla. In addition to occasional supply preaching, I have enjoyed woodworking, genealogical research, writing, and presenting Norwegian-American heritage programs these past few years. I also confess I read too many mysteries.
Luther College has always held a special and important place in my life, first and foremost as that is where I met my future husband—Glenn and I will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary next year.

There was a real emphasis on “faith and learning” while we were at Luther—but I feel it offered us even more than that. There were life-long friendships formed and a feeling of “connectedness” that exists even 50 years later. Whenever we turn on Locust Road and head to Decorah, there’s a feeling of “coming home.”

With Glenn being a pastor, we’ve moved a number of times, and I’ve had to “re-invent” myself quite often. I’ve worked for the national offices of the American Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, in the office of Church Relations at Luther, as a social worker in a nursing home, and then as a special education assistant in two different school districts in Wisconsin.

Glenn has told you about our family and retirement. The only thing I’d add is that we were able to enjoy a wonderful trip to Norway in 2001 and the winters we spend in Florida are something I really cherish.
I was a teacher in Beacon City School System for 36 years, teaching third and fourth grades. Since retirement, I have been volunteering with an organization called Puppies Behind Bars. PBB is a non-profit which trains prison inmates to raise service dogs for wounded war veterans and explosive detection dogs for law enforcement. I enjoy very much this worthwhile experience. My husband Jerry and I have three children, Amy, James, and Erin, as well as two grandsons, Chase and Brody, all of whom live in the area. We thoroughly enjoy having our children and grandchildren living so close to us.
Paul W. Davis

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After graduation from Luther, I attended Michigan State University to receive a master’s degree in mathematics. I appreciated Luther's Dr. Herbert Rebasso's instruction in my studies at Michigan State. It was at Michigan State that I met my future wife, Christine Wengert. After our marriage and receiving my master’s degree in the spring of 1968, we moved to southern California for a job in the aerospace industry. I worked for McDonnell Douglas for two years in mission planning and software development for satellite launch vehicles. I continued my profession in the aerospace industry at TRW Systems, which merged with Northrop Grumman, until I retired in 2009. My assignments included software development and systems engineering for ballistic missile systems, command and control centers, and satellite ground stations. My assignments included process improvement and six sigma quality improvement instruction at Northrop Grumman. I found that I enjoyed adult instruction and became an instructor on a part-time basis for the California Institute of Technology in their Industrial Relations program, which I have continued in retirement—teaching systems engineering and project management.

My wife, Christine, has master's degrees in elementary education and counseling. After our two children, Daniel and Amy, left home, Christine worked for the Los Angeles Unified School District at an inner-city elementary school counseling students. She loved her work and saw it as an opportunity to apply her Christian faith in her daily work. We have six grandchildren. Our son, Daniel, and his family live in Fallbrook, Cali., and our daughter, Amy, and her family live in New Berlin, Wis., a suburb of Milwaukee. Daniel is an emergency medicine MD and works in ER hospitals and performs advanced resuscitation training for emergency medical personnel. Amy operates a cottage business called, “A Doll Like Me,” which makes custom dolls for limb difference children.
Judith Ann (Labus) Engebretson

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I taught English at Palatine High School (Ill.) for five years and middle school for 30 years—retired now. My greatest pleasure was teaching English and History to gifted students (7th and 8th grades for two years each). I was able to design my own two-year program and included many of my travels when introducing large sections of American History. I’ve traveled to over 90 countries covering most of Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and ten African countries. I served on the old Illinois Synod, especially on fact-finding trips to South Africa, Namibia, and most of Central America. I also served six years on the national ELCA Board of Outreach. Currently, I’m serving on the candidacy committee for the Northern Illinois Synod.

My time at Luther College provided me with excellent background for my future endeavors.
Luther has influenced every part of my life, as I have been actively involved in music ever since. Playing in the Luther College Concert Band under Weston Noble, band tours, and singing and playing in Messiah are all special memories of Luther.

Our family includes my husband Dick, our daughters Kim (Janne) Flisrand and Kirsten Flisrand Larson, plus a granddaughter, Kendra. Both our daughters are Luther grads.

I taught in Luverne, Minn., for four years then moved to the Willmar, Minn., area where I taught woodwind lessons. Now in Austin, long-term subbing, teaching woodwind lessons, and directing church choirs (20 years) have taken up my time.

For the past 35 years, handbells have become a major interest, including having served on the Area 7 Handbell Musicians of America board for 15 years. Currently, I am directing a community bell choir and at two churches. Playing in the Austin Symphony and Community Band, as well as teaching clarinet through MacPhail, keep me occupied.

“Follow your dreams.” This has led to opportunities and travel far beyond my wildest dreams.
John Gatzlaff

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Avoided/delayed the draft by going to the University of Iowa, where I earned an MBA by August 1967.

Joined the US Navy as a Supply Corps Officer and served aboard the USS Winston in the Pacific off the coast of Da Nang, and on a small Naval Facility on the island of Eleuthera, Bahamas.

Started a banking career in 1971 that lasted 25 years at US Bank, and 11 years at various subsidiaries of Bank of America. Most of my banking career was focused on Middle Market Commercial Lending.


Currently working part-time with retiring executives and business owners in the process of selling their businesses. Essentially helping wealth individuals, and their families, organize and prepare for their next chapter in life.

Married in 1974 to Jeanne (42 years and counting) and have three children and four grandchildren. “YOUR NET WORTH WILL BE IN YOUR CHILDREN.” We spend one month in Mexico each winter split between Puerto Vallarta and Cabo San Lucas.

Enjoy sailing, wind surfing, biking, Nordic skiing, Canadian fly-in fishing, and golf.

Volunteer at Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity on the Finance Committee where we “make decent, affordable shelter for all people a matter of conscience.”

Advice: KEEP ON LEARNING!!!
Mary (Loken) Haas

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The years I was at Luther were great; they helped to prepare me well for both my teaching career and life in general, while having many fun experiences with friends along the way. My 1965 International Summer School in Oslo and fall (working, traveling, and visiting relatives) through the New Year holidays in Norway, were also very exciting and added immensely to my Luther education before returning for my spring semester and graduation.

Dr. Helen Strand was a great steady influence throughout my “Elementary Education Program” and Dr. Knut Gunderson was, for three years, my very special “Norwegian” teacher. Each gave me lasting memories. It was so much fun to be able to visit with Dr. Gunderson and his family in Norway a couple times and Dr. Strand at the age of 102 in Minnesota. Also, participating annually in Messiah with Weston Noble was always a highlight.

Following Luther, I taught first grade for one year in Burnsville, Minn., then first grade for one year in Richmond, Cali., before settling in Stockton, Cali., where I continued teaching first grade for four years before taking a break for 12 years to raise our family. Thereafter I helped at our daughters' preschool for three years and their primary classrooms; then returned to teaching first grade and kindergarten full-time for 17 years. The first year back, however, I had the life affecting experience of having my best student (a Hmong) die in my arms when the tragic Cleveland School shooting occurred here in Stockton in January 1989. Four others died and 29 were injured (five from my class) in addition to one of our teachers. Otherwise, helping all those young children learn was always great fun.

Susan Oare Henninger and her hubby, Rudy, connected me with my husband, Helm Haas, and we were married in June 1968. We had a very special boy who had cerebral palsy and made his heavenly journey home on Christmas day in 1976 at the age of 4 ½. He was loved dearly by many. Thereafter we were blessed with two healthy daughters who are now married, with Heidi, having two boys (ages 8 and 5) and Hildi, two girls (ages 5 and 2). We are so very thankful that they and their families are all doing well at work and play, not too far away.

We have lived in Stockton all these years and enjoyed trips around our beautiful country (all 50 states), Canada, Europe, and Scandinavia a number of times (always seeing relatives in Norway and Germany), and a special Christmas vacation trip to Australia and New Zealand.

Since retiring, we have so enjoyed our grandchildren, visiting with family and friends when possible, as well as taking some trips, and being busy around home.

Dr. Strand had an ABC rule for us students...Always Be Christian. Additionally, my personal advice to Luther students is to always: be conscientious...giving 100 percent while working hard, be kind/helpful to others, and most importantly, enjoy all of your loved ones while living life to the fullest!
Marsha Gwen (Gaarder) Hasseler

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My two major Luther College recollections are: first, wonderful Dr. Qualley, with his teaching and commitment to students and to his Lord, and secondly, Hothorpe Hall, where I spent six months.

It was a privilege to work under Dr. Qualley in his office, and a delight to make post-grad stops on High Street to visit him and his wife! I do regret now that I was not bold enough to begin to study Greek under him. That would have been so helpful in more study and having increased understanding of the Bible.

Hothorpe caused in me a desire to return to England to teach. Thus, my job applications were made on the East Coast. But WHS in Watertown, NY, offered not only my first job teaching Latin, but also an introduction to Robert Hasseler. We will have celebrated a 49-year marriage by Homecoming time. It was my career-privilege to be the primary influence in the lives of our four children until their college years. The oldest son is a writer. The two youngest have served the USA, and you, through military service; the other two have not enlisted, but been very active alongside our soldiers. Relationships developed through local Fort Drum are simply an amazing gift.

After my first young 18 years at home, Luther College was a strong second step with more growths over these 50 years.
Linda (Klees) Heeler

Spouse Name: Phillip Heeler

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After graduation from Luther, I taught fifth grade in the Chicago area. In 1967, Phillip and I moved to Norman, Oklahoma, where I taught fifth through eighth grade, as well as earned a master's degree from the University of Oklahoma.

In 1970 we moved to Carlinville, Ill., where I taught elementary education courses for ten years at Blackburn College. In 1981 we moved to Maryville, MO, where I taught at Northwest Missouri State University in the Education Department and the Horace Mann Laboratory School. For 34 years I trained teachers as they taught young students in my classroom. It was the best of both worlds: an elementary classroom, as well as teacher training. As I met with future teachers I often thought of my mentor, Dr. Helen Strand, and my training at Luther College and the Decorah Schools.

I am so grateful for my years at Luther. Luther gave me the opportunity to have a career and to realize my God-given potential for which I am eternally thankful.

Phillip and I have two children, Sylvester and Sonja. Sylvester lives in St. Joseph, MO, with his wife, Marla, and two daughters: Lily who is 18 and attending Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, MO, and Liza who is 15 and attending Central High School in St. Joseph. Our daughter, Sonja and Andres, her husband, both 1993 graduates of Luther live in Waseca, Minn. They have three children: Isaac who is a sophomore at Luther, Aubrey who is a freshman at Luther, and Brianna who is a sophomore at Waseca High School.

Last year Phillip and I retired to an acreage outside of Savannah, MO, where we garden, watch the sunsets, volunteer, and read all the books we have been collecting over the years.
Phillip Heeler

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After graduation, I earned master’s degrees from Northwestern University and the University of Oklahoma and a doctoral degree from the University of Illinois.

Starting in 1970, I taught mathematics and computer science at Blackburn College in Carlinville, Ill., for ten years and computer science at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, MO, for 35 years.

My favorite professors at Luther were Weston Noble, Dennis Barnaal, and Herbert Rebasso, who impressed upon me their dedication to their respective disciplines which I have attempted to follow in my career.

My wife, Linda, and I have a son in St. Joseph, MO, and a daughter in Waseca, Minn., and five grandchildren.

After retiring in 2015, we moved to a small acreage outside of St. Joseph, MO, where we have taken up flower gardening and restoring old farm tractors.
Susan (Oare) Henninger

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Rudy and I were married in August 1966 and moved to Berkeley, CA, where Rudy attended graduate school for his Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering. Our daughter, Amy, was born in San Francisco. Switzerland became our home from 1971-73, and then we moved to Illinois where our daughter, Becky, was born. In 1977 we moved to Los Alamos so that Rudy could work at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and this is where we have stayed. I taught first grade in California and then took 12 years off to be with our children. I returned to teaching and taught special education for eight years, finishing my career teaching mostly fourth grade.

Dr. Helen Strand was a huge influence on my life. My student teaching assignment was during Easter break and the student union was not open during this time, so Luther gave $75 for meals to those of us staying in town. Mary Loken and I thought we could save the money, and instead stocked up on food from the union in the days before the break. We stored our milk in our “refrigerator” (the window sill), and saved crackers. It wasn’t enough food to sustain me, and Dr. Strand found me nearly passed out outside of her office. After determining what I had done, she took me home to her house and fed me a full dinner of pork chops, gravy, corn, and salad. Dr. Strand also came to visit us when we lived in Switzerland. Because of her example, I have always had a special place in my heart for anyone struggling. Dr. Richard Simon Hanson was another favorite professor. He held an after-dinner work session for those of us who were doing poorly in his class and taught us how to study. That helped me ace the class in the end. Spending five weeks at Hothorpe Hall during the summer of 1965 was a life-changing experience.

One interesting coincidence was while we were living in Switzerland, staying with my German teacher and his family on his farm. When Harry saw my Luther sweatshirt he said, “I know about Luther College. I sent my former girlfriend there to teach French.” (Ms. Hubscher—my former French teacher). Then he proceeded to tell me how he had married her best friend while she was at Luther!

I have been extremely blessed in life after Luther. Our two daughters have grown into beautiful people with beloved families of their own. We are grandparents of five. Throughout the years we have had many adventures, including climbing many 14ers. We have traveled extensively and we love bringing friends to our cabin in the mountains in northern New Mexico, which is at 10,450 feet, and only accessible by snowmobile in the winter. My church and church family is big part of my life. Perhaps the most satisfying activities in retirement are teaching a 39-year-old man to read and a 90-year-old woman to swim.
Roger Allen & Luanne Kay (Mahlum) Hjelle

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Following graduation, Roger enrolled at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and Luanne then earned her PhT (putting hubby through) teaching first grade at St. Anthony Park Elementary, and Developmental Reading in the Whitehall, Wis., school district, where Roger interned.

Roger graduated from seminary in 1970, and served as Associate Pastor of the Ridgeway Lutheran Parish, (12 miles west of Decorah) from 1970-74. While there, he served on the District Youth Committee for three years. He accepted a call to Good Shepherd Lutheran, Viroqua, Wis., and served as Associate Pastor from 1974-84. In 1984 he was called to serve as Senior Pastor until 1998. During his time in the parish in Viroqua, he served on the District and Synod Communications committees, and also served on the Lutheran Campus Ministry Board of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, as well as serving as Dean of the South Conference. He also developed the first conference resource center in the ALC, and it continued to operate for 25 years. Receiving a degree in Educational Media from UW-La Crosse in 1980, he used this degree to produce a weekly radio program, as well as publish some written and audio/visual resources.

In 1998, he accepted the call to serve as Senior Pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran, La Crosse, a position he held until his retirement in May 2012.

In retirement, Roger has provided some pulpit supply, but the majority of his time is spent in his workshop, where he creates turning items for the 7-8 craft shows that they participate in during the summer and fall months in Minnesota, where they have a lake home, and Wisconsin.

Luanne taught while Roger was in seminary, and resumed teaching after our daughter started school. She taught in Viroqua, for 27 years as a Reading Teacher, a Title 1 Teacher, and as a First Grade, Multiage 1/2 grade, and K/1/2 teacher. She retired from teaching in 2005, and in retirement was involved as an interim director, and teacher in a Day Care run by Good Shepherd.

In her retirement Luanne not only assists at the craft shows, but is involved in her church circle and quilting group at Holmen Lutheran. She received a Jefferson Award for volunteer service for her time spent reading to Onalaska kindergarten students in two classes. A good deal of time is also spent with the eight grandchildren in three different states while parents go on trips. We also enjoy watching the track, cross country, hockey, cheer leading, basketball, soccer, and dance pursuits of the eight very active grandkids.

Over the 33 years that we have had our lake home, we have enjoyed having the grandchildren share their time and memories at the lake.
We have three children: Alan and his wife Michelle (both ’89 grads of Luther), live in Algona, Iowa, where Alan is a Family Practice MD. They have two children, Bo and Emma. Kurt and his wife Lynn, UW-La Crosse and UW-Eau Claire grads respectively., own and manage “Safe at Home Health Care” in Oswego, Ill., providing care and care providers to older persons, allowing them to stay in their own homes. They have three children: Maddie, Gavin, and Alaina. Anissa and her husband Josh, both graduates of UW - La Crosse, live in Owatonna, Minn., where Anissa is a kindergarten teacher, and Josh is a phy. ed. teacher, and head boys basketball coach. Their children are Kinzie, Brayden, and Leyton.
Wow! 50 years! Where have the years gone? So many memories and so many blessings to count! I've been fortunate enough to return to campus on a fairly regular basis and it's been great to see the changes on campus, as well as having an opportunity to visit with fellow classmates and former professors such as Weston Noble, Dr. Monhardt, Dr. Mostrom, and Dr. Bahe. Favorite memories include a harrowing ride with Dr. Qualley as he drove two of us to lunch at the Cliff House and a very enjoyable dinner and evening with Dr. Bart Butler and his wife. Game nights at the Kuhlman's with music faculty provided lots of laughs. Mr. Noble's band reunion weekend was amazing. They say you can't go back, but we all agreed that we did take a step back in time. The sound was magical and wonderful friendships were renewed. Also, the Luther ring is such a strong connector. Flying to New York City about 20 years ago found me seated next to a fairly recent Luther grad who sang in Nordic. We had such a nice visit and she was so helpful getting me safely on my way once we arrived at the airport. The feeling of family among Luther students and staff is such a strong bond.

My first job out of Luther was teaching Latin and Music Literature/Music Theory at a high school near Dallas. After four years teaching elementary music part-time in Minnesota and five years in central Wisconsin, we landed in Oconomowoc, Wis., my home for the past 40 years. During the first 15 years here I taught many piano lessons and had some outstanding flute students who helped me revive my playing skills. A divorce required me to re-evaluate my goals for life. I headed to graduate school and got my Master's in Library & Information Science. I found I loved being back in school and then began a 17-year career as a School Library Media Specialist. I've been retired from school for seven years now, but continue to use my skills as a part-time Reference Librarian at our local public library. I enjoy keeping my brain active and my tech skills up-to-date while helping patrons.

My children include Erik, who graduated Luther in 1990 (fourth-generation). After 30 years with the Dorian Summer Music Camps and 26 years as a fifth grade teacher he is very excited to be headed to Wartburg Seminary this fall. My son, Kurt, is a chemical engineer in Houston. Kurt has two children, but sadly I only get to see them about once a year. My daughter, Beth, lives here in Oconomowoc, so I'm lucky enough to spend lots of time with her and her two children. I need one of those “grandma's taxi” decals for the back of my car! But I really enjoy my time with them.

Retirement has provided more opportunities for travel. A highlight was the Luther Alumni trip to Norway in 2011. My college roommate, Janet Becker Swiston, and I had a great time. My music continues to be an important part of retirement. For the past 28 years I've enjoyed playing my flute in a very good community concert band. I'm also a member of a woodwind quintet. Ringing handbells at church and in an area group are also rewarding activities. I'm proud to be a Luther grad and I count Luther and my many experiences there as well as my Luther friends among my blessings. Soli Deo Gloria!
Priscilla (Fretheim) Jacobson

**Spouse Name:** Douglas Jacobson ’64

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Hello to all from Windom, Minn., where Doug and I have lived since 1966. We have raised two daughters and are now enjoying four grandchildren. I am retired from 35 years of teaching piano lessons and 20 years of serving as county RSVP coordinator.

I've always loved reading, playing piano, and being involved at our ALC church here. Now in retirement, I've added flower gardening, bridge playing, and a variety of volunteering. Doug and I traveled to Scandinavia in 2008. Every two years, I have a lot of fun when Luther Sunnysiders get together.

I look back on my years at Luther College with fondness. Luther is really my second home. Since my dad was a pastor who changed locations, I did not have a “hometown.” Windom is that for me now, but Luther is my other home. My grandfather and father were Luther grads, and Luther is where I met Doug and many friends. Doug and I have returned for almost all our reunions. Luther is where I feel welcome and comfortable. I continue to add more happy memories each time I return. Happy 50th everyone!
Davis & Shirley (Rovang) Johnson

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Enjoying rural Iowa life on a family farm near Decorah—our children and grandchildren live here also. We enjoy attending all their activities.
Mary (Halvorson) Juhl

**Spouse Name:**  John Juhl

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Patricia (Johnson) Kairis

Spouse Name:  Frank Kairis

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I taught in Minneapolis Public Schools for thirty-one years as a physical education instructor. I coached badminton for twelve years. I have a master’s degree from the University of Minnesota.

I married Frank in December of 1970. We have two adopted children from Korea. Both Erica and Kirk came to Luther and graduated in 1996 and 1998 respectively. They too had good experiences at Luther. They still see and enjoy their Luther friends.

I retired in 1997 and now enjoy my freedom to choose activities. Both Frank and I go to an exercise class three times a week. It includes stretching, weight training, and core training. We are also involved in square dancing. It’s really fun!

I hope the Luther experience will be as good for new students to Luther as it was for my family.
Roger & Eleanor (Bollis) Kittelson

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We met at Luther College and were married between our junior and senior years. We lived in the Chicago area from 1966-78; worked for Arthur Andersen & Co (CPAs), and have lived in Hudson, Ohio from 1978-present; served as the V.P., Treas., & CFO of Christian Healthcare Ministries, Inc. for the past 15 years. Daughters: Rachel ’89, Marcy ’91, Gretchen (Gustavus ’93), and granddaughter, Emily, is a freshman at Luther in 2016. We are planning on retirement in spring 2017 and moving back to Minnesota. Blessed by God!
Kenneth J. and Sue M. (Berg) Knutson

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Ken: Luther provided great preparation for seminary, especially in the classical languages—added great appreciation for classical music. (Weston Noble, Q. Pip Qualley, and Ruth Mostrom.) Some of my favorite Luther memories include Wolfgang Jon Wielgart and his fossils and Mr. Wessler and his counter-revolutionary comment in Russian History.

Sue: taught first grade for 12 years and loved it. I completed a master's degree in education from Western Kentucky University—then followed up with Suzuki Piano Teaching, taking 11 years of training, and continuing piano lessons with Dr. Jennifer Judd. I have a thriving piano studio and taught piano at East Central College in Union, Missouri, for ten years. My students have won many auditions and have been chosen for masterclasses with concert pianists. I appreciate Mr. Noble, my advisor, and the wonderful education I received at Luther.

Career path includes: parish pastor in Colman-Midway, South Dakota; parish pastor in Mt. Sterling-Utica, Wisc.; Chaplain in the U.S. Army; parish pastor at Peace Lutheran in Washington, Missouri; adjunct instructor in ethics and philosophy at East Central College. In retirement, I sold shoes at Kohls, taught at a community college, read a lot, and battle health issues.

We adopted five Native American children and had one physical birth. We are great grandparents twice already. We have lived in and traveled to many places—South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, New Jersey, Kentucky, Alabama, Missouri, and Germany. While in Europe, we visited Benelux, Italy, and Yugoslavia; Sue visited—England, Austria, Africa, China, Mongolia, and the Matterhorn. Ken visited—behind the wall in East Germany, Switzerland, and all fifty states. We have cruised to Cayman Islands, Jamaica, and Hawaii twice. We have done a paddle wheel tour of the Willamette, Snake and Columbia Rivers. Same on East Coast, from Acadia to Portsmouth, Alaska from Denali to Vancouver inside passage.

Advice to Luther students would be to take a full load, keep your grades up so you can take an extra course, and take something not in your normal track.
Connie Kronlokken

Spouse Name:  Don Starnes

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I’ve lived in California since 1969. I was the office manager for several big San Francisco architectural offices and also worked for a wine brokerage, where I did data management. My husband, Don Starnes, is a filmmaker and we partnered in this, and in raising his son, Jesse. These days I am working on a series of fiction books which detail the lives and loves of three siblings, which we are publishing under Lightly Held Books. I also work in our county library and have a writing lab for grade school kids. My Minnesota roots are strong, but I don’t visit often.
Carole (Winger) Lawrence

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Lowell Meyer

**Spouse Name:** Sharon Meyer

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- Dept. Chair 1980-98
- Assist. football, basketball, baseball coach 1966-85
- Retired 2001
- Married 1968 to Sharon O'Donnell
- Daughter Kerry born 1973
- Grandchildren: Avary 2008; Cuinn and Ansley 2010
Ann (Aaker) Naslund

**Spouse Name:**  Robert C. Naslund '65

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I taught kindergarten in Decorah for 34 years, and have been retired for 16 years. Bob and I have three children: Michael, Jennifer, and Laura—all are Luther graduates. We have nine grandchildren that keep us very busy. Bob retired from teaching and coaching after 49 years. We celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary with an Alaskan Cruise—such a beautiful part of the USA.
David J. Nesheim

Spouse Name: Tami (Merritt) Nesheim ’68
Address: 438 Vadnais Lake Drive, Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
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I married Tami Merritt in August 1966. We have two children, Robin and Christian, and three grandchildren. We have lived in the St. Paul suburbs and New Ulm, Minn. I served in the Army Reserve from 1966-72.

I began my working career at 3M in 1966, becoming a Divisional Purchasing Manager. I left 3M after 17 years and started a Manufacturers’ Representative Company, Nesheim and Associates.

Upon retirement, my son and I started Vinifera Wines and Ales, selling wines from around the world and emphasizing craft beers. This hobby has allowed my wife and me to travel to wine areas around the world since 1985.
John Norback

**Spouse Name:** Kathleen Ley

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After John completed an MS in Mathematics at University of Wisconsin-Madison, he taught at Marion College in Fond du Lac, Wis., for six years. He went back to UW to complete a Ph.D. in Operations Research and joined their Food Science Department as a professor. His research focused on the business problems of the food industry, especially food safety issues. John wrote software that was used around the world by businesses, educational institutions, and governments in English, French, Spanish, and Japanese. John also taught at universities in Tunisia, Bangladesh, Mexico, Uganda, and Japan. He retired in 2010.

John had three sons, Chris, Nate, and Seb. He married Kathleen Ley in 1993 and continued as a renaissance man who loved hunting, fishing, and gardening at his farm. With Kathy, he built a cottage in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan along the shores of Lake Superior. Art was an outlet for him, as he created with acrylics, encaustics on canvas, and layers in sculptures. He had gallery shows at UW Madison, Mineral Point, and Chicago.

Luther helped John become a constant learner. He valued the skills he acquired there. His son, Chris, also graduated from Luther. His nephew, Luke Forsberg, starts there in the fall.

After many years with Parkinson's Disease Dementia, John moved to memory care at Oakwood Village—Madison, Wis., in June 2016.
Duane Oyen

Spouse Name: Denay Oyen

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After I graduated in 1966, I went on to study economics at the University of Iowa, where I earned my M.A. degree in 1969 and then my Ph.D. in 1973. My life's work was teaching economics, first at the University of Dayton, and then for 31 years at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. If I had the chance to do it all over again, I would do exactly the same thing again. I loved teaching.

The most significant events in my personal life were, first, my marriage in 1968 to my first wife, Lynne, who I had met through Luther classmate, Gary Meyer; second, Lynne's death in 1998 at age 51; third, my marriage in 2004 to my second wife, Denay, who I met through Luther grad Dick Boyum. I have been incredibly lucky in love twice. Thanks to Denay, I have three wonderful stepdaughters and five very active (ages 7-12) grandsons.

My four years at Luther had a profound influence on my life. I made great friends, especially through the Pi Sig fraternity and the Luther wrestling team, where I was regularly beat up by Davis Johnson, Roger Kittelson, and Jerry Gipp, to name a few. I grew up on a farm just north of Decorah and when I started at Luther I knew that I liked learning, but I had no clear idea of where I was headed other than a vague idea of studying something related to business. The Luther faculty, especially Darrell Lewis, Ed Kaschins, Warren Berg, and Stan Lindquist gave me the guidance I needed. These faculty members knew me, took an interest in me, and encouraged me. Their efforts gave a much needed boost to my confidence. Lewis and Kaschins advised me to go to graduate school, which I did, and that eventually lead to me becoming a college professor.

Luther faculty members were the role models for my career. Even though I never taught at Luther, I always was a Luther prof. By that I mean that I tried to be the kind of teacher to my students that my Luther professors had been to me.

Luther College obviously is a religious institution so one would expect four years at Luther to influence one's thinking about religion and so it did. The best way I can explain this is to use the words of a Lutheran bishop. The bishop and I were talking about evolution or perhaps global warming—I forget the exact topic—and the bishop said, “You know, Duane, God doesn't ask you to check your brain at the door when you go to church.” I think that quote captures what I learned at Luther. Our knowledge of history, linguistics, archeology, biology, genetics, and other disciplines, plus our own God-given ability to think critically, play a role in what we believe.

I retired in 2007, but I seem very busy. How did I ever have time to work? My main hobbies are playing bridge, fishing, golfing, and running. I try to run the Eau Claire half marathon each May, but I am finding that every year, the run gets longer. Denay and I spend part of the winter
on Maui and we travel a bit. Our most recent trip was on a Viking River Cruise through Germany. Of course, a great deal of time, the best time, is spent with family.

As far as advice for current Luther students, I have a few thoughts. First, study abroad is the best educational experience you can have in college. If it is at all financially possible, spend a semester abroad. Second, when you start college, you do not have to have your college years planned in detail: just plan to excel. When you graduate, if you excel at thinking, speaking, writing, and understanding human behavior and have compiled a record of distinction at Luther College, there will be a place for you in the work world. Finally, an observation more than a piece of advice: fifty years go by very quickly.
Wayne Pederson

**Spouse Name:**  Roylene Pederson, *deceased 1997*

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Career Path—Education: Administrator, teacher, and coach; retired in 2005.

Family—Wife: Roylene—deceased 1997

- Son: Erik—works for BP
- Son: Roy—teacher/coach
- Daughter: Britta—works for JP Morgan Chase
Following graduation, I decided to become a teacher. I moved to Chicago and taught school in one of Chicago’s ghetto areas. I also completed my master’s degree at Roosevelt University with a master’s degree in education.

I then moved to Bloomington, Ill., where I worked on my master’s degree in biology at Illinois State University in Normal, Ill. I then began to teach biology in the Bloomington Public schools. After two years of doing this, I decided that I would rather be a physician.

I graduated from the College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in 1976. Following an internship, I entered primary care practice with my father in Charles City, Iowa. At that time, I figured out that I was unhappy with an office-based medical practice. I completed my Internal Medicine training at the Des Moines General Hospital in 1983. While at Des Moines General Hospital, I received additional training in cardiology, gastroenterology, and critical care because my trainers knew that I was going to be practicing in rural Iowa or Wisconsin.


In 2013, I married Madge Stuart, a teacher I had met while teaching in Bloomington, Ill. In 2009, we started a coffee shop (timberlanecoffee.com) in our community, Boscobel, Wis. Madge and I now spend most of our time there. However, we do often take bicycle riding trips. Our next trip is to ride the Erie Canal in upstate New York.

We also fly our own Beechcraft Bonanza all over the country. Our most frequent destination is the Seattle area to visit our grandchildren.
John Poppe

Spouse Name: Pat Poppe

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After serving 42 years in the Pastoral ministry, my wife and I moved from Green Bay, Wis., to Woodbury, Minn., to live close to our two daughters; one is a Dr. of Psychology and the other manages areas in the Pearle Vision here in Woodbury. I continue to remain active in the Lion's Club (38 years now), serve on the evangelism board and as a lector, and work in the in-reach and out-reach mission area in my LCMS church. My oldest daughter and I try to golf regularly during the spring-fall months at a nine-hole course. I now have the time to enjoy reading, playing cards at our apartment building, attend Twin's baseball games yearly with a daughter, and follow lots of basketball and football on TV. Life has slowed down, but continues to keep both of us busy. Pat enjoys coming back to Luther College, as she sent a good number of students here to major in music.
Janet ‘Jan’ (Fritz) Quello

**Spouse Name:** Paul Quello

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We were in Texas for 24 years, teaching and operating our real estate company. When Paul was offered a job with the ELCA Foundation in Wisconsin, we enjoyed living in Madison, my birthplace. Then our old Texas neighbor, Rick Torgerson, hired him to do development work for Wartburg, Gustavus Adolphus, and Luther College. We enjoyed our time in the Midwest, and retired in 2004. We live in the Victorian home in downtown Seguin that housed our office previously. Paul still sells real estate, and I enjoy volunteering with a food pantry, a children's advocacy center, and our church. One sister moved here too, so we've finally organized a Six Fritz Sisters reunion here for the fall. But first: Decorah!
Sandra Jo (Stueber) Rettschlag

Spouse Name:  Doyle Rettschlag

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After graduation, I taught German in Pierre, South Dakota (2 years), Port Washington, Wisc. (6 years), and Hustisford, Wisc. (2 years). I married Doyle in 1972. We had two children, Erin and Robin, before I received a degree in Behavior Disabilities, which I taught for seven years before returning to teach German at Juneau, Wisc. Before retiring in 2008, I planned seven student exchanges with a school in Germany. In retirement, we enjoy our six grandchildren and spending time at our getaway home near the Wisconsin Dells.

Luther memories include the “beanie,” painting windows for the holiday season, wearing skirts—especially in the cold winter months, the music played from Main every day, the long walk to go “into town,” participating in Messiah, and especially the availability and help from the faculty that made me feel like part of a family.
I, along with high school classmates, Don Stensaas and Dan Thurmer, visited Luther College during our Augustana Academy sophomore choir tour, giving direction to our college choice. Some 50+ years later, I remain grateful for this special place and for the friends who surround us to this day.

Following a Luther ELED major, my career and most of my volunteer service has involved children, teaching kindergarten and preschool, along with church-related teaching and other leadership roles with youngsters. My husband, Bill (involved in hospital administration), and I worked in our careers in the Milwaukee area, making our home there for nearly 40 years. Dear to us are our adult children, W. Andrew, Jackson Hole, WY, and Kirsten Marit, Minneapolis, Minn. We delight in our grandchildren, W. Aiden and Eva Kirsten, visiting them often in Wyoming. Obviously, a bit of teaching is still a precious part of my life. Apart from visiting family, we have always enjoyed travel in the U.S., and abroad, in Norway.

In 2013, we moved from Milwaukee to the Minneapolis area, continuing our retirement closer to family and even some Lutherites. Friends in Wisconsin remarked, “You’re going north?” We still enjoy the same outdoor activities, as well as city offerings, as we did in Wisconsin, winter arrives, as well.

Reflecting on “notables” in my life at Luther and beyond, a rich lifetime of remarkable pastors have remained in my memory bank as helpful and influential. As a Luther notable, I remain thankful for my advisor and art instructor, Orville Running, himself a pastor who was a quiet and steady influence—and he delivered thoughtful, concise, and short chapel talks, as well!

On a lighter and more social note, our senior resident house, Sunnyside, still keeps a dozen or more of us amused as we gather every few years for a “catch up” weekend. Delightful!
Barbara (Swenson) Rossow

Spouse Name: Kenneth Rossow

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Luther College has always held a very special place in my heart. It even came to mean more to me when both of our children graduated from Luther: Dean '92 and Brenda '95. Dean majored in math and economics and Brenda was a flute performance major. She and I got to share our love for music at Luther (both of us were members of the WFLCCB, but she was also a member of the orchestra and collegiate choir). That was very special.

I majored in Elem. Ed. and minored in music and taught fifth grade for three years at Hayden Heights Elementary School in St. Paul, Minn. After getting married in 1968 and having two children, I decided to start my own private piano studio in my home. I have been teaching piano ever since. I still have about 40 students a week, teaching the Suzuki Method and traditional piano as well. For the past 20 years, I have also been the choir director and chapel organist at Arlington Hills Lutheran Church in St. Paul.

Ken and I have been married for 48 years and we have three grandchildren ages 15, 11, and 3. One of them lives out of state, so thank goodness for Skype. Oh yes, and we also have four Pembroke Welsh Corgis.

Band tours were a highlight of my life at Luther. It was such a privilege to have played under Weston Noble for four years. He taught us lessons that have lasted a lifetime. Thank you Luther College.
David M. Rovang

Spouse Name: Karen (Kimball) Rovang '68

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How do I put 50 years into a few words—I'll try. After graduating from Luther with a biology major and chemistry minor, I married Karen Kimball with whom we have had three kids, two girls and a boy. I spent almost 22 years in the Air Force (active duty), retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. Most notable assignments were to Vietnam as an Air Traffic Control Officer and to Germany as a pilot flying government VIPs all over Europe and the mid-East—my best flying job. After I retired from the Air Force, I flew for 15 years with Northwest Airlines, flying mostly in the U.S.

Since retiring, I’ve been active in the local VFW Post, currently acting as the Chaplain and Color Guard/Honor Guard Captain. I help distressed veterans and their families, visit home-bound vets, and preside at veterans’ funerals. Karen and I are active in our local Lutheran church choir, as well as other committees and positions of leadership. All three of our offspring attended Luther, with two graduating. We have seven grandkids, two of which are currently attending Luther. We live on a small lake in Minnesota where I still boat and wakeboard, trying to entice our offspring’s families to join us whenever possible. We have been blessed with good health so far. We enjoy traveling to our offspring’s homes and most of the U.S. We have also traveled to Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, Europe, and Western Asia. I still would like to travel to South America, Australia, New Zealand, and China and am trying to convince Karen with the idea.

Celebrating our 50th Anniversary this summer, Karen and I hosted our three offspring and spouses on a river cruise from Budapest, Hungary to Nuremberg, Germany, and had a really great time. As you can tell, I never used biology or chemistry for anything professionally. You never know what you will end up doing for your life’s work. I feel very blessed to have had the job I had as a pilot, which I never anticipated going into college. My advice to Luther students is to enjoy your Luther years—you will probably never be freer.

In closing, I found that being your 1966 class agent for these eight years has been an honor and privilege. I am resigning that position—it’s time for someone else to take the reins. I hope you continue supporting Luther in ways that are meaningful to you.
Jeffrey & Marilyn (Haugen) Roverud

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Jeff and I have spent most of our 50 years living just blocks away from Luther College. Our lives have been blessed by the richness the college provides in a community like Decorah. We have enjoyed concerts, lectures, sporting events, special events (Nobel Prize winners, King and Queen of Norway), and countless friendships with professors, staff, and presidents. The dedication that we have experienced and observed of the faculty and staff to the students, in and out of the classroom, and to the mission of this college we love is extraordinary! We are humbled by the “servant leadership” and “vocational call” of so many who have given their lives in service to Luther College.

Jeff’s professional life working for Roverud Construction was spent not only serving the company, but serving on the Iowa Limestone Producers Board of Directors and as their president. He also served on the National Stone Association Board of Directors and was elected to serve as president of that association in 1988.

I have been fortunate to have served on countless boards including the Iowa Humanities Board, Lutheran Services of Iowa, and Luther College’s Board of Regents for 12 years, eight as secretary. I was awarded the DSA and the Spirit of Luther Award by Luther College.

We have two daughters that graduated from Luther College as English majors (1992 and 1996). Both are married and have two children.
After graduating from Luther, I taught fourth grade in the Osseo School District for one year. My senior year I had met Don, who had already finished graduate school and was working in Williston, ND, my hometown. On June 25, 1967, we were married and I joined Don in Bismarck, ND, where he had moved the previous summer.

I enjoyed teaching fourth grade in the Bismarck Public Schools for three years. We became homeowners in October 1970, when we moved into our house, which was built in 1929. It was here that we raised our two children, Kristin ’70 and Mark ’74, and we still call 930 North 8th Street home! I was blessed to be able to stay at home with our young children, as many mothers were at that time; but in 1983 I did return to teaching in the Title 1 reading program. Working only thirty hours a week was great as both children were involved in many activities.

We never expected to remain this long in Bismarck, which is a wonderful city; but Don’s positions within the ND Department of Human Services were ever changing and challenging for him, plus he always enjoyed what he did. After the last twelve years of his career there as the Director of Children and Family Services, he decided it was the right time to retire and to begin consulting.

Meanwhile, both kids graduated and went on to college (Mark—Luther Class of 1997); Kristin was married to Scott in 1995; our first grandchild was born in Mpls. in 1999; Mark married Liza in 2000; and as a consultant, Don was traveling frequently. In 2000 I made the decision to retire so I would be free to go with Don and to be active in my new role as grandmother. Actually the transition was easy!

When I accompanied Don on his trips, we would usually extend our stay to enjoy and to explore the area. As a result, I've been to many places in the USA that I might not otherwise have ever visited. We treasure the trips and experiences that we've had together. We've also had the opportunity to travel abroad, primarily to Europe, including several times to beautiful Norway, home of our ancestors! Our Panama Canal cruise and trips to Egypt and China were very memorable.

A very special place to us is our cabin in Northern Minn. A group of seminary graduates of the classes of 1931 and 1932 purchased 62 acres on Kabekona Lake. My father built our cabin in 1947 so all of my family has wonderful memories of our summers at the lake. Most of the cabins are still in the same families, so friendships there continue into the fourth generation.

Spending time with our family is a priority. Kristin (PT in the Moorhead Schools) and Scott (Thrivent) live in Fargo, ND with their three children: Zach (17), Erica (14), and Jake (9). Mark (Lutheran Pastor at SPD) and Liza (an assistant high school principal) live in Minneapolis with their three children: Trygve (12), Josephine (9), and Marit (6). We love being grandparents!!

I am thankful for my years at Luther College: the excellent education, the friendships and all the experiences that helped me become the person I am today.
Patricia (Dekok) Spilseth

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My Sunnyside friends have been the strongest influence that Luther has made on my life. From all over the country, we gather every other year to be together and share our lives.

After a teaching career, I entered business with two gift/gallery/interiors shops called next?, traveled the country as a business consultant, then divided to teach writing classes and write a weekly column, “From Where I Sit.”

I’m married to Dave, a retired American Airlines pilot, and we have two grown children, Kate and Andrew. Both reside in the Twin Cities. Kate teaches bi-lingual second grade and is married to Matt, a Public Defender Lawyer. Andrew sells for Sotheby’s Real Estate in Wayzata, owns Tidgboats, a boat cleaning business on Lake Minnetonka and manages rental properties he owns. Both kids married this fall, 2016.

Due to Dave’s airline passes, we’ve been able to travel extensively. Most memorable are trips to Egypt where we rode camels to the pyramids, to Russia, throughout Europe, Mexico, where we spend a week each February.

We love living in Minnesota on the lake with family and friends close by. We’re Mr. and Mrs. Excitement—just happy at home.
I grew up in SE Minnesota, 35 miles from Decorah. I had relatives who had attended Luther College and growing up my family attended several Messiah performances under the direction of Weston Noble. I think it was just a given that I would also attend Luther.

When I started at Luther, I had no idea what I would major in or what career path I would choose. I took a Sociology class from Dr. David Johnson and thought “I could become a social worker!” I have told Dr. Johnson that he was the reason I became a social worker. I had no idea what I was getting into when I was hired for my first job. But through training sessions and helpful co-workers and supervisors, I spent almost 35 years in social work. The majority of my career was as a Child Protection Social Worker in Ramsey County (St. Paul, Minn.). As a Child Protection Social Worker, I was responsible for providing or securing services to families where the child/children had been abused or neglected so these children would be safe. In my career I also spent several years investigating the initial reports of child abuse and neglect. There were long days and lots of decisions to be made to keep children safe. I had some very interesting experiences and also some wonderful clients. It was my degree in Sociology from Luther College that led me into this career that I loved, and where I felt I was able to help many families and to keep many children safe.

During my four years at Luther, I recall lots of time studying in the “stacks” at the Koren Library. I also worked in the library all four years. When I was a freshman, Tom Tlou, who also worked in the library, would walk me to Larsen Hall at 10:00 p.m. when the library closed. As I recall, he later became the United Nations ambassador from his home country in Africa.

One fond memory I have from Luther is singing with the mass chorus in Messiah under the direction of Weston Noble.

I have lived in the Twin Cities since I got my first social work job after graduation from Luther. I have been so fortunate to have been able to travel abroad to many countries. Two of these overseas trips were with Luther College classmates, and we had a wonderful time on these trips. The lifelong connections and friendships that were developed in the four years at Luther remain. We may not talk or see one another for periods of time, but it seems that we pick up where we last left off. We came from different places and some of us may not have known one another well while at Luther, but I believe we all share common values and that is a part of what ties us together 50 years later.

Retirement is great! I enjoy volunteering for several things, including at my church and as a board member of the townhome association where I live. Social get-togethers with family and friends continue to be important to me. Several times a year I travel to San Antonio to visit my sister-in-law and nephew.

To those who are currently Luther students, cherish the friendships you make while you are attending Luther. Many of these friendships and lifelong connections will remain throughout your life.
Paul & Linda (Knutson) Strand

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Paul and Linda Knutson Strand celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in August 2016 with their children, spouses, and grandchildren. Our journey began at Luther College where we obtained an excellent education and developed life-long friendships. We continue to enjoy connecting with our Luther classmates.

Paul had a variety of careers including CPA and jobs in finance, management, and sales. Linda began her teaching career teaching first grade. After the birth of their children, she began teaching adults, and spent the last 17 years teaching adult learners with acquired physical disabilities. She developed a passion for teaching individuals with brain injuries and continues that passion by volunteering at The Gathering, an Alzheimer's group at their church.

Paul and Linda are both retired and travel as much as possible. They especially enjoy ocean and river cruising, along with frequent trips to Seattle to see their daughter and family. They are both active in their church, Oak Knoll Lutheran, in Minnetonka, Minn. They live in Plymouth.
Jim & Linda (Bergsgaard) Svanoe

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Jim and Linda have lived in Madison, Wisc., for the past 50 years. They have one son, Anders, and two grandsons, Jon-Erik and Julian. Jim taught 6th grade for 33 years and, now in retirement, has a handyman business. Linda has taught music for 40 years, and still has music students. They travel to Norway nearly every year to visit family. Most recently, they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a family vacation to Hawaii.
Janet (Becker) Swiston

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My life at Luther, both academic and socially, provided me with the foundation to be successful throughout these past 50 years as a teacher, parent, and active community member. Sense of family from my days at Luther has drawn me back to campus again and again. Throughout my life, as I've met fellow Luther grads, it has been a joy to share our mutual experiences. I treasure the friendships I made in the Luther College Concert Band and with classmates and faculty.

Following thirteen years of teaching instrumental and elementary vocal music in Iowa, I spent fifteen years teaching English as a Second Language in Stevens Point, Wis. Through the years I also directed church choirs and various instrumental groups.

My husband Dean and I were blessed with three sons. Now our family has grown to include three daughters-in-law and nine grandchildren, ranging in age from eighteen months to fifteen years. What a joy!

Retirement has found me tutoring individuals through the Portage County Literacy Council and working on local, national, and international hunger and poverty issues. Musically, I play piano for nursing home church services and recorder in the Point in Time Recorder Consort, as well as sing in the church choir. Along with sewing, reading, gardening, and working on genealogy, my life is full. I'd like to think that my experiences at Luther helped steer me down the path my life has taken. Soli Deo Gloria!
Gene Takle

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Luther provided me with the fundamental mathematical and physical sciences background that allowed me to enjoy a rich and diverse scientific career. And perhaps more importantly, it provided the community of culture and values to live and enjoy a rich and diverse life. Among the many faculty members at Luther that influenced me were Professors Herbert Rebasso and Robert Jacobson in math, David T. Nelson and Richard Barnaal in physics. And on the athletic side, I was privileged to train under the most inspiring and supportive coach I can imagine, Kent Finanger. He not only helped me develop as an athlete, but also to manage multiple stresses, from internal and external expectations, that brought me to the brink of giving it all up as being impossible. Coaches Arman Pipho and Rich Halverson provided the right blend of training and inspiration to allow me to succeed in cross country.

I left Luther for graduate school in physics at Iowa State, earning a PhD in 1971 and remaining 45 years on the faculty in the Department of Geological and Atmospheric Sciences and Department of Agronomy, with a courtesy appointment in the Department of Aerospace Engineering. My current title is Charles F. Curtiss Distinguished Professor in Agriculture and Life Sciences. As mentioned at the onset, this diverse academic career path is attributable to the strong foundation at Luther.

Of course, Luther also provided me with a life mate of now 48 years, Miriam Nelson. She not only has put up with me for all these years, but also provided us with three children, of whom we are very proud, that she will introduce in her update.

To Luther current and future students, my experience prompts me provide two pieces of advice:

“We come to college not alone to prepare to make a living, but to learn to live a life.” (M.J. Riggs, 1883, engraved in the ISU Memorial Union)

“You don’t know what’s possible until you have tried the impossible.” (source unknown)
Miriam (Nelson) Takle

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I didn’t travel far from home to attend college—being a “DP” (Decorah product), but found good friends and a good start for a career in education at Luther. Incidentally, I also found a great husband!

After graduation I taught first grade for five years, and then part-time preschool for 25+ years. This schedule worked well for keeping up with our three children and Gene.

Our kids all have become successful adults with good mates. Our two daughters, Tami and Erika, are medical doctors and our son Bryn is a doctoral candidate in Horticulture. Tami and her husband, Todd, have two girls, Emily (10) and Madeline (9), and Erika and Kyle have Sophie (8 months). Bryn and Jenna have a dog, cat, and chickens. It is wonderful to be grandparents.

I spend my times with crafts, yard work, volunteering, and traveling to see granddaughters. We are looking forward to seeing “old” friends at Luther.
The LUTHER EXPERIENCE for me/us has been woven into the fabric of our lives like a thread in a tapestry. The educational anchor served me well traversing to Luther Theological Seminary, parish ministry, pastoral care, and resource development. Interestingly, education at Luther continued beyond graduation, returning to LC to serve as Director of Alumni Relations, Director of the Annual Fund, and Associate Vice President of Development. Mentored in resource development, my career advanced to be a consultant to development programs nationwide. Operating my own company, Thurmer Consulting Company, provided services to educational institutions, social service, health care, museums, and churches. During this time, I never thought of myself other than a pastor assisting people in viewing philanthropy as stewardship of the gifts as blessing from God. Beautiful fundraising happens when institutional needs are met by passion and mission within the donor, meaning as much to the donor as to the organization that receives it.

Consulting was a core activity for many years, but I remained active in ministry. Now as the sun begins to set, I am working harder in ministry and less in fundraising…and loving it. While we travel nearly six months of the year, I manage to work remotely as the Executive Director of ChristPond Foundation and Retreat Center near Milwaukee in Random Lake, Wis., returning once a month to conduct worship services at the Retreat Center.

This year, Mary Ann and I will reach the milestone of 50 years of marriage. Mary Ann, also a Luther grad, has been a remarkable mate and support to me personally and professionally. Her gifts remain active and crisp as together we experience the body and mind showing signs of the leaves turning color. We are blessed with four children, three are living and have given us six grandchildren. Each of our children graduated from Luther and we’ll see how many grandchildren follow suit. Our child, Jonathan, who died at five and a half while we lived in Decorah, made his contribution to Luther, and continues to do so, through a scholarship in his name.

For two people who enjoy travel, we've been blessed. Investments in time-shares give us about six months of travel, usually in a pathway from Arizona in the fall, Hawaii in January, a periodic trip to Europe and Florida through spring, ending at our condo in Cape Coral, Florida. Until April we try to have the condo rented. The highlight of travel has become the people we encounter from around the world and in all walks of life.

The most profound trip in the past nearly two years was to face death upon the diagnosis of an incurable cancer called multiple myeloma. While I wish it on no-one, for me it has been filled with the blessing of understanding the gift of life in deeper ways. The experience marked priorities with greater clarity—a new day, family, opportunity to serve and be served, thanked, and thankful. One understands more clearly you are not ready to live until you are ready to die.
The Luther College experience, before, during, and after, was not just an education, but a cornerstone that anchored. While on one hand it was an ANCHOR, on the other hand it was a resilient SPRING BOARD to manage, respond, adjust, and embrace the changing challenges of life. A life full of surprises we never thought would happen to “us.”
Mona (Viste) Udstuen

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Duane and I have three children: Jennifer ’96, Mark ’97, and Alissa—Concordia/Moorhead ’02, and seven grandchildren who range in age from 2-12. Although my greatest joy and most fulfilling work was raising our children, my other work experiences included junior high English teacher, ESL (ELL) teacher, Sunday School curriculum author, and Christian Ed. director. In retirement I enjoy, among many other things, spending time with family and friends, writing poetry, playing a little golf, and coordinating an on-going charitable project benefiting Tucson mothers and their babies. Life is good!
How did I end up at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, from a suburb of Chicago? I was recruited to play football for the legendary Coach Edsel Schweizer. I never played a down of football for Luther. Two roads diverged in Decorah, and I took the one least traveled for me. After a high school career of sports, I made a decision to become a full-time student. And that has made all the difference. Thank you Robert Frost.

One of my influential professors at Luther was my freshman English teacher, Bernard Bearer. He not only helped me improve my writing, but also was a mentor to me in my first year at Luther. As I continued my academic resurgence, I sought out some outstanding teachers at Luther (and there were many), such as David Johnson, Harlan Nelson, and Ron Christensen. Dr. Christensen was especially influential in developing my interest in political science.

After a year in law school at Valparaiso University, I started my teaching career on the west side of Chicago. That experience shaped me in a positive way. I continued my teaching and coaching career at Glencrest Middle School in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, for 29 years. After retiring in 2001, I continue to substitute teach at the same school (I know where the bathrooms are located).

My post retirement has included being a mentor for a kids in need program, tutoring for Literacy in Action, and being a substitute driver for Meals on Wheels. It has also included, with my wife’s help, caring for my 101-year-old mother. During our 47-year marriage, we were blessed with three daughters and sons-in-law and ten grandchildren. We raised our three daughters in Elmhurst and still reside there.

Luther was a great experience at many levels. From intramural football games, to my membership in Tri Omega, to the interim program my senior year, it was all good. I was surrounded by challenging and great friends. I value the liberal arts education I received at Luther. For those students attending Luther in the 21st century, I say stay the course with a liberal arts education and enjoy every day in scenic Northeast Iowa.
I moved to Houston, Texas, shortly after graduation from Luther and live there today. I married Robert Voigt in 1969 and we had 2 wonderful daughters, Kristen and Katherine. I worked as a technical writer/editor for a NASA contractor for four years, stayed at home with my young children for several years, and then went back to school and earned an MBA from the University of Houston. A career in hospital administration followed. In 1991, I auditioned and was selected to sing with the Houston Symphony Chorus. With that privilege, my Luther-bred love of music returned in full force. A few years later, I was approached by the Senior Pastor of a large Lutheran church in Houston to consider assuming the position of Director of Worship, Music, and the Arts at that church. My initial reaction was that this was outside of my field of study and not a good thing to pursue. However, upon further reflection, I knew this could be a way to connect every day with the music I loved and serve in ministry as well. So I accepted the position, went back to school, plus I studied privately for several years with a professor from the University of Houston in order to polish my skills.

I retired from that church position almost five years ago. My husband and I traveled and did some things on our bucket list. And then, two years ago Trinity Lutheran Church, downtown Houston, asked if I could help them out as an interim Director of Worship and Music. I went back to work, and I am still serving in that interim position.

Last December, my husband of 46 years, passed away suddenly. So this year has been a year of transition and sadness.

I am blessed to have five wonderful grandchildren who constantly keep me on my toes. And, I am privileged to still be singing with the Houston Symphony Chorus and another small vocal group, the Houston Camerata.

What has Luther meant to me? My experience at Luther exposed me to wonderful music and gave me musical experiences that I've drawn on throughout my life. At Luther, my faith journey was supported, and was challenged. And that challenge has turned into a tremendous blessing for me.

What advice would I give? Two things: Follow your passion. Living a life when you enjoy going to work every day yields much happiness. And, secondly, treasure your loved ones every day.
Armed with a Luther BA in French, I earned a MA in French at Tulane University. I married the Rev. George F. Wharton, a Louisiana man, an Episcopal priest, also certified to teach math. I learned to love gumbo, beans and rice, and how to peel crawfish. Already loved New Orleans Jazz.


1976   Moved to Fairfield, Iowa. Stripped woodwork. Played for the first ever Maharishi International University graduation ceremony—and the second. Luther is better organized.
1979   Moved to Decorah. Taught French 101 fall semester. Spring semester, studied piano with John Strauss. He asked if I'd teach piano. Decided I should earn a Luther music major. Taught French and Piano at Luther. Accompanied my two violinist kids, as well as numerous faculty and student recitals,

1991-98  Continued to teach French and Piano at Luther. Devoted four summers and eight years of a weekly commute to Iowa City to earn DMA. My interdisciplinary doctoral thesis, for which I am indebted to amazing Luther faculty in Art, French, Music, led to invitations to present at college/university conferences as near as Luther College and as far as Hawaii, France, and the UK. Continued teaching French and/or Piano as needed.

2015  Retired. Remind me what day this is, what time I am supposed to be where, and what I'm supposed to do when I get there. Shortage of pianists at Luther and in town—I'm still working.
Ruth Ann (Pieper) Willius

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I have loved, been loved, and have made a difference. I am a cancer survivor and have lived a full life, but want to go forth to continue to grow and give.  
I am so blessed: I have been married for 47 years.
I have two sons and five grandchildren.
I have loved my employment of 38 years in the field of education (preschool through parent education).
I have lived in Mpls. for 25 years and now in the country for 21 years.
I have traveled extensively outside of the U.S.—many solo trips volunteering in schools in Peru and Central America.
I published a children’s picture book.
In my retirement years, my happy places are in my gardens, at the nature center guiding school groups, at schools teaching Spanish, at home reading, and hiking.

There are many sweet memories of LC, but I believe the biggest impact in my life are friends. The roots were established at Luther and continued to grow into some beautiful relationships over the last 50 years.
Carol (Trettin) Wilson

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The Luther experience gave me a great start into teaching. I only taught four years before our family started. I married Dale Wilson and had two sons—Jay ’93 lives in Indiana with his wife and four kids and Dean ’99 lives in Minnesota with his wife and three kiddos. Dale passed suddenly before he turned 60. I have since remarried. My life took many turns. I taught, owned/operated a clothing store for 19 years, tried my people skills in insurance, worked for a social agency advocating for the poor, took the job of City Clerk, and now I'm a part-time church secretary and loving my life! Golf keeps me busy in the summer and traveling to warm places in the winter takes up my time, along with the grandkids!
A few years ago, after I read my poems at Luther's Lutheran Writers Festival, the first person to ask me a question was Dr. Martin Mohr, my first guide to modern poetry back in 1965. “I might have expected it,” I thought at the time, “a penetrating question from Dr. Mohr!” Also at the reading were my teachers Dr. Mary Lou Mohr and Mr. Harland Nelson (and I knew Dr. John Bale would have been there, too, had he been able to). Besides my education at Luther, I've enjoyed and valued my connections with my professors and with Luther since my graduation. It's a tribute to Luther and the quality of people who work there that my professors have been interested in me and my work for fifty years.
Laurel and I were married in August of 1965 just before the start of our senior years at Luther. On the Wednesday prior to graduation from Luther, Laurel presented me with our firstborn son, Brian (so technically that event actually occurred before our graduation). That fall we moved to Grand Meadow, Minn., where I taught junior and senior high school science.

In 1969, we bought a house in Calmar, Iowa, and procured teaching positions at the Turkey Valley School District in Jackson Junction, Iowa, where I taught the same subjects I had taught in Grand Meadow. During the summer of 1973, I was on the Upward Bound staff at Luther College.

In 1974 I was hired by UPS as a deliveryman, a position I held until 1986 when nagging back problems caused me to look for other work. In 1978, we sold our home in Calmar and built our present home, an earth-sheltered house near the Decorah Fish Hatchery. In 1986, we bought a shoe store and repair in Postville, Iowa, which I operated until the end of 1990.

I then returned to Luther College where I took six computer science courses in a little more than a semester. I worked at Sweet Computer Services in West Union for six years and then at Fastenal Company in Winona, Minn., for ten years after which I retired. After retirement I have flitted from interest to interest. I did some contract programming and worked as a deckhand on a backwater excursion boat on the Mississippi. I volunteered for a several years with the Raptor Resource Project, and in 2013, since there were no cameras in the 'eagle tree' due to the fact that the eagles decided to build a new nest for that year, I produced dozens of videos of the Decorah Eagles using a webcam and a telescope that were situated in our living room. I am currently making cribbage boards on my homemade CNC machine. My epitaph should probably read 'He didn't do anything he didn't like for very long'. By the way, Laurel and I have been married for 50 years.

I have sung with the 148-year-old Luren Singing Society since 1999. In 2001, we toured northern Norway with the group and had the privilege of seeing the Midnight Sun at Nordkapp within one day of midsummer—an unforgettable experience.

Laurel and I have two sons, Brian and David. Brian and his family (wife Paula, Sebastian, Emily, and Grace) moved into our yard in the summer of 2000 where they continue to live. Sebastian now lives and works in the Twin Cities. David and his family (wife Stephanie, Alex, Bella, and Carter) live in Edina, Minn. David's daughter, Samantha, is a student at the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks, North Dakota.
Jim and I were married in August of 1965, just prior to the start of the school year. Between my last final and graduation Sunday, our first son, Brian, was born. I sat in the audience with my parents and graduated in absentia and then went back to the hospital for the evening! Summer was spent getting used to a newborn and living in the old Luther barracks which were demolished after we and a few other couples moved out at the end of the summer. We moved to Grand Meadow, Minn., in August and I taught two classes of Spanish at the high school. The next two years an additional class was added and I continued to teach three classes in the afternoons. In June of 1969 we moved to Calmar because we had been hired to teach at Turkey Valley for the 1969-70 school year. I taught seventh and eighth grade Spanish, two classes of Spanish I and one class of Spanish II. I taught at Turkey Valley for only one year and then resigned in favor of being a stay-at-home mom to my two sons, the second (David) being born just prior to the start of the 1969-70 school year. I substitute taught at Turkey Valley off and on for the next several years. After David was old enough to go to school, I worked mornings at a preschool in Calmar for a year. Eventually I worked part-time at various offices at what is now Northeast Iowa Community College in Calmar. I quit working at NICC in 1978 when we moved to Decorah.

In 1978 we built an earth-sheltered home near the Decorah Fish Hatchery—we continue to live there. Since moving to Decorah I have worked at Prudential Insurance (for less than a year) and at Luther College for 29 years—ten years at Student Support Services (a government TRIO program) and nineteen years at Computer Center/IS/LIS. I retired from Luther in 2010, took two years off, and since 2012 have held temporary positions in various college departments, filling in for medical or maternity leaves mostly, but also doing some projects. This has been a great way to learn more about and appreciate what makes Luther the place it is!

Our family includes two sons—Brian (Paula) and David (Stephanie). Brian and his family are our closest neighbors, and David and his family live in Edina, Minn. Our grandchildren are Sebastian (age 26), Samantha (age 20), Emily (age 18), Alex (age 17), Grace (age 16), Isabella (age 14), and Carter (age 5). It appears that the grandchildren are not going to follow our footsteps to Luther, but both sons are Luther graduates.

Free time finds me gardening, sewing, reading, and attending lots of activities the grandchildren are involved in! Life is good!
Dan Wrolstad

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Luther has always had a special place in my being. Both of my parents graduated from Luther in the mid-1930s. My mom was in the first class of women, and my dad was a track and field star who ran at the Drake Relays with Jesse Owens, but in a different division. Two of my brothers also graduated from Luther. My uncle, Marwin Wrolstad, was also very active in the Vesterheim Museum.

My Luther education and participating in track, cross country, and being a member of Luther’s first swimming team prepared me to become a track and field coach and a Social Studies teacher. I taught at Grafton High School for 30 plus years. I also was a ski club advisor. Skiing is still a passion for me. I have skied in Norway, Whistler, Canada, Alta, Utah, Vail, and in upper Michigan regularly with my children, Kristen and Erik.

Luther inspired me to do community service. I’ve been a member of my local Lions Club since the 1970s. I’ve served as a chairman of several committees and as president. I was awarded the Melvin Jones Fellow Award for dedicated humanitarian services by the Lions International Foundation.

My children have taken up my interest in running and skiing. My daughter, Kristen qualified and ran in the Boston Marathon and is an excellent skier. She is a comptroller for a family business. My son, Erik, is a manager at Fed Ex and is an excellent snow and water skier. I am the proud grandfather of three grandchildren.

I retired from teaching in 2000 and became a full time realtor and travel with my wife, Barb. We have traveled to Norway to check out the Wrolstad homestead near Telemark. We recently traveled to the Panama Canal, Alaska, Bahamas, Costa Rica, Columbia, and Canada. The values that were reinforced at Luther remain with me today.

Fun times at Luther:
1. Watching a football game in the rec room at Olson Hall—freshman year Green Bay Packers vs Minnesota Vikings—WOW!!!
2. Senior year a fellow swim team member was rescued by the Decorah Fire Department for riding icebergs in the Upper Iowa River.
3. Jogging through the countryside out to Pulpit Rock and Dunning’s Spring.
4. Meeting some of the nicest people of my life.
Ellen (Kaasa) Zerillo

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I have lived in Connecticut since graduation. I worked as a programmer and business analyst for Aetna and Travelers Insurance companies. We have two daughters, one of whom graduated from Luther in 1998. In retirement we are enjoying family, travel, skiing, and sailing.