Thirty-six years in Nigeria

Both were born in the Netherlands, Dick Seinen in De Krim and Margaret DeVries in Ooster Nykerk. Both immigrated with their families to Canada, Dick to British Columbia and Margaret to Ontario. Both came to RBI—Margaret in 1966 and Dick in 1967, met, graduated, married and served in Nigeria as missionaries for 36 years. Now, they are retired and live in Canada. Theirs is a story of faithfulness, perseverance and commitment to a life of service—a story that by their own admission is not finished yet, as they continue to serve and obey.

According to Dick, the small town of Terrace, on the north coast of British Columbia, with the soaring peaks of the Kitimat mountain range to the east and the trout-filled Skeena River running through the middle of town, was a wonderful place to grow up. “Although our immigrant community was close, life was not always easy during those days as we struggled to become part of Canadian society and build a church,” said Dick. “Nevertheless,” he continued, “the fifties’ lifestyle in what some called ‘the isolated community of Terrace’ helped me years later to adjust to the African setting in which we would live for almost 40 years.”

The small church that was finally built in British Columbia and first served by a

True beauty in Third Schaal dorm

“Seeing how the media portrays women—and how subtly that media puts thoughts in our minds that do not line up with what the Bible says—is one of the issues that we discuss when we look at God’s perspective on real beauty.” With 28 upperclassmen women under her care, Kuyper’s Third Schaal dorm Resident Assistant Sarah DeWitte is determined to make sure that all the “women in the dorm fully understand that they are fearfully and wonderfully made.”

“During our first semester together, we spent time learning what the issues in our lives were, what God was doing, what He was teaching us, and how He was shaping us—we were all very transparent and vulnerable during our talks,” said Sarah. “We came to the realization that some of us, without intending to, allow ourselves to be defined by the world. It was then that we decided to become proactive by being defined by who God says we are.” The women spent considerable time in the study and discussion of Proverbs 31 and Psalm 139. “It was very enlightening and refreshing to be able to discuss these issues openly, but with God’s Word as the ultimate authority,” said Sarah.

According to Sarah, the group came up with several ideas to graphically represent and remember what they were learning. One is a mirror of shattered pieces which has been put back together and now hangs in the hallway. The

Kuyper women’s basketball team plays in Alaska

On December 28th, the Kuyper women’s basketball team set out for Fairbanks, Alaska, on an all-expenses paid trip courtesy of their hosts, the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Anchorage. The team knew that playing against the Alaska teams was going to be tough, but all were determined to make sure the outcome of the trip would be more than just playing basketball.

According to Caitlyn Ouwinga, one of the players on Kuyper’s team, each day before heading outside, they had to put on multiple layers of clothing in order to feel “slightly” warm in the temperatures that reached down to 40 below zero.

The team played the University of Alaska Fairbanks twice, on December 30 and again on New Year’s Eve. The next
Kuyper College is engaged in a new Strategic Planning Initiative as we look at current opportunities and the economic realities that affect us. I serve on the boards of two other organizations that have just begun strategic planning—it seems to be that season! Interestingly, it seems when organizations get down to planning goals and objectives (all the detail stuff), something gets lost in the process. That something, I observe, is the mission statement.

I am struck at how often an organization can plan without taking specific account of the main concepts articulated in its mission statement. I sense this happens because there always seem to be those “really big” things—opportunities and challenges—that come to the forefront of people’s thinking. The mission can quickly become taken for granted and “assumed” to be in the background of any planning. This, of course, is a danger for the organization.

The mission of Kuyper College has been very important to us, and we have had great boards over the years that have kept the historical mission of the College before us in all planning. There have been times when that mission has been challenged, when the institution has wavered or experimented, or when we’ve even called the mission into question. Time and again, however, the College has stayed true to that which has inspired RBI, RBC and Kuyper over the years. Our mission today conveys the same focus, the same spirit, and the same direction-setting authority our founders set forth in 1939.

The accounts in this Newsletter are examples of the continuity of purpose we embrace. We are excited about our Bible-based curriculum, ministry and service emphasis, and Reformed worldview perspective! We are convinced that we have exceptional programs, students, opportunities and...a mission statement that not only serves us well today, but one that will continue to do so far into the future. Thank you for helping us preserve and promote that mission in today’s generation of students!

The mission of Kuyper College is “to equip students with a biblical, Reformed worldview to serve effectively Christ’s church and His world.”

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroeze
President

Three librarians and a message

“Engaging Culture Through Biblical Teaching” was the theme of the 62nd annual conference of the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), which took place this past February in Orlando, Florida. The conference included a variety of workshops offered under a number of “tracks.” One of these workshops—“Measuring the Effectiveness of Your Library”—was presented by Dianne Zandbergen, director of library services at Kuyper College’s Zondervan Library, Kathy Molenkamp from Grace Bible College in Grand Rapids, and Carol Reid from Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee. “Our hope in presenting this workshop together,” said Zandbergen, “was that it would serve as a model of collaboration, both among librarians and colleges. In an age of financial challenges, collaboration, accountability and assessment are receiving greater emphasis among accrediting bodies and local college administrators.” According to Zandbergen, academic libraries need to provide evidence that the resources and services they provide are actually making an impact upon and enhancing student learning. “This evidence needs to be based upon collected data; the data must then be interpreted and evaluated,” added Zandbergen. “In addition, academic libraries are being encouraged to enhance their assessment by going beyond measuring only their collections and services to measuring the benefits of these collections and services to the user.” The presentation touched upon questions that need to be considered such as: What do students need to learn? Is the library helping them to learn it? How is the library doing that? How well is the library doing it? How can the library sustain and improve its

Three librarians continued on page 5
I love to hear stories

Ann Essenburg
Admissions Counselor/Campus Visit Coordinator

I love to hear the stories of how students are led to Kuyper. It is one of my favorite parts of my job. I have heard lots of these stories over the years, and I am constantly reminded of God’s faithfulness and His hand of direction—stories of finding Kuyper in the phone book, hearing about us on the radio, seeing our billboards on the highway, or reading about us in a magazine.

However, the one consistent way that students hear about Kuyper College is through other people who refer them to us. I am constantly amazed at the people that God uses to direct students to Kuyper and into ministry.

I also was directed to Kuyper through someone else—my mom, who encouraged me to check out the school during my senior year in high school. As soon as I set foot on campus, I knew that this was the place for me! I loved the beautiful campus, and the staff and students were extremely welcoming and gracious. I never applied anywhere else and loved my time here from the very beginning. I grew tremendously in many ways and made friendships that will last a lifetime. Seven years later I am still here, working with prospective students, helping them discern their calling and determine if Kuyper is the right place for them. I love welcoming students to our campus and showing them all of the things that Kuyper has to offer.

Even after many years of reading applications and talking with students, I do not tire of hearing students’ stories. I am continuously amazed by the paths that students take to Kuyper. It is incredible to see the connections between people and the links that lead students to Kuyper—family members, church members, youth pastors, pastors, friends, and new acquaintances. However, the number one source of referrals is our current students who tell their friends and family about their experiences at Kuyper College.

Through all of this, I am reminded of the impact that each of us is capable of making in the lives of others. May we never forget that we all have the opportunity and power to make a difference in the lives of those around us!

“In My Words” is a feature of The Kuyper College News highlighting first-person stories by Kuyper College faculty and staff.

One thing President Lincoln did not do

You probably already know many fascinating facts about Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president. You may know he enjoyed bowling or that he was one of our tallest presidents at 6’4” and wore a size 14 shoe. Some even know he was once challenged to a duel (which he accepted) and is the only president to hold a patent (for a device to lift boats over shoals). But there is one fact few people know about this popular president—Abraham Lincoln died without a will. Even though he was an active attorney and undoubtedly knew the importance of writing his wishes, he never did. When he died, the lawyers were left to try to determine the division of his estate.

Unfortunately, many people today, from pastors to pilots to presidents—die without the benefit of a will. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Kuyper College is a member of the Barnabas Foundation so, at no cost to you, we can provide access to Christian professionals from Barnabas who will answer your questions about wills and estate planning. They can help you work out a plan to meet your individual needs and support kingdom causes important to you. Over 6,000 Christians have benefited from their 30 years of experience and expertise.

Estate planning is not only for the wealthy; it is for everyone. It is simply the process of deciding where your assets should be distributed after your death. As God’s stewards we realize that everything we own actually belongs to God. Estate planning is part of our spiritual responsibility for the assets God has entrusted to us.

For more information, please contact Ken Capiscioltto at 616-988-3676 or e-mail kcapiscioltto@kuyper.edu.

Kuyper College is unable to provide tax advice regarding estate planning. We recommend you contact your tax consultant with any questions regarding your specific situation.
missionary pastor had a great impact on Dick’s life and helped model for him what he and Margaret would encounter in Africa—churches with grass roofs, a piece of steel or a rim of a car for a church bell, and a pulpit that was just a table.

After high school, Dick and Margaret entered the work force. However, they felt there was more in life for them to do. Dick and Margaret were encouraged by their pastors to attend a school in Grand Rapids called Reformed Bible Institute. “We both came because we wanted to learn how to be better servants,” said Margaret. “We wanted to be able to understand what we were taught from the time we were children: the why, where and when of the Christian life. And of course, we also wanted to see where God would lead us through this educational adventure.”

Dick speaks for both when commenting on their spiritual journey. “There must come a time in each person’s life where one must make a commitment to answer the call of Jesus Christ personally,” he said. “We thank the Lord for catechism, pastors, adults who cared for us, many friends who were believers, but above all, the working of the Spirit of God during our formative years. These all helped us to see clearly and respond to the truths and demands of God on our lives and to seize every opportunity we’ve had to emulate what the joy of the Lord is all about.”

At RBI, Dick and Margaret found what they describe as “a fantastic community of seeking people and staff who were dedicated to helping them find meaning to the life in Christ—a caring group of professors who loved and knew the Lord, and showed the joy of the Lord in their personal and professional lives.” Some of the people they mentioned included professors Gunnink, Magee, Oostendorp, Schaal, Van Laar and Veenstra. “They, and others, helped us understand that a Christian education had value through eternity,” said Dick. “I guess we could say we had a great life, but RBI made it more abundant.” According to Margaret, “the faculty acted not only as professors, but as mentors, advisors and people who wanted us to succeed. It was not just the subject matter that they taught so well, but the lifestyle that showed through their teaching, which showed us how to live for Christ.”

After graduation from RBI, the Seinens felt that God was speaking to them the same way He spoke to Elijah when He asked him: “What are you doing here?” So, they decided to answer that question in their lives by seeking to serve God through missions. Dick vividly recalls the day when they took the first step toward becoming missionaries. He and Margaret were driving on 28th Street in Grand Rapids. “It was a cold and dreary day,” he said. “We decided to stop at the Christian Reformed World Missions office to see if they had any openings for missionaries. They had a position, and less than a year later we were in Africa.”

The Seinens’ first assignment, which lasted for 12 years, was in Takum, Nigeria, a small village in the southeastern part of the country, about 25 miles north of the border with Cameroon. There, Dick taught Bible and history in the Wukari Division Combined Secondary School, which took Nigerian students through a five-year program that led to a high school diploma. After Takum, the Seinens spent 24 years ministering in the Hillcrest School in Jos, a city of over a half-million people in the central part of the country where, during the last 11 years of their ministry, Dick was the school’s administrator. “Hillcrest was a first-through-12th grade school founded in 1942,” said Dick. “Its purpose was to educate the children of missionary parents so they could remain in the field while their children received a Christian, North American-style education.” According to Margaret, “As the years went by, Hillcrest became an international school with students from over 30 countries as well as a variety of denominations—a mission field in itself.”

While Dick was busy ministering and leading Hillcrest’s administration, Margaret ran a missionary guesthouse, and was also very involved in Bible Study Fellowship as a leader. Hospitality was also a big part of the Seinens’ mission. “Missionaries frequently travelled to Hillcrest School to visit their children,” said Margaret. “In addition, CRC delegations would stop by from time to time, as well as siblings or
“Seeding, watering and harvesting is teamwork—but, lest we forget, it is not us doing the converting; it is the work of the Spirit.”

—Dick Seinen

colleagues of missionaries. They all would need a meal but restaurants were not a real option, so a lot of cooking and entertaining was done at the Seinen home.” Speaking with obvious pride, Dick said of Margaret: “She could have a cup of traditional, very strong Arabic coffee with a Lebanese lady friend, or the overly sweet with lots of milk coffee of Nigeria, and have fellowship with people of all cultures and creeds. This fine missionary lady would,” he continued, “joyfully spend time preparing a meal made from scratch—including killing and cleaning the chickens and picking the fresh vegetables—in order to serve the hundreds of guests who’ve graced our table over the years.”

The Seinens speak of the strength it took to send their children to boarding school during the first part of their missionary service. “It was more difficult than we thought it would be, even when those around us did the same thing and were dealing with similar feelings,” said Margaret. “Both Dick and I knew that if God wanted us to be in Nigeria, and we knew that He did, then we had to trust that He would take care of our children.” Today, they both praise God that their children were not only very well taken care of, but that they too are followers of Christ.

After leaving Nigeria, the Seinens moved back to Canada. Their two sons, Philip and Brenten, their daughter Alison (all born in Nigeria), and their spouses all live within a four-hour drive of the Seinen home. “After all this time apart, it’s a thrill to be so geographically close to our children and seven grandchildren,” said Margaret. The Seinens are also waiting to move to the first house that they’ve ever owned by the end of April.

“We thank God for the many that have come to Christ over the years through our service to His Son, and for the many people who, together with us, ministered to serve others. Seeding, watering and harvesting is teamwork—but, lest we forget, it is not us doing the converting; it is the work of the Spirit,” said Dick.

“We thank God for placing people on our path who needed to hear the Good News,” added Margaret, “we’ve seen the tears of gratitude from people in thanksgiving for our ministry—how encouraging and thankful we are to God for allowing us to see the fruit of our labors—His fruit.”

The Seinens, with an alumnus of Hillcrest School, shortly before their departure from Nigeria

True beauty
continued from cover

mirror says: “When the world shatters your image, let God piece you back together.” In addition, there’s a wall with pictures of loved ones with the headline: “The beautiful people in our lives.” Also on the floor, the women drew the outline of a "Woman of God," and inside the outline they wrote words signifying some of the traits of such a woman according to the Scriptures —joyfulness, humility, prayerfulness, encouragement, forgiveness, modesty, love, honesty, cheerfulness, thankfulness, childlike faith, truth, service, wisdom, simplicity, purity, compassion, holiness, inner peace, generosity, praise, kindness, faithfulness, loyalty, hospitality, trust, meekness and many other characteristics. “And just as a final reminder of the difference between what the world says and what the Bible teaches us,” concluded Sarah, “a painting hangs on another wall with the words from Luke 15:32: ‘This [sister] of yours was dead and is alive again.’ ”

Three librarians
continued from page 2

efforts? Zandbergen said that although these questions are more difficult to answer and measure (as compared to measuring the size of the collection, facilities, budget, etc.), the answers should provide more meaningful guidance as to the impact of the library upon the users of that library.

“It was a great conference,” said Zandbergen. “The workshop we presented provided guidance in aligning the library’s mission statement with the institution’s mission, encouraged librarians to become active participants in creating and sustaining a ‘culture of assessment’ on campus, and to take the responsibility for evaluating library effectiveness.”
Walt Gutowski Jr. is the current and second-generation owner of Swift Printing Company in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His parents started the business in 1950 on the corner of Bridge Street and Turner Avenue, where it has been located ever since. In 2005, while the facility was undergoing renovations, a 100-year-old Dutch heritage Bible was found hidden in an inner wall in one of the buildings. "Being of Polish heritage, I knew I was not the proper caretaker for this treasure," said Gutowski. He called the Public Museum, but they were not interested, so the Bible sat in a file cabinet in his office waiting for the right caretaker. On occasion, he would pull the Bible out of the cabinet and show it to someone who he thought might be the right fit, but according to him, "It never felt quite right."

After his election as First Ward City Commissioner for Grand Rapids, Gutowski had the opportunity to meet Ed DeVries, a well-known developer and builder in west Michigan and a member of the board of trustees of the College. "I thought that in Ed, I had finally found the caretaker for the Bible," said Gutowski. "However, Ed told me that while he was not the right person to keep the Bible, he had the perfect caretaker for it—Kuyper College."

During a recent board meeting, Gutowski and DeVries presented the Bible to Nick Kroeze, president of the College, and to the members of the board. Addressing the board, they both shared about the history of their new friendship and the events that led to the presentation of the Bible to the Kuyper College community.

The Kuyper women’s basketball team and coach Kalman in frigid Alaska

As an alumni, you are a vital part of the Kuyper College community. Please continue to share with us the stories about your life, work and ministry. You may contact Nadia Van Dyk, alumni & parent relations coordinator, by mail at the Kuyper College address, by e-mail at alumni@kuyper.edu, or by calling 1-877-229-0941.

Chet and Angie (Kroeze) Glass (2000) were blessed with their first child—a baby boy, Caleb Joseph—born on February 16, 2009.

Michael (2000) and Tricia Jager have adopted a baby girl, Addison Mekdes. She was born on February 10, 2008. The adoption was finalized on August 26, 2008, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Tom (2007) and Kari (Schierbeek) Sterk (2006) were blessed with their first child—a baby girl, Hailey Joy—born on September 1, 2008.

Paul and Nadia (Asanova) Van Dyk (1998) were blessed with their first child—a baby boy, Donal Alexander—born on November 16, 2008.


Kevin Struyk and Jenny Michaels (2005) were married on October 11, 2008, in Orlando, Florida.
With AmeriCorps in Seattle

Editor’s Note: Sarah Poulisse, Class of 2008 (BSW), is working for AmeriCorps at a crisis residential center in Seattle, Washington. In an interview, Sarah shares her experiences.

KCN—Where are you serving?
Sarah—I am an AmeriCorps volunteer through Notre Dame Mission Volunteers at Spruce Street Secure Crisis Residential Center in Seattle—a short-term shelter for runaways.

KCN—What are your responsibilities?
Sarah—The purpose of my AmeriCorps team is to provide support to underserved youth in the Seattle area. My role is called Bridges Coordinator for a program created for youths who need help in areas such as education, counseling and effective role modeling. These young people are often involved in drug dealing, prostitution or are part of gangs. Bridges involves a lot of relationship building, education, case management (getting youth back in school) and job finding. I attempt to build relationships with the young people while they are living at the Center so I can follow up and work with them after they leave Spruce Street.

KCN—Why did you travel to Seattle? Wasn’t there a position closer to home?
Sarah—I spent 22 years in Grand Rapids, MI. It was a good place to grow up, to be sure, but I had seen the worst and best of west Michigan by the end of my college career. I knew that I needed a new experience amidst people who thought differently and where there was a multiplicity of diversity—faith, race, political ideologies and socioeconomic backgrounds. I wanted to gain experience, live in a large city with public transportation so I could get rid of my car, and explore a larger world. I even have an aunt and uncle who live in Seattle, which has made the transition easier. I didn’t receive the greatest encouragement from friends and family regarding my move, but I couldn’t imagine staying and still thriving personally. So, I found my way to Seattle working for a small stipend, taking the bus, learning all about Seattle’s youth services, and loving life.

KCN—Your work can be stressful. How do you get through it all?
Sarah—I keep balance in mind. I see how easy it is to personally take on my clients’ crises. When you add the stress of living on a very modest stipend and moving to a new place where you don’t know anyone, balance is NECESSARY. I found friends in similar walks of life and I try to exercise regularly. I have an AmeriCorps team who knows pretty well what I’m experiencing. And I stay connected with people who are important to me back home. It is also so important to make time and space for reading, journaling, hobbies, sleeping, God and my faith. I know I have to be intentional in order to stay strong in my beliefs, so I seek to find a healthy balance between all aspects of my life so I can replenish and be a more effective vessel of God’s love and grace.

KCN—What have you learned, and what are you learning, through your work?
Sarah—I’ve learned that I’m only one person and can only do so much, and that I am not the answer to the problem. I can only be there to encourage and be a resource for the young people’s journey to recovery, stabilization, attitude adjustment, or whatever it is they need. In addition, I’m learning that I will probably never see the fruits of my labors. However, I need to take one day and one small success at a time. I’m young and still learning, but I’m helping others and making a difference in the process.

KCN—How did your Kuyper education prepare you for what you’re doing today?
Sarah—Kuyper is unique; it has a very special niche. At Kuyper, academics reflect the College’s Reformed worldview which is integrated into every course. Kuyper equipped me to evaluate and develop my faith as I grew very much in the safe, but mostly different—for me—environment. The four-year journey I began and saw through at Kuyper challenged me to evaluate the values I was raised with and decide for myself to embrace them. This was difficult because, unlike my first 18 years of life, I wasn’t in an environment that mostly agreed with me.

In addition, Kuyper professors have integrity. They’ve followed a calling that allows them to help other people discern and work toward their calling. The professors treated me well and as a capable student and adult, expected much of me, challenged me, and allowed me room for creative expression. My social work classes were intimate and productive, and the attention, encouragement, and challenges I received from professors Scott and Meerman did more than encourage an academic understanding of the social work field. They helped me by pushing me out into the field. Still, I am learning now that I have so much more to learn, but I am grateful for the knowledge, values and skills I did acquire in my social work education.

KCN—Anything else you’d like to add?
Sarah—On a daily basis I try to be humble about what I do. Perhaps I’m too hard on myself, but I don’t want to give the impression that I am out there saving the world. I’m only doing what I can. Picking up and moving to Seattle was my way of doing that. Not everyone has to do the same to follow God’s purposes for them in life. We can all do great things where we are or where we feel called to be.
Kuyper College
Alumni Information Form

Once you've completed this form, please use the postage-paid business reply envelope in this newsletter to mail back to Kuyper College.

Name: ___________________________ Spouse: ___________________________
Year of Graduation or Specific year(s) you attended the College ___________________________
Current Mailing Address: ________________________________________________________
Alternate Mailing Address: ________________________________________________________
Home Phone: ____________________ Cell: __________________
E-mail Address: __________________
Current Occupation: ___________________ Employer: __________________
Current Church Attending: __________________
Birthday: ______ /__ /__________ Anniversary: __________________
Relatives who attended/attend the College: ________________________________________

What services would you like to see provided to you by the Kuyper Alumni Office?
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

What kind of Kuyper events are you most likely to attend? (check all that apply)

☐ On-campus events (plays, conferences, etc.)         ☐ Events specific to your graduating class
☐ Special events (Spring Gala, International Golf Outing, etc.)
☐ Alumni specific events
☐ Alumni events in your area (if out of state)
☐ None
☐ Other: __________________________

Would you be interested in supporting Kuyper College by: (check all that apply)

☐ Volunteering on campus
☐ Talking to prospective students in your area
☐ Helping contact alumni to update and maintain alumni info
☐ Serving on the alumni board
☐ Hosting/meeting with visiting student groups
☐ Assisting with other alumni tasks
☐ Assisting with phoneathons, art auction, etc.
☐ Other: __________________________
Do you have any special skills you would like to offer Kuyper: (photography, graphic design, record-keeping, writing, decorating, carpentry, etc.)

How often would you like to see alumni events offered at Kuyper?

☐ Once a year  ☐ Other: __________________________
☐ Twice a year

What type of information are you most interested in receiving from the Kuyper College Alumni Office? (check all that apply)

☐ Updates on current College events  ☐ Invitations to special events
☐ Updates about current students and faculty  ☐ Special services and discounts for alumni received through the College
☐ Updates on how to connect with classmates and other alumni  ☐ Other: __________________________

What is your preferred method of receiving communications and updates from the Kuyper Alumni Office?

☐ U.S. Postal Mailings  ☐ Web site/ Web-based community
☐ E-Mail  ☐ Other: __________________________

Are there any other questions, concerns or ideas you would like to share with us?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Once you've completed this form, please use the postage-paid business reply envelope in this newsletter to mail back to Kuyper College.

For questions, suggestions, or additional information, please contact Nadia Van Dyk, coordinator of alumni and parent relations at: nvandyk@kuyper.edu or by calling 616-988-3648

KUYPER COLLEGE
Office of Alumni & Parent Relations
3333 East Beltline NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525
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www.kuyper.edu
Born in Grand Rapids, Susan Hoag describes two constants in her life—martial arts and the church. “I grew up in the United Church of Christ,” said Susan. “However, during my later teenage years, I also attended an Assembly of God church.” According to her, the tension between two different worship styles and beliefs created some confusion and presented denominational and doctrinal challenges for her. “Now, what I’ve been learning at Kuyper is like growing a third leg,” she said. “I’m learning not just to accept what I’ve been told, but how to find out truth for myself.” Susan is also a certified teacher of martial arts. She holds a second degree black belt. “Growing up I was very small and weak, so my mom thought it would be good for me to gain some strength. I’ve been involved in martial arts since second grade,” said Susan.

After high school, Susan, not knowing exactly what she wanted to do, enrolled at a community college. “However, ministry was always in the back of my mind,” she said. “Yet, I was not sure how to go about it, so I began looking into other schools.” According to her, she considered Kuyper, “that little school on the East Beltline.” But, she thought, “I was not Reformed, so why would I want to go there?” It took only one visit to convince her that Kuyper was the place for her. After a year at the College, and several conversations with Kuyper’s provost, Mel Flikkema, who is a retired colonel in the Army Chaplaincy, she decided that she wanted to be a military chaplain and joined the National Guard.

Susan is back at Kuyper after being deployed to Iraq, where she served as an assistant chaplain for one year. “It was overwhelming,” she says of her time in Iraq. “In a war theater chaplaincy you’re never off—every soldier’s problems land at your door, even in the middle of the night.” Susan said it was a time of extreme spiritual growth. She explained: “In that dry, desert land, I found that part of my life was a spiritual desert that needed to be watered and cultivated. So, I took the same advice I gave the soldiers. I spent a lot of time studying the Word and in prayer, being still and learning what God, through Christ, wanted for me.”

Susan is still in the National Guard. After graduation, she plans to enter seminary and then attend the Army’s chaplaincy school.