Student Scholar Day

At the end of each school year, as the weather warms up and students prepare for summer, one day is set aside to celebrate scholastic achievements. During Student Scholar Day, students are encouraged to present academic papers and artwork, and make oral presentations to Kuyper classmates, faculty, staff, family, and friends. The day begins with recognition of outstanding graduates during the Honors Convocation. After the ceremony, the rest of the day is dedicated to student presentations.

All presenters have spent untold hours working on their projects, some since the beginning of the school year. The process starts with students submitting an abstract of their project to a panel of professors. If approved, a faculty advisor is appointed to guide the student through the process of creating their presentation. This year, there were thirty-two presentations on topics such as: “The Effects of Chick Flicks on Women’s View of Romantic Relationships” by Cheyenne Boluyt, “Jesus and the Adulterous Passage” by Jonathan Waterbury, and “Introversion and Extroversion in a Culture of Technology” by Erica Hall.

In addition, eight artwork presentations in the form of posters, delving into such issues as “Video Game Addiction” and “Landmines in Cambodia,” were on display in the Library.

After a day of celebration, the Kuyper College Choir brought the day to an end by performing “Holy Week: Singing the Story.” A fitting finale, serving to remind the Kuyper community that academic talent is but one of the many blessings we receive from God.

North to Alaska

Mark and Heather (Ayre) Overbeek, members of the class of 1998, grew up in loving Christian homes, Mark in Middleville and Heather in Fremont—both small cities in Michigan. They met at Kuyper, married during their senior year, and now serve in the village of Old Harbor, Alaska. Located on Kodiak Island, and with a population of about 200 people, the village is only accessible by air or sea. This is their story.

Mark’s Story

I grew up as the third of four children. Ours was a Christian upbringing in so many more ways than that term is often applied these days. Yes, we spent a lot of time at church. But more than that, my parents really lived out before us what it looked like to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Two other major influences in my formative years were my brother and my friend Eric. At the age of 13, I knew I was a sinner and was beginning to sense in a deeper way a great need to be reconciled with God. My brother and I shared a room, and one night I came across his journal. Though I don’t remember the content of those notes, I remember the feeling of realizing my utter sin and lostness. I also realized the splendor of God’s gift of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ. I ran downstairs and shared with my parents that I wanted to follow Jesus. Later that month I made profession of faith.

Alaska continued on page 4

An aerial view of the village of Old Harbor, Alaska
Letter from the president

Depending on which generation you are part of, the word “memories” will either bring to mind the swooning voice of Elvis Presley (“Memories, pressed between the pages of my mind”); Barbara Streisand with her rendition of “Memory” from the musical Cats (“Memory, all alone in the moonlight, I can smile at the old days it was beautiful then”); or Keith Urban’s “Making Memories of Us” (“And I’ll win your trust making memories of us”). Truly, there are strong emotional attachments as one connects with thoughts of the past when we discover how closely tied they are in our hearts yet today.

As I write this letter I am also reflecting that today is the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. The media has been full of stories honoring our World War II veterans, and especially of those who had direct involvement with the invasion of Normandy. The memories of 90-year-old men, only shared to the degree their hearts can bear, are usually accompanied by eyes glistened with the tears that honor thoughts of their fallen comrades. And yet there too is the overwhelming feeling of having been part of something grand, purposeful, decisive and much bigger than themselves. For them, their memories are at the same time humbling, proud and grateful.

As we at Kuyper draw closure to our 75th Anniversary year, we have been very mindful of the memories alumni, staff, trustees and supporters of the College have found dear to their hearts. Many of these have been shared in The Kuyper College News, the anniversary book, and college events throughout the year. Many of those memories are hugely nostalgic. Many memories also still bring tears to people’s eyes—on our Student Memorial Wall there are pictures of five of our students who died while attending the college. All of these memories together have become an important part of who we are today and what we will be in the future.

As with our D-Day veterans, we recognize too that we have been—and yet are—part of something grand, purposeful, decisive and much bigger than ourselves. So, let us cherish these memories that we have shared together and let us encourage one another in carrying forward the spirit and work of those who went before us. Continue to sing The Old, Old Story in the present time as you continue to pray for and help prepare a new generation of alumni who will, one day, reflect with humility, pride and gratitude that their time at Kuyper helped enable them to be a meaningful part of something much bigger than themselves. What sweet memories!

Dr. Nicholas V. Kroese
President

Kuyper alumnus makes U.S. Army history

Rev. Peter Hofman, class of 2002, a U.S. Army chaplain with the rank of captain, recently earned a Special Forces tab. Together with his previously earned Ranger tab, Hofman is the only chaplain in the history of the U.S. Army to earn both Ranger and Special Forces tabs. Special Forces soldiers, also referred to as the legendary Green Berets, are an elite, multipurpose force for high priority operational targets of strategic importance. They undertake missions ranging from counterterrorism to unconventional warfare, while also seeing deployment to foreign regions to take part in humanitarian efforts.

The Special Forces qualification course consists of stress and aptitude tests, land navigation courses, studies on language and culture, and intensive survival and evasion training. On their website, the Army summarizes who the Special Forces are with a simple phrase—The toughest missions. The best-trained soldiers. “During training there were things outside your control, such as instructors, teammates, personality conflicts, weather and terrain,” said Hofman. “During this time my Reformed faith was paramount. I could trust in a sovereign God. I knew it’s out of my control, but He is in control.”

Hofman said that establishing credibility among soldiers is what motivated him to earn his Special Forces tab. “In order to build effective rapport with a group of people, you need to study their culture, environment, history, and understand what motivates them. In those terms the military is its own culture. I am ministering in this context,” he said. Having these tabs has allowed Hofman to become a vehicle for the gospel to others in the military. “The type of men I am around judge a book by its cover. The way they do this is by your uniform. With the Ranger and Special Forces tabs, I enter their brotherhood,” he explained. “When they need someone to turn to, they can say, ‘This guy understands me.’”

Hofman’s home and calling church is First Christian Reformed Church of Waupun, Wisconsin. Peter and Kristi (Kroeze), class of 2003, and their six children currently reside in Hope Mills, North Carolina.
In My Words: God’s Campus

Dr. Edwin D. Roels—President, RBC—1987-1995

When I was invited to serve as RBC’s president in 1987, I was impressed with the College’s excellent faculty and some of the programs and courses being offered. I also met a number of very dedicated and capable RBC students who were preparing for lives of Christian service. Clearly, RBC was a wonderful place to be!

However, while appreciating the faculty, programs and students, I had relatively little interest in the campus buildings. Buildings and building programs were definitely not on my mind and not on my heart. I was surprised, therefore, after being on campus only a very short time, when I was invited to meet with some RBC board members and a college vice president to discuss the possibility of building a new library on the campus. Some very attractive and impressive architectural drawings had already been made and a generous donor had offered to help underwrite the costs of the building.

It seemed somewhat strange, however, that the new library would be built on a campus that had relatively little room for expansion and where the main building on campus—with classrooms, offices and “chapel”—was in great need of significant improvements. After some serious discussion, therefore, the Committee agreed that we should probably consider other options. So they decided to appoint me to meet with the president of neighboring Aquinas College to see whether they might possibly be interested in purchasing the RBC campus. Though I was no more of a realtor than a builder, God graciously enabled the College to sell the old campus to Aquinas College and to begin building an entirely new campus on a different site.

As the plans for the new campus were being developed and a builder was selected, I suggested to Mr. Dan Vos (founder of the Dan Vos Construction Company) that he might wish to crown his extensive church building activities by building a chapel on the new campus. Dan graciously agreed to build AND donate the beautiful chapel, which is now a focal point of joyful worship, praise and thanksgiving to God.

Through the exercise of good stewardship, the generosity of many donors, and the diligence and skill of the builders, the RBC/Kuyper campus was built on schedule and within the proposed budget! It clearly was God Himself who provided everything that was required to build this beautiful campus to His glory. Soli Deo Gloria!

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

Stewardship: The Kuyper College Annual Fund

A Foundation for Giving

At Kuyper College we count on the success of the Annual Fund to enhance the education all students receive. Like most institutions, tuition doesn’t cover the full cost of educating a student. Therefore, Kuyper relies on support from alumni and friends, private foundations and corporations to help “fill the gap” between tuition revenue and annual operating expenses. Simply put, support for the Annual Fund provides Kuyper College the opportunity to welcome those who come with a desire to be trained to make a difference in God’s world after graduation, regardless of their profession.

Tuition Does Not Cover Everything

Charging enough tuition to cover total budget expenses would mean that a Kuyper education would be beyond the reach of most students served by the College. The board of trustees is committed to educating students who value and desire a Kuyper education, not just those students who can afford to pay full tuition costs.

Tuition, fees and auxiliary enterprises (including room and board) provide a large percentage of the total operational budget—about 79% this year. Endowment earnings provide 9%, but much of the remaining revenue required to operate the College comes from financial contributions to the Annual Fund. The Annual Fund goal for the current year is $909,000.

We All Benefit

The entire Kuyper College community benefits from the gifts to the Annual Fund. These gifts allow us to provide:

- Scholarship support for deserving students
- Academic programs which integrate faith and learning
- Outstanding faculty
- Extracurricular programs, including ongoing campus activities, intramural programs, intercollegiate sports, and student leadership groups
- Acquisitions and resources for the Zondervan Library
- Continuing education opportunities for faculty
- A safe, spacious and contemporary campus

Impactful Participation

Your gift to the Annual Fund, no matter the amount, impacts and transforms lives, which positively affect our community, state and the world. The Annual Fund helps Kuyper provide a comprehensive education that puts biblical faith first in the academic and community experience of our students through the integration of a high-quality academic curriculum and a Reformed worldview. It also helps us enhance our programs, recruit and retain exceptional faculty, and add many valuable resources for students that make a Kuyper education both desirable and valuable.
Though younger than me in age, Eric, a friend from youth group, was much older than me spiritually. He was really unashamed of his faith. He also had a way of evaluating life through a biblical lens. He was a godly voice in my life, helping me grow in my faith. During a basketball game Eric collapsed on the court. He died a short time later. I struggled to understand how God could allow this to happen and have Eric taken out of my life. Then as I began to process Eric’s death, two thoughts seemed to crystallize. First, Eric had it right. Life is about bringing glory to God. Real life is to be found only in our relationship with Christ. Second, life is short. I became convicted of the need to devote my life to something that matters for eternity. Although it took time, I began developing that same confidence in my faith that I so admired in Eric. This was my first step toward the mission field and my first step toward Kuyper. One of the youth workers at our church, Peace Reformed, had gone there and highly recommended it. To be honest, I really didn’t put a whole lot of thought in it. The biggest decision was to go to a Bible college instead of Ferris State, which I had previously considered.

**Heather’s Story**

I am the youngest of four girls, by just 10 minutes. My fraternal twin sister was always my best friend and ally. My older sisters were role models, challenging me to excellence at school by their example and encouraging me to live as a Christian by their wise choices. We were heavily involved in programs at church like GEMS and youth group. Our parents encouraged our participation, but never forced us. We attended church as a family and saw my parents’ Bibles always lying out and about, as they were frequently used.

Looking back, I believe the Lord used the collective body of Christ in my local church to bring me to salvation. I remember a couple of moments that mark milestones in coming to Christ. The first is merely a faint memory of quietly retreating into my parents’ room, closing the door, and finding a corner between the wall and dresser where I prayed, “Jesus, come into my heart.” That’s all. No great confession, no theological understanding, no magical fireworks. Old enough to walk, open doors, form sentences and offer a simple prayer of invitation from a simple understanding of simple faith. A few years later I wanted to know how I would know it was the right time to make this choice, this decision. I saw young people standing before the leaders of the church saying, “Jesus is my Savior and Lord.” However, I didn’t want to do it just because they did. A Sunday school teacher explained that I would know by feeling a “prick in my heart.” At 13 I experienced the urging of the Spirit—“the prick in my heart.” That night, with my mother’s help, I prayed for forgiveness of my sin and for Jesus to be Lord of my life. I remember experiencing great joy as I left for school the next day. That was just the start of the journey.

When I was in high school, one of our youth pastors and his wife, both grads from Kuyper, took us on two mission trips to Mexico. Those experiences got me thinking seriously about the future and changing my pursuits. I had dreams of a successful career, but as graduation approached, I found myself changing direction. I chose Kuyper because I was committed to lifelong service in Christ and wanted to really learn what that looked like.

**Mark and Heather’s Story**

We met at Kuyper and found close friends, the kind you can be away from for years and get together again like no time has passed. We found professors passionate about what they taught. We found the tools to grow. We found peers who understood us and joy in knowing Christ more intimately than ever before. We also found difficulty in challenging decisions and the spiritual nurturing from fellow students and professors that we needed to continue the ever-deepening journey with Christ. And beyond the education and degrees, we received the ability to discerningly study, in freedom, the Word and will of...
God. We were not boxed into one way of thinking, but were taught how to rely on the Spirit. After graduation we served in youth ministry in a church for a couple of years. While there, we both felt called to missions. So we left our position, and I took a construction job to pay off Heather’s and my student loans. Within a year we were debt free, and God began to unfold His plan before us.

At Urbana in 2001, we met a group of folks doing ministry among native peoples in remote villages in Alaska. Something stirred in our hearts. We moved to Kodiak in 2003 and God opened a door for us in 2004, when we moved to Old Harbor. We’ve been there ever since. Along the way God blessed us with children. Our oldest, Josiah, is 12, followed by Esther, 10, Jedidiah, 7, Miriam, 2, and Phoebe, born this past April.

At Old Harbor we realized early on that we not only desired to build relationships with the people, but we really needed them to teach us how to live in such a place. There were some historical wounds inflicted by others who had come to the village in the past. Over time, people have come to see us in a different light and trust has begun to develop. We now have a small fellowship of 15 believers that worships on Sundays and meets throughout the week for prayer, projects, Bible study and accountability. Though the fellowship is small, we see growth in relationships with Christ and a group of believers committed to one another.

Early on we saw an open door for us to minister to the youth. During the school year, we have an after school program once a week for kids K-6 with Bible lessons that often lead up to the theme of Bible Camp, a week-long ministry in the summer held in partnership with a church on the mainland. Another exciting youth ministry opportunity has been taking teenagers on outdoor trips, such as hiking, kayaking, horseback riding, and mountain and road biking. Getting them out of the village has allowed the teenagers to become more transparent, which has resulted in deeper conversations.

While our ministry has been focused on Old Harbor for several years, God is giving us a vision for regional ministry around the island of Kodiak. The largest city on the island, the city of Kodiak, includes a population of 1,200 native people. There is presently no church that is meaningfully engaging this community. While Old Harbor is the largest, there are five other villages around the island accessible only by air or water, ranging in population from 30 to 150. What if we could form cell groups in each of these villages—a core of believers with one or two leaders who bring people together for prayer, Bible study and fellowship? And what if each of these cell groups becomes connected to a body of believers in Kodiak while seeing the native community in Kodiak intentionally engaged with the gospel? These two aspects of ministry merge as believers from the villages come to Kodiak to experience worship in the larger body of Christ, to be encouraged in the faith, and to be trained in various aspects of Christian leadership. Right now, God is gathering the pieces together. There is a team of Christian leaders in place who have become convinced of this vision, just as we have, and are committed to partnering with God and each other to see it happen. Even more exciting than that, we believe there are believers in each of the villages that we can partner with in establishing these cell groups. While we aren’t sure what the future holds, or what specific shape our ministry will take in the future, we are excited about this new direction and feel humbled that God would choose to use us to accomplish His purposes on Kodiak Island.

Mark, (red vest), sea kayaking in the waters around Kodiak Island
Attending RBI was a great time in my life. I lived at home, about 25 miles from the RBI campus, and enjoyed commuting with four classmates in a little Volkswagen Beetle that seemed like we were sitting inside an egg and close to the ground.

At RBI it felt like we were all a family attending classes with students of all different ages, some who were single and some married couples with families, all representing a variety of cultures and nationalities. In between classes we would enjoy snacks, chat, and sometimes take a peaceful walk with fellow students “down to the pond.” The atmosphere on campus helped me to focus on serving Christ, to learn to share my faith, and to live in community with everyone wherever life has led me.

I met my husband, Bob, after he had completed six years in the U.S. Army, serving in places like France, Alaska and Texas. While we were dating we attended a variety of activities on and off campus. On June 18, 1965, we were married, and being that all of us in the RBI community were very close, they were all excited to be invited to the wedding. Since then, we’ve been blessed with five children and nine grandchildren. I’ve also enjoyed many long-lasting friendships with staff, students and alumni, and was an active member of the RBI-RBC Alumni Association for ten consecutive years.

RBI prepared me well for many community leadership positions over the years. I’m glad and blessed to still be serving the Lord with the gifts He has given me.

My favorite memory at RBC was taking the course on Western Evangelism with Dr. Hertel. As part of the course requirements, paired-up students made cold calls once a week and then would write a brief report. I still remember knocking at one door and being welcomed in by an older lady. We introduced ourselves and went straight to the reason we had come. “We are students at RBC and are visiting the neighborhood to share Jesus Christ with those who don’t know Him. We are also inviting them to come to church,” we said. I shared my story of growing up in the villages of Africa and how it was there that I met Christ. She grew more interested, especially when I shared my story of growing up in an African Traditional Religion (ATR) family. I still vividly remember her question: “Are you telling me that Jesus is in Africa?” “Yes,” I responded, “and He is here in GR too. In fact, He is here in your house as we speak, and you can receive Him as your Savior.” In the end she prayed to receive Christ. I got an A in that course. However, the greatest joy was in knowing that the Lord used the course to lead this lady to Him. Almost 30 years later, this story is still fresh in my mind.

As a missionary with Christian Reformed World Missions, I am reminded by this story to never be ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes (Romans 1:16).

I truly enjoyed my four years at Kuyper (two years as RBC!). In those years, I had the privilege of working on campus, and one of my positions was sitting at the front desk. I really enjoyed this job because I was able to see faculty, staff and students as they walked by—oftentimes, someone would strike up a conversation which helped me to get to know others. When he delivered packages, the UPS delivery person would even bring chocolates for the front desk worker.

During one spring break, when most of my Kuyper friends were off, I stayed behind to work and study. Trying to have the most fun as possible, I wrote up a “Chronicle of the Front Desk.” I took great delight in recording every detail I could, including who walked by, what they said, how many times Duane Bras came out to inspect how everyone was doing, and Dr. Meyer offering me Chinese food for lunch! By the end of the day, I realized how delightful Kuyper was and, should I say, how delightful the people at Kuyper are.

I was part of the first graduating class from the music and worship program in 2008. Dr. Carol Hochhalter and the other students of this class became a close family. I so appreciated how personal our classes were, how much fun we had during music trips, and how friendships made remain to this day. And I will never ever forget the spontaneous times of singing and playing music in the Chapel, sometimes after hours of study when we needed a break. We sure sang loud! These are some of my favorite memories from Kuyper which I’ll never forget.
Class Notes

Marriages:

Michael Braden (2014) and Karissa Geurink (2014) were married on May 3, 2014.

Tim DeWolde and Sylvia Davenport (2014) were married on May 3, 2014.

Kellen Arick and Celia Larson (2013), were married on May 10th, 2014.

Matthew Peterson (2014) and Grace Slomp (2014) were married on May 31, 2014.

Eric Reynhout (2013) and Chelsea Axford (2012) were married on June 28, 2014.

Births:

Ken (2007) and Kristi (Lyman) Kruithoff (2007) were blessed with Clara Hope on September 29, 2013. She joined big sister Annabelle.


Eric (2011) and Angela (Hubers) Roosma (2012), with big brother John, welcomed Audrey Jean on January 26, 2014.

Adam and Heather (Befus) Tichelaar (2007), along with big brother Hans, were blessed with baby boy Heath Edward on February 26, 2014.

Tony (2011) and Rebecca (Sikkes) VandenHoo (2011), along with big brother Judah, welcomed baby girl Analeigh Chesed on March 25, 2014.

Chris (2007) and Karen (Meulink) Neumair (2009), with siblings Hannah and Becca, had Elizabeth Claire on May 1, 2014.


Professional Developments:

Stephanie (Vander Heide) Bergman (2010) graduated from Spring Arbor University with a Master of Arts in Counseling. She recently joined the staff at thethirdchair counseling agency in Grand Rapids, MI.

Alex Brito (2005) was recently promoted to refugee mentor coordinator at Bethany Christian Services in Grand Rapids, MI.

Rachel (Grochowalski) Curtis (2011) graduated from Grand Valley State University with a Master of Arts in English.

Darrell L. Delaney (2005) has been appointed as campus pastor of Madison Square Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

Shaun Furniss (2004) has been appointed as senior pastor of North Street Christian Reformed Church in Zeeland, MI.

Kelly Oosterbroek (2014) has joined the staff of Home Works Corporation (HWC) in Wyoming, MI, as an administrative assistant.

Lisa Ritzema (2011) has joined the staff at Hope Reformed Church in South Haven, MI, as director of worship and arts.

Events

Kuyper International Golf Scramble
12:00 pm, Monday, August 25

Kuyper Youth Ministry Golf Scramble
9:00 am, Monday, August 25

Fall Orientation
Tuesday, August 26 – Sunday, August 31

Registration and Classes Begin
Tuesday, September 2

Opening Convocation
Friday, September 5

Faculty Scholar Day
Friday, October 3

Scholarship Dinner
Monday, October 20

Kuyper Experience Days
Find schedule at www.kuyper.edu/visit

News

• Dr. Jeff Fisher, assistant professor of theological studies, made a presentation, Reforming Melchizedek: Changes to Interpreting the Mysterious Priest at the Reformation, at the Evangelical Theological Society conference.

• Dr. Carol Hochhalter, associate professor of worship studies, is serving on the steering team for the Association for Reformed & Liturgical Worship.

• Dr. Dan Kroeze, professor of biblical studies, presented the Foundations for Christian Movement modules for the Grand Rapids area chapter of Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, a ministry of the U.S. Center for World Mission.

• Dr. Branson Parler, associate professor of theological studies, made a presentation, Act Naturally: Paul on Hair Length and Human Sexuality, at the Midwest Regional Evangelical Theological Society meeting.

• Dr. Richelle White, associate professor of youth ministry’s articles In Her Steps: Honoring Historical Preaching Women in African Methodism, and Wholly Hip-Hop: Black Youth, Hip-Hop and Youth Ministry, were respectively published in the A.M.E. Church Review and the Journal of Youth Ministry.
According to Cobey Bussey, his father is the hardest working man he knows. “He has worked hard for our family while teaching my siblings and me what it takes to be successful in life. The formula he consistently preached was simple: a close knit family, hard work and respect,” said Cobey. He added that a quote from his father, “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn’t work hard,” keeps him motivated to achieve his goals.

Cobey also had high praise for his mother, whom he characterized as the most loving and caring person in the world. “While we were growing up, there wasn’t anything she would not do to take care of our family; she made sure we had everything we needed. She still cares for us like that today,” he said. Cobey also speaks in glowing terms of his brother—“my best friend,” and his sister—“determined and totally committed.” He added that it is his family and the environment that he grew up in that has helped him to stay focused in everything he does.

While attending high school, Cobey says he was always committed to achieving the best he could while also maintaining a balanced life. “Staying committed to school made me more responsible as I was growing up—I also loved and played basketball and football,” he said.

Cobey says that although faith in the Lord played a big role in his and his family’s life, before coming to Kuyper he viewed Christ from a distance. “Now,” he said, “I rely on the Lord to get me up every day, and I give to Him whatever I have to handle that day. I know He cares and looks over me, so I live, always believing and with a heart of faith.”

At Kuyper, Cobey said he has found a great community. “I came here to get a Christian education and to play basketball. But I also found a welcoming community that took me in and has provided me with much support to help me grow further in my faith and continue to grow as a man,” he said. In praise of his fellow students, Cobey says they are supportive and want to see everyone succeed. Referring to the faculty, he says the professors are all welcoming, and he has received from them “a ton” of knowledge of things he did not know.

While at Kuyper, Cobey continues the pattern of life he lived while at home—he is very busy. “Besides all of my studies, I am a member of the basketball team and also work stacking pallets at SpartanNash. All of these experiences are good and help me to grow,” he said.

After graduation, and relying on the knowledge and experience gained through his business studies, Cobey plans to open a restaurant. He says that Kuyper had, and continues to have, a large influence in the development of those plans: “Kuyper has been life-changing and a blessing, teaching me to become the best man I can be.”