

KUYPER

College News

A Publication for Alumni & Friends

Ancient City of Patan in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, home of Mount Everest

MY STORY

ARBIN POKHAREL

THE STEPS OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN ARE ORDERED BY THE LORD

Born in Nepal to a privileged class family. Suddenly thrust into poverty and a Christian orphanage at the age of 4. A one in one hundred million chance phone call that sent him halfway around the world. A farm, Christian School, and church in Ohio. Dordt College. Kuyper College. Calvin Seminary. This is the story of Arbin Pokharel—from an orphanage to a leader of the Nepali church.

>> See **ARBIN POKHAREL**, Page 4

Alumni Profile

CLASS

1999

HOME

Kathmandu, Nepal

CAREER

Pastor, Cross-Way Community Church and President, Reformed and Presbyterian Seminary

FAMILY

Wife, Bimala, and two children, Alyssa and Immanuel

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Kuyper Alumna Becomes Urban Farmer

JOIN THE CONVERSATION



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Standing Stones

As a child, when I heard the story from Joshua 4 about setting up the standing stones, I would imagine myself going back in time and asking an Israelite, “What do these stones mean?” Then, I would wait to hear the amazing story of how God safely led the Israelites across the Jordan River to establish them in the Promised Land.

Do you think Joshua ever wondered if there would be a new set of standing stones representing what God would do in and through the next generation of Israelites—how He would support and stand with His people?

As I consider Kuyper College’s history, I can point to standing stones, or markers, of God’s work in and through our College community. Our standing stones may not appear as spectacular in nature as God leading Israel on dry ground across the Jordan River, but we, too, have testimonies to share of God’s loving faithfulness and gracious provision.

I wonder if some of our early leaders and graduates of Kuyper College, then Reformed Bible Institute or Reformed Bible College,

wondered what God would do in and through the next generation of students?

Living Stones

The Apostle Peter extends the analogy of standing stones and speaks of believers being *living stones* who are being “built into a spiritual house. . .to be a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that [we] may proclaim the mighty acts of Him who called [us] out of darkness into His marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2: 5, 9)

In this issue, you will read about some of God’s *living stones* within the Kuyper community—the next generation of students and alumni who are shining Christ’s light and love into a dark and broken world. And, you’ll read our current statement on racism and social justice, words that call all of us to be *living standing stones* as Christ’s representatives of love and justice to all people in every square inch of this dark and broken world.

As I reflect on these past weeks, navigating life and a new normal through this pandemic and witnessing, once again, the



impact of our unrelenting racist attitudes and behaviors, I am convicted. While I can say with surety that God’s loving faithfulness and gracious provision continues to stand at Kuyper College, can I as surely say that I am standing as a living stone, representing Christ to all of His image bearers? Or, am I a stone to trip over?

Thanks be to God for His grace, wisdom, truth, and justice which continues to stand. And, thank you for your commitment, encouragement, and support as we prepare the next generation of *living standing stones* for God’s glory.

Grateful to serve,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Patti".

Dr. Patricia R. Harris
President

“... can I as surely say that I am standing as a living stone, representing Christ to all of His image bearers? Or, am I a stone to trip over?”

Kuyper Community Notes

Professional Development

Matt Wohlford (2007) graduated from Western Theological Seminary and is now serving as the pastor of Nooksack Valley Reformed Church in Nooksack, WA.

Josh Westhouse (2010) graduated from Western Theological Seminary and is now serving as a chaplain resident at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services.

Betsy (Hochhalter) DeVries (2012) graduated from Emmanuel College at the University of Toronto with a Ph.D. in Theological Studies with an emphasis in homiletics.

George Floyd's Life Mattered. Black Lives Matter. Life is Sacred.

As a College whose thoughts and actions are guided by God's Word, we are adding our voice of condemnation against the racist attitudes that caused the murder of George Floyd. God created all of us in His image. God made us who we are.

The heartbreak of what we witnessed on a Minneapolis street has angered, profoundly troubled, and deeply saddened us. We abhor the racism that caused the death of George Floyd.

We have fallen short of God's intended goodness and peace and must stand

together against racism, hate, and violence. God commands us to love our neighbor, especially the oppressed.

How then do we act in order to restore what we, as fallen people, have broken?
How do we respond?

We Stand

We stand with our students. We stand with those feeling the hurt and pain over targeted police brutality and racism. We stand with those feeling marginalized by the actions of others. We stand with those confused by it all, unsure of what to say or do.

As Christians, we seek to restore justice. Kuyper College embraces the opportunity to educate students to be seekers of justice as they—His image bearers—are vital to changing the future and impacting the world according to His will.

Kuyper College stands against racism; we will take a stand against this scourge. We also join with others across the nation in lifting prayers for comfort not only for the family of George Floyd, but for every man, woman and child in our country who walks in fear because of the color of their skin.

Kuyper Announces Plans for In-Person Instruction this Fall

Dr. Patricia Harris, president of Kuyper College, announced on June 2, plans to open the College's campus for in-person instruction and residential living this fall.

"Since completing our academic year in April, we have been focused on developing suitable plans for this fall that promote student safety and success," said Dr. Harris. "While details are still in process, we will continue to provide updated information in the coming weeks to our returning and new students and their families."

The return to campus will be accomplished according to public health measures and guidelines by established by governmental authorities and medical experts. "While we are committed to being back on campus, our #1 priority is the safety of our students and staff," said Dr. Harris.

The State of Michigan MI SAFE START plan for re-opening the state has provided useful guidance being used to inform Kuyper's campus planning and preparation. Kuyper is also partnering with the Kent County Health Department, which has been instrumental in providing local guidance to the College. According to Ken Capiscio, Kuyper's vice-president for advancement, the College's Leadership Team has been engaged in numerous conversations with leaders of other institutions, ranging from higher education groups in Washington D.C. to meetings among sister institutions here in West Michigan. "All of these meetings are focused on safely opening our college campus and delivering in-person, on-campus education."

According to school officials, the smaller size of the College allows it to implement

a highly flexible learning model engaging smaller classes of students meeting face-to-face, using enhanced technology with personalized attention from faculty.

Kuyper is also aware that some students may have health considerations that might hinder in-person, on-campus attendance. As such, the College is committed to providing high-quality alternate arrangements.

"Finally," said Dr. Harris, "We are confident that as we continue to navigate through the challenges of this pandemic the Kuyper College community will demonstrate broadly how an intentional Christian, in-person, residential campus community can live and learn together—and do so safely."

FOR LATEST INFORMATION ON KUYPER'S COVID-19 RESPONSE, GO TO kuyper.edu/covid-19-updates

Shelby VanHouten (2014) began a new position at Hope Partners as an outpatient case manager/social worker for adults with severe mental illness.

Campus Event

August 24
Kuyper College International Golf Scramble, Sunnybrook Country Club

As alumni, we invite you to get involved and stay in touch by calling the Alumni Office at 877.229.0941 or sending us an email to alumni@kuyper.edu with your contact information or the most recent news about you.

Nepal is landlocked by India to the south, east, and west, and by China beyond the Himalayas to the North. I was born into the Brahmin caste, which made me “privileged” in a society measured by *dharma* and *karma*—literally religion and duty. Some of my paternal uncles served in the royal palace and the central temple committee in Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. My father had a high government job and owned property in Kathmandu. All those privileges turned into a curse instantly when our father passed away, leaving five children, all under the age of 12, to be raised by an uneducated young widow. To be a widow in Hindu religious society is a worse curse than the lowest of castes. Instantly, we became poor. My mother became helpless with grief and by a world that turned against her. Struggles began to pile up on top of the grief with relatives not wanting her around. Raising five children became impossible. So, my mother placed my older sister and I, her two middle children, in a children’s Christian home. I was 4 at the time. My sister Sarita and I were left without parents and siblings.

However, the Christian home was perhaps the safest and most beautiful place to grow up in a poor country like Nepal. There, we were provided with a good education, while also being cared for physically and spiritually. My favorite part of growing up at the Christian home was the church. My heroes were the pastors who would stand up every week to preach the Bible, many of whom were frequently arrested or even jailed. I would often think, “Who in this world would go this length for their faith if what they are preaching about was not true?” I began questioning the belief and the religious system I had been born into, and it did not take long to come to the truth. By the time I was in high school, I remember praying, “Lord, if you allow me to study the Bible, I will minister to your people in Nepal.”

When I finished my 10th grade standard education, I was lost as to what I would study after that. Then, a miracle happened. Out of the blue, a man from Celeryville, Ohio, a stranger, phoned the orphanage in Nepal. He knew about the children’s home from a newsletter. I happened to be the only one around at that time who spoke English, so we talked. After about an hour of answering his questions, he asked one more, a question that would change the course of my life forever. “How would you like to come and study in the United States? We have great Christian schools here.” Over the next seven months, he made all the preparations necessary.



Arbin and Bimala with children, Alyssa and Immanuel

Against all odds, in December of 1992, I found myself in Celeryville, ready to attend high school at Mansfield Christian School. The two years I spent in Ohio were full of excitement as well as struggles over everything that was new. I struggled because of the new culture, the winter, and living on a farm far away from Nepal. I was a city boy from a warm climate in Kathmandu. Mark Holthouse, my sponsor and host, was a kind man with a compassionate heart, but as a single man in his 50s, he was not accustomed to having a housemate or caring for a teenager. During these days, the church family at Willard Christian Reformed Church in Ohio sustained me. I was baptized at Willard CRC in 1994. The church took me in as part of their family. More particularly, Ben and Jill Wiers took me in as part of their own family. Willard CRC also became our commissioning church, sending us to the mission field in 2002.

After finishing high school in Ohio, I applied to Moody Bible College, but there were no scholarships available. Later, another miracle! I applied to Dordt College and was accepted with a 75% scholarship and ready to start in the fall of 1994. At Dordt, I was introduced to Calvin, Kuyper, Dooyeweerd, Wolters, Bavinck, the Plantingas, and other Dutch thinkers. I remember becoming deeply attracted to Reformed life and worldview. There I also met Dr. Nick Kroeze, who had been appointed as the next president of Kuyper College. He told me that Kuyper had a great missions study program. He followed by saying: “From what you’ve said, you should check it out. They also have great scholarship programs for missionaries!” The next thing I knew, I was a student at Kuyper in the fall of 1996.

The next three years at Kuyper were the best! It was the right place for me. At Kuyper I loved so many things. Student life and doing life together. The professors were serious about academics, yet they also motivated us about life and mission work around the world. To study alongside passionate, mission-minded professors and missionaries who had come back from the field, and with those who were preparing to enter into missions, was very special.

In 1998, I returned to Nepal for the summer. I had come back home for the first time after six years to find that churches were sprouting all over the city and all over the country. That summer God confirmed



Worship service at Cross-Way Community Church

His calling in my life for missions work there. He had made all the arrangements, in a miraculous way, for me to come to the United States and acquire a great education and support, through the kindness and gifts of the people of a nation lavished with kingdom resources. The covenant I had made with the Lord in the year I left Nepal in 1992, that I would return to minister to His people and the church, stayed with me throughout the 10 years I spent in the U.S. But it was at Kuyper that I found the framework for missions and resources for spirituality to propel my passion for the decades to come.

After graduating from Kuyper in the spring of 1999, I was given a full scholarship and enrolled at Calvin Seminary in the Master of Theological Studies program. I met Bimala, my wife, while she was a pre-med student at Calvin. Her father was a general in the Gurkha regiment of the British military. She was not only smart and beautiful, as a Hindu she had a deep commitment to serving in Nepal. I shared the gospel with her many times, but it wasn't until her engagement with the professors at Calvin that she became a Christian. After experiencing mission work in Kenya during a January interim, she changed her studies from pre-med to social sciences and Third World development. After finishing her undergrad program, she enrolled at Calvin Seminary for the MA program. In my second year at Calvin Seminary, we grew toward each other in our vision for Nepal. We dated less than a year, although we had known each other for over five years, and got married in the summer of 2001.

We arrived in Nepal in 2004 after spending two years teaching at a Presbyterian seminary in India. It was a year to wait on the Lord to discern His direction for our mission work. I was asked to preach in churches and give lectures so often that it began to occupy much of my time. Finally, I stopped taking invitations, and we settled in our living room to begin a prayer ministry which gave birth to our first church. More exciting was the Friday night youth ministry. After the group grew to over 20 regularly attending teenagers, we rented a coffee shop in town. We continued to grow in the coffee shop, held our first baptism of two ladies there, and on November 19, 2005, we inaugurated Cross-Way Community Church in Kathmandu, Nepal. After 15 years of being a community and a resource church in Kathmandu, God has led us to plant 32



Vacation Bible School at Sunsari, a daughter Church of Cross-Way

churches in 30 of Nepal's districts. We have endured many struggles, oppositions, and even persecutions in this mission. We have learned an important lesson that organic means, within a community of human relational interaction, is the best way to plant a church—through the body of Christ, each person becomes an authentic disciple of Christ.

There are certain advantages and disadvantages of being native missionaries. As nationals, people think and expect us to be fully and only natives and locals, but when they realize we are ministers of Christ, there is an odd stigma and a suspicion of ulterior motives. Missionary life is a life on a bridge. You never belong fully to either world but are called to serve both the worlds. You are called to live in God's reality and proclaim His truth, wherever and whatever the risk, and rest your security in God, whether you are accepted and approved, or not. Yet, you depend on the work of the Holy Spirit to use you and bring change in people's lives and their circumstances. Our ultimate comfort lies in the fact God is alive and active, and we are beloved enough that He would speak and act through us.

When we returned to Nepal, apart from praying in our home for God's direction, I began to teach at a theological institution. Today, after 15 years, I lead the Seminary, which is now called Reformed and Presbyterian Seminary, serving over 70 students every year from all denominations from across the country.



Reformed Presbyterian Seminary's Faculty and Board Members

My wife leads a multi-faceted ministry called Higher Ground. Higher Ground began as a coffee shop, expanded to a bakery, and then to a crafts business, all with the mission of training the most vulnerable and exploited women in skills and business, while supporting their children's education. Human trafficking and poverty are major problems in Nepal. Higher Ground, is an effort to combat both in the name of Christ.

As I lead the church and my wife leads the community development work, we envision God presenting us as His testimony to the world around us, to be an example to the new generation of church leaders growing up before our eyes. We have not been called to change the world; we have been called to live faithfully in and for Christ and to let the world see who Christ is as we abide together with the body of Christ we serve.

Ben Meyer—A Beloved Member of the Kuyper Community

As a result of a farming accident, Ben Meyer, a longtime member of the Kuyper faculty, went



home to be with his Lord, whom he loved, served, and worshipped, on Saturday, May 2. The Kuyper community wishes Ben's wife Judy and his family our deepest sympathies with a promise of our continued prayers.

Ben grew up on a dairy farm in South Dakota. After completing military service, he enrolled in Dordt College, where he met Judy. After graduation, the Meyers moved to Grand Rapids and began their teaching careers. Ben earned a master's degree from Western Michigan University, where he also received a Ph.D. in Education.

In 2002, upon the Meyers return from Phenom Phen, Cambodia, where they developed an English program at the Royal University of Law and Economics, Ben joined Kuyper College as academic dean and registrar. As a valued colleague gifted in academic administration, sharing the Kuyper vision with students was one of Ben's great passions.

Ben spent 32 years with Jenison, Michigan, public schools. In addition, he taught for 20 years as an adjunct professor at Grand Rapids Community College. Ben and Judy also spent summers teaching English in Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, and Lhasa, Tibet.

"Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful and trustworthy... Come share in the joy of your master." Now rest in eternal peace, Ben, dear colleague and friend.

In My Words

A COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER

A person you never met smiles at you in the grocery store, another driver lets you merge into traffic with a friendly wave, or someone ahead of you in line pays for your coffee. Any of these things are certain to brighten anyone's day, but at Kuyper College, acts like these are far more common than rare.



Lisa Rusticus

Manager of the Annual Fund
and Alumni Relations

The Kuyper College community has an inclusiveness paralleled by nothing I have experienced anywhere else. My first day as a student at Kuyper, I was given just a small glimpse of the promise of this community. Standing in line to buy books for the first time as a college freshman, another student popped up next to me, took three fairly expensive books out of my stack,

and before I could figure out what was going on, said: "Don't buy these; I have them." She ran to her dorm and returned with the books without even asking my name or for money. At the time, while I was delighted, this act of selfless kindness seemed incredibly unusual. But as I would learn throughout my four years as a student, this is just the way of the Kuyper community.

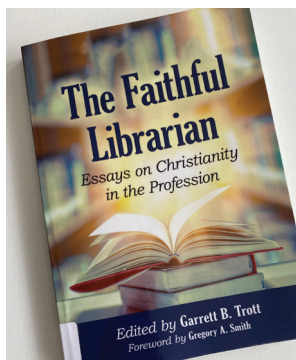
This loving and uncommon community is what excited me when I came back to Kuyper several years later to be part of the staff. As I walked around on my first day, I received hugs from professors and staff that I knew from my days as a student, while also receiving smiles and kind words from staff, professors and students I was meeting for the first time.

One of the hallmarks of the Kuyper community is that it effortlessly makes a person feel at home no matter who they are or where they come from. This way of welcoming, of embracing hospitality, is part of the Kuyper DNA, and perhaps it is one of the most difficult things to convey during these times of social distancing. Over the past few months, we had to cancel our Spring Gala, commencement, and numerous visit days for prospective students. While we replaced them with acceptable digital alternatives, nothing can take the place of community hugs, smiles and in-person, side-by-side and heart-to-heart worship.

When we are together once again, I hope we remember what made us connect with Kuyper in such a powerful way. I pray that the lessons we have all learned from our College community continue to help guide our way of living.

The Faithful Librarian

What do Christianity and librarians have in common? In a recent book, the *Faithful Librarian—Essays on Christianity in the Profession*, we learn, through 15 essays, the many commonalities between the two. One of those essays, “Scholarship as Conversation: Using a Shared Research Method (ALEA) to Help Students Seek Truth and Wisdom in a Post-Truth World,” was written jointly by four members of the Kuyper College staff—Dr. Patricia Harris, president; Michelle Norquist, director of library services; Dianne Zandbergen, former director of library services; and Andrew Zwart, director



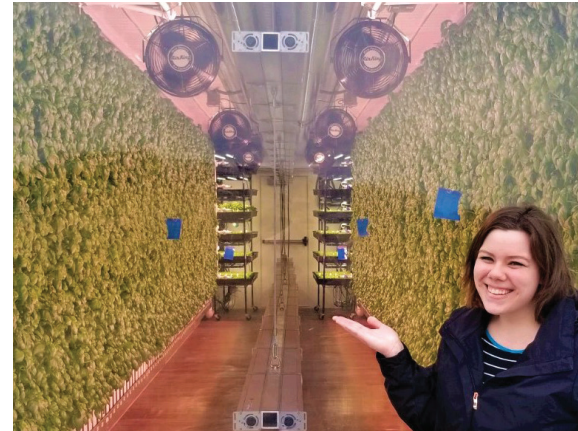
of academic support and interdisciplinary programs. Below is an abstract of their essay.

“How do we develop within our students a deep and abiding love for God’s

truth, as well as a desire to know and understand God and His creation? Can we encourage curiosity and further develop discernment in students? What role does information literacy play in stimulating curiosity and developing discernment? How does information literacy relate to the intellectual virtues? Kuyper College, a small, ministry-focused college in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is attempting to address these questions and concerns through a campus-wide research process that uses a common vocabulary across the disciplines. This process, known as ALEA, is a four-stage research procedure based on the following steps: ask, listen, engage and answer. This essay describes how ALEA evolved as a result of assessment work; how it relates to one of the College’s campus-wide student learning outcomes; and the role the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards*, and some of the threshold concepts of the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, played in the development of ALEA. Examples are given as to how ALEA is being applied in specific assignments and courses throughout the College as well as implemented progressively in the Bible and Theology department.”

Kuyper Graduate Takes Leap of Faith to Become Urban Farmer

Alyssa Patton graduated from Kuyper with a double major in intercultural studies and Bible and theology. She currently works for Square Roots Farm, an urban indoor farming company growing local, real food while training the next generation of leaders in agriculture. She loves it, but it wasn’t an easy journey. Before joining Square Roots, Patton completed an internship through Kuyper at Hunger Education and Resource Training (HEART), learning about sustainable agriculture, aquaponics, animal care and community development.



Alyssa Patton at Square Roots Farm

After Kuyper, there were many changes. “Community life looked very different outside of college, and job searching was a challenge,” she said. Patton had been working for ten months in a daycare center when she learned about Square Roots. It seemed to be a fit, so she applied. “My passion is community development,” she said. “Over the years I have learned the impact that agriculture has on community development—the type or lack of available food impacts people on an individual and community scale.” Patton said that she and her husband took a leap of faith, and even before she knew the job at Square Roots was hers, she put in her two weeks’ notice at the daycare.

Patton got the job, and she fell in love with the company. “They focus on creating a culture in which people are equipped and empowered to construct creative solutions within the food industry,” said Patton. According to her, although farmers at Square Roots do seeding, harvesting and transplanting, they also offer various programs, including plant science lectures, business exposure networking events, and visits to local farms, restaurants and organizations.

When asked about the benefits of going to Kuyper, Patton responded, “The connections and relationships I made during Kuyper have helped me grow tremendously and are a constant resource in my life.” She also praised Kuyper’s professors, saying they gave her a “season of spiritual growth” as they poured themselves into her and the other students. “They really care about seeing their students thrive.” Patton said that it was her mother who suggested Kuyper, so she decided to give it a try. “I will always be thankful that my parents made it a point to tell us kids how much they and God love us,” she stated.

Now, Patton works full time while her husband, Jake, attends Calvin Theological Seminary.

When asked about future plans, Patton said, “We do not know what life holds after Seminary or Square Roots, but we are thankful for the time we have now, and we are excited to see how God will work through the ups and downs.”

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

STUDENTS TO WATCH

Doriene McCalister

I grew up the youngest of seven brothers and sisters. My mom, a single mother, raised us to the best of her abilities, especially in a “hard knock city.” She worked every day tirelessly, in and out of the office as a Certified Nursing Assistant and at home as a full-time mother. However, with her heavy load she did not have the time to encourage us in the Word. But that is where my aunt Linda stepped in and filled that role, sharing daily devotionals and taking us to church on Sundays when my mother couldn’t because of work.

While growing up I attended multiple elementary schools and three high schools because we moved a lot. Yet, some of the biggest moments that impacted me as a kid were spent going to after school programs. I was able to enjoy my time with my brothers, sisters and friends all before it was time to really grow up.

During my last year of high school, I did not spend much time focusing on my faith. I had other things to worry about—graduating and beating the odds of becoming another statistic.

I did graduate, but then I had to face the fact that college might not be for me, and my heart was heavy. But one morning, everything changed when I had a simple conversation with my grandmother about her faith and her relationship with God. It was that simple conversation where my faith journey began. Thoughts were swirling through my head. Who is God? What is His purpose? What was I missing? So, I Googled “best Christian colleges in Michigan,” and there was Kuyper College sitting at the top of the search. And I can truly say that I am beyond grateful I found Kuyper. After all my years being exposed to life in Detroit, I found exactly what I was searching for—a loving Father who is there no matter what the challenge. I was spiritually lost without God. Kuyper has provided a home to learn and be obedient to God’s Word.

I chose Kuyper because of its small community. Looking back, I know I made the right choice. Here, I discovered hard working professors who care as a parent would, a place where everyone matters, and a home away from home that provides a tremendous sense of security.

At Kuyper I am receiving a great education and am learning life and professional skills in and out of the classroom. It helps when you have countless people rooting you on every day—people like the professors who have impacted my life in many ways. They are always willing to go the extra mile academically or give you an extra boost of confidence whenever needed. And it is not cookie-cutter teaching—they work around each individual student’s skillset to give us the best possible education. It has been amazing.

And what can I say about the student body—let my personal motto suffice: “While we are small in number, we are very big in heart.”

I have yet to be involved in my internship, but hope to soon. From what I hear from the students who have completed theirs, it is one of the highlights of their time at Kuyper.

Kuyper is helping me strengthen my mind and my spirit. It is providing an ever-growing platform for learning God’s Word and setting a foundation for my faith in God. It has given me peace of mind for a better and brighter future, it has strengthened my faith in God, and it has provided a footing to take the knowledge I am gaining here and share it with my loved ones and hopefully generations to come.

After I graduate, I hope to go into real estate and eventually branch off into my own practice helping to provide housing for the less fortunate.

In closing, I would like to give a special thanks to my mother Michelle McCallister and my grandmother Ernerstine Davis, to my classmates Esther Jung, Luke Boersma, Rashawn Smith, and Allison Rohel, as well as to Professor Marc Andreas and staff members Tim Chupp and Curt Essenburg. You all have impacted my life in great ways, and I will be forever grateful.



CLASS **2022**

HOME **Detroit, MI**

MAJOR **Business
Leadership**