

KUYPER

College News

A Publication for Alumni & Friends



Bill, his wife, Cheryl, and their grandchildren, Connor and Makayla.

MY STORY

BILL MOERDYK

Building Hope

For Kuyper graduate Bill Moerdyk, who recently celebrated 21 years with Habitat for Humanity of Kent County, work and service are inseparable.

He is excited to wake up in the morning and head to the jobsite, he said, because he knows he is doing more than simply earning a paycheck. When he raises a roof, lays down siding or sculpts the yard of a Habitat house, he is giving those he serves a fresh start in life through safe, comfortable housing.

“My work is rewarding because it’s about giving back to others,” he said recently, leaning back in a rocking chair next to his wife, Cheryl, whom he married in 1979. “It’s been a dream job from the beginning.”

Moerdyk took his first construction job in 1977, the summer after graduating from Loy Norrix High School in Kalamazoo, Michigan. What began as a temporary position on his uncle’s crew, he said, eventually grew into his life’s calling.

“At the end of the summer, there wasn’t enough work for him to keep me on anymore,” he recalled. “So, I went down to the local lumber yard and asked if they

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Living Out God's Call

With great enthusiasm this fall, we are welcoming several new staff and faculty members, and we are celebrating the many new students who have joined our Kuyper community.

Why Kuyper? Our Bible and theology foundation. Our ministry and service programs. Our KuyperWorks program. Our sports. Our community. So many reasons that these students come. And undergirding all these reasons is their desire to discern their vocation and purpose in life as they seek to serve God and others. As Ephesians 2:10 says, "We are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works."

Our newly approved strategic plan articulates our commitment as a college community to integrate purposeful learning, work, and service as we innovate for the future and inspire people in advancing the gospel.

This plan is built on our institutional core values, which have shaped and guided our students, faculty and staff for more than three decades:

Primacy of Scripture

We uphold the Bible as the Word of God which guides our teaching, philosophy, lifestyle, and our learning, work and service.

Biblical Worldview

We educate within a framework of a biblical worldview which assumes that God exists and has created all things and the revelation of God given in Scripture is true, trustworthy and authoritative, thus shaping our beliefs about and interactions with the world.

Reformed Faith Tradition

We understand and apply our faith and worldview according to the teachings of the Bible as summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort, the Belgic Confession and the Westminster Standards.

Educational Excellence

We provide quality, comprehensive learning experiences in and out of the classroom as we fulfill our end goal of education to live faithfully for Jesus Christ in God's good world.

Holistic Development

We strive to form lifelong learners who are academically, spiritually, socially and morally discerning, just and merciful leaders in church and society.

Caring Community

We actively work toward a campus environment, denominationally and ethnically diverse in nature, where mentoring, mutual care, accountability and encouragement are characteristic of students, faculty and staff.

Based on these core values, we have articulated a refreshed mission statement in these 23 well-chosen words:

As a community of biblical higher education, Kuyper College forms lifelong learners for purposeful lives of work and service to God and neighbor.



As a community of biblical higher education, Kuyper College forms lifelong learners for purposeful lives of work and service to God and neighbor.

This refreshed mission statement expresses up front that "community" is a vital and valued part of Kuyper's cultural "DNA." It also affirms our deep and integrated Bible and theology foundation, a hallmark of Kuyper College, which designates us a college of biblical higher education. And no matter our role as students, staff or faculty, we are learners who are being formed more and more into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Finally, in all that we do, we are living out God's call to intentional and meaningful work and service, and, as the Great Commandment states — directed to God and our neighbor.

Grateful to serve,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia".

Dr. Patricia R. Harris
President

Embracing Community, Beginning a New Year

Kuyper College began the new academic year with a focus on “A Life of Service” and an encouragement to emulate Jesus’ life of humility and sacrificial love.

That focus was woven throughout a series of festivities to begin the new school year. At opening Convocation, held the first day of classes, President Patricia Harris tied the theme for the year into Kuyper’s newly refreshed mission statement, and she reminded those gathered in Vos Chapel that, “As a community of biblical higher education, Kuyper College forms lifelong learners for purposeful lives of work and service to God and neighbor.”

She added: “My hope is that Kuyper College will be a meaningful community for all of us, where we can learn, work and serve together,” she said.

And while classes started the day after Labor Day, students got a full immersion into Kuyper’s culture and ethos the week prior during orientation, three days marked by excitement, eagerness, laughter and love.

At Move-In Day, teams of Kuyper professors, staff and returning students were ready to put servant leadership into practice by welcoming newcomers and their families to campus with a smile. Many familiar Kuyper faces, including President Harris and Director of Admissions Kris Haymon, lent a helping hand as students settled into their new homes in Schaal and Timmer halls.

The move-in teams were needed as this fall’s first-year class is one of the largest in recent years at 60-plus students and with transfers added in, some 70-plus students were on campus for orientation week.

The new arrivals represent five countries—Andorra, India, Kenya, Spain and the U.S.—and seven states—Alabama, California, Indiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Pennsylvania. Many of them will also be student-



The Kuyper community gathered on the first day of classes for opening Convocation.

athletes with admissions stats showing two-thirds of the first-year students currently plan to play a sport at Kuyper.

After move-in, it was time for an afternoon dedication service in the Vos Chapel, which set the tone for the new year by calling the community to live lives marked by faith-driven servant leadership.

It was also an opportunity to formally welcome new students to Kuyper.

“You stepping into this community will make it even brighter and help us flourish even more,” President Harris told the first-year class with a smile. “Welcome to Kuyper College. We so appreciate having you here!”

Emily Karsten is one of the newest members of the Kuyper community. She began her time at the College as a dually

enrolled high school student and is looking forward to full-time studies.

“When I heard about Kuyper from my brother, who is an upperclassman here, I knew I just had to come,” she said. “I’ve loved the experiences I’ve had here so far, and I can’t wait for more.”

Following the dedication service, an all-student welcome took place. The festivities continued the next day with worship, community conversations, orientation to Kuyper’s Work College approach (it is the only Work College in Michigan) and sessions on academic and spiritual development.

The three days of activities wrapped up with worship, team challenges, discussions and an ice cream social.

>>MOERDYK from Page 1

knew of anyone who was looking for workers, because that's what you did in those days."

He spent the next few years working for other contractors, learning more tricks of the trade.

Then, God presented a new path to follow.

Engaged in mission-centered work

He and Cheryl had felt God calling them to the mission field for some time. They had already begun pursuing an opportunity to serve in Haiti and were even learning to speak Creole when his brother, who was a missionary in Nigeria, told them of an opening with his organization.

"He worked as an agriculturalist with a Dutch mission organization, and they were looking for a builder," he said.

The Moerdyks served in Nigeria from 1984 to 1994, welcoming three of their eight children during that time. During those years, Moerdyk said, he cultivated a strong sense of what it means to make an impact at the community level by engaging in mission-centered work. After returning home, he simply couldn't imagine doing anything else.

At first, he thought this meant God was calling him to be a pastor. Knowing that Kuyper College could help him build a strong foundation of biblical and theological knowledge—while also



Bill (in the white hard hat) with a crew of Habitat volunteers.

gaining the experience necessary to follow this call—he decided to enroll.

Though he was a fair bit older than his fellow students, he said he fit right in.

"I graduated high school the year before most of my classmates were born," he said with a laugh. "But I enjoyed the good fellowship I got to have with them."

And the flexibility Kuyper offered made it the ideal place for the father of a growing family, who also continued working in construction full time to continue his education.

"I was able to have mostly 8 a.m. classes," he said. "I could get to work afterward and still make it home for supper and family evening time."

Kuyper News and Events

Marriages

Rabecka Commans (2021) married Jeremiah Ruse, and the couple recently had a son whom they named Calvin.

Kristyn DeNooyer (2019) and Pablo Garcia are anticipating being united in marriage on October 14, 2023.

Births

Kelsey (Bruxvoort) Wagg (2008) and her husband Bryce welcomed Finley Alexander into the world on August 7, joining his big brother Elliot.

Professional Development

Will Brouwers (2021) accepted a position pastoring Dispatch Christian Reformed Church in Cawker City, Kansas.

Rosha Crawford (2017) accepted a position as case manager for the State of Arizona under the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Though he began his time at Kuyper with the intention of becoming a pastor, by the time he was finished, Moerdyk had begun to question whether this was really the path God had laid out for him.

A long legacy at Habitat

After graduating in 1998, he says he wasn't sure where to go next. He created his own construction company, and a few years later, he contacted Habitat Kent, looking for ways to involve his church's youth group in serving the community. On a whim, he decided to ask about a job for himself too.

"They said no at first, but I got a call two weeks later, encouraging me to submit my resume for a new position that had just been created," he said. "The problem was, I didn't have one. In the building world, you get work mostly by word of mouth. So, I went back to Kuyper for help."

He smiled as he recalled the Kuyper staff who happily offered their assistance, helping him craft the resume that eventually brought him to Habitat.

Moerdyk's legacy with Habitat Kent spans statewide. Since joining the team in 2001, he has served in a variety of roles, most recently as senior site supervisor. He founded the Homes Summit, where construction employees from all of Michigan's Habitat affiliates gather annually to share building strategies and learn what's new on the market. He has also led Habitat Kent's Brush of Kindness event, where, in just three days, Habitat

"My most satisfying days are setting trusses with a group of volunteers who have never done that before. They're just blown away when they see a box become a home."



Bill on a jobsite.

Kent and 250 AmeriCorps volunteers improved 14 homes on a single street.

He enjoys empowering his volunteers by teaching them new skills, seeing them complete tasks they previously didn't feel equipped to do.

"My most satisfying days are setting trusses with a group of volunteers who have never done that before," he said. "They're just blown away when they see a box become a home."

But, he added, the best part of his work is connecting with the families who will one day live in the homes he builds. Each one has their own unique story, and he is grateful to walk alongside them on their homeownership journeys.

Moerdyk came to Habitat Kent when they had just begun building their 100th

house. By the end of the summer of 2023, he had helped complete the 500th, on the very same street where the first had been built.

He smiles when he thinks about this, seeing both the humor and the providence. Every new build and rehab he has participated in represents an individual or family who received new hope in the form of a home to call their own. And God, he said, has been there all along, guiding and equipping him.

His work has always been more than just a job to him, he said, and as the waning light of sunset streams through his own front window, Moerdyk said simply: "We are a witness not only to the families we serve, but to each other and to the neighborhoods we work in."



Bill, Cheryl and 6 of their 21 grandchildren.



Kristyn DeNooyer (2019) has accepted a position at Thrive, a ministry of the Christian Reformed Church, as a Communications Specialist. She said she is joining a team dedicated to equipping congregations in the areas of faith formation, disability inclusion, abuse prevention and justice. She will be working to streamline strategy, create robust and compelling content and coordinate bi-national efforts to provide quality resources for supporting healthy, faith-based spaces.

Stay in touch. Call the Alumni Office (877.229.0941) or send us an email (alumni@kuyper.edu) with your latest news, updated contact information and more. We'd love to hear from you!

Building Servant Leaders

The return of varsity athletics to Kuyper College began with the volleyball team traveling to the Judson Invitational in late August. A week later coach Tori Johnston and her team hosted Moody Bible Institute at the newly renovated Boonstra



Gymnasium on the Kuyper campus for the first home event of the new era of athletics.

It was an honor for her and her team, Johnston said.

“It’s a big task to be the first team,” she added. “But we are proud to take on the job

Tori Johnston

and represent both women’s sports and the sport of volleyball.”

In all that she and her team tried to do this season, keeping God at the center was a recurring theme.

“We talked a lot about setting a solid foundation for future teams,” Johnston said. “One of our goals this season was to create a legacy that is God-honoring and builds servant leaders. Before we are athletes or coaches, we’re sisters, daughters, moms, Christ-followers. To be able to do life with one another and build each other up in those things is a big blessing.”

As volleyball wraps up its season this month, men’s and women’s basketball have begun practices and are anticipating their first contests. Coach Gary Bailey’s men are at North Carolina in late October and then have their first home game the first week of November. Meanwhile, coach Mike Janikowski and his women’s basketball team also will begin their 2023-24 season in late October on the road and then welcome fans to Boonstra Gym the first week of November for their first home game of the campaign.



See [kuypercougars.com](https://www.kuypercougars.com) for more on Kuyper athletics, including the full schedules for basketball.

In My Words

CALLED TO HELP

Over 25 years ago, a co-worker at what was then Old Kent Bank showed me an article in a financial aid magazine and mentioned casually that Reformed Bible College, now known as Kuyper, was hiring. I went home that night and told my mom and dad that I had found my new job!

Before interviewing, I stopped by the campus, parked the car and prayed, telling the Lord that if He wanted me to have this job, I wanted it too.

Now, a quarter of a century later, I still have the utmost confidence in God’s good providence in leading me to Kuyper College. And after all these years,



Agnes Russell

Director of Financial Aid

I still come to work every day finding a great appeal in the fact that the people are real. In their teaching, their conversations and the way they care, Kuyper staff, faculty and students are real.

I also appreciate how as a college campus, we come together to rejoice in the good times and bear each other’s burdens when life is hard.

For many years now I have found that young people have a special place in my heart. It starts with the very young, and it extends to those who are college age. For more than 30 years, I have worked in children’s ministry, and I love seeing the little ones as they have grown and are now stepping into various positions in the church.

I also love helping students reach their goals. There is a feeling of accomplishment when a student is able to experience Kuyper because financial aid made it possible for them to attend. I love attending graduation to see the “finished” graduate and to hear where God is leading them next.

During my time at Kuyper College, I have often said that though God did not call me to be a missionary or a social worker or other such professions, He did in fact call me to help those He did call to such professions. I consider it a blessing to be in the position I am in and to be able to invest in the next generation of Christian young men and women leaders (and to help Kuyper invest, literally with financial aid dollars, in the next generation).

I am grateful for the many friends of the College who donate the dollars that we can in turn pass on to our students through scholarships and more. I also am grateful to God for His grace and care. Looking back, I remember writing in my RBC application that I wanted to hear “Well done, good and faithful servant” when my life was over. That is still my prayer, and Kuyper is a wonderful place to work on His behalf.

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

New Employees Bring Energy, Talent to Campus

Dr. Anthony Bradley laughs as he recalls teaching Old Testament Bible to ninth graders at Phil-Mont Christian Academy during his student days at Westminster Theological Seminary. “That might be the toughest crowd,” he said. But Bradley added: “That’s where I learned to teach. And that’s where I learned that I love to teach.”

Now, Bradley brings that same passion to Kuyper, teaching two courses a year in biblical interpretation as a research professor of interdisciplinary and theological studies and bringing two decades of experience in higher ed to student life and strategic initiatives with the President’s office.

“I’m at a point in my career where I’ve done a lot,” he said. “And now in this next season, I’m focusing on investing in the next generation.”

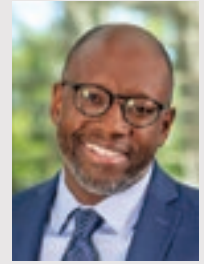
Bradley is one of numerous new employees investing in the next generation. For Emily Pertont, the new director of student success at Kuyper, working for a Christian college and helping people find their place of belonging brings personal and professional passions together in one vocational location. New director of admissions Kris Haymon said the same. “We have such great opportunities here for students, and this place is a great fit for so many,” he said.

Nathan Slauer, the new manager of the annual fund and alumni relations for the College, said he has enjoyed developing fundraising, marketing and management skills as a graduate student and at the organizations he has served. “My hope is to use these skills to best support the mission of Kuyper College.”

Finally, director of library services Jamie Tiemeyer and admissions counselors Amanda Krebs and Olivia Juhas all came to Kuyper just in time for the new school year, also eager to bring their talents to the campus.

Welcome to the Kuyper Community

To learn more about our new faculty and staff, please go to www.kuyper.edu/news and scroll to their individual stories.



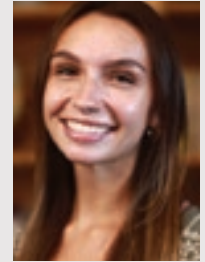
Anthony Bradley



Kris Haymon



Olivia Juhas



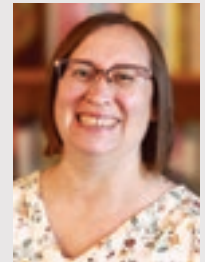
Amanda Krebs



Emily Pertont



Nathan Slauer



Jamie Tiemeyer

New Minors to Open Valuable Academic Avenues

A pair of new minors will give Kuyper students excellent academic options to



Marc Andreas

combine with their major and will enhance their career after graduation.

The sports management minor will be led by business leadership professor Marc Andreas who

said the reintroduction of varsity athletics to the College also is leading to a surge of new student athletes interested in the field.

“We are creating a minor that fits the culture

of Kuyper College,” Andreas said.

The community development minor also is a natural fit with Kuyper’s history and mission and recognizes that many churches are working to become more engaged with their local communities. It will overlap with content from the Kuyper social work major while allowing students interested in community development to gain a deeper knowledge of the field.

Social work program director Jennifer Colin came to the College two years ago after many years in K-12 education, including stints as a school social worker, school counselor and principal.

She said Kuyper students have expressed interest in learning more about how they



Jennifer Colin

can care for and grow their communities in a more intentional way.

“Offering the community development minor can effectively equip students with knowledge and

tools that will help them make a difference wherever God leads,” she said. “Community development empowers people to utilize their own gifts and talents in creating an environment where everyone can flourish.”

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

STUDENTS TO WATCH

Daniel Milton

Growing up, I was exposed to a lot of different cultures and diversity. First as a boy, and then as a young man, my life has revolved around sports, music and my faith. I was raised up in church and have worked to be an active servant in ministry and an example to the kids below me coming up. That's always been important to me.

I went to Avondale High School, and basketball was a big part of my experience there. After high school I went to another college and played basketball, but it wasn't the right fit. When I started looking at other college options, Kuyper stood out for a variety of reasons. It's a Christian college, it offers a business program, it has an amazing on-campus environment and, finally, it has varsity basketball.

In high school I earned the hardest worker award one season and was team captain as a senior. I think I'm the type of student-athlete that Kuyper is looking for. As I got to talking with Coach Bailey and the rest of the coaching staff, what was happening at Kuyper got me really excited, and I wanted to be part of bringing a winning culture in athletics to the school, helping influence the community and doing my part as a student athlete by serving God.

I enrolled for the winter 2023 semester and have felt very welcomed here from the beginning. On my first campus visit,

I met the president of the College. So far Kuyper has been above and beyond my expectations. It's very family oriented, and that has been consistent from the start.

My classes have been great, and my professors really put in the effort with their classes and presentations. They also check up on me and encourage me, sometimes even with text messages, which is pretty amazing.

I worked for maintenance in the spring, all summer and now again this fall. The KuyperWorks program is something that definitely attracted me. It was pretty cool learning a new trade and set of skills. It will help me down the road, no matter what my career might be. My major is business leadership, and I plan to be a freelance entrepreneur and work on business ventures in athletics. I firmly believe that my relationship with God is what makes me a stronger person and athlete, and I am beyond excited for my career as a student and an athlete at Kuyper College.



CLASS **2026**
HOME **Detroit**
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