

# KUYPER

College News

A Publication for Alumni & Friends

## PROVISION and *Momentum*

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

### Where We've Been

Founded in 1939 as the Reformed Bible Institute, Kuyper College has a rich history rooted in the Reformed tradition, shaped by Abraham Kuyper's vision of Christ's lordship over all of life.

With a deep biblical foundation, students at RBI were trained for Christian service and lay ministry. In 1970, the curriculum expanded, offering four-year degrees, and RBI became Reformed Bible College. By the late 1980s, a new campus reflected both



growth and a continued commitment to ministry-centered education.

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Kaleb Gardner came to Kuyper to play basketball at a Christian college and has discovered a community of believers that ignited a real desire for faith.

# God's Faithfulness is Sure

## What does a 50-year relationship with a college look like?

My journey with Kuyper began a half century ago as a high school student at the RBC Spring Gala, via a family friendship with former president Dr. Dick Van Halsema. It deepened a year later attending the Urbana Missionary Conference alongside RBC students and further deepened when I was a student at Calvin College and participated in the RBC Summer Training Session in Mexico, where I met my husband.

Over the decades, my ties to the College continued to grow. While studying at Calvin Theological Seminary, I took New Testament Greek at RBC under Dr. Paul Bremer. Years later, our daughter earned her bachelor's degree at Kuyper. And then, as Bob and I were discerning God's call to return to the U.S. after serving 15 years with Christian Reformed World Missions in Manila, Philippines, I received an email from Dr. Nick Kroeze about the open provost position at Kuyper.

In June 2013, I stepped into that full-time role, and four years later, I was given the profound privilege of serving as president. What an unexpected yet providential journey with this College.

Years ago, the Van Halsema family gave me a photograph of a Jewish man

reading his Torah at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem. For 45 years, it has hung in every office I've occupied. It keeps me anchored to what is central: God's Word, His story, from past to present to future. That it has hung in my Kuyper office feels especially fitting, because it reflects who we are: a community rooted in Scripture.

**"Fifty years of connection to this institution have taught me one thing above all: God's faithfulness is sure. It is Kuyper's story and mine."**

From the very beginning, 87 years ago, the women and men who attended night classes at RBI sought a deeper knowledge of the Bible and a clearer understanding of how to live it out in everyday work and service. That same calling shapes us today.

Our mission is to form lifelong learners for purposeful lives of work and service to God and neighbor. That's not simply a phrase on a wall. It's Kuyper's life, visible in every classroom, every KuyperWorks



placement, every chapel service.

As I write this final president's letter, I return to the four commitments RBI made to its students in 1939: a deeper knowledge of the Bible, a stirred interest in God's kingdom work, fellowship rooted in the Word, and the deepening of each student's spiritual life. These are not relics of the past; they are our inheritance, and Kuyper's enduring charge to those who will lead next.

Fifty years of connection to this institution have taught me one thing above all: God's faithfulness is sure. It is Kuyper's story and mine.

It has been the honor of my life to serve this community. I leave with a heart full of gratitude—for you, for our students, and for our God who writes better stories than we could ever plan.

Going forward Kuyper College is committed to its mission and to living out its motto: Ora et Labora, Pray and Work. Kuyper will.

Grateful to serve,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Patti".

**Dr. Patricia R. Harris**  
President



## Kuyper Celebrates 87th Commencement

“How are you feeling in your body and spirit?” Daniel Przybylski asked the Kuyper College Class of 2026, inviting them to close their eyes for a moment of reflection.

Przybylski, who served as this year’s Commencement speaker, addressed graduates and their families gathered in the Boonstra Fitness Center on April 24 for Kuyper’s 87th Commencement. He noted that encouraging this kind of reflective pause is just one of the many ways Kuyper prepared him for a life of service.

As a Senior Institutional Chaplain with the Michigan Department of Corrections, the ability to pause and measure his internal state helps him stay connected to his own moral compass and the God who guides it, Przybylski continued.

“In other words, through a biblical teaching and worldview lens, Kuyper has taught me to get up every day and try to do the right thing,” he said.

Following God’s direction on this journey helps us shine the light of Christ in a world that desperately needs it, Przybylski emphasized, encouraging the Class of 2026 to continue on this path in their post-graduation lives.

“Tonight, celebrate and be proud of what you have accomplished, but tomorrow and in the days, months and years ahead, lead a life of ministry with integrity, and model the fruits of the Spirit well,” he said.

These themes were familiar to the Kuyper community, which spent the 2025–2026 academic year focused on the theme “Seek First”—and they permeated a Commencement Day that created many lasting memories.

### Called to Lead with Faith and Purpose

The day’s events began with students gathering midmorning in the Boonstra Fitness Center for Commencement practice, rehearsing the look and feel of the ceremony. Next up was the Commencement luncheon, which included remarks by Kuyper President Patricia Harris.

A few hours later, Harris opened her final Commencement ceremony as president with a welcome message to all those gathered for the auspicious occasion.

“This afternoon, we are celebrating how God has been at work in and through the lives of our graduates, and how He is going to lead them forward in their different callings,” she said.

One of those graduates is Kaeden Costen, who graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Ministry Leadership and delivered a special message from the Class of 2026. Considering the great sacrifice Christ made on our behalf, he urged his classmates to remember that we are called to surrender our lives to Him in response.

“As we leave this place, the question is not ‘What do I do next?’ but ‘Who am I living for?’” he said.

After receiving their diplomas, the Class of 2026 heard similar words of commissioning from President Harris, who closed with a charge that captured the spirit of the day.

“May you go and shine brightly and boldly into every square inch of God’s world,” she said with a wide smile. “Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly as you serve and love God and your neighbor. Congratulations!”

In 2006, the school adopted a new name—one that honored its roots. Reformed Bible College became Kuyper College. This name is a statement of identity and intention: we are preparing women and men to carry their faith into every square inch of the world.

### Where We Are

Today, Kuyper College lives out its mission as a Bible college through intentional faith formation, academic rigor, and hands-on experience. Students are disciplined in community, challenged in the classroom, and equipped through meaningful work opportunities that connect learning with real-world impact.

Through initiatives like KuyperWorks, student-life community building, varsity athletics, and partnerships beyond campus, students are not just prepared for careers. They are formed as servant-

leaders who carry their faith into every sphere of life.

### Kuyper's Future

Kuyper College continues to look toward the future by aligning with three strategic priorities:



#### 1. Integrate Learning, Work, and Service

*Connecting classroom learning with meaningful work and service experiences.*



#### 2. Innovate for the Future

*Embracing change with creativity and courage to meet emerging needs.*



#### 3. Inspire People

*Inviting others to join in advancing the gospel through biblical higher education.*



These priorities are already taking shape through tangible initiatives across campus, and they position Kuyper to deepen its impact while remaining firmly rooted in its mission.

Kuyper's board, faculty, and staff are collectively preparing for the next phase of growth and impact, grounded firmly in our mission to form lifelong learners for purposeful lives of work and service to God and neighbor.

This means as a Christ-centered learning community shaped by a biblical Reformed worldview, we remain committed to

## Real-World Experience. Lower Debt. Meaningful Outcomes.

### Students from

**7** + **4**  
states countries

**93%**

of students gain real-world experience through **work placements** and **internships** on and off campus

**68%**

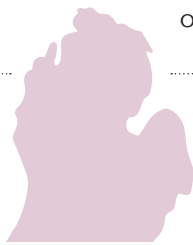
of students participate in **athletics**

### Accredited by

- Higher Learning Commission
- The Association for Biblical Higher Education
- The Council on Social Work Education

**\$15,987**

**Average student debt**  
(National average: \$36,973)



Federally recognized **Work College**—the only one in Michigan and one of nine nationwide

**100%**

of students receive **financial aid**

## Kuyper News and Events

### Birth

**Alexandra Oosse** (2011) and **Doug Nol** (2010) welcomed a son, Lucas Nol, on January 22, 2026.

### Professional Development

**Nellie DeVries** (1998) published her first poetry book on March 23, 2026, Japanese Garden: Four Seasons of Poems.

**Julie Matthyse** (2020) has taken on a new role as the children and youth pastor at Jenison's Sunshine Ministries.

**Dr. Jeremy Van Dyken** (2002) completed 10 years as assistant professor of psychology at American University of the Middle East in Kuwait. He also founded Pathways Counseling, a Christian counseling practice that focuses on helping churches respond to spiritual and spousal abuse.

### In Memoriam

**Dr. Edwin Dale Roels**, who served as the fourth president of Kuyper College, lived a life marked by faithful service, global ministry, and a deep commitment to making the truths of Scripture clear and accessible. Dr. Roels went to his heavenly home on February 20, 2026, at the age of 92.



Scan the QR code to read more.

# Because of You, We're Debt-Free—Now Let's Do More

academic excellence, spiritual formation, and whole-person development.

Since 1939, God has faithfully provided for Kuyper College through the generosity of His people. Today, we remain grateful to be debt-free, a testament to that provision and the quiet faithfulness of many who have given sacrificially.

Yet the need continues.

More than ever, the world needs graduates who are grounded in faith, equipped for meaningful work, and committed to serving others in Christ's name. Along with you, we pray that those attending Kuyper College today will be used by God to be Kingdom-impacting servant-leaders wherever they are called.



“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: ‘mine!’” –Abraham Kuyper

## Thank You, Sponsors!

We are grateful to the following friends of Kuyper College who have helped underwrite the cost of the Spring Celebration Gala:

Jeff Boersma  
Jacque Bolt  
Don Bratt  
Jackie Bremer

Marty Bruins  
Carpet Bonanza  
Dan Vos Construction  
The Detwiler Family

Henry Doorn, Jr.  
Doug & Gail Elenbaas  
Larry & Judy Fredricks  
Phil & Mary Frens

Bob & Patti Harris  
Hope Discovery ABA Services  
J.C. & Tammy Huizinga  
Robert & Paulette Israels  
Kairos Collaborative  
Nick & Gloria Kroeze  
Dan & Nancy Kroeze  
Jack & Karen Lanning

Land and Company  
JoAnn Miersma  
Jay & Kathleen Morren  
Lois Nagel  
Marian Payne  
Gary & Rosemary Schipper  
Scott Allen Creative  
John & Valerie VanBaren  
Anonymous (2)



As Kuyper's fiscal year ends June 30, 2026, we're grateful for over \$450,000 in match-challenge gifts. This leaves just over \$450,000 still to go, so your help is greatly needed!

We invite you to generously support this important work. Your gift will directly support KuyperWorks, student leadership and engagement, and academic learning and technology needs.

We invite you to prayerfully consider how you might join in this work, so we can accomplish our goal by June.

Together, we can continue forming students for lives of purpose, service, and Kingdom impact.

In addition to direct gifts, Kuyper College can receive IRA charitable contributions, stock gifts, and asset transfers.

Contact Kuyper Advancement for more information at [advancement@kuyper.edu](mailto:advancement@kuyper.edu) or 616.988.3702.

### Kuyper Timeline

#### 1939

Founded as the Reformed Bible Institute

#### 1970

Began offering four-year degrees and became Reformed Bible College

#### 1980s

Moved to the East Beltline Campus

#### 2006

Became Kuyper College

#### 2026

Living out our mission

## Faithful Stewards, Lasting Impact

As summer approaches and another academic year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on what God has done at Kuyper this year, in classrooms, in chapel, and in the lives of students



Nate Vander Stelt  
Interim Chief  
Advancement Officer

who are graduating and stepping into God's callings.

None of that happens without the many people who support Kuyper not out of obligation, but out of a genuine sense of their own calling. Across our community, donors and friends give of their time, treasure, and talent in ways both large and small, each act of

generosity is a response to God's invitation to be faithful stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

At the recent Kuyper Celebration Gala, I was struck by the remarkable range of people gathered in one room. Decades of Kuyper alumni and supporters were represented: men and women whose faithfulness to this mission spans generations. Alongside them were first-time attendees who offered encouraging and affirming words about what they had seen and heard of our mission and vision. It was a powerful reminder that God continues to draw new friends to Kuyper even as He sustains those who have walked with us for years.

That same faithful, kingdom-minded, and quietly transformative spirit is what sustains this College. And as we approach June 30—the close of our fiscal year—we are prayerfully trusting God to provide through special gifts that will help us meet our current needs and step into 2026-2027 with a fresh start and renewed momentum.

If you feel called to be part of what God is doing here, we would be deeply grateful for your support. Contact me at [advancement@kuyper.edu](mailto:advancement@kuyper.edu) or (616) 988-3702 for more information.

## In My Words

### OPENING THE DOOR TO SOMETHING BIGGER

When I was looking for a place to pursue a degree in youth ministry, Kuyper stood out immediately. The community, the worldview, and the sense of purpose woven into everyday life all resonated deeply.



Jon Versluis  
Financial Aid Specialist

When I graduated, I assumed my time here was complete and that I'd return only for the occasional alumni event.

But God had other plans.

My calling didn't arrive in a single dramatic moment. It came into focus gradually, through a series of experiences and learning opportunities that gave me a clearer picture of who I am and what I'm meant to do. Each step seemed to build on the last, and slowly, that picture came together.

After college, I transitioned into a career in data analytics, a different path than I had anticipated but one I embraced. When I came across a job listing for a financial aid specialist at Kuyper though, something clicked. Here was a role that combined my new professional skills with the heart behind my youth ministry degree—walking alongside young people at a place I already loved.

My faith shapes how I show up to work every day. It reminds me that I can make a meaningful impact wherever I am, as long as I'm doing it for the glory of God. For me, that conviction has taken a very practical form with a snack corner in my office! I remember what it was like to be a college student and how food was always a quiet concern in the back of my mind. So I keep snacks and meals available for anyone who stops by, students and colleagues alike. It's a small thing, but it opens the door to something bigger.

That open door has led to some of the most meaningful conversations of my career. Students come in to talk through their financial situations, and I get to sit with them, listen, and ask questions. I've been able to walk them through what a budget looks like and point out pitfalls I've personally fallen into. There's nothing quite like watching the weight lift off someone's shoulders as they walk out the door, usually with a snack in hand.

What keeps me here is the students themselves and the mission that shapes them. I love seeing the passion each student carries for their field and their desire to make a real difference in the world, all while continuing to grow in their faith and wrestle with what they believe. That energy is contagious, and it keeps me engaged and growing too.

To students, colleagues, and supporters of Kuyper, I'd say this: the biblical worldview that is woven into every class and every assignment here is not just academic, it's formational. It has shaped who I am and how I move through the world, and it continues to do so. I am grateful every day to be part of a community where that kind of growth is not only possible, but expected.

# Kuyper Gala Recognizes Faithful Leadership Across Generations

Pastor Darrell Delaney had a simple yet profound reminder for students, staff, faculty and friends of Kuyper College gathered mid-April for the 2026 Spring Celebration Gala.

“When Jesus calls us to seek first His kingdom, He is telling us what must come first if everything else is to make sense,” the pastor, faith-driven leadership coach, 2005 Kuyper graduate and keynote speaker for the night said.

Throughout his address, Delaney reflected on all the ways God used Kuyper to mold his calling, emphasizing the College’s commitment to building the next generation of Christian leaders.

“Kuyper was one of the places God used to shape my faith, clarify my call and prepare me for a life of service,” he said. “When I think about Kuyper College, I don’t just think about it as a school I attended; I think about it as a place God used to form me.”



Keynote speaker Darrell Delaney.

His message was a timely one, coming near the close of an academic year focused on the theme, “Seek First.”

The night began with words of welcome and an address from President Patricia Harris, followed by a video reflecting

on Kuyper’s legacy of equipping Christian leaders and an update from the Board of Trustees, all while sharing lively conversations and a delicious meal.

During the update, Board Chair Dr. Eric Hoogstra made an exciting announcement: the creation of the Patricia R. Harris Student Scholarship Fund, in recognition of President Harris’ 13 years of faithful service to Kuyper College.



President Patricia Harris with Kuyper Board Chair Dr. Eric Hoogstra.



The Kuyper Service Award was presented to JoAnn Kuiper Miersma by President Patricia Harris.

“It will provide for and carry forward her legacy of humble servant leadership for generations of students in the future,” Hoogstra said, to a round of enthusiastic applause from the audience.

Another important piece of the Gala’s events was the presentation of the Kuyper College Service Award, which is given each year to a recipient or recipients who have exhibited the spirit and work of the College’s mission statement through lifelong service.

Whether those honored are faculty, alumni or friends of the College, they all have demonstrated a dedicated vision and commitment to sharing the love, hope and Word of Christ throughout His creation.

“By accepting this award, the recipients set an example of dedication and humility in service that encourages all of us within the Kuyper College community,” remarked President Harris.

This year, the Kuyper Service Award was presented to JoAnn Kuiper Miersma, a 1956 Kuyper graduate, recognizing her many years of steadfast support for the College.

Reflecting on this journey, she said: “I want to challenge all of you to remember that no matter where you are in your life, God has a plan for you. No matter how old or young you are, He always has some good for you to do.”

## STUDENTS TO WATCH

### Kaleb Gardner

I grew up in Arizona and spent most of my teenage years in Michigan. I went to Yale Senior High School and was planning to go to college for track and field, but deep down I wanted to play basketball. Then I got a text from Coach Tyler (Whitcomb) here at Kuyper, one thing led to another, and I ended up a Cougar. Sports were important, but the deciding factor was Kuyper's Christian mission. I knew that Kuyper would set me up to grow in my faith.

Growing up, church attendance and family time were priorities. We always had dinner together at the table, and we are a family that has always been in and around the church. My mother

**"That changed my freshman year here when I found a community of believers that ignited a real desire for faith."**

raised four children while going to school to become a nurse, eventually earning her master's degree. My father worked in video directing at a large church and now runs his own construction business, passed down from my grandfather. I have three siblings, two older sisters and a younger brother. My oldest sister is at University of Detroit Mercy pursuing her law degree, my second-oldest just graduated from Moody Bible Institute and my younger brother is finishing his first year at Cornerstone. Life could be a bit chaotic growing up, but I am grateful for how I was raised.

While I grew up knowing about Christ, I wouldn't say I wanted a deep relationship with him. That changed my freshman year here when I found a community of believers that ignited a real

desire for faith. I got baptized that summer and haven't looked back. Letting God be in control has eased my stress about the future in a way I didn't expect. Life still has its challenges, but it brings more joy and peace than I have ever felt before.

During my time here, I've come to appreciate the professors and their intentional care for us, not just as students but as people and as Christ followers. One professor who stands out is Professor (Marc) Andreas. He's my advisor and has taught many of my classes. Through that relationship, I've seen his deep knowledge of business, his wide network of connections and his genuine care for his students.

I have worked quite a few different jobs while at Kuyper, mainly because I like trying new things. I started in the kitchen through KuyperWorks, then moved to the library, then completed an internship at Tabernacle Community Church helping launch their social media strategy. This year I've been in the business office while also working at Meijer. Balancing work, school, sports and internships hasn't always been easy, but it has pushed me to develop time management skills and get clear on my priorities.

Kuyper is a place that has quality believers in the staff and faculty who intentionally care for all of the students. If you're looking for an education where the professors care about your growth beyond the classroom, then Kuyper is what you are looking for.



CLASS **2027**  
HOME **Yale, Michigan**  
MAJOR **Business Leadership**