

INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

LEGACY



JUSTICE TO ALL

RISE & LEAD

Alumnae lead the way
and inspire others to
achieve their dreams.

SUMMER 2021

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS





LEGACY

A MAGAZINE FOR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS OF INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO

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Lead from where you are.

That's the challenge IU Kokomo's Chancellor, Susan Sciame-Giesecke, is known to give to faculty, staff, and students. Leadership isn't just for the chancellor, the CEO, the manager, or the person with the big title.

Leadership is for everyone, if they accept the challenge.

In this issue of Legacy, you will meet amazing alumnae who are doing that every day in their careers. Women like Amanda Bagwell, who fights for equal employment opportunities for all, based on her own difficulties as a blind woman finding employment. Or Priyanka Singh Deo, who had the courage to move across the world to chase her dream job.

There's also Brianne Boles, who transitioned her love of volunteering into serving as CEO of one of Howard County's largest employers, and Alexius Babb, who returned to school out of desire to transform her family's future, and now plans to lead change for people of color in the health care system.

Read their stories, starting on page 12.

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE IU KOKOMO CLASS OF 2021!

While earning a college degree is a challenge in the best of times, this class has confronted obstacles none of us could have imagined when they first enrolled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In earning their degrees, these graduates have shown remarkable persistence and flexibility, and I am proud beyond measure of their success.

This class went on spring break last March expecting only one additional week away from campus, as the pandemic began. Instead, they finished the spring 2020 semester from their homes, adapting to remote learning nearly overnight. I would be remiss if I did not commend our faculty, who completely reworked their classes during spring break, to be ready to continue high-quality instruction in a new format.

Amidst these challenges, IU Kokomo did not just survive — we thrived. We built our new Student Activities and Events Center (SAEC), and hosted volleyball and basketball games. When we returned to campus August 24, we offered the largest percentage of in-person classes of all IU campuses, and saw record-breaking enrollment of 3,227 students, thanks to the diligent efforts of our admissions and academic advising offices.

I am especially excited about the opening of our new Multicultural Center last fall, which provides resources for our growing population of students of color, international students, and those in the LGBTQ+ community. The Center promotes a welcoming and positive campus climate, and cultivates a diverse, inclusive environment that supports equal access, participation, and representation on our campus.

We celebrated our 75th anniversary, and IU's Bicentennial, even if the commemoration had to be cut short. Our Bicentennial campaign netted more than \$16 million, far surpassing our original goal. Funds raised created more than 140 undergraduate scholarships, while also providing funding for the campus greenhouse — which also opened in fall 2021 — student international travel, athletic teams, a fitness center, and the SAEC.

We were also ranked among the top regional campuses in the Midwest, in the 2020 U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges Rankings, tied for the 7th through 11th spots in the Top Public Schools Regional College Midwest.

As we prepare to return to a more “normal” year this August, we look forward to the accomplishments ahead. A large percentage of our graduates stay and work in this region, teaching in our schools, providing health care in our hospitals and health care centers, starting and leading new businesses to grow our economy, and much more. We couldn't be more proud.

Congratulations, graduates!

Susan Sciame-Giesecke, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Indiana University Kokomo



What's your story?

Looking back on this past academic year, I have been impressed with the stories I have heard of our recent graduates, as well as alumni, and how they have persevered through unusual times.

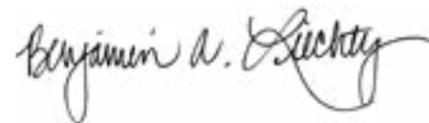
Many have overcome obstacles, tried new things, and reached milestones they never thought possible. Others have dug deep into their careers and found ways to continue to excel.

This issue of *Legacy* highlights a few IU Kokomo alumnae who have risen to the top, despite what has been going on in the world around them. These stories are most likely very much like your own.

These leaders have made strides to lead from where they are, and plant themselves in places where they can flourish. You'll get a glimpse of their leadership styles and what drives them on a daily basis. I hope you'll enjoy reading about these amazing women.

So, I'm curious. What's your story? I'm always eager to learn more about you, your career path, your growth and accomplishments. Please drop me a line to share your journey. Who knows, you may be featured in the next edition!

Until then, I hope you'll take advantage of the warmer weather, get outside and breathe the fresh air! I know I'm ready!



Benjamin Liechty, BA '06
Director of Alumni Relations
and Campus Ceremonies
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MEET BILL AND BARBARA LAMBERT, IU ALUMNI AND DONORS.

The Lamberts met at Indiana University in 1957, when they were both in the School of Business. They were athletic, and played golf and tennis together. Bill invited Barb to the Indy 500 with his family. During the race, there was a crash in front of their seats, and Barb was hit with a flying chunk of rubber from a tire, and received several stitches. Bill said I'll take you home and she replied, "Oh no, I'm staying for the race!" That was it for him.

Their daughters were both in the medical field, and the Lamberts recognize the importance of nursing. They wanted to support a scholarship for the nursing students at IU Kokomo. To accomplish this philanthropic goal, they have generously given \$100,000, establishing the William P. Lambert and Barbara A. Lambert Charitable Gift Annuity, (CGA) which will ultimately fund the Bill and Barbara Lambert IU Kokomo Nursing Scholarship.



WHAT IS A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY?

A Charitable Gift Annuity is a simple agreement in which a donor makes a gift of cash or securities in return for a fixed income stream for life. The annuity rate is based on the age of the annuitant(s) at the time of the gift.

Based on their ages, the CGA rate offered by IUF for two lives is 6.6%. This means that for a gift of \$100,000, IUF will provide a fixed payment of \$6,600 per year to them for the remainder of their joint lives. The Lamberts also will receive a generous charitable income tax deduction.

We are grateful to the Lamberts for their generous gift which helps them do well while also doing good. Thank you!

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Please contact the IU Kokomo development office at 765-455-9485.

Fundraising Disclosures: go.iu.edu/89n



2021 COMMENCEMENT

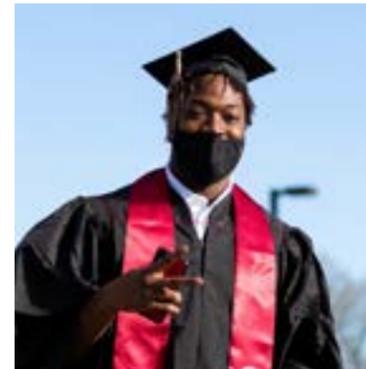
Indiana University Kokomo celebrated the academic achievements — as well as the resilience and dedication to persevere in the face of a global pandemic — of both 2020 and 2021 graduates during Commencement on Tuesday, May 11, during an outdoor ceremony at the Pavilion.

CLASS OF 2020

- 654** Graduates
- 41** Indiana counties
- 12** States
- 16** Countries
- 34%** First generation

CLASS OF 2021

- 706** Graduates
- 39** Indiana counties
- 10** States
- 17** Countries
- 34%** First generation



**FOR MORE COMMENCEMENT PHOTOS
SEARCH @IUKOKOMO ON FLICKR**



STUDENT ADDRESS

Mehreen Tahir
BS '21

“You are blessed to be born in a country that values freedom, your universities that value students, and your professors that value your success, so never forget to give back to this entire community.

I pray you never face the adversity of oppression or a situation where your right to freedom of speech is threatened.

I urge you to passionately pursue your dreams and never give up on your goals. May you always be the pride of your campus, family, and your country.”

Mehreen Tahir represented the graduates as class speaker. She grew up in a small village in Pakistan and came to the United States because of her dream of an education. An honors graduate in biochemistry, she will continue her studies at Arizona State University, pursuing a Ph.D. in environmental biochemistry.

To watch Mehreen’s powerful speech, as well as the rest of the commencement ceremony, visit go.iu.edu/3Pde.

Cougars

GRANT GAYLOR MAKES SCHOOL HISTORY AS FIRST NATIONAL CHAMPION



When Grant Gaylor enrolled at Indiana University Kokomo, he thought his days throwing shot put were likely behind him.

The campus’s track team was new, and only included running events at that time.

Not ready to give up throwing and hoping it might be added before he graduated with his nursing degree, Gaylor continued to train on his own, with help from his Northwestern High School coach and some video instruction programs. When he was asked to be on the first throwing team last spring, he was ready.

Two weeks after graduation, he secured his place in campus history, winning shot put at the NAIA men’s outdoor track and field national championships.

“My story is unique, but almost anyone could do this,” he said. “It just takes the right motivation and drive. People can be a lot more than what they think. It just comes down to you. An outcome isn’t promised, but are you willing to do the work to get the outcome you want? I was willing to do the work and hope it would be meaningful and impactful.”

Stay up-to-date on all things athletics at [IUKCOUGARS.COM](https://iukougars.com)

Gaylor dominated the field at nationals. His throw of 18.74 meters in the finals was 72 centimeters better than the next competitor and beat his previous school record of 18.02

He also won River States Conference (RSC) titles in shotput and discus, and was named its Outstanding Field Athlete of the Year. He was runner-up in shot put at the NAIA indoor championships.

He’s balanced a full training schedule with his senior nursing program, throwing and then lifting weights after class each weekday, and then competing in meets on Saturdays.

“It’s been challenging, but it was rewarding at the same time,” he said. “I’m just grateful for the opportunity to be able to compete and represent my university and be part of the team atmosphere again. It’s an important individual thing for me, but also to be part of something greater than myself.”

After graduating in May, and with nationals behind him, he looks forward to beginning his career as an emergency room nurse at Community Howard Regional Health. He also hopes to continue to impact IU Kokomo’s track program as a volunteer coach.



SAEC RECEIVES OFFICIAL WELCOME



IU Kokomo officially dedicated the Student Activities and Events Center on May 11.



IU President Michael A. McRobbie accepts a ceremonial key to the SAEC.



Faculty, staff, students, and donors attended the ceremony.



Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke said the SAEC is the gathering space the campus community needed.

The long-awaited Student Activities and Events Center received its official welcome to campus during a dedication ceremony led by IU President Michael A. McRobbie.

“This much needed and very welcoming center will further strengthen the already vigorous spirit of community, scholarship, and fellowship at IU Kokomo,” McRobbie said, noting that it is “at least a dozen facilities in one,” because not only is it a gym, but also a resource center, a commons, a classroom, a training center, a proving ground, a lounge, and more.

The SAEC opened for the fall 2020 semester, just in time to also serve as a much-needed classroom space due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke added that the campus has needed a gathering space for many years and is pleased to finally have it.

“This truly is something to celebrate,” she said. “In my mind, the campus is now complete. We’re ready for the 21st century.”

Representing student athletes, Jaela Meister, from the women’s basketball team, said they are grateful for the gymnasium.

“I cannot wait until we are able to fill up this gym with hundreds of students and staff, while also competing in front of our friends and families,” she said. “I hope to be able to raise another banner to represent this university, and to show how thankful I am to have witnessed the building of our new facility, and to play in it.”

Located southeast of Hunt Hall on the eastern edge of campus, the 26,000 square-foot building accommodates up to 1,200 spectators, and offers athletic offices, athletic training and locker facilities, a large lobby/reception area, and a three-story-high assembly space/gymnasium.

For more information go to iuk.edu/eventscenter



Cliff Hunt, (left) with Dr. Richard Lasbury (right) in the new Student Activities and Events Center.

HOOPS FORGES FRIENDSHIP

Office named in honor of first basketball coach

The friendship between Dr. Richard Lasbury and Cliff Hunt began with a shared love for Indiana University basketball.

The two recall both attending IU Bloomington in 1953, and the excitement of attending basketball games there. Both have become IU Kokomo sports fans and have supported the programs with scholarships funds, while also funding student travel programs.

When IU Kokomo announced plans to build the Student Activities and Events Center (SAEC), Lasbury and his wife, Betty, knew they wanted to support it — and that their gift should honor their friend. When the SAEC opened in fall 2020, it included a men’s basketball coach’s office named for Hunt.

“Cliff has done a lot for IU Kokomo,” Richard Lasbury said. “He was the first basketball coach, and he’s important to the campus. I’m happy we did it.”

Hunt called the honor “overwhelming and surprising,” but appreciates it.

“I have a long history at IU Kokomo, and I even took some classes there when the campus was at the Seiberling Mansion, in 1952,” he said. “I wanted to lay a base for IU Kokomo to compete in the NAIA. I think I placed a foundation for that to happen.”

Hunt coached the IU Kokomo Knights from 1981 to 1991, starting the team as a club sport, and growing it to play against other schools. The campus’s athletic programs, now branded as the Cougars, earned NAIA membership in 2013.

He hopes to see the stands packed with student fans when games can go on without COVID-19 restrictions.

“This is something IU Kokomo has needed, and I’m proud to be part of it,” Hunt said. “I could never have imagined it when I was borrowing gym space for games from elementary schools and the Armory.”

Lasbury said he drove by regularly during construction to watch progress, and is happy with the finished center.

“IU Kokomo’s growth is amazing,” he said. “It used to be just one building, and now look at it. It’s a real campus.”



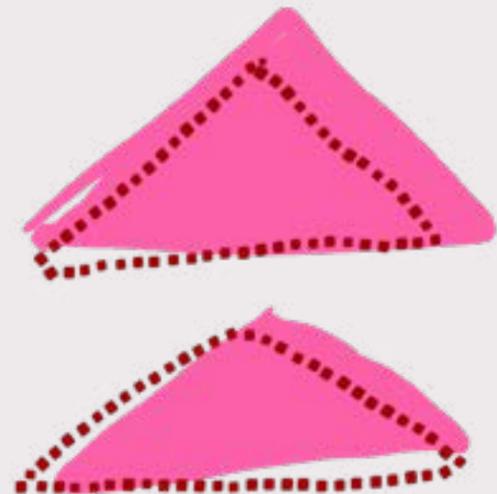
Men’s Head Basketball Coach Eric Echelbarger, (left) shows Cliff Hunt (right) the plaque outside his office.



There is no force more powerful
than a woman determined to

Rise

—Bosa Sebele
writer, activist, and law scholar



INTEGRITY. ACCOUNTABILITY. EMPATHY. HUMILITY.

These are just a few qualities of a great leader. And many alumnae of Indiana University Kokomo exude these traits every single day.

Often times, it's a person like Alexius Babb, who is about to complete her Ph.D. to become a counselor, so she can be a trustworthy face of a health care system to other people of color. Or it's someone like Amanda Bagwell, who has overcome great obstacles to attain employment, and now reaches a hand back to lift others.

Brianne Boles also qualifies, as CEO of Bona Vista, where she leads one of the largest employers in Howard County, as they impact the lives of people with special abilities. And Priyanka Singh Deo heads up a team of Microsoft Engineers, in a field typically dominated by men.

Continue on to be inspired.



Equality in the workplace tops alumna's goals

With a law degree and an impressive resume that includes a Congressional internship and recognition as one of the top law students in the country, Amanda Bagwell shouldn't have had difficulty finding a job. Her blindness, however, complicates matters.

After a lifetime of battling for her rights, she's taking her experience and using it to make a difference for others with disabilities.

"I want to break down stigmas on the front line," said Bagwell, 28. "I want to be the person helping employers understand what they can do to reasonably accommodate people with disabilities, to help them reach their maximum potential."

It's a daunting task.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 17.9 percent of persons with a disability were employed in 2020, down from 19.3 percent in 2019. By comparison, 61.8 percent of people without a disability were employed during that same time period, down from 66.3 percent the previous year.

These numbers do not shock Bagwell, as a person who has lived this reality.

In addition to her bachelor's degree in psychology from IU Kokomo, Bagwell graduated from the Valparaiso University School of Law in 2018, and was recognized by The National Jurist magazine as one of 20 law students nationwide who contributed the most to their law schools and communities in the previous year.

Even with these accolades, "I struggled getting a job," she said. "I'm educated, I have experience, I have a wonderful resume."

"I know how it feels to be told, very diplomatically, 'Well, we have other candidates,'" she continued. "I'm sure they do. They don't understand how I can do the job. I know how that stings."

Amanda Bagwell with her guide dog Buddington.

Understanding those challenges, Bagwell has made it her life's mission to help. She co-owns a web accessibility compliance business, and also works as a counselor for vocational rehabilitation through Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration. Her goal is to earn her law license to help write policies that make employment easier.

"Just because we have disabilities doesn't mean we don't deserve a life," she said. "I want to help. I believe the best way I can do that is to help adjust existing policies, write new policies, and bring my knowledge to the table regarding regulations. Whether I'm blessed to do that in vocational rehabilitation or somewhere else, I want to serve."

Bagwell said many times, there are small accommodations that can make a huge difference. For example, she uses a larger computer monitor. She also has a guide dog, a yellow lab named Buddington.

"Most people, I have found, once they are given the correct tools in their toolbox, can do very well," she said. "I've enjoyed helping them have their basic needs met, and then watch them grow and develop, to become their own advocate for their rights, handling it professionally moving forward. It's fulfilling to me to see they can stand on their own and move forward and be part of society."

Bagwell sets an example for her clients, with her own persistence, tenacity, and independence.

"There's a creative way for everything," she said. "I'm used to doing things by myself. When my parents got sick, I would walk to the school bus by myself. I've cooked, cleaned, and walked home from law school. It's all by trial and error. You have to figure out a way to do something, when push comes to shove."

Bagwell has challenged herself since she lost her sight, shortly after her fourth birthday, due to a connective tissue disorder.

"I had to re-learn how to live," she said. "I had to learn how to feed myself, and how to navigate my surroundings. I was already reading and writing, but then had to learn to read Braille with my hands."

Her mother and stepfather pushed for her needs at school, but when their health struggles left them unable to do so, she had to take that job on herself at a very young age.

"When they got sick, I learned that someone had to get up and do it, and it was going to have to be me advocating for myself," she said.

After graduating from high school, she first earned a community college degree, then enrolled at IU Kokomo. She found a welcoming environment while earning her bachelor's degree in psychology, graduating in 2015 — with her guide dog, Roscoe, accompanying her across the stage.

"It set the trend for what I should ask when I went to graduate school," she said of her IU Kokomo experience. She was able to receive documents in an electronic format, allowing her to read them on her computer, which she was allowed to use in class for note taking. She

also received extra time on tests, to accommodate for her screen reader, which was essentially talking software, to read the information.

"I got the hands-on help I needed, which allowed me to mature and grow up in a more family-based setting," she said.

Law school was harder, because she had to push for many of the accommodations she needed. On top of the rigorous class schedule and hours of study she and her classmates had to do, she also spent countless hours scanning print textbooks into a program that read them to her, or contacting publishers to send her PDFs to scan. She took exams either in Braille or on a Word document where she could type answers — often folding the screen down so her classmates couldn't read her answers, because of professors' concerns.

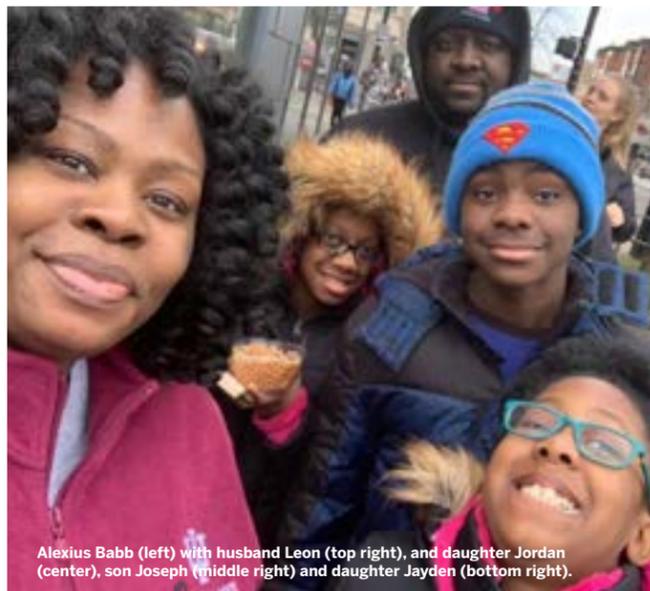
Sarah Sarber, IU Kokomo's chief of staff, who is also a law school graduate, talked her through career options, leading her to policy and regulation. Bagwell gained experience in that area as an intern with Congresswoman Robin Kelly in Chicago.

In her role, she drafted policies for local companies, networked, helped with programs to get children from low income families access to college, spoke with constituents, and organized educational events.

"How else can you be part of your society, unless you have knowledge?" she said. "If you don't know what you're advocating for when you talk to your employer, you can't protect yourself."



Amanda Bagwell works in her office with guide dog Buddington close by.



Alexius Babb (left) with husband Leon (top right), and daughter Jordan (center), son Joseph (middle right) and daughter Jayden (bottom right).

Family drives education journey

A conversation around her kitchen table changed Alexius Babb's life — and the lives of her family.

Her husband, Leon, asked her if there were any goals she wanted to achieve. She wished she had finished college, and he suggested she just go back — and pointed out Indiana University Kokomo was just a few short miles from their home.

Less than 10 years after that conversation, Babb has gone well beyond her initial wish, with a Doctor of Psychology nearly completed, and a move for a job in Hawaii on the horizon.

It hasn't come easy for any of them.

After graduating from IU Kokomo, she started her graduate program in Chicago, then moved to Tyler, Texas for her internship. She and Leon agreed they wanted their children — a son, 14, and 11-year-old twin daughters — to stay in one place until she finished school and had a job. So, he stayed in Kokomo and took on the majority of the child raising, while also earning his bachelor's degree in Medical Imaging Technology.

"It's been a lot of hard work, a lot of sacrifice, and a long journey," she said. "The fact we will be reunited, and our family will be in a better position than we were before, makes it worth the sacrifice. We're thinking of where we are generationally. When we had these discussions in our family, I don't think anyone in our extended family could imagine that any of us would go this far."

They all look forward to being together again in their new home in Hawaii starting in September. Alexius will do her post-doctoral training as a primary care psychologist at Hilo Hospital, where Leon will work in his new profession. They've already chosen schools for their children, and are working on the other logistics of such a big move. It's a

bittersweet moment, she noted, as they leave behind friends who have become family in Kokomo.

"It's been a real good journey to what feels like a long pursuit of making things better for our family," she said. "Just to see where we started from, and the culmination of our hard work, it's really profound and shows where education can take you."

While she originally planned to start a career immediately after earning her bachelor's degree, Babb said faculty members including Rosalyn Davis, clinical associate professor of psychology, encouraged her to dream bigger, and assured her she was more than capable.

As a doctoral student, her research focuses on physician empathy, and how it impacts treatment success for Black people who manage diabetes and hypertension. She's also considering health care discrimination and patient satisfaction, to see how those variables affect the outcome.

"These are two of the more common illnesses in the Black community that lead to overall poor health outcomes," she said. "The relationship between the doctor and patient is very important to keep people on their treatment regimen. It's important for physicians and other medical institutions to have this information, so they can moderate the relationships and make changes to have better outcomes."

Her ultimate goal is improving minority health care, noting that there is long-established distrust for the medical community. As a fellow minority herself, she hopes to show that there are people within the system working to make it better.

That goal prompted her to apply for the job in Hawaii, to do her part to improve the overall health and well-being of native Hawaiians, and other minorities who live there.

"They have a very troubled legacy relationship-wise with the United States," Babb said. "Years of generational trauma can cause a lot of trauma to the human psyche, and to overall health outcomes."

"We're thinking of where we are generationally. When we had these discussions in our family, I don't think anyone in our extended family could imagine that any of us would go this far."

Babb hopes that she and her husband have set an example not only for their own children, but for others in their family, about the possibilities education opens for them.

"The most important thing we hope we instill in our children is hard work and good effort, because that will help you master many things in life," she said. "We really hope they see how hard we worked, and they would pick up that same drive, perseverance, and resiliency we have."

CEO finds growth through challenges

If you're comfortable, you're not growing.

That's the leadership philosophy at the heart of Brianne Boles' professional success. As Chief Executive Officer of Bona Vista, a Kokomo-based not-for-profit, she leads a team that provides services for pre-school children, and children and adults with disabilities.

"We serve, or could serve, people from birth to death, complete life wraparound services, depending on what someone needs, and where they are in their current situation," said Boles, B.G.S. '03, M.P.M. '06.

"Even with 13 years at this agency, and three years in the CEO position, I challenge myself to find ways to push myself, to stretch my abilities," she said. "We're responsible for thousands of lives, and I'm running a company that is one of the larger employers in the city of Kokomo and Howard County. I take great pride in that."



"If you're comfortable, you're not growing, in my opinion," she said. "Put yourself out there, challenge yourself, be open to anything that comes your way."

While her original plan was to be an elementary teacher, Boles reached back to childhood experiences, volunteering in the community with her mother, Vicki Boles, a long-time Kokomo teacher.

"Giving back to our community was in my blood," she said. "When I decided to switch, I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do. I turned to what we did as volunteers, began working for the American Red Cross, and fell in love with it."

As she figured out her career, mentors from campus all advised her, leading her to the Master of Public Management program as it was getting off the ground.

Armed with her graduate degree, Boles began her career at Bona Vista as a vice president in communication and development — with plans to continue growing into new roles. She discussed these goals with Jill Dunn, the CEO who hired her.

"I told her that I would want to grow. I had professional goals and that Kokomo was near and dear to my heart, and I would like nothing more than to grow and give back to my hometown professionally," she recalls telling Dunn.

She began stretching herself by moving from communications into programming for the individuals served by the organization, starting out in the employment division. In that position, she helped people with disabilities secure and maintain employment.

"What I liked about it, and what I think grabbed me, was the ability to still network and meet people," Boles said. "I like the opportunity to do something different every day in this job. Regardless of what position you are in here, it is definitely not the same thing every day."

She found she enjoyed working more directly with Bona Vista's clients than her previous role allowed.

"What has kept me here is I can walk into any of our buildings and see clients, and see the difference we make, and that the staff makes. That's what's locked me in and has kept me here 13 years later," she said.

"For many of our persons served, we are their family. We handle everything someone would handle for their son, their daughter, their parent, like haircuts, grocery shopping, teaching grooming etiquette, and helping with daily hygiene. That is what we do every day. We develop relationships and bonds grow organically. The staff loves the persons served, and it's hard not to. They are very, very special people."

Having the ability to see the impact Bona Vista has is how she knows she's grown as a leader during her career.

"It's inspiring to work for a company that provides essential services every single day, regardless of what's going on in our local community, let alone nationally," she said. "I definitely have grown in the area of patience, and celebrating the small moments. It's important to celebrate those small victories, and we have a lot of them here."

She encourages other women to look for opportunities to serve, both personally and professionally.



Brianne Boles at Bona Vista Early Childhood Services

Grad feels pride & joy at Microsoft

No dream is too big, if you aren't afraid to reach for it.

That philosophy has led Priyanka Singh Deo to success in her ideal job, in a city she's come to love as home — on the other side of the world from where she started.

"Sometimes, when you think about things, they seem impossible. But, if that's what you want, you find a way," said Singh Deo, M.B.A. '14. "I'm pretty much living my dream job."

As a project manager for Microsoft, one of the world's largest and most successful technology companies, she currently works from her apartment overlooking downtown Seattle. She is responsible for managing a team of 21 engineers who work with start-up developers to implement their entire technical needs on the Azure cloud platform.

"This is my pride and joy at Microsoft," she said. "At this point, I've helped more than 5,000 start-ups be successful. When we started Azure, I saw an opportunity to help developers adopt our program and



Priyanka Singh Deo at Microsoft in Seattle, WA

founded Azure Consultants. It started as a pilot program, and now it's an integral part of Microsoft and Microsoft for Start-Ups."

It almost seems like too much for a woman who grew up in a British boarding school in India — but that background gave her the tools she needed to seek out the next opportunity.

"Moving away and starting new was instilled in me from a really young age," she said. The experience was similar to what Americans see in the Harry Potter movies, she said, with students assigned to houses, and earning points for their house in the classroom and on the athletic fields.

"It was really wonderful," she said. "In a sense, it taught me to be independent at a young age. I learned to make friends quickly. When you are away from home, your friends are your everything. I've never had to work on learning interpersonal skills, because they just came naturally from this experience."

With that sense of independence, she left India for the very first time

shortly after graduating for college in the United States. That led to her first job, working for an engineering firm in Munich, Germany. She noted that her colleagues all had advanced degrees, and knew she would need more school to achieve her career goals.

That led to IU Kokomo, where she was a graduate assistant in the Office of Student Life while earning her M.B.A. She missed the atmosphere of Munich, with its big city lifestyle and opportunities for outdoor adventures, however, and kept her eyes open for a city with a similar vibe.

She found what she was looking for on a fall break trip to Seattle, and began intentionally using LinkedIn for connecting and networking, building towards getting her foot in the door at Microsoft.



"Finding good mentors is really important," she said. "They are already where you want to go, and can give you the best direction for how to get there."

"I knew I wanted to be a program manager, so when I saw someone on LinkedIn who had that title, I would message them and say, 'I'm in college, and I want to get to where you are. I would appreciate it if you would take some time to talk to me.'"

LinkedIn is where she learned about her first job at Microsoft. Within a week of receiving a job offer she packed everything she owned into her Toyota Corolla and set off on a marathon 32-hour drive to the west coast — with no place to live lined up, but with plenty of faith in her own ability to work out the details, because she wanted it badly enough.

"I feel truly fortunate with coming this far, and finding a job I love," she said. "I've worked other places where it was just a job. Now, I can wake up in the morning and start doing something that's almost second nature. This is my passion, this is what I want to do."

"I do feel really blessed and lucky to be here."

Lisa Taylor-Weaver BS'99



Major:
Finance and Economics

Current Occupation:

Director of Engagement at The Cellular Connection. I have held several positions over my 22 years with the company including accounts receivable, accounting team lead, assistant controller, and director of administration.

What advice would you give a woman who is starting her career?

One nugget of wisdom that I was given when I began my career after graduating was to be flexible. This still stands true today. You must be willing to be flexible with your approach to projects and people. Change is inevitable and necessary for growth and innovation. I would also encourage having a mentor. Identify someone you define as successful and ask them to lunch. We all need someone to be our cheerleader, sounding board, and shoulder to cry on when needed. Gerry Stroman, who I met as a student at IUJ, was all of those things for me. I will forever cherish my mentorship and friendship with her.

Ann Millikan BA'59



Major:
Elementary Education

Current Occupation:

I was a first-grade teacher for 19 years at Bon Air Elementary, worked with the school to develop elementary guidance program, and the administrator for Kokomo Schools' Title 1 program.

What advice would you give a woman who is starting her career?

Look at all the options and take all the classes that you can take. Do everything you can to help clarify what you really want to do. It's wise to get every opportunity you can to do any kind of job or volunteer experience in any area you think you might be interested in. Look around and see what options are available.

Emilee Miller-Norris BA'13, MPM '16



Major:
Communication, Public Management

Current Occupation:

I'm the Chief Executive Officer at Clinton County Family YMCA. I do a little of everything. It's a nonprofit, so anyone who works in that world knows you wear many hats when you do any job there. I do strategic thinking, long-term planning, and overall long-term health of the facility.

What advice would you give a woman who is starting her career?

I think the biggest thing is to advocate for yourself. You hear about women trying to break the glass ceiling and, really, I've found more that it's women trying to make sure that they don't shatter in these positions. It's tough to be a woman in male-dominated fields. It's difficult to sit in a room and be sure of yourself, speak up, and advocate for your own worth. You're the only one that's going to do it. Nobody is going to swoop in on your behalf and advocate. You need to be well rounded and very well prepared to have fierce conversations.

Faith Renken BA'18



Major:
Humanities with minors in English and Sociology, and a concentration in Performing Arts

Current Occupation:

I'm the Assistant Director for Programing at Ball State University. I oversee the university program board where they host weekly events such as Alcohol Alternatives, which encourage students to come to programs rather than go out on a Thursday evening.

What advice would you give a woman who is starting her career?

I would say that there's really not going to be a direct path to where you want to be. It'll all take time to figure out the best way to adjust and to probably fail at times, so that you can figure out the best way for you as a person to succeed and the way that you define your own success. It's really important to enjoy the journey and to not forget to keep your cup full as well. Without having your own cup filled, it's really hard to give your whole self to others and to even encourage others to do better.

JUST KEEP

Running



By: Tyler Lucas
BS'17

Everyone can agree that this last year has been different. Everyday life has changed. The way we see each other. How we all interact with each other. How we handle our stresses.

Now more than ever, it's extremely important to take care of our mental and physical health. My way prior to COVID was running.

Due to this pandemic, everything was closing and cancelling. All races were put to a stop and I was over halfway through a marathon training period. I would have people say, "Tyler, you run! Nothing is changing too much for you." Well, sure. I run, but I only like running when there is a race on my calendar. And given the circumstances, there were no REAL races on the horizon. Virtual races became a big thing.

My motivation was completely drained. The crowds, all the runners lining up, the water stations, GONE. Not to be seen. Not only that; my job traveling was put to a stop AND my wife and I were blessed with a beautiful baby girl during this time. My life was (and is) crazy and it felt okay to put running on the back burner. But as time went on, I could definitely tell that stress and anxiety were becoming more common in my everyday life.

About a month and a half passes into being at home and I had decided that running had to come back. It also helped that my father-in-law was running more than me (and he is good at letting me know that). So the process began of getting back into running. Wake up, get my coffee, work, and immediately after that, RUN. It doesn't matter how far or how long, I just had to do it. And having my wife cheering me on was a definite motivator.

With races slowly coming back, it is easier to find the motivation. If you're looking for an easy way to start running for better physical and mental health, here are some tips to get started:

1 DON'T WORRY ABOUT DISTANCE, JUST FOCUS ON YOUR TIME.

Aim for 10 minutes. Get used to that and throw in more time once it feels natural to your body. Countless 'Couch to 5k' programs exist online with a simple Google search that can be helpful to beginners!

2 PUT RUNS IN YOUR CALENDAR.

It gives you a goal to get out the door.

3 TELL FRIENDS THAT YOU ARE STARTING TO RUN.

They may become supportive and be a source of motivation!

4 DON'T START OFF SPRINTING!

You are trying to become a runner, not break any world records.

5 SIGN UP FOR A RACE.

Even if it's virtual, it will give you something to look forward to (and chances are you will get a t-shirt).

6 PUSH THROUGH.

Just remember, it is important to have time to decompress through these hard times. And putting yourself through a workout may be tough, but you won't regret it after.



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