School of Education cultivates teacher success

Alumnus Brayton Mendenhall, Indiana Teacher of the Year nominee, stands with his class at Ben Davis High School.
TEACHING ON PURPOSE

The last few years have been challenging for educators.

With a looming teacher shortage, the demands of both virtual and in-person classrooms amidst a global pandemic, and the everyday stresses that go with the job, it’s no wonder these essential workers are feeling the effects.

In this issue of Legacy, you will be inspired by our School of Education and its efforts not only to recruit and prepare future teachers, but also to support its alumni in the field, as well as our local schools. From the Tomorrow’s Teachers program, to wellness mentoring, and lifelong learning, our faculty are making an impact on education in north central Indiana.

Read their stories, starting on page 10.
Imagine being offered a job interview, but not having appropriate clothes to wear to it.

This is a reality for some IU Kokomo students. You may have even experienced it yourself when you were a student here.

Now, however, students have access to free professional clothing on campus. The recent opening of the Cougar Closet provides a variety of business attire at no cost. That’s right! No cost.

A partnership between the Women in Business and Student Marketing Organization made this dream a reality. The closet offers clothing not just for job interviews, but special events, internships, KEY trips, and more.

These successes are what make this campus such a special place to be. Students collaborating, meeting needs of other students, all while igniting their entrepreneurial spirits. They even applied for funding through IU Kokomo’s Women of the Well House philanthropic group and the IU Regional Economic Development fund for start-up costs.

Help me applaud their efforts by making clothing donations to this wonderful cause. There’s bound to be a suit or two in your own closet that you don’t wear anymore. You can bring your gently used professional attire to the Main Building, room 180, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We have a small gift for you as a token of our appreciation.

This is just one example of the community spirit here at IU Kokomo. It’s all about the students and their success. This is our mission.

Susan Sciame-Giesecke, Ph.D.
Chancellor
Happy Holidays, my fellow alumni!

Welcome to the winter edition of your alumni magazine. We have all been through a lot over the past 2 years. Our resiliency in the face of loss, grief, and normalcy has taken its toll on all of us in different ways.

This issue focuses on our education alumni, who have been working diligently to continue to educate our future doctors, nurses, lawyers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and creatives. We all have fond memories of teachers that had a positive impact on us during our formative years. Perhaps they were a teacher who challenged you to push forward or helped you when you needed it the most. Our teachers help us realize our dreams, our strengths, and assist us in honing our skill sets to prepare us for what lies ahead. Our School of Education is working with our education alumni and various school corporations to combat teacher burnout. Throughout this issue, you’ll read about these important initiatives but also get a glimpse of what life is like on campus now that students, faculty, staff, and alumni have returned.

Highlights include the recognition of Brayton Mendenhall (B.S. ’11) who was recognized as a finalist for the Indiana Teacher of the Year. We are so proud of him and the positive impact he, and so many of our education alumni, make on students each day. We also celebrate the students who received the alumni scholarships. These bright, kind, motivated students were so appreciative of being selected to receive a scholarship that is funded by you, their soon-to-be fellow alumni. And I enjoyed welcoming you back to campus for homecoming. It was wonderful to see so many of you, and I look forward to seeing more of you throughout the year.

As we reflect on the past year and prepare for the next, let’s continue to lift our teachers, and return the favors they did for many of us when we needed it the most. One way we will be celebrating our education alumni is by hosting our Teachers of Distinction on June 14, 2022, on the IU Kokomo campus. I hope you will join us and nominate a deserving colleague like the ones featured in this issue. They need it now more than ever.

Benjamin Liechty, B.A. ’06
Director of Alumni Relations
and Campus Ceremonies
I WANT TO PAY IT FORWARD

Amber Moore, B.A. ’17
Former IUAA Kokomo Region Board Member

I PROBABLY WOULDN’T BE WHERE I AM TODAY IF I HADN’T BEEN HONORED TO RECEIVE AN ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP.

While working toward my degree, there were many semesters that I found myself with an extended class load. I held various offices on campus such as student body vice president and ambassador, plus participated in student life activities. IUK pulled me into the world of academia and stretched my capacity. Because of organizations such as the alumni association, which offered financial support, I was able to stay focused on my university experience without the distraction of financial encumberment. It wasn’t until I was on the receiving end of the endowment that I realized the profundity of those investments. One of my life goals now is to be a generous, and hopefully substantial, financial contributor to empower students. I want to pay it forward as a tribute to those who had never met me but supported me.

For me, personally, a significant impact of receiving an alumni scholarship was also receiving the vote of confidence from the alumni board. This recognition from a group of highly respected alumni who believed I was worth the investment gave a thinly stretched senior the boost needed to finish strong to receive my first degree. I am now teaching sixth graders to begin to dream about crossing their own educational finish line.

Your generosity can make a huge difference in the lives of our IUK students.
Contact Alumni Director Benjamin Liechty at alumni@iuk.edu to discuss giving options.
Indiana University inaugurated Pamela Whitten as its 19th president during a November 4 ceremony attended by more than 1,000 people at IU Auditorium.

IU Kokomo celebrated Whitten — the university’s first female president — with a viewing party in the Kelley Student Center Commons. Students, faculty and staff gathered to watch a live stream of the historic event on the IQ wall, and enjoyed cake, chili, and cornbread.

Student Rene Semple of Lafayette represented the campus in President Whitten’s platform party, while Mattie Tom of Carmel, 2020 student body president, and Lanie Pocock, a cross country and track athlete from Fort Wayne, were among the student leader and athlete delegation in the procession.

Chancellor Susan Sciame-Giesecke participated in the ceremony as part of the platform party. Sciame-Giesecke serves on Whitten’s cabinet as interim executive vice president of university academic affairs.

A visionary scholar and accomplished educator and researcher, Whitten has held a variety of leadership roles, beginning at Michigan State University where she served as a dean for five years, and most recently as president of Kennesaw State University.

Learn more about President Whitten at president.iu.edu.
A small leather-bound three-ring notebook embossed with the IU crest is the only memento Robin DeWitt kept from her time at Indiana University Kokomo.

“It represented the fact I got my degrees from IU,” she said.

It lay forgotten in a box for decades, unpacked as she purged boxes from her shed when she retired from her long teaching career in 2016. She discarded her 1970s-era textbooks from the same box. But for some reason, this notebook stood out.

“It still appealed to me as something special,” said DeWitt, B.S. ’71, M.S. ’78. “I held onto it and threw everything else away. I thought, ‘I’ll just keep it.’”

DeWitt took notes in it for her undergraduate classes in education, and then again when she returned to earn her master’s. While most of those notes are gone, a few remain, including a neat, cursive reminder, “need to get application to graduate.”

She remembered seeing someone else with the same notebook while visiting a friend on the Bloomington campus in the late 1960s, and decided she needed one as well.

After earning her degree, she moved to Indianapolis where she taught second graders at Bridgeport Elementary School in Wayne Township for three and a half years. After a move and some life changes, she returned to Kokomo – completing her master’s and taking a teaching job with Kokomo schools for eighth and ninth grade students with emotional disabilities.

“That was a different kind of teaching,” she said. “It was nothing like before, with lesson plans you could adhere to. It was flexibility to the max.”

She used her interest in arts to build relationships with students, over quilt making, stained glass creations, and latch hooking rugs. There weren’t a lot of teachers with expertise in her area, so as she grew her skills, DeWitt began mentoring others, including in an internship program with the Indiana Department of Education.

She noted there weren’t a lot of career options for young women when she went to college, and sometimes thinks she might have chosen law if that option had been more viable at the time.

“It was a different generation,” she said. “I don’t know what I would have done. I might have been a lawyer. I can argue now with the best of them. For the time period I was in, education was a good fit.”

In 2016, DeWitt learned she was to become a grandmother and decided it was time to retire after 26 years. Now, she keeps in touch with a group of former colleagues and is working to relearn Spanish in her spare time. She also enjoys sewing, quilting, and is president of the Greentown Research Club.
Indiana University Kokomo hosted a Wizard of Oz-themed homecoming celebration the last week of October — complete with tethered hot air balloon rides, the annual Angel Walk, a pumpkin patch and a pep rally!

Alumni were invited for a tailgate and some volleyball action at the Student Activities and Events Center as the Cougars saw a 3-1 victory over the Grenadiers from IU Southeast.

Saturday rounded out the homecoming celebration with two more wins. Women’s volleyball knocked off Midway in straight sets, avenging their lone conference loss on the year. The win gave IU Kokomo their fifth River States Conference regular season title and seventh straight NAIA National Tournament bid.

Men’s basketball won their season opener later that evening with a narrow 69-68 victory over the Lynx of Lincoln College. Go, Cougars!
FOR MORE HOMECOMING PHOTOS SEARCH @IUKOKOMO ON FLICKR
I hold much hope for the future because of teacher candidates like the ones we support.

—Leah Nellis, dean, Indiana University Kokomo School of Education
Is there a teacher who made a positive and lasting difference in your life? Perhaps one who helped you discover your talent in art, music, or academics? Or, one who listened and supported you through a challenging situation, believed in you, or who helped you navigate a conflict with a friend?

Mr. Wells was one of those teachers for me and what my second-grade self learned from him was that teachers are smart, caring, creative, energetic, and resourceful. I’m reminded of that every day as I work alongside faculty and staff in the School of Education at IU Kokomo and interact with our students. These individuals, officially considered teacher candidates, seek to make a difference in the lives of others – your son or daughter, grandchild, niece, nephew, or neighbor’s child – and have a positive impact in our shared community.

This is their Why, their purpose. Young adults in our communities are choosing to be part of something larger than themselves by committing to this noble profession.

Despite a state and national decline in the number of individuals preparing to become educators, enrollment in the School of Education has steadily increased in recent years reflecting diverse backgrounds and experiences.

This hopeful trend can be partially attributed to our Tomorrow’s Teachers program for high school juniors and seniors who are considering a career in education and want to get a head start on college coursework in their intended major. Co-developed with several local school corporations, the program is thriving because of school administrators and classroom teachers who have been encouraging, supportive, and affirming of the important role of a teacher.

After high school graduation, these students begin full time on campus with a sense of confidence, commitment to their future profession, a budding professional network, and college credit hours already in place. They progress through the program in an accelerated way.

While optimistic about our future impact on P-12 education in the region, it goes without saying that there are many challenges associated with being an educator that, unless addressed, continue to threaten the quality of teaching and learning that happens in these classrooms. Over 90 percent of Indiana schools struggle to find qualified candidates for teacher openings, and national surveys of teachers have found teaching to be one of the most stressful jobs in the United States, a concern that has only grown since the pandemic.

Teachers report high levels of stress, which negatively impact both physical and mental health. Linked to the learning environment teachers create for their students, student behavior and learning outcomes as well as teacher burnout and turn-over, educator wellness is at the heart of the solution. We know that in order for teachers to be able to teach at their best, they have to feel their best.

We strive to prepare our teacher candidates for the challenges of the profession through continual hands-on experiences throughout their training and mentoring from IU Kokomo faculty and local classroom educators, as seen in the Teacher Residency program — a year-long student teaching experience. Through coursework and experiential learning, our students learn about the science of stress, the mind-body connection, and skills to promote personal wellbeing.

The Emerging Educator Mentor Network connects teacher candidates, recent alumni, and seasoned educators for the purpose of creating a space for self-care, affirmation, and resilience. Our goal is not only to help teacher candidates earn a degree and a teaching license but to support them into their first teaching position, one that launches a professional career in which they find meaning, value, purpose, and has the type of impact that Mr. Wells had on me so long ago.

I hope the articles in this magazine bring you a sense of hope and appreciation for those who serve our communities as educators.

—Leah Nellis
As a teacher, Brayton Mendenhall wants his classroom to be a place students feel like they can be themselves.

“I want my students to be able to speak French, of course, but at the end of the day I also want them to know that I care about them,” he said. “When I hear from a student, ‘You made me feel safe, you made me feel loved,’ or when a parent reaches out and says, ‘You were such a role model for my kid, that’s the ultimate. When they know they can come to my class and they will be cared about and loved, whether they learn French is important, but it’s not the number one thing in my classroom.’”

Mendenhall’s dedication to his students, as well as his excellence in teaching at Ben Davis High School, Indianapolis, earned him recognition as one of the top 10 finalists for Indiana Teacher of the Year for 2022.

“It’s an exciting adventure, and I’m excited to have made it that far in the selection process,” said Mendenhall, B.S. ’11. “It’s validating. It makes me feel like I’ve achieved something.”

While the last 21 months has been challenging as a teacher because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mendenhall says focusing on the connections he makes with students are what keeps him in the profession.

“If teachers allow themselves to define success in the numbers (test scores), that’s what’s going to burn them out,” he said. “It’s always about the kids. If I focus on why I went into teaching, I don’t see myself getting burned out. I don’t think I could leave the classroom to become an administrator because I love the connections with the kids. I love to watch them grow, and see them get excited. They become my kids after all the years we have together.”

The positive environment provided by his school also plays a role.

“I’m in a place where diversity is celebrated, where the student and teacher relationship is important, and teachers are respected,” Mendenhall said. “I’ve felt supported here. I feel like I understand the reason why we do things. It’s
a school that cares about the student as a whole, and not just about the numbers or the curriculum. There’s a whole student mentality at Ben Davis that has kept me going and kept me in education.”

It’s especially important to him to provide the role model he wished he had as a teenager.

“Being an out gay teacher is very important to me,” he said. “In high school, I had nobody to look up to. There was nobody like me in my high school. I want students to see you can be gay, you can be successful, and you can be respected by your peers. There are students who are trapped in those situations, and they don’t feel like they have anybody.”

Mendenhall didn’t take a direct path into being a French teacher — he first enrolled at IU Kokomo after graduating from Taylor High School in 2000, as a 21st Century Scholar. After one semester, he dropped out and worked as a color guard instructor in the area.

He learned from that experience that he enjoyed teaching, so when he returned four years later, he enrolled in the School of Education. He chose secondary education, with a focus on English, after testing out of all the French available at IU Kokomo at that time.

He’s grateful to have earned a degree close to home, and for the relationships he built with faculty like Karla Stouse and Terri Bourus.

“My interactions with my professors really helped me,” he said. “I was able to make real connections with them, and they really encouraged me. It’s something I probably would have missed out on at a larger campus. This kind of school is conducive to those in-depth, personal relationships.”

He went to England with Stouse for the Innovation Symposium, and repeats her wisdom about grades with his own students now.

“She told us constantly, ‘It’s not always about the grade, it’s about the learning,’” he said. “She’s the kind of teacher I want to be. It’s all about the relationships with the students, and pushing them to think and grow.”

After graduating in 2011, he accepted a job teaching English and French at South Vermillion High School, near Terre Haute. A year later, he was hired at Ben Davis High School, as a French teacher and color guard instructor.

“What I always wanted to do was French and color guard, so it worked out eventually,” he said. “I took the long way around to teaching French. I tell my students, the path you have laid out before you, the idea that you are going to graduate and study exactly what you want to study, and get a job right away, it doesn’t always work out that way. Sometimes you have to make your own path. As long as you keep focused on doing what you love, it will work out.”
During the last few years of Randy McCracken’s career in education, it was getting harder and harder to hire teachers.

“Finding teachers in the sciences, math, and even English was far more difficult than it had been, and some areas it was even harder,” said McCracken, an IU Kokomo adjunct faculty member who retired as superintendent of Western School Corporation in 2020.

Western’s situation wasn’t unique — according to a study by Public Impact, 92 percent of Indiana School Corporations struggle to find qualified teaching candidates to fill openings. That trouble is made worse by a 60 percent drop in individuals entering the state’s teacher preparation programs.

McCracken heard about a program in a Chicago-area school that brought college-level education classes to high school students. He shared the idea with Leah Nellis, dean of the School of Education, about starting a similar program to encourage high schoolers in the region to consider becoming teachers.

“It’s a great opportunity for them to be involved, to see if that’s the direction they want to go, and to earn college credits as well,” he said. “The more we can grow this program, the better chance we have of taking care of the teacher shortage we have now. As teachers in high schools are working with their students, they can encourage students who they think would be great teachers.”

In fall 2018, the Tomorrow’s Teachers program began not only at Western, but at Caston, Kokomo and Logansport school corporations. It allows high school juniors and seniors to complete entry-level School of Education classes, taught by IU Kokomo faculty, and get some early experience assisting in classrooms in their district. They also participate in on-campus events, getting a taste of college life at the same time. The program has expanded since then to include Alexandria-Monroe and Clinton Central schools.

Marlie Chaffee, now an IU Kokomo junior, was among the first to enroll at Western High School. She was nervous about taking college classes in high school, but said it confirmed her desire to teach elementary school.

“I’ve always wanted to be a teacher because I love kids,” she said. “I loved my teachers growing up, and I wanted to be just like them. I knew I wanted to go to IU Kokomo, too, and I saw it as a great opportunity to get my foot in the door.”

She especially enjoyed her experience in classrooms ranging from kindergarten all the way through middle school, which opened her mind to levels she hadn’t considered.

“It was a great opportunity to see what teaching different ages is like,” she said. “I thought I didn’t want to do middle school, but I learned it wasn’t what I thought it would be.”

The connections she built during that program helped her transition successfully to college. Plus, she plans to graduate a semester early.

“When I came to campus, I was more comfortable taking classes,” she said. “I felt comfortable reaching out to faculty when I had questions because I was able to do it during Tomorrow’s Teachers.”

Chaffee was especially impressed when Dean Nellis contacted her to see how her first semester was going.

“You don’t expect the dean of the School of Education to know who you are when you are just a freshman. I felt like I was home when I came to campus.” —Marlie Chaffee
AROUND THE CLASSROOM


Student teachers don’t always get the full picture of a typical school year. But through the Teachers in Residency program, it’s an opportunity for future educators to get a real taste of those 180 days.

For Tayler Sampson, B.S. ’21, it makes all the difference. “By being there the whole year, I experienced all the highs and lows,” she said. “I never felt like I was a student teacher. I was part of the class and it was my classroom.

Last year, Sampson joined a group of students who piloted the program, in place of traditional student teaching experiences that last a semester at a time.

“This program made me realize this is what I want to do. I really do want to be a teacher,” said Sampson, who taught a third-grade class at Green Meadows Intermediate School in Frankfort.

In fact, she had such a great experience and performed so well that before the school year ended, she was hired.

Joining Community Schools of Frankfort in Clinton County in the newly launched venture included two schools within the Maconaquah School Corporation in Miami County. Administrators have discovered the benefit goes both ways.

By observing these future teachers at work in the classroom, there is potential to have the first chance at hiring them — a critical advantage during a teacher shortage.

Lindsey Bright, Green Meadows principal, said the program is impressive, choosing to participate to prepare teachers more fully for the profession. “I think back on my own teacher preparation, and we certainly didn’t get this kind of student teaching experience,” she said, noting that most are in the schools for less than a semester. “Seeing the school year from start to finish is a great benefit.

“They are learning from the best of the best, in my opinion,” Bright added. “They really get to dig in and see start to finish what the school year looks like.”

The year-long, hands-on approach helps these students form realistic expectations going in, making them more likely to stay in the classroom long term. According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within the first five years.

The School of Education began offering this extended program after the two school systems applied for and received a grant from the Higher Education Commission. The grant funds stipends to the students and their mentors.

Leah Nellis, dean of the School of Education, explained that when student teaching takes place for a semester the student cannot be paid. However, a year-long residency allows for payment in the form of a stipend.

“It allows for teacher candidates to receive some compensation and can devote time, attention and energy to student teaching, instead of also trying to have a part-time job to pay expenses,” Nellis said. It’s a win-win for everyone.

“When these students spend time in the classroom with an experienced teacher, they emerge with better skills and are more confident in themselves,” she added.

The experience has been a positive one for Sampson. Now, she’s taking that confidence and applying it to her first teaching job.

“I knew that within a month I would love to be a teacher here if there was an opening,” she said. “I was very blessed when a job opened up and I was able to accept it. I already knew the culture, and that I would fit in with the team.”
TEACHER WELLNESS

Mentoring program supports new teachers

Early in her teaching career, Ashley Hunt questioned if she had made the right choice.

“The stress got to me my first and second years, and made me question if education was for me,” she said. “Going into it, you’re always told you’re going to use what you learned in college, but it’s a totally different ballgame when you have your own classroom. I found that out quickly.”

Hunt, B.S. ’19, is not alone. According to the U.S. Department of Education, nearly 50 percent of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years under normal conditions. Add in the stress and uncertainty of a global pandemic, and nearly 1 in 4 teachers were considering leaving their jobs, according to a survey in early 2021 by RAND Education and Labor’s American Teacher Panel.

She has hope, however, because she truly isn’t alone. She’s one of 11 early-career educators in the IU Kokomo School of Education’s Emerging Educator Mentor Network, which began with a self-care and resilience retreat on campus in June and continues to provide alumni veteran teachers as mentors throughout the school year.

The retreat, facilitated by trained educators and social workers, focuses on the importance of one’s own well-being and the impact teachers have on shaping their classrooms, students and families. The monthly mentoring curriculum includes a book titled, “The Onward Workbook: Daily Activities to Cultivate Your Emotional Resilience and Thrive.” Participants meet to discuss a chapter as well as their use of the practices and strategies outlined in the book.

Hunt, who teaches at Lincoln Elementary School in Huntington, receives support from Nicole McDorman, Kokomo Central Middle School, and retired Kokomo teacher Ann Millikan.

“It’s been so helpful,” the Wabash resident said. “It’s nice to be able to talk through what’s going on in my school and classroom, and bounce ideas off each other. Even though we teach different grade levels, we can talk about some of the stresses we’re going through. They’ve helped me figure out if I am stressing over areas that aren’t worth stressing over, and shared how they have coped with that as well.”

In addition to offering the support for the first three years of a new alumni’s career, lessons in stress management, mindfulness, and coping skills are being woven into the School of Education’s curriculum. This program pays particular attention to students from backgrounds that are underrepresented in teaching, so future graduates will be prepared for the challenges.

“We want to give these future educators the tools to be resilient, to be mindful, to have self-awareness to know when they are stressed, and coping skills,” said Cheryl Moore-Beyioku, lecturer in special education, who helped launch the wellness program with Dean Leah Nellis.
It's been so helpful. They've helped me figure out if I am stressing over areas that aren't worth stressing over, and shared how they have coped with that as well.

—Ashley Hunt

“We’re preparing students now so they can step into those careers with these strengths,” she said. “We’re also supporting our alumni during their first three years. We want them to know we are still here for them, and want to help them be successful in their new careers.”

Moore-Beyioku added that as teachers handle their stress appropriately, they continue to teach by modeling that action.

“We’re investing in the future, in the wellness of our students and teachers. It is an investment that multiplies,” she said.

The School of Education provides guidance for the new teachers and their mentors, with wellness curriculum they work through in their regular meetings.

McDorman, B.S. ’12, M.A. ’16, said while she’s been guiding Hunt, she’s also benefitted from the program.

“I don’t typically do self-care,” she said. “I just run at all cylinders until I crash. This is allowing me to pause and look at why I’m doing the things I’m doing, and making myself relax, so I can be calmer and less stressed when I go home to my family. I’m trying to build new habits from what we’ve learned.”

Millikan said teachers from a variety of generations working together benefits the students, because they can share ideas.

“We can get new ideas from everybody, and make connections,” she said.

Hunt said it’s already making a difference for her. “I definitely feel like I’ve been able to handle my stress better using some of the tools we were taught,” she said. “The stress in education doesn’t really go away, but I don’t feel like it’s impacting my body the way it was or impacting my life outside of school anymore like before.”
LIFELONG LEARNING

Education journey continues for teacher

“If you’re not learning and growing, the world is going to leave you behind.”

—Amy Henderson

This describes Amy Henderson’s passion to keep her nose in the books while asking her students to do the same.

As she works on her master’s in educational technology, she’s reminded of how quickly things can change. All the more reason to keep on learning.

“So much has changed even from when I started teaching. I don’t know if Google classroom was around. Right now, I can’t imagine teaching without it,” she said.

Her path to education was an untraditional one, first earning a degree in communication in 1998 and trying out the corporate world for a while. However, deep down she knew she always wanted to be a teacher.

“My second job after graduation was with ADP, where I worked in software support and training. Here, I’m training payroll clerks on how to use software and realized it wasn’t what I wanted, which was teaching children,” said Henderson, who returned to IU Kokomo and completed her teaching degree in 2011.

Some may have questioned starting her graduate degree during a global pandemic, while also teaching full time, with students both in her classroom and online. It’s helped keep her from getting burned out.

“Teaching and going to school means I have to really compartmentalize and prioritize my time,” she said.

“It helps me that I know I have this project due for a class, or this assignment, so I need to leave school at school,” she said, a third-grade teacher at Lafayette Park Elementary, Kokomo. “People might think I’m crazy but working on my classes has been a bit of a brain break. It takes me out of teacher mode, and into time for me to learn and grow to be a better teacher.”

Henderson’s students sometimes are surprised when she tells them she hasn’t graded their papers yet, because she had 130 pages to read and a paper to write in just a few days.

“It’s fun to watch their faces, and help them realize schooling doesn’t ever need to end,” she said.

She’s proud to have set an example for her daughters, noting they used to have “homework nights,” in which the girls sat with her and colored or looked at books while studying for her college courses. Her older daughter, Emily, is now an IU Kokomo freshman, and enrolled with 15 credits already earned through the Tomorrow’s Teachers program.

Younger daughter Molly is a senior at Kokomo High School, and plans to major in journalism.

“They both value education, because my husband and I have made it the expectation that you have to do something beyond high school,” she said. “We have raised our girls that learning doesn’t stop once you graduate.”

She’d been considering earning a master’s degree, and said during the COVID-19 pandemic, she had more time to think about that goal.

“I had a goal to get my teaching license before I turned 40, and I did that,” she said. “I missed the boat on earning my master’s before I turned 50, but it was a good time to start. The Master’s in Educational Technology was perfect with everything I’ve been doing virtually, and finding resources.”

Henderson’s next step in her career is to become a technology coach or work for Kokomo’s elementary education technology department.

“I definitely see it as a bridge out of the classroom and into more of a coaching position, whether that’s working with other teachers, families, or a mix of the two.

“I always said if I hit the lottery, I would take a class every semester,” said Henderson. “There are so many options IU Kokomo offers, and if you aren’t learning, you’re kind of stuck.”

Learn more about the School of Education and its programs at iuk.edu/education, and grad programs on page 23.
Honoring Excellence

Nominate outstanding alumni who go beyond, give back and make a difference in their professions!

The IUAA Kokomo Region partners with the School of Education and School of Nursing and Allied Health Professions this spring to recognize their own who exemplify the best in what they do. Please consider submitting a nomination and saving the date for these special events!

NURSES OF DISTINCTION
ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS OF DISTINCTION
FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING AND ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONS

These awards honor alumni and friends who have shown a commitment to the values and support of these professions. More criteria and information can be found on the online nomination form: go.iu.edu/4ab4

Recognition ceremony:
February 25, 2022
IU Kokomo campus

TEACHERS OF DISTINCTION

This award recognizes alumni who have had a positive and meaningful impact on their students and school community. More criteria and information can be found on the online nomination form: go.iu.edu/4a5M

Recognition ceremony:
June 14, 2022
IU Kokomo campus

Follow the IU Alumni Association Kokomo Region on Facebook and Instagram to stay up-to-date on all alumni news!

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The Presidents Circle honors Indiana University’s most generous donors.

Members are people who have helped define the very character of IU.
JUDITH AND MICHAEL GOLITKO

Judy Golitko believes that education is the key to turning dreams into reality. Judy spent 30 years raising her family and working as a paralegal before becoming a first-time college student. After seeing her children graduate and begin their professional careers, Judy was inspired to do the same. She attended IUK and earned her associate’s degree in 2001 and B.S.N. in 2003, both in nursing. While working as an R.N., Judy realized she could better serve her community in a different capacity. With her newfound purpose, she enrolled in the IU School of Law and graduated with her juris doctorate in 2006.

Judy’s passion for learning and love of IUK led her to establish the Judy Golitko It’s Never Too Late Scholarship to assist other non-traditional students in their pursuit of a college degree. Her favorite quote is, “If you love what you’re doing, you’ll never work a day in your life.” Judy believes in IU and in education. She is excited to give back to her alma mater and help others achieve their goals.

Judy has worked with her son, Matthew, at Golitko Daly PC in Kokomo for 15 years. Her focus is medical malpractice, and she returns to IUK often to speak to nursing students about the subject.

Judy has served on the Kokomo Rescue Mission board for the past seven years. She has also held the IUK Alumni Association President position, receiving the President’s Award in 2010, and was inducted into the Alumni Association Hall of Fame in 2013.

HAROLD W. KING, DDS AND SHERRY KING

Sharon and Harold King have dedicated their lives to serving others. After earning her B.S.N. at DePauw University in 1963, Sherry completed her clinical training at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis. Having graduated from Indiana University Bloomington with his bachelor’s degree in 1961, Hal completed his DDS in 1964 at IUPUI. He then served for two years in the U.S. Air Force before the couple moved to Kokomo, where Hal practiced family dentistry from 1966 through 1999.

While working as a dentist in Kokomo, Hal served in the Air Force Reserve for eight years. In retirement, he has volunteered and served his community in a number of capacities, including with the American Cancer Society, which awarded him its Quality of Life Volunteer Award in 2001.

Eager to give back to their community and invest in its future, Sherry and Hal decided to support higher education in their hometown by giving to Indiana University Kokomo.

They are “very proud of IU Kokomo” and are “excited about its expansion, its new athletic programs, and its ability to attract students from other parts of Indiana.” In memory of Hal’s mother, who was a teacher, the Kings established the Zula Mae King Memorial Scholarship at IU Kokomo for education students. To support students as what they consider “one of the best nursing schools in Indiana,” they also established the Sharon “Sherry” H. King, R.N., B.S.N. Nursing Scholarship.

The King’s incredible generosity will ensure the future of countless IU Kokomo students in the years to come. Welcome to the Presidents Circle, Hal and Sherry!

TED LINDSAY GRAYSON, M.D. AND ROSANNA SHOE GRAYSON

Rosanna and Ted were both born and raised on family farms in Tipton County, Indiana. Together, they shared a lifelong involvement in and passion for agriculture. As skilled educators, Ted and Rosanna also shared an equally vocal passion for education and all the opportunities it can provide. Their intentional estate planning reflected this firm commitment to academic scholarship.

Rosanna earned her Bachelor of Science in Education from Ball State University in 1952 and served as a public-school educator in Indianapolis and St. Louis. Ted was farming full time when Indiana University opened an extension campus in Kokomo. He was a proud and grateful member of the first class at IU Kokomo.

Throughout his life, Ted attributed the opening of the Kokomo campus as giving him both the opportunity to first attend college and then to become a surgeon. He was honored to speak at one of IU Kokomo’s 75th Anniversary events in 2019. Ted’s journey then continued to Bloomington for a bachelor’s degree (’50), IU Medical School (M.D. ’52), and Washington University in St. Louis for six years of internship and surgery residency.

Next, the Graysons chose to return to Indiana to make their home. Ted’s 30-year private practice focused on abdominal and thoracic surgery. Throughout his career, he also trained hundreds of interns and residents as a clinical associate professor at IU’s School of Medicine.

Shortly before his death, Ted was awarded an IU Bicentennial Medal.

Both Ted and Rosanna joyfully, completely embraced life! They remained steadfastly grounded in the values that guided everything they so thoroughly enjoyed together. Now, their shared values will provide academic scholarships for students attending Ball State University, Purdue University, Indiana University, and IU Kokomo.

Learn about ways to provide unique and valuable learning experiences to IU Kokomo students. Contact Vice Chancellor Crystal Jones at crmjones@iu.edu.
As fall sports return, Cougar fans noticed a few differences. New coaches, new student-athletes, and full capacity at all home sporting events. But one thing has not changed: the Cougars continue to have a high level of success.

IU Kokomo volleyball captured the River States Conference regular season championship and earned their seventh consecutive NAIA National Tournament berth. Erinn Adam leads the conference in hitting percentage and blocks per set, while Alyvia Smith leads the league in digs.

The women’s soccer team posted a 6-4-1 conference record, giving them the most RSC wins in program history. The six wins earned the Cougars the fifth seed in the conference tournament.

Brandi Jones, a graduate student on the women’s golf team, won three tournaments including the River States Conference Fall preview. Jones now has 10 tournament wins in her career, the most in program history.

In cross country, many records have been broken during the fall. The men’s team is ranked first in the River States Conference for the first time in program history. Lexi Jackson won the JennaStrong Invitational with a time of 18:21 and finished second at the NAIA Great Lakes Invitational with a time of 17:56.9, breaking her own school record by 25 seconds.

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON ALL THINGS ATHLETICS AT IUKCOUGARS.COM
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If you have visited Chicago, New York, San Francisco, Yellowstone National Park, or Disney World over the past few years, you might have seen students raising the IU flag or wearing “I Turned the KEY” T-shirts. Those students were among the many hundreds of IU Kokomo students participating in the KEY (“Kokomo Experience and You”), our signature experiential-learning program. Through these trips—as well as research, retreats, simulations, internships, and community projects—students are getting their hands on their learning. Employers value this kind of applied learning, and so do students, who have raved about their KEY experiences.

As an alum, you can help us create enriching experiences. Look for invitations to join students, faculty, and staff for future KEY trips. Also, we welcome your suggestions for activities and destinations, perhaps your own place of business! Either way, you can help your fellow Cougars turn the KEY to learn, connect, and thrive.

Let us know you’re interested by emailing, alumni@iuk.edu.

REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

KEY will get you there.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS OFFER CAREER GROWTH

Perhaps you’ve been thinking about changing careers or you’ve been encouraged to return to school to advance in your current position. Whatever your story or motivation, we offer several graduate programs at Indiana University Kokomo to help you succeed. It’s our goal and our mission to help you gain the theoretical foundation, experience, and skills you need no matter what your goal may be.

IU Kokomo offers in-person learning:

- Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling
- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Public Management
- Master of Science in Nursing
  - Family Nurse Practitioner
  - Nursing Administration
  - Nursing Education

Online graduate programs are available. For a complete list of master's degrees, visit iuk.edu/graduate-programs.
JOIN THE COLE FITNESS CENTER AT A SPECIAL ALUMNI RATE!

$180 per year

The Cole Fitness Center is excited to welcome back IU Kokomo Alumni to the facility after a two-year hiatus.

If you’re an IUAA member, you qualify for this special rate that includes access to the entire gym, plus fitness classes!

Memberships run from August 1 to July 30 and are prorated based on when you sign up. We look forward to seeing you in the Cole Fitness Center soon!

For more information, please contact the Cole Fitness Center by email, colefit@iuk.edu or by phone, 765-455-9419.