

# HOUGHTON

WINTER 2026



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Dear Friends,

One of the greatest blessings of serving Houghton as President is getting to know our students. They inspire me daily and remind me of why Houghton's mission is so vitally important, today and tomorrow.

As students come to Houghton, they are in various stages of understanding the vocations the Lord is calling them to and equipping them for. For some, their calling has been clear for years. For some, their understanding of how the Lord wants to use them is evolving. For others, they are confident of vocational callings in ordained ministry, as teachers or as musicians. Among the group of students who come to Houghton typically having recognized early academic giftedness and ability are those preparing for careers in the health sciences.

Pre-health students represent a healthy portion of the Houghton student body. While their beds and clothes are in their residence hall rooms, many of them spending most of their waking hours (and some of their sleeping hours!) in the Paine Center for Science. As they matriculate, more and more of their coursework is taken in Paine, but outside of class, you are likely to find small groups of students in laboratories, faculty offices, and dedicated study spaces as well as improvised ones.

Houghton has long been recognized as a place for serious Christian students to study science and prepare for careers in the health sciences. There is no shortage of Houghton graduates who have gone on to have long and impactful careers as medical doctors, nurses and medical missionaries. Houghton continues to provide outstanding preparation for students who pursue nursing, D.O. and M.D degrees. But additionally, with robust partnerships with professional and graduate programs, Houghton is preparing students for vocations in veterinary science, physical therapy, pharmacy, occupational therapy, nutrition and dietetics, dentistry, and athletic training. As the Lord continues to call young people to vocations in the health sciences, Houghton continues to provide Christ-centered, rigorous preparation to equip them for that work.

With this issue, we are privileged to share some of the stories of our students, faculty, and alumni who have been a part of Houghton's rich history in the health sciences. We are grateful to be a part of what God has done and continues to do in and through the lives of our graduates.

Yours in Christ's Service,

Wayne D. Lewis, Jr.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

# Lifelong Learning: From Classroom to Boardroom

## Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano

Lifelong learning is a thread running through the fabric of 1986 graduate **Dr. Tim Coetzee's** story. The story begins at a small Christian school in New Jersey where Tim fell in love with biology under the tutelage of his AP biology teacher, **Kathleen (Fink '77) Donaldson**. He was interested in a career as a physician, and Kathleen shared Houghton's outstanding pre-med reputation with him. As a missionary kid and pastor's kid, Tim discovered the financial aid Houghton offered made it an affordable choice for his family. But it was more than just pre-med and scholarships that brought Tim to Houghton. The direct influence

of a Houghton alumna was a driving factor in Tim's choice.

**Houghton taught me the importance of constantly learning. You're never done. It's never too late to be a better leader.**

Tim started his Houghton journey, as have many alumni, on the Highlander Wilderness Adventure under the leadership of **Doris "Mabel" Nielsen '71**. During Highlander,

he read Francis Schaeffer's *The Mark of a Christian*, and it was a defining moment. "Forty years later," said Tim, "I still remember the impact of that book. It's a bit of an organizing principle for me today. There are so many things we could be distinguished by, but the idea that 'they'll know you by your love for each other' is something that infuses the work I do today."

Although Tim was initially determined to become a physician, by his sophomore year he knew he was on the wrong path. After a three-week practicum experience, during which he shadowed a family medical doctor, Tim

found himself seeking the guidance of his advisor, Houghton biology professor and director of pre-med at the time, Dr. Donald Munro. Tim's love of biology and desire to move away from clinical medical practice landed him in Houghton's biology labs conducting research. Like Houghton students today in the Shannon Summer Research Institute and in independent research studies, Tim was pursuing his study of biology in a distinctly Houghton way—doing science in a lab rather than simply listening to a lecture.

"It was great, because at Houghton I was pretty much learning by doing," said Tim. "The uniqueness of Houghton was that I was doing a lot of research on my own, figuring things out for myself through trial and error. It wasn't an opportunity I would have had at larger institutions."

Tim completed two independent research projects and a senior honors project during his time at Houghton. He also found his passion at Houghton, in **Dr. Charles Detwiler's '72** classroom studying microbiology. The seeds planted in microbiology led Tim to post-graduate education at Albany Medical College where he completed an M.S. and a Ph.D. studying molecular biology—particularly that now-famous molecule mRNA.

Tim's work in molecular biology put him on a path that led through research labs with funding provided by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, to offices where he managed projects and started up the for-profit research arm FastForward LLC. He found himself on another learning curve, which required him to rely on the soft skills he picked up at Houghton—particularly effective communication.

"Dr. Munro instilled the importance of communication," remarked Tim. "I learned that clarity in communication, both in how you write and in how you speak, is important. But because the ideas in science often require visuals, I also learned about the importance of visuals that have clarity and impact."

A year ago, Tim entered another phase of his lifelong learning journey when he was appointed CEO of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. Those lessons in communication have grown to encompass storytelling, relating to

prospective funders about the difference the society's work makes in the lives of people living with multiple sclerosis.

And it isn't just the communication skills honed at Houghton that Tim relies on. "The commitment to people is something I continue to carry with me. I look back on the people part of my time at Houghton, the emphasis on relationships with people and the way my faith journey influences how I serve the people right in front of me every day."





# A Tale of Two Siblings

Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano

Students' paths into Houghton's pre-med track might look somewhat similar, but siblings **Dr. Jonathan Figueroa '13** and **Dr. Alyssa Figueroa '14** discovered that the paths beyond Houghton are as unique and varied as the students themselves.

Jonathan came to Houghton in the fall of 2009 thanks to a desire to study at a Christian liberal arts college known for its strong pre-med program and a little guidance from fellow Timothy Christian School (Piscataway, NJ) alumnus **Tyler Haggerty '08**. Although Jonathan didn't initially plan to play collegiate soccer, a campus visit introduced him to the coach at the time, Dr. Matthew Webb, and a team of great young men—solidifying Jonathan's decision to attend Houghton and pursue a biology degree on the pre-med track.

They were mentors who assured me I was capable, that everyone struggles and it wasn't meant to be easy. That close mentorship was important to me.

Alyssa, like Jonathan, grew up with aspirations of becoming a physician. Although Houghton wasn't initially at the top of her list, she loved the small class sizes and intimate feel of campus. During a campus visit for a winter indoor soccer tournament, Alyssa met Coach David Lewis and a few incoming teammates. The opportunity to study in the Balkans with Houghton's East Meets West honors program was the final selling point. A year after her brother, Alyssa also enrolled at Houghton as a biology major on the pre-med track.

The Figueroa siblings were attracted by the way Houghton faculty individualized the pre-health professions track.

According to Dr. Jamie Potter, Interim Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Professor of Biology and Director of Pre-Health Professions, faculty help students identify what they love most about health professions and then align those passions with their academic and co-curricular experiences to put each student on the best possible path.

Both Jonathan and Alyssa benefitted from guidance and advising from Dr. Potter, along with insights from beloved Professor Emeritus of Biology Dr. Jim Wolfe, former biology professors Dr. Matthew Pelletier and Dr. Aaron Sullivan, and campus physician **Dr. David Brubaker '90**. Alyssa had visions of internal medicine or pediatrics while Jonathan initially considered a career in international medicine.

"I liked having professors who really took the time to get to know me," shared Jonathan. "They wanted me to perform well, but they also challenged me. Nothing was given, I had to work for it."

Alyssa reflected on the well-known challenges presented by **Dr. Karen Torraca's '93** infamous organic chemistry course—affectionately (or not) known by generations of Houghton students as "O-Chem."



"I had a conversation with Dr. Wolfe as well as Dr. Potter, wondering if I should keep pursuing medicine, if it was going to be possible for me," said Alyssa. "They were mentors who assured me I was capable, that everyone struggles and it wasn't meant to be easy. That close mentorship was important to me."

Jonathan's international interests resulted in a minor in public health, which included a study abroad opportunity in Ecuador with former intercultural studies professor **Dr. Ndunge Kiiti '88**. Dr. Kiiti inspired Jonathan to see health beyond a medical and pharmaceutical viewpoint, helping him discover how to integrate his faith with his work—a formative learning experience he carries into his work today.

Houghton allowed me to explore how to love in the way that Christ would love and still hold my convictions strongly.

Alyssa explored options in both osteopathic and allopathic medicine, and in her advising with Dr. Potter discovered that osteopathic medicine was the right approach to her career aspirations. Alyssa found Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM), in Erie, Pennsylvania, to be the right option for her to pursue medical school.

Jonathan was intent on pursuit of allopathic medicine. After Houghton, Jonathan attended St. George University School of Medicine (Grenada), motivated by St. George's placement rate at his residence hospital of choice—New York Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital. After three years in residency, Jonathan did a two-year fellowship at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

Today, Jonathan is an endocrinologist at New York University Langone, where he teaches residents, primarily in an outpatient clinical setting. Alyssa

did her residency in internal medicine at Jefferson Health Northeast in Philadelphia. When her husband Lucas, a member of the US Air Force, was stationed for active duty in Tucson, Arizona, she took on the role of internal medicine hospitalist at Northwest Healthcare—Tucson. She recently was also appointed Associate Director for the Internal Medicine Residency at the hospital.

The Figueroa siblings carry the things they learned at Houghton with them as they serve their patients on opposite sides of the country.

“There is benefit to having a strong conviction about your beliefs,” remarked Jonathan. “But I think that some of what we’re seeing in the world today is more or less a result of not being able to hear the other side and not being able to love people who are different. Part of my education at Houghton was that—loving people who are very different. Houghton allowed me to explore how to love in the way that Christ would love and still hold my convictions strongly.”

Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano is in her tenth year at Houghton University, where she serves as the Director of Advancement Communication and the Editor of Houghton Magazine.



“Houghton’s affiliation with the Wesleyan Church broadened my scope of how to approach Christianity and meld it with medicine,” said Alyssa. “In Medical Ethics with Professor Benjamin Lipscomb, I thought about taking care of people from all walks of life and all perspectives and religions and backgrounds. I thought deeply about how I would approach my beliefs within the medical system.”

# PRE-HEALTH AT HOUGHTON



**How will you fearlessly  
care for others with  
Christlike compassion?**

Isaiah 58:10

## FEARLESS HEALER

**IN THE PRE-HEALTH PROGRAMS AT HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY, YOU WILL:**

- » Gain rigorous hands-on and experiential training through volunteer work as an EMT with the local ambulance service or at an inner-city clinic in Buffalo or by shadowing local practitioners.
- » Receive the best in teaching, training and mentoring, including the pre-health practicum, where you live with and learn from a Houghton graduate who is a practicing healthcare professional.
- » Conduct, publish and present real research with one or more of Houghton University's faculty members who care about your academic success as well as your spiritual, emotional and professional growth in healthcare.

**AFTER HOUGHTON:**

- » Emergency Medicine
- » Medical Missionary
- » Medical Research
- » Primary Care
- » Refugee and Immigrant Health
- » Rural Health
- » Specialized Medicine
- » Urban Health

**YOU CAN STUDY:**

- » Pre-Athletic Training
- » Pre-Chiropractic
- » Pre-Dentistry
- » Pre-Medical
- » Pre-Nursing / 3+1 Nursing
- » Pre-Nutrition and Dietetics
- » Pre-Occupational Therapy
- » Pre-Optometry
- » Pre-Pharmacy
- » Pre-Physical Therapy
- » Pre-Physician Assistant
- » Pre-Veterinary

Gain early acceptance to medical school and other health professional programs through Houghton’s affiliation agreements with numerous institutions, including Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine, D’Youville University, Northeast College of Health Sciences, and more.



Take your next fearless step when you complete your application for admission to Houghton University.  
[Houghton.edu/Apply](https://Houghton.edu/Apply)

Learn more about majors and areas of study at Houghton when you visit:  
[Houghton.edu/Majors](https://Houghton.edu/Majors)

# The Houghton Student's Pre-Health Journey



Not a single student will walk the same path. Each one must develop an individual plan alongside their advisors, and then they must allow for adjustments as they learn and grow in their own experiences and abilities. Conversations with my students are often long, and sometimes hard, as they realize their own limitations, discover their real interests, and explore their unique skills. They start to find their own personal vocational path, and they begin to think deeply about their why.

In order to discover their true passion for the vocation of medicine, my students must move beyond the basics of grades, transcripts, aptitudes, and idealized visions of medicine to find their passion and their reason for pursuing this journey.

When students walk through my door for the very first time, they usually already have an idea of what profession they want to pursue. They often know the courses they might need and that shadowing someone in the profession is a good idea—and may even be required. They know excellent grades, top scores on entrance exams, and stellar letters of recommendation are necessary. However, they usually don't know why they want to take the particular path they've chosen.

Some of my students want to pursue a medical profession because they want to help people. Some have been on the receiving end of care and found the work being executed on them fascinating. Some had a close friend or family member who needed specialized care and they saw what a provider did for them in their time of greatest need. Many are pretty smart cookies with proven academic acumen, and they've been told they should go into medicine with that aptitude. All of these reasons are good, but none of them really gets to the root of "why medicine is for me."



So, how does Houghton help students discover their why? They likely won't find it in a classroom, or a lab, or even shadowing a physician. Healthcare is a people-oriented, service-oriented field fraught with disparity, inaccessibility, and loopholes. To prepare students for the reality of serving in the medical field, they must engage with medicine and the healthcare field in the most realistic ways possible. Houghton students need to step out of



their classrooms and into their community. Our students are encouraged to engage in service opportunities like volunteering at the campus influenza vaccine clinic, assisting the Red Cross at community blood drives,

and investing in opportunities that place them in direct communication with our rural, low-income community here in Allegany County.

Once students start engaging, in addition to observing and learning, they discover they can play vital roles in their own communities. They start to see not what they can be—a medical provider—but who they can be. They begin to understand ways they can serve the people around them in medicine. They realize "why medicine is for me." Their realizations are usually rooted in a single powerful idea: being the hands and feet of Jesus isn't a symbol or an image we can behold, it's the physical act of showing love, compassion and care for others.

Jamie Potter, Ph.D., is the Interim Dean of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Professor of Biology and Director of Pre-Health Professions at Houghton University.



## FEARLESS CAREERS

### Your Student's Financial Aid Could Cover the Cost of Tuition

With the Founder's Promise Scholarship, Houghton will elevate Pell-eligible students' financial aid to equal the cost of tuition. This is just the latest example of how Houghton is making the cost of college more transparent and affordable for families, including setting tuition and fee costs well in advance of the new academic year.

### START SAVING NOW

Juniors and seniors can complete fully online early college courses for a radically reduced cost of only **\$70/credit.**

[Houghton.edu/Academics](https://Houghton.edu/Academics)

# Unimaginable

When I arrived at Houghton, biology was my field of choice, but I had little direction beyond that. I certainly didn't imagine working as an Associate Professor, with my days full of not just patient care, but teaching medical students, residents and fellows. I didn't imagine that I'd go to Kenya, building friendships and schools, and providing healthcare for their runners. I didn't imagine that it would be possible to have a career as well as be a wife, mother and friend.

Deep friendships, strong mentors and meaningful solitude mark my time at Houghton. The girls of Hazlett 34, now lifelong friends, held an MCAT party for me. They dressed up like cats and performed a hilarious, yet strangely encouraging, original poem. I don't think I would've made it without them. Looking back on the classroom, I was blessed to learn from some of the most vibrant professors. Dr. Aaron Sullivan taught me about patience and simplicity. Dr. Larry Christensen



opened each organic chemistry class with a pithy saying or a short story, bringing joy to learning. Professor **Sunshine Leonard '01** always reminded us that our worth was not in our grades. Dr. Cathy Freytag generously welcomed me into her life as a friend. It was also during these four years that I found a "frenemy" in distance running. During the volleyball off-season, I'd spend countless hours running the shoulders of Route 19 or dizzying laps around the old suspended track. Usually I ran by myself, with only my prayers and thoughts. Through these miles, The Lord revealed His faithfulness to me by, not only setting a clear career path before me, but by safely getting me through literal Western New York blizzards.



Escaping that winter weather, I went to Florida for medical school then onto North Carolina for residency. I knew Wake Forest Family Medicine was the place when I found some of the brightest and most content physicians. After completing my family medicine residency, sports medicine seemed a natural fit. My dad's career was in professional sports (not to mention my mom, **Linda (Clow '76) Jarvis**, and brother, **Landry Jarvis '10**, were both Houghton athletes), so my childhood was full of practices, games, and injuries. Plus, my osteopathic education set a strong foundation for musculoskeletal medicine.

During my fellowship year, I was introduced to Running the Race (RTR), a missions organization with a goal of sharing the love of Jesus while providing care to local Kenyan athletes. My first trip with RTR, five years later, changed my life. I fell in love with the people of Kenya, as my eyes were opened to how big our God is. Now, I get to return year after year, bringing along residents and fellows, introducing them to my friends across the world and helping to establish sports medicine care in the "Home of Champions."

I never could've imagined a job where I meet patients in their most vulnerable state of pain. If they are willing, I get to pray with them and that is a great privilege. I never could've imagined a life in Kenya where I work with some of the best runners in the world. I never could've imagined the chance to meet new residents and fellows each year; teaching and learning from each other. All of this with an amazing husband, 3 beautiful wild children, countless friends and a supportive community. It's more exhausting and more extravagant than I could have dreamed. Nothing is perfect on this side of heaven, neither my life nor Houghton, but God faithfully works in the broken places. I'm beyond grateful to the Lord for these friends and mentors (many unmentioned) and the many miles. I'm thankful that Houghton is a willing vessel for His ways that are higher than ours.



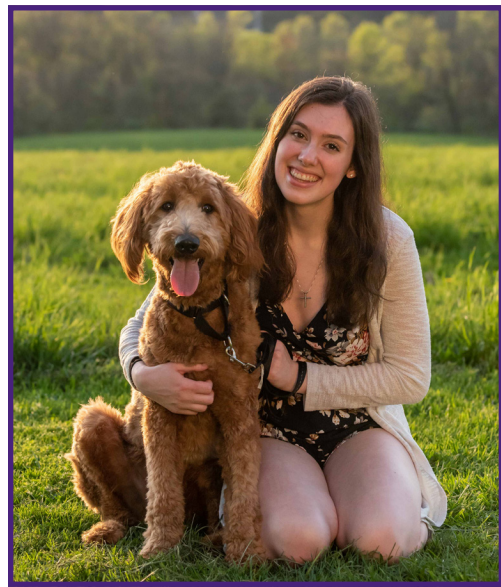
## **Dr. Laura (Jarvis '06) Lintner**

*is a sports medicine doctor with Wake Forest University School of Medicine (WFUSM) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where she also completed her residency and fellowship. She holds a bachelor's of science in biology from Houghton University and a D.O. from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. In addition to her work at WFUSM, she is a volunteer with Running the Race, ministering to the needs of athletes in Kenya.*



# Live IT Out

Salim Ford '28



**Erica Haefner '27** is a Houghton University junior studying pre-physical therapy in the hopes of becoming a pediatric physical therapist. Her aspirations began when she was a junior in high school. She says, "After a lot of injuries and physical therapy sessions, I realized this is something I am really passionate about." After further research and shadowing opportunities, she determined that this is what she's called to do.

Erica's goals to become a physical therapist align with her faith and her passion for serving others. She states, "I have a very strong passion for helping

people, especially helping them learn more about their own bodies." She draws from her own experience as a patient attending physical therapy sessions, explaining that "The physicians and doctors I connected with most were the ones who taught me what was actually going on in a simple way that I could understand." As a future physical therapist, she hopes to draw on her positive experiences to help her patients understand themselves and enhance recovery.

Erica names Anatomy and Physiology, taught by Dr. Donald Wilcox, as her favorite class. She's also enjoyed shadowing, which is a core requirement for her major. She enjoys learning through actual experiences. Erica cites Dr. Ransom Poythress, her advisor, as an encouragement to her, along with Dr. Jamie Potter and Dr. Wilcox, with whom she takes a number of classes. She's looking forward to taking Injury and Evaluation this Spring semester, and eagerly anticipates entering more major-specific classes as she furthers her studies.

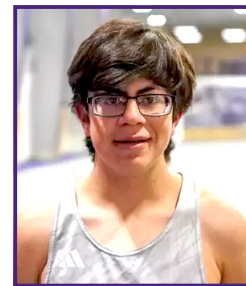
Erica enjoys being a member of the Pre-Health Professions Club, attending

campus events, and her role as a teacher's assistant. "It's a really good way to connect with people," Erica shares.

About her goal to become a pediatric physical therapist, Erica says, "This is what God is calling me to do. I need to live that out and do the best that I can do."

**Erica Haefner '27** is a junior from Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, majoring in exercise science on the graduate track.

**Salim Ford '28** is a sophomore from Arkport, New York, majoring in English and Writing. He is a member of the Cross Country team, the Highlander Chorus and Chamber Choir.



# To Serve Christ Well

Dr. Sam Gerardi '18

I arrived at Houghton University in 2014 and like many young adults, I was confident that I knew precisely what I wanted to do. I planned to major in communication and focus on videography and photography. That plan didn't last long. I found myself drawn to biochemistry, a field that fit how I was wired. I've always wanted to integrate science and faith in a way that allowed me to love people well, and Houghton became the place where that desire took shape.

What made Houghton so formative was not that it told me what to think, but that it taught me how to think. I can distinctly remember asking my chemistry professor, **Dr. John Rowley '03**, for help during an experiment. He responded, "No, you figure it out." Dr. Rowley and many of my professors understood that true learning happens at the interface between what you know and what you don't. That approach cultivated my curiosity and desire for discovery rather than just memorization. I entered uncertain of my path and left still discerning

what God was calling me toward, but with the tools, confidence, and spiritual grounding to navigate that journey.

Completing my biochemistry degree at Houghton also fulfilled my pre-pharmacy prerequisites, and I wouldn't have wanted to prepare anywhere else. The academic rigor and community-built study habits, critical thinking, and perseverance that carried me through graduate school, residency, and now my work at Buffalo General Medical Center as an Emergency Medicine Clinical Pharmacist. I learned to take ownership of my learning, stay motivated, and value collaboration.

I still rely on the habits and mindset Houghton fostered to think critically, evaluate data, and apply knowledge that knowledge to my patients. To serve Christ well is to serve others well, and Houghton gave me the foundation to do exactly that.

**Sam Gerardi '18** completed a bachelor's of science in biochemistry with a pre-pharmacy concentration. He completed his D.Pharm. at D'Youville University in 2023, and his residency at Kaleida Health in Buffalo, New York, in 2025. IN addition to his role as an emergency medicine clinical pharmacists at Buffalo General Medical Center, he is the area director for the Christian Medical & Dental Associations (CMDA).



# Giving Back THROUGH MENTORING

**Dr. Jenna (Hill '15) Smith**

I began my Houghton journey in 2011 as a biology major with a chemistry minor. I completed the first year Science Honors program, and was very involved in the Pre-health Professionals club and Sigma Zeta math and science honors society. I took quite a few of the upper-level biology electives, especially during my last couple of years there. These classes really helped prepare me for the challenging curriculum that was coming in graduate school.

I applied to veterinary school my senior year and was accepted to Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine. The course load was intense in depth and breadth, but I felt I had a solid foundation from Houghton. I graduated from Cornell in 2019 and started working at Perry Veterinary Clinic in Perry, New York, as an associate veterinarian. I became a partner at Perry Vet in the beginning of 2023. Currently, I practice both small and large

animal medicine, splitting my time between cats and dogs in the office, and dairy cows and other large animals on farms throughout Western New York. I even go to calls at the Houghton Equestrian center—talk about coming full circle!

One of the joys in this profession is the opportunity I have to mentor students—whether they're in veterinary school or are in their pre-vet studies.



Given Perry Veterinary Clinic's proximity to Houghton, we have the privilege to host quite a few pre-vet students, including **Zachary Wolfer '24**, who is now a D.V.M. candidate at Kansas State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and current pre-veterinary student **Greg Loper '28**. This is a great opportunity for me to be able to give back to a community that gave me so much. Recently, I've had some students join me who went to Houghton for their undergraduate and are now in veterinary school.

During these externships, we always have ample time to chat in the truck in between calls. The conversation inevitably goes back to our fairly universal Houghton experiences—"Organic chemistry was so challenging, wasn't it?" or "Did you love microbiology?" Maybe "Did you take a Mayterm off-campus?" or "Were you purple or gold?" (Team Purple!)

And often, most commonly—"Wasn't Houghton the best? I loved it there."



**My time at Houghton University was instrumental for my success in veterinary school and provided me with the foundation to excel immediately at Kansas State University. The pre-health professions program challenged me academically, offered me research opportunities, and provided me with connections to gain valuable experiences to help bolster my application. The incredible support from faculty I received both when I was a student and after graduation has had a lasting and meaningful impact on my professional journey.**



**Jenna (Hill '15) Smith, D.M.V.** is a large and small animal veterinary and partner with Perry Veterinary Clinic in Perry, New York. She holds a bachelor of science in biology from Houghton University and a doctorate of veterinary medicine from Cornell University.



- A Homecoming Festival
- B Booksigning with Dr. Eli Knapp '00
- C Alumni Award Honorees
- D Equestrian Open House
- E Disc Golf Tournament
- F Homecoming SPOT
- G Homecoming Womens Volleyball
- H Homecoming Festival
- I Dr. Connie Finney '78 Portrait Unveiling
- J Harvestival
- K First Year Scarf Tradition
- L Homecoming Festival
- M Homecoming Womens Soccer
- N Society Celebration

**ALUMNI AWARD Honorees**  
 From left to right: Joanna Sudlow '15, Young Alumna of the Year; Dean Liddick '60, Alumni Appreciation Award; Derek Tennant '90, FEARLESS Award; Cindy (Dunham) '73 on behalf of David Smith '73, Alumnus of the Year; President Wayne Lewis



# HOMECOMING & Family Weekend 2025



# FROM THE ALUMNI BOARD

Dear Fellow Alumni,

What a beautiful weekend it was for Homecoming this year! The sun was shining, the leaves were showing off their brilliant fall colors, and the campus was full of life. It was the perfect backdrop for reconnecting with friends, celebrating our shared Houghton experiences, and giving thanks for the vibrant community God continues to build here.

This year's Homecoming Festival took place on the Quad, creating a lively hub of activity at the center of campus. More than 500 off-campus guests joined the celebration and our students were more involved than ever. We also enjoyed a brand-new event—"Harvestival"—complete with local craft vendors, live music and, of course, free cider and donuts! It was a joyful time of fellowship that perfectly captured the warmth and hospitality of Houghton.

We also had the opportunity to celebrate some very meaningful moments. The Class of 2020, whose final semester was marked by unprecedented challenges, was honored with free professional graduation photos and the "Class of 2020 Alumni Art Exhibition," which provided our 2020 art graduates with the capstone gallery experience they missed. We also unveiled a new portrait of **Dr. Constance "Connie" Finney '78**, Education Faculty Emerita, recognizing her years of faithful service and the profound impact she's had on so many students.

This year's Alumni Award Recipients exemplify Houghton's mission of Christ-centered leadership and service:

- » FEARLESS Award: **Derrick Tennant '93**
- » Alumni Appreciation Award: **Dean Liddick '60**
- » Young Alumna of the Year Award: **Joanna Sudlow '15**
- » Alumnus of the Year: **David Smith '73**



For full award citations for each of the award winners, please visit [houghton.edu/alumni-awards](http://houghton.edu/alumni-awards)

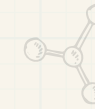
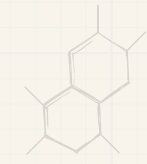


Finally, the Alumni Board convened to discuss how we can continue to best serve our growing alumni community through deeper connections, meaningful engagement and lifelong support for one another and for our beloved alma mater.



As we reflect on this year's blessings, we give thanks to God for His continued provision and for the countless ways He works through our alumni to impact the world for Christ. Thank you for staying connected, for your prayers and for the ways you continue to represent Houghton in your communities and around the world.

**Stetson Knight '99**  
Alumni Board Chair



# FROM THE ARCHIVES:



## Dorah Burnell & The Pasteur Pre-Medic Society

The 1926-1927 academic catalog is the first to show pre-medical as a possible major—described as a "composite major"—at Houghton College & Seminary. This coincides with the hiring of Professor Dorah Burnell, who came to Houghton in 1926 to teach chemistry.

A native of Nebraska and graduate of State Teachers College (1916) and the University of Nebraska (B.S. 1924, M.A. 1925), Professor Burnell built the college's chemistry department while fulfilling countless other roles on campus.

Along with colleagues in the Science Department, Professor Burnell helped students establish The Pasteur Pre-Medic Society. In its inaugural appearance in the

Boulder in 1928, the society described its aim as "...to promote a feeling of comradeship, to gain inspiration for future tasks, and to learn something more of the nature and extent of this their chosen field of endeavor." The inaugural group boasted 27 members and by the 1950s, the club was one of the largest and most active on Houghton's campus.

Today known as the Pre-Health Professions Club, the group remains one of Houghton's largest and most active clubs. Their aim, similarly, is "...to serve as an information resource and generate opportunities for fellowship, career exploration and volunteer service for students interested in health-related fields."

In the dedication of the 1954 Boulder, students observed of Professor Burnell that "[h]er influence was there... Lights were shining out from the meticulously kept chemistry lab until the early morning hours. On the desk were carefully graded papers—around the room was all the valuable equipment she had procured. From this lab alumni went forth to succeed... her influence was there."



Professor Burnell's influence remains—in Houghton's chemistry labs, in the Pre-Health Professions Club, in the lives of service led by so many of our alumni. Professor Burnell's influence has played a role in helping to shape thousands of doctors, nurses, researchers, dentists, pharmacists, public health servants, medical missionaries and more who have gone on to, as Willard J. Houghton would say, "fix up the world for Christ."



# CAMPUS NEWS

## 2025-2026 NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Houghton University welcomed four new faculty members in the 2025-2026 academic year.

**Dr. Soo Yeon Kim**, Associate Professor of Violin and Viola

Dr. Kim holds a B.Mus and an M.M. in Violin Performance from The Juilliard School and a D.M.A. in Violin Performance and Literature with a minor in music history and string pedagogy from Eastman School of Music. Most recently, Dr. Kim was a visiting professor of violin at Houghton University.



**Dr. William “Bill” Perrine**, Professor of Instrumental Music and Director of Instrumental Activities

Dr. Perrine holds a B.A. in Music Education from Transylvania University, an M.M. in wind band conducting from University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a Ph.D. in Music Education from Indiana University. Prior to coming to Houghton, Dr. Perrine served at Concordia University Ann Arbor.



**Dr. Michele Vanasse**, Ellen F. Donley Dean of Education and Behavioral Science, Associate Professor of Education

Dr. Vanasse holds a B.A. in Elementary Education and Biblical Studies from Trinity Bible College, an M.S.Ed. in Learning Development from Montana State University—Northern and a Ph.D. in Education—Curriculum Studies with a concentration in teacher education and school improvement from University of Massachusetts Amherst. Dr. Vanasse previously served at Carroll College, Eastern Nazarene College and Mount Vernon Nazarene University.



**Dr. Timothy Xeriland**, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Dr. Xeriland holds a B.A. in Psychology and Philosophy from the University of Connecticut, an M.A. in Mathematics and Statistics from Ball State University, an M.S. in Applied Cognition and Neuroscience from University of Texas at Dallas and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from Michigan State University. Dr. Xeriland came to Houghton from Ball State University.



## FACULTY UPDATES

**Aaron Harrison '01**, associate professor of art, presented his interactive art installation Million Birds of Hope (*photo, right*), which invites viewers to become participants by taking a little bird directly from the display. It has been shown at the Ortlip Gallery at Houghton University, at Tri-County Arts in Olean, New York, and at Art Prize in Grand Rapids, Michigan. To learn more about the project, visit [www.millionbirdsofhope.org/about](http://www.millionbirdsofhope.org/about).



Rev. Dr. J.L. Miller, Rev. Dr. J. Michael Jordan '99 and Rev. Dr. Andrew Walton '06 were the joint recipients of a research grant from the American Bible Society studying Bible engagement among the next generation. The project explores the practice of lectio divina and its potential for impact on the spiritual development of college students.

Dr. Sharon Johnson, professor of piano and coordinator of collaborative piano, was appointed to the Horne-Blanchard Chair in Music. The Horne-Blanchard Chair of Music is an endowed fund providing for the compensation of the chair holder and additional professional development funds. The recipient is nominated and voted upon by her peers to hold a five-year appointment. The chair was established by Dr. David and Allene (Horne '57) Blanchard in 2014.



A portrait of Professor Emerita of Education **Dr. Connie Finney '78** was unveiled at Homecoming 2025. The portrait, by artist **Kyle Stevenson '96**, will be added to the University's art collection, and is currently displayed on the second floor of the Chamberlain Center.

Professor Emeritus of Christian Ministry **Dr. Michael Walters '86** continues in his pursuit of life-long learning in retirement, hosting a book discussion group for the past six years for five of his fellow emeriti faculty members: Senior Counselor Emeritus Dr. Michael Lastoria, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy Dr. Carlton Fisher, Professor Emeritus of Political Science Dr. Ronald Oakerson, Professor Emeritus of Theology Dr. Richard Eckley and Professor Emeritus of History Dr. Cameron Airhart. Together they have read and discussed nearly 60 books, continuing their friendships in spite of geographic distance.



Carrie Magin, D.M.A., associate professor of music composition and theory has been featured on an album nominated for a 2025 GRAMMY® Award with her composition “How To See An Angel.” The piece, written for soprano, bassoon and piano, composed for soprano Fotina Naumenko of Shenandoah Conservatory, appears on the album “Bespoke Songs,” which received a nomination in the category of Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

## Did You Know?

**FREEWILL**

In 2024, Houghton University began a partnership with **FreeWill**, a will-writing resource for our alumni and friends to better equip you for thoughtful stewardship of the resources with which you have been blessed.

We are called to be good stewards of the time, talents and resources that God has entrusted to our care. Houghton is pleased to be able equip you with the resources necessary to advance the Kingdom now and long into the future. Provision for your loved ones combined with legacy giving can help provide the resources necessary for Houghton students to pursue God's calling on their lives and to have an impact on the world they never imagined possible.

Visit [www.freewill.com/Houghton](http://www.freewill.com/Houghton) to get started today.



## EXCELLENCE: IT'S ABOUT THE PURSUIT, NOT PERFECTION

By **Kyra Binney '26**

The start of Houghton's fall semester marks another year of pursuing the Athletics Department's motto: "Excellence for the Glory of God." But what does excellence actually look like within Houghton's teams? Dr. Matthew Webb, Director of Athletics, offers a perspective that reframes the idea entirely.



"I think a misconception would be that excellence equates perfection... I don't think that's the case," Webb says. "To me, excellence is more about a pursuit."

Webb emphasizes that perfection—whether as an athlete, student, or employee—is impossible. What matters is the effort. "We're not going to be perfect," he says. "But I think we can still be excellent without being perfect." He draws a parallel to Christian life: believers will never be perfect, yet their pursuit of God is what truly matters.

When identifying excellence among Houghton's athletes, Webb looks beyond wins and losses. While victories are celebrated, he believes true excellence is embedded in the culture of each team. "The excellence that I see in our programs is more behind the scenes," he explains. "It's the culture—things that teams are doing to pursue Christ culturally."

Each team expresses this culture differently. The men's basketball team sits together at the front of chapel services. The women's soccer team carries a wooden cross across campus during their annual cross run, praying and fellowshiping along the way. These traditions rarely take center stage, yet they reveal each team's deeper commitment to growth and faith.

At the start of the year, the Athletics Department holds its all-athlete meeting. While it covers required policies and expectations, Webb also uses it to remind athletes why they compete. His hope is that each student-athlete not only performs well but grows spiritually through their sport and team community.

Looking ahead, Webb says each team stands in a unique place based on its history and current needs. Some programs with new coaches are focused on building culture; others aim to build on last year's progress. With a strong start to the fall season—both in performance and team culture—Houghton's ongoing pursuit of excellence is already in motion.

## HOUGHTON ELEVATES HOLISTIC ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PHYSICAL AND MENTAL PERFORMANCE INITIATIVES

By **Kyra Binney '26**

Houghton University Athletics has taken significant steps in recent years to elevate the holistic development of its student-athletes—pairing a structured strength and conditioning program with a new mental performance partnership. Together, these initiatives reflect the department's commitment to equipping Highlander athletes with the tools needed to thrive physically, mentally and spiritually.

### STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING: BUILDING STRONGER, SAFER ATHLETES

Launched three years ago under Head Athletic Trainer Austin Walden, Houghton's strength and conditioning program has quickly become a cornerstone of athlete development.



The program is designed to enhance performance while reducing injury risk by offering structured, intentional training for athletes both in-season and out-of-season.

"The goal is to provide structured training programs for our athletes—to help them perform on the field while minimizing the risk of injuries," Walden explains. "Once our athletes are

physically stronger and faster, there's a decreased chance of injuries."

Each session includes dynamic warmups, agility drills, sprints and full-body strength work. Walden collaborates closely with coaches to ensure each program aligns with team goals and reflects sport-specific needs.

Athletes have already seen measurable benefits. Women's basketball player Hannah Farley '27 credits the program for improvements in explosiveness, agility, and injury prevention. "Austin does a great job at implementing exercises that are game-like," she said. "I've seen growth in my explosiveness and agility, and I've been blessed to avoid major injuries."

Walden has likewise observed fewer muscular injuries and stronger team cultures around training. His long-term vision includes expanding the program to allow teams up to three sessions per week.

### HOLOS 360: TRAINING MENTAL EXCELLENCE

Video Interview with Jason Rollins: <https://youtu.be/DqvykxRQQUk>



Complementing the physical training program, Houghton recently partnered with Jason Rollins, founder of Holos 360 and a certified Mental Performance Mastery Coach, to bolster athletes' mental preparation and resilience.

Director of Athletics Dr. Matthew Webb says the partnership grew from a desire to give student-athletes proactive mental performance resources: "It's not mental health resources particularly—it's proactive, intentional mental performance training."

Rollins' curriculum guides athletes through three phases—preparing well, performing well, and reflecting well—each centered on developing mental habits and disciplines that directly influence performance. He works with teams and individuals through online meetings, focusing on personalized support.

One unique element of Holos 360 is its Christian foundation. Rollins helps athletes understand their Imago Dei—their identity as people created by God—so they compete from a place of purpose rather than pressure.

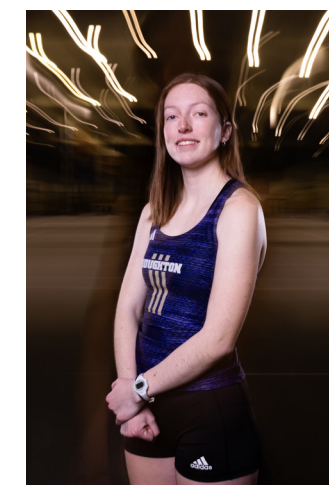
"When athletes understand that their identity is placed in who God made them to be, it releases them to perform at their best," Rollins says.

Early feedback from athletes has been highly positive. Webb notes that while conversations with Rollins remain confidential, students have expressed appreciation for the program's impact.

## A UNIFIED APPROACH

Together, Houghton's strength program and mental performance partnership represent a unified effort to strengthen the whole athlete. By investing intentionally in both physical readiness and mental excellence, Houghton is preparing its teams to compete with confidence, resilience, and purpose—reflecting a holistic vision of athletic success

**Kyra Binney '26** is a senior majoring in Writing and Communication. A native of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, she is a mid-distance runner for the Houghton University Women's Track and Field team and a member of the Houghton University Cross Country team.



## Empire 8 Fall All-Conference Selections

### WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

First Team: Noelle Linenfelder **1**

Second Team: Emberlynn Nolt (Torchbearer Award), Amy Collins

Third Team: Aria Larson, Jenna Binney

### MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

First Team: Amos Bixler **2**

Second Team: Ben Allen

Third Team: Luke Ellis

### FIELD HOCKEY

First Team: Campbell Bowers **3**

Second Team: Kylee Barshinger, Lilyana Good

Third Team: Adria Hartzler

Tomorrow's Leaders: Ava Kramp

### WOMEN'S SOCCER

Second Team: Hope Russell **4**

Third Team: Taylor Curyto

Tomorrow's Leaders: Aivery Shuck

### MEN'S SOCCER

Third Team: James Fay **5**

Tomorrow's Leaders: Daniele Schivo

### WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sage Brinckerhoff **6**: Co-Rookie of the Year, Second Team Singles, Third Team Doubles

Arija Grant: Third Team Doubles, Tomorrow's Leaders

### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

First Team: Alexa Belanger **7**

Second Team: Emma Cole

Tomorrow's Leaders: Emma Cole



## Calling All Highlander Alumni Athletes!

Help us preserve the rich history of Houghton Athletics by updating your information in our online Alumni Athlete Form. Your stories, achievements, and memories play a vital role in strengthening our archives and reconnecting the generations who have worn the purple and gold.

Share your updates today and stay connected with Houghton Athletics!



# ALUMNI NEWS & NOTES

## 1950

**George Johnson** and his wife Janice celebrated their 77th wedding anniversary in June of 2025.

## 1952

**Dr. Bruce Waltke** was honored by his friends with an endowed chair at Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Bruce K. Waltke Chair of Old Testament Studies celebrates Dr. Waltke's work as a professor of biblical studies at the institution.

## 1961

**Bethel Reimel** was recently invited to participate in a committee at the Catholic Information Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on the provision of bereavement services in local parishes.

## 1963

**Norma (Bence) Grover** **1** threw out the first pitch at a Rochester Red Wings baseball game. The game's sponsor, Western & Central New York American Automobile Association (AAA), honored Norma for her 60-year membership and 20 years as a travel guide.

## 1964

In November 2025, **David Droppa** **2** was named an alumnus of the year by the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work.

**Dr. Frederick Trexler** **3** will join the 2026 Student Statesmanship Institute LEAD Camp in Spring Arbor, Michigan. He is a tutor to homeschool students in pre-calculus and calculus through Pioneers Co-op, volunteers with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) and is active in the ministries of Cascades Baptist Church in Jackson, Michigan. In September 2025, he participated in the wedding of his grandson (son of **Mike Trexler '92**).

## 1966

**Allen Chase**, a retired therapist and Army chaplain, continues to occasionally provide pulpit supply for the Lutheran Church (ELCA) in western Washington state and regularly provides online tutoring with people for whom English is their second language.

## 1968

**Rev. Ronald Hamilton** retired after 55 years in church ministry. During his career he served as both church planter and pastor, and spent years ministering to the needs of fellow pastors through the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference, of which he was conference minister for over a decade.

**Gary Ward** and his wife Lavonne have moved to Sierra Madre, California, after losing their home of 38 years in the Eaton Fire in January of 2025. They attend Christ Church Sierra Madres, which is near their new home, and daily celebrate God's goodness to them.

## 1971

**Mike Flynn** **4** of Richmond, Virginia, now provides executive coaching services for business owners and ministry leaders in both group and individual sessions.

## 1973

**Rev. Kenneth Lawrence** retired after 49 years of service as pastor at Hampton Falls First Baptist Church.

**Gary Newton** **5** now serves as an adjunct professor of Christian ministries at Taylor University in Upland, Indiana, and as senior pastor of Oak Chapel Church in Marion, Indiana.

## 1974

**Karen (Dunkerton)** **6** and **Steve Erickson '76** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in the Outer Banks, North Carolina, with their sons and families, including **Steven '01** and **Nicole (Nafzinger '01) Erickson**.

**Stephanie (Gallup) Mondello** convened a Wicker Chair Wisdom Circle comprised of seven fellow alumni in March of 2021 to combat COVID isolation, which continues to meet. The group, a part of Stephanie's larger ministry through her role as spiritual director for Tender Listening, has met in a virtual format bimonthly for group book discussions. Stephanie was joined by **Marjorie (Rudd '75) Webber**, **Evelyn "Dindy" Bence '74**, **Laura Beth "LB" (Stockin '75) Norton**, **Linda Mills Woolsey '74**, **Susan (Thurber '74) Fisher** and **Joanna (Dotts '74) Askins**. In 2025, the women were privileged to meet in person in Pendle Hill, Pennsylvania.

## 1975

**Dan Johnson** retired from his position as controller for the radiology group at Wilson Hospital in Johnson City, New York, at the end of 2023. In retirement, he runs a small tax practice, serving approximately 120 clients annually. He and his wife have the joy of three children and eight grandchildren.

**Harry Thompson** serves as an administrator at Augustana University's Center for Western Studies, one of the first regional studies centers to focus on the American West and the only university-affiliated book publisher in South Dakota. Through the center, Dr. Thompson published his history of the research center (see Bookshelf). He credits his experience with the Houghton Boulder for his interest in book publishing and **Dr. James Barcus '60** for inspiring his academic pursuits in literature.

## 1977

**Samuel Cheung** retired from the New York City Public School System in August of 2025, where he had served as the program manager of the Bilingual Pupil Services Program. In retirement, he plans to travel, including making several trips to Europe. He continues to remain active as a collaborative pianist, having recently accompanied a full-scale vocal recital at the Merkin Concert Hall on Manhattan's West Side. He also remains active with the ministry of the Episcopal Church of Our Savior and with the Diocese of New York.

**Michael Frost** has formally retired from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in North Weissport, Pennsylvania, although he continues to serve the church in a part-time capacity.

## 1978

**Vicki Grant-White** has served as a trauma training consultant for the University of Buffalo's Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care since her 2019 retirement from the Allegany County Department of Social Services, where she served as commissioner. She intends to continue her trauma work locally with the county trauma informed coalition she founded in 2018.

1979

**Stanley Wicks** has come out of retirement to serve as the cantor for First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He directs the Chancel Choir and plays the church's Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ for two weekly Sunday morning services.

1981

**Major Charles Patrick Granat**, former regional commander for the Salvation Army in the Republic of Poland, has come out of retirement to serve as the interim corps officer for a congregation in Pensacola, Florida.

**Laura (Sawyer) Mason** completed a through-hike of the Appalachian Trail on June 7, 2025. She hiked the northern section of the trail in 2024, and after successful cancer treatments and clean-up in the wake of Hurricane Helene in 2024, she returned to the southern portion of the trail in the spring of 2025. The hike took a total of 6 months to complete. After three decades of executive leadership serving nonprofits and educational institutions, **Laurie (Fiske '81) Reinhardt** launched her consulting practice ClearView Fundraising Solutions. Previously she held roles with College Advising Corps, Museum of Life and Science, St. John's College and North Carolina State University.

1983

**Mark Christopher** retired in March of 2025 from his decade long career delivering tires in Western New York. He now spends his time hiking and biking.

1985

**Cynthia Machamer** was promoted to administrator of Heathwood Assisted Living and Memory Care in Penfield, New York. She previously served as a case manager.

1987

**Pamela (Walker) Ducharme** and her husband **Chip '87** were thrilled to meet fellow alumni **Kymrie (Sisson '08) McElheney** and **Lanae (Ford '88) Bengtson** at Impact Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, during their church's 4th of July Buffalo Bills tailgate party.

1988

**Suzette Bressler** is now a project manager with JE Richards in Columbia, Maryland. JE Richards is a union contractor in the greater Washington DC area, and Suzette's role will be to assist with all aspects of commission for a federal grant project.

1990

**David Hills** is retiring from the Buffalo Public Schools (BPS). He served first as a teacher, then 14 years as principal at three different Buffalo schools. He closed out his time with BPS as an associate superintendent of school leadership and chief operating officer.

**Charles Howard** joined the counseling team in the Center for Student Success at Houghton University. He continues to work as a senior advisor with Neurokids, an INGO he co-founded in 2020. Previously Charles was a counselor at Rift Valley Academy in Kenya. He is the proud parent of Houghton graduate **Elise '25**, Houghton student **Brianne '28** and Houghton Academy student Julia.

1996

**Jeff Babbitt** presented his first solo art exhibit in September 2025 at the Howe Gallery at the David A. Howe Public Library in Wellsville, New York. The show was funded with a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and included 25 landscape oil paintings and pastels of scenes around Allegany County. (Pictured with Houghton professor emeritus of art, Ted Murphy).

1998

**Adria Willett-Leonardo** is now the associate pastor of Bellingham Covenant Church in Bellingham, Washington. In addition to general pastoral duties, Adria also oversees Christian formation, mission and outreach for the church.

1999

**Amy (Bower) Coots** completed her Doctorate of Education in Educational Administration and Leadership at Pennsylvania Western University in August 2025.

**Elizabeth (Sherwood) Thurber** obtained her LPC (licensed professional counselor) and NBCC (national board-certified counselor) certificates. She continues serving youth as a school counselor at a public school in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, while seeking God's leading in starting her own practice.

2000

**Kevin Beers** is celebrating his 25th year in ministry, which began after college with WDCX 99.5 Christian radio in Buffalo, New York. In 2001, he began his pastoral ministry in the Western New York District of the Wesleyan Church. He currently serves as pastor at Revive Wesleyan's East Aurora Campus alongside his wife, Becky, and is in his sixth season as chaplain for the Buffalo Sabres.

2001

**Gregg Lytle** took on a position as a healthcare and employment lawyer at Segal McCambridge in

September 2025. His work focuses on litigation in both state and federal courts on behalf of healthcare providers, employers and retail establishments.

**Michelle (Taylor) McIlroy** has taken on a role with her regenerative family farm. Alongside her husband and two sons she oversaw the delivery of more than 70 goat kids in the spring of 2025. Previously, Michelle wrote and illustrated books for Rosen Publishing Company.

**Dan Pelton** co-founded Frontline Assessments, where he serves as CEO and as a clinician. Frontline Assessments offers independent psychological evaluations delivered virtually across 41 states, supporting veterans of the military.

**Dr. Jeff Thompson** was presented with an EM:RAP Challenge Coin, which recognizes excellence in humanity and Emergency Medicine Practice They are presented to Emergency Medicine practitioners who are considered by their colleagues to have gone above and beyond the call of duty. Dr. Thompson is a practitioner with University Emergency Medical Services in Buffalo, New York, and is active as a medical missionary overseas.

2003

**Alice Ball** completed her Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at St. Bonaventure University in August of 2025.

2004

**Ryan Engelbrecht** published an orchestration for septet of the Piano Sonata No. 9 in D-Major by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The work, entitled Sull

Terraza, is scored for string quartet and wind trio and is available through J.W. Pepper.

2005

**Sarah Stedman** accepted a position with Guilderland Central School District, her high school alma mater, at Farnsworth Middle School teaching middle school vocal music, including chorus and 6th 7th and 8th grade general music

**Jennifer (Kinman) Vickroy** is now the assistant general manager of Carlisle Inn in Sarasota, FL.

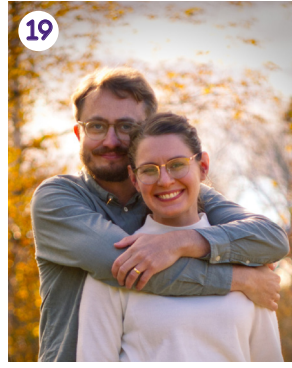
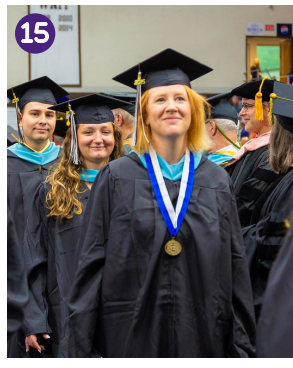
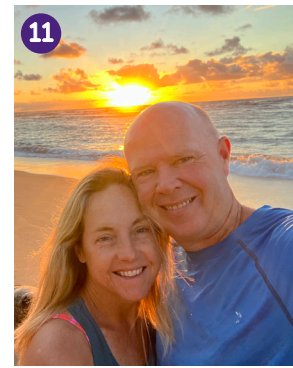
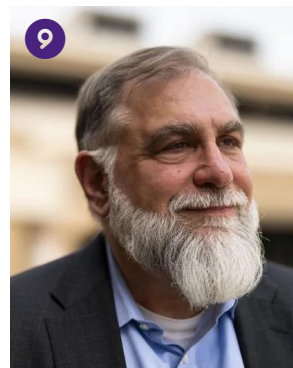
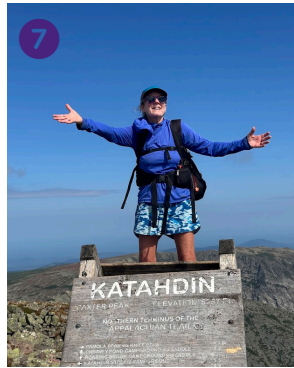
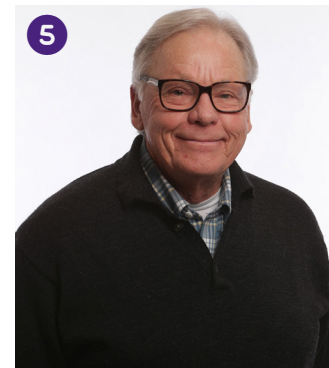
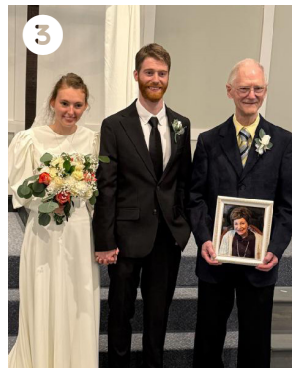
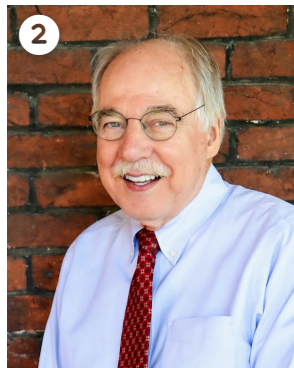
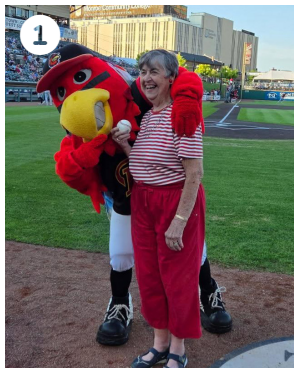
2010

**Natalie (Cobiski) Karlson** completed her Doctorate of Ministry in Leadership and Spiritual Formation at George Fox University in May 2025. Her final project focused on re-imagining biblical womanhood and helping evangelical women find their voice and confidence in their experiences with God.

**Dr. Melissa Stanley** was selected as the recipient of the Central Michigan University College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences' Gold Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Dr. Stanley holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and is the director of Secondary Social Studies Education at Central Michigan University.

2011

**Heather Little** completed her master's degree in anthropology with a concentration in historical archaeology at the College of William & Mary in



2024. She is now a senior field archaeologist at the William & Mary Center for Archaeological Research in Williamsburg, Virginia.

2014

**Rachel (Abate) Comini** completed the Leadership Academy for Educational Leadership and School Building/District leadership certifications at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in July of 2025. She was promoted to MTSS coordinator for the 2025-2026 academic year.

**Luke Crawford** was ordained as a minister in the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada on September 15, 2024. In fall 2025, he was invited to Houghton's campus to preach at the University's annual Rooted Revival.

2015

**Patrick Bielecki** completed his Master of Science in Nonprofit Management from Gratz College in 2020.

**Miriam (Griffith) Reimer '19** is now the administrative assistance for development at Providence University and Theological Seminary in Otterburne, Manitoba, Canada.

2017

**Danielle (Bees '17) Sylvester** was a composer participant in the New Music On The Point festival in Leister, Vermont, and had a work premiered at the festival in June of 2025. She is a freelance composer working on a variety of projects including arrangement, musical theatre and ensemble work.



2018

**Vivian (Chappell) Cox '20** completed her Master of Science in Environmental Policy and Management at Denver University in May 2025. She is now a climate policy analyst in Washington, DC, responsible for analyzing and improving international appliance policies for energy efficiency and climate objectives, including developing policy and regulatory guidance for and disseminating guidance to international energy regulators and policymakers.

**Natalia Sytch '21** completed her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University in May of 2025.

2019

**Kayla (Loomis) Boomhower** is now a special education teacher at A.W. Becker Elementary School in Selkirk, New York.

**Kaylee (Haller) Fisher** accepted a new role a public affairs specialist with the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in September 2025. She was recently published in Dr. David Anderson's work *The Intentional Life: Crafting Your Legacy One Day at a Time* with a piece entitled *A Lifelong Exploration*.

**Shaphan Hestick '22** recently completed his master's degree in International Science and Technology Policy at The George Washington University. In 2024, he was honored with the Guyana National Prize for Literature with his debut musical production *With A Kiss*—a retelling of the crucifixion through the eyes of Judas. Most recently, Shaphan released an EP entitled *Triumph* through

Frontier Worship, blending Caribbean rhythms with contemporary praise and worship.

2020

**Julia Fisher** was accepted into Pennsylvania Western University's clinical mental health counseling graduate program and is seeking licensure as a licensed clinical mental health counselor in both New York and Pennsylvania.

2021

**David Bowers** graduated from Dallas International University in 2023 with a Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics. After completing his master's degree, he spent two years ministering to refugees in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In July 2025, he enrolled at Duquesne University to pursue a doctor of osteopathic medicine.

**Julia Hotchkiss '23** completed her Master of Divinity at Asbury Seminary in May of 2025. Following graduation, she took on the role of pastor for Peace Wesleyan Church in Falconer, New York.

2023

**Evan Tsai '24** completed his Master of Business Administration at Alfred University in May of 2025.

**Mary Vandenbosch** took on a new position as the BIM/CAD Coordinator with M/E Engineering in Rochester, New York. Mary works with the BIM Coordinator team in leading project setups, developing new Revit content, and implementing Revit training procedures.

2025

**Zachary Roussie** is a member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest serving as a specialist supporting students at St. Labre Indian School on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in Ashland, Montana.

**Rachel (Scharf) Ryan** is now an admissions counselor for the Doctor of Chiropractic program at Northeast College of Health Sciences in Seneca Falls, New York, where her husband Andrew Ryan '25 is enrolled in the Doctor of Chiropractic program.

**Caleb See '25** presented a solo art show at Gallery At Seneca in Buffalo, New York, in November of 2025. A multimedia artist, Caleb themed his show on loving others in the face of disagreement.

DOWN THE AISLE

DOWN the AISLE



**1 Alana Meyers '19** tied the knot with **Martin Dibble '21** on May 22, 2021, at Levant Wesleyan Church in Falconer, New York. They were joined by many Houghton alumni, including the bride's parent **Allen '94** and **Leigh (Williams) '94) Meyers**, the bride's brother and sister-in-law **Andrew '18** and **Olivia (Morse '17) Meyers** and the groom's sister **Raisa Dibble '17**.

**2 Marissa (Perez '18 MM '20)** and Joel Webb were married July 9, 2022, with **Carolyn Borbolla '16, Alana Cross '18, MM '20, Sarah (Showers '18) Webb** and **Lillie Blakeslee '18** as a part of the wedding.

**David Bowers '21** married Chrysanthe Milley on August 19, 2023. Among those celebrating with the couple was the groom's father, **Robert Bowers '90**.

**3 Danielle Bees '17** tied the knot with Christian Sylvester on May 5, 2024, at Unionville Vineyards in Ringoes, New Jersey. She was joined in her celebration by Matron of Honor **Katie (Kreidler '16) Johnson** and photographer **Chelsea (Lee '16) Johnson**.

**4 Vivian Chappell '18** married Dylan Cox on September 14, 2024, at Highland Forest in Fabius, New York.

**5 Kayla Loomis '23** wed Nate Boomhower on October 27, 2024, in Albany, New York.

**6 Rebecca Loomis '19** was joined in marriage with Leo Pusatere on November 8, 2024, in Saratoga Springs, New York.

**7 Danielle Sloan '19** tied the knot with **Noah Miller '20** on February 16, 2025, at Glenville Community Church in Scotia, New York. They were joined in their celebrations by best man **Ken Watson '20**; groomsmen **Andrew Schulz '20, Trey Burlingame '20, Elliot Spicer '20** and **Caleb Lyon '20**; and bridesmaid **Rachael (Sherwood '19) Evans**.

**8 Emily Allen '20** tied the knot with Tony Mendoza on June 22, 2025, in Wilmore, Kentucky. They were joined in their celebration by many Houghton alumni, including the bride's parents **Bill '89** and **Kristen (Roth '90) Allen** and brother **Will Allen '24**.

**9 Anna Catherman '24** married Christopher Tanner on June 29, 2025, in Curwensville, Pennsylvania.

**10 Rachel Scharf '25** wed **Andrew Ryan '25** on July 11, 2025, at Majestic Woods in Clymer, New York. They were joined by many Houghton students, alumni, faculty and staff.

**11 Kayleigh Verspoor '24** married Elijah Trutt on July 26, 2025, in High Point, North Carolina. They were joined by many Houghton friends, including their wedding photographer **Hannah Roeske '24**.

**12 Jenna Strahan '24** was joined in marriage with John Newton on August 1, 2025, in Montreat, North Carolina.

**13 Megan Kidwell '13** wed Ben Vagase on August 2, 2025.

**14 Nina Dorsino '22** tied the knot with **Zachary Guntz '22** on October 11, 2025.

**Axel | 8.20.21 A**  
adopted 2025  
Ben '80 and Mary (Morley '82) Colter

**Judah Eliezer | 8.1.23 B**  
Martin '21 and Alana (Meyers '19) Dibble

**Levi Jacob | 2.3.24 C**  
Emily and Luke Crawford '14

**Luke | 6.7.24 D**  
Sarah (Norton '19) and Ethan Geer

**Miles Thomas | 6.20.24 E**  
Grace (Stevens '19) and Jarod Alexander

**Tommy | October 2024 F**  
Emily (Hornibrook '21) and Taylor Quinlan

**Frederick Victor | 11.30.24 G**  
Marissa (Perez '18 MM '20) and Joel Webb

**Matias Tesfahun | 1.28.25 H**  
Ashlee (Duttweiler '16) and Tesfa Angasso

**Maeve | 1.30.25 I**  
Abby and Tommy Munro '11

**Arlan Ray | 2.18.25 J**  
Andrew '18 and Oliva (Morse '17) Meyers

**Arthur Edward | 5.12.25 K**  
Elianna (Chroniger '18 MBA '20) and Noah McHenry

**Caleb Michael | 5.26.25 L**  
Joanna (Stolzenburg '11) and Michael Raimo

**Owen Bradford | 06.2025 M**  
Rachel and Caleb Smith '19

**Henry Michael | 6.17.25 N**  
Emily (Loomis '16) and David Ritsema

**Joshua | 7.10.25 O**  
Ed '09 and Stephanie (Candelora '09) Santoro

**Emmett Daniel | 7.15.25 P**  
Aaron '17 and Kasey (Cannister '17) Eisenhardt

**Wesley Benjamin | 7.18.25 Q**  
Brianna (Logee '19) and Benjamin Taylor

**Marshall Dale | 8.2.25 R**  
Vivian (Chappell '18) and Dylan Cox

**Imani Marie | 8.26.25 S**  
Joel '20 and Emmalynn (Erisman '21) Mulindwa

**Samuel James | 9.23.25 T**  
Tanya (Hatton '19) and Steve Swisher

**Pearl Thérèse | 9.28.25 U**  
Brandon '14 and Hannah (Compton '14) Cooper



# BOOK SHELF

**1 Mary Anne (Kowles '63) Phemister**  
The Power of Storytelling: Illustrated Profiles of Nine Women Writers Who Shaped a Nation's Character (1760-1860) | Page Publishing, July 16, 2025

**2 Carol (Gratrix '69) Brinneman**  
Seven Years in Ivory Coast 1972-1979 | Independently Published, October 3, 2025  
My Heart, A Mission Field | Independently Published, July 27, 2025

**3 Richard Nilsen '70**  
An Old-Fashioned Body Count | Zirlinson Publishing, October 10, 2025

**4 Harry Thompson '75**  
Bright, Clear Sky Over a Plain So Wide | The Center for Western Studies, August 30, 2021

**5 Anita (Hill '78) Placido**  
Whispers from God | Hawes & Jenkins Publishing, Inc., August 28, 2025

**6 Eli Knapp '01**  
In the Crosswinds: Birds, Humans and the Paradox of Place | Torey House Press, July 15, 2025

**7 Ryan Engelbrecht '04**  
Haggadah Bo Yeshua | Lulu.com, August 25, 2022

**8 Tori (Walker '17) Einher**  
Beneath the Aurora Mountains | Unscripted Chaos, July 26, 2025



# In MEMORIAM

## 1960

**Sally (Camp) Kamerling**, 86, passed away on April 24, 2025, in Wilmington, Kentucky. She dedicated her career to nursing, serving in many public health capacities in Cortland County. She leaves behind her three children and four grandchildren.

**Richard Smith** went to the arms of his Savior on July 22, 2025, at the age of 87. A resident of Saugerties, New York, he dedicated a 40-year career to public school teaching. He was an active member of his church. Richard leaves behind his wife **Janet (McKim '60)**, two sons and five grandchildren.

## 1963

**LeRoy Bechtel** was promoted to his heavenly home and great reward on January 23, 2025, at the age of 83. A resident of Weaverville, North Carolina, LeRoy had a fulfilling career as a music teacher and then as music director for what is today known as Family Life. A long-time church musician, LeRoy and his wife spent five years in Brazil with Ethnos360. He leaves behind his wife, two children and one grandchild.

## 1964

**Lynn Leitzel** of Richfield, Pennsylvania, entered into the presence of his Lord and Savior on July 1, 2025, at the age of 82, surrounded by his family. A long-time educator, Lynn had a passion for missions work and spent his retirement as a missionary recruiter. He leaves behind his wife, two children and seven grandchildren.

## 1965

**Rev. Dr. John Hilliard** departed this earthly life on August 11, 2025, at the age of 99. A longtime resident of Buffalo, New York, John was a veteran of the US Navy, and began his civilian career with Bethlehem Steel before returning to school to become a teacher at Buffalo Public Schools. He spent decades in the pulpit as a minister of the Gospel and was an active member of his community. He is mourned by four children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

## 1966

**Dorothea "Bunny" Brueschwylar** was called home on July 12, 2025, at the age of 81. A resident of Newton, New Jersey, she had a three-decade-long career in elementary education. She was an active member of her church, serving in many different capacities throughout her life. She leaves behind her nephew and his family.

**Janice (Marolf) Francis** passed away peacefully on June 15, 2025, at the age of 80. She was a dedicated educator, serving as a reading specialist for many years. An active member of her church, Janice also served Houghton University as a member of the Alumni Board. She leaves behind two of her children, **Karin '98 (Jeffrey Wolgemuth '96)** and **David Francis '94**; six grandchildren including **John Wolgemuth '28** and **Catherine Wolgemuth '27**; and three siblings, including **Russell Marolf '66**.

**Marianne (Coleman) Sacher**, 80, passed away on May 27, 2025, in Newark, Delaware. A life-long church musician and music educator, she blessed churches with her gifts for over 65 years. She is survived by her husband and daughter.

## 1967

**David Oetinger** passed away peacefully on July 29, 2025, at the age of 80. A long-time resident of Owensboro, Kentucky, David spent most of his career as the Chair of the Biology Department at Kentucky Wesleyan College. He served for a brief tenure on the faculty at Houghton University (then College), was a veteran of the US Navy, and a long-time US Naval Reservist. He leaves behind two sons and three grandchildren.

## 1969

**Col. Patricia Walegir (Ret)**, passed away at the age of 76 on February 25, 2025, in Croton-on-Hudson, New York. Col. Walegir was a veteran of the United States Air Force, having served in the 514th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron.

## 1971

**Glenn Felty**, 82, of Allentown, Pennsylvania, went home to be with the Lord on June 20, 2025. Pastor Felty spent nearly 60 years in ministry, serving as a pastor, with missions organizations and as principal of a school for missionaries in Venezuela. He is survived by his wife, three children and three grandchildren.

## 1972

**Lt. Cdr. Kenneth Winters**, 74, of North Brookfield, Massachusetts, passed away on August 8, 2025. A retired lieutenant commander in the United States Navy, he was also a veteran of the US Navy Chaplain Corps. Upon retirement, he served as a pastor. He is survived by his wife, **Connie (Buchholz '72)**, two daughters and one grandson.

## 1973

**Ralph Biesecker** was called home to be with the Lord on July 1, 2025, at the age of 81. A resident of Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, Ralph was a veteran of the United States Navy and worked in retail for much of his career. The founder of the Houghton ensemble SonTouched, Ralph was briefly employed at Houghton before taking on music ministry opportunities with local churches. He is survived by his wife, **Elaine (Sheldon '70)**, and his son.

**Mary (Wojciechowski) Pierce**, 89, passed away on April 22, 2025, in Greenville, South Carolina. Mary was a music educator for over 30 years, and served her church in music ministry. She is survived by her three daughters.

## 1974

**Laura Luick** was called home on January 31, 2025, at the age of 73. She was a lifelong educator and resident of Niagara Falls, New York.

## 1977

**Dr. Geoffrey Gerow**, 71, of Pendleton, New York, passed away on May 4, 2025. A chiropractor by trade, Dr. Gerow established his own practice, taught college courses and served as director of the D'Youville College chiropractic program. He was an active volunteer in the community and among his fellow medical practitioners. He leaves behind three sisters.

## 1978

**Linda (Bowen) Edwards**, 68, of Houghton, New York, died on August 21, 2025. A lifelong public servant, Linda served Allegany County as a probation officer, director of Stop DWI and director of the Youth Bureau. She leaves behind her husband, daughter and three grandchildren.

## 1982

**Steven Kerchoff**, 64, passed away at his home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on August 16, 2025. A longtime public servant in foreign service, Steven was also an active choral musician. He is survived by his three siblings.

**Sandra (Tingue) Meyers**, died on April 30, 2025, at the age of 76. Formerly a resident of Friendship, New York, she had a 20-year career as an educator. She is survived by three children, **Dale '99**, **James '95** and **Alan '94 (Leigh Williams '94)**; 17 grandchildren, including **Eva Meyers '21**, **Alana (Meyers '19) Dibble** and **Andrew Meyers '18**; and 10 great-grandchildren.

## 1984

**Jeffrey Cox**, 62, of Westerville, Ohio, passed away on April 18, 2024. A gifted musician and respected businessman, he is survived by his wife, **Milana (Chernick '82)** and his three children.

## 1989

**Darlene (Gross) Taylor** of Grandview, Missouri, passed away on February 10, 2025, at the age of 72. She had a lifelong love of teaching and dedicated many hours to children's educational programming at her church. She is survived by her husband **Donald '73**; children **Joseph '04 (Heba Wissa '04)** and **Lisa '99**; and 11 grandchildren.

## 1995

**Guy Bennett**, 73, of Olean, New York, passed away on September 10, 2025. A veteran of the United States Air Force and the US Army National Guard, Guy also served his community as a firefighter for 20 years. He was a librarian, working at libraries around the country. He is survived by his wife, six children, eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

## 1996

**Michael Baldwin**, 63, of Wellsville, New York, died on September 5, 2025. He was a well-known radio personality and deeply engaged in emergency services in his community. He is survived by three sisters.

## 2004

**Briana Burghardt**, 43, of Lisle, New York, passed away on July 23, 2025, after battling multiple life-threatening conditions. After a brief tenure as a field hockey coach for Houghton University, she began a career as a school teacher, eventually specializing in STEM education, and as a coach for high school multiple sports. She is survived by her daughter, her parents and her sister, among many other loving family members.

**Jay Fessenden** of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, passed away on October 5, 2023, at the age of 43. The owner of JDF Consulting, he leaves behind his wife, **Joanna (Durham '04)**, his son, his parents and his brother **Dan '08**.

## 2011

**Christopher Austin**, 54, of Cuba, New York, died on August 6, 2025. He had a 25-year career with Dresser-Rand/Seimens. He is survived by his father, son, fiancée and three siblings.

## 2025

**Maxwell Morse**, 22, went to rest on August 31, 2025, as the result of brain health challenges that prevented him from completing his Houghton degree. A member of the Houghton men's basketball team, he was a licensed commercial drone pilot and an active volunteer with special needs children at his church. He is lovingly remembered by his parents, his three siblings, his grandmothers and a large circle of extended family.

## CONNECT WITH US

Houghton Magazine welcomes alumni news, alumni art and photography, and letters to the editor for possible inclusion in the publication. All submissions are subject to editorial discretion and the opinions expressed are those of the authors or their subjects and not necessarily shared by the University or the editor. Submissions and address changes can be sent to [Magazine@Houghton.edu](mailto:Magazine@Houghton.edu) or Houghton University 1 Willard Avenue, Houghton, NY, 14744. Written permission is required to reproduce Houghton Magazine in whole or in part. Contents © 2026 Houghton University.



# HOUGHTON SUMMER CAMPS

[Houghton.edu/Summer-Camps](http://Houghton.edu/Summer-Camps)

## 2026 CAMP DATES - QUICK REFERENCE\*

Equestrian Camps	Weekly from June 14-July 23
Girls Basketball Camp	June 28- July 2
Boys Basketball Camp	July 12-16
Tennis Camp	July 19-23
Girls Soccer Camp	July 19-23
Girls Volleyball Camp	July 26-30
Boys Soccer Camp	July 26-30
Summer String Festival	July 26-30

\* Please visit our website for full details, pricing and age brackets.