

# HOUGHTON

SUMMER 2026





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# On the COVER



**Abigail Fulmer '19** riding Otto (see page 14) salutes the judges at the start of a dressage show during her time as a student. Abigail completed a dual major in business administration and sports, recreation and wellness with an equestrian concentration. Today, she is the Programs and Inventory Coordinator for the United States Eventing Association.

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Dear Friends,

I came to Houghton in 2021 without specific plans for where we would invest or what we might change. I came with the intention of listening, learning, and discerning what our greatest opportunities for growth and development might be. It took very little time to determine that Houghton's Equestrian Center and equestrian studies program were both rare and exceptional, and that these should be central to the University's plans for investment and growth.

Houghton is an historic and highly esteemed Christian liberal arts and sciences university. Programs most often associated with Christian liberal arts universities include history, philosophy, English literature, or mathematics—not equine management. Equine studies is not what comes to mind when most people think of Houghton. But that is changing. Located just a bit off the main residential campus, you only find Houghton's Equestrian Center if you are looking for it. But once you have experienced it, you will not forget it. Neither will you question the way its faculty, staff, and curriculum provide a beautiful complement to the traditional liberal arts and science disciplines. Equine Studies is not tangential to Houghton's mission. It embodies Houghton's mission.

Demand for Houghton's equine programs far exceeds our current capacity. Undergraduate academic programs and the Summer Equestrian Camp have been at maximum capacity for several years. The quality of the faculty, facilities, and academic program, coupled with an idyllic setting in rural Western New York, and integrated with a Christ-centered, academically rigorous liberal arts curriculum make equine studies at Houghton a highly sought option for students. I believe our opportunities for growth are tremendous. It is time to expand. By God's grace and with the support of generous donors, we will make needed repairs and upgrades, add faculty, enhance program offerings, and expand the number of seats available to both university students and summer campers.

This issue of Houghton Magazine is a celebration of the faculty, staff, and partners who have made equestrian studies at Houghton the beautiful program that it is today, and the students and alumni whose lives have been forever impacted by their time in equine studies at Houghton. As you read, I invite you to dream and pray with us, as we plan for the next chapter of the program's story, and prepare for the students and horses the Lord continues to send to us.

With the love of Jesus,

Wayne D. Lewis, Jr.



FROM THE PRESIDENT



# The Ministry of Therapeutic Riding

Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano

When you ask Houghton graduates “how did you end up at Houghton,” invariably every answer you receive is evidence of God’s providential hand in their lives. **Shelby (Skinner '19) Dytschkowskyj** grew up coming to Houghton from Franklinville, New York, for the Upward Bound program and remembers visiting campus for school trips. But it was a spot on Family Life Radio the ministry of Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch in Bend, Oregon, that put Shelby on the path she’s walking today.

Shelby didn’t grow up as a “farm kid,” and never owned a horse—in spite of her life-long love for horses. She’d

sometimes do a little stable work for the occasional riding lesson, but it was that radio spot that inspired Shelby to figure out how to marry her love of horses with her heart for serving people. “It shaped my whole future,” Shelby stated.

As a teen Shelby started volunteering at High Hurdles, a therapeutic riding center in Sardinia, New York. She grew to love the work and knew she’d need to go to college if she wanted to pursue a career in therapeutic riding. Houghton wasn’t the only school Shelby considered, but at the end of the day she felt such a peace

at Houghton that she turned down a full scholarship elsewhere in order to become a Highlander.

Throughout her time at Houghton, as she pursued a dual degree in Equestrian Studies and Psychology and worked on her PATH\* certification, Shelby thrived in the “try it—you’ll learn something” environment. Under the leadership first of **Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young**, who retired in 2017, and subsequently **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**, Houghton’s equestrian program offered her plenty of



hands-on experience serving on chore crew and teaching lessons for local children.

Shelby also had the opportunity to intern with a barn in Arkansas. Like many student internships, it didn’t turn out exactly how she’d anticipated. “Houghton was such a supportive and kind environment. I loved being personally involved with professors, like **Andrea (Potteiger '00) Boon**, worshiping with them in church, watching their kids, being a part of their lives. I was honestly a bit naïve about the greater equine world. My experiences in that internship and my first jobs opened my eyes to some of the cruelty in the equine world. Because of that, I spend a lot of time reflecting on Houghton’s culture and I work to bring that culture into my current role.”

As for her current roles, those teenage years volunteering at High

Hurdles became a job offer after Shelby graduated. Today, she serves as program director at the sasi-affiliated barn. sasi, a Western New York non-profit that supports people with developmental disabilities, connects people with creative opportunities that honor their choices and fit their lives—riding being one of those creative opportunities.

In addition to taking on the role of director at High Hurdles shortly after COVID, Shelby recently became the director of equine assisted services for the Lothlorien Therapeutic Riding Center in East Aurora, New York, another sasi-affiliated barn. “I never envisioned climbing ladders,” Shelby remarked wryly. “I struggled a bit to find my sense of calling in my transition to administration. I’m now seeing the success of good administration that leads to flourishing programs.” She credits her liberal arts education at Houghton with equipping her to make

the transition into administration. Along with her colleagues, Shelby supports people with mental, cognitive and physical disabilities, such as autism, Downs Syndrome or cerebral palsy. They work with children as young as four through adults in their eighties, making riding an accessible sport for each student. While Shelby and her team aren’t therapists, they partner with riders to help them translate “horse skills” into “life skills,” inspiring independence and encouraging verbal and physical development.

Shelby approaches every day as a true scholar-servant. She lives out that early dream of working with horses to help people, whether writing policies at her desk or teaching in the arena. As she sees the growth in the lives of her riders and the impact it has on their families, she feels a clear sense of the ministry of her calling.



**Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano** is the Director of Advancement Communication and Editor of Houghton Magazine.

*\*Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship*





# Practical Application

## Bella Goss '23

My time in the Houghton Equestrian Program was extremely valuable and taught me many of the skills I needed to perform well in my current role as Horsemanship Director of the Camp Hebron Horsemanship program. Camp Hebron is a camp and retreat center whose goal is to connect people with God, nature, and each other. Meadowview Stables operates in Camp Hebron, offering overnight horse camp in the summer, riding lessons, trail rides, school field trips, and other activities. We are excited to begin expanding our services to host fun shows, clinics, and some other events throughout the year.

While I am not jumping 3' courses on performance horses—like I did at Houghton—I am applying many of the practical managerial, pedagogical and people skills I gained through the equestrian program.

One class that has been particularly helpful was Equine Facility Management (EFM), which I took in my sophomore year with **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**. I learned how to manage all the ins and outs of an equine program, including things like developing schedules, pasture management, and feed management. Thanks to EFM, I was able to implement a lot more structure in my program when I started my job.

Along with my management role, I spend a lot of time teaching. My equine pedagogy class and attaining my Certified Horsemanship Association

(CHA) certification at Houghton with **Kathie (Christensen '98) Hilsher** helped prepare me for this part of my job. Camp Hebron operates under the CHA guidelines, so it was a very easy transition for me to begin a lesson program here and apply the many teaching skills I gained at Houghton. I also served as a teaching assistant (TA) for some of the riding classes, including equine pedagogy, which grew my confidence in teaching people how to ride horses.

I now have students from beginner up to learning how to jump cross-rails at Camp Hebron! Teaching has been one of my favorite skills to have learned from Houghton and I continue to use in my work here. It is so rewarding to see the young kids I work with in the summer go from timid and afraid to touch a horse to excited to learn new skills with their equine partner by the end of a camp week.



On top of all the equestrian skills I learned in Houghton's program, I also took many business and management classes as a part of my degree that have helped me to confidently make decisions for the business that I run now. With **Professor Alex Wright '07**, I developed my critical thinking and problem-solving skills, especially when he challenged us with real-life applications of the things we were learning. I've discovered that learning how to manage staff and relations with the people you work with is just as important as learning to manage the horses. Houghton's Equestrian Program understands that and has that covered!

**Bella Goss '23** is the Horsemanship Director at Camp Hebron in Halifax, Pennsylvania. She holds a dual degree in Equine Studies and Recreation Equine Management.

# Blessings on the Hill

Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries



Houghton's Equestrian Event Center, completed in 2018, has truly revolutionized what the Equestrian Program is able to offer to both our students and the local equine community. When I think back to how it began—with a simple email asking if we were indeed wanting to build a larger indoor riding arena and informing me that there was a potential donor to fund the project—I am astounded at what came about.

I am deeply grateful for the anonymous donor who made the lead gift of \$2.4M and the many others who came alongside them to make the Equestrian Event Center possible.

The arena project began as a dream of **Program Director Emerita Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young**, who served at Houghton from 1986-2017. I am thankful every day that the Lord put the arena project on her heart. Without Jo-Anne's dreaming and talking about her vision with many individuals, our anonymous donor may never have heard about the project. That short email I received got the ball rolling, so we dreamed and worked to build a facility that would be functional and beneficial for our equine students, as well as the larger equine community. It is truly a blessing to set foot in that space every day, whether the riding arena, the classroom, the Faith of a Mustard Seed Atrium or the Jo-Anne O. Young Competitor's Wing stable. The Lord

provided even more than we could have imagined!

From the perspective of teaching students, the Event Center has given us a heated warm space in the cold winter months to train and learn. No longer do students and faculty have frozen fingers and toes while teaching and riding in mounted labs. We don't have to end classes early due to being too cold, and students are able to take full advantage of the learning process during each 15-week semester, rain, snow or shine! The classroom has allowed us to have a designated space for our lecture-based class learning that isn't shared with the student worker time clock or the restroom!

For our local equine community here in Western New York, it has given us the ability to offer even more equine learning opportunities as we share our wonderful new space. We are able to host many shows, clinics and seminars that expand our educational and missional reach beyond our four-year university students.

I've had the privilege to be a part of the equine program for over 20 years, first for two years as an undergraduate transfer student (2006-2008), then returning to work full time in 2013 as herd manager and instructor, and then taking over the reins as the equine program director in 2017. It has been

a blessing to see our program change, expand, and thrive over those two decades. I have seen the Lord work through the outstanding investment of our amazing faculty and staff, our wonderful students, and the support of hundreds of donors. I am so thankful that the Lord chose me to be a part of His program during this season, and to get to see the Lord working in the lives and hearts of His people. Every time I drive onto the farm, I am reminded of the Lord's faithfulness in my own life and in His equestrian program here on the hill in Houghton!



**Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**

has served at Houghton since 2013 and is now in her ninth year as Equestrian Program Director.

She holds a

bachelor of science in recreation and leisure studies with an equestrian concentration from Houghton University and a master's of education in equestrian education from William Woods University. Professor Ries is a Certified Horsemanship Association Master Instructor and Assistant Certification Instructor for Standard English/Western certifications and Equine Facility Management certifications and is a United States Dressage Federation Silver Medalist.





# Creating Memories:

## Summer Camp at the Equestrian Center

Hannah Williamson '19

Summertime at the barn is my favorite time of the year. Houghton's campus is a bit emptier, the students have gone home, and things seem to be quieting down . . . but not at the Equestrian Center. In fact, it's quite the opposite. The Houghton equestrian program hosts and organizes two large, recognized dressage shows at the start and end of the summer—and sandwiched in between, we keep busy running multiple weeks of equestrian camp for horse-loving youth.

Over the course of the summer, Houghton University runs five weeks of girls' overnight residential equestrian camp for riders ages 10-18, and one week of day camp for girls and boys ages 7-14, hosting upwards of 100 campers. The goal of our camps is to create a fun and safe environment where campers will see and feel God's love lived out while learning and growing in their horsemanship skills. We welcome riders of all levels and experience to join us for a great week at camp.

During their time at camp, riders are able to choose what skills they would like to work on. They have the opportunity to use one

of our amazing lesson horses, or can bring their own horse for the week. Campers are able to work on dressage, hunters, jumpers, eventing, and/or western during their time at camp. Whether they are brand new to horses, improving current skills, or experienced riders eager to try something new, there is an opportunity for everyone.

I think it is incredible how broadly known Houghton's equestrian



camp is. We have campers who come from all over the country and even internationally. In recent summers, I have had campers come from as close as just down the street to as far as California, Florida, Saudi Arabia and even Russia. I always ask the campers coming from farther away how they heard about us. Sometimes, they have a Houghton connection through friends, family, or their church, but often they reply, "Your camp is one of the first ones to pop up when searching for best overnight equestrian camps."

Our small equestrian camp program is such a big draw that can lead to potential college students who may otherwise not have discovered Houghton. Many summer campers have turned into Houghton students who become involved in our Equestrian Program by either pursuing a major or a minor in an equestrian field. Every year, we have students in our incoming class who have been campers, some years as many as five students. Many incoming students have shared that their time as a camper impacted their college decision in choosing to come to Houghton.

Students in our program, whether having been a camper previously or not, can have the opportunity to work over the

summer as a camp counselor and/or instructor. This is a great hands-on learning opportunity for current students to build on their leadership skills and better prepare themselves for future jobs in the equestrian field. For those who started as campers, it can be a fulfilling full-circle moment to be on the other side of camp to help campers create special memories.

Coming full circle is something I understand well. Although I didn't attend Houghton's equestrian camp, my start with horses kicked off at Royal Ridges Retreat, where I was a camper at their equestrian camp. I later worked as a camp counselor and then as a camp wrangler. Those experiences led me to pursue my degree at Houghton and then stay on to direct our summer camp program. Looking back, I never would have thought that my start in summer camps would have been so influential—but here I am, 15 years later, able to give all of the campers who come through Houghton's equestrian camp those special summer camp memories that will stay with them for a lifetime.

**Hannah Williamson '19** has served at Houghton since the summer of 2019 as the Assistant Equestrian Program Director and Equestrian Events Coordinator. Her role as the Equestrian Camp Director officially started the summer of 2022 after having worked as a counselor and assistant director in previous summers. She holds a bachelor of science in equine studies from Houghton University and is a Certified Horsemanship Association Instructor and Equine Facility Manager.



## FEARLESS CHAMPION

### IN THE EQUESTRIAN PROGRAM AT HOUGHTON UNIVERSITY, YOU WILL:

- » Learn and train under CHA-certified professors and FEI-level clinicians within a thriving community of Christians who are living, learning and experiencing life together.
- » Enjoy first-class facilities on 336 acres of farmland, trails and cross-country while working with 30 school horses trained in multiple disciplines, or board your own horse.
- » Gain the opportunities to grow your riding ability, develop your teaching skills, earn your CHA certification, and compete in open and USEF/USDF-recognized competitions.

Take your next fearless step when you complete your application for admission to Houghton University.  
**Houghton.edu/Apply**

Learn more about majors and areas of study at Houghton when you visit:  
**Houghton.edu/Majors**



# FROM THE ARCHIVES: AN EQUESTRIAN TIMELINE

1973-1974

Houghton's course catalog first offers the option of riding lessons as a lifetime sports elective. Lessons were taught off-campus at Brentwood Stables in Angelica, New York.

Carol Wheeler

1983

Carol Wheeler is hired as an adjunct professor to instruct riding lessons on campus, offering the first horsemanship course during Mayterm and the first full semester course in the fall.

Dr. Demosthene Romanucci, father of Houghton students **Eric '87** and **Demo '86**, donates seven horses to the college, helping to create the foundation of the Houghton herd.

1984

Students begged and foraged materials to build the first riding arena—a simple 50' x 50' square constructed of split oak fence posts, saplings and baling twine.

1985

Houghton students first ride in an intramural competition at St. Lawrence University under the coaching of Carol Wheeler.

In response to interest and demand, and for the safety of horses and students, the college builds a 120' x 240' outdoor riding arena.

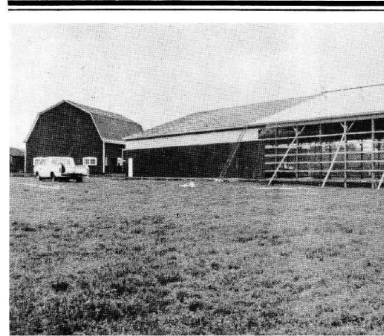
Marla (Nielsen '83) Omdal

1985

Marla (Nielsen '83) Omdal takes over instruction of Horsemanship classes.



## Campus News



The first summer camp, with 15 riders participating, is taught by Marla and **Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young**.

Marla & her husband **Dan Omdal '84** begin replacing pasture fencing with safer materials using free railroad ties.

Dr. Glenn and Mrs. Blanche Piper, parents of Houghton student **Heidi Piper '87**, donated the funds to construct a 60' x 145' indoor arena.

1986

Marla and Dan renovate the old dairy barn to create box stalls.

Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young

1986

Jo-Anne (Olsen' 69) Young is appointed program director.

circa 1986-1987

Houghton student **Melissa Knox '88** presented the first petition for a minor in equestrian studies. It would take approximately eight years for the program to be approved.

1991

The first Abdullah Cup award was presented to outstanding equestrian student **Jillane (Clark '93) Baker**. The award celebrates the 1984 Olympian equine medalist who visited Houghton in 1990.

The first outdoor jumping arena is constructed.

A Milieu article in June describes some of the earliest steps toward an equine assisted therapy program. Houghton students **Karen (Weaver '91) Liddick**, **Ellen Barnes '92** and **Jillane (Clark '93) Baker** worked with **Tracy Terwiliger '94**, a student with a condition that necessitated the use of a wheelchair, to facilitate her participation in Horsemanship I.

1993

The equestrian studies minor is first listed in the Houghton course catalog. Long-time donor and volunteer Cathy Daggett volunteers her time as an adjunct professor, a role she continued to fill for the following decade.



circa 1993-1994

Houghton student **Mary Beth (Neterer '97) Brice**, with support from her fellow students and Professor Young, successfully petitioned President Dan Chamberlain to be permitted to raise funds for the construction of a lesson barn to be attached to the existing indoor arena—a \$35,000 project which was completed in 1994.

1998-1999

The Equestrian Society was founded under the leadership of President **Heather Stam-Washington '00**. In its inaugural year, the society published a newsletter and hosted a student-taught jumping and dressage clinic.

2003

New faculty member **Michelle LaBarre '02**, taking over Cathy Daggett's position, brings therapeutic riding lessons into the regular academic year.

2005-2006

The Equestrian Studies concentration in Recreation and Leisure (today's Sport, Recreation & Wellness) major first appears in the course catalog.

2009-2010

The first certification course for CHA certification in teaching riders with disabilities was offered. Previously, this subject was offered a possible special topics course.



2015-2016

The Department of Leisure Studies becomes the Department of Sport, Recreation and Wellness, which houses the Equestrian program.



2011-2012

The first year that concentration tracks in both Equestrian Performance and Equestrian Management appear in the course catalog.

2015

The STAR repots that the first equestrian open house is planned and hosted to fulfill course requirements in a class with **Dr. Laura Alexeichik '00**.

2016

The Equine Assisted Therapy minor first appears in the Houghton College course catalog.

2017

A \$2.M anonymous lead gift is announced to allow for the construction of the Equestrian Event Center, incorporating a 100' x 200' indoor riding arena, bleacher seating, classroom, concession stand, and box stalls among other amenities. Further investment thanks to a gift from Heidi (Ziegler) and David Doll created the Faith of a Mustard Seed Atrium.

Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries

2017

Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries is appointed program director upon Jo-Anne Young's retirement.



2018

The Equestrian Event Center is dedicated at Homecoming. During the dedication, Jo-Anne Young is appointed Program Director Emerita.



## DID YOU KNOW?

You can find digitized versions of all editions of the Houghton STAR, the Boulder, the Milieu and Houghton Magazine online through the Willard J. Houghton Library?

Scan the QR code with your phone's camera To read more of President Luckey's reflections on Houghton Seminary, use the QR code to see the April 1911 edition of the Houghton STAR.

Or visit <https://libguides.houghton.edu/archives>







# True Excellence

## Emily Fausnaught '24

When I think back on what first drew me to Houghton, I immediately think of the equestrian and London Honors programs. I was drawn to the opportunity to be challenged academically while also pursuing my passion for horses in a setting committed to faith and excellence. During my first visit, I was struck by the professionalism, kindness, and strong sense of community within the equestrian program, and that made a lasting impression on me.

At Houghton, I double majored in equestrian performance and business administration, with a minor in equine therapies. More than anything, my time there taught me the value of hard work, community, and pursuing excellence with humility. The equestrian program challenged me to grow in both skill and character and gave me mentors and friendships that continue to shape me. I still remember conversations with Professor **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**, while I was serving as a teaching assistant in the equine program, about

the best ways to challenge and coach newer students in their riding.

The friendships I formed at Houghton have remained one of the most lasting gifts of my time there. Even now, close friends such as **Eileen Goodge '24** continue to be a steady source of encouragement and community, despite living several states away. Through those relationships and experiences, I learned to work hard, love others well, and better see the beauty of God's creation.

Today, I serve as the Volunteer Coordinator at Cloverleaf Equine Center, in Union Mill, Virginia, where I help coordinate over 120 volunteers each week in a therapeutic equine environment. My equestrian background equipped me to teach volunteers about horses, safety, and the care required in this setting, but it also continues to shape the way I lead and encourage others. Houghton taught me that true excellence is not just about technical skill, but about patience, consistency, and the ability to bring out the best in



others—lessons I now rely on every day in volunteer coordination.

I remain grateful for the way Houghton strengthened my faith, deepened my love for both horses and people, and prepared me for work that feels deeply meaningful.

**Emily Fausnaught '24** is the Volunteer Coordinator at Cloverleaf Equine Center. She earned a Bachelor of Science in equestrian performance and business administration from Houghton University and is a PATH Intl. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor.



# Entering the Next Chapter

## Jiana Martin '26

Gratitude is the first thing I think of when reflecting on my time at Houghton University. Like many others, I was an eager and excited freshman who looked forward to beginning my undergraduate education. I especially looked forward to starting my equestrian classes. God planted a love for horses in my heart from a very early age, so it was a dream come true to be able to pursue a career with them through the University's equestrian program.

There have been many parts of the equestrian program that have helped prepare me to enter the equestrian industry with confidence, especially since I did not enter school with a lot of prior equine knowledge. From the classes to working on farm maintenance and chore crew to being a teaching assistant (TA), I have appreciated the wide variety of learning opportunities. One class in particular, Equestrian Pedagogy Methods taught by Professor **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**, prepared me for my summer internship, where I had the opportunity to teach a lot. The class helped me broaden my riding knowledge and skills, as well as developed me as an instructor. Another opportunity that helped me feel confident heading into my internship was working at the University's equestrian summer camp. This was my first experience as a camp counselor and riding instructor,



so it was nice to have a safe environment where I could grow and learn before stepping into an internship position.

From the beginning, my internship experience was a testament to how God moves and provides in life. I filled out the application for working at Windwalker Farms, a small, Christian, family-owned barn in Fenton, Michigan during Thanksgiving break. The following morning, I received an email from one of the owners expressing their interest in me joining their team. I excitedly accepted. At the end of the summer, I learned that the same night I filled out the application, the owners were actively praying and looking for a college to reach out to about bringing in a student. I was the first out-of-state intern they hosted and am returning there after I graduate this summer as a full-time assistant barn manager.

Along with the equestrian program, my educational experiences as a whole have equipped me for post-graduation life not only as an equine professional, but also as a well-rounded Christian scholar-servant. Everything from the London Honors program to the business and theology classes to the art and science classes has helped me gain a more comprehensive understanding of the world around me. Over the course of four years, I've come to realize what a

Christian liberal arts education means. It is about preparation for interacting with the world with an open mind, thinking critically about the situations and ideas I encounter, and understanding the things around me from various perspectives. It has expanded my skills and knowledge in ways I would not have otherwise had the opportunity to grow.

As this chapter of my life comes to an end, I am thankful for the friends and memories I have made, the classes and professors (and horses) who taught me, and the God who provided it all. I cannot wait to see where He continues to lead me as I enter the next chapter.

**Jiana Martin '26** is a graduating senior majoring in Sports, Recreation and Wellness Management with an Equestrian concentration and minoring in Business Administration. A native of Levittown, Pennsylvania, she serves as the co-editor-in-chief of the Houghton STAR. She will begin her position as the Assistant Barn Manager at Windwalker Farms in June 2026.





Amanda (Shine '05) Zambrano

If you walk through the bi-level barn at the Houghton Equestrian Center, a friendly black and white gelding will invariably poke his nose out to request a good scratch or a friendly pat. He's a 22-year-old tobiano Friesian sport horse registered as Knight's Dream, and known affectionately as Otto.

Otto came to Houghton from the Rochester area, generously donated to the program by Sue and David Knight in 2014. He's been a barn favorite for years and it isn't simply because of his friendly, affectionate nature and beautiful black and white markings.



lesson horse." The assessment was correct. Since his early days, Otto has grown and matured into a great lesson horse embodying everything a learning rider and trainer could wish for.

Otto works with Houghton's equestrian students as they learn, focusing on dressage. Students have ridden him in second level recognized dressage shows, schooling shows and in clinics with world-renowned clinicians such as Agnieszka Majewska and Kristi Wysocki. "He's a confidence builder," shared Professor Ries. "Otto is a confident horse and that instills confidence in the students. He's great at working students through the challenging walk to canter transitions, giving them true lightbulb moments in their educational journeys."

"Being a lesson horse is hard," reflected **Andrea (Potteiger '00) Boon**, assistant professor of recreation and equestrian studies. "There are so many people handling them, all with different ways of communicating with their horses. Otto is a special horse—he's worth a million bucks!"

This horse with a heart of gold is only one of the 34 horses in Houghton's herd, almost all of whom have been donated to the program. Since the original donation of seven Morgan horses from Dr. Demosthene Romanucci, Sr., in 1984, Houghton's herd has been built with the generosity of those looking for the next perfect home for their beloved equine companions.

Donated horses are the lifeblood of the Houghton University Equestrian Program. "We say our horses are the best teachers in the program," remarked program director **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**. "As instructors we are helping the students understand what the horses are trying to tell them, through their body language and the responses they have to the riders positioning and aids."

Not every horse makes a good lesson horse, and Otto is a gem among the Houghton herd. To make sure they're a good fit, prospective lesson horses like Otto go through a number of steps before joining the herd, including visits with Houghton instructors, videos of training or shows, and often a trial period on campus. Program Director Emerita **Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young** evaluated and accepted Otto into the Houghton herd when the Knights reached out looking for a new home for their horse.

On his acceptance papers, the Houghton equestrian staff remarked on Otto's fit for the program. "He has a quiet mind," the form reads, "which will make him a great

## Joining the Herd



Finding a new home for a beloved animal companion is a difficult and emotional task, and Dorothy Davidson knew she had to ask a lot of questions before settling her horse, Vig (aka Easy Wind), at Houghton University.

"The thing I needed to know most, and the thing I think most people would want to know, is what Houghton does with their horses when they're no longer a fit for the program. I didn't want to see

horses just tossed aside because they're too old or lame."

So, Dorothy discussed this very topic with equestrian program director, **Larissa (Strappello '08) Ries**.

"Larissa assured me that the first thing she always does is contact the previous owner to see if they wish to take the horse back. If they don't, the horse finds a home with either a current student or someone from a long list of trusted Houghton alumni willing to take retired horses."

The Houghton equestrian program isn't new to Dorothy. After moving to Houghton with her husband, **Mark '92**, as he finished his senior year, Dorothy found herself regularly at the farm, where she boarded her own horse. 25 years later, Dorothy brought two horses to a show at Houghton and met Larissa as she was assuming leadership of the program following **Jo-Anne (Olsen '69) Young's** retirement.

"I got to know Larissa and understand her vision for the program and her approach to teaching. I was curious to know how she was going to make riders, because I saw so many programs full of students who

wanted to be trainers but had almost no riding experience."

Dorothy also learned that Houghton horses get plenty of pasture time and a lot of grass. Dorothy was pleased with what she learned and felt confident Houghton would be a good place for Vig. In 2025, Dorothy rode Vig at a show in Houghton, which gave Larissa and **Hannah Williamson '19** the opportunity to see him in action.

"I knew Vig could teach the students a lot of things," Dorothy reflected. "As a mid-/upper-level horse, he had the potential to be very useful to Houghton's dressage students."

Larissa and Hannah agreed Vig would be a great fit for Houghton's herd, so he stayed behind after that show and became a part of the Houghton equestrian family.

"I stayed in touch with Larissa and Hannah in the early weeks to see how Vig was doing," shared Dorothy. "They were really responsive. They told me I could come visit him and ride any time, and I see him when I'm on campus for shows. I even saw him once in an ad for Houghton!"

From its inception, the Houghton Equestrian program has grown and thrived due to the overwhelming engagement and support of generous friends and alumni. They've invested their time (such as Cathy Daggett's contributing ten years of donated instruction time) and their resources (such as the anonymous lead donor who underwrote the construction of our Equestrian Event Center in 2017 or Glenn Piper who underwrote the construction of the first indoor arena in 1985), the dozens who have entrusted us with their beloved equine friends, and the thousands who have donated supplies, equipment, materials, and dollars for scholarships, facilities, equipment and so much more.

If you have a passion to invest in the future of Houghton University's Equestrian program, please visit [houghton.edu/giving/investment-opportunities/](https://houghton.edu/giving/investment-opportunities/) or contact the Office of Advancement at [advancement.edu](mailto:advancement@houghton.edu) or 585.567.9340







Going into my time at Houghton, I never planned to leave with a full-time career in horses. I was incredibly passionate about riding, and though the equestrian program was a big part of my motivation to attend Houghton in the first place, my primary intent was to further my training and knowledge before leaving for a career in the medical field. I double majored in Biology and International Development, with minors in Public Health and Equestrian Studies. Though that may sound like a confusing combination, I loved each area of study and finding ways to integrate them with one another. Despite my plans, by the time graduation approached, I found myself looking more seriously toward an equestrian career.

My time in the equestrian program had shaped me so significantly, I couldn't imagine not continuing to have training and riding as a major part of my life. Over four years, my horsemanship, riding level, management knowledge, and passion for the sport had grown exponentially. I graduated in love with teaching and training, and confident in my knowledge and skills to do so professionally.

Today, four years after graduating, I am the owner of my own training business in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the head coach of the University of Tennessee's intercollegiate dressage team. I have continued to grow in my own education as a rider and trainer, and I use the tools I learned at Houghton daily.

I am so incredibly grateful to the professors in the equestrian program who invested so deeply in me, even though I wasn't an equine major. I am blessed to still have relationships with them, and I know I can always reach out for career help, training advice, or to catch up on life. Having a network of trainers in the industry that I deeply respect gives me the confidence that there are people in my corner, especially when being a business owner can feel daunting.

My time in the Biology and Global Studies departments taught me so much as well, and I have never regretted pursuing multiple areas of study. I came away as a more well-rounded person, student of the world and follower of Christ. I have been blessed with opportunities to pursue passions in and out of the equestrian field. Through

experiences travelling and working abroad, studying the biological world around me, and pursuing my equestrian dreams, I left Houghton confident of which path God was leading me down and better able to love those around me better. My time at Houghton gave me perspective and pushed me to grow professionally and personally. As I navigate life today as a young business owner in a complex world, I am grateful for the strong foundation I built there and for those who invested in me to make it all possible.

**Sarah Maurer '22** is the owner of *Strategy Sport Horses LLC* in Knoxville, Tennessee, and the dressage coach for the University of Tennessee. She holds a dual degree in biology and international development with minors in public health and equestrian studies.



# A Note from the ALUMNI BOARD

Dear Houghton Alumni and Friends,

At our recent Alumni Board Spring Meeting, one theme rose above all else: a **shared calling to prayer**. We believe one of the most meaningful ways we can stay connected as a Houghton community is by seeking the Lord together.

On May 5, for the third year, Houghton alumni from across generations gathered for a Virtual Alumni Prayer Event focused on the graduating class of 2026. It was a meaningful time of lifting up these students as they step into what God has next, entrusting their futures to His guidance and care.

Looking ahead, the Alumni Board is preparing to launch a year-long Alumni Prayer Initiative beginning in August 2026. This initiative will include a Monthly Prayer Focus, and we invite you to follow along using the prayer schedule found on the right-hand side of this page or find a full monthly prayer devotional at [www.houghton.edu/alumni/prayer](http://www.houghton.edu/alumni/prayer) as we lift up specific areas of Houghton's life throughout the year.

We invite you to put 2026 Homecoming and Family Weekend on your calendar and plan to join us on campus October 2-3, 2026. We'll be celebrating reunions for the classes of 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006, 2001, 1996 and 1991. A full schedule of events will be on the web soon at [houghton.edu/homecoming](http://houghton.edu/homecoming).

We also invite you to consider partnering with Houghton as an Alumni Ambassador. Learn more at [Houghton.edu/alumni/alumni-ambassadors](http://Houghton.edu/alumni/alumni-ambassadors).

There is space for you here. There is a role for you here. And it begins with showing up together in prayer. Prayer is a part of who we are as a Christ-centered community. In a season of both opportunity and challenge, we believe God is at work in and through Houghton, and we are invited to be part of that work through our connections and through prayer.

We prayerfully invite you to join us.

In Christ,

## The Houghton University Alumni Board

Stetson Knight '99 – President  
Diane Alderman '89  
Jordan Markwood '05  
Judith Rapley '92  
Julie Tuttle '95  
David D. White '79

Kaylee (Jentsch '19) Brady  
William Allen '89  
Susan (Monteith '78) McMillen  
Janet (Dill '69) Stowell  
Mary Vandembosch '23  
Emily Fausnaught '24



# 12 - MONTH Prayer Themes

**JANUARY**  
Faculty and Staff

**FEBRUARY**  
Student Vocation  
and Calling

**MARCH**  
Leadership Wisdom  
and Discernment

**APRIL**  
Generosity and Stewardship

**MAY**  
Graduates

**JUNE**  
Enrollment, Retention,  
and Recruitment

**JULY**  
Rest and Renewal

**AUGUST**  
New Beginnings

**SEPTEMBER**  
Residence Life

**OCTOBER**  
Alumni Community

**NOVEMBER**  
Christian Collaboration  
and Partnerships

**DECEMBER**  
Relationships  
and Community





**CONGRATULATIONS,  
CLASS OF 2026**



« (from left to right): Salutatorian Emma Dainty, President Lewis and Valedictorian Noelle Lisenfelser



« Dr. Carrie Whitcher, Chief Quality Officer at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Insurance Services Division, delivered the keynote commencement address.



(from left to right) Honorary degree recipients Dr. David Cram and Dr. Robert Danner; commencement speaker Carrie Whitcher; President Lewis; Houghton Medal recipients Dr. Paul Young '76 and Rev. Johanna Rugh.

## CLASS OF '26 FAST FACTS

**175**  
Graduates

Many countries were represented, including: Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Ghana, India, Ireland, Malaysia, Puerto Rico, Rwanda and United Kingdom



### TOP MAJORS

Biology (including Exercise Science, Biomedical Sciences, Environmental Science, and Biology), Business Administration, Psychology, Education, and SRWM

**11**  
Associate

**146**  
Bachelor's

**18**  
Master's

**26** Double Majors

**79** Honors





## Gillette Hall Progress



Gillette Hall residents returned from 2026 Winter Break to move into fully-renovated rooms. The modernized living spaces, including fully renovated bathrooms and lounges, are part of an \$11.6M donor-funded project

which is slated for completion in August 2026, when the building will again be named East Hall.



## Student Leadership Awards Presented

The dedicated service of Houghton's student leadership was celebrated in April 2026 at the annual

Leadership Gala. Three graduating seniors were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the Houghton community as campus leaders.

*Robert Danner Excellence in Sharpening Award: Hannah Dunmire '26*

Named for long-time Vice President for Student Life, Dr. Robert "Bob" Danner, this award is presented to a student leader who exemplifies our call as believers to sharpen one another. From Painted Post, New York, Hannah is completing a dual degree in inclusive childhood education and communication.

*Mike Lastoria Excellence in Support Award: Anna Lloyd '26*

Named for Dr Mike Lastoria, who served as Director of the Counseling Center for over 30 years, this award is presented to a student leader who exemplifies our call as believers to support one another. A native of Newville, Pennsylvania, Anna is completing a dual degree in psychology and global studies.

*Kim Cockle Excellence in Celebrating Award: Thomas McGlynn '26*

Named for Houghton employee Kim Cockle, who fills many roles on campus in student life, this award honors a student leader who exemplifies our call as believers to be joyful, celebrating God's good world and the opportunity we have as believers to live in community. Thomas McGlynn, of Brockport, Ontario, is completing a dual degree in accounting and business administration.

## The "Old Friar" Reclaims His Watch at Willard J. Houghton Library

For decades, the "Old Friar" offered Houghton students a sense of quiet sanctuary. After a brief period away for much-needed care, the 1935 masterpiece by Aileen Ortlip Shea has officially returned home to Houghton University.

The painting—a Pulitzer Award-winning piece from the National Academy of Design—is one of the crown jewels of the University Art Collection. Due to the impact of time and exposure the work required expert attention and was recently restored by the specialists at Westlake Conservators. Conservators meticulously cleaned the canvas and repaired the painting's ornate housing. More than just a maintenance project, the restoration is a celebration of the University's enduring bond with the Ortlip family and their artistic legacy.



Now, the "Old Friar" has found a fitting new residence on the third floor of the Willard J. Houghton Library, nestled within the Religion and Philosophy department. Whether you are looking for a moment of quiet reflection or wish to admire one of the most significant award-winning pieces in our collection, the "Old Friar" is waiting for you. Next time you're on campus, stop by the third floor of the library to see an old friend back in his rightful place.

**Dr. Carrie Magin** collaborated with local music educators and ensembles in March 2026 to premier her band piece "Atlas: Titan of the Sky" with the West Seneca East Middle School Band on March 10, and her choral work "The Unfolding Path" with the Lewiston-Porter High School Choir on March 19. Additionally, Dr. Magin's five-movement chamber work, "O'Keeffe Suite," was premiered at West Texas A&M University in October 2025.

**Dr. Ransom Poythress**, Associate Professor of Biology was awarded Houghton University's Excellence in Teaching Award for the 2025-2026 academic year. Dr. Poythress was described by one student as a professor who "connects what is being taught to real-life, present-day implications and happenings, and includes discussions and reflection questions throughout lectures and labs to encourage and challenge [students] to apply concepts and think critically and deeply."

**Dr. Alison Young Reusser '07** presented collaborative work she, **Dr. Paul Young '76**, and **Rev. Dr. J. Michael Jordan '99** completed with two Olivet colleagues at the meeting of the Association for Psychological Science's Global Summit in October. The presentation title was "The Ties That No Longer Bind: Evangelical Pastors & Christian Faculty Thoughts on AI's Impact on Trust, Relationships and Belief." The work was funded by a \$5,000 Council for Christian Colleges and University (CCCU) planning grant. The team was encouraged to complete a second research project using remaining grant funds, and are currently collecting data for a longitudinal study on AI attitudes/usage and trust/loneliness in higher ed faculty.



Magin



Poythress



Young  
Reusser



Young



Jordan

# HIGHLANDER ATHLETICS NEWS



## Serving with Purpose: Josh Marr '28 Selected for National Red Cross Leadership Program

At Houghton University, the pursuit of excellence is deeply connected to a calling to serve others. For junior men's soccer student-athlete **Josh Marr '28**, that calling is taking on a new meaning on the national stage.

Marr has been selected as one of 16 students nationwide to participate in the 2026 Collegiate Leadership Program through the American Red Cross—a highly competitive initiative developed in partnership with the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA) and the

National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics.

He is one of three student-athletes chosen from NCCAA member institutions this year, representing Houghton among a select group of student leaders from across the country. Marr's selection is a testament not only to his personal character and leadership, but also to the culture being cultivated within Houghton Athletics.

"I am so grateful to Houghton University for the opportunity to participate in the Red Cross Leadership program," said Marr. "As a Business Administration student who is hoping to go to nursing school after my time at Houghton, this was something I couldn't pass up. After a fairly intensive application and interview process, I am beyond excited to be an ambassador for Houghton and for the American Red Cross."

Beginning in the fall of 2026, Marr will step into a visible leadership role on campus as a Red Cross ambassador—organizing blood drives, recruiting donors, establishing a Red Cross Club at Houghton, and helping raise awareness of critical humanitarian needs.



## 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!







2026 Hall of Honor Class

Houghton University Athletics proudly inducted **Kirsten (Nelson '05) Maples**, **Joe Mason '07**, and **Danielle (Brenon '12) Groff**. into the Houghton Athletics Hall of Honor as the Class of 2026 during a special luncheon held on Saturday, May 2. ❶

Joe Mason '07 ❷

Known for his humility and steady leadership, Joe Mason represented Houghton with integrity and respect as a thrower for Houghton’s track and field team. He broke multiple school records in his first meets as a Highlander and went on to set program standards in the outdoor discus, hammer, and shot put, as well as the indoor shot put and weight throw—records that still stand today.

Kirsten (Nelson '05) Maples ❸

Kirsten Maples was a dynamic and versatile athlete whose contributions to Houghton Athletics spanned both volleyball

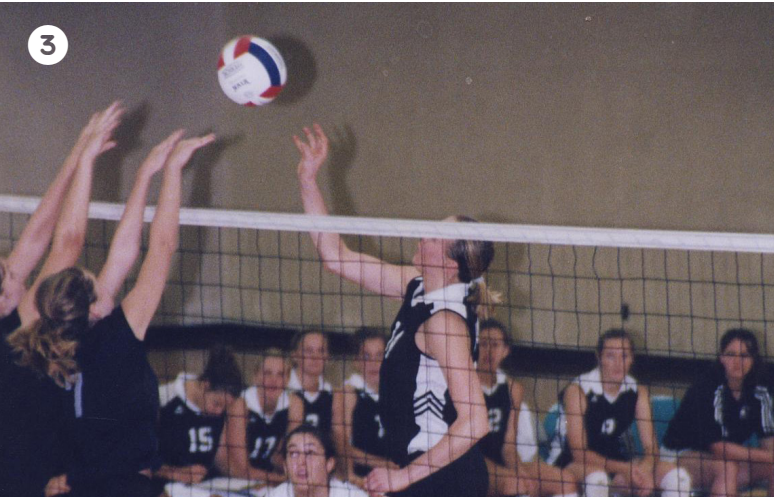
and basketball. As one of the most accomplished volleyball players in program history, she remains prominently featured in the Houghton record book across multiple statistical categories.

Danielle (Brenon '12) Groff ❹

One of the most decorated distance runners in Houghton history, Danielle Groff’s career was defined by determination, growth, and championship-level success.

Groff developed into a multiple All-American and national champion during her time at Houghton, highlighted by her victory at the National Marathon Championship her senior year. She also claimed national titles in the 5K and 10K at the National Christian College Championships and delivered standout performances in cross country. Her achievements remain etched in the program’s record books.

Full citations for inductees can be found at [athletics.houghton.edu/honors/hall-of-honor](https://athletics.houghton.edu/honors/hall-of-honor)



Nehemiah Wall

Behind home plate at the Houghton University baseball field now stands a new landmark known as the “Nehemiah Wall” — a 140-foot stone backstop built by Houghton baseball players, coaches, alumni and supporters during the fall semester.

The project replaced an aging wooden backstop while visually connecting the field to the creekstone architecture that defines much of Houghton’s campus. Players gathered creekstone by hand, learned masonry techniques through training connected to Alfred State College and completed the labor themselves over the course of several months.



For Head Coach Brian Reitnour, the vision extended beyond improving the facility.

“From the initial construction of the field I had said that I wanted something visual to connect our field with the rest of campus,” Reitnour said. “The most noticeable distinctive of Houghton’s campus is the creek stone that adorns most of our buildings.”

Assistant coach Tom Kenney connected the project to the biblical story of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, giving the structure both its name and spiritual purpose. Engraved stones throughout the wall feature Bible verses that walk visitors through the Christian story of salvation.

The project was made possible through the support of alumni, families, local businesses and community partners who donated funding, materials and expertise.

“Quite honestly, I think that the pieces that came together were nothing short of miraculous,” Reitnour said.

Beyond construction skills, the project gave players a deeper appreciation for the history and mission of the university. Reitnour believes the wall will remain a lasting symbol of the program’s purpose: “Our goal is to win baseball games. Our purpose is to develop men who are built for God and for others.”

Houghton Soccer Alumni Day

Houghton University welcomed back former players, coaches, and supporters on April 18 for a special Soccer Alumni Day, bringing together generations from both the men’s and women’s programs.

The event provided alumni the opportunity to reconnect with former teammates and coaches while also engaging with current student-athletes and coaching staffs. Participants took part in on-field activities throughout the day, with a mix of alumni and current players competing in informal matches.

A central highlight of the event was the recognition of two of the most influential figures in program history: Doug Burke and David Lewis. Burke, who led the men’s program for 27 years, and Lewis, who guided the women’s program for 28 years, were both honored for their lasting impact on Houghton soccer and the generations of student-athletes they mentored.

New signage for Burke Field, which pays tribute to Doug and Esther Burke’s enduring legacy and profound influence on Highlander Athletics, was unveiled. It was also announced that the “Coach David Lewis Sports Ministry Endowment” was created by his former players to support sports ministry programming at Houghton.

The event served as an opportunity to celebrate the tradition of Houghton soccer while strengthening connections between past and present members of the program.



Pictured (from left to right)  
Back Row: **Bob Smalley '78**, **Paula Maxwell '85**, **Dwight Hornibrook**, **Peter Fuller '82**, **Doug Burke**, **Matt Webb**  
Front Row: **Esther (Webb '16) Pellegrino**, **Nikki (Elsaesser) Murren**, **Scott Reitnour '96**, **David Lewis**



# ALUMNI News&Notes

## 1951

**Lee** and **Alice (Fehlman '53) Lederhouse ❶** celebrated 75 years of marriage on December 26, 2025. The Lederhouses currently reside at Covenant Living at Windsor Park in Carol Stream, Florida.

## 1964

**Carol (Schmidt) Jordan** and her husband Dean completed the Nafaanra Bible in Ghana, West Africa in 2016. Since that time, they remain involved in Ghana with the Ligbi Translation Project. They are active in their local church and community, especially as they help distribute tracts from The Way of the Master.

## 1969

**Rev. Bill Foster**, founder and former CEO of Habitat for Missions (HFM), has retired after 20 years of service. HFM generates financial support for Christian missions by flipping houses with volunteer labor. To date, HFM has generated over \$2 million for God's work around the world. Bill and his wife **Daphne (Wilday '70) Foster** founded HFM in 2005 while serving as Missionaries in Residence at Indiana Wesleyan University. Previously, they were missionaries in Australia for 31 years. Bill's former classmates **Randall Johnson '69** and **Robert Harris '69** have served as Board Chairman and Board Secretary respectively for more than 15 years.

**Jay Johnson ❷** was a 2025 recipient of Marquis Who's Who in America for Expertise in Antiques as a leading expert in Black memorabilia and artifacts. His curated collection "Looking Blackward" consists of over 3,100 historical items, selections of which have been exhibited for Maryland Congressman Steny Hoyer's Black History Month celebrations.

## 1972

**Rev. Jeff Crawford** and his wife **Beverly (Poe '78) ❸** celebrated their Golden Anniversary on December 27, 2025. In May 2026, Jeff celebrated his 50th reunion from Asbury Theological seminary, where he completed his graduate studies in theology.

## 1973

**Dr. Blaine Benedict ❹** retired from Trinity College (Florida), where he had been serving as Vice President for Academics and Dean of the College. Previously, Dr. Benedict served as a professor at Houghton University

(1989-2011) and as an American diplomat (1979-1989). He is a three-time Fulbright Scholar (1993, 1997, 2011).

**Rev. Dr. Gary Newton ❺** now serves as Senior Pastor for Oak Chapel Church in Marion, Indiana. In his role, he preaches, leads Bible studies, has a visitation ministry and is training a younger pastor for future leadership in the church. Rev. Dr. Newton is also an adjunct professor of Christian Ministries Program and Foundation for first-year students at Taylor University (Upland, Indiana).

## 1974

**Carolyn Leach** has retired, ending a career in promotional advertising sales that spanned more than 36 years. She remains an avid pickleball player with many tournament wins.

## 1975

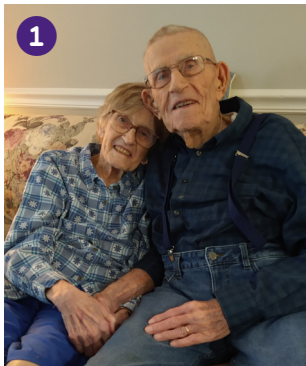
**Rev. S. Allan Summers** has retired from his position at The Bridge Church (Ottawa, Ontario).

## 1976

**Doug Gent** and his wife **Vivian (Halberg '74) Gent** celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in July 2026. They live in Western Michigan near their son **Andrew '08** and his family. Doug, a retired lawyer, serves on the boards of a number of Christian ministries, as a mentor to prison inmates and young men in his church, a conciliator, a Bible study leader and a Relational Peacemaking instructor. Vivian, a retired medical technologist, also leads Bible studies and volunteers with Crossroads Prison Ministries

**Donna\*** and **Brian** are the founders of Kingdom Rain, a missions organization that has operated since 2002 to equips leaders to build disciple-making movements in the least reached regions of the world. Their training curriculum, "Pathway to Multiplication," has been translated into 17 languages and is being used by national leaders to establish disciple-making churches in India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. The heart of Kingdom Rain is to bring a simple and biblical process for the development of disciple-making movements. Their purpose is to equip leaders by training, coaching and mentoring them, to join God in the building of his kingdom.

*\*last names omitted for security reasons.*



# Thank You!

## ONE DAY GIVING CHALLENGE 2026

Thanks to your generous support, we achieved this year's One Day Giving Challenge! Together, we raised **\$2,416,964** for the Scholar-Servant Fund, student scholarships and other priority projects on campus from **2,229** donors. This is truly an incredible outpouring of support that will significantly impact the lives of Houghton students.

### DECADE CHALLENGE

The following classes are winners of this year's Decade Challenge, each class winning a \$1,000 scholarship named in their honor to be awarded in the 2026-2027 academic year to support a Houghton student.

1950s | **1958**  
1960s | **1969**  
1970s | **1977**  
1980s | **1980**  
1990s | **1993**  
2000s | **2005**  
2010s | **2017**  
2020s | **2025**

### CLASS CHALLENGE

We are excited to celebrate the winner of the **Class Challenge**: The **Class of 1977**. This will add \$30,000 to the existing **Nick Bohall Scholarship!**

### MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE

The **Class of 1969** will expand their existing class scholarship and the **Class of 2025 Scholarship** will be created!





1978

**Paul Allan Clark** , PhD, retired after 12 years as Education Consultant with Mesa Global, working to support excellence in theological education institutions in the majority world. Paul’s retirement concludes 46 years of full-time active ministry as pastor, missionary, theological educator and education consultant in theological education. Paul and his wife **Karen (Eckstrom ’80)**  live in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they will continue to invest time in their children and 13 grandchildren, in mentoring the next generation, and guiding others to learn to love as Jesus loves.

**Anita (Hill) Placido’s** book “Whispers from God” (see Houghton Magazine Winter 2026, pg. 33) was a 2025 Literary Global Book Award finalist in the Nonfiction Inspirational category. Published by Hawes & Jenkins Publishing, Inc. in August 2025, the book was noted for its exceptional craft, originality and literary impact.

**Dwight Roeters** retired in December 2025 after a 34-year career with Eastman Kodak in manufacturing and procurement and 13 years with Johnson and Johnson Medical Technologist and Innovative Medicine supply chains. He and wife **Kathy (McOrmond ’79)** look forward to spending more time with their children and grandchildren, while also making time for playing golf and traveling.

1983

**Rev. Dr. Brian Armen** retired in May 2025 after 38 years of service as an ordained minister in the Lutheran Church. In his retirement, he is working as a chaplain at Jacaranda Trace (Venice, Florida), a continuing care retirement community, and enjoying more time with his wife **Lori (LaQuay ’83)**, children **Jonathan ’10** and **Stephen ’12**, and his future-Highlander grandchildren.

1985

**Laura (Maranz) Dean** , author of “Georgia Jipp: Blizzard Pilot” (see Houghton Magazine Winter 2025, pg. 28), has earned national recognition for her book due to its storytelling and historical significance. Chronicling the heroic efforts of the South Dakota pilot’s work with the American Red Cross, the book has received several prestigious honors, including the 2025 Spur Award, the Gold Will Rogers Medallion Award, the 2025 WILLA Literary Award and the Bronze Medal for the 2024 Moonbeam Children’s Book Award.

1988

**Diane (Meserve) Dunn**, Adjutant General of the Maine National Guard, was promoted to Major General. She serves on Houghton’s Athletics Advisory Board and was named Houghton University’s Alumna of the Year in 2021.

**Dr. Myron Glick** was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2026 Excellence in Health Care Awards in Buffalo, New York, on June 17, 2026. Dr. Glick is the founder of Jericho Road Community Health Center, created in 2013 when he merged his private medical practice with his mission-based charity, then known as Jericho Road Ministries. After stepping down as CEO in 2025, he remains a practicing physician with the organization, which now has five independent practice sites in Buffalo, a practice at the Buffalo City Mission and clinics abroad in Sierra Leone, Congo and Nepal.

1989

**John “Hobie” Beedon** has been retired since December of 2022 after a career in law enforcement. He remains active at his church and at the gym.

1990

**Kristine (Paroline) Castro** has launched the Greater Atlanta Christian Chamber Coalition (GAC3). Rooted in scripture, this Christian Chamber of Commerce functions through a Kingdom Economics perspective committed to building a city economy where everyone in the city prospers. The organization serves all 29 counties of the Atlanta metro area.

1993

**Erik Williams**  is now an executive coach with Novus Global. In his role, he partners with church and faith leaders, business owners and college students helping individuals and teams break through limiting patterns, unlock clarity, elevate performance and drive meaningful results in their organizations.

1994

**Linda Carol (Barr) Benedict**  serves as the Director of Business Development and Master Grant Writer for CareerSource SunCoast Center in Bradenton, Florida. Her work consists of applying for grants, supervising grant coordinators and managing grant programs totaling more than \$4,000,000.

1996

In April 2026, **Scott See**  completed his Certificate in Spiritual Direction through CenterQuest Asia. He creates safe sacred spaces and shares contemplative practices, with a focus on marginalized communities. In March, he joined the board of the River NYC church.

2000

**Rachel (Johnson) Graham**  and fellow Shea House roommates **Heather (Conklin)**



**Huth, Mindy (Lewis) Hanawalt**, and **Kristine (Hess) Larison** met for a short weekend reunion in March 2026 at Camp Hebron in Pennsylvania.

2001

**Glenn McCarty’s** middle-grade fantasy novel “The Song of the Stone Tiger” (see Bookshelf pp 29), published by Bandersnatch Books, has been named a finalist for the Christianity Today 2025 Book of the Year and for the Selah Awards (audiobook category).

2002

**Seth Grebbien** now serves as operations assistant for New Hope Ministries, a Christian social service agency. While taking on this new role, he continues to serve as director of youth and family ministries at St. David’s EC Church in Dover, Pennsylvania

**Bridget (Bossart) van Otterloo**  had the honor of being chosen as one of three artists for the “Three Americans” exhibit at the Arnot Art Museum in Elmira, New York. The exhibit was on view February 15 through May 15, 2026. She displayed 20 original watercolor and oil paintings.

**Dr. Joshua Ziefle**  was appointed Provost and Chief Academic Officer at Houghton University in April 2026. Dr. Ziefle holds a PhD in Church History and an MDiv from Princeton Theological Seminary and joins Houghton from Northwest University in Kirkland, Washington, where he has served as Dean of the College of Ministry, Dean of the Center for Online and Extended Education, and Director of the Center for Calling and Theological Formation. He begins his tenure

at Houghton in July 2026.

2003

In February 2026, **Dr. Richard Liantonio**  was ordained to the Transitional Diaconate in The Episcopal Church. Effective July 1, 2026, he will undertake the appointment of assistant professor of Hebrew Bible at Saint Paul School of Theology (Leawood, Kansas). His ordination to the priesthood is scheduled for August 29, 2026.

2005

**Jordan Markwood**  completed his EdS (education specialist) in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Virginia in May 2025. An employee of the Loudon County Public Schools, in December 2025 he was promoted from choral director at Rock Ridge High School to Performing Arts Specialist for the entire school district. In his work, he supports all music teachers and programs K-12 in a district of approximately 81,000 students. Jordan is a member of the Houghton University Alumni Board and received Houghton’s Alumni Distinguished Achievement Award in 2022.

**Cacie Miller (MM)**  completed her doctorate of musical arts in piano with cognate studies in performance practice at the University of Illinois in December 2023. Her doctoral thesis and project recital ‘Composing the Climate’ involved commissioning, premiering and writing about two new chamber pieces that engaged with climate change. Dr. Miller’s work was funded in part with a grant from the Illinois Art Council.

2011

**Dr. Kevin Dibble (MM ’13)**  has been promoted to Assistant Professor of Music at Houghton University. In January 2026, he was selected to serve on the national board of the National Collegiate Choral Organization.

2013

**Dr. Anthony Cappello** was hired as an assistant professor of mathematics at Niagara University in Fall 2025.

**Dr. Young Ju Lee**  has worked as an associate program director of Hackensack Meridian Health—Mountainside Medical Center’s Internal Medicine residence program since May 2024, focusing on ambulatory curriculum. She is the medical director of the continuity clinic run by their residents and serves the under-insured patients in her community. Dr. Lee is also an assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the Hackensack Meridian School of Medicine, teaching medical students in their clinical years.

2015

**M. Jerome Bell (MM ’18)**  is now an assistant professor of music theory at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has redesigned a music theory curriculum, and teaches both undergraduate and graduate students. Jerome intends to complete his PhD at the Eastman School of Music in 2026.

**Dr. Brian Stevens (MM)** was a primary contributory author on the text “Chorale Repertoire by Women Composers,” published by





GIA Publications. The work is a significant piece of scholarship, highlighting the lives and music of more than 200 women choral composers and nearly 2,000 unique choral works. Dr. Stevens, the Visiting Professor and Director of Choral and Vocal Music at St. Bonaventure University, collaborated with composers and conductors from around the world to contribute to this project.

2016

**Dr. Fabio Menchetti (MM)**  has been promoted to Associate Professor of Piano effective August 2026 at Washington State University (Pullman, Washington), where he began his career as assistant professor in 2020.

**Erin (Salati) Miner**  completed her doctorate in physical therapy from SUNY Upstate Medical University. She worked at upstate Hospital Downtown in Syracuse, New York, before taking travel contracts in medical ICU (MICU). She has a passion for neurology and intensive care units. She was married in 2021 and lives with her family in Mexico, New York.

2017

**Marshall Brady**  now works with eXp Realty in Buffalo, New York, after working in youth ministry and automotive sales. He works with clients to buy, sell and invest while actively building a real estate investment portfolio centered on long-term value and growth.

**Jordan Scott** accepted a new role with Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center as the lead Clinical Pharmacist Specialist for Specialty Pharmacy, focusing on Hematology.

2018

**Laurie (Rice) Call** was inducted in to the Notre Dame High School (Batavia, New York) Athletics Hall of Fame. At Houghton, Laurie was a three-season member of the women’s basketball team and an NCCAA All-American Scholar Athlete. Laurie is the Operations Manager for Rex Wallace Consulting, LLC and a member of the Houghton University Athletics Advisory Board.

Rochester native **Alyssa Rogan** is returning to her hometown after five years in Atlanta, Georgia. She will be attending Monroe Community College to pursue dental hygiene.

**Angelica Tennant**  completed her Master of Science in curriculum and instruction from Buffalo State University in May 2025.

2019

**Abigail Fulmer** accepted the role of Programs & Inventory Coordinator for the United States Eventing Association (USEA) in Middleburg, Virginia, in October 2024.

2020

**Josiah Kratz** graduated with a PhD in computational biology this December 2025, defending a dissertation entitled "Theories of Learning and Adaptation in Bacterial Cells." He began a postdoctoral fellowship at Georgia Institute of Technology in January 2026.

**Samuel Martz**  has taken the position of Probation Officer with Ventura County Probation Agency in Ventura, California. He has the privilege of working with youth in a custodial setting, maintaining a safe and structured environment

while encouraging positive growth.

2023

**Evan Tsai**  was promoted to Financial Analyst and Senior Project Manager at Alfred University. Previously, held the position of Finance Project Manager.

2024

**Rebekah Crane** completed her Accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (ABSN) at the University of Rochester School of Nursing in 2025. She is now a registered nurse at Highland Hospital in Rochester, New York.

**Kate Jeanes**  began a master’s degree in education at Geneva College, which she anticipates completing in May 2028. While at Geneva she is working as a Resident Director for McKee Hall. Following graduation in 2024, she worked for the Creation Care Study Program in Kaik uira, New Zealand, as a Student Life Coordinator, making for a natural transition into residence life.

**Alisabeth (Crandall) Kendall** is a fourth-grade teacher in at Wake County Public Schools in Cary, North Carolina. In June 2026, she completed her Masters in Literacy from the American College of Education

**Kaitlin Kleinau**  is currently pursuing a Master of Music in composition and music theory pedagogy at Southern Methodist University, which she anticipates completing in 2027. Following graduation from Houghton, she worked for European American Music Alliance in Paris, France, and then took a teaching job at DEA Music and Art in Staten Island. She recently conducted a children’s choir at Radio City Music Hall.

**Johanna Lamont** completed her Master of Arts in public history—archives management from Liberty University in May of 2026. She was inducted as a member of the Omega Nu Lambda National Honor Society.

2025

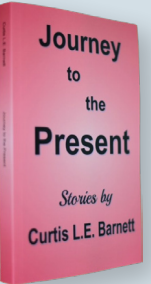
**Natalie Cunningham** recently accepted a position in education program development with the Saunders Finger Lakes Museum. Her role consists of planning and overseeing museum programs and developing educational content for visitors.

**Renae Totstline** has taken a position as a kindergarten teacher at Perry Central School in Perry, New York.

**Bethany Tubman** began AmeriCorps service in August 2025 as a student success coach and mentor with City Year in Washington, DC.

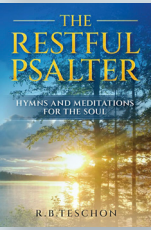


# Alumni BOOK SHELF



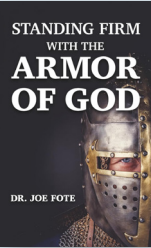
Curtis Barnett '71

Journey to the Present  
February 6, 2025, *Independently Published*



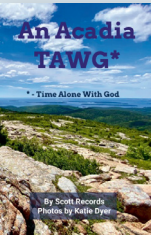
Russel Teschon '77

The Restful Psalter:  
Hymns and Meditations for the Soul  
November 26, 2025, *Independently Published*



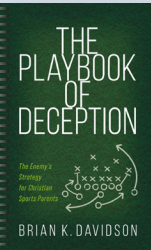
Dr. Joe Fote '78

Standing Firm with the Armor of God  
November 7, 2025, *Independently Published*



Scott Records '78

An Acadia TAWG (Time Alone With God)  
2024, *Lulu.com Bookstore*



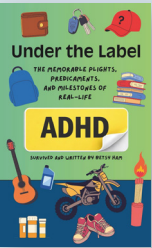
Brian Davidson '82

The Playbook of Deception: The Enemy’s  
Strategy for Christian Sports Parents  
November 14, 2025, *Independently Published*



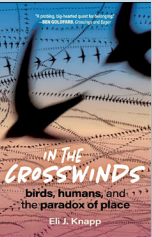
Gwenn (Sheet '90) Lochstet

Veil of Wisdom, Book Three of the Far  
Stone Cycle May 12, 2026,  
*SoliD Glory Writs LLC*  
[Published under the pen name  
*Willametta Sue*]



Betsy Ham '94

Under the Label: The Memorable  
Plights, Predicaments, and Milestones  
of Real-Life ADHD | November 30, 2025,  
*Independently Published*



Dr. Eli Knapp '01

In the Crosswinds:  
Birds, Humans and the Paradox of Place  
July 15, 2025, *Torrey House Press*



Glenn McCarty '01

The Song of the Stone Tiger | September  
23, 2025, *Bandersnatch Books, LLC*



Elise (Matthews '08) Piotrowicz

Bird in Space | November 24, 2025,  
*Vesper Sparrow Press, LLC*



Christian Welker '24

F.A.I. Files: Wolves | March 23, 2026,  
*Will Fall Writings* [Published under the pen  
name *William J. Fall*]



# DOWN *the* AISLE

- 1

**Rachael Bailey '17** wed Cole Austin on October 23, 2021, in Dunbarton, New Hampshire. They were joined by in their celebration by **Anna (Philbrick '17) Shalda, Kayla (Miller '17) Ganger, Teira Hawkins '17** and **Hannah Renee (Beker '15) Barbre**. The ceremony was presided over by Coach **Robert Smalley '78** and his wife **Laurie (Middleton '84) Smalley**.


- 2

**Hannah Wilber '23** married Jose Guzman on May 11, 2024, in Alder, Montana.

**Connor Swan '19** tied the knot with Lexus Kirby on November 2, 2024 in Temiskaming Shores, Ontario, Canada. They were joined in their celebrations by fellow alumni **Ben Reber '19, Genevieve Hartman '19, Jonathan '20** and **Regina (Emmart '19) Durbin**.


- 3

**Alisabeth Crandall '24** wed **Hunter Kendall '23** at Seneca Lake in Romulus, New York, on June 22, 2025. They were joined in their celebrations by many Houghton alumni, including **Hannah (Chorey '23) George, Kareena Ulfig '27, Natalie Cunningham '25, Carlee Miller '24, Jason Kauffeldt '23, Lukas Cornell '26, Lydia Brown '19, Kayla (Loomis '23) Boomhower, Ryan '23** and **Kayli (Clapper '23) Carlsen, Aubree Niles '24, Andrew '26** and **Rachel (Scharf '25) Ryan, Liam McNeill '22, Zach Parr '22, Austin '23** and **Mikayla (Bond '23) Schaumleffel, and Bekah (Scharf '21) Yoder**.


- 4

**Grace Vuolo '24** tied the knot with **Micah Barnts '25** on September 1, 2025, in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. Houghton alumni **Matthew Arndt '25, Tony Agueci '25, Thomas Auld '24, Empress Weber '25, Benjamin Van Tine '25** and **Kara (Pocock '06) Campbell** joined the couple in their celebration.

**Dr. Robert Leibold '77** wed Rev. Penny Gadzini on September 6, 2025, at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in Northport, New York. They were joined in their celebrations by Houghton alumni **Donna (Dumas '77) and Steve Corbeill '77; Gloria (Mazur '77) and Paul Rowley '77; Ellen (Harpel '77) and Doug McCann '77; and Kristina Hansen '83**.


- 5

**Erin Lawrence '20** married Sean Fitzpatrick on September 27, 2025, in Perkasio, Pennsylvania. They were joined in their celebrations by bridesmaids **Holly Fleth '20** and **Jamie (DelGiorno '20) Lehman; Emily (Allen '20) Mendoza;** and Professor Ryann Cooley and his wife Margarita.


- 6

**Jessica Guillory '16** married Walter Muench on December 14, 2025, in Columbia, Maryland. The bride's wedding party included **Rebekah Wallace '16, Brett (Loretz '16) Roderick,** and **Abigail (Erlanson '15) Gordon**.





## Future Highlanders

- Rowan Robert | 6.10.25

A

Kyla (Quinn '07) and Mitchell Perry
- Mary Ruth | 7.12.25

B

Andrea (Schmidt '05) and Travis Gassman
- Benjamin Samuel | 8.2.25

Hannah (Pender '20) and Max De George
- Melody Paige | 11.1.25

C

Samantha (Emmart '17) and Adam Current
- Samson Peter | 3.20.24

D

Erin (Salati '16) and Logan Miner
- Charles Donald | 11.14.25

E

Erin (Salati '16) and Logan Miner
- Annelise Laura | 11.30.25

F

Aimee (Bush '12) and Bryan Benitez
- Michael James Jonathan | 12.3.25

Lexus and Connor Swan '19
- Josiah Richard | 12.31.25

G

Kaylee (Jentsch '19) and Marshall Brady '17
- Daniel Keith | 1.1.26

H

Mindie (Pomeroy '10) and Eric Elwell '19
- Mariah Beth | 2.26.26

I

Allyson (Waters '22) and Levi Miller
- Jay Charles | 3.9.25

J

Rachael (Bailey '17) and Cole Austin
- Judah Joseph | 3.26.26

K

Elisabeth (Tate '21) and Micah Christensen '22





# In MEMORIAM

1942

**Janice (Crowley) Weitz**, of Mayville, New York, passed away October 3, 2025 at the age of 104. Janice was a lifelong educator, retiring from Arcade Central School. In retirement, she found a second career with the Internal Revenue Service. Janice is survived by a niece and a cousin.

1946

**Jean (Christenson) Inman** of Willcox, Arizona, passed away on December 29, 2025, a few months short of her 101st birthday. Jean began her professional life as a teacher, including in a missionary school in Panama. She spent much of her life as an educator, teaching Spanish and working with English language learners. A co-founder of Faith Fellowship, she and her husband also spent time as cattle ranchers in Costa Rica. Jean leaves behind three children, five grandchildren and two-great-grandchildren.

1948

**June (Meyers) Caley** of Haverhill, Massachusetts, peacefully passed into the arms of her Lord and Savior on December 28, 2025 at the age of 99. An award-winning artist, she was an active member of various art associations. June was also a dedicated secondary school science teacher. She is survived by five children, ten grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

1949

**Dr. Frank Tooze** passed away on February 25, 2026, at the age of 100 in Evergreen, Colorado. A veteran of the US Navy, he served during World War II as a navigator in the Pacific Theatre. Dr. Tooze began his medical career as a general practitioner before training in reconstructive and plastic surgery and becoming a professor at University of Rochester, chief of plastic surgery in Erie, Pennsylvania, and chief at St. Vincent’s Hospital. He is survived by three of his children, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

1950

**Dorothy (Pease) Bloom**, 97, of Kailua, Hawaii, passed away on January 4, 2026. Throughout her career, she worked as a secretary. She was an active leader in her church, teaching Sunday school, chairing the trustee committee and participating in Bible study. She is survived by two children, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

1951

**Lois (Benning) Dungan**, 96, entered into the presence of her Lord and Savior on February 1, 2026, in Brunswick, Georgia. With her late husband, **Bruce ’51**, she spent 17 years serving at the Caribbean Christian Center for the Deaf in Jamaica, West Indies before returning to the United States to establish Christian Deaf Ministries. Lois is survived by her two children, including **Deborah (Dungan ’72) Hoffman**; five grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by two siblings and many nieces and nephews, including **Timothy Benning ’81**.

**Charmaine (Lemmon) Lennox**, of Largo, Florida, passed away on November 1, 2025, at the age of 96. She was an active mentor to many, serving as a Stephen Minister, a Sunday School teacher, a Bible study leader and in other leadership roles. Charmaine leaves behind her five children including **Deborah (Lennox ’76) Arrendale**, **David ’78**, and **Stephen ’79**; nine grandchildren, including **Megan (McMonagle ’04) Dudley**; and 14 great-grandchildren

1952

**Rev. John Chambers**, of Escondido, California, went home to be with the Lord on March 21, 2025, with his family gathered around him. Rev. Chambers began his career as a bush pilot in Alaska, before spending 23 years as a minister at Grace Presbyterian Church. He was also an Air Force Reserve Chaplain. He is survived by his wife **Barbara (Cross ’60)**, three daughters, 12 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

**Clayton Gravlin**, 96, of Hudson, New York, passed away peacefully on March 23, 2026. A United States Army veteran, Clayton dedicated his civilian career to education, teaching high school science and physics for many years. A devoted member of his church, he leaves behind his wife, one daughter, three grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

**Patricia (Mitchell) Paine**, 96, of Winsted, Connecticut, passed away on May 17, 2025. She began her career as an art teacher, and later taught primary school, ending her 35-year career as a first-grade teacher. She is survived by two daughters, a granddaughter and three siblings.

**Virginia (Elmer) Powell**, of Chugiak, Alaska, passed away peacefully on September 9, 2025. Alongside her late husband, **Leo ’52**, Virginia spent the early years of her teaching career serving students in rural communities in Alaska. She was a dedicated volunteer in her church and community and worked extensively with English language learners. She is mourned by her six children, 14 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

1953

**Dr. James Welker Jr.**, 94, of New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, passed quietly at home with his family at his side on August 3, 2025. He practiced dentistry with the United States Air Force and subsequently in New Castle, Pennsylvania, for 40 years. He is survived by his wife, four sons including **Keith ’82**; 11 grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

1954

**Dr. George Bagley**, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, journeyed home with his Lord and Savior on October 27, 2025. A holder of 8 U.S. patents, he was a research chemist for Armstrong World Industries for nearly 40 years. He leaves behind his loving wife, **Dian (Frew ’54)**; his four children, including son **Daniel ’80**; six grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-granddaughter.

**John Brown**, 94, of Greece, New York, died at his home on February 7, 2026. John dedicated over 30 years to students as a school psychologist in Tonawanda, New York. He was a faithful member of his church and a long-time volunteer with Habitat for Humanity. He is mourned by five children, including **Barbara (Brown ’83) Reem** and **Laura (Brown ’78) Hernandez**; 15 grandchildren, including **Brent Hernandez ’23**; and 10 great-grandchildren.

**Malcolm Starks** of Raymondville, New York, passed away on December 30, 2025 at the age of 95. After beginning his career as a social worker, he later became a rehabilitation counselor. He was an active civil servant, community volunteer and member of the Wesleyan Church. He served under President Stephen Paine as a member of Houghton College’s Local Board of Trustees and was also a local chapter president for the Houghton College Alumni Association. He is survived by his four children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1956

**Gloria (Agoston) Bruno**, aged 91, passed away peacefully on December 20, 2025. A nurse by trade, she was also a professor of nursing, a devoted member of her church and an active community volunteer. She leaves behind two children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Elsa (Nelson) Manelick**, 91, of Youngsville, Pennsylvania, passed away peacefully on February 15, 2026 surrounded by the love of those who cherished her. She worked in her local school district and the local magistrate’s office, and was an active member of her church. She is survived by her two children, six grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

1957

**Phyllis (Neal) Cooper**, 90, of Orchard Park, New York, passed away peacefully on October 13, 2025. She dedicated her career to service in the United Methodist church. She leaves behind her husband, two children, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

**Jeanne (Smith) McCaw** died October 28, 2025, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, at the age of 90. A pastor’s wife and devoted mother, she also worked at Consumers Energy for many years. She is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

**Esther (Lawrence ’57) Swimley**, 89, passed away on June 5, 2025, in Canadaigua, New York. She had a career in teaching and substitute teaching in several school districts and worked for many years administering ASVAB tests. She served alongside her husband for over four decades at Crosswinds Wesleyan Church. She was survived by her husband, Gary, who followed her to heaven in January 2026. She is also survived by three children, including **Susan (Swimley ’83) Schrader**; nine grandchildren including **Kara Schrader ’11**; and 21 great-grandchildren.

1958

**Carolyn (Mountain) Gibson** of Summit, New Jersey, passed away on May 6, 2025 at the age of 88. Among her surviving relatives are her husband, **Henry Gibson Jr. ’60**, and her son, **Henry Gibson III ’81**.

**R. Bruce Hess** of Houghton, New York, passed away on January 21, 2026, at the age of 89. A third-generation missionary, Bruce served alongside his wife with One Mission Society (OMS), serving over 20 years in Colombia, followed by two years in Ecuador. He continued his service with OMS both on Houghton’s campus and in the Northeast US, dedicating over 20 years to working with aspiring missionaries at Houghton. Bruce is survived by his three children, **Linda (Hess ’87) Nunez**, **Glenn ’85 (Jodi Carlson ’88)** and **Matthew ’87**; 10 grandchildren, including **Isaac Hess ’16**; 7 great-grandchildren; and sisters **Alene (Hess ’53) Elkins** and **Lois (Hess ’60) Yankowski**.

**Madeline (Woodhams) Stewart**, 91, of Altamonte Springs, Florida, passed away on December 15, 2025. Madeline was a dedicated wife, mother and homemaker. She was a long-time member of North Atlanta Bible Chapel where she served in women’s a girls’ ministry. She was a faithful volunteer at Camp Hope for many years. She is survived by her four children and their spouses, 15 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren.

1959

**Henry “Hank” Stafford** of Bradenton, Florida, passed away on January 10, 2026 at the age of 88. He had a 34-year teaching career at Morris Central School and enjoyed coaching and officiating for school athletics. He was a committed civil servant and community volunteer. He leaves behind his wife, two children, five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1960

**JoAnn Marie (Booth) Nelson** passed away October 13, 2025 in Mars, Pennsylvania. Alongside her late husband, **Andrew ’60**, she dedicated more than five decades to full-time ministry with Hi-Ba (High School Born Againers), mentoring high school students in Cleveland, Ohio, and the New York Metropolitan area, and helping expand the ministry’s international reach. She is survived by two of her children, 10 grandchildren, two great-grandchildren and her sister **Linda (Booth ’66) Lawyer**.

**Jane (Gregg) Roeske**, 86, of Fillmore, New York, passed away on October 21, 2025 surrounded by her family. A dedicated elementary educator, Jane was also a faithful and active member of Houghton Wesleyan Church. She is survived by her children **Martha ’90 (Shawn Skeele ’87)** and **Peter ’93 (Faith Winchell ’99)**; six grandchildren, including **Hannah Roeske ’24**, **Adeline Roeske ’23** and **Aubrey (Skeele ’18) Evans**; and four great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her sisters **Barbara Gregg ’58** and **Virginia (Gregg ’56) Polanski**.

1962

**Marilyn Howder**, 86, of Springfield, Ohio, passed away on January 13, 2026. She dedicated more than 30 years of her life to educating fifth grade students in Frewsburg, New York. An active member of her church, Marilyn also volunteered with Bethany Camp. She is survived by a brother and his family.

1963

**Judith “Judy” (Stout) Revere** of Warsaw, Indiana, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on March 23, 2026, at the age of 84. Judy was a dedicated elementary educator and an active church member. She leaves behind her husband **William ’63**, two children, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

1964

**Rona (Sandercock) Wolfe**, 84, of Ephrata, Pennsylvania, passed away on March 5, 2026. She spent many years as a Title One tutor in the Eastern Lancaster County School District, and was an active member of her church and a community volunteer. She is survived by two children and six grandchildren.

**Dr. Donald L. Bailey**, a prominent member of the faculty in the school of music from 1967 through 1983, passed away on April 3, 2026, in Waco, Texas, at the age of 82. In 1967, Dr. Bailey was appointed professor of voice and director of the Houghton College Choir. In 1977, he was appointed chairman of the Fine Arts Division, inheriting the role from Dr. Charles Finney. Dr. Bailey held degrees from Eastern New Mexico University and University of Northern Colorado and was a respected choral adjudicator and clinician. In 1983, Dr. Bailey departed from Houghton to take a position at Texas Tech, followed by Arizona State University and ultimately Baylor University. Retiring from Baylor in 2008, he was named Faculty Emeritus. A long-time member of the Texas Choral Directors’ Association, he was also a respected composer with Alliance Music Publications and Gentry Publications. His choirs were routinely featured at state and national conferences, and he was a highly sought-after guest conductor and clinician. A beloved professor, Dr. Bailey was twice named Outstanding Faculty Member during his tenure at Houghton University. He is survived by his wife, Karen.





1965

**Elaine (Lambrides) Eriksen** of Carmel, Indiana, went to be with the Lord on December 26, 2025 following a brief battle with cancer. She was 82. A faithful member of College Park Church, Elaine was also an entrepreneur who owned Kay Interiors and served as a pioneering member of a significant residential real estate company. She is survived by her husband, two children and two grandchildren.

**Nancy (Gray) Gee**, 82, of Midland, Michigan, passed away peacefully to her eternal home in heaven on October 24, 2025. Nancy was a music teacher serving in public, military base and Christian schools. She is survived by her husband **Ronald ‘64**, two children, six grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

1966

**Dianne Donelson**, 81, of West Seneca, New York, passed away peacefully on December 25, 2025, with her family by her side. She dedicated 35 years to teaching third grade and continued tutoring after retirement. She is survived by her niece, great-niece, great-nephew and brother-in-law.

1968

**Deborah Heritage**, 80, died peacefully on January 17, 2026, in Troy, New York. She spent her 30-year career in elementary education. She is survived by her brother and four nieces and nephews.

1969

**James Elliott**, aged 77, of Methuen, Massachusetts, left this world on February 22, 2025 after a struggle with Alzheimer’s disease. He spent his career using his law degree in the insurance industry and was a longtime member of Forest Street Union Church. He is survived by his wife, four children, six grandchildren, and three siblings including **Janet (Elliott ‘67) Arendt**.

**Anne Fountain**, 77, of Machias, New York, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on June 6, 2025. She was a longtime music teacher in the Pioneer School system and a dedicated part of music ministry at Odosagih Bible Conference. She leaves behind her sisters, four step-children and many nieces and nephews.

1971

**Martin French**, 76, of Manassas, Virginia, passed away January 23, 2026, after a long illness. A veteran of the US Navy and a Naval Reservist, Marty spent his civilian career in construction while serving as a community and church volunteer. He is survived by his wife, **Virginia (Fero ‘72)**; his four children, including **Megan (French ‘96) Coleman**; and four grandchildren.

1973

**Nicholas Watson**, 74, of Williamsville, New York, went to be with Jesus on July 14, 2025, after battling health issues for many years. He was the owner of Watson’s Restaurant and Candies (Kenmore, New York) and a longtime member of Amherst Alliance Church. He is survived by his wife **Pamela (Schwartz ‘72)**; two daughters, including **Karisalynn (Watson ‘04) O’Connor**; and four grandchildren.

1975

**Harold Tooley**, 78, of Forestville, New York, died January 5, 2026. An Army veteran of the Vietnam War and Purple Heart recipient, Wayne served as a pastor and teacher in his civilian career. He ministered in the prison system and in nursing homes. Harold is survived by his wife, his son and his grandson.



**Dr. Benjamin King**, long-time vocal professor, opera workshop director and director and dean of the Greatbatch School of Music, passed away on April 9, 2026 at his home in Cedar Park, Texas. He was 76 years old. Dr. King came to Houghton in 1980 as assistant professor of voice and director of men’s choir. He held a Bachelor of

Music and a Master of Music from Texas Tech University and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the Eastman School of Music. Dr. King was appointed director of the School of Music in 1986. After a four-year stint at Sam Houston State University, Dr. King returned to Houghton in 1996 as professor of voice and director of opera workshop. In 2001, Dr. King was again appointed director of the School of Music and would later be named dean of the Greatbatch School of Music. He served as the President of the Central New York/Finger Lakes Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, president of the New York State Association of College Music Programs, and site visitor for National Association of Schools of Music accreditations. Dr. King retired from Houghton in 2011, when he was appointed Professor Emeritus, and returned to his native Texas. Dr. King was known for his booming laugh, encyclopedic musical knowledge, and wise mentoring. A baritone, Dr. King performed in a variety of musical theatre and opera productions, was a regular soloist both on campus and in the region, and a guest lecturer across the country. At the time of his retirement, Houghton Magazine said “King combined high energy with a calm presence and unwavering trust in God... his students also knew they could tell him anything in the world, and he would listen with compassion and wisdom.” (Houghton Magazine Spring/Summer 2012, pg. 18). Dr. King leaves behind his wife, Vicki; sons **Brian ‘01 (Emily Jeffers ‘00)**, **Barry ‘03 (Mindela Sheaffer ‘03)** and **David ‘09**; and five grandsons.

**Sandra Yaegle**, 72, of Chesapeake, Virginia, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on November 19, 2025. She began her career as an elementary teacher, then became a faculty member of Regent University in the University Library. She served on the editorial team of “The Christian Librarian.” She is survived by one sister, a cousin and many nieces and nephews.

1978

**William Domm**, of Ontario, New York, passed on December 13, 2025, at the age of 69. Bill dedicated his career to education, first as a music teacher and later in administrative positions. He was an active community volunteer. Bill is mourned by his wife, three children and six grandchildren.

1980

**Paula (Newcomb) McLellan** passed away on March 17, 2026, in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, at the age of 67. Paula was an early childhood educator who dedicated much of her life to raising her family. She is survived by her husband, three children, five grandchildren, and two of her brothers, including **Douglas Newcomb ‘87**.

1981

**Gail Trail**, 86, went to be with the Lord peacefully on December 2, 2025 from her home in Higgins, New York. Gail served alongside her husband **Ronald Trail ‘58** in Bible translation for 53 years with Wycliffe Bible Translators in India, Nepal, Korea, Afghanistan and Pakistan. She served as pianist for Wesleyan Church of Higgins. She leaves behind her husband; her five sons **Joel Lall-Trail ‘91 (Kiran ‘91)**, **Bradley ‘89**, **Nathan ‘85**, **Stephen ‘82** and **Daniel ‘82**; 9 grandchildren; and 9 great-grandchildren

1982

**Carolann (Stehling) Darling**, of Groton, New York, passed away peacefully on January 15, 2026 at the age of 65, surrounded by her family. A certified ultrasonographer, Carolann also enjoyed a career in retail. She was an active volunteer in her church and dedicated to service in crisis pregnancy centers. She is mourned by her husband **James ‘79**, her mother, two daughters and two granddaughters.

1983

**Joanne Tompkins**, 62, passed away on October 17, 2025, in Ndungu Kebbeh, The Gambia, West Africa. She served the Lord there in literacy for 25 years with the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE). She is survived by three siblings, including **Nancy (Tompkins ‘73) Swanson**.

1984

**Helen (Mason) Atzenweiler**, 63, of Delray, West Virginia, passed away February 11, 2026, at her home. She began her career as an educator serving at the American Indian Christian Mission School (Show Low, Arizona) and spent much of her life ministering to churches alongside her husband. She is survived by her husband, one daughter, three granddaughters, and her brother **Doug Mason ‘81 (Laura Sawyer ‘81)**.

1985

**Rev. Michael Messick**, 72, of Lancaster, Ohio, passed away at home surrounded by loving family on February 2, 2025. He was a veteran of the US Navy before accepting a call into ministry. He is survived by his wife **Ruth (Enty ‘79)**, five children, nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

1992

**Robert Goodling Jr.** of Charlotte, North Carolina, went home to be with Jesus on December 16, 2025, at the age of 55. Rob has a long career in finance, working for MBNA, Bank of America, Lowe’s Financial, Visa and Wells Fargo. He is survived by his wife **Britton (Sylvester ‘93)**; four children; his parents, **Bob** and **Carol (Ayres ‘63) Goodling**; and two sisters, including **Christie ‘90 (Nathan French ‘90)**.

1994

**Scott Merrill**, 56, of Darien Center, New York, passed away from a serious illness on November 7, 2025. He worked in Youth Ministry at West Middlebury Baptist Church and served with Greater Europe Mission in Romania for three years. He is mourned by his aunts and uncles and many cousins.

1997

**Jennifer (Lytle) McNiven**, 50, of Fishers, Indiana, passed peacefully from this earth on November 14, 2025. Along with her husband, **Christopher ‘97**, Jennifer built Aspire Consulting, a research-driven leadership advisory firm. She served Houghton University under President Emerita **Shirley Mullen ‘76** on the President’s Advisory Board from 2014-2016 and on the Board of Trustees from 2016-2018. Jennifer leaves behind her husband; two teenage sons; her father, **Wesley Lytle ‘67**; and her sister, **Kristen (Lytle ‘99) Kincer**.

2001

**Daniel McGaffick** of Lakewood, New York, passed away on December 15, 2025 at the age of 47. Dan spent 18 years as a machinist and quality manager for Chautauqua Machine Specialties. He is survived by his son, his father and two siblings.

2004

**Ryan Alo**, 42, of Waverly, New York, passed away November 14, 2025, surrounded by his family and friends. Ryan dedicated his career to education, both as a teacher and administrator. An EMT, Ryan was a committed community volunteer. He is survived by his four children, his mother and his brother.

2006

**Argie Jandrew**, 40, of Scio, New York, passed away October 2, 2025 at her home. A substitute teacher and administrative assistant, Argie is survived by her mother; two siblings, including **Jessie (Jandrew ‘08) Tucker**; and two nephews.

Friends

**Gary Swimley** of Canandaigua, New York, joyfully moved to his eternal home with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on January 1, 2026, while surrounded by his family. He was 89. Gary began his career as a teacher then moved into computer programming, retiring from pharmaceutical company Fisons and pursuing post-retirement work as an independent IT contractor. Gary was an active member of Crosswinds Wesleyan Church for over four decades. Alongside his late wife, **Esther (Lawrence ‘57)**, he was a faithful and generous supporter of Houghton University. Gary is survived by three children, including **Susan (Swimley ‘83) Schrader**; nine grandchildren including **Kara Schrader ‘11**; and 21 great-grandchildren.



**Dr. Dolores Gadevsky**, 91, longtime Houghton University associate professor of piano, passed away peacefully on May 5, 2024, in Largo, Florida, surrounded by her family. Dr. Gadevsky joined the School of Music’s faculty in 1989, coming from the Eastman School of Music with an impressive resumé of a Fulbright Scholarship, an Eastman DMA, international studies with well-known names such as Nadia Boulanger, and

performances in notable venues such as the Chautauqua Institute and the Kennedy Center. During her 16-year tenure at Houghton, Dr. Gadevsky touched countless lives as a professor of studio piano, class piano, piano pedagogy and collaborative piano. Beyond the academic calendar, Dr. Gadevsky led pedagogy seminars and taught at Csehy Summer School of Music in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. At her retirement in 2005, a student noted, “[Dr. Gadevsky] embodies the Houghton College ideal. She demands excellence...while exemplifying love, patience and caring.” She is survived by her daughter, **Danielle (Gadvesky ‘95) Marolf**.





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