

ALVERNO magazine

Fall | Winter | 2022-23



ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

From volunteering to civic engagement, Alverno extends its mission beyond campus

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ALVERNO MAGAZINE | FALL | WINTER 2022-23

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Alverno Magazine connects the members of the college community by sharing the stories of our strength, inspiration and meaningful engagement with the world.

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Dear Friends of Alverno College,

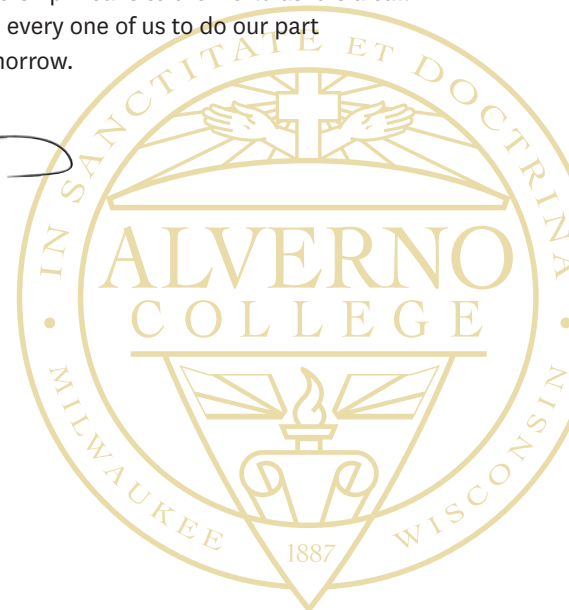
For those whom I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Joseph Foy. I began my career at Alverno in 2020 as Vice President of Academic Affairs. Starting July 1, I have had the privilege of serving our campus community as interim president. While there are so many reasons I am proud to be here at Alverno College, what I am most inspired by on a near daily basis is the commitment of the students, staff and faculty to the promotion of civic engagement and demonstration of our common commitment to our communities.

You may be wondering why civic engagement stands out for me as such a salient aspect of Alverno's identity. My background is in political science, so November in an election year always gets me fired up and ready to go! I look forward to each election cycle as an opportunity to challenge myself and students to elevate civil dialogue, promote voter registration and participation, increase civic knowledge, and to advance the responsible actions that democracy requires of us in order to remain vibrant and healthy. Most importantly, once an election is over and all the votes are counted and races called, we have an obligation to consider our civic responsibility to remain engaged and to support and lead in our communities. It is a time to remember that the ballot box, with its associated rights and freedoms, may mark the liberatory beginning of democracy, but it is far from the end.

Since arriving at Alverno, I have found that this central tenet of democracy and civil society is more than just a civics lesson; it is a lived expression of the profound and transformative mission of the College. At advanced levels, Alverno's "effective citizenship" ability asks students to demonstrate taking "a leadership role in addressing organizational and community issues." Students, staff and faculty do just that. The Alverno community is actively engaged in registering voters, volunteering as poll workers and providing transportation to make democracy accessible and fair for all. So impactful are these efforts that Alverno College was recognized in *Washington Monthly's* 2022 Best Colleges for Student Voting Honor Roll.

But like democracy, Alverno's commitment to being a college within the community extends far beyond election day. You see that displayed in full throughout this edition of *Alverno Magazine*. From increasing public health through blood pressure screenings and nutritional advocacy, to an Alverno alum activating her abilities to start a nonprofit to combat human trafficking, the impact of Alverno in the world is truly amazing. A highlight this semester was the outpouring of engagement on Community Day, "an annual day of service when the Alverno community participates in service and discussions that serve the broader Milwaukee community," which drew over 300 participants this year! Likewise, in celebration of the 50th anniversary of Alverno's Research Center for Women and Girls (RCWG), and the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment, the RCWG recently released *Wisconsin Women in Public Life — Elected Officials*. The report focused on bringing greater awareness to the opportunities and headwinds of women in elected public life, as well as how to get more women leaders into pathways of public and elected service.

The world needs women's leadership now more than ever. I think we can all agree that Alverno-educated, Alverno Strong women are more than ready to provide that leadership. I hope this edition of the magazine is as much an inspirational look at what women's leadership means to the world as it is a call to action for each and every one of us to do our part in writing a better tomorrow.



Picture Perfect

A picture is worth a thousand words, and no one understands that better than **Cheryl Moore, PhD**, executive director of career development.

That's why the Alverno College Career Studio added an Iris Booth, a self-serve photo booth that delivers high-quality digital portraits for the modern professional. Students can walk in, have their headshot taken for free, touch them up on the spot and then upload their photos to their email.

It's a dream of Moore's that is finally being realized. "This levels the playing field for students who are underrepresented and can't afford to have professional headshots taken."

Alverno is one of only 35 institutions in the country to provide this technology to students, and the only one in Wisconsin. It's all part of Moore's strategic goals to increase engagement with students while bolstering their digital readiness. "Today's graduates need to be technology-savvy, and this is one way we can help them achieve that."

Career Coaching With Intention

When you ask **Jessica Solórzano, MEd**, about her vision for working with students, the new career and internship coach lights up. "My mission for serving students is about empowering them and ensuring that they have the skills and resources they need."

Working primarily with health care and STEM students, Solórzano is focused on making sure that women studying the sciences feel supported. "It's really about championing them, reminding students they have the skills and tools to be able to navigate the world."

She is also intentional about creating a space where students from historically marginalized groups, especially women of color, feel valued and confident. "In the Career Studio," Solórzano says, "we're dedicated to creating equitable spaces for students to learn about their professions and how we're preparing them for success. For me, that's really powerful."



The first cohort of Kohl's Scholars: Sandra Gaytan Lopez, Andrea Herrera, Liliana De Leon, Akeyla Stubblefield, Mariana Lopez-Mireles



The new Iris Booth in the Career Studio.



Jessica Solórzano (at left) works with student Maria Araujo to help her determine which direction she would like to take with her upcoming marketing internship.

A Day at Kohl's

The first cohort of Kohl's Scholars recently spent the day at the Kohl's corporate headquarters to get a tour of the office, engage in a leadership roundtable, take part in a presentation with the Kohl's diversity and inclusion team, and enjoy a networking lunch with members of the Kohl's business resource groups.

The Kohl's Scholars include **Sandra Gaytan Lopez**, majoring in business and management; **Andrea Herrera**, human biology; **Liliana De Leon**, human biology; **Akeyla Stubblefield**, creative arts in practice; and **Mariana Lopez-Mireles**, business and management. The Kohl's Scholars program awards \$5,000 scholarships to sophomores or juniors majoring in business, communication or STEM fields. Professional development is an essential component.

"During my visit to Kohl's, I had the chance to interact with various members of the company and know more about their career journeys," says Gaytan Lopez, class of 2023. "They all had great advice to share, which encouraged me to keep growing not only as a professional but as a person."



Developing Diverse Leaders

Elena Hernández Burke '22, who serves as the coordinator of global exchange programs and the co-director of diversity, equity, and inclusion at Alverno College, has been named as a fellow of The Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Leadership Academy/La Academia de Liderazgo. The program is designed to increase diverse representation in executive and senior-level positions in higher education. Hernández Burke is one of 39 fellows from across the country.

A Strong Commitment to Teaching

For the 13th year in a row, Alverno was recognized for its commitment to undergraduate teaching by **U.S. News & World Report**. Alverno is No. 2 among Midwest universities, higher than any other school in Wisconsin. The ranking highlights schools "where the faculty have an unusually strong commitment to undergraduate teaching."

The 2023 rankings also mark the fifth consecutive year that Alverno is Wisconsin's most innovative school.

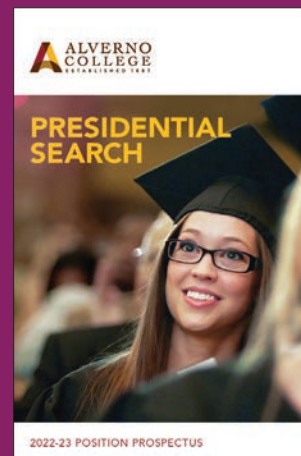
In other rankings, **U.S. News** also recognized Alverno for its value, ethnic diversity, first-year student experience, senior capstone, service learning, economic diversity and social mobility.



PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH UPDATE

Alverno College's Board of Trustees has officially launched a search for the College's ninth president. The Presidential Search Committee, led by trustees **Kathy Hudson H'14** and **Kathleen O'Brien, OSF '67**, and supported by executive search firm Spencer Stuart, spent the summer gathering important feedback from stakeholders about the characteristics they would like to see in a new president, the challenges and opportunities for the College, and the distinctions they feel make Alverno a special place.

The Presidential Search Committee has also launched a presidential search website: **alverno.edu/presidential-search**. Here, you'll find the presidential profile, search updates, and directions about where to submit applications, nominations or recommendations.



Greenhouse Grand Opening



The Alverno Greenhouse has been up and running for just over a year, creating exciting new research opportunities for students. In October, more than 50 people had a chance to tour the greenhouse at its grand opening while learning from students about projects now underway. Faculty, staff, students, the Board of Trustees and other key stakeholders sampled hors d'oeuvres that incorporated kale, tomatoes and perch raised in the greenhouse.

“Whether it’s planting the seeds for students to further explore science careers, introducing students and community members to sustainable agriculture, or providing nourishment for a student in need, the impact of the greenhouse is widespread,” said **Joseph Foy, PhD**, interim president of Alverno College.

The 1,400-square-foot living laboratory was designed with teaching at the forefront, allowing students from different disciplines to have hands-on access to the greenhouse, exploring how science, education, art and more are uniquely intertwined.





Building Connections

Joseph Foy, PhD, interim president, recently sat down with Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley to discuss how the College can be of service to the county, and vice versa. The county is especially interested in hiring more women, especially women of color, in key positions.

“We know that what we do in Milwaukee County has a ripple effect across the state,” Crowley says.

The visit is part of Crowley’s tour to meet with various college presidents in the area to learn more about their needs and priorities while sharing the county’s mission, vision and strategy in an effort to see where they may align.



Alverno Strong in Mesa

Congratulations to the first cohort of Master of Science in Nursing — Direct Entry (DEMSN) students at the Alverno Mesa location in Arizona! These 30 students attended the inaugural orientation in late August, and they have since been building up their competencies and skills to prepare for clinical sites. On track to graduate in May 2024, these aspiring nursing professionals will soon help welcome the next new cohort of 48 DEMSN students in the spring. Welcome to Alverno!

Going to Bat for Local Youth

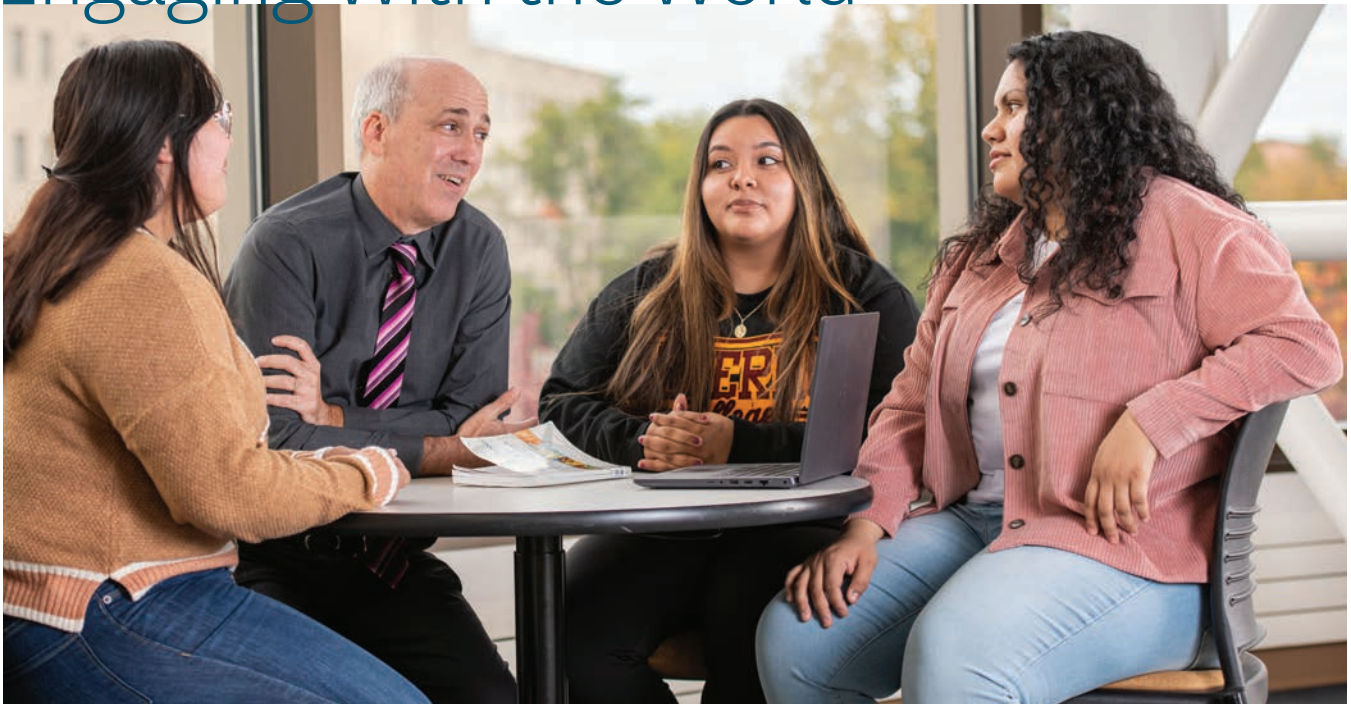
Several coaches from Alverno Athletics volunteered their time and talents with the Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) Ultimate Sports Day, an event that introduced kids to new sports while teaching them fundamental skills. “My mission is to increase awareness for our athletic programs while also being more visible in the community,” says **Katari Key**, Alverno’s athletic director. “Service is a big part of who we are, and this is one of the many ways we do that.”



WHY I TEACH



David Brooker: Engaging With the World



Whether teaching political science, directing the global studies and international affairs major, advising pre-law students or leading Model United Nations trips to Chicago, **David Brooker, PhD**, has inspired many Alverno students to engage with the world since he first arrived on campus in 2005. Most recently, he worked with colleagues to develop Alverno's new community engagement and activism major.

"There's been an increase in political awareness of students the past four years or so," he says. "We're hoping to really ingrain this major into Milwaukee and emphasize skill development, which makes it different from the typical political science major. Instead of making it a traditional study about politics, it's more about ways that you can create avenues to become engaged in local politics."

What inspired you to become a teacher?

"It was a late decision. I was well into grad school, and my training was in Soviet politics. And at that time, people with that background overwhelmingly went to work for the government. But a few years

later [after the Soviet Union collapsed], the Defense Department wasn't hiring practically everyone trained in Soviet politics. And after being a teaching assistant in grad school, I realized I liked it. I liked the freedom of it. I actually get paid to talk about things that I find interesting and that I care about."

What do you love about teaching at Alverno?

"It's really the focus on teaching and students' learning. The more I was at Alverno, the more I realized that in more traditional environments, it's really about grading and ways of separating the Bs from the Cs or the As from the Bs. It took years to realize all sorts of things that I did for that purpose. And even feedback was often really grade justification. So it wasn't, 'Here's what you can do to get better.' It was, 'Here's why you got a B-minus.' Whereas here, it's about revising and improving and making mistakes, and learning from those mistakes. And so learning that was an adjustment. But once you become comfortable with that adjustment, it's liberating."

What do you hope to empower your students to achieve?

“To find their voice, and that can mean different things for different people. I also hope that they engage with the world and understand it. I try to stay away from this idea that we need to fix the world because that implies that we’ve got all the answers. But once a student decides there’s something that needs to be fixed, I hope they think they have the agency to actually try to engage in that process.”

Do you have a favorite memory from your time at Alverno?

“For me, graduation is always memorable. It’s easy to think that it’s just an endless loop, but it’s graduation that really reminds us that Alverno students are on a journey. I really like the fact that I have students at every step of the way and so I get to see that development.”

Model UN Builds Real Skills

You don’t have to become a career diplomat to find value in Alverno’s longstanding tradition of participating in the Model United Nations program.

“Developing a global perspective, social interaction and communication — I think Model UN really tests those abilities. Skills you develop in terms of networking, forming quick partnerships — those are skills that can be used in all sorts of ways,” says Professor David Brooker, who has taken 175 Alverno students to the Model UN conference in Chicago since 2006.

On many college campuses, Model UN is a student-run club or a volunteer elective. Alverno is unique because Model UN is a required course for the global studies and international affairs major and political science minor. Over the years, the course has attracted students from other majors as well, including nursing, education and business. Students who want to repeat the experience — and many do — can participate through an independent study. Even alumnae sometimes return for a mini Model UN simulation during Alverno class reunions.

“I think it helps students develop more confidence,” Brooker says. “It’s really good at proving to students that they can succeed in an

environment that’s very different from Alverno. Alverno is a very polite community. At Model UN, during informal caucusing, you have to speak up to be heard and not let people talk over you. And so in that more competitive environment, the louder, messier environment, I think it’s good to show Alverno students that they can flourish.”



Proud to be an

ALVERNO NURSE

Brittany Gordon's daughter is only 2, but she is a powerful force in her mom's life and higher education journey.

"She motivates me to keep going with school. I just want to provide her the life that I feel she deserves," says Gordon, an Alverno nursing major.

Gordon, a U.S. Army veteran, chose Alverno upon her return to civilian life because she immediately knew it was a place where she would succeed.

"Alverno offers great scholarships and opportunities. Everybody is so eager to help me. The clinicals have been great, and I've built a connection with my teachers," she says.

Gordon so values the support she has received here that she is thrilled to pay it forward to her peers in the nursing program.

"I've made so many good friends here and am the go-to person to help people study," she says.

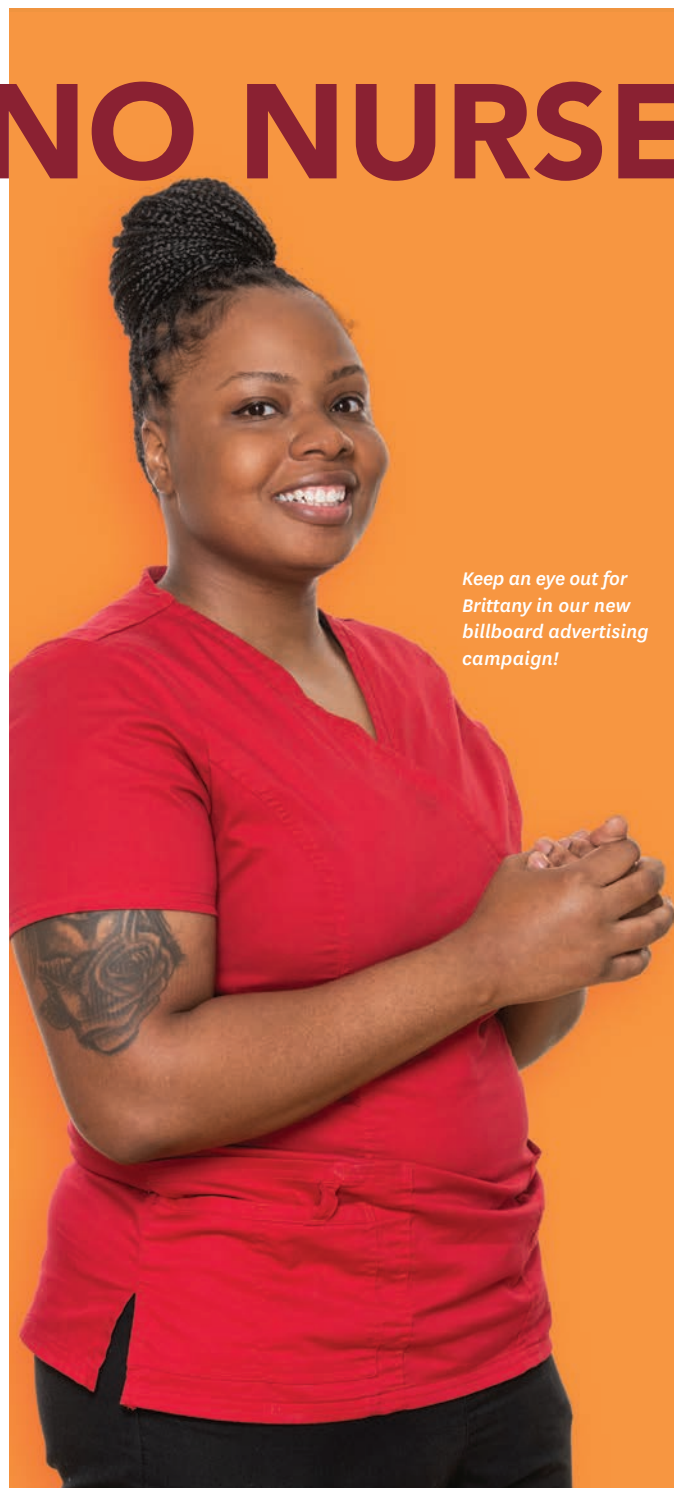
When she graduates next year, Gordon hopes to go into anesthesia nursing. After helping care for family members, she looks forward to providing skilled, compassionate care as an Alverno Strong alumna.

"At Alverno, we don't take the easy route. We push ourselves to succeed," she says. "It's a great honor to be an Alverno nurse."

—Jackie Avial

“I really appreciate all the opportunities Alverno has given me. The scholarships I receive mean that I don't have to work while I'm in school. I can focus on my education.”

—Brittany Gordon



Keep an eye out for
Brittany in our new
billboard advertising
campaign!



Giving Back to the Community

For our nursing students, meeting people where they're at and building connections is what community health nursing is all about.

One cohort of the College's Master of Science in Nursing — Direct Entry (DEMSN) program recently spent the day at Sherman Park Grocery providing free blood pressure checks, discussing food labels and sharing healthy recipes. The grocery store, which opened this summer, serves 40,000 residents in the immediate area with food that is nutritious, delicious and affordable. Owner Moe Wince saw a need in the neighborhood that had been without a grocery store for more than 10 years. His goal is to not only address the food desert and food insecurity, but to create awareness in the community about the importance of diet and its impact on health. That's where our DEMSN students come in.

"I love public health," says **Lauren DeVries**, who served three years in the Peace Corps as a community health educator in Uganda. "It's important to make connections with people so they can trust you."

Joslyn Mateo agrees. "We're educating the community on what's healthy, what they can improve on. It feels good to do some preventative measures."

Kirsten Lezama '14, an instructor in the DEMSN program, sums it up. "It's all about making the healthy choice the easy choice."

The key takeaway for these students: Never underestimate the power of collaboration and commUNITY!

— Kelly Cole

“It’s important to make connections with people so they can trust you.”



Community

DURING ALVERNO'S COMMUNITY DAY, MORE THAN 300 STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF VOLUNTEERED AT SITES AROUND SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN.

Opportunities to give back included cleaning up litter from parks and beaches, restoring natural habitats and removing invasive species, making blankets for an emergency shelter and knitting hats for people undergoing chemotherapy treatments.

Over the course of 21 years, more than 7,600 Alverno community members have given more than 24,700 hours of service — a true testament to the phrase “Alverno Strong.”



46 bowls made
for Empty Bowls
project

25 people trained
to be election
poll workers



7,000
pounds of pumpkins
washed for Hunger Task
Force Farm

pounds of squash
harvested at
Hunger Task Force Farm
4,000



Two 5' high
piles of invasive species
removed from the campus
bioswale and rain garden

30 bags of trash
collected
throughout
the city



24 fleece blankets
made for Hope
House clients

60 hats knitted or
crocheted for
Operation
Chemo Comfort

Day



FULL SPEED AHEAD >>>



In just a few years, Alverno Accelerate has empowered adults to earn a diploma — and so much more.

A college degree represents an enormous investment of resources. The return is manifold, but sometimes, life gets in the way.

That's where Alverno Accelerate comes in. Launched in fall 2020, the online program meets adults where they are in life, providing an affordable and flexible path to a bachelor's degree in leadership in three years or less.

Unlike traditional online programs, Accelerate is an experiential program that fits within the context of each learner's life, enabling adults to apply what they're learning to experiences in their community and work. Prior college credits count toward degree progress so learners can focus on what's next.

Learning That's Relevant and Responsive

After earning her associate degree, **Tokara Henry '22** launched her own business, Bijou Nails and Co., in Milwaukee's Bronzeville district and spent the next decade growing it into the largest Black-owned nail salon in the city. "I opened a business because money was a little more important than education at the time," says Henry, a mother of two.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and the manicure business temporarily dried up like a bottle of polish with the cap left off.

Already a licensed nail technician instructor, Henry decided to open Advanced Nail Tech Academy — and go back to school herself. She started asking for college recommendations and discovered a common thread among the most accomplished women in her network, from the mom of four young kids to the principal of a large school. "The busy women went to Alverno, and they succeeded," she says. "That was important to me because I'm very busy."

As a mom and entrepreneur, Henry was especially drawn to Alverno Accelerate. About 14 months later, she completed her bachelor's degree in leadership.

Any qualms she might have had about juggling the program alongside two businesses quickly disappeared. "The online system was so easy to navigate, and the instructors truly want to see you succeed," she says. "The curriculum of the Alverno Accelerate program really centered around my life's work. Every assignment tied directly to my current life and what I said I wanted to do in the future."

One of her experiential learning modules focused on developing a nonprofit idea. It inspired Henry to relaunch Sickle Cell Warriors of Wisconsin, a nonprofit organization she'd started years earlier in memory of a close family member.

Thanks to Alverno Accelerate, she felt better positioned to develop a sustainable plan for the organization's future.

Now when other busy women start talking to Henry about their dreams, she urges them to consider Alverno, even pulling up her Accelerate coursework to show them how the online program works.

— Nicole Sweeney Etter

“Anybody that’s thinking about the program should just stop wishing and start doing.”

— Tokara Henry '22

Fostering Lifelong Learning

As a working mom, **Angie Haney '22** was looking for a college that would offer flexibility and support while working toward a degree.

The Chicago community college didn't come through. Nor did the one in Pennsylvania. But Gateway Technical College in southeastern Wisconsin did — and that's where Haney completed an associate degree, found a strong community of supporters and discovered Alverno Accelerate.

“It helped me learn about myself, appreciate my life experiences and realize those life experiences were educational lessons as well,” Haney says.

Haney proudly served as Master of Ceremony at Alverno's May 2022 commencement, celebrating the achievements of her Alverno family. Haney's own family was there to celebrate her achievements.

“Everything that I do, I really try to do it so that my daughters can be proud of me. I know I made them proud. They've been able to see something that a lot of children of color don't see. It felt so good to have them front and center,” Haney says.

As the founder of EmPower HerPower LLC, Haney seeks to provide youth programs to build up young women through mentorship. Earning a bachelor's degree is an important step forward in her professional and personal growth. It's not the last.

“I plan on getting my doctorate to effect policy change in social issues,” says Haney.

Along the way, Haney plans on following the advice that she gives to her daughters — and anyone who is lucky enough to meet her.

“Life has ups and downs. It has bumps and bruises. You just have to keep going. You have to understand that everything you go through is a lesson. Learn the lesson and keep going. Never give up on you. In time, what you envision for yourself will come.”

— Jackie Avial



Karen and Marco Romantini have the distinction of being the first mother-son duo to graduate with bachelor's degrees from Alverno.



27 students have completed a bachelor's degree through Alverno Accelerate since the program's launch in fall 2020.



Effective Citizenship in Action



*“Alone, we can do so little;
together, we can do much.” — Helen Keller*

Community engagement has been one of the abiding keystones of the Alverno experience. Not only do we serve the greater community, but we also gain a new perspective, one that may open up a new path or lead to immeasurable growth.

For many of us, giving to the community in meaningful ways means volunteering, whether on Community Day or with organizations of personal significance. For others, being engaged in the election process gives us a sense of civic pride as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of our vote. For some, it might mean taking a bolder step of working toward abolishing injustice.

In whichever ways we contribute to the community around us, one thing is certain: our impact radiates well beyond campus.



Keepers of Democracy

By Kelly Cole

For **Sue Leister**, director of Alverno's internship program, serving as a chief election inspector is a calling. Working at the polls over several elections, she saw the need for younger poll workers. In 2008, when then-President Mary Meehan declared Presidential Election Day a campus holiday, Leister (pictured above at right) saw an opportunity to get students involved. As a result, the college held 10 poll worker training sessions that year. More than 120 people attended and served at the polls.

"To me, voting is your main responsibility as a citizen, to participate in the life of the community, in the life of your city and your state, in your country, and to make your voice heard," Leister says.

Since the initial trainings, between 200 and 300 additional students have prepared to work the polls, and the numbers continue to grow. Trainings are offered on campus, and students learn everything from what forms of ID are acceptable to the nuances of maintaining a nonpartisan stance while assisting voters.

"It's not about choosing one side or the other," says **Elizabeth Coppola '12**. "You can help someone who's struggling to vote that day. Whether it's the elderly having a hard time getting to the polls or someone who's never voted and doesn't understand the process, there's always a way to get involved."

For Coppola, the experience ignited a desire to get more involved. A year after graduating from Alverno, she ran for Wisconsin State Assembly. "If you don't have those experiences, you don't know what's possible. When I look back at it now, the most surprising thing is how it impacted the rest of my choices moving forward, whether running for office or even just knowing how important my vote is."

Getting students to the polls has long been a campus priority, and the results have been impressive. In 2020, 71.2% of students who were voting-eligible were registered to vote and of those, 82.7% voted on Election Day.* Formal efforts to register students to vote include campus visits by the League of Women Voters, while grassroots efforts by students have also been effective.

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.”

– Muhammad Ali

*Source: Student Voting Rates for Alverno College, 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Campus Report





Celestina Hertz, class of 2024, is behind some of the recent grassroots efforts. She recently handed out donuts with a gentle reminder to “donut” forget to vote. Most students she talked with were already registered to vote, but for those who weren’t, she provided a QR code that took them to My Vote Wisconsin’s website.

“On the local and state level, so many things could change if they just had more information. I think a lot of people don’t think about those things,” Hertz says. “I have a lot of faith and hope and love for my generation, and they have amazing points of view. I want to help us achieve our ideal world.”



For students who aren’t American citizens, elections are an opportunity to see the democratic process in action. **Rachel Haos**, assistant dean of Student Development and Success, has been taking international

students to the polls to observe since 2016. “We have had students who come from countries where women do not have the right to vote in national elections or where democratic elections do not take place,” Haos says. “I am a first-generation American whose father came to the U.S. through forced migration. Voting and being an effective citizen is such an important part of my life, and it’s something we integrate as part of the curriculum for our students, so I thought it would be a great opportunity for international students to see what the process looks like here.”

All of these efforts reflect the College’s commitment to getting students, faculty and staff more involved in effective citizenship — one of Alverno’s 8 Abilities. For Leister, who organized the poll worker training as a side project, her labor of love has been rewarding.

“I think I got more out of this than I expected to in terms of seeing how it affects students who have done it,” she says.

“They could really see how we brought the abilities together at the site in terms of working as a team, their attention to detail, and being a good problem solver.” Leister adds. “They could see their abilities in action.”

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

— Mahatma Gandhi



Changed Lives Change Lives

By Kelly Cole

April Bentley is free. She believes everyone deserves to be free, too.

Bentley, class of 2026, is the founder of Rubies, which stands for “rare, unique, beautiful, intelligent, excelling sisters.” The nonprofit’s mission is to prevent young girls and women from getting caught up in the world of sex trafficking. It’s a world she knows all too well. Taken in at the age of 14 by a woman she knew and trusted, Bentley spent 19 years being trafficked before she was able to get out.

Bentley survived. But to her, the word “survivor” doesn’t define her identity. “I cringe when I hear that word,” says Bentley. “I am more than that. I’m a lived experience.” Her nonprofit focuses on intervention, awareness and prevention while shaping character through culture. They work with anyone who identifies as female from the age of 11 through 22. “Our mission is to reach and teach those who are at risk of exploitation,” she says. “It’s my mission, it’s my mandate to teach what I know.”

Her calling to help others is what led her to pursue a degree in social work at Alverno. “This is where my heart is, trying to make our communities strong, our young women strong, our families strong. That’s my purpose right there.” And once she has her degree, Bentley looks forward to being able to say: “I am not only my experience. I’m educated as well. I am credentialed, and I am more than enough.”

Rubies was recently invited to become a part of Wraparound Milwaukee, a system of care for children with serious emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs and their families. It’s a big step for Bentley, a step that will allow her to reach even more young women. “The life I live wasn’t designed to kill me. It was designed so that someone else might live. That’s how I get up every day.”

Bentley is steadfast in her determination. “My mom would always say, ‘You can’t save the world.’ And I’d say, ‘Why not?’”



RUBIES’ MISSION: To identify and reach girls who are at risk of exploitation and sex trafficking while preventing them from being victims through awareness education and mentorship and to restore those victimized by this trauma.

To learn more about Rubies, please visit rubiesmke.org


Absolutely Magical

By Jackie Avial

For **Cassie Rincon '13**, hanging out with Severus is a normal day at the office. So is traipsing down woodland paths, never quite knowing what sights or creatures she'll discover.

The Alverno alumna works at the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, located just north of Milwaukee. And this Severus isn't the spiteful potions professor who makes life difficult for Harry Potter. Rather, he's a nonvenomous Eastern Fox snake, one of the many snakes, turtles and other reptiles and amphibian Animal Ambassadors that, at any given time, make their home among the nature center's 185 acres of wetlands, woods and Lake Michigan shoreline.





It may not be Hogwarts, but to Rincon, it's absolutely magical.

"I consider myself so lucky to be able to work with these animals," says Rincon, who began her Alverno education with plans to become a teacher until discovering that a traditional classroom wasn't the right fit. She switched to environmental science, and her current role allows her to pair her passion for teaching with her love for nature.

When introducing kids to Severus and other cold-blooded friends like Emerson the snapping turtle, Rincon delights in seeing "the wonder in kids' eyes when they touch a snake for the first time." (If you're curious, she reports that snake skin feels like a football or basketball.)

Other activities include welcoming field trips to the center, leading families on guided hikes and exploring the Lake Michigan beachfront. In the cold Wisconsin winter, gorgeous ice formations are on display; in less-frozen weather, visitors can uncover 450 million-year-old fossils on the beach.

In teaching kids about Wisconsin's native flora and fauna, Rincon hopes to foster an appreciation for nature. She also hopes to counter a common perception that threats to the environment are too far away or too big for one person — one child — to make a difference.

"We show them that there are things that you can do right in your own backyard that can help. For example, you can give migratory birds a habitat to stop over when they're traveling and take a break. We have topics on invasive species of plants that are harmful: Here's how you can get rid of it and make your world a little bit better," she says. "We teach so much about Lake Michigan, the pollution that's happening and the other nonprofits that are working hard to clean up and make sure there is healthy water for us to drink. We also teach them about citizen science roles they can take on."

Ultimately, Rincon is proud to plant the seeds for kids to become the next generation of nature lovers and conservationists.

"I have kids who were my students when I first started working here. Now they're becoming volunteers. Or volunteers are now interning or employed here. It's really cool to see."

Sustainable Living Tip

"I'm all about creating a healthy habitat. A healthy habitat starts at the base and has to do with the plants, including having native plants. Leave the dead stems and seed heads for winter so insects can use them and birds can eat the seeds. Don't rake up all your leaves. There are tons of invertebrates that love to go into leaf litter. When you rake, you're taking away some food and shelter. It can actually be beneficial for your soil. I rarely rake up my leaves. I just mulch it and leave it for animals. Eventually, that does lead to more nature coming to you. It's already out there. You just have to make a spot for it."



If You Visit

Rincon recommends checking out:

"Lake Michigan. The beach we have is phenomenal. We are unique in that we have this amazing shoreline. Our nature center is right next to Doctors Park, and the two beaches combined make the longest section of undeveloped beach in Milwaukee County. It's magical."



By Nicole Sweeney Etter

When Alverno nursing student **Ariyah Kirkendoll, class of 2023**, sees her primary care provider, she receives more than health care — she also gets mentorship and advice from a fellow Alverno sister. That's because her provider is family nurse practitioner and triple Alverno alumna **Clarissa Lawrence '12 '18 DNP '21**, the founder of Community Health PCS, a mobile in-home private practice in Milwaukee.

Kirkendoll's mother, who is also Lawrence's patient, first discovered the Alverno connection and asked if Lawrence would mentor her daughter. Lawrence, who is also a national mentor for the American Nurses Association and a nurse practitioner preceptor, immediately said yes.

"Mentorship is very dear to my heart," says Lawrence, who has mentored more than 50 students over the years. "Especially for my Alverno sisters, I always like to reach back and help."

Lawrence didn't find her own mentor until later in her undergraduate nursing program.

"Even though I was successful and had a strong family support system, if I would've had someone that actually understood what I was going through, I feel like I would've had a better experience," she says. "That's why I said, 'I'm going pay it forward.' Because I don't want anyone to feel like they're not supported."

For Lawrence, mentorship can mean sharing encouraging words over the phone or text, fielding questions about nursing education and life post-graduation, or giving advice on the best questions to ask during a job interview. Those small gifts of time are so important, she says.

"In the nursing and medical field, it's so easy for us to get wrapped up in our careers, but I think that it's just so fulfilling when you think about those who are behind you, who need you — they need to see you," Lawrence says. "Especially with women of color because we don't always have the role models or the family support. To lift them up when they need it means so much to me."

"My favorite thing is the people around me in my major. We keep each other on track, we text every day, remind each other of the small things. And that just comes from the closely knit community of Alverno."

— Ariyah Kirkendoll '23

Thanks to Lawrence's example, Kirkendoll is already thinking about getting her nurse practitioner degree and eventually opening her own practice.



“She’s an inspiration,” says Kirkendoll, who has aspired to become a nurse since middle school. “I think it’s important to see people who look like you or people who’ve had similar experiences doing what you’re doing and not only doing it but thriving.”

And Lawrence feels certain that Kirkendoll will thrive, too.

“I feel like she’s going to be an excellent nurse because the compassion is there,” Lawrence says. “And that’s so important because going into nursing is difficult, and especially with trying to overcome the pandemic and with burnout, sometimes we get compassion fatigue. So with her having that and being such a soft and gentle person, I think that is exactly what the nursing profession needs.”

“I’ve always wanted to be in health care. I initially wanted to be a pediatrician because I saw my pediatrician and that’s the first time I could recognize compassion in the workplace. Then I started to notice that nurses are more connected with the patients, they’re more interactive, they get to spend more time with the patients. So that’s when I decided to switch to nursing.”

— Kirkendoll



“My confidence has grown, not only as a nursing student, but as a woman as well. Just being around that environment is very inspiring, and I can see the growth within myself.”

— Kirkendoll

In Loving Memory

With fondness and gratitude, we remember two beloved faculty members who have recently passed away.



Mimi Czarnik, PhD, was a student-centered professor of English whose love of words and stories (especially fairy tales) lit a spark in her students. An avid reader, Mimi inspired a love for books not only in her students but in her colleagues as well. Her commitment and empathy for our students will long be remembered by those whose lives she touched.



Jim Factor, PhD, professor emeritus, was passionate about mathematics, and his contagious enthusiasm for the subject knew no bounds. He believed that if students learned the concepts of math first, the language and symbols used would come naturally. No doubt he helped many students who struggled with math grasp the concepts of algebra, geometry and trigonometry.

in Gratitude

For gifts received from January 1, 2022, through August 31, 2022.

In Honor of...

Class of 1997

Beth Monhollen '97

My daughter Diane

A. Virginia Andrews '92

Sister Margaret M. Earley '52

Alice Hatzenbeller '88

Jessica E. Giese '09

Chris Giese

Ellen Hopper '96, Outstanding Alum Award Recipient

Mari-Anne '91 and Donald Hechmann

Joybelle Kimlicka

Denise Sonberg

Dr. Clarissa Lawrence '12 '18 '21, Service to Community Award Recipient

Mari-Anne '91 and Donald Hechmann

Sister Andrea Lee, IHM, with gratitude for her innovative and passionate leadership

Anonymous

Judith W. Amberg '67

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Janice Stewart '71

Erica A. Perez '10

Jessica C. Wegner '95 '05

Denise Marie Traub

Maggie Wilmot

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Barbara Cerda '17

Mari-Anne '91 and Donald Hechmann

Jim Berkes

Mary E. Devitt '82 '02

Linda L. Bosetti '78

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Judith Grauwels '64

Father Lawrence (Larry) Heiman, C.P.P.S.

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Lou and Kathleen M. D'Ercole
 Patrick and Chris Flanagan
 Sylvia Gear
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 Chris and Michala Jacobson
 Dena Lieberman
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Joan Sattler '65

Sister Lenora T. Maier '52

Selma Peterson

Sister Helen Malcheski '57

Sister Agnes Marie Steiner '66

**Sister Margaret Mary Martin,
a great teacher**

Catherine Labinski '62

**William McEachern,
my dear husband**

Kristine McEachern

**My parents, who worked so
hard to see all of their five
children attend college**

Darlene Florek Ebeling '71

Mary Anna Novotny '54

Mary E. Rampson '99

Marciano and Rosita Perez

Raquel Perez '67

Kristin M. Pokrovac '14

Patrick Pokrovac

**Sister Poverello, a 1965 Pius XI
High School graduate**

Judy L. Peppard '66

Anthony Purpero

Anonymous

**Eva Santana Quintero and Adolfo
Curiel Quintero, my mom and dad**

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Marlene (Fortaw) Schuler '62

Thomas R. Schuler

Judith Ann Schwister '63

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Nancy V. Paddison

Carol (Suminski) Wagner '68

Virginia Dotson-Koch

Lois Gresholdt '91

John and Connie Kordsmeier

Francis Wagner

In Memoriam

We ask for your prayers for
 these alums who passed
 away between April 2, 2022,
 and August 31, 2022.

Marie Benz '73

Barbara (Barwick) Bielinski '63
 Keith A. (Lane) Carrington '08
 Barbara (Sauve) Christian '58
 Dolores (Konek) Chrzan '56
 Sandra Debyl '83
 Janice L. (Miller) Dennis '83
 Barbara (Reitz) Domarad '60
 Lynn I. (Therault) Erickson '92
 Mary Ann (Gully) Ferolo '62
 Corinne (Skowron) Finn '64
 Mary (O'Brien) Giorgio '66
 Sister Rosemary Hagen '54
 Mary Alyce (Heller) Hahn '63
 Sharon (Studer) Hamann '90
 Frances Henkel '65
 Geraldine M. Herdzina '66
 Audrey J. (Stittsburg) Kaske '90
 Cindy Knoblauch '92
 Marjory B. (Chen) Liu '59
 Sister Helen Malcheski '57
 Sister Mary Ann Mankowski '70
 Timi Michelle Manyo '05
 Sister Mary Catherine Martini '63
 Jacqueline T. Mueller '91
 Donna (Kenney) Neudauer '69
 Sister Alice Marie Nytes '49
 Mary Ann (Gillick) O'Neil '60
 Gloria Jean E. (Elmer) Otto '02
 Sister Virginia Pfaller '53
 Mari Pinzl '84
 Rosemary (Watry) Pozy '59
 Barbara A. (Thatcher) Pratt '90
 Rosemary (Sandrick) Rankin '65
 Sister Agatha Marie Sadler '68
 Judith Ann (Detrick) Schwister '63
 Frances (Hart) Smith '64
 Barbara (Modic) Stupek '84
 Marianne Unger '73 '98
 Barbara (Steffens) Walters '64
 Christine Lee (Fernandez) Williams '07
 Sister Anna Wolfe '58





Patricia Jensen's Inspiring Legacy

Longtime educator **Patricia Jensen '71, PhD**, was passionate about experiential learning and creating hospitable spaces for learning. In her 35 years of teaching at Alverno, Jensen — who died of ovarian cancer in November 2021 — was an inspiration to many students, alums and faculty.

Throughout the past year, her family, friends, colleagues and former students have joined together to establish the Patricia J. Jensen PhD Experiential Learning Scholarship to honor her legacy.

"Patricia left a mark on all of us. She inspired us to be strong women in the world, to have the courage to change the things that need changing, and to stand together supporting others on their journeys," shares **Rebecca Porter**, independent strategy consultant and former Alverno assistant professor, and **Linda Olszewski, '98 '08, DBA**, associate professor and director of Alverno's Business Division.

Olszewski and Porter, along with Jensen's spouse and retired Alverno faculty member **Sandra Graham, PhD**, established the scholarship to support future generations of women, just as Jensen did.

A gifted educator who embodied Alverno's unique approach to assessment learning, Jensen radiated compassion and a love of teaching. She was committed to knowing each student she taught as both an individual and as a professional.

"Patricia made everyone feel like they were the most important," says Olszewski, who was Jensen's student in the first cohort of Alverno's MBA program. "She had a powerful ability to lift up whomever it was she was working with."

Jensen started teaching at Alverno in 1979 and was one of the key faculty members involved in the formation of the Business and Management division's Weekend College program. Later, she worked on the development, implementation and administration of the Master of Arts (MA) in Education program and development of the MBA program.

As a scholar-teacher, Jensen's hope for her students was that they learn and grow to become competent and confident. "She would want her legacy to be that she really helped students to learn and grow and be really good at what they did. She cared so much about that," Graham says. "She wanted them to be solid citizens who could listen and discern, and then act from a mature and informed sense of the world around them."

Jensen helped Olszewski to realize she wanted to work in education.

"She was the one who saw in me that I could be a good educator," Olszewski recalls. "I've been trying to live up to that for her and because of her every day."

The endowed scholarship supports what Jensen really believed in — experiential learning. The scholarships will be awarded to undergraduate women studying business who demonstrate a commitment to the community, their families and Alverno's abilities.

Graham hopes the scholarship helps a student focus more on learning and provides a confidence boost. "Patricia was really about that — helping students to become more confident in their learning process."

— Dana McCullough

If you'd like to learn more about Patricia Jensen's story, please go to www.alverno.edu/magazine-post to read the full article online.

Help is needed to fully endow the Patricia J. Jensen PhD Experiential Learning Scholarship and benefit future generations of undergraduate students at Alverno. Make a gift today at alverno.edu/jensen.

PROPEL STUDENTS FORWARD.

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alverno.edu/give2022

Ashley

MAJOR: ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE

“As a single mother, my scholarship helps me to focus on my studies. I appreciate the help you are giving to me and other young women pursuing a college education. Words cannot describe how much of a positive impact you have made on my life!”



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