

LORAS

Spring/Summer 2024 **MAGAZINE**

SAE Baja
JJ Weyer, Jacob Westermeyer, Cam Menini,
Jacob Bonnett, Cooper Larsen
Advisor - Dr. Aaron Joy

DUHAWK RACING

Additional Resources
Chassis Reinforcement represents one of the biggest improvements we can see in our vehicles. Here are 4 ways to improve chassis strength, or structure.

Garage Progression
After extensive work with Loras and the Engineering Department, Duhawk Racing secured a dedicated space in a garage under Robison Hall. While many teams have fully equipped workshops, Duhawk Racing started from the ground up to acquire tools and build the infrastructure needed to succeed in our mission.

SAE Baja : DR-01
JJ Weyer, Jacob Westermeyer, Cam Menini,
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LORAS COLLEGE

Chassis
The chassis includes the frame and roll cage of the vehicle. The main objective is to ensure the driver will be protected in the event of a collision or a rollover incident by ensuring rigidity and integrity of the chassis during the operation by the driver.

Powertrain
The powertrain department does everything that moves the vehicle forward. It includes, but is not limited to, the engine, transmission, and rear axle. The powertrain is the heart of the vehicle and must be able to handle the stresses of the race.

Electronics
The electronics handles two safety systems on the vehicle. The engine shutdown control can be shut down by the driver in an unsafe event. The second system is a break light to ensure the driver is visible to other vehicles over large obstructions.

ON THIS DAY

April 17, 2024

Loras Legacy Symposium

Celebrating Academic Excellence



LORAS COLLEGE

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Loras, as a Catholic liberal arts college, creates a community of active learners, reflective thinkers, ethical decision-makers, and responsible contributors in diverse professional, social, and religious roles. Inspired by the Catholic intellectual tradition and rooted in the transformative power of learning, Loras enriches lives and serves humanity.

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SPRING/SUMMER 2024

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COVER PHOTO

Loras Legacy Symposium annual poster session held April 17, 2024.

Stay Connected f s i in X

President's Letter



Dear Loras Alumni and Friends,

I hope this message finds you and your families doing well.

This past academic year, Loras successfully implemented its new calendar. We started a week earlier, ended the first semester a week earlier, and began the second semester three weeks earlier. Our experiential term transitioned from January

to May, and we conducted Commencement three weeks earlier than in past years. Our rationale for making the academic calendar change included: aligning it more closely with other colleges and universities so that greater collaboration can occur, condensing the long break between semesters to permit greater campus engagement, and increasing opportunities for extended summer travel, internships, work, and career starts for students.

Another change we pursued was the restructuring of our academic infrastructure. We moved away from the six divisions and one school model to the establishment of three schools: the Noonan School of Business, Engineering, and Innovation; the School of Science and Health, and the School of Humanities and Education. The three-school model creates greater efficiencies, allows for new interdisciplinary collaboration, reduces faculty administrative duties, and increases teaching opportunities. I am grateful to our academic administration and faculty for their hard work in making all of this happen in a relatively short period of time.

My colleagues and I believe these efforts and many others included in this magazine will help to further advance Loras as we continue to navigate the challenging headwinds higher education is increasingly facing. We welcome your prayers and advocacy. Further, your financial support is ever more important. Please join me by generously participating in our historic ENDURING VALUES/VIBRANT VISION Campaign.

Thanks in advance for your consideration and deep care for Loras!

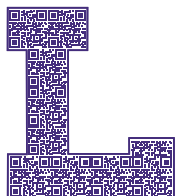
Pro Deo et Patria!

James E. Collins

James E. Collins ('84) President

Expand the Flock!

loras.edu/referral



FR. BARTA Remembrance

In Memoriam: Msgr. James Barta ('52)

By President **James E. Collins** ('84)

Msgr. Barta dedicated most of his professional life to Loras College before being called to serve as Episcopal Vicar in Cedar Rapids for the Archdiocese of Dubuque in 1993. In 2002, he was named Vicar General for the archdiocese of Dubuque where he served until retirement in 2010.

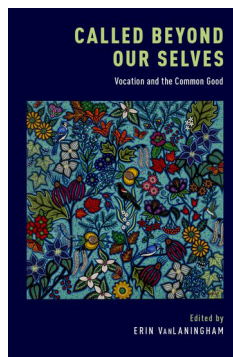
Msgr. Barta was an incredible mentor to me for most of my career and served as a great role model in all ways. His generous invitations for me to serve as director of alumni relations and assistant to the president, respectively, represented humbling moments and impactful opportunities for me. His willingness to preside at my matrimony to Lisa and baptize our six children will always be treasured.

I could write for hours about all the ways Msgr. Barta positively influenced my life, but his greatest story will be written by all of you. He loved teaching, counseling, serving, and reading. He loved the intellectual engagement he had with faculty during and after his time at Loras. He loved the curiosity and desire for learning our students often exhibited.

Mostly, Msgr. Barta would want you to know that he desired to live by the first two commandments and that he loved Loras with his whole heart!



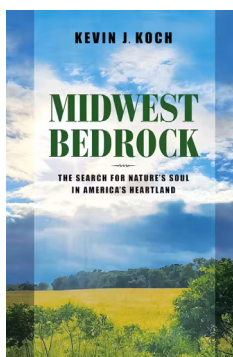
NEW FACULTY BOOKS



Called Beyond Our Selves, Vocation and the Common Good

Erin VanLaningham, PhD, Professor of English

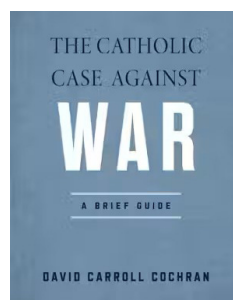
The concept of vocation in higher education helps undergraduates explore what it means to live a meaningful life. In this volume, the contributors propose that when we prioritize the well-being of all, our notions of success and purpose are elevated. The contributors offer pedagogies, models, and practices that orient vocation towards the well-being of the community, highlighting the importance of justice, compassion, dialogue, and action in our responses to the traumas of personal, historical, and communal life.



Midwest Bedrock: The Search for Nature's Soul in America's Heartland

Kevin J. Koch ('81), PhD, Professor of English

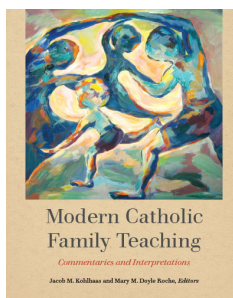
Heartland takes readers on a journey across all twelve Midwest states to natural settings that defy typical stereotypes of the Midwest landscape. Featured locations include Effigy Mounds in the Driftless Land of Iowa, Wisconsin's 1100-mile Ice Age Trail, Kansas' Flint Hills, Hocking Hills in Ohio, and more. The book also explores a sense of place that delves into history, geology, local conversations, and personal narrative.



Catholic Case Against War: A Brief Guide

David C. Cochran, PhD, Professor of Politics

Cochran's book draws on decades of papal statements and Vatican documents to detail Catholic social teaching's critique of war and advocacy for its alternatives, as well as how consistent it is with what empirical and historical research reveals about the nature of armed conflict in the world today. This is Cochran's sixth book.



Modern Catholic Family Teaching

Jacob M. Kohlhaas, PhD, Associate Professor of Moral Theology & Director of the Honors Program

A first of its kind, academic commentary on magisterial documents that constitute the primary sources of contemporary Catholic teaching on the family. With a diverse and international list of contributors, each chapter engages a moment in this tradition to invite critical academic engagement with Catholic family teaching, a topic

that increasingly bears weight across many areas of theological and ethical consideration. This new approach offers greater perspective on the recent tradition's growth and development, equipping scholars and students of theology to engage the pressing questions of our time.

FACULTY/ STAFF NOTES

The following individuals have been recognized for their outstanding performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service by being awarded tenure and/or promotion effective with the 2024-2025 academic year.

AWARDED TENURE AND PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Emily DiFilippo, PhD
Assistant Professor of Spanish

Erin McGovern, MBA
Assistant Professor of
Accounting

Aaron Joy, PhD
Assistant Professor of
Engineering

PROMOTED TO FULL PROFESSOR

Valerie Bell, PhD
Associate Professor of
Criminal Justice

Kate McCarthy Gilmore, PhD
Associate Professor of Spanish,
Associate Dean of the School of
Humanities and Education

Dave Pitt, PhD
Associate Professor of
Theology

PROMOTED TO EMERITUS PROFESSOR

Kevin Koch ('81), PhD,
Professor of English

Dave Oostendorp, PhD
Professor of Chemistry

David Salyer, PhD
Associate Professor of
Education, Director of the
Teacher Education Program

RETIRING FACULTY

Kevin Koch ('81), PhD, Professor of English.....	41 YEARS OF SERVICE
Dave Oostendorp, PhD, Professor of Chemistry.....	37 YEARS OF SERVICE
David Salyer, PhD, Associate Professor of Teacher Education.....	25 YEARS OF SERVICE
Lynn Gallagher, EdD, Director of the Lynch Disability & Cultural Resource Center, Assistant Professor of Disability Studies.....	13 YEARS OF SERVICE

New MA in Disability Studies

A groundbreaking, first-in-the region graduate program will be added to Loras' academic offerings beginning this fall.

This disability studies master's program is well-suited for administrators, social service professionals, educators, advocates, individuals with disabilities, and family members, enabling them to take on leadership roles in service provision, formulation or modification of disability policy, and advocacy for removing barriers to full inclusion in public and private organizations and society at large.

This innovative program aligns seamlessly with Loras College's commitment to inclusivity and Catholic social teaching by serving and supporting individuals often living on the margins of society.

In 1986, the Lynch Disability Resource and Cultural Center was established at Loras to serve students with disabilities. Evolving beyond individualized accommodations and primary learning disability or attention deficit disorder support, the center expanded services to include the Autism Resources for Career in Higher Education (ARCH) program.

"Recognizing a growing number of students on the spectrum, we adapted our approach to provide not only academic support but also essential social and career preparation," stated Lynn Gallagher, disability studies program director. "The master's program is the next evolution for us."

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED

"We are so pleased to partner with Drake Law School and St. Ambrose University to offer additional opportunities for Loras students to pursue advanced degrees at an accelerated pace," shares Donna Heald, provost and academic dean at Loras.

Drake Law 3+3

Loras students can earn both a bachelor's degree and a law degree in six years thanks to a new partnership with Drake University Law School. This agreement is in addition to an existing 3+3 program with the University of Iowa College of Law.

The agreement streamlines admission to apply during a student's junior year. Loras students accepted as part of this program are guaranteed a \$5,000 scholarship annually, renewable for three years, in addition to any other scholarships awarded.

St. Ambrose Physician Assistant Studies

Loras students who have met all St. Ambrose University MPAS Program admission requirements and anticipate completion of their baccalaureate degree by May prior to the MPAS start date will apply for admission to the MPAS program prior to the November 1 deadline through Centralized Application Service for Physician Assistants (CASPA). Two Loras College students who meet a minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale will be guaranteed an interview during the MPAS admissions process.

St. Ambrose Public Health

A new 4+1 Master of Public Health articulation agreement was recently completed with long-time partner St. Ambrose University. This partnership is a great opportunity for students with an interest in public health to advance their studies with a master's degree, complementing Loras' new public health major, which started in fall 2022.

Loras students are eligible to take up to thirteen credits of graduate coursework through St. Ambrose while enrolled as an undergraduate. The public health graduate program is open to students with majors from any disciplinary area.

Ultimate Athlete Study



In collaboration with Stanford University, Dr. Elaina Biechler, associate professor of kinesiology, is the lead for one of the testing grounds for a study, aiming to uncover the genetic determinants of human aerobic performance. Called the ELITE study, Biechler is conducting tests on one hundred elite athletes, playing a crucial role in the larger 10,000-subject study.

“My role thus far is as a data collection site, which has been awesome. I currently

have three student researchers who help with the data collection sessions,” Biechler shares. “I am an endurance athlete and have been for twenty-plus years, so it has been so fun for me to get to meet with like-minded people, and connect with other athletes in the Midwest. We’ve had athletes coming from Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Des Moines, and Madison area so far!”

The study looks at various genetic markers to determine if there is a link with

aerobic performance and puts the subjects into the elite category from a physiological perspective. Additionally, once the data set is done, they eventually will be able to compare these genetic markers with diseased populations.

Biechler also serves as the director of the Master of Arts in Coaching Leadership graduate program.

elite.stanford.edu/about

Dewey Celebrates Catholic Schools Week

In honor of Catholic Schools Week, on January 30 Dewey helped morning drop-off at St. Columbkille Elementary to kick things off!

Students were thrilled to get high-fives and hugs from Dewey as they arrived at school. After the warm welcome, Dewey joined in on the morning meeting, sharing Duhawk spirit and handing out Dewey stickers.



30 Years of Honors

By Jacob M. Kohlhaas,
Associate Professor of Moral Theology
& Director of the Honors Program

As Loras graduates received their diplomas at the commencement ceremony this spring, ten wore purple stoles, signifying their completion of the Loras College Honors program requirements. These ten students also represent the Honors program's thirtieth graduating class.

Since the Honors program was launched in the early 1990s, 420 graduates have completed the program requirements. The first class of twelve graduates received their diplomas in 1995.

In the subsequent decades, classes ranged from only two graduates in 2003 to twenty-four in the class of 2019. Since its inception, six faculty members have directed the program, and many more faculty and staff have supported its curriculum through teaching and mentoring.

In 2013, the program was re-envisioned with an emphasis on student-led research, cultural competency, and community-based learning. Dr. Erin VanLaningham, professor of English, directed the program through the implementation of this new model. In 2016, her work in the program was recognized by Iowa Campus Compact, where she received the Emerging Innovation Award.

This spring Loras hosted the Upper Midwest Regional Honors Conference annual meeting, inviting two hundred honors students, faculty, and support staff from colleges and universities across the Midwest to our campus. This year's theme was, "Passion Meets Purpose," inviting discussions on vocation and service to the common good, topics central to the mission and identity of Loras.



30 Years of Honors Reunion - *Join Us!*

Homecoming 2024
Saturday, October 5

CREATIVE MEDIA STUDENTS DOMINATE FOR 15 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

Once again, creative media students earn the top honor in the state, winning in just about every category at the annual Iowa College Media Association Conference, securing the prestigious Overall Video Excellence Award for an incredible fifteenth year. Their exceptional work across various categories, from documentary to sportscasting, short films to music/comedy, solidifies Loras' dominance in the state's media landscape.



Medicare and More: Through a Community Lens

Last semester, a new Call to Participation class generated buzz across campus. Unsurprisingly, the second semester offering quickly filled up with a waiting list. The class, Medicare and More, taught by Professor of Social Work **Nancy Zachar Fett** ('90), explores major governmental programs that impact underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized communities.



As one of the final courses in the general education sequence, it requires students to compare two or more systems of governance and Catholic social teaching. Students reflect on social issues like housing, violence, food insecurity, healthcare, and family poverty, as well as the governmental response—while also comparing these programs to how other democratic societies handle similar issues worldwide.

"Students are expected to read and discuss what they learn before I provide a PowerPoint lecture on the first day to familiarize them with the history, basics of the program, eligibility, and what the program offers," Fett explains. "This prepares them for a speaker from the community on the second day. On the third day, we complete an activity or reflect and dig deeper into the program."

Midway through the semester, students learn first-hand about the impact of policies, funding, and laws by facilitating focus groups in the community. The spring class visited Crescent Health Center, Fountain of Youth, and various programs at Four Oaks.

Students listened to individuals who have experienced empowerment and success in their lives while participating in governmental programs and the barriers they have faced. Then, the class developed asset-based projects informed and inspired by these conversations.

One project was a linktr.ee guide to direct users to information needed for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Dubuque—how and where to apply, details about the EBT card, additional programs like WIC, and more. Another project

produced a SNAP Map to help visualize the nearest SNAP retailer in Dubuque. The map also indicates if the retailer accepts WIC, as some only accept SNAP.

"The inspiration to create the map came from Dr. Jake Kurczek, who assisted with our class and presented on community-based research where he showed a map that illustrated the cross-sections between demographic data and food deserts in Dubuque," shared project member **Ava Bradley** ('24).

Medicare and More was part of a course redesign grant, funded and collaboratively designed by the Center for Experiential Learning and the Archbishop Kucera Center, combining Catholic social teaching and asset-based community development (ABCD). Current Civic Action Faculty Fellows, Dr. David Pitt and Dr. Andrew Massena, led efforts to incorporate the asset-based community development into the faculty grant and provided training in Catholic social teaching and how it complements and supports an ABCD method in the classroom.

Funding for the Medicare and More focus groups and participants was awarded by the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, supported by Universitate for the development of service-learning in Catholic higher education. Loras was one of thirty-three colleges and universities worldwide to receive the grant in 2023.

"This class really opened my eyes to these realities, and I will forever be grateful," reflects **Alexys Abate** ('24). "I feel as though this class helped me to become a more well-rounded individual and have more empathy and understanding for others."

WHAT IS A CALL TO PARTICIPATION COURSE?

As part of the general education curriculum, Foundations, Explorations, & Vocations, the Call to Participation courses are the final course in the vocations category and focus on developing the disposition of responsible contributing.

Courses engage questions about the nature, limits, and diverse forms of democracy. Students employ a Catholic social teaching framework, and reflect on their ever-evolving understanding of community needs and the grounds on which they are called to participate in meeting these needs.

CIVIC ACTION FACULTY FELLOWS

Developed as part of the 2017 Campus Compact Civic Action Plan, the Civic Action Faculty Fellows are faculty leadership positions in the Center for Experiential Learning (CEL). Inspired by and designed to support Loras' Civic Action Plan, the Fellows, both past and present, have worked as a team with the CEL to significantly advance Loras' distinct civic mission. They contribute to efforts to institutionalize a culture of practice, engagement, and innovation.

Fellows from 2021–24, Drs. Andrew Massena, David Pitt, Kenny Loui, and Professor Ryan Decker focused on identifying, supporting, promoting, and expanding the use of civic engagement and high-impact practices within academic majors at the College. They were supported in their work by past Civic Action Faculty Fellows, Drs. Jake Kurczek, Lisa Garoutte, and Sarah Cassella.

Graceann's Inspiring Commitment to Social Change

In the summer of 2020, as a high school senior, **Graceann Beckett** ('24) received a graduation gift—a book—that would set the course for a transformative journey. *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, by Father Gregory Boyle S.J., the founder of Homeboy Industries, opened her eyes to a world of boundless compassion and sparked a passion for social change.

Homeboy Industries, established in 1988 in Los Angeles, is the world's largest gang intervention, rehabilitation, and re-entry program. Graceann, drawn by Father Boyle's work, organized a campus book club, delving into three of his books and fostering a community of individuals passionate about compassion and justice.

Motivated by a desire to contribute directly, this past summer, she spent eight weeks at the Los Angeles Catholic Worker—close to Homeboy Industries. The aim of the Catholic



Worker movement is to live in accordance with the justice and charity of Jesus Christ. Each summer, any adult interested can join them for six weeks. It is an opportunity to live and work with a gospel-based community, to discern one's vocation, or just to deepen one's social justice experience on a first-hand basis.

Graceann helped prepare and serve meals on Skid Row and engaged in witnesses for social change. Her experiences, including an arrest during a protest, highlighted the importance of applying theology in action and fueled her dedication to working for justice. She even got to personally invite Father Boyle to Dubuque when their paths crossed at Delores Mission, his former parish that she often attended.

As a double major in philosophy and religious studies and theology, Graceann embodies the spirit of a compassionate and dedicated leader. Now a Loras senior, she plans to pursue graduate studies in theology, aiming to continue her on-the-ground work and apply theology in the real world.

In the words of **Stacia McDermott** ('03 M '23), director of spiritual life and peace and justice at Loras, "Graceann is not afraid of confronting difficult issues and deeply desires to be a person of faith and integrity. Her leadership has made a tremendous impact on her peers."

Reaching out across campus and the broader community, Graceann rallied support and paved the way for Father Boyle's campus visit this March.



Cherished Belonging: The Healing Power of Love in Divided Times

Fr. Gregory Boyle Presentation & Book Signing

With Homeboy Industries as a backdrop, this talk explored the power of love to transform the disunity that currently keeps us from each other. Loving is our home, and knowing that is to never be homesick again.

Father Greg Boyle is renowned for transforming LA gang members into "kinship" advocates. After his remarks, Loras students participated in a Q&A panel with Father Boyle. River Lights bookstore hosted a book signing of *The Whole Language*.

Archbishop Kucera
Center for Catholic
Intellectual
and Spiritual

Andrew P. Studdert
Chair of Business
Ethics & Crisis
Leadership

The Fr. Ray
Herman Peace
and Justice
Center

Pathway to Participation:
Enriching and
Deepening Vocation
NetVue grant

EVENT SPONSORS

Admirela's Mission for Peace & Justice

For **Admirela A. Balic** ('96), a life of accomplishment means deploying knowledge and commitment to serve humanity's highest values. As the new senior rule of law advisor for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), she lives out that belief daily.

"Having originally come from Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country that experienced genocide and a three-year long brutal war, I learned to empathize with people who are facing conflict at no fault of their own—innocent civilians, women and children, cruelly swept up as a strategy of war," Admirela shares. Witnessing her own home in flames and family members in a concentration camp fueled her determination to acquire skills to "alleviate some of the suffering around the world."

"Bad experiences teach us humility. They make us more human and vulnerable, therefore more amenable to empathizing with others."

That empathy and drive took her from the UN peacekeeping mission in post-war Kosovo to coordinating humanitarian relief for Rwandan genocide refugees in Tanzania. She worked across forty countries combating transnational organized crime and terrorism from Vienna before supporting anti-corruption and anti-piracy efforts in Kenya and Somalia.

Now in South Sudan, over a decade after independence but still plagued by fragility and community violence, Admirela advises an international team promoting dialogues between communities to support reconciliation and prevent violent clashes. Abductions of women and children, cattle raiding, and killings are some of the most concerning crimes affecting these communities. The establishment of Traditional Leaders Courts as an inter-communal dispute resolution and justice mechanism was requested by a regional peace agreement to help ease grievances and promote lasting peace by ensuring that there is accountability for such serious crimes.

"Accountability for these crimes needs to be ensured, not only to prevent them in the future, but also to ensure there is no impunity," Admirela states. Her role delivers on UNMISS's mandate from the UN Security Council to build durable peace, strengthen rule of law and governance, and protect civilians from violence.

Looking back, Admirela expresses gratitude for life's trials: "Bad experiences teach us humility. They make us more human and vulnerable, therefore more amenable to empathizing with others." That hard-earned empathy, combined with formidable experience, fuels Admirela's vital work for justice and human dignity around the world.



CFA INSTITUTE RESEARCH CHALLENGE



Students **Emma Coates** ('24), **Chase Hefel** ('25), **Tyler Kratochvil** ('24), and **Lori Silva** ('26) represented Loras while competing in the 2024 sub-regional competition hosted by the CFA Society of Iowa. Each team from the nine schools represented evaluated John Deere (Deere & Company), submitting a written report and making an oral presentation with a buy or sell recommendation to a panel of CFA judges.

The Loras finance major is recognized by the CFA Institute as a University Affiliate Program (UAP) with curriculum preparing students for the first CFA exam, even before graduation. Along with our minor in financial planning and wealth management that meets Certified Financial Planning (CFP) education requirements, Loras stands out as one of the few small, private institutions providing both paths.

Learn more at loras.edu/finance.

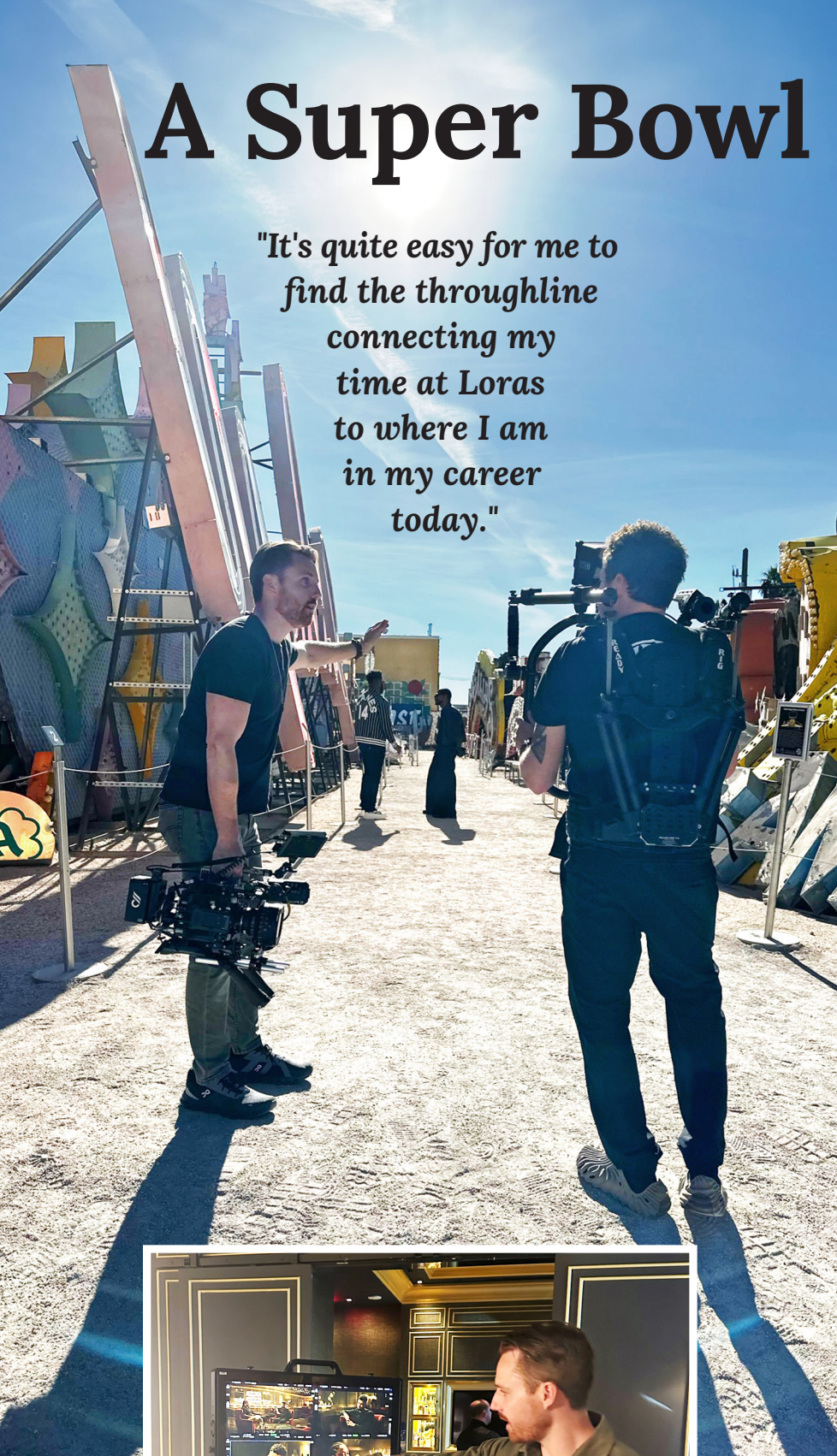
Loras Take Second in Big Stock Pitch

Zack Ehrler ('24), **Andrew Hefel** ('24), **Chase Hefel** ('25), and **Austin Jones** ('25) finished in second place in the first Big Stock Pitch Competition hosted by Appalachian State University and competing against teams from across the country.

Teams pitched a stock that they believed presents an impressive return opportunity backed by fundamental analysis and risk assessment, including ESG considerations. Each team submitted a slide deck for the initial round of judging. Then, as one of the top three teams, the Loras team presented via Zoom to an esteemed panel of judges. For the second-place finish, the Loras team split a \$500 prize

A Super Bowl Spectacle.....

"It's quite easy for me to find the throughline connecting my time at Loras to where I am in my career today."



For football fans, the Super Bowl is the pinnacle sporting event of the year. But the drama on the field is only half the story. Behind the scenes, a massive production crew works tirelessly to create the electrifying in-stadium experience and global broadcast that fans have come to expect. And this year's big game also featured the talents of three creative media (formerly media studies) alumni.

BLENDING ARTISTRY & STORYTELLING

Sean Brennan ('14) has carved out a unique niche blending beautiful imagery with compelling storytelling. As a freelance director of photography in Los Angeles and New York, his projects span the gamut from feature documentaries to branded content, short films to broadcast features.

"After a decade, I've moved much closer to finding that sweet spot of blending look and story," Brennan says. "It's becoming easier to make pretty images, but making images that support and enhance a story takes more thought and artistry. I'm certainly striving for that in my work now."

Brennan's artistry was on full display during this February's Super Bowl pregame segment with artist Usher on CBS Sports. He served as cinematographer for a five-minute feature exploring the history of Black entertainment in Las Vegas through the lens of Usher's career in the city. Working alongside Director Niya Walker, Brennan's visuals provided the perfect complement to the intimate interview with the iconic performer.

It's an impressive addition to a portfolio crafted through relentless hard work and a passion for visual storytelling sparked at Loras College. "It's quite easy for me to find the throughline connecting my time at Loras to where I am in my career today," Brennan affirms.

In the rapidly evolving media landscape, he credits Loras' cross-disciplinary education for accelerating his professional development. "Learning hard skills like editing and shooting has made me a more versatile tool on my projects," he explains. "It's allowed me to have educated conversations with the other members of a project, which ultimately leads to a better finished piece."

Brennan is well-positioned to help shape the emerging narrative. His ability to merge stunning visuals with compelling stories is a masterclass in the art of engaging an audience. By fusing technical expertise with creative passion, he's ensuring the tales that deserve to be told won't be forgotten.

Behind the Scenes

BRINGING THE WOW FACTOR

At the center of this Super Bowl is **Jeremy Havens** ('07), director of technical operations for Van Wagner Productions. His company is responsible for executing the in-game presentation elements for eight of the country's top ten sporting events, including the graphics, videos, hosting, and overall spectacle fans see during Super Bowl broadcasts.

"We over-plan and over-wire to make sure the fans don't notice when issues arise," says Havens. And the preparation truly is staggering.

Months before the big game, Havens and his team start planning site visits to audit the stadium's existing video, networking, and infrastructural capabilities. Even brand-new, state-of-the-art venues require major enhancements, like the three miles of fiber optic cable and thirty-four network switches his crew installed in Las Vegas' Allegiant Stadium for Super Bowl LVIII.

When Super Bowl week finally arrives, Havens oversees a crew of 150 tasked with constructing the complex, multi-faceted control room that powers the show. This includes specialized broadcast systems, production servers, and dedicated networks for the editing teams capturing footage in real-time.

Havens' ability to lead this intense, high-stakes operation was honed right here at Loras in the creative media program under Craig Schaefer. "He allowed access to the systems and invited me to be a part of as much as I wanted to be," recalls Havens, who embraced every opportunity from running cameras to editing and motion graphics.

"I gained the ability to always think ahead and anticipate what was needed," he says, crediting experiences like upgrading the Rock Bowl's video board and producing content for football games. More importantly, he learned "to be an active learner and responsible contributor"—core values that have guided his meteoric rise in the industry.



ANIMATING BRANDS TO LIFE

In the high-stakes world of big-budget advertising, brands can't leave anything to chance. That's where **Connor Stickney** ('14) and the team at Animated Storyboards come in. As a senior producer, he helps translate scripts into dynamic animated visualizations for testing with audiences.

Stickney channels his creativity and drive into shaping some of the biggest marketing campaigns in the world. By fusing innovative technology with meticulous production, he's become an indispensable part of the process that turns bold brand visions into polished realities on screens big and small.

"I'm proud to have three commercials in the Super Bowl this year which I produced test spots early in their production process," says Stickney, whose work included visualization testing for ads by Hellmann's, Nerds Gummy Clusters, and Doritos Dinamita.

Stickney played a pivotal role upfront. "Animated storyboards are a small yet integral part of most ad agencies' or brand teams' full production process," he explains. "What I produce is an animated version of commercial scripts, and the videos are shown to test audiences for feedback."

At Animated Storyboards' state-of-the-art facilities, Stickney orchestrates a seamless process blending cutting-edge technology with creative ingenuity. The company's 8,000 square-foot motion capture studio allows a team of artists and animators to transform rough storyboards into vivid 3D animatics, breathing life into concepts before significant budget is committed to live production.

"Loras has a killer creative media program that I fully immersed myself in," Stickney recalls. Loras provided more than just technical training, however. It was a formative experience that taught him how to think creatively, collaborate, and balance work with an active lifestyle.

See animated and final commercial at loras.edu/superbowl.

RIVALRY UNITE THROUGH LEADERSHIP

Every two years, the American Rivers Conference hosts the Student-Athlete Leadership Conference. Seven Loras off-season athletes were nominated by their coaches to attend.

"It was nice to know our coaches thought about us in that way," said **Mary Bean** ('25), a soccer player from Cedar Rapids. "I was excited to go, but also nervous. I didn't know who any of you guys were," volleyball player **Cat (Catherine) Meyer** ('24) shares with a smile.

The highlight of the weekend was the keynote speaker, Nate Wilson-Traisman, who presented on the mental side of sports and performance anxiety.



"That was my favorite part of the conference," said **Max Golembiewski** ('25). "He told us not to go against your performance anxiety. Finding ways to make this better was a cool thing to listen to."

"There was one slide I took a picture of," **Katie Callahan** ('26) shares. "Everyone says the anxiety is normal, but hearing about techniques on how to use it to your advantage was really helpful."

Sixty-five students from nine schools attended the weekend conference in Cedar Rapids. Junior football player **Preston Petrussek** ('24) said he enjoyed meal time the best. "We got to

WOMEN'S TRACK & FIELD CROWNED NCAA INDOOR CHAMPIONS

Top-ranked Loras College women's track and field team were crowned the NCAA Indoor Champions for the second time in the last three seasons. **Emma Seipel** ('25) became the first Duhawk with title-

winning marks in the long jump. **Grace Alley** ('24) finished the meet in historic fashion, winning two individual titles in the pentathlon and the high jump, and earning three All-America honors.



"...ALTHOUGH WE ARE RIVALS, WE CAN WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GREATER GOOD."

know each other, and athletes from other conference teams. We never get to do that."

Teams were also mixed to create student-led productions of public service videos that the conference will share during Division III Week. "My favorite part was making the ARC videos with people from other schools," shared **Bryan Basinger** ('25). "It almost felt weird working together with people from different schools in the ARC to make the best video possible. It showed me that although we are rivals, we can work together for the greater good."

When asked what they will bring back to their teams, **Elaina Schroeder** ('26) replied, "I want to apply the different leadership methods we talked about at the conference along with different opportunities to be more inclusive. I will also be more informed on how to help my teammates cope with the anxiety they feel while playing volleyball and hopefully be an outlet and a helpful source for them."

The Student-Athlete Leadership Conference provided valuable lessons for the Loras athletes on leadership, mental performance, and collaboration across competitive lines.

The US Track & Field and Cross Country Coaches Association awarded Head Coach **Matt Jones** ('05) the National Women's Coach of the Year, while Alley earned the National Women's Field Athlete of the Year accolade.



DUSTIN BOHREN

ZEB GNIDA

ERIC KINKAID



NCAA DIVISION III WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Three Loras College Duhawk wrestlers finished as All-Americans at the conclusion of the No. 10 team's season. Senior **Zeb Gnida** (174-lbs) went 4-1 with a third-place finish. Sophomore **Eric Kinkaid** (149-lbs) went 4-2 with a fourth place finish. Another sophomore, **Dustin Bohren** (165-lbs), went 4-3 with a seventh-place finish.



MEN'S VOLLEYBALL WIN CCIW TOURNAMENT

Duhawks won the 2024 College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin Tournament Championship over Carthage College (24-1). They completed their historic season in the Elite Eight of the NCAA DIII Finals.



MEN'S BASKETBALL WIN A-R-C TOURNAMENT

Men's basketball win the program's third American Rivers Conference Tournament title, defeating the top-seeded Nebraska Wesleyan University Prairie Wolves, 85-76.

Student Internship Spotlights

NAME
Hannah Quinones

HOMETOWN
Peosta, Iowa

MAJOR
Psychology

CLUBS/ACTIVITIES
Honors, Advanced Research Lab, Wind Ensemble, Delta Epsilon Sigma

GRADUATION YEAR
2024



Hannah Quinones ('24) interned at John Deere in labor relations this spring. In this role, she assisted employees with administrative issues like disability, FMLA, and general questions. Hannah says John Deere is the perfect place to learn about this industry first-hand.

This internship helped her develop project management skills, learn widely used HR programs, and understand professional work dynamics. Hannah credits Loras College for preparing her for this opportunity through resume help, faculty advice, and training to work effectively on goals with others. Hannah says she thrived at John Deere thanks to Loras' support and her psychology studies.

Grace Kopcio ('26) is sparking success at her internship with the Dubuque Fire Department. Tasked with ensuring city-wide safety, Grace diligently worked on the fire protection database system, "The Compliance Engine," to make sure businesses and properties across Dubuque are up to date on their fire protection systems.

"I absolutely love working directly with Fire Marshal Kevin Esser, Assistant Fire Marshal Derek Paulson, and the Dubuque community to provide safety and protection to the city of Dubuque."

Before this internship, Grace worked as an assistant data quality analyst for the fire department's database provider, motivating her to reach out to the department to help improve their compliance.



NAME Grace Kopcio

HOMETOWN Aurora, Illinois

MAJOR Business - Marketing

CLUBS/ACTIVITIES Golf

GRADUATION YEAR 2026

NAME
Steve Marfo

HOMETOWN
Ghana

MAJOR
Kinesiology

CLUBS/ACTIVITIES
Black Student Union, Global Student Union

GRADUATION YEAR
2026

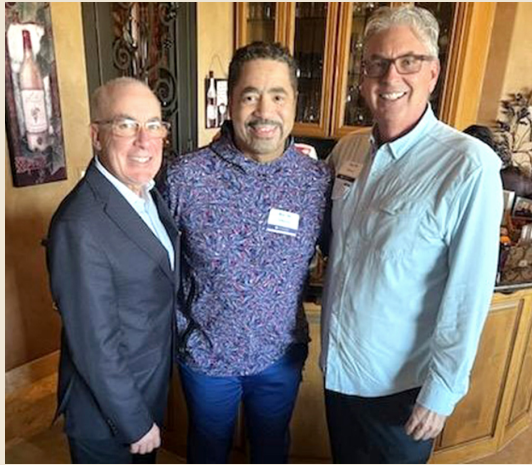


Kinesiology major **Steve Marfo** ('26) gained valuable experience at Hills & Dales as an intern. He assists clients with daily tasks, monitors their health, and provides emotional support. Steve says seeing clients thrive under his care is incredibly rewarding. This opportunity allows him to develop skills in patient care, communication, and teamwork that are essential for any healthcare role.

Originally from Ghana, Steve advises approaching the role with empathy, patience, and eagerness to learn. Steve's internship taught him daily that caring for others is a privilege. He looks forward to applying these lessons as he pursues his passion for healthcare.

HOME
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LORAS 2024

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OCT.
4, 5, 6




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States Represented **39**

Duhawk Day Events **25**



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FIELDHOUSE



TURNS 100

For over eighty years

the Loras College Fieldhouse stood as the heart of campus life. Completed in 1924, the Romanesque Revival gymnasium hosted thousands of athletic events, concerts, speeches, and more. On March 6, 1925, Columbia played football against the University of Notre Dame featuring a halftime dedication ceremony.

Beyond athletic competitions, the gym played host to homecomings and prom dances, featured speakers like George Will and Bowie Kuhn. It also served as the concert venue for popular musical acts, including Guy Lombardo, Boston Pops Orchestra, the Four Freshman, and the John Philip Sousa Band conducted by Sousa, himself.

The end of an era arrived on February 17, 2007, when the final varsity basketball games were played on the hardwoods. Hosting Buena Vista University, the women claimed a 69-63 victory, and the men won 68-56, closing the Fieldhouse's legacy on a high note.