

THE MAGAZINE OF

gordon

COLLEGE

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Gordon happenings!

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Up Front

with President Hammond

In January 1877, evangelist Dwight L. Moody arrived in Boston—ready and eager to share revival messages in his native Massachusetts. Joining him was Boston local pastor A. J. Gordon.

Together, they built a large wooden tabernacle just one block from Gordon's Clarendon Street Baptist Church. Seating 6,000 people, about four times the capacity of our campus's Chapel, the space filled up every night from January through May. Thousands packed in to hear the gospel, sing gospel songs, and come to know the Lord for the first time. What a great moment in Christian history!

When Moody moved on that spring, Gordon continued to care for the masses of new believers. Before long, he was overwhelmed by their eagerness to serve the world through ministry, missions, and social renewal.

Gordon helped these new believers establish a halfway house for women who left a lifestyle of prostitution. He partnered with other churches to provide clean water and reach out to Boston's growing immigrant communities. And yet, he knew he needed to do more.

Inspired by a colleague's missionary school in England, he founded one of his own: the Boston Missionary Training School. When classes started in October 1889, they were open to anyone including people of color, Jewish converts, and women—regardless of whether they had the means to pay.

Within just a few years, graduates of his school were serving in places like Korea, China, Russia, Algeria, Congo, Barbados, Sudan, and Australia. Closer to home, they served the Native American tribes of Oklahoma and worked among the poor in Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire.

This is the legacy Gordon College inherits: preparing the people of God for the work of God throughout the world.



✉ president@gordon.edu
📷 @mike_hammond_gc

Do you see yourself in this story? Do you see yourself in the people of God?

1 Peter 2:9-10 reads: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

Our identity in Christ, and as part of his people, is not passive. It is a calling. We are chosen and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

I appreciate the way Dorothy L. Sayers explained the work of God as a calling in her essay "Why Work?": "The church's approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours and to come to church on Sundays. What the church should be telling him is this: that the very first demand that his religion makes upon him is that he should make good tables."

Or as President Dick Gross often quoted Elton Trueblood: "Holy shoddy is still shoddy."

God has a plan for us, and that plan is to not live mediocre lives. When we do the work of God in the world, we get to celebrate the goodness and excellence that he empowers us to live out as his people.

This is why we continue to invest deeply in the campus and students of Gordon College. This is why we believe a Christian institution of higher education has a place in New England. Because we are called.

This is how we will continue to thrive: by embracing the timeless truths of our faith in Jesus Christ and continuing to adopt the best research and innovation for the future, as we continue in that mission: to prepare the people of God for the work of God.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike D. Hammond".

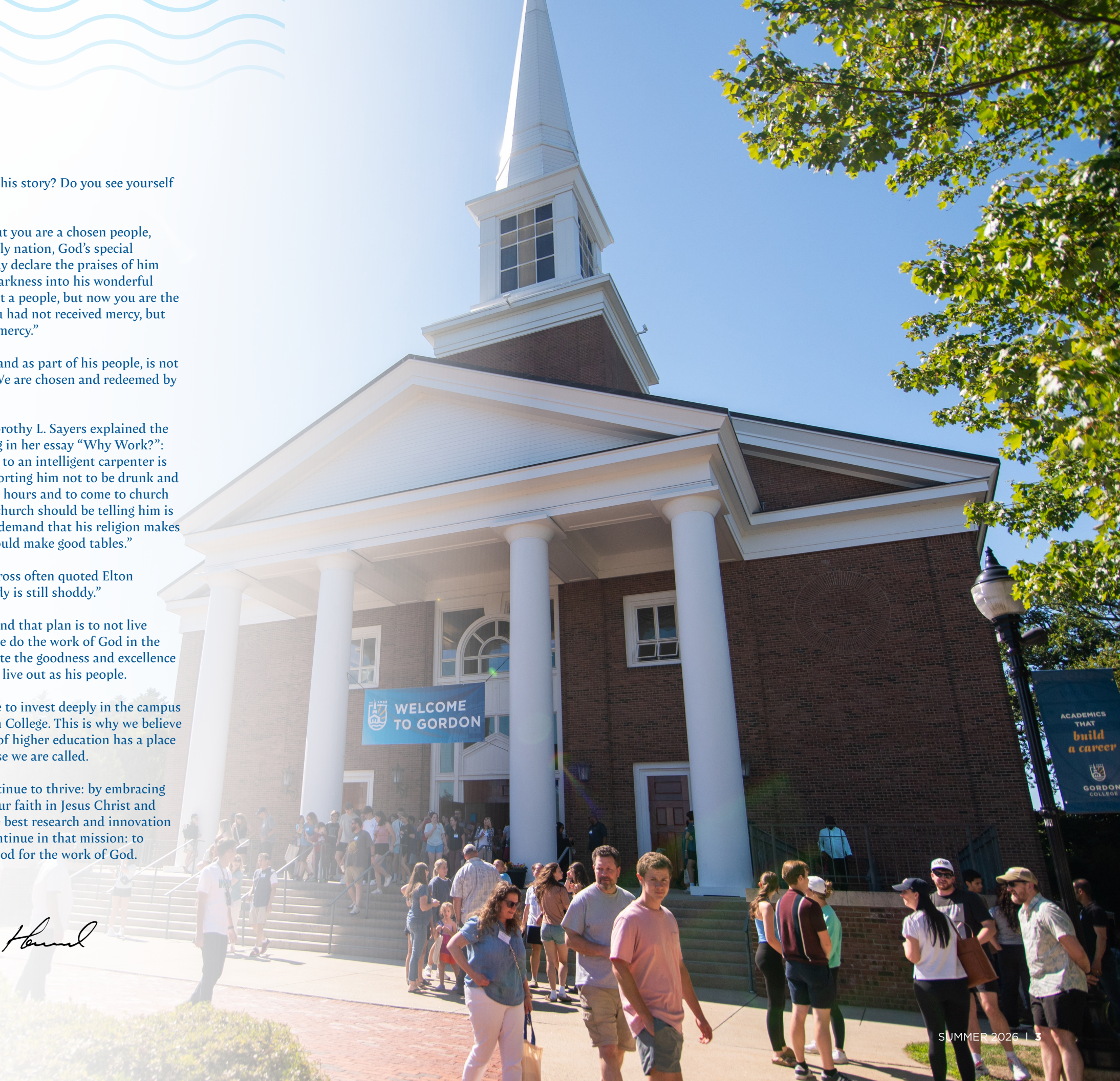


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A Gordon STILLPOINT

This spring, I had the privilege of competing in Gordon's 2026 JUD Talks competition. The topic of my speech was "The Beauty of Being Bored," inspired by one of my friends.

To varying degrees, we have all internalized the idea that busier is better, and all too often that's where we find our identity. We think we have to do everything, all the time. We think of ourselves like God.

How do we break out of this mindset? We deliberately build still points into our busy schedules. We learn to let ourselves be bored.

It is one thing to say that, though, and quite another to do it practically.

My advice is to start with one minute of boredom a day. Just one minute. No screens, no music, and no tasks—just you and your thoughts.

By "boredom" I do not mean a lack of doing things as much as a lack of intention to do things. It is okay to think to yourself, daydream, pray, or let your mind wander; the point is not to set up a goal to achieve something. This type of boredom is a purposeful lack of productivity.

I practiced my speech for several months, and at the same time, I practiced spending one minute in boredom. What I noticed is that it made me slow down, catch my breath, and mean what I was saying. It took the spotlight off me and instead put it on God and on my audience. That is the beauty of being bored. That is the beauty of incorporating still points into our lives.



Charis Guilford '27 is a junior majoring in biblical studies. Originally from Knoxville, TN, she enjoys walking in the woods and spending time with friends.

Submissions for A Gordon Stillpoint can be shared for future inclusion and consideration at gordon.edu/Magazine.

The Magazine of Gordon College

Editorial Team

Amber Joy Dempsey '13
Editor

Joanne Steward
Art Director

Gregory M. Schnitzspahn
Copyeditor

Marilyn Helgesen '74
Matthew Deveney '28
Alumni News

Contributing Writers

Kelly Foster, M.Arch.
Nora Kirkham, Ph.D.
Scott MacGregor '67

Administration

Michael D. Hammond
President

Sandra Doneski '93
Provost

Thomas Hurley '14
VP of Marketing and Enrollment

Britt Carlson '03
VP of Advancement

Peter Bayreuther '07
Alumni and Parent Engagement

Mission

The Magazine of Gordon College offers timely perspectives and impactful stories to engage, inspire, and keep you connected to the Gordon community.

Letters to the Editor

Feedback and story suggestions can be emailed to magazine@gordon.edu or mailed to: Editor, *The Magazine of Gordon College*, 255 Grapevine Road, Wenham, MA 01984

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News: On The Grapevine

CAMPUS NEWS AND HAPPENINGS



Dr. Os Guinness Visits Campus

Dr. Os Guinness returned to Gordon to spend time with students, faculty, and staff. Guinness has edited and written over 30 books and was named the recipient of the 2026 William Wilberforce Award by the Colson Center. His great-grandfather, Henry Grattan Guinness, was an Irish evangelist who was influential in encouraging A.J. Gordon to start a ministry training school in Boston—which later became Gordon College.

M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling

Led by Program Director David Cook and the Dean of the School of Psychology and Human Services, Kaye Cook, Gordon's Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling integrates clinical counseling, psychological science, and supervised fieldwork. Now accepting applications, the program gives students the training needed to become a Licensed Mental Health Counselor or Licensed Psychology Associate.



New Arts Administration Major

The Adams School of Music and the Arts, in collaboration with the School of Business, has launched a new major for fall 2026: arts administration. Students in this program will explore the intersection of artistic disciplines, business considerations, and promotion of the arts.



Office of Veteran Services

The newly formed Office of Veteran Services is led by Dr. Joanna Hersey, Flotilla Staff Officer for the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and veteran of the United States Coast Guard. "As someone who earned my undergraduate degree as an adult student while on active duty, I know the challenges of balancing collegiate work and military responsibilities. As a longtime educator, I am here to come alongside our veteran and military-connected students in their pursuit of learning." We are proud to support our veteran and military-connected students, faculty, and staff.



CCI Invites Partnership

Under the leadership of Executive Director Monique Cooper and Associate Director Krista Bogertman, the Career & Connection Institute (CCI) is actively gathering interest from alumni and families who would like to support Gordon students through internships, job shadowing, networking, and panel discussions. To get involved, scan the QR codes below.



Family Form



Alumni Form

2026 Upcoming Events

June 11-13
American Independence and Identity at 250: Examining Democracy in the United States and Globally

June 27
Gordon @ Connect Fest (Jaffrey, NH)

July 6-31
Summer Academies for Middle and High School Students in Entrepreneurship & Innovation, STEM, and Digital Storytelling

July 18
Gordon @ Hillfest (New Ipswich, NH)

July 20
Admissions Summer Luncheon

July 22
Gordon Community Fenway Park Ballgame

July 27-29
Gordon @ Kingdom Bound (Darien Center, NY)

July 31
Admissions Summer Luncheon

August 6-8
Gordon @ SoulFest (Greenfield, MA)

August 26
Classes Begin

September 11
A Film Screening of Ken Burns's *Henry David Thoreau*

September 26
Admissions Fall Open House

October 2-3
Homecoming and Family Weekend



Explore Gordon's full calendar of events!

Golden Goose lives on

“Golden Goose has been a staple of student life at Gordon for nearly three decades. The competition in this year’s Clue-themed show was stiff with skits, videos, and choreographed lip-sync routines. Representing the sophomore class, Elizabeth Gustafson ’28, Tim Kercher ’28, and Anna Larson ’28 won the night!” - Vasilia (Vasi) Tussing ’27, Campus Events Council Publicity Team Lead



National student advertising competition

Gordon College served as the district host for the American Advertising Federation’s National Student Advertising Competition, welcoming six local college teams to campus. This year’s campaign focused on unifying the NFL’s youth organizations under one brand to boost participation. 13 Gordon students participated and placed third in the final competition.



Ken Burns’s new Henry David Thoreau documentary

David Goss ’74, assistant professor of history, and Sarah St. Germain ’17, college archivist, attended the premiere of Ken Burns’s new documentary *Henry David Thoreau*. Photographed with Burns (left) and Don Henley of the Eagles (right), St. Germain and Goss contributed to the documentary through historical expertise and access to Gordon’s Vining Books—as pictured in the film.



Canva Pro for Students

This spring, Gordon rolled out Canva Pro to all undergraduate students—for free! This resource is an easy-to-use design platform offering polished presentations, effective resumes, and many other creative designs.

When You Can’t Not Go

Inside a life of emergency medicine and humanitarian aid

Amber Joy Dempsey ’13

The heat hit him first. Todd Denison ’91 had just touched down in West Africa as a 20-year-old college student who had never left the United States. “I remember getting slammed in the face with heat that was a living entity,” he recalls.

It was 1989, and through Gordon College’s summer internship program, Todd had signed up for a solo deployment in Liberia, leaving campus the day after his sophomore final exams. It was during this trip, says Denison, that “God planted a seed to work in contexts of significant need and international capacity.”

And decades later, that seed has grown into a life dedicated to service in the world’s most urgent places—disaster zones, war-torn regions, remote villages—and a calling that has shaped not only his career, but also his faith, leadership, and personal investment in others.



Todd Denison ’91 with a group of children in Togo with Clinics of Hope.

For over 10 years, Todd '91 has traveled to Togo with Clinics of Hope.



After that, he couldn't imagine not doing international work in some capacity.

From New York to the North Shore

Todd arrived on campus from Upstate New York in 1987, planning to study pre-med. But during his freshman year, he pivoted to scientific research and pursued becoming an emergency medical technician (EMT).

As part of that work, he joined an Emergency Medical Service (EMS) company covering 9-1-1 contracts across the North Shore. "I guess you could say I developed a different view of what collegiate life versus what real life was," Todd says. "I spent a lot of time responding and caring for patients in Beverly, Lynn, Revere, Malden, and Chelsea. That really helped keep me grounded."

But it was his summer in Liberia that defined everything that came next. Todd was stationed at ELWA Hospital in Monrovia. "The mission hospital usually took medical residents or fourth-year medical students. They didn't know what to do with an EMT," Todd laughs. "So, they were like, 'We'll just treat you like a fourth-year medical student.'"

Over the course of that summer, Todd grew both spiritually and in clinical experience—tending to men, women, and children in the emergency department, patient ward, and the operating room. After that, he "couldn't imagine not doing international work in some capacity."



The Urgency of Emergency Response

Following graduation in 1991, Todd pursued paramedic training and began what would become an extensive career in emergency medicine. In 1993, he was offered the opportunity to join Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT), a part of the United States Health and Human Services response division.

Focused on providing immediate medical care and supplementing local resources, the team responds during disasters, disease outbreaks, and national security events. Like the National Guard, members can be deployed for weeks at a time. When the call comes, they go.

"COVID changed that model a bit, and we ended up doing what was called hospital augmentation missions," he explains. "We would go into a hospital that was overwhelmed with COVID and augment either their ER staff or the ICU staff."

Todd was deployed four times during the pandemic to places like Lake Charles, Louisiana; Southern California; Michigan; and Bethel, Alaska.

"God does have a sense of humor, though," he shares. "I hate being hot, and so he puts my heart into places where it's hot and humid all the time. Even when I was in Alaska, it wasn't cold then. That's funny!"

Todd spent three weeks in Gaza as part of a medical task force trauma team.



Safety in the Skies

In 1998, Todd signed up as a critical care flight paramedic with Boston MedFlight—an organization he still serves today as Senior Critical Care Transport Paramedic and Director of Safety.

Boston MedFlight brings the resources of a hospital ICU directly to patients—wherever and whenever needed. Over nearly three decades, Todd has grown alongside the nonprofit as it expanded its reach across New England. With just two helicopters, one truck, and two bases at Todd's start, Boston MedFlight now operates seven helicopters, 10 critical care ambulances, and five bases in Bedford, Lawrence, Mansfield, Plymouth, and Manchester, New Hampshire.

As the Director of Safety, Todd oversees risk mitigation, emergency preparedness, and operational safety—ensuring their teams can do high-risk work with the highest level of care. "Nothing we do is unsafe," he explains. "But all of the things have inherent risk."

"We take care of everything from premature babies to complex medical and trauma patients by helicopter," explains Andy Farkas, Chief Operating Officer at Boston MedFlight.

"Todd has always been a very strong clinical advocate for good patient care and safety."

Most of the leadership team at Boston MedFlight continues to work in the field and manage transports. "I don't want to give up the clinical medicine," explains Todd. "And from a leadership standpoint, none of the staff can ever say, 'Well, you don't know what it's like because you don't do it.' I think that's important."



One of Boston MedFlight's seven helicopters.

"Our team takes care of a lot of difficult situations—some are the worst of the worst situations you could think of from a healthcare perspective," Andy shares. "Todd's very compassionate and really makes sure we have all the resources in place to care for our own employees. He's just somebody that's a huge asset—not only to us—but to the organizations he impacts, too."

Boston MedFlight is supportive of their employees using their skills and taking "humanitarian leave." After someone has been with the organization for five years, they receive one week of humanitarian leave in addition to their annual leave time. Anyone there for more than 20 years receives a second week—offering Todd an opportunity to continually pursue his call to international aid.



Opportunity Demands Responsibility

For more than 30 years, Todd has served with disaster response and humanitarian organizations across the globe—from Africa to the Middle East, from storm-devastated islands to active conflict zones.

Over the past decade, he has traveled regularly to Togo with Clinics of Hope—an organization that specializes in establishing high-quality, sustainable medical clinics in remote West African villages. In 2018, he joined the disaster response team of Samaritan’s Purse, a ready-state international team specializing in providing emergency medical care, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), and NFI (non-food item) distributions to those in need globally. His deployments have taken him to places like Saipan after a devastating

typhoon and Jamaica, where he worked in a fully deployed field hospital after the region’s primary facility was destroyed in a hurricane.

In August 2025, that work brought him to Gaza, where he served on a medical task force team providing trauma care at daily food distribution sites.

“I had a lot of friends and family who were concerned I was going into a war zone, but I had one friend who said, ‘Well, you have to go.’ And he was right. It’s this idea that I can’t not go. It’s just a desire that God has given me, and I have the skill set . . . To me, opportunity demands responsibility.”

Road Trips and Mentorship

Mentorship, he says, is one of the most important threads in his life.

“I’ve always taken to the Barnabas Multiplication Principle. Barnabas poured into Paul. Paul poured into Timothy. Timothy into others,” he says. “I had men who poured into me, so I’ve always felt I needed to do the same.”

In 2005, Todd was invited by Todd Blount and Lyle Richardson ’93 to join Rhode Trip—a Rhode Island based, Christian outdoor leadership program for young men.

“I played soccer at Gordon and seemed to be injured more often than not,” shares Lyle. “Todd was around helping the trainer, and he was clearly next level—skilled, efficient, overqualified. That stuck with me early on. I’ve always appreciated having him around.”

The program spans six years, walking boys from middle school into high school and guiding them through increasingly challenging expeditions. But the goal is not simply adventure—it’s formation.

“From the beginning, Rhode Trip was meant to be more than just a trip,” explains Lyle. “These trips can be physically, mentally, and spiritually demanding, and leadership matters. I knew we needed leaders who could bring both real-world competence and deep character. Todd immediately was all in!”

It’s this idea that I can’t not go. It’s just a desire that God has given me, and I have the skill set.

Todd and the Samaritan Purse team in the full field hospital they constructed.



Early “Rhode Trips” bring students to New Hampshire and Baxter State Park in Maine—all expenses included. Rhode Trip V brings groups backpacking in Colorado. By the final year, Rhode Trip VI participants are raising their own support and traveling internationally to places like Haiti and Guatemala—putting into practice what they’ve learned and serving communities in need.

“Generations now are so visually desensitized. They can see a picture, they can see a video of suffering, and it doesn’t quite click,” Todd shares. “But a missionary doctor I worked with in Liberia said, ‘You don’t experience poverty until you smell it.’ Out of the senses, our smell is the one that creates the most vivid memories.”

Lyle has appreciated Todd’s rare ability to mentor young men. “Todd has been one of the most consistent and impactful leaders in Rhode Trip. He meets them where they are, building trust, and then challenging them to grow,” Lyle says. “Todd doesn’t force it, and he doesn’t perform—it’s authentic. His faith is real, and it shows up consistently in how he leads, how he serves, and how he cares for the people around him.”

Hundreds of young men, shaped through years of mentorship, now carry forward their experiences—some even return to lead the program themselves. “By taking [these young men] to places like this,” shares Todd. “I hope seeds are planted just like mine.”

Interruptions Welcomed

Todd often returns to a verse that has guided him for decades: Proverbs 20:24, “The Lord directs our steps, so why try to understand everything along the way.” That truth has become his guidepost, shaping the way he approaches both his work and his life. “It takes the pressure off,” he says. “I don’t need to be in control. I just need to be moving.”

He has also taken to heart the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “We must allow ourselves to be interrupted by God.” Together, these ideas have shaped a life marked not by certainty, but by a willingness to respond—again, and again, and again.

Even now, after nearly 30 years with Boston MedFlight, Todd sees his future not as winding down, but as opening up. “People say, ‘You should be thinking about retirement,’” he says with a smile. “No, that’s just a change in jobs.”

There are still places to go, still needs to meet, and still ways to serve. For Todd, it all began with a summer in Liberia—and he’s been answering the call ever since.

Jack Good Community Service Award

For outstanding, faithful, and dedicated service in areas beyond personal vocation and modeling Christian servanthood to the community, Todd Denison ’91 is recipient of Gordon College’s 2026 Jack Good Community Service Award. Join us at Homecoming and Family Weekend on October 2-3, 2026, to hear more about Todd’s lived experience.



Todd Denison ’91 in Togo with Clinics of Health.

Beauty, Justice, and Fences



Kelly W. Foster, M.Arch., is an associate professor of art. He teaches art design principles and an array of design fields. His research connects design thought and practice with Christian theology.

One evening last summer, I found myself removing the remains of someone's old fence from the back of a truck headed to the dump. As I pried the pickets loose from their panels and extracted the rusty nails, I mentally sketched ideas for how to repurpose the materials for an art installation in the gallery of Gordon's Barrington Center for the Arts.

During the period of time in which I was designing and building the installation, I also gave presentations and published an essay on the tension between beauty and justice. Forming half-decayed cedar fence pickets into art provided an interesting contrast to the process of assembling words about the abstract concepts of beauty and justice.

Along the way, as I engaged with a variety of people, I discovered that it's only for some that beauty and justice are merely categories to be mulled over on occasion. For others, the tension is not abstract. It presents real challenges and frustrations in their daily lives and work.

Ministry leaders who want to guide their communities into care for "the least of these"—our neighbors whose lives are characterized by injustice—wonder if it's wasteful

to put resources toward the aesthetic quality of the music, the liturgy, and the spaces in which their communities worship. And they want to affirm and support the artists in their midst, who themselves worry that their gifts for artmaking may not be valuable enough to warrant much of their time and energy in a world marked by injustice.

Yet biblical beauty and justice are not distant, and they are not separate from our lives.

These tensions arise when we imagine both beauty and justice as elsewhere, separate from each other and separate from our everyday lives. We imagine seeking beauty in places like galleries, concert halls, or nature preserves, whereas pursuing justice might take us to other parts of town or other parts of the world. Yet biblical beauty and justice are not distant, and they are not separate from our lives.

Each word describes characteristics of our relationships with each other and with the world around us. Justice is a set-rightness in our life together, with those far away and those nearby sharing the world in a way that values and lifts up everyone. Beauty is a



personal experience of the resonance of things in both our physical and our interpersonal environments. We do not choose if we want to pursue beauty and justice, we are always participating in them, either building them up or breaking them down.

It's an image of the church, God's people, seeking a shared life of self-giving love.

All this was on my mind as I sanded, painted, and reassembled discarded lumber into something new. The installation was, at least in part, about the tension between beauty and justice. I created a set of woven, fence like structures that divided the gallery into an interlocking set of "rooms." Attendees were encouraged to direct their attention toward one another as they inhabited the spaces in contrast

to the more common practice in galleries of directing our attention to art objects.

My hope was that as people inhabited the spaces together, they might begin to notice how their physical posture and position in relation to one another connects more broadly to other spaces and to other people. The fence pickets formed a screen that both divided and connected the spaces, creating an image of an integrated life, one where beauty and justice are things to seek in and through our interactions with one another. It's an image of the church, God's people, seeking a shared life of self-giving love, expanding outward toward neighbors, weaving together discarded lives into something new and beautiful.

We do not choose if we want to pursue beauty and justice, we are always participating in them, either building them up or breaking them down.



Small Enchantments:

Walking, Reading, and Writing Mountains

On a summer walk in the Scottish Cairngorms, a stream draws me to itself. I hear it gurgling first, then notice it reflects the light that gives the trees their sparkle. I didn't realize how often I would walk along these streams. When I follow them, I *stravaig* or wander through Aviemore, Rothiemurchus, Glenmore, Loch Morlich, Loch Uaine, struck by the scent of hot pine. I meet a herd of reindeer. Their backs brush against my waist as they walk, their hooves click along the path. The fields are aflame with heather—transfiguring the land.

Mountains move as we shift our gaze. Offering privileged vantage points, mountains alter ways of seeing, experiencing, and representing the world. Viewing a mountain as traveling releases it from its assigned role as a steady fortress in our imaginations, but something that hides behind clouds or reveals itself in fragments of light.

My recent doctoral research at the University of Aberdeen explores encounters with mountain landscapes in the works of Anglo-American poet Denise Levertov (1923–1997), Japanese writer Michiko Ishimure (1927–2018), and Scottish writer and poet Nan Shepherd (1893–1981). I hope this research will help to chart a path for future interdisciplinary scholarship that considers the long, ongoing story of women and mountains. This project was made possible through the generosity of the University of Aberdeen's New Kings' studentship and the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation.



Over the course of my program, I traveled to Switzerland, Japan, and the Cairngorms. I also conducted this research at lower elevations, on the cold North Sea, between Fife and Aberdeenshire, where I lived for several years, and eventually completed this project on the other side of the Atlantic, on Boston's North Shore.

Mountains tell the stories of our lives. For many of us, mountains represent that which is aspirational, sublime, or even beyond our comprehension. The Bible abounds with references to mountains as sites of triumph, temptation, and transfiguration. Mountains are imagined as landscapes that test our physical and emotional limits. At Gordon, we can experience this firsthand through the La Vida Expedition and Discovery programs, where ventures into the Adirondacks or White Mountains invite us to practice courage and curiosity, plus challenge us to cultivate deeper awareness of our relationships within creation. This physical awareness of our bodies in the mountains cannot be fully disentangled from spiritual experience.

While the writers I study generally appreciate the act of walking, climbing, and observing mountains, their shared emphasis on mystery and the sacred decentralizes conquest and ascent as the ultimate concern. Instead, their writings consider both the visible and invisible world of the mountain, inviting us to remain open to new experiences in a landscape that cannot be reduced to its physical summit. In their poetry and prose, Levertov, Ishimure, and Shepherd draw upon the material conditions of their environments, as well as their own religious beliefs and practices, as a way of settling or unsettling their sense of place. Their work is united by a shared interest in the nature's hiddenness, permeability, and the potential for rupture, as well as a capacity for creation, transfiguration, and regeneration.

From her kitchen window in Seattle, Levertov observes, but does not climb the volcanic Mount Rainier-Tahoma, recording it in her later poems as a “witnessing presence” that witnesses her, even as it retreats into clouds and mist. Levertov's Christian faith, along with her itinerant lifestyle, shapes her relationship to the mountain, which often functions as a metaphor for a life of geographic and spiritual pilgrimage.

Ishimure's environmental activism and love of Japanese folklore and local traditions in her native Kumamoto Prefecture provide the material for her novel *Lake of Heaven* (1997), in which a fictional village has been submerged under a man-made lake following the construction of a dam. For Ishimure, the mountains represent proximity to the gods and ancestors, offering a footpath to a new sense of home during a period of rapid urbanization and industrialization.

Moments of transfiguration abound in Shepherd's *The Living Mountain* (1977), which charts her “traffic of love” with the Cairngorms. While walking and stravaiging in the hills, encounters with sparkling lochs and bursts of sunlight illuminate a “dark and stubborn” Scotland.

Through writing and reading the mountains, these texts have the potential to transfigure our own imagination of the natural world, allowing us to see and experience places in unexpected ways, whether we find ourselves on a sidewalk, a subway, or on the beach.

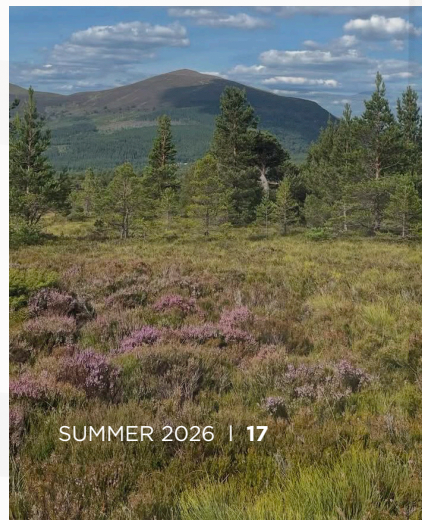
Walks in the mountains mark me long after I leave, even as the mountains melt off my skin with each swim in the salt distance of the sea. The high realm of heather begins to fade like a myth until I lift my head above the water. Beyond the rocks crusted in barnacles, I might see a line of blue hills.



Nora Kirkham, Ph.D. is an instructor of English at Gordon College where she teaches The Great Conversation, literature seminars, and creative writing. She holds an M.Litt. in Theology and the Arts from the University of St Andrews and an M.A. in Creative Writing from University College Cork. She is the author of the poetry chapbook *Landing* (2025).

“Everything became good to me, its contours, its colours, its water and rock, flowers and birds. This process has taken many years, and it is not yet complete.”

—Nan Shepherd,
The Living Mountain



When Gordon Went Dark

It was early evening on November 9, 1965, when the lights simply stopped.

We had just finished dinner. I was somewhere between the dining hall and the dorm, in that loose, unhurried part of the evening when nothing was demanded of anyone yet. The sky was already darkened in that late fall way it does in New England. Then, without warning, everything went out. No flicker, no gradual dimming. Just darkness.

At first, we assumed it was a campus electrical problem. We checked light switches, looked out windows, and tried to make sense of what had happened. Students drifted into hallways and out onto the Quad, voices low, asking whether it was just one building or all of them. It became clear quickly enough—the entire campus was dark at the same time.

As we began to realize it was not just Gordon, the mood shifted. People gathered on the steps outside the dorms. Doors were propped open so candlelight and flashlights could spread as far as possible down the halls. There was confusion but not panic. A kind of collective settling-in, as if the campus itself had exhaled and decided to wait.

News traveled slowly. There were no quick updates or reliable announcements. What we knew came in pieces, mostly through battery-powered radios.

Eventually the picture grew larger: the blackout was not local. Large parts of New England, including Boston, were without power.

That changed everything about how we understood the evening. This was not something to fix or wait out in an hour. It was something else entirely, and no one could say when it would end.

Normal routines dissolved. Studying was not possible. The evening reorganized itself into small conversations, dim common rooms, people sitting together with nowhere particular to be.

The campus I knew well felt like a different place.

I remember staying up later than I should have, talking with a few others in the hallway outside my room, our voices quieter than usual without quite knowing why. Some students gave up and went to bed early. Others lingered.

Outside, the campus felt unfamiliar. Grapevine Road, normally a steady presence at the edge of campus—headlights passing, the occasional sound of an engine—had gone nearly silent. Without the ambient glow of streetlights and buildings, the dark was complete in a way it almost never is. The campus I knew well felt like a different place.

What I remember most is the quiet. No hum of electricity, no background noise from the buildings, no mechanical undercurrent of any kind. It gave the night a different character, something I didn't have words for at the time but have never quite forgotten.

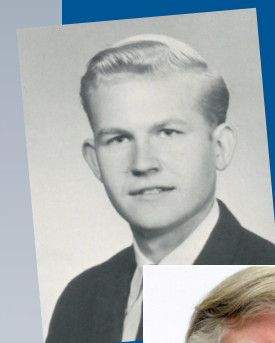
Sometime before dawn, the power came back. What woke me was not a sound but a light—the lamp on my desk, which I must have left switched on, suddenly burning in the dark room. Then a few startled voices down the hall, someone laughing, the hum of the building reasserting itself. It was almost ordinary. And then morning came, as it always does.

Classes resumed. Routines snapped back into place. But campus conversation turned almost immediately to the blackout—where people were when it happened, what they had heard on the radio, how far it had reached. For many of us it was the first time something that large had touched ordinary life so directly.

What has stayed with me, more than sixty years later, is how quickly the familiar simply stopped. One moment the campus was humming along as it always had; the next, we were feeling our way through the dark together, figuring out how to wait.

For many of us it was the first time something that large had touched ordinary life so directly.

It was only one night. But it was enough to make clear how thin the line is between the ordinary and the unexpected—and how much we rely, without ever thinking about it, on everything continuing to work.



Article contributed by
Scott MacGregor,
Gordon College
Class of 1967.

The hum of the building reasserting itself. It was almost ordinary.

Class Notes

ALUMNI NEWS, STORIES, & UPDATES

1900s

'50s

Winifred (Dreschler) Dodge '54 went to be with the Lord on November 3, 2025. "Winnie" and her husband of 72 years, **Paul Dodge '52**, served the Lord for 28 years in Thailand as missionaries of the American Baptist Churches USA. Whether in the deep jungle or urban environments, Winnie functioned as a nurse and administrator while Paul served as an evangelist, pastor, and teacher of pastors. They also pastored together at churches in ME and NY. During retirement they taught at a seminary in Myanmar, Burma. Paul continues to live independently at Garden Spot Village, in New Holland, PA, with frequent visits from their four sons and family members.

Judith "Judy" (Gay) Kee '56 passed away on March 2, 2026 at age 91. A CBFMS missionary in Congo for 20 years, Judy taught midwifery in Nyunkunde Hospital where she learned French and Swahili. In the 90s, Judy went to Rwanda and worked on repairing medical infrastructure. At 52, she returned to the US and married her soulmate, Ralph Kee. She was ordained as a minister and served at the International Community Church of Boston, where she was a beloved pastor and mentor. Judy spent her last years as caretaker for Ralph and passed away three weeks after him. She is survived by her sister-in-law, Rita; stepchildren, Dana and Doreen; seven grandchildren; and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.



Hampton, NH's **David C. Chesbro '58B** passed away on November 2, 2025. Born in 1936 in Hyannis and raised in Osterville, MA, he accepted Christ as a teen. He married **Priscilla Martin '61B** in 1959, and the couple spent 66 happy years together. David taught for 34 years in Boston and was a Golden Apple recipient and devoted Gideon. He is survived by four children and 10 grandchildren.

Betty (Reed) Bruce '58 passed away at 88 years of age. She met her husband, **Ralph Bruce '59**, while singing in the Gordon College Choir. He passed in 2010. She taught 1st grade and 3rd grade. She enjoyed sewing girls' dresses for missions all over the world. Betty leaves behind her son, William, as well as many nieces, nephews, precious friends, and adopted family members.

'60s

Brooks Sanders '65 spent two years in the Army after stints teaching multiple languages in high school and middle school, with much of his time being spent playing soccer in Germany. He attended Syracuse for one semester of grad school. He also spent time as an airline ticket agent, radio announcer, and a TV newsman before taking a job in Dryden, NY as a Media Specialist at Tompkins Cortland Community College. For the last 22 years of his work life, he was the head of the communications department at the college, teaching broadcast skills and ethics. He retired in 1999, but continued to write and produce High School Challenge, an academic contest for high school students that he began as a project for his TV students in 1978. In 2021, he and his wife Tina moved from upstate NY to Englewood, FL. They visit New England seldom now since almost all of their family members have moved south.

During **Paul Mauger's '67** academic career, he published 28 scientific papers, delivered over 100 professional presentations, taught in psychology graduate programs at three secular

universities, and served as the President of Richmond Graduate University. His research has been cited in more than 500 scientific papers. He is the author of four tests that have been translated into multiple languages, from Spanish to Mandarin.

Dr. Randall H. Collins '67 is a veteran educational leader with more than four decades of experience in public education. A former superintendent in CT, MA, and ME, he served 20 years in Waterford, CT, and was named Connecticut Superintendent of the Year in 2002. He is a past president of the American Association of School Administrators and has held national leadership roles advancing civic education and school leadership. Dr. Collins is recognized for pioneering service-learning initiatives and for his lifelong advocacy of equitable, high-quality public education. Dr. Collins was Gordon College 2001 Alumnus of the Year. He is married to **Patricia (Starvaski) '68** and they have two children and five grandchildren and live in Ellington, CT.

Paul Sideropoulos '68 earned his B.S. from Gordon in 1968, and his M.R.E. from Gordon-Conwell in 1971. In 1973, he married his wife Roula in Berea, Greece, and they were blessed with three children. Paul and his family returned to Boston and taught English to immigrants for 11 years at the English Language Center and Boston Public Schools. He and his family then moved to Thessaloniki in 1983 where he worked as a youth pastor. In 2001, he joined Agape Greece as Director of Family Life Ministry. He retired in 2019 but continues to serve others. He is involved with Legacy Coalition, a Christian ministry for grandparents, and he participates in mission trips with the Macedonian Outreach in the Balkans.

'70s

Upon graduation, **Marty Larsen '70B** went to Gordon-Conwell for an M.Div. degree as he sensed a call to ministry. He married his wife, Susan, in 1971, and they had two children and five grandchildren across the years. Marty has been in pastoral ministry since 1976 and recently formally retired, having served three churches for more than 23 years as well as having been a pastor-and-wife team to missionaries around the world for 23 years.

James Douglas "Doug" Sargent '73B, of Auburn, NH, passed away on October 3, 2025. Doug grew up in Exeter, NH, and after graduating Barrington, went on to earn his master's at the University of Nebraska Medical School. Doug proudly served his country for 20 years, retiring as a Major in the US Air Force. He then continued in the medical laboratory field at several hospitals, most recently at St. Joseph Hospital in Nashua, NH. Throughout his life, he enjoyed bowling, boating, hiking, and traveling. Doug actively served his Lord, most recently at Calvary Bible Church of Derry. He leaves behind his wife of 51 years, Mary; two sons; two grandsons; four siblings; and several nieces and nephews.

Amy (Divoll) Sheppard '75 retired from a 21-year career in school social work as chair of a K-8 Christian school board. She has been married for 49 years to **Paul Sheppard '76** who is a retired occupational therapist. She is a babysitting Nana to six grandchildren and a pre-school social studies teacher. They are also avid gardeners.

In 2023, **Wayne Smith '79** retired from the business world and has begun his next vocational ministry as a professional bowler. He bowls regularly in the South Regional PBA-50 and occasionally in the PBA-50 National tournaments.



'80s

Aprile and **Joel Stoddert '84B** continue to serve Lyndon Center Baptist Church in VT's rural Northeast Kingdom region. At 12 years, Joel's tenure is the second longest in the church's 183 years. He celebrated the 30th anniversary of his ordination last July.

In this season of her life, **Wenona Price '85** is deeply reflective and challenged. When her mother passed in January of 2025 at the age of 93, her life took on new meaning. Moving from caretaker to finding a new normal has been one of the loneliest seasons of her life. At 63 years old, her mother's transition has left her with a new urgency and impartation in her call to ministry which she senses every minute of every day.



Dr. Saul Reyes '86 was named the 5th president of Walters State Community College, a public institution serving 10 counties in East Tennessee. Dr. Reyes earned an Ed.D. in higher education leadership at the University of South Florida and a B.S. in youth ministries and biblical studies from Gordon. He and **Sharon (Stackhouse) Reyes '84B** will celebrate their 40th anniversary this summer.



After retiring from The Coca-Cola Company after 25 years as a VP, **Scott Williamson '86** and his wife Deb moved from Atlanta to their vacation home on St. Simons Island full-time in 2018. After a couple of months of "retirement", he started teaching a class at the local college in his hometown of Brunswick, GA. That led to a full-time teaching gig in the business school, where he teaches marketing and business communications classes. He's done that for eight years now, teaching in the fall and spring and taking the summer off. He was also alumnus of the year in 2015. His two children are grown, and they have two beautiful grandchildren! "God is Good."

Frank DeRienzo '88 is a Retired Army Special Forces LTC with a 34-year mix of active and reserve service. He has worked for Adobe for 28 years, mostly in collaboration and e-learning software (Adobe Connect). For recreation he hunts and fishes and occasionally writes essays on cultural and apologetic topics for The Fleming Foundation. He has four adult children and three grandchildren (so far) and a wife of almost 40 years.

David Geney '88 is blessed to be married to his wife **Teri (Magie) '88** for 37 years after meeting at Gordon. Now that their two kids have flown the nest, they split their time between their house on Lake Champlain in VT and exploring aboard their boat, currently based in Vero Beach, FL. David still flies for United Airlines as a 777 Captain based out of beautiful Newark, with plans to retire from that in three years.

'90s

Christopher Weiss '91 recently started a new position as Executive Director of Instruction, School Improvement, and Innovation in the Hartford Public Schools in CT, overseeing 12 schools, coaching and supporting the schools' principals, and leading several districtwide programs.

Kelly (Risser) '96 and **Brian Sullivan '95** have two biological kids and three adopted kids. She is a registered nurse in Hartford, CT and her husband Brian is the Next Gen Pastor at Wintonbury Church in Bloomfield, CT.

Heidi (Walker) '97 and **Bob Winslow '97** have been serving overseas now for over 25 years. They met at Gordon and, beginning in 2000, started ministry across multiple countries including Greece, Germany, and France. They currently serve in a local French church and are focused on disciple-making and church planting. They are also seeking to start a new camp in one of the most unreached regions of France. To raise money for this camp, Bob organizes and leads amazing Reformation Tours. Geneva is the seat of the Reformation, the foundation of the Protestant faith, and where most reformed catechisms come from. They have six children from ages 25 down to 12; two were born in Germany, one in NJ, and the last three in France.

Jason Martinez '99 has been married to his wife Erica for 12 years. They fostered for seven years, adopted their daughter Makayla who is now 14 in 2020, and they have a biological daughter Maggie Roux who is six. They live in New Orleans, and he travels out of the country for work multiple times a year as a Field Sound Mixer for Bravo's franchise *Below Deck*, which he has worked on for 10 years.

teenage girls will be traveling to Santiago, DR with Casas por Cristo to build a house for a family in need.

In July 2025, **Paul Hoffman '00** became an Associate Professor in Biblical and Religious Studies and Director of the Preministerial Scholars at Samford University, Homewood, AL. In March 2025, he coauthored *All Shepherds and Electric Sheep: Leading and Teaching in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* with Baker Academic. He has been featured by NPR, PBS, and Salon.com.



from Notre Dame in 2023 and is in their second year of law school.

Ruth McNutt Perry '03 is a local licensed pastor in the United Methodist Church, pastoring three churches. She started a podcast this year called *The Beautiful Kingdom Builders* where she hosts conversations about gender, justice, abuse, and healing in the Christian faith. You can find it at www.thebeautifulkingdombuilders.com. Ruth and her husband, Logan, live in Appomattox, VA, with three young adult and teen children.

Kate (Perlis) McKinniss '04 lives in Santa Barbara with her husband and two young children. She's the chairman of the Capital Campaign Steering Committee raising \$24M to build a new upper school campus (grades 7-12) for their local Christian school: Providence School. Their kids attend Providence's lower school, which is also Kate's alma mater. After a dozen years leading tech start-ups through various acquisitions, she recently launched a fiduciary business where she serves families as a professional trustee.

Amanda Titter '05 recently became a published fantasy author. Her debut novel, *Tarnished Relics*, won a bronze medal for sword & sorcery at the 2025 Global Book Awards. She is set to release her second book, an Edwardian fantasy titled *Benandante*, in September.



Johann Ducharme '06 completed a Ph.D. at William & Mary and now serves as an Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship at the University of Delaware. His research focuses on intellectual humility and character development in higher education, supported by over \$750,000 in external grant funding, advancing undergraduate education initiatives.

Sarah McMahon '09 is the headmaster of a Christian classical school in Rwanda, East Africa, through the Rafiki Foundation. It's a humongous job, but very rewarding. There are about 440 students and 50 teachers from preschool through 12th grade. If anyone is interested in learning more about the organization or to sponsor a child, they can go to rafikifoundation.org or email Sarah at sarahm@rafikifoundation.org.

Hope Johnson '13 recently published her first book, *99 Life-Giving Bible Verses for Women: When We Ask, God Answers* (Whitaker House, 2025). This devotional explores how God's Word encourages and empowers us in common life challenges such as depression, grief, worry, and decision making.



Ollie White Ed.S.'18 previously earned her master's at Gordon-Conwell including a Foundations of Reading elective at Gordon College. She then returned to Liberia and started Beautiful Beginnings School. Realizing the difference that elective made, she completed the Education Specialist program at Gordon College in 2018. Then, she went on to launch the ELITE Teacher Education Program in 2019 and opened a second school in 2024, focusing on helping teachers and school leaders better support student success.

Tanya (Davis) Coco '19 is currently teaching English at a high school in Japan through the JET Program! She and her husband welcomed their daughter in November 2024.

Amber (McCarty) '19 and **Jesse Cook '19** welcomed their daughter, Eleanor Cook, in May of 2025.

2000s

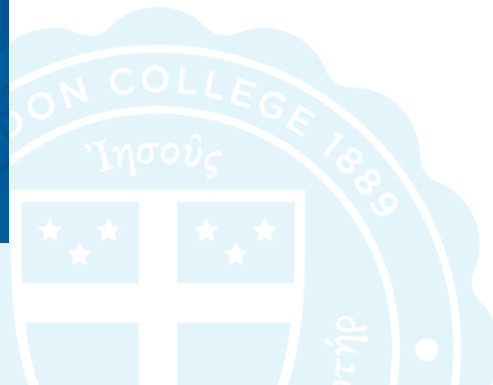
'00s

Bethany (Carlson) '00 and her husband **Brian Browne '99** are living in Southeastern CT near their families with six of their eight children still at home. Brian works as a high school English teacher and department head, and Bethany is a professional artist and live wedding painter (www.bethbeeart.com). They both enjoy volunteering with their church's youth group, and this summer, Beth and three of the

Melissa (Marley) Bonnichsen '03 earned her M.Div. in 2010 at George Fox University. She was a staff member at the University of Portland from 2009-2013, as well as faculty/staff at the University of Notre Dame starting in 2013. She still serves there today as Director of Residential Life. She is currently finishing her Doctorate of Education at Northeastern University in Boston. She is married and has three wonderful children. One graduated

"The balcony is where I wrestle with God. Looking at everyone, I feel both apart and included—it's complicated but holy."

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'10s

Alyssa (Baker) Gurney '12 is the Chief Strategy Officer for Central Valley Health Network, a trade association representing community health centers in CA.

Erin (Frink) Homsy '12 married her husband David in 2016, and they have since moved to Little Rock, AR. They have four children and are very involved with their church, Fellowship Bible Church. David's family are Lebanese immigrants, and his first language is Arabic. Because of their heart for missions, they volunteer together each week teaching an ESL class at their church. In 2014, she joined her father's financial planning practice as his assistant. Over the past decade, she has earned her financial licenses and CFP® and CKA® (Certified Kingdom Advisor) designations. She is now a partner in her family practice, Frink Family Financial.

Update your contact info and share **Class Notes**



The deadline for the Fall 2026 issue is August 21, 2026. Please submit your news at www.gordon.edu/magazine

Submission Guidelines

- ▶ Give graduation year (and maiden name, if applicable).
- ▶ Submissions to Class Notes must be contributed by the alum featured and written in the third person.
- ▶ Remembrances may be submitted by the surviving spouse, executor of the estate, or surviving parent or child in the absence of a surviving spouse. Unfortunately we cannot print obituaries received from other sources.
- ▶ Notes from individuals are intended only for sharing with the Gordon alumni community and do not suggest or represent an endorsement by the College. Gordon College reserves the right to edit or omit submissions.



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