

THE MAGAZINE OF TRINE UNIVERSITY

TRINE

SUMMER 2026



Meet Tony Kline, Trine's 19th president

PAGE 22



The Trine softball team finished the season as national runners-up in the 2026 NCAA Division III Softball Championship Series, with a 41-8 overall record. Read more on page 34.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



It's my honor to write to you for the first time as Trine University president.

I'm grateful to the university's Board of Trustees for entrusting me with this opportunity to serve this institution that I love. Thanks to the excellent foundation laid by Dr. Earl D. Brooks II during his presidency and campus leaders in the past, this university has never been in a better position.

And I believe the best is yet to come.

In this issue, you'll read how our laser focus on students has made Trine University a premier institution and how I plan to continue our emphasis on personalized student success throughout my presidency.

We have incredible leaders on the President's Cabinet, which welcomed several new members this spring and summer. Learn more about them along with other campus happenings in the pages ahead.

You'll also find out about the new Trine Family Fitness Center and Thunder Dome, and read about plans for a beautiful new facility to house our growing Ketner School of Business.

Learn how Trine students have succeeded on the field, in academic competitions against much larger schools and in the virtual world of esports. And read how one student project helped a disabled veteran return to the sport he loves.

Trine University would not be the institution it is today without those who donate generously to support our mission. Our Scholarship Gala, which once again raised a record amount, is featured inside.

Read about our record numbers at fall and spring Commencement ceremonies, as we once again sent out graduates to succeed, lead and serve. And learn about some of the latest accomplishments of Trine alumni.

I truly look forward to connecting with you in person at an alumni event or during Homecoming. I'm always excited to hear your stories about this special place and your thoughts on how we can continue to make it better.

Sincerely,

Tony Kline, Ph.D.
Trine University President

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CORRECTION: Last issue's Thunder's Final Roll incorrectly included a listing for Ruth D. (Martin) Fisher-Matthews, 1990 BSBI0. Ruth D. (Martin) Fisher-Matthews is alive. Trine magazine regrets the error.

Please visit trine.edu/magazine to download a digital version of Trine Magazine.



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Inside of the Trine Family Training Center

TRAINING CENTER, THUNDER DOME NOW OPEN

Trine University has opened two new facilities this summer to better serve Thunder student-athletes.

The Trine Family Training Center includes two 50-person locker rooms, a shower, restroom and a weight room with 10 stations, rubber floor and turf for training. The center is part of an overall renovation project at Zollner Athletic Stadium that also includes a new varsity locker room, new team room and new HVAC system.

The 92,000-square-foot Thunder Dome will provide training, practice and competition space for sports including baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer and football.

The new facility features artificial turf, new locker rooms and a controlled climate that will allow for year-round use.



The Trine Family Training Center



Thunder Dome



DESIGN COLLABORATIVE

RICK AND VICKI JAMES PROVIDE LEAD GIFT TO SUPPORT NEW BUSINESS SCHOOL BUILDING AT TRINE

Trine University has received a lead gift from Dr. Rick L. James, alumnus and chair of the university's Board of Trustees, and his wife, Dr. Vicki L. James, for a new building to house Trine's Ketner School of Business (KSB).

The new 55,000-square-foot James Center for Business Leadership is expected to open in August 2028, with a total budget of \$30 million.

It will be located north of Ford Hall, the current home for KSB.

"We're grateful beyond words for the deep commitment to Trine University that Drs. Rick and Vicki James show, and for the outstanding support, leadership and transformation they have provided over the years," said Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., Trine University president. "Their many investments in this institution and its students will continue to make an impact for generations to come."

"Just as many people supported my efforts to receive an excellent business education at Trine, I'm excited for this opportunity to impact future generations," said Dr. Rick L. James. "Vicki and I hope our lead gift will inspire many others to make a similar impact and help the Ketner School of Business become this region's premier business education provider."

Design Collaborative has been named the architect for the project. Site development will begin this fall, with construction launching in the spring of 2027.

1977 alumnus

Rick James is a 1977 Trine University graduate who went on to co-found Metal Technologies, Inc., (MTI) in Auburn, Indiana. He currently serves as chairman of MTI's board.

He has been a member of Trine University's Board of Trustees since 2010 and served as board chair since 2012.

Under his leadership, the university has added more than \$150 million in campus enhancements and facilities, allowing for continued enrollment growth. The university has expanded into health sciences and health professions, which now include some of its fastest-growing academic programs.

The university also successfully completed the largest capital campaign in its history, raising more than \$137 million.

He and Vicki James have, personally or through MTI or the James Foundation, generously supported many projects at Trine University and around the nation.



AS COLTS' COACH SHARES ABOUT BEING THE BEST, GALA RAISES BEST-EVER AMOUNT

Nearly 400 in attendance at Trine University's Scholarship Gala heard about being the best as they helped support Trine students in becoming their best.

Indianapolis Colts Head Coach Shane Steichen shared about the trajectory of his life and the qualities that propel NFL players to be the best at the Gala, held on Valentine's Day in the elegantly decorated Keith E. Busse/Steel Dynamics Inc. Athletics and Recreation Center.

The Gala raised a record amount for Trine University student scholarships and Books and Beyond, bringing in more than \$2.65 million.

Immediate and future impact

Welcoming guests to the event, Trine University President Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., said that scholarship support has an impact immediately as well as for generations to come.

"With your generosity, we can ensure that every student has the resources they need — not just to attend Trine, but to thrive here," he said.

Stashu Patterson, who completed a degree in accounting and finance as well as a Master of Science in business analytics this May, agreed, saying support did far more than help him cover the cost of textbooks.

"It gave me freedom," he told the crowd. "Freedom to say yes to leadership opportunities. Freedom to mentor other students. Freedom to

serve in organizations across campus. Freedom to focus on becoming the best version of myself instead of worrying about whether I could afford the next required course material."

Patterson said everyone attending the Gala was not just funding education, but "investing in futures."

"You are shaping the next generation of engineers, business leaders, healthcare professionals, educators and entrepreneurs who will one day be sitting where you are tonight," he said.

Love of football, pursuit of excellence

Steichen shared about falling in love with football during high school, spending late nights throwing the ball to teammate Austin Collie, who later became a wide receiver for the Colts.

John Robinson, coach at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, recruited Steichen to play there.

When his playing career ended, Steichen looked for an opportunity to coach, which he had wanted to do since high school.

He became a graduate assistant at the University of Louisville. His entry into the NFL came when Norv Turner, whose son played with Steichen at UNLV, hired him as a coach for the Chargers in San Diego.

His then-girlfriend had just moved to that city, and they soon got engaged.

"We've been together now for 24 years, so I'm very grateful," Steichen said.

Character, preparation, consistency, relentlessness

He said the four things that have stood out during his time in the NFL are character, preparation, consistency and the relentlessness to be the very best.

Character, Steichen said, builds trust. He recalled attending a coaches' symposium that featured a Navy SEAL who asked if trust was earned or given.

Most of those attending raised their hand that it was earned, but the speaker challenged them that they had trusted surgeons and airline pilots who hadn't earned their trust first.

"His message really was, when you get to a level in business and life, when you're at the top of your class, and you hire people into your company, there's got to be a little bit given," Steichen said. "But you've still got to earn it every day."

In the NFL, Steichen said, separation from mediocrity comes from preparation.

"You've got to prepare the right way to be at your best," he said. "At the end of the day, if you can look yourself in the mirror, go through a project, whether you're in business or in life or in football, and you gave it your all, you know you can live with the results."

Consistency, he said, builds stability in life, while relentlessness is the pursuit to be the very best in everything you can do.

He talked about coaching his then 6-year-old son through homework and his son complaining the writing task was hard.

"I go, 'You're right. It is hard.' You're gonna go through adversity," Steichen said, "but as a parent and as a leader of company or organization, our job is to inspire, empower and guide."

"That's what it's about," he concluded. "Motivation gets you going, but discipline keeps you going."

Live painting fetches \$1,100

After Steichen spoke, the Gala moved into the live auction portion of the evening, which included sports and vacation packages and radio advertising.

The last item in the live auction was a watercolor of Pokagon State Park painted during the event by Adela Les, a computer engineering major at Trine. The painting sold for \$1,100.

Concluding the event, Trine University President-Elect Tony Kline, Ph.D., reminded listeners that the evening is far more than an enjoyable night together.

"By being part of this Gala, you are allowing Trine University students to achieve their goals, hopes and dreams, impacting not only them, but the families they will go on to lead, the organizations where they will work and the communities where they will live," he said.

“By being part of this Gala, you are allowing Trine University students to achieve their goals, hopes and dreams...”

- Dr. Tony Kline, President-Elect



FALL COMMENCEMENT

Cameron CEO tells BCHP graduates their care will make an impact

Trine University’s first Associate of Science and Master of Science in nursing graduates, along with physician assistant and surgical technology graduates, received a welcome to the healthcare field from the leader of Cameron Health, herself a longtime nurse, during the university’s fall Commencement on Dec. 12.

Held in the Ryan Concert Hall of the university’s T. Furth Center for Performing Arts, the ceremony recognized students from the Brooks College of Health Professions who completed their degrees during the fall semester.

Strong partnership

Lexie Staten, vice president for academic affairs, welcomed the graduates and their families by thanking them for choosing Trine.

“Take pride in all you’ve accomplished,” she said. “Remember the relationships you formed, the challenges you met and the education that has prepared you for what comes next.”

In her address to the graduates, Angie Logan, president and CEO of Cameron Health, noted that throughout its nearly 100-year history, Cameron has been supported by Trine University.

“Our organizations have shared and continue to share a common mission: improving quality of life in this region through education and healthcare,” she said. “Together and separately, we have made a powerful impact in the last century.”

She praised “the first results of one of our most meaningful collaborations” — the first Associate of Science in nursing (ASN) students to graduate as a result of the partnership between Trine and Cameron. The university’s first Master of Science in nursing (MSN) graduates also finished in the fall semester.

Changing lives

A former acute care nurse and chief nursing officer, Logan said she entered healthcare because of someone in her life who, after being drafted by the Los Angeles Dodgers, was left quadriplegic by an accident.

Despite his disability, he went on to scout for the Seattle Mariners, coach the New Haven High School baseball team to the state championship and start his own business.

“He always said the reason he didn’t give up, the reason he found his way forward, was because of the caregivers who believed in him and honored what mattered to him,” she recalled. “If the way you show up for someone can change even one life that drastically, I wanted to be a part of that.”

She encouraged the graduates to give the same personal attention they received at Trine to every patient they encounter.

“Patients rarely remember the clinical details, but they do remember the nurse who warmed [their] blanket, the tech who offered comfort when they were scared, the therapist who celebrated their progress, the provider who sat down right beside them and listened instead of rushing,

the caregiver who noticed something important and acted, even without being asked,” she said.

“Years from now, when they tell the story of their hardest time in life, your name may or may not be spoken, but your kindness will still be with them.”

In closing, she said she was proud to welcome each of the graduates as colleagues.

“Thank you for your commitment to making your community a better place,” she said. “I cannot wait to see the positive impact we’ll make together as we work to improve the lives of those around us.”

Endless possibilities

Following the presentation of degrees, which included pinning of the ASN and surgical technology graduates and hooding of the MSN and physician assistant graduates, Tim Raftery, president of the Trine University Alumni Association Board of Directors, inducted the new alumni into the association.

Brielle Bergeron, a Master of Physician Assistant Studies student who was named outstanding graduate for the Brooks College of Health Professions, gave the response from the class.

“From the first day of student orientation to the final day of clinical rotations, each of us has faced moments that tested our limits, but those moments also revealed our strengths,” she said.

“We started out as eager yet intimidated, newly accepted students in this program, and have grown with one another into confident, capable and respectful healthcare professionals. You are all fantastic people who will change numerous lives as providers, and I am so excited for each and every one of you. Here’s to a future filled with endless possibilities, meaningful impact and the shared pride of knowing we made it together.”



Angie Logan, left, and Lisa Clemens, dean of the Brooks College of Health Professions.



DANIELS OFFERS GRADUATES ADVICE FOR PROMISING, UNCERTAIN TIMES

Mitch Daniels, former governor of the state of Indiana and former president of Purdue University, shared advice with graduates he said were entering a world he described as “the most promising and most uncertain and treacherous” as Trine University held Commencement ceremonies on May 2.

The university celebrated about 2,700 graduates in two ceremonies at the Keith E. Busse/Steel Dynamics Inc. Athletic and Recreation Center.

Graduates from the Angola campus, Brooks College of Health Professions and TrineOnline were honored in the morning. Students from the Detroit, Phoenix and Reston, Virginia, education centers were recognized in the afternoon.

Welcoming an overflowing crowd to the morning ceremony, Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., Trine University president, encouraged the Class of 2026 to savor the good memories of their campus experiences.

“Thank you for the many contributions you made to the Class of 2026 and to this university, and please move forward with the confidence that comes from knowing that even in some challenging times, you built the best possible foundation for a bright future,” he told the graduates.



From left, Trine University President Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., former Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels and Trine University President-Elect Tony Kline, Ph.D.

A time for heroic leadership

Presenting the keynote address, Gov. Daniels said the Class of 2026 will face challenges including the emergence of artificial intelligence, the rise of China as an economic and military power, and historically high federal budget deficits.

“We will call on your generation for some extraordinary, maybe heroic leadership: in the economy, public life and in the homes where a society’s values are taught and its future leaders are shaped,” he said. “That’s why I’m uplifted coming to Trine. Like few places anywhere, this place prepares problem solvers.”

Gov. Daniels offered the graduates several pieces of advice as they prepared to launch into the world and its challenges:

- Answer why without saying I. “Your first thought before going after a new goal should be, ‘What value will I add? How will this business, this cause or community be better if I succeed?’ ”
- Play the ball, not the other way around. “Don’t wait for issues, but get right up on them and tackle them as soon as you can.”
- Welcome your mistakes. “Treat your bad judgments as teaching moments and then resolve never to repeat them.”
- Don’t mistake the edge of the rut for the horizon. “Make sure you’re looking at the big possibilities out beyond the range of what’s known and familiar.”
- There’s no traction without friction. “Change and progress you bring in your future roles will generate friction in rough proportion to the traction and momentum they achieve.”
- Dogs don’t bark at parked cars. “I can tell you how to lead a stress-free life. Just don’t do anything consequential.”

In closing, Gov. Daniels challenged the Class of 2026 to “go out and pay back the investment your families and this institution have made in you by doing the great things of which we know you are capable.”

Following the address, Dr. Brooks and Tony Kline, Ph.D., president-elect, presented Gov. Daniels an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the university.



Monica Kurtzeg accepts a posthumous degree for her brother Ben from Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., Trine University president.

What matters most

The graduating seniors then received their degrees.

The university granted a posthumous degree to Ben Kurtzeg, who would have graduated with the Class of 2026 but died in an accident in 2024. His sister Monica accepted the degree, drawing a standing ovation from everyone attending.

After Tim Raftery, president of the Trine University Alumni Association Board of Directors, inducted the new graduates into the association, Stashu Patterson, the Robert B. Stewart Award winner for the Class of 2026, presented the response for the class.

Patterson said he set out to achieve five goals when he came to Trine: complete more than one degree, earn a 4.0 grade point average, become president of a major student organization, start his own club and address the class as the Stewart Award winner. But he said he learned achieving those goals wasn’t the most important part of his college experience.

“What mattered most was that time I got to spend with each and every one of you, the relationships that we built,” he said. “Right now, it’s easy to think about those late nights, the exams, the stress, the pressure to succeed; but in a few years, that’s not what we’re going to remember. What we will carry with us are the moments that we shared together.”

“What makes Trine special isn’t just the education, it’s the community. This is a place that puts students in a position to lead, a place that challenges you to grow, a place that surrounds you with people who want to see you succeed, and that that’s going to stay with us long after today.”

Concluding the ceremony, Dr. Brooks encouraged the graduates to make wise choices and listen to the counsel of those whose lives illustrate success and harmony while standing alone when necessary.

“Believe in what you’ve cultivated in yourself: your ideals, your standards and your innate feelings of right and wrong, good and bad,” he concluded. “Take charge of yourself and build on your own success.”

Watch the 2026 Trine University Commencement here:



Stashu Patterson, Robert B. Stewart Award winner for the Class of 2026, speaks during Commencement.

TRINE STUDENTS NOTCH BEST FINISH AT NATIONAL SPORTS SALES COMPETITION



From left, Mason Slazyk, Isaac Wilson, faculty advisor Zander Atwood, Josh Hartman and Beckam Pichardo.

“These guys were incredibly motivated to succeed and the results speak for themselves.” - Zander Atwood

Sport management majors from Trine University’s Ketner School of Business recorded their best team finish and equaled their best individual placement at the National Collegiate Sports Sales Championship (NCSSC).

Trine finished fifth as a team with Isaac Wilson from Noblesville, Indiana, placing second overall in the Corporate Partnerships competition.

In addition, Josh Hartman from Whitestown, Indiana, placed sixth overall in the Ticket Sales competition. Mason Slazyk from Fort Wright, Kentucky, finished in the Top 16 in Ticket Sales and Beckam Pichardo from Sunland Park, New Mexico, finished in the Top 32 in Corporate Partnerships.

Competing against top students

The NCSSC is a role-play competition that allows college seniors majoring in business administration and sport management the chance to compete against top talent from across the nation.

The event, held Feb. 24 and 25 at State Farm Arena in Atlanta, included more than 250 students, recruiters and faculty members.

“To say I’m proud of these men would be an understatement,” said Zander Atwood, faculty advisor and assistant professor of sport management at Trine University. “The amount of hard work, time and energy they put into their role plays and presentations paid off in the end, and many different employers took notice. These guys were incredibly motivated to succeed and the results speak for themselves.”

The competition also offered the opportunity for the Trine students to network and interview with industry professionals. Atwood said one of the students was offered a full-time position with an NHL team during the event.

TRINE STUDENTS EXCEL AT ACJA NATIONAL COMPETITION

Students from Trine University’s TAO chapter of the American Criminal Justice Association (ACJA) took top awards at the organization’s national conference, held March 8-13 in Bloomington, Minnesota.

A Trine team took first place in the upper division for crime scene investigation (CSI).

Team members were Silas Jones, an accounting major from Swayzee, Indiana, Braiden Wolfe, a mechanical engineering major from South Whitley, Indiana, and Cole Anderson, a criminal justice major from Nashville, Michigan.

For the competition, detectives from the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office set up a scene similarly to a case they had encountered where an elderly woman was killed during a robbery.

Teams had to mark evidence on the scene and decide what would need to be collected for DNA evidence. They also prepared a case report and a crime scene sketch.

“I think everyone’s jaws were on the floor when we won it,” said Jones. “Our team consisted of a mechanical engineer, a freshman criminal justice major and an accounting major, so we figured there would be other teams that did better than us.”

Firearms, agility, testing, lip sync

Jones and Wolfe also were part of the firearms team that placed second in the upper division, along with Mila Stepanovich, a psychology major from Munster, Indiana.

Jones placed second individually on Cold Case testing and third place in Criminal Law testing.

“The Criminal Law test felt similar to the tests from Professor (Mike) Hess’s Criminal Law class,” Jones said. “Thankfully, I had just taken that class last semester, so there were multiple questions that I recognized as soon as I read them.”

Anderson placed second individually in physical agility.

Teammates Haleigh Loso, a criminal justice major from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Ethan Parker, a criminal justice major from Coldwater, Michigan, joined Jones, Wolfe, Stepanovich and Anderson to take third place in the lip sync competition, which raises money for ACJA’s scholarship fund.

Stu Hamblen, faculty advisor and director of campus safety at Trine, took third in the pro firearms competition.

Jones said the competition was one of his favorite college experiences.

“I am glad that I got to go before I graduated,” he said. “The week was full of fun events, and I made a lot of good friends while we were there.”



Cole Anderson



Haleigh Loso



Silas Jones



Ethan Parker



Mila Stepanovich



Braiden Wolfe



Stu Hamblen

ON TARGET: TRINE TEAM DESIGNING ARCHERY SOLUTION FOR DISABLED VETERAN

Injuries sustained during the Gulf War robbed Chester Evitt of the ability to enjoy archery.

A Trine University senior design group worked to give that ability back to him.

“I used to be good enough with the bow that I could tell you, ‘Lay a \$1 bill on the table and I’ll bet you that dollar bill I could put two arrows inside of each other,’ and I could do it faithfully,” Evitt recalled. “Now, just holding my bow yesterday about broke this old man down like an old shotgun.”

“My wife, when this all went down, she says, ‘You think you’ll be able to do it again?’ I said, ‘That’s my goal.’ ”



From left, Chester Evitt holds a bow with the help of a device developed by Trine University engineering students Jake Welker, Cooper Clark, Andrea Mendoza and Ava Dobbins.

Giving back to those who served

The project is one of several that Trine senior design groups worked on this year in partnership with Project S.E.R.V.E., a nonprofit that pairs disabled veterans and first responders with universities to develop solutions to enhance quality of life for the veterans and first responders.

The chance to make such a positive impact for Evitt is what drew the Trine students to the project, including Ava Dobbins, a biomedical engineering major from Barberton, Ohio, who served as team lead.

“I was interested not only because I enjoy the outdoors, but also because I wanted to be part of something bigger than myself, helping a veteran who was willing to give everything regain the opportunity to return to bow hunting,” she said.

“I have many veterans in my family,” commented team member Jake Welker, a design engineering technology major from Clayton, North Carolina. “I want to not only give back to veterans, but those who have lost their hobby and want a chance to do it again.”

Lifelong love of archery

Evitt, who grew up in southern Indiana and now lives in Montana, fell in love with archery at age 8, when his foster father bought him his first bow.

“I took my first deer in Harrison County, Indiana, and I’ve been addicted ever since,” he said. “We raised three sons and a daughter and they all love archery. It’s just been part of my life.”

Gulf War wounds to his arm and chest impacted his ability to use a bow, but he was still able to hunt until another injury three years ago left him unable to draw.

“I felt robbed and really bummed out,” he said. “When I was healing, all my buddies were coming out to where we live, and we live in the finest place to elk hunt in the United States. I had to sit in my Jeep and watch them go hunting and watch elk walk by.”

When first approached about working with the Trine students, Evitt was skeptical, not because he doubted their abilities but because he doubted his own.

“They proved me wrong,” he said.

Lines of communication

Evitt said the process of designing a device was “chaotic” at first because he and the students were trying to learn about each other and how they communicated.

“After a while, we figured out what to say and how to say it to where they understood what I need and I understood where they were trying to go,” he said.

“Staying in communication with the customer was vital for this project. We asked questions about his needs and interpreted his needs into a product,” said team member Cooper Clark, a biomedical engineering major from Holiday City, Ohio.

Dobbins said the group generated some 40 initial concepts.

“We went through several iterations of the first design to fully understand what direction we wanted to go,” commented team member Andrea Mendoza, a biomedical engineering major from LaGrange, Indiana.

Mendoza said the team listed the most valuable features of each design and ran them through a selection matrix, weighing each feature based on criteria provided by Evitt as well as technical specifications.

“That allowed for us to narrow down our options and make a design that would incorporate the needed features,” she said.

Dobbins said the team created its first iteration using low-cost materials such as PVC piping and 3D-printed components. The second phase of prototypes used finalized materials, including carbon fiber and canvas fabric.

Testing and refining

Evitt traveled to Angola, Indiana, this spring to meet the team and test their design at Thunder Lakes, a local archery and gun shop that provided guidance to the students.

The team and Evitt were confident the final product will soon have him shooting a bow again. They hope it also will provide a solution for others with similar injuries.

“We have come so far and accomplished so much, with the help of our customer I am very confident we will create an effective, accessible device to help him enjoy the hobby he once loved,” Welker said.

The team is grateful to Thunder Lakes and Angola Canvas for their assistance and expertise during the project.

“We truly could not have done this without the support of these local businesses,” said Dobbins.

As for Evitt, he is looking forward to taking part in archery competitions for disabled veterans and has nothing but praise for the Trine team, saying he is “grateful, humbled, impressed, thankful.”

“It’s been a true pleasure,” he said. “The knowledge that those four brought as a team and supported by the folks at Thunder Lakes and their input is beyond impressive.”

“I can’t wait to see where they go in life.”



From left, Cooper Clark, Ava Dobbins, Andrea Mendoza and Jake Welker.

Watch an interview with Chester Evitt.





Alexander J. Furth

Furth, Argyle join Trine Board of Trustees

The Trine University Board of Trustees has added two new members, both with strong family ties to the university. **Alexander J. Furth**, co-founder, partner and president of P2G Capital Partners, is the son of Dr. Tomas Furth, distinguished alumnus, trustee emeritus and namesake of the T. Furth Center for Performing Arts.



Dennis Argyle

Dennis Argyle, senior vice president and chief financial officer for Knight Facilities Management in Saginaw, Michigan, is the father of three Trine alumnae: Kaylee Argyle, 2022 BSBA/MBA, Alyssa Argyle, 2023 BSHPE, and Sophia Argyle, 2026 BSBA/MBA.

“It’s always encouraging to see legacies continue at Trine University and in its leadership, but Alex and Dennis bring

much more to the Board of Trustees than family ties,” said Dr. Rick L. James, chair of Trine University’s Board of Trustees.

“They each have a successful track record and will provide wisdom and expertise that will enhance the strong leadership team Trine University is already blessed with.”



Amy Heavin

Dr. Amy Heavin joins Trine Cabinet as vice president for student affairs

Amy Heavin, Ph.D., has been named vice president for student affairs at Trine.

Dr. Heavin had served as assistant dean for academics since 2025, where her duties included oversight of the university’s Office of Student Success.

In her new role, her supervision will expand to include the executive director of housing and residence life, the dean of student and community relations, the executive director of student success, mental health counseling, the health center and the director of student engagement, leadership and service.

“Dr. Heavin is a tremendous leader who has a long track record of being driven, creative, organized, positive and always working to best support students,” said Tony Kline, Ph.D., Trine University president. “These attributes align closely with what we do best at Trine University, and she will thrive in this new role.”

Dr. Heavin joined the university to launch its Transition to Teaching (T2T) program in 2022, serving as director of the effort.



Matt Land

Land named VP for advancement

Trine University has named longtime assistant vice president for athletics and athletic director **Matt Land** as its new vice president for advancement.

Andy Rang, head women’s basketball coach, has added interim athletic director to his responsibilities to

help with the transition as Land assumes his new role.

As vice president for advancement, Land will provide strategic leadership for Trine University’s fundraising and alumni engagement goals, working closely with President Tony Kline, Ph.D.

Land has been part of Trine since 2006, when he joined the university for a very successful run as head football coach.

He led the Thunder to Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) conference championships and NCAA Division III playoff appearances in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

He was named athletic director in 2012 and added the role of assistant vice president for athletics in 2015.



Erie Yoder

Yoder joins Trine as VP for operations

Eric Yoder, who most recently served as chief executive officer of the YMCA of Steuben County, has joined Trine University as its new vice president for operations.

In his new role, Yoder will provide strategic oversight and executive leadership for campus facilities, infrastructure, auxiliary enterprises and capital construction initiatives.

He had served as CEO of the YMCA of Steuben County since 2024. Under his leadership, the YMCA saw year-over-year increases in membership and revenue.

Prior to the YMCA, he worked for 18 years at Wagler and Associates. At the time of his departure, Yoder was serving as acting chief financial officer, a role that followed a distinguished tenure during which he held positions including project manager, lead designer, director of business development and director of operations.

Over the course of his career with the firm, he managed projects throughout Indiana, Ohio, Michigan and Wisconsin, frequently overseeing developments exceeding \$10 million in value.



Cisco Ortiz

Ortiz named dean of student and community relations

Trine University has named **Cisco Ortiz, BSCJ 1999**, to the new role of dean of student and community relations.

In this position, he will serve as the senior liaison for the university to students, parents of students and community

stakeholders. He will be the first contact for community organizations looking to initiate new partnerships with the university.

He will continue to support families of students through his proactive, positive, solution-oriented interactions and problem-solving. He also will add a layer of retention support focused on student-athletes.



Lexie Staten

Two from Trine named to Forty Under 40

A Trine University administrator and a graduating senior were included in this year’s Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40.

Lexie Staten, vice president of academic affairs, and **Paige Aselage**, who graduated in May and who has been working as an accountant for Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, were named to the Forty Under 40 Class of 2026.

The Forty Under 40 honorees were chosen by an independent panel of judges from a competitive pool of more than 200 nominations submitted by community members, colleagues and peers. Each recipient exemplifies professional excellence and a commitment to strengthening the Greater Fort Wayne community.



Paige Aselage

Trine Day shatters records

Trine University’s annual Trine Day, a celebration of the university as well as an opportunity to support its mission, set records for number of donors and funds raised, bringing in more than \$160,000 for scholarships, academic and athletic needs, and student organizations.

Held for 1,884 minutes from April 24-25, the effort raised \$160,218, given by 669 donors.

“Once again, the Trine family has come together to provide our current and future students with one of the best college experiences around, and the financial support to afford it,” said Matt Land, vice president for advancement. “We are grateful for each person who gave during Trine Day and continue to be excited about the future of this university and its students, thanks to our generous donors.”



Donors give more than \$140K to Trine for Giving Tuesday

Alumni, employees and friends of Trine University contributed more than \$140,000 to Trine University scholarships, renovations and other areas during Giving Tuesday on Dec. 2.

The university raised a total of \$142,271, exceeding its goal of \$125,000. Trine received 178 gifts from 157 individual donors.

“Contributing almost 20% more than our goal is a huge testament to the incredible generosity of those who support Trine University,” said Ellen Paxton, assistant vice president for advancement. “We’re grateful to each one who chose to partner with us to help make sure students can afford to receive a quality educational experience at Trine.”

Giving Tuesday, held the first Tuesday after Thanksgiving, has been celebrated since 2012. Intended to counter more commercial post-Thanksgiving events such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, Giving Tuesday seeks to celebrate and encourage charitable giving internationally at the beginning of the holiday season.

Trine’s PT program 1 of 6 nationwide with perfect pass rate

Trine University’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program was one of only six out of more than 250 nationwide to have all its students pass the national licensure exam on the first try during the most recent cycle.

According to data released by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, Trine students had a 91% first-time pass rate in the 2022-2023 cycle and a 96% pass rate for the 2023-2024 cycle before achieving the perfect rate for 2024-2025.

The average pass rate nationwide for 259 programs was just over 85%.

Trine faculty receive annual awards

Trine University honored faculty members during its annual year-end awards ceremony, held prior to Commencement on May 2.

McKetta-Smith Excellence in Teaching

The McKetta-Smith Excellence in Teaching Awards were established for the faculty by Trustee Emeritus John J. McKetta, Ph.D., in 1989.

John Liu, Ph.D., associate professor, Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, was honored with the Professor Gerald H. Moore Overall Excellence in Teaching Award. He also received the Charles & Sue Ragan Gelet Excellence in Teaching Award in Engineering.

The Helen Smith McKetta Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to **Jenna Waterman**, assistant professor, Master of Physician Assistant Studies program.

The recipient of the Robert Andrew & Anne Ewing Smith Excellence in Teaching Award in Health Sciences was **Vinnie Lang**, assistant professor, Department of Exercise Science.

The recipient of the Robert Ewing & Gail Stewart Smith Excellence in Teaching Award in Arts and Sciences was **Jill Noyes**, assistant professor, Department of Humanities and Communication.

The recipient of the Merle J. & Anna Mae McKetta Thomas Excellence in Teaching Award in Education was **Chelsea Superzinski**, assistant professor, Franks School of Education.

The recipient of the Charles William, Nelle Paris, & Mary Ann McKetta Excellence in Teaching Award in Business was **Evan Gustin**, assistant professor, Ketner School of Business.

The recipient of the Steve & Mary Yacynch McKetta Excellence in Teaching Award in Engineering was **Jarred Finnerman, Ph.D.**, assistant professor, Department of Design Engineering Technology.

The recipient of the Frank & Julia Gelet McKetta Excellence in Teaching Award was **Rizacan Sarikaya, Ph.D.**, associate professor, Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering.

The recipient of the John J. & Mary Gelet McKetta Excellence in Teaching Award in Engineering was **Kinsey Cotton Kelly, Ph.D.**, associate professor, Bock Department of Biomedical Engineering.

Additional awards

Four adjunct faculty members received the Outstanding Adjunct Award, recognizing teaching excellence and exceptional service to the university: **Caitlyn Freese** in the Brooks College of Health Professions, **Shawn Snyder** in the

Franks School of Education and **Richard Parkinson, DBA**, and **Abigail Scheg, Ph.D.**, in the College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Four individuals received the Service Award, which recognizes a faculty or academic staff member who has gone well beyond regular duties and has committed an extraordinary amount of time, resources and dedication to the betterment of Trine University: **Josh Pranger**, instructor and executive director of academic operations for the College of Graduate and Professional Studies; **John Curtis**, director of assessment and accreditation for the College of Graduate and Professional Studies; **Renee Shipe**, institutional researcher and reporter; and **Wendy Yagodinski**, assistant professor and chair of the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology.

Three faculty members received the Faculty Scholarship Award, which recognizes an individual who has gone well beyond regular duties and has dedicated much time and effort to produce quality scholarly work as a faculty member at Trine University: **James Miller, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering; **Gaganpreet Hundal, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the College of Graduate and Professional Studies; and **Tricia Widenhoefer, DPT**, associate professor, Doctor of Physical Therapy program.

The Excellence in Teaching award, honoring a strong commitment to teaching and student success, was presented to three faculty: **Kara Wilson**, assistant professor, Master of Physician Assistant Studies program; **Erica Hutton, Ph.D.**, assistant professor and director of the Cold Case Unit, Department of Criminal Justice; and **Sarah Franzen, Ph.D.**, College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Vickie Kern, instructional designer in the College of Graduate and Professional Studies, was honored with the OER Excellence Award, presented to those who have shown a strong commitment to effectively incorporate open, affordable education resources for students.

The Barrenbrugge Award for Faculty Excellence, based on the criteria of excellence in teaching, achievement in research or other scholarly endeavors and service to the university, was presented to **Jeremy Rentz, Ph.D.**, Schantz Distinguished Professor in the Reiners Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

The Jannen Renaissance Scholar Award, which honors a breadth of interest and accomplishment consistent with Renaissance ideals and encouraging students and faculty to aspire to such breadth, was presented to **Matthew McLin, Ph.D.**, assistant professor in the Department of Humanities and Communication.



Evan Gustin



Jarred Finnerman



Sarah Franzen



Erica Hutton



Kinsey Cotton Kelly



Vinnie Lang



John Liu



Jill Noyes



Rizacan Sarikaya



Jenna Waterman



Wendy Yagodinski



Matthew McLin



Josh Pranger



Renee Shipe



Tricia Widenhoefer



James Miller



Jeremy Rentz



Chelsea Superzinski



Kara Wilson



Matthew Liberatore

\$70K grant to fund undergraduate research at Trine

A Trine University faculty member has received a \$70,000 grant from the American Chemical Society (ACS) to support research into gels that could improve oil recovery as well as impact production of food, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Matthew Liberatore, Ph.D., chair of the McKetta Department of Chemical and Bioprocess Engineering, received the grant from the ACS’s Petroleum Research Fund for Undergraduate Research for his research, “Finding synergy between entanglements and crosslinks in aqueous polyelectrolyte gels.”

Liberatore said the research seeks to design improved gels that can be used to make underground oil recovery more effective and efficient.

The grant will cover materials and supplies for preparing and testing gels as well as stipends for Liberatore and the Trine students who will assist with the research. It also will cover travel for students to present their findings at regional and national conferences.

Trine receives \$200K Lilly Endowment grant for AI integration

Trine University has received a \$200,000 planning grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. to guide the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into its curriculum.

The grant was provided through Lilly Endowment’s Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education initiative (AIHE).

The grant will allow the university’s AI Task Force, which was established two years ago, to work with teams within each of the university’s academic schools to consider challenges such as preserving human-driven learning and assessment integrity as the university designs a roadmap for AI integration.

The university will explore the rapidly expanding array of AI tools and applications that could be integrated into Trine’s academic programs and support institutional effectiveness.

Funds will be used to pilot an open-source, enterprise-grade generative AI platform that will allow Trine to build secure, customized AI assistants within a single environment.

The grant also will allow the university to provide training and professional development related to AI integration in higher education.

All Trine ASN graduates pass licensure exam

Trine University’s first cohort of Associate of Science in nursing (ASN) graduates had a perfect 100% pass rate on their National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) for registered nurses.

Trine presented degrees to its first ASN graduates in December. The program launched in 2023 in partnership with Cameron Health, with classes held in the Joyce and Al Gutstein Education Innovation Center on Cameron’s campus as well as on Trine’s Angola campus.

Trine expanded the ASN program to its Brooks College of Health Professions facility in Fort Wayne this past fall.

Not pictured: John Curtis, Caitlyn Freese, Gaganpreet Hundal, Vickie Kern, Richard Parkinson, Abigail Scheg and Shawn Snyder.



CONSISTENT FOCUS:

As faculty and now as president, Dr. Tony Kline puts students at the center

Tony Kline, Ph.D., came to teach at Trine University because of its focus on students.

Keeping the student experience at the center of everything will be his top priority as the university’s 19th president.

“Our goal is to ensure Trine students are truly prepared to be difference makers professionally in their industry and personally in their community,” he said.

“We will continue to embrace the personalized attention our students receive in every facet of their Trine experience. That’s in our DNA and will remain strong.”

Steady and poised in his trademark gray suit even as he shared his excitement about the opportunities of his new role, Dr. Kline took office June 1 after serving as executive vice president since 2025.

First-generation student

He grew up in a rural area near Monroeville in northeast Indiana.

He credits his parents and a family full of educators, whom he described as “loving, hard-working, faith-filled and service-minded,” for sparking his interest in teaching. A first-generation four-year college student, he earned his bachelor’s degree in elementary education, master’s in special education and Ph.D. in educational leadership and research.

He began teaching in Indianapolis and “got the travel bug,” making around 35 international trips on six continents during his 20s.

During that time, he created a program that took college students to Malawi in southeastern Africa over a number of summers to work in an orphanage. They provided literacy instruction to local children and professional development to educators, who would walk up to five miles to attend.

In addition, he taught in Thailand and supervised teacher candidates working in a school on a U.S. military base in Germany.

“Those experiences were transformational for me in many ways. I was able to experience different cultures and learn how massive the world is. Conversely, I realized how small the world can be, oftentimes seeing the universal values of dignity and respect across the globe,” he commented.

‘Blown away’

He and his wife, Dre, lived in Indianapolis. When she became pregnant with their first child, they began looking for opportunities closer to family.

He interviewed for a faculty role in Trine University’s Franks School of Education (FSOE) and was “blown away” with the university’s laser focus on its students and creating the best learning environment for them to be successful.

He joined the university that fall, in 2013, and has worked closely with hundreds of students who have benefited from a Trine education.

“Countless numbers of students have come through this institution over the years, each with different stories, backgrounds and journeys to higher education. And yet, they all experience one common driving force: Our

students are surrounded by people at Trine University who care for them at every turn, whether in person or online. They leave here with a strong community of supporters who have prepared them for industry and what they will encounter in life,” he said.

He’s overseen a trajectory of growth throughout his tenure at Trine, a pattern he intends to continue. During a time of declining enrollment in schools of education around the state and nation, the FSOE grew by more than 260% during his time as dean, beginning in 2016.

He also supported the school in receiving more than \$1.7 million in grants and gifts and in maintaining its record of 11 straight years of 100% employment for graduates seeking teaching positions, a trend that continues today.

He became vice president for academic affairs (VPAA) in 2023, where he guided the launch of multiple industry-aligned programs and led collaborative partnerships across academic schools that resulted in increased enrollment for the institution.

“Our entire Trine team’s focus on our mission, being student-focused and having a nimble, entrepreneurial spirit, has directly led to growth over the years,” he said. “Being part of how Trine has grown and evolved,



Tony Kline, Ph.D., and Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D.

initially within the tremendous team in our Franks School of Education, then as VPAA, and most recently as executive vice president, I am thrilled about our future.”

Premier

His success, which he credits to outstanding individuals and collective teams at each level, gives Dr. Kline confidence as he looks ahead to the future.

He references the university’s vision statement, which states, “Trine University will be recognized as a premier private university, characterized as engaged, dynamic, growing and adding value.”



Tony Kline, Ph.D., center, Trine University president, stands with students he's connected with, several of whom graduated with the Class of 2026. From left, Awab Tagalsir Almaridi Ali, Emily Bassett, Payton Ault, Cade Dinan, Ashtyn Shemwell and Stephanie Rodriguez.

“That word ‘premier’ is important to us,” he commented. “It’s really the measuring stick for every aspect of our student experience, from recruited students and their families visiting our beautiful campuses to watching with pride as they cross the stage at graduation. We have raised the bar in becoming a premier institution and that will be our standard going forward.”

Though challenges loom for higher education across the country, including a smaller number of high school students pursuing college and reduced funding from state and federal agencies, Dr. Kline sees them as opportunities to break through the noise and showcase the value of a Trine University education.

“We work so hard knowing that when the dust of the current challenging landscape settles, we will have capitalized on these opportunities to distinguish us as a leader in private higher education,” he said. “We all see negative headlines about high student debt, academic programs that don’t lead to careers and unsafe campuses. Trine University is proud to buck that trend as we’ve been recognized for low student debt load and the incredible 99% job placement rate over the last 13 years. And we have a safe, vibrant, engaging student life experience where they thrive.”

“We operate in this way because it’s the right thing to do. It’s what our students and their families deserve. And doing so has made us leaders in higher education.”

He also sees the increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a challenge and opportunity for every sector, including higher education.



Tony Kline, Ph.D., second from left, walks with students, from left, Awab Tagalsir Almaridi Ali, Payton Ault and Adam Brimie outside C.W. Sponsel Administration Center.



Tony Kline, Ph.D., welcomed students to the Franks School of Education each year as dean. He is pictured with Max Nieszala, who graduated with a social studies education degree in 2023.

“For two years, we have been working with faculty, staff and students on the impact of AI,” he said. “We have to have our eyes wide open to how AI can advance our institution, though also the difficulties it can present. We will prepare our students for both.”

As he settles into the role of president, Dr. Kline realizes he owes much to the foundation laid by Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., and his leadership since the turn of the century.

“It’s hard to accurately describe the impact that Dr. Brooks has had on our institution and me personally,” Dr. Kline said. “His tremendous leadership has elevated our university in every way, with his big vision and clear focus on the how details make all the difference with our students. His tenure as Trine University’s president could be put up against any presidency across the country.”

“We refuse to be stuck on what status quo is or what other colleges are doing. We’re writing our own story. We’re driven to see how we can always innovate, how we can get better, because we know at the end of the day, it’s the students who will benefit most.”

Supportive family

His wife, Dre, and their two children, ages 12 and 10, are excited as Dr. Kline moves into the new role.

“They’re all big fans of Trine, and we take the kids and their friends to games all the time,” he said.

He looks forward to being able to meet more alumni, both in gatherings and individually.

“It’s really important for me to get to know their stories of why Tri-State and Trine are important to them,” he said. “It’s truly a special place, and I never get tired of hearing how this institution has shifted the trajectory of our graduates’ lives.”

“We want alumni to keep being proud of Trine University. We’ll continue to raise that bar of what it’s like to be a premier institution, ensuring high-quality outcomes for our students into the future.”

He is excited to begin outlining the next steps for the university with the Cabinet, which has added new members in preparation for his presidency. (See page 18.) He described the lineup as “hungry, humble, brilliant and student-centered.”

“At any university you can find the brilliant individuals, but I really appreciate our folks at Trine who lead with humility by being others-focused,” he said. “This is a complete team effort, and so Cabinet will play a major role in this next chapter of our university’s story.”

The broader university community also will be involved, with Dr. Kline using feedback from a recent all-employee survey to help guide decisions and initiatives.

“We move at the speed of trust. Entering into this upcoming year, we’re going to hold a series of listening sessions and focus groups to identify areas where we can continue to raise the bar and improve,” he said. “Regardless of our employees’ title and role, having a voice in who we are and how we go about our work is important.”

During Dr. Kline’s presidency, he said the university will always maintain its student focus and core values.

“Programs may change, strategies will come or go, but the DNA of what makes Trine University so special will remain steadfast,” he said.



class notes

keep connected with alumni and friends

Share what is happening in your life with your fellow alumni. Class notes, including births, marriages, promotions, additional education, relocations, etc., may be submitted to alumni@trine.edu.

Join us on social media: **Facebook** (facebook.com/TrineUniversityAlumni), **X** (x.com/trinealumni) or **Instagram** (instagram.com/trineuniversityalumni)

1990s

Steve Shepherd, 1991 BSME, and his



wife, Beth, are becoming the next owners of Schimpff's Confectionery in downtown Jeffersonville, Indiana, continuing the fifth generation of family ownership. Steve, who spent time helping in the candy shop as a child, always planned to return and lead the business. Under Warren and Jill Schimpff, the beloved shop grew into a nationally recognized destination, recently earning USA Today's No. 1 candy store ranking, and Steve plans to preserve its signature candy-making traditions while carrying its legacy forward, saying, "I always told everybody my last stop was going to be here."

Dawn Foods has appointed **Kristi Kangas, 1996 BSCE**, as senior vice president of North America manufacturing operations, where she will oversee a network of facilities and lead efforts in quality, safety and operational improvement. With more than 25 years of experience in food manufacturing, Kristi previously held a leadership role at Griffith



Foods, managing multi-site operations across North America. She will focus on driving automation, efficiency and long-term growth while strengthening Dawn's manufacturing strategy, noting, "I'm a manufacturing junkie at heart, and Dawn offers a unique opportunity to focus deeply on operations while making a meaningful impact."

PJ Smith, 1999 BAM, has been sworn in as the new police chief of the Fort Wayne Police Department following the resignation of Chief Scott Caudill. A longtime member of the department since 1983, PJ brings decades of leadership experience. He most recently served as deputy chief.



Josh Snyder, 1999 BSCE, has been appointed interim public works director for the city of Sandusky, Ohio. A longtime city engineer and experienced public works leader, Josh will oversee infrastructure and essential services while the city searches for a permanent director.



2000s

Luke Amstutz, 2004 BSSSEd, has been named the new head football coach at Northridge High School, with his hiring approved by the Middlebury Community School Board. A veteran coach, Luke previously led Angola High School to 26 wins and spent 12 seasons at East Noble, where he guided the program to consistent success, including a 2019 state championship game appearance. He returns to coaching after serving as East Noble's activities director and will also join Northridge as a physical education teacher.



Bryan (Ohio) Elementary School second-grade



teacher **Kamilla Houk, 2008 BSEIEd**, has been named the first Educator of the Year from the Coalition of Rural and Appalachian Schools (CORAS) for Bryan City Schools.

Kamilla has taught at Bryan Elementary for 18 years and is recognized for her strong focus on building lasting relationships with students and families. She credited her colleagues, especially her teaching partner Lisa Walker, for shaping her approach, saying, "I take the most pride in the relationships that I have built with all the students I have had over the years."

2010s

Virginia Goni, 2012 BSME, originally from Argentina, recently completed her long journey to U.S. citizenship. She described the process as emotional and challenging, reflecting on years of waiting and time spent away from family. Her husband, Abel Guimmarra, also pursued his own path to citizenship after moving to the U.S. in 2013.



Matt Zurbriggen, 2013 BSCE, will serve as the new utilities director for Valparaiso (Indiana) City Services. Matt previously served as deputy director and earlier as deputy engineering director. He is a licensed Professional Engineer.



A former standout baseball player, Matt also brings a strong athletic background alongside his professional experience in city engineering and utilities leadership.

The University of Louisville has added **Me'Leick Miles, 2018 BPSY**, as a defensive line coach. The all-time sacks leader at Trine, Me'Leick won a conference championship in 2017 before moving into coaching. He has since worked at several programs, including Franklin College, Purdue University as a graduate assistant and Murray State as a defensive line coach.



Benjamin Moricz, 2019 BSME, and **Clare (Danner) Moricz, 2019 BACOM/BAENG/2021 MBA**, were married April 18 in Indianapolis, just short of their nine-year anniversary together — having met at Trine University! They were surrounded by nearly 100 members of their Trine family on their special day, which was their favorite part. Ben and Clare were married at Bishop Chartrand Memorial Chapel on the campus of Marian University, where Clare works as the assistant director of research and donor relations. Ben works as a lead systems engineer at V2X and a youth soccer coach for Indy Eleven Academy. Ben and Clare live on the north side of Indianapolis in their first home with their 3-year-old long-haired chihuahua, Bourbon.



2020s

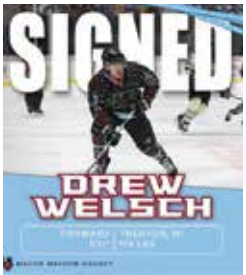
Leeanna Knight, PA-C, 2021 MPAS, has joined the CMH-OHSU Health Primary Care Clinic in Warrenton, Oregon, as a full-time primary care provider after previously serving in a temporary role in nearby Astoria. She brings prior experience in family practice with Parkview Physicians Group in Indiana as well as walk-in and rural clinic care in Michigan.



John Browning IV, 2025 BSBA, has joined Farbman Group as an accounting support specialist.



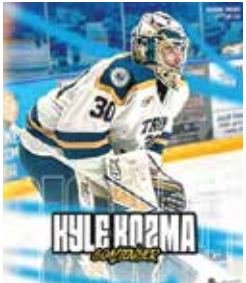
Drew Welsch, 2025 BSBA, has signed with the Macon Mayhem after a brief stint with the Fayetteville Marksmen and time this season with the FPHL's Danbury Hat Tricks. Drew made his professional debut last season with the Port Huron Prowlers, recording seven points in six games. A former standout at Trine University, Drew totaled 80 points across four collegiate seasons and is expected to make an immediate impact with Macon.



Sean Henry, 2026 BSBA, recently joined the Knoxville Ice Bears as a defenseman.



Kyle Kozma, 2026 BSBA, recently signed with the Quad City Storm Professional Hockey Club.



John Wrachford, 2026 CSIT/MSIS, was chosen for the 2026 cohort of the Orr Fellowship. For the Fellowship, John was paired with Mission Critical Group, a company that provides electrical systems for industries including data centers, healthcare, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals and semiconductors.





The Trine University Oral History Project

Share your story — we’re ready to hear your voice

This summer, Trine University is launching an exciting Oral History Project designed to preserve the memories, moments and milestones that make the Thunder family so special. To help bring these stories to life, Trine has partnered with Publishing Concepts (PCI), a company that specializes in capturing and publishing alumni histories.

Beginning this summer, PCI will contact alumni by email, mail and phone to invite you to participate in a brief interview and to confirm or update your contact information. If you choose to take part, your story will be recorded and transcribed.

You’ll also have the opportunity to submit photos. Collected stories and images will be compiled into a keepsake edition — available in both hardbound and digital formats for purchase.

Every Trine journey is unique, and this project depends on alumni voices to tell the full story of our university’s impact across generations. We hope you’ll consider participating and adding your chapter to Trine’s history.

For more information, visit trine.edu/oral-history.



SUCCESSING, LEADING AND SERVING:

Trine alum Pohlgeers named mayor of hometown

Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, has always been home to **Greg Pohlgeers**, a place where he has wanted to serve and make an impact.

Now, the 2000 Tri-State/Trine University alumnus has the opportunity to do even more to help make the city a better place to live.

A member of the City Council since 2017, Pohlgeers was unanimously appointed Fort Mitchell’s mayor in late December.

Special place

Pohlgeers, who graduated with a degree in business management and management information systems, grew up in Fort Mitchell, a city of about 8,800 in the Cincinnati metropolitan area.

As he and his wife, Amy, grew their family, he began volunteering at the school. He soon desired to have even more of an impact and decided to run for City Council.

He was “deeply honored” to be appointed mayor.

“This was the ultimate confirmation from my peers that they respected my work, my vision and my dedication to the City of Fort Mitchell,” he said. “I am extremely grateful and humbled by their trust and confidence in me to lead the city.”

Balance

In addition to his service in city government, Pohlgeers has had a successful professional career that began when Trine’s Career Center helped him secure a position with the Cintas Corporation.

“Their guidance and resources were invaluable and instrumental in helping me navigate my next steps following graduation,” he said.



Today he is president of Associated Management Systems, a medical billing service in Erlanger, Kentucky.

While juggling his responsibilities may appear daunting, Pohlgeers said he is able to leverage technology and manage his time to succeed in all his roles.

He felt it was the right time for him to step into the mayor position.

“From a business standpoint, I knew I had great staff in place, which provides me with greater flexibility,” he said. “Equally important, at the city level, I have an outstanding city administrator and department heads leading the day-to-day.”

The cornerstone of the balance, he said, is his family.

“This doesn’t work without the support of my three children (Audra, 12, Bryce, 15, and Everett, 17) and my wife,” he said. “I was not going to toss my hat in the ring unless my family was all in. I am truly blessed with their unwavering support of this next endeavor.”

Foundation built at Trine

He credits his Trine education with equipping him with the skills to run a business and help lead a city.

“Trine provided a strong foundation in management, as well as in finance and accounting — both essential to responsible leadership. My education went beyond simply learning information. It taught me how to think critically, solve complex problems and lead when the answers are not always clear. Trine challenged me to meet deadlines, work through obstacles and remain disciplined when situations became difficult.”

“Choosing to attend Trine was one of the best decisions of my life,” he added. “My experiences at Trine University prepared me to apply what I have learned — and what I have lived — to help build something stronger, safer and better for everyone.”

SCHOLARSHIP AIDS KSB STUDENTS

A new opportunity is teeing off for students in Trine University’s Ketner School of Business (KSB).

Thanks to a generous gift from alumnus **Larry Kennedy, 1971 BSBA**, an endowed scholarship has been created for students majoring in golf management.

The scholarship continues a long-standing commitment from the Kennedy family, who have now supported two scholarships at Trine. Larry and his wife, Maryann, who passed away in January, established the first to benefit KSB students.

For the Kennedys, the decision to invest in students is both personal and deeply meaningful.

“Education is the pathway that made our lives possible,” stated Kennedy. He points to Maryann’s own story as the beginning of the family’s philanthropy, as she was able to attend college in 1972 because of a four-year, \$400-per-year Kiwanis scholarship.

Kennedy’s connection to Trine (then known as Tri-State College) runs deep, shaped by the kind of campus memories that only grow more vivid with time. TSC provided Kennedy the opportunity to be a reporter for the school newspaper and yearbook and to serve as a member of the student council.

An avid golfer, Kennedy has made the most of his pastimes, serving as both a First Tee golf and a PSIA ski instructor and, in winter, taking on a role that delights countless families: a real white-bearded Santa Claus. With this latest scholarship, he’s bringing that same spirit of service and giving back to the next generation, helping KSB golf management students turn ambition into an “above par” future.



TRINE
UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI & FRIENDS

HOLE 5

Somebody a long time ago came up to Alan Dausman and me and said, “Can you guys cook hot dogs at the next Trine University Alumni and Friends Scholarship Golf Outing?”

We looked at each other, shrugged our shoulders, and said, “Sure!”

That was more than 15 years ago, as near as I can recollect. Hole 5 has become a bit of a tradition for Al, me and many of our fellow Alumni Board members. We look forward to it the first Friday of every August.

Having the Hole 5 tent strategically located so players can take advantage of the dogs and libations while hitting both west (teeing off) and east (fairway shots) has provided some great stories. Some of the errant fairway shots have zipped through the trees around the tent a few times, making us a little nervous and the golfers a little sheepish.

Not that we would harass them when they come to fetch their ball. Of course not.

Weather is always a factor, and we have run the full gamut: hot, cold, wind, drizzle and absolutely perfect. There was only one time I remember being called in due to lightning.

I recall one time being cold enough to call the club house and they brought out a wind breaker. I put it on my credit card and still wear it.

The Trine University Alumni and Friends Scholarship Golf Outing is an excellent event. It is usually completely sold out and, based on the interaction we have with the participants at Hole 5, everybody has a good time. The Alumni Board is a proud sponsor of the event and many of us either volunteer at Hole 5 or special games, or we play on teams to support the scholarships.

We hope to see you on Aug. 7 at Hole 5 for a hot dog! Remember: They will be HOT!

Ned Haylett, 1972 BSME
Alumni Association Board of Directors



THUNDER’S FINAL ROLL (current through March 31, 2026)

1940s

- Jack R. Cuthbertson, 1948 BSME**, Grand Rapids, Michigan, April 18, 1987
- William T. Lavey, 1948 BSCE**, Bloomington, Indiana, April 16, 2017
- Ronald E. Ehlinger, 1949 BSCE**, Cumming, Georgia, Jan. 21, 2018

1950s

- Howard D. Porter, 1953 BSRT**, New Bern, North Carolina, April 7, 2020
- David A. Hillman, 1954 BSAE**, Bucyrus, Ohio, Jan. 4, 2026
- John D. Hovarter, 1955 BSME**, Corunna, Indiana, March 22, 2026
- Dr. Eugene E. Lemke, 1955 BSRT**, Indianapolis, Indiana, Feb. 1, 2026
- Leslie B. Rigler, 1955 BSEE**, Churchville, Maryland, Dec. 1, 2025
- Robert G. White, 1955 BSBA**, Fortville, Indiana, Feb. 5, 2026
- Erik P. Dambergs, 1956 BSCE**, Broomall, Pennsylvania, Sept. 18, 2024
- Ray N. Rapp, 1956 BSRT**, Mabank, Texas, Oct. 1, 2022
- Michael H. Sellheim, 1956 BSCE**, Valencia, California, June 14, 2023
- Robert M. Wilson, 1956 BSRT**, Sarasota, Florida, July 9, 2023
- Gordon F. Dyndor, 1957 BSEE**, Watervliet, New York, Feb. 28, 2026
- Dudley H. Geigenmuller, 1957 BSME**, Norwich, Connecticut, Aug. 24, 2018
- Robert E. Hufford, 1957 BSEE**, Brandon, Florida, Oct. 22, 2019
- John L. Hunsinger, 1957 BSME**, Santa Anna, Texas, Nov. 28, 2025
- Napoleon F. Pietryka, 1957 BSME**, Randolph, Vermont, Dec. 2, 2025

- James L. Russell, 1957 BSCE**, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Jan. 13, 2026
- Charles E. Weiderhaft, 1957 BSRT**, Carmel, Indiana, Nov. 14, 2025
- William A. Dager, 1958 BSEE**, Carmel, Indiana, Feb. 18, 2026
- Donald F. Frantom, 1958 BSACC**, Arlington Heights, Illinois, Jan. 12, 2018
- I. Joseph Santinoceto, 1958 BSACC**, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Jan. 7, 2026
- Ronald M. Severance, 1958 DDT**, Lansing, Michigan, Feb. 4, 2026
- Walter L. Brown, 1959 BSEE**, Stanley, New York, Oct. 21, 2025
- Norman C. Clark, 1959 DDT**, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Jan. 1, 2026
- Thomas N. Farrington, 1959 BSEE**, Garrett, Indiana, Feb. 3, 2026
- Joseph V. Jackson, 1959 BSChE**, Jefferson, Ohio, Dec. 30, 2025
- Y. Pete Jacob, 1959 BSChE**, Columbus, Ohio, March 2, 2026

- Leonard W. Tiedemann, 1959 BSME**, East Middlebury, Vermont, Jan. 7, 2025
- Roger J. Wiersma, 1959 BSEE**, Poughkeepsie, New York
- Wallace W. Windle, 1959 BSEE**, Whitney, Texas, Dec. 20, 2025

1960s

- William O. Boyer, 1960 BSEE**, Sidney, Ohio, Nov. 9, 2020
- Thomas R. King, 1960 BSME**, Columbus, Ohio, Aug. 23, 2025
- Shambhoo A. Pai Panandiker, 1960 BSEE**, Austin, Texas, May 1, 2025
- Walter L. Perry, 1960 BSCE**, Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 12, 2024
- Ronald K. Weimer, 1960 BSEE**, Lake Wales, Florida, Jan. 18, 2023
- Elmer H. Wirtz, 1960 BSCE**, Portland, Oregon, Nov. 1, 2021
- Stephen D. Worl, 1960 BSCE**, Sidney, Ohio, Feb. 13, 2026
- Arthur R. Dyson, 1961 BSME**, Sellersburg, Indiana, Jan. 13, 2026
- Robert John Gampp, 1961 BSEE**, Bradford, New Hampshire, Aug. 28, 2021
- Dale V. Marting, 1961 BSCE**, Crown Point, Indiana, Oct. 27, 2025
- John J. Wiedenman, 1961 BSChE**, North Charleston, South Carolina, March 9, 2026
- George N. Pardonner, 1962 BSEE**, Highland, New York, Jan. 31, 2026
- Ronald P. Graf, 1964 BSME**, Centerville, Indiana, Jan. 12, 2026
- Ralph T. Lamkin, 1964 BSME**, Palmview, Texas, Jan. 2, 2026
- James A. Otto, 1964 BSME**, Knoxville, Tennessee, Aug. 28, 2024
- Thomas A. Story, 1964 BSME**, Cypress, Texas, Feb. 26, 2026

- Theodore W. Sushka, 1964 BSCE**, Marietta, Ohio, March 7, 2026
- Clyde S. Willis, 1964 BSCE**, Wheelersburg, Ohio, Nov. 18, 2025
- Marvin D. Yoder, 1964 BSCE**, Defiance, Ohio, Nov. 29, 2025
- Brian E. Marcellus, 1965 BSME**, Canandaigua, New York, Aug. 3, 2025
- Rev. Peter G. Puhak, 1965 BSME**, Canandaigua, New York, Dec. 9, 2025
- Rodney E. Schaeffer, 1965 BSAE**, Chino Valley, Arizona
- John H. Smit, 1965 BSEE**, Green Valley, Arizona
- Robert E. Vance, 1965 BSME**, Portland, Indiana, Jan. 11, 2026
- Lawrence A. Huber, 1966 BSBA**, Chesterton, Indiana, Dec. 29, 2024
- Daniel J. Hoger, 1967 BSBA**, Crete, Illinois, Jan. 4, 2026
- James R. Place, 1967 BSEE**, Valparaiso, Indiana, Feb. 5, 2026
- Kenneth E. Wishard, 1968 DDT**, Webster, New York, March 6, 2026
- Edwin Hartz, 1969 BSME**, Simpsonville, Kentucky, April 26, 2013
- Khalid M. Kanoo, 1969 BSBA**, Manama, Bahrain, Aug. 29, 2025

1970s

- Alan J. DallaPalu, 1970 BSBA**, Lebanon, New Jersey, Nov. 27, 2025
- William J. Chaudoin, 1971 BSCE**, Herndon, Kentucky, Oct. 28, 2025
- James A. Raimar, 1971 BSME**, Saginaw, Michigan, Oct. 19, 2025
- Roger R. Spickler, 1971 BSBUS**, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, June 30, 2025
- George C. Ford, 1972 BSBA**, Norwalk, Ohio, Oct. 10, 2025
- Harold E. Joy, 1972 ASCT**, Osceola, Indiana, March 1, 2026
- George T. Morgan, 1972 BSME**, Saint Joseph, Michigan, Oct. 24, 2025
- Roderick L. Hoffman, 1973 BSME**, Daleville, Indiana, Feb. 24, 2026
- Jeffrey N. Davis, 1974 ASCT**, Fort Wayne, Indiana, March 16, 2026
- Syed M. Huq, 1974 ASCT**, Indio, California, Oct. 1, 2022
- Michael R. Klink, 1974 BSCE**, Auburn, Indiana, Jan. 18, 2026
- Richard M. Braid, 1975 BSEE**, Lake City, Minnesota, Feb. 5, 2026

- Douglas M. Farmer, 1975 BSBA**, Buckeye, Arizona, Dec. 25, 2024
- Glenn A. Trego, 1975 BSCE**, Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, Oct. 8, 2025
- James E. Newbrough, 1977 BSTRN**, Leland, North Carolina, Oct. 21, 2025
- Karl J. Spicker, 1977 BSEE**, Ashland, Ohio, Nov. 17, 2025
- Richard L. Brickel, 1978 BSME**, Bryan, Ohio, Oct. 15, 2025
- Sandra L. Newell, 1978, BSBusEd**, Reading, Michigan, Oct. 24, 2025

1980s

- James D. Fisher, 1982 BSTRN**, Loveland, Ohio, Nov. 7, 2025
- Craig L. Myers, 1987 BSME**, Fremont, Michigan, March 9, 2026
- Jerry L. Turner, 1987 BSCE**, Edwardsburg, Michigan, Dec. 19, 2025
- Michael D. Kobelak, 1989 BSME**, Northfield, Ohio, Dec. 2, 2025

1990s

- Debra E. (Brickert) Sarkine, 1994 BSChE**, Mooresville, Indiana, Jan. 5, 2026
- Henry V. Frazzini, 1996 BSEIEd**, Seminole, Texas, Dec. 29, 2025

2000s

- Brian A. Just, 2002 BSEA**, Mooresville, North Carolina, Oct. 28, 2025

2010s

- Jeremy L. Berry, 2012 BSBA**, Lenexa, Kansas, Jan. 20, 2026

TRINE UNIVERSITY MOURNS LOSS OF TRUSTEE EMERITUS HOLTZ, NAMESAKE OF MSOL PROGRAM

Trine University joined many across the nation in mourning the death of Lou Holtz, who served as a trustee at the university from 2011 to 2017 in addition to his distinguished career as a football coach and broadcaster.

Holtz’s death was announced by his family March 4. He was 89.

Holtz delivered the Commencement address at Trine in 2011. The university awarded him the honorary Doctor in Public Service degree at that ceremony.

He joined the university’s Board of Trustees that August and was named trustee emeritus in 2017.

In 2013, he lent his name to Trine University’s Lou Holtz Master of Science in Leadership program, now the Lou Holtz Master of Science in Organizational Leadership. The program, which builds a highly effective foundation to prepare students for a variety of leadership complexities and opportunities, has graduated 369 students since its launch.

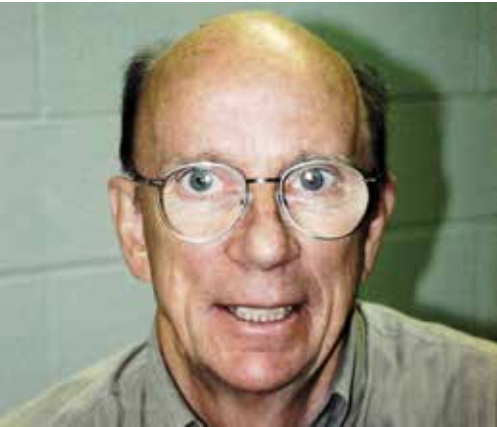
Holtz was part of the university’s Distinguished Speaker Series in 2015 and again in 2017 and was the keynote speaker at the university’s Scholarship Gala in 2019.

His last visit to campus was in 2024, when he spoke at the funeral of university namesake Ralph Trine.



Lou Holtz

LONGTIME FACULTY MEMBER PETE HIPPENSTEEL PASSES



Pete Hippensteel

Trine University is mourning the loss of longtime faculty member and coach Pete Hippensteel, who passed away April 8.

Hippensteel came to Tri-State College as a chemistry professor in 1964 after teaching high school for five years. In 1967, the first year TSC became accredited by the North Central Association, he started

the college’s biology program, developing each course in the major as well as teaching it the first time it was offered.

He received the Robert Ewing and Gail Stewart Smith Excellence in Teaching Award in Arts and Sciences, part of the Tri-State’s McKetta teaching awards, in 1989 and 1996. He was named to Who’s Who Among America’s Teachers in 1998 and 2000.

Tri-State recognized him as professor emeritus at Tri-State in 2005 following his retirement.

In 1967, he became the faculty athletic representative, serving 39 years in that role. During his tenure, Tri-State never had to forfeit a contest due to an eligibility problem.

He coached Tri-State’s baseball team for 11 years between 1966 and 1983, compiling a record of 93-145-1.

TRINE ESPORTS EARNS HONORS

Trine University’s esports teams had a successful spring season, with Overwatch Gold qualifying for a national invitation and other teams dominating conference play.



Overwatch Gold competed at the first ECAC National Founders Invitational, held May 15-17 in San Antonio, Texas.

Jonah Kyle, a computer science and information technology major from Valparaiso, Indiana, received the Forge Scholastic Esports Championship 2026 Uncommon Player Award. He was honored among thousands of players across all leagues represented at the invitational.

Though Trine lost matches against Purdue, the University of Delaware and Northwood, Jeremy Goossens, director of esports, said it was still incredible to see the university compete on such a big stage.

Trine esports teams won the Block House Esports League MIAA competition on April 12, the first time Trine has secured the title in back-to-back semesters.

Out of the three Trine teams competing in the conference, two — R6 Siege and Overwatch — were undefeated during the regular season and playoffs.

Trine Overwatch Navy members were: Kylee Garrity, a civil engineering major from New Palestine, Indiana; Xander Bowman, a computer science and information technology major from Howe, Indiana; Aiden Keever, an extended reality major from Highlands Ranch, Colorado; Addie Winebrenner, a mechanical engineering major from Huntington, Indiana; Sean Smith, a business administration major from Pleasant Lake, Indiana; and Connor Frappier, an electrical engineering major from Fort Wayne, Indiana.



R6 Siege team members were: Ryan Brown, a computer science and information technology major from Springfield, Ohio; Levin Wann, a criminal justice major from Indianapolis; Landen Young, a mechanical engineering major from Commiskey, Indiana; James Whiting, a business administration major from Lansing, Michigan; and Tristan Smith, a cybersecurity major from Greensburg, Indiana.

Trine Rocket League team members were: Logan Hooley, a civil engineering major from Goshen, Indiana; Ethan Schroeder, a computer science major from Mountain Lake, Minnesota; Trevor Hunter, a computer science and information technology major from Rushville, Indiana; and Carson Sickmiller, a golf management major from La Vergne, Tennessee.

BACK HOME AGAIN: BURTON REPEATS

Wyatt Burton is now a two-time virtual Indy 500 winner

The virtual version of the greatest spectacle in racing is becoming the place where Wyatt Burton dominates.

On Feb. 26, Burton, a member of Trine University’s esports team, became the back-to-back champion of the second annual Collegiate iRacing League (CiL) 500, held on a virtual Indianapolis Motor Speedway (IMS).

The computer science and information technology major from Edinburgh, Indiana, has swept both races at the virtual IMS.

He was more than four seconds ahead of his nearest challenger, led the most laps and had the fastest lap.

He finished second overall in the CiL for the spring season, getting edged out by Jake Cummings of Converse University by two points. He was named the Cleanest Driver in the league, averaging 262.7 turns per incident point.





Softball finishes 2nd in nation

The Thunder came up just short of a repeat national championship performance, falling to the University of Redlands in the 2026 NCAA Division III Softball Championship Series.

The team finished the season as national runners-up with a 41-8 overall record. The trip to the championship series was the fourth in five seasons for the program. Along the way, they captured their seventh super regional title and eighth regional title.

It wasn't an easy road to the final site of Salem, Virginia, with the Thunder needing to go 5-0 in elimination games during the regional and super regional rounds.

After losing their second game during the regional to Loras College, Trine came from behind to win games against the University of Rochester and Loras to force the decisive game seven against the Duhawks. They ran away with that contest to secure a spot in the super regional and to host Muhlenberg College.

The Mules took the first game, but the Thunder won back-to-back contests on the second day, capped by an extra-inning walk-off homer from **Debbie Hill**, to secure their spot in the final eight.



Debbie Hill

After cruising through bracket play, the Thunder fell to Redlands in a pair of contests to finish as runners-up. During Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association play,

Trine went 14-2, capturing their seventh-straight regular season championship, before taking their fifth-straight MIAA Tournament title.

A host of Thunder players received individual accolades along the way.



Emma Lee

Emma Lee headlined the conference awards, earning Most Valuable Position Player. **Clare Feehan**, Hill, **Tyra Marcum**, **Macy Rocha** and **Karley Trine** joined Lee with first-team All-MIAA honors while **Whitney Duell** was selected to the second team. The National Fastpitch Coaches Association recognized Lee, Feehan, Hill and Marcum as first-team All-Region. Rocha, Karley Trine and **Keelin Wheaton** earned third-team recognition.



Hill, Lee and Marcum each earned All-American status, all as first-team selections. It was the first such selection for Lee, the third for Marcum and the program-best fourth All-American award for Hill.

Karley Trine followed up a few days later by becoming the first Thunder softball player to be named a Rawlings Gold Glove. Lee became just the second student-athlete at Trine to earn the Elite Scholar-Athlete award, given at each NCAA-sponsored championship to the student-athlete with the highest academic standard among their peers.



Clare Feehan



Tyra Marcum

A host of program records fell during the campaign. The team as a whole broke single-season marks in on-base percentage, runs scored, doubles, home runs, runs batted in, total bases and walks. Marcum broke the single-season doubles record with 20.



Macy Rocha



Karley Trine

Hill took down multiple career records in the final season of her time at Trine. Headlining her slate was the NCAA Division III Softball record for most bases on balls. She owns top career marks for Trine in slugging percentage, on-base percentage, games played and started, doubles, home runs and runs batted in.



Whitney Duell



Keelin Wheaton

Head coach **Donnie Danklefsen** also reached a milestone during the season, surpassing 700 career wins at Trine. He finished his 22nd season at the helm with a 725-214 record and a staggering .772 winning percentage.



Donnie Danklefsen



Women’s basketball gets NCAA tourney win for 9th straight year

The Trine University women’s basketball team earned its ninth consecutive bid to the NCAA Tournament this season, before winning their first-round contest with a convincing 90-45 decision over Shenandoah University.

The Thunder have won at least one NCAA Tournament game in each of their nine appearances. The team’s final loss of the season came to the eventual national champions, Denison University, by the closest margin for the Big Red during their tournament run.

The Thunder opened the season 6-1 with a win over No. 9 Baldwin Wallace and a record-setting blowout of Carlow (Pennsylvania). Trine slipped up at their annual Holiday Tournament but responded well, rattling off 15 consecutive wins over MIAA foes.

During the streak, Trine scored dramatic wins over Hope and Calvin and held eight consecutive opponents under 50 points. The Thunder claimed their second consecutive MIAA Regular Season crown with a 71-65 win over Calvin University, which was Trine’s 33rd consecutive MIAA victory, a new program record and just a few games shy of Hope College’s MIAA record of 39.

Trine advanced to its 11th straight MIAA Championship game, where they fell to Hope College.



Annika Southworth

Annika Southworth became the first freshman in program history to earn first-team All-MIAA honors while sophomore Madison Wagner joined her on the first team. Ally Capouch was named to the second team.



Madison Wagner



Ally Capouch

Men’s basketball reaches MIAA title game



Jon VanderWal

The men’s basketball team opened the Jon VanderWal era with a strong 20-win campaign, reaching the MIAA Championship game.

The Thunder opened the season with dramatic home wins over Ohio Northern and Baldwin Wallace before traveling to Washington, Pennsylvania, for the annual Great Lakes Invitational. Trine fell to eventual national champions Mary Washington before defeating VanderWal’s old squad, the Marietta College Pioneers.

The Thunder then won 13 of their next 15, including a pair in Daytona Beach over winter break. The statement win came on Jan. 15 with the 15th-ranked Calvin Knights in town. The Thunder put their undefeated record over “Bacon Night” on the line and earned a huge 88-68 win.

Trine moved into second place in the MIAA standings with an overtime win against Hope before securing the conference’s fourth seed in a tight race. Trine opened the MIAA tournament at home with a win over Albion before avenging a pair of regular-season losses to Olivet on the Comets’ home floor.

Jayden Bradshaw and Nate Tucker earned All-MIAA honors and Tucker was this year’s recipient of the Robert L. Griem award as the most outstanding senior male athlete.



Jayden Bradshaw



Nate Tucker



Acro and tumbling claims national title

The Thunder Acrobatics and Tumbling team claimed a national title in the open pyramid event at the NCATA Division III Event Finals.

Trine had nine athletes named to the All-Tournament or All-Academic team. Lauren Alexander, Lauren Hillin and Olivia Hartup were named to the All-Tournament and All-Academic teams. Lillianne Boyd, Courtney Welsh, Alexandra Mission, Julianna Porco, Megan TenHarkel and Ava Henderson earned All-Academic honors.

Trine posted a 6-3 record this year and season-best score of 219.43 on senior day against Adrian. Trine advanced to the semifinals of the NCATA Tournament before falling to Concordia University Wisconsin.



Lauren Alexander



Lauren Hillin



Olivia Hartup



Lillianne Boyd



Courtney Welsh



Alexandra Mission



Julianna Porco



Megan TenHarkel



Ava Henderson



Men’s volleyball wins conference title

The men’s volleyball team claimed its first Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League Regular Season Championship with a dominant run at the end of their slate.

A rocky start turned a corner when the Thunder defeated No. 20 Hobart College for the program’s first ranked win. They went on to finish with 14 wins over their final 17 games, including two more wins over teams in the national poll.

Trine ended the season on a nine-game winning streak, including five consecutive sweeps over Olivet, Mount Union, Baldwin Wallace, Spalding and Wabash. A senior night win over Calvin gave Trine a share of its first MCVL Title.



Johnson-Kuhao Ho'okano-Pelekai



Karl Both



John Mikrut



Dalton Lutes

Trine advanced to the MCVL Tournament for the sixth consecutive season, this time as the second seed. The Thunder fell to Calvin in the opening round.

A program-high four members of the team were selected to the All-MCVL team. Johnson-Kuhao Ho'okano-Pelekai and Karl Both were named to the first team while John Mikrut was named to the second team. Dalton Lutes earned honorable mention status.



Kuhn sets new victory mark for men’s lacrosse

Since the addition of head coach **Ryan Kuhn**, the Trine men’s lacrosse team has embarked on a historic run that continued in the 2026 season. It took Kuhn just five seasons to become the winningest coach in program history, securing his record-breaking 49th win this season. He finished the year with 53 wins in his career with the Thunder.

Overall, the team went 14-5 in the season, making 2025 and 2026 the only time the program has had back-to-back double-digit win totals.

Trine opened the season by going 10-1, with the lone loss coming to a nationally recognized Oberlin College. Trine finished 3-3 in Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) play, sitting fourth in the final standings. They



reached their second-straight MIAA Tournament semifinal during the postseason, falling to the eventual champions from Hope College in the final seconds of the game.

Sophomore **Vin Pantano** captured the single-season assist record during the opening round of the MIAA Tournament. Senior **Danny Kelly** broke the program career

record for caused turnovers ending the year with 122. Junior **Mason Levin** earned first-team All-MIAA honors while Pantano was joined by classmate **Rocco Curatola** and senior **J’Oshua Shaw** on the second team.



Ryan Kuhn



Vin Pantano



Danny Kelly



Mason Levin



Rocco Curatola



J’Oshua Shaw

James represents Trine at NCAA men’s golf championships

The Thunder men’s golfers posted a spectacular spring season, culminating in an individual berth to the NCAA Championships for senior **Garrett James**. James finished 89th of 225 at the championships.

He finished the season with the fifth-lowest scoring average in program history in both 18- and 36-hole rounds. He ranks fourth and fifth in the career categories, respectively.

Fellow senior **Carter Schnipke** established a program record with 82 career rounds played. The team broke the program scoring records for 18- and 36-hole average while winning seven tournaments and finishing second in the MIAA standings. Spectacular sophomores **Jake Bilby** and **Jack Besner** joined the senior duo on the All-MIAA team. James was named to the first team while Schnipke, Bilby and Besner were on the second team.



Garrett James



Carter Schnipke



Jake Bilby



Jack Besner



Women’s golf has strong spring; Smith earns MIAA honors

The women’s golf team continued its success from fall into spring.

The Thunder competed well in a pair of tournaments featuring a plethora of nationally ranked opponents, placing eighth and ninth at the WashU and Illinois Wesleyan Spring Invitationals.

Trine hosted its annual Spring Classic at Zollner Golf Course on April 17 and finished second. It was silver again for the Thunder at the MIAA Spring Finale.

Rylee Smith broke her own school record on day one of the tournament, becoming the first Thunder golfer to break 70 in a single round with a 69. For her efforts across the full season, Smith was named the MIAA Most Valuable Golfer. Smith now owns both the season and career records for 18- and 36-hole scoring average.

Natalie Kulka was also named to the MIAA First Team and **Grace Thiele** was named to the second team.



Natalie Kulka



Grace Thiele



Rylee Smith

Men’s hockey makes 5th NCHA semifinals appearance

The Trine University men’s hockey team once again turned in a strong performance, reaching 18 wins for the fifth straight season and making a Northern Collegiate Hockey Association (NCHA) Harris Cup playoff run.

After the 2024-25 season saw the Thunder reach their first NCAA Division III Men’s Hockey Championship tournament, the team entered this season with high expectations, ranked seventh in the nation according to multiple polls. They spent almost all the season ranked, but a few critical losses kept them from the national tournament.

They did secure upset victories against Aurora University and Adrian College, both top three in the nation at the time. They also took a win against the United States National Team Development Program Under-18 team.

During NCHA play, Trine went 12-4-2, earning the third seed in the postseason tournament. They swept their opening round to make their fifth-straight appearance in the semifinals, where their season ended with a loss to St. Norbert College.



Alexander Babich



Brody Simko



Women’s tennis sets win marks

The women’s tennis team ended its season 16-6 overall after going undefeated during the fall season.



Erin Kolar

Head Coach **Erin Kolar** earned her 100th career win on March 5 with a win over Allegheny and her 200th win combined between both men’s and women’s later in the season.

Elina Locane led the Thunder at No. 1 singles with an 18-3 record and earned first-team All-MIAA honors. It was the winningest season for an individual since the program started competition in NCAA Division III.

Alexis Maloney won the Karen Caine award, given to a senior who demonstrates outstanding academic and athletic achievement. Locane and Maloney teamed up at No. 1 doubles and posted an 18-3 record. Maloney became the winningest doubles player in program history.

The Thunder qualified for the MIAA Tournament for the second consecutive season.



Alexis Maloney

Elina Locane

Men’s tennis finishes 15-7

The men’s tennis team finished the season 15-7 overall and earned the fourth seed in the MIAA Tournament, where they defeated Adrian before falling to eventual league champions, Kalamazoo, in the semifinals.

The men finished the fall season undefeated. Coach **Erin Kolar** became the winningest coach in program history, capturing her 100th win as the men’s coach.

Drew Hackney and **Andrew Spirrison** claimed first-team All-MIAA honors and **Sammy Yin** was named to the second team while also claiming the Dr. Lawrence Green Scholar Athlete Award for his exceptional academic and athletic achievement. Spirrison became the program’s career leader in doubles victories.



Drew Hackney



Andrew Spirrison



Sammy Yin



Records shattered in women’s track and field

Between the indoor and outdoor seasons, the women’s track and field team notched 78 new top-10 marks, including 10 new program records.

No one had more than freshman **Hannah Flores Ness**. She set new records in the indoor and outdoor high jump, the pentathlon and heptathlon. Her high jump records measured 1.60 meters/5’ 3” and 1.63 meters/5’ 3.75”, respectively. Her point totals in the multi-events of 2,962 and 3,964 shattered the previous program standards.

Brooklyn Kerry and **Olivia Andrews** added records in the indoor and outdoor triple jump and pole vault. Kerry’s jumps measured 11.47 meters/37’ 7.75” and 11.82 meters/38’ 9.25”.

Andrews became the first Thunder woman to clear 12 feet in the pole vault with a clearance of 3.78 meters/12’ 4.75” on May 9. Her indoor record measures 3.55 meters/11’ 7.75”. She is also the first female vaulter in program history to earn All-Region honors.

Kaylee Birely had a hand in two new program records, first during indoor season on the 4x400-meter relay with **Alyssa Possehn**, **Emma Heintzelman** and **Ariana Todd**, clocking 4:01.88. She then broke the outdoor record in the open 400 meters with a time of 58.37.

The final record of the year went to **Bailey Puckett**.



Hannah Flores Ness



Brooklyn Kerry



Olivia Andrews



Kaylee Birely



Alyssa Possehn



Emma Heintzelman



Ariana Todd



Bailey Puckett

Men’s track wins 3rd Indiana championship

The men’s track and field team posted a strong season, making a mark on the record book. While the Thunder’s reign of 11 consecutive MIAA titles ended, their streak of Indiana DIII Championships grew to three.

Braden Estep led the way during indoor season, topping a 27-year-old record in the 60-meter dash and bettering his No. 2 all-time mark in the 200-meter dash. Estep claimed both the 60- and 200-meter dash championships at the Indoor MIAA Championships and qualified for the NCAA Championships in the 200, where he placed 16th and earned second-team All-America honors.

In addition to an indoor title in the 3,000-meter run, **Max Van Huis** claimed MIAA crowns in the 5,000- and 10,000-meter runs at the outdoor championships and was the Thunder’s lone All-Region selection during outdoor season.

The Thunder tallied 158.5 at the Indiana DIII Championships, securing their third consecutive title.



Braden Estep



Max Van Huis



Strong start sets mark for women’s lacrosse

The women’s lacrosse team posted the best start to a season in program history with a 4-0 mark to begin the year. The Thunder toppled Bethel (Indiana) in their home opener; the Pilots were receiving votes in the NAIA Top 25 poll.

Trine opened MIAA play with a win over Albion and added conference wins over Alma and Saint Mary’s. The Thunder claimed the MIAA Freshman of the Year award for the second season in a row with **Erin Fariello** taking the honor. **Izabelle Dominski** and **Claire Schmaltz** were named to the All-MIAA second team. **Kelsey Yanagihara** set a program record for saves in a game with 26 against Adrian on April 11. The team finished 8-8, 3-4 in the MIAA.



Erin Fariello



Izabelle Dominski



Claire Schmaltz



Kelsey Yanagihara

Men’s wrestling wins 4 duals

The men’s wrestling team posted four dual match victories and a second-place showing at the Adrian Invite this season.

The Thunder defeated Adrian in a dual match for the first time since the 2017-18 season with a 21-20 decision on Jan. 22. Trine then defeated Alma on Feb. 5 and entered the final dual match of the season with a chance to earn a share of the MIAA Championship before falling to Albion.

Kaden Golder earned All-MIAA status at 125 pounds; he was undefeated in MIAA play and placed eighth at the NCAA Regional Championships.

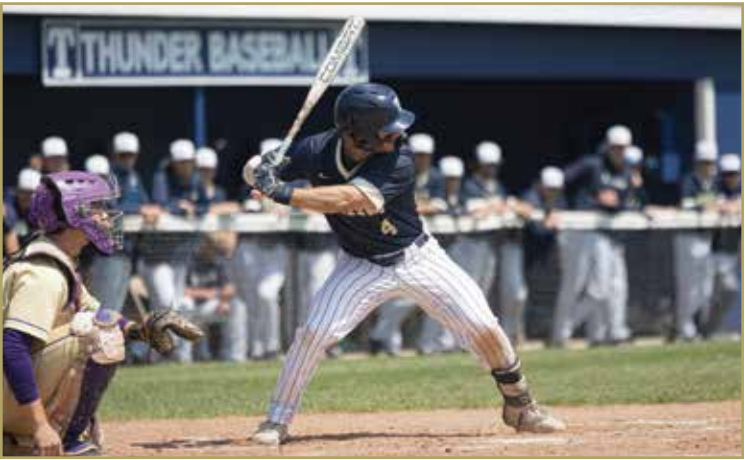


Kaden Golder



Women’s hockey wins 7

The women’s hockey team qualified for the NCHA Slaats Cup Playoffs once again this season, ultimately falling to Adrian in the quarterfinals. Trine claimed five of their seven wins at home; three came in January during the team’s eight-game homestand. A sweep of Stevenson in November highlighted the non-conference schedule.



Cole Temple

Baseball wins 4 on spring break trip

The Trine baseball team claimed four wins during its annual spring break trip, including a pair of run-rule victories over Waynesburg and Saint Vincent. A sweep over Hope College marked the first conference series sweep since 2022 for the Thunder. A win two days later over Olivet would push the win streak to four.

The team finished 8-30, 4-15 in the MIAA. **Cole Temple** claimed second-team All-MIAA honors at third base.

Women’s wrestling places in meets

The women’s wrestling team had four wrestlers compete at the NCWWC Regional Championships at Tiffin University. **Laylah Hicks** and **Madison Small** each won matches to help the Thunder finish 15th. Hicks and Small again led the Thunder at the Quad Cities D3 Invitational, where Trine placed 22nd out of 31 teams.



Laylah Hicks



Madison Small

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