

THE MAGAZINE OF TRINE UNIVERSITY

TRINE

WINTER 2026



Trine succeeds at Cast in Steel competition

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From left, Jason Blume, assistant vice president for Innovation One, explains some of the features of Trine University's makerspace to Board of Trustees members Keith Turner, John Counciller, John Pellegrino Jr., Mike Axel and Ken Ehinger during a Homecoming tour.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Each year, Trine University's Cast in Steel senior design team takes items that many of us only dream about and makes them reality. The annual competition provides a unique opportunity to apply what our students have learned as well as research and apply new processes they'll use in industry.

And like everything we do at Trine, we excel in Cast in Steel, winning national awards while competing against larger universities working with corporate foundries. You'll read about our past successes, hopes for this year's team and the process of creating a battle ax in this issue's cover story.

Trine students get hands-on opportunities to work with much more than metal. You'll read in this issue about a group of students who are helping research ways to improve an electronic component used in everything from computers to cell phones.

You'll also read stories of multiple alumni who have gone on to succeed in their careers because of the strong foundation this institution gave them.

Trine's first Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) graduates joined those alumni in our December Commencement ceremonies. You'll read profiles of these graduates, the first of many to come, in this issue.

You'll also read about and see photos from Homecoming and the Touchstone Dinner. These events are a wonderful time to celebrate our institution and those who generously support our mission and vision.

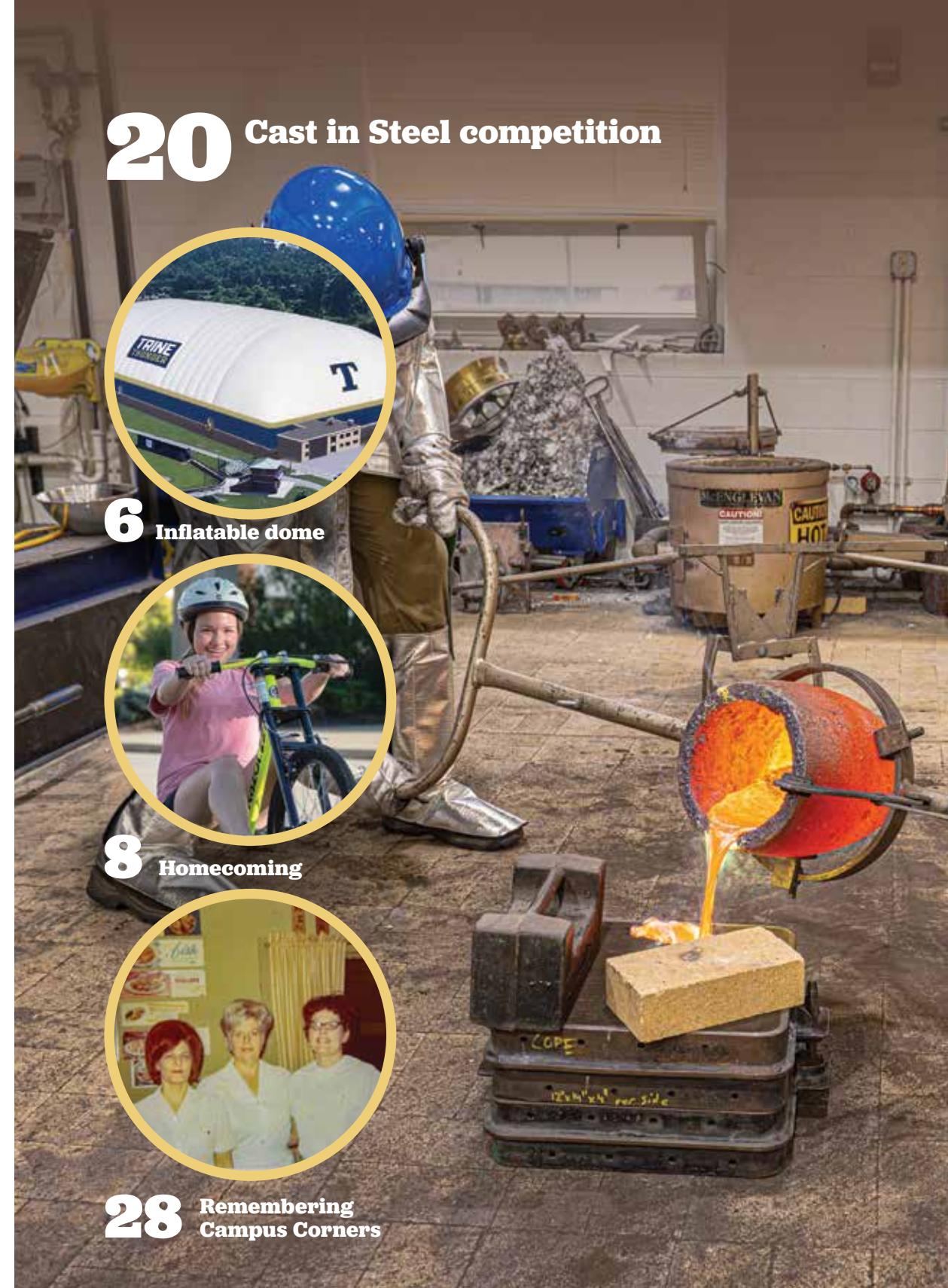
And, as always, you'll read about the excellence of our athletic teams, including a historic season for women's cross country.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of this great university. Our impact continues to grow, whether our students and alumni are wielding a battle ax, providing patient care or leading in their homes, businesses or communities.

Sincerely,

Earl D. Brooks II

Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D.
Trine University President



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THE MAGAZINE OF TRINE UNIVERSITY

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TRINE ADDING INFLATABLE DOME TO SERVE ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Trine University athletic teams will soon have another all-weather option.

The university will open a \$6 million, 92,000-square-foot inflatable dome this spring, providing training, practice and competition space for sports including baseball, softball, lacrosse, soccer and football.

The new facility will feature artificial turf, new locker rooms and a controlled climate that will allow for year-round use. It will accommodate bleachers for spectators as needed.

“We’re proud to continue to support our athletic teams with state-of-the-art facilities, allowing them to build on the many successes we’ve already achieved,” said Earl D. Brooks II, Ph.D., Trine University president. “In addition, this new space will allow all our students more access to Hershey Hall, which will undergo its own extensive renovations and upgrades.”

Thunder athletic teams have captured three NCAA Division III team championships in the last two years, with softball winning in 2023 and 2025 and men’s basketball taking the title in 2024.

Practice space during Hershey renovations

The new dome will provide practice space for teams that will be temporarily displaced by the renovation of Hershey Hall, which was announced last spring as part of the university’s master plan.

In addition to the Hershey Hall renovations, the plan, which encompasses about \$120 million in capital projects, includes the new Summit Street Apartments, the John and Mary Pellegrino Student Design Center, renovations to Zollner Football Stadium, and new facilities to support parking, dining, Campus Operations and the Franks School of Education.

GOOD VIBRATIONS: TRINE TEAM RESEARCHES KEY ELECTRONICS COMPONENT

Microelectromechanical systems (MEMS) may be microscopic, but they keep our modern world going.



Trine University student Janna Wilson works in the foreground while, from left, James Miller, Ph.D., and students Maranda Padfield, Nicholas Ewing and Nathan Stefanski work on the MEMS resonator project, funded by the National Science Foundation.

MEMS resonators, strands of silicon narrower than a human hair, are found in everything from computers to cell phones, vibrating to allow devices to keep time and sense movement.

Funded by \$200,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, a Trine University faculty member and students are researching how to make them better.

Doing the math

James Miller, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, said MEMS resonators are like a guitar string, and the research seeks to determine if increasing tension on them — similar to tightening a guitar string to tune it — will make their frequencies more stable.

Mechanical engineering majors Maranda Padfield of Kokomo, Indiana, Janna Wilson of Kokomo, Indiana, Nicholas Ewing of Wabash, Indiana, and Nathan Stefanski of Almont, Michigan, are assisting with the research.

Ewing, who first heard of the opportunity when discussing the possibility of graduate school, said he was attracted to the project by its interdisciplinary nature.

“I liked the idea of being able to stay close to software, since that is a big passion of mine, while also doing mechanical engineering,” he said. “I felt like I would really enjoy it even if I didn’t end up pursuing graduate school after finishing my degree.”

Padfield was intrigued by the ubiquity of MEMS.

“They’re in almost all the technology that is used in the modern day, and yet, most people, me included, know little about them,” she said. “It also opens a completely new door into more research later down the line in grad school or the corporate world.”

Stefanski said he has been interested in research since childhood, and the opportunity to conduct research has solidified for him that it’s a career part he wants to follow.

“There’s a great deal of intellectual freedom involved, but it seems like a job that never gets boring,” he said. “That’s the kind of future I envision.”

Noise reduction

Through the research, Dr. Miller said the students learn about semiconductor devices, microelectronics, mathematical modeling and computer programming, which provides valuable skills for technology sector jobs and engineering graduate school.

Stefanski said the project has also allowed the team to meet and interact with professionals at weekly “lab lunches” hosted by Dr. Miller.

“Many of them began as mechanical engineering students but have since transitioned into roles focused on health, fitness or computer science — all still connected to MEMS,” Stefanski said. “One of the biggest lessons I’ve taken away is the value of having a wide skill set and diverse experiences.”

The team is already preparing a journal article about its research to be published as well as individual abstracts to be presented at a MEMS conference this year.

Dr. Miller said he hopes to secure additional funding after the current grant concludes in August 2026.



THOUSANDS ENJOY HOMECOMING CELEBRATION

Alumni, students, parents, employees and community members flooded the Angola campus for Homecoming festivities the weekend of Oct. 3-5.

Highlights included tours of the Summit Street Apartments, the annual Touchstone Dinner, alumni sporting events, tailgating and Thunder Zone, and, of course, the Homecoming football game.

Cadence Bommarito, a junior from Grand Rapids, Michigan, majoring in elementary education was named Homecoming queen. Manny Ortiz, a junior from Coldwater, Michigan, pursuing a degree in secondary education, was named Homecoming king.

Thunder Games winners were:

Sidewalk Painting: first place, Kappa Sigma Alpha; second place, Trine Skating; third place, women's lacrosse

Lip Sync: Theta Phi Alpha

Tour de Trine: Christian Campus House

Dodgeball: Christian Campus House



Mark your calendar for **Homecoming 2026, Oct. 2-4**, and visit **trine.edu/homecoming** for updates.

Touchstone

Trine University recognized alumni, trustees and supporters of the university during the annual Touchstone and Homecoming Celebration Dinner on Oct. 3. The event was held in the Keith E. Busse/Steel Dynamics Inc. Athletic and Recreation Center. The university recognized those who increased their giving level and presented the following special honors.

ALUMNI, TRUSTEES, FRIENDS HONORED

Trustee Emeritus



Trine University honored alumnus Dr. Tomas Furth, namesake of the university's T. Furth Center for Performing Arts, as trustee emeritus. A native of Argentina, Dr. Furth attended what was then Tri-State College by recommendation of that nation's U.S. cultural attaché. He graduated in 1954 with a Bachelor of Science degree in mechanical

engineering and a Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering in 1955. After completing these two challenging degrees, he went on to become an outstanding business leader.

Dr. Furth has a long history of support for Trine University's annual and athletic funds and campus development. Tri-State University awarded him an honorary Doctor of Engineering degree in 1994. He joined the Board of Trustees in 1997 and served for 27 years.

Pillar of Success



Rick Henvey, chief executive officer for Parkview Health, was named Trine University's Pillar of Success.

Henvey has served as chief executive officer for Parkview Health since 2023. He has been with the organization for 19 years, leading its strategic growth across northern Indiana and northwest Ohio. Today, Parkview Health includes 15 hospitals

and an extensive network of over 1,200 primary care and specialty care physicians and advanced practice providers. With approximately 17,500 co-workers, it is the region's largest employer.

A member of Trine's board since 2017, he has been part of the development/campaign, enrollment and marketing, and campus planning committees.

Woman of Distinction



Trine University honored Kathy Eikenberry, known along with her husband Mike for her service and philanthropy throughout the Greater Fort Wayne area, with its annual Woman of Distinction Award.

Through service and philanthropy, she has positively impacted many charitable organizations in the Greater Fort Wayne area, both

on her own and in partnership with her husband, Mike, a member of Trine University's Board of Trustees.

Distinguished Service Award



Tomy Cochran, a 1969 business administration graduate, received the Distinguished Service Alumni Award.

Cochran has served in many capacities across northeast Indiana. After graduating from Tri-State, he went on to work for 32 years at Magnavox and Raytheon in Fort Wayne. He earned membership in the Magnavox Quarter Century Club and served on the club's board of directors.

Outstanding Achievement Award



Joe Schroeder, the first athlete in the 141-year history of Tri-State and Trine University to compete in the Olympics, was honored with the Outstanding Achievement Alumni Award.

A 2016 bachelor of science in civil engineering graduate, Schroeder was named a member of the USA Men's Rugby Sevens team in 2018 and was selected as one of 12 starters for the US Olympic team for the summer games held in Tokyo in 2021.

He scored during the team's match against South Africa. The US team eventually finished sixth at the games.

Outstanding Young Alumnus/a Award



The university honored Nicholle Probst as its Outstanding Young Alumna.

Graduating in 2013 with a degree in psychology and criminal justice, Probst is dedicated to advocating for children who are involved with or at risk of entering the child welfare system.

With more than a decade of leadership experience in child welfare, Probst specializes in developing community-centered programs that improve outcomes for vulnerable populations.

Tyler Benner, a 2008 sport management graduate, received the Outstanding Young Alumnus Award.

Benner has been an insurance agent for Indiana Farm Bureau since 2016. He was the agency's top producer in 2019 and was named a governor and premier agent in 2020. He serves on Indiana Farm Bureau's Agent Advisory Committee as a voice for fellow agents.



Spirit of Trine Alumni Award



The university presented Rick Hoover with the Spirit of Trine Alumni Award.

Hoover earned his aerospace engineering degree from Tri-State College in 1971. A member of the Alumni Association Board of Directors for 25 years and former president of the Board, Hoover has spearheaded efforts to engage alumni and support current Trine students through scholarships.

Hoover established the University Cup Golf Outing, held during Homecoming weekend. This event includes and involves all campus organizations and alumni, and has raised more than \$102,000 for student scholarships over its history.

Athletic Hall of Fame



Two individual alumni and one team were named to the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Jeffery Barnett is a 2019 Trine University graduate with a degree in exercise science. Barnett was a four-year member of the football and track and field teams. At Trine, Barnett collected seven All-America honors, three NCAA runner-up finishes in long jump, nine first team All-MIAA honors and a MIAA Indoor Field MVP.



Kaylee Fox is a 2018 graduate of Trine University with a degree in sport management and a minor in marketing. She was a four-year member of the softball team. Fox was a two-time NFCA All-American and a four-time member of NCAA Regional All-Tournament teams and first-team All-MIAA.



The 2010 football season is one of just three where the Thunder reached 11 wins, and one of two where the team reached the second round of the NCAA Division III Football

Championship. Trine, led by head coach Matt Land, finished the regular season with a perfect 10-0 record before finishing 11-1 overall, with their lone loss coming to the eventual national champions.



Trine names Drerup dean of health sciences school

Trine University has named Samuel Drerup, Ph.D., as dean of its Rinker-Ross School of Health Sciences, its fastest-growing academic school.

Drerup most recently served the university as chair of its Department of Biological Sciences and associate professor of biology.

He joined the university in 2016 as an assistant professor and was promoted to associate professor in 2020. He has since served as interim chair and co-chair of the Department of Science in addition to his teaching duties.

He has served as director for the Northeastern Indiana Tri-State Regional Science fair since 2018. He also has served on the university’s Curriculum and Academic Standards and Laboratory Safety Committees.

For several years, he has overseen teams of Trine University students who have monitored water quality at sites across Steuben County, funded by a Community Action Grant.



Paxton joins Trine as AVP of advancement

Ellen Paxton has joined Trine University as assistant vice president of advancement, bringing more than 25 years of experience in fundraising and institutional promotion to the position.

Paxton most recently served as a member of the development team at Bishop Dwenger High School in Fort Wayne, where she led the execution of the three largest fundraising events at the school.

Prior to that, she was vice president for institutional advancement at the University of St. Francis in Fort Wayne, where she oversaw all fundraising and Alumni Association engagement programs, special events, marketing and communications and community relations. She exceeded fundraising goals for the university in that role.

Her career also includes a 15-year tenure at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, with progressively increasing responsibilities throughout. She began as director of corporate and foundation relations, then served as senior director of development — central programs, senior director of regional advancement and eventually senior regional director of external relations and communications.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in physical education with an emphasis in sport management from Indiana State University and a Master of Arts in physical education with an emphasis in sport administration from the University of Northern Colorado.



High five: Trine once again voted region’s best; Tyler named Best Professor

Readers of Fort Wayne Newspapers have voted Trine University the Best College in the Greater Fort Wayne region for the fifth straight year.

The university also was honored as the area’s Best Higher Education institution, and Tim Tyler, Ph.D., professor in the Reiners Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Trine, was recognized as the region’s Best Professor.

The honors were announced Oct. 9 as part of Fort Wayne Newspapers’ annual Readers’ Choice awards.



Kayla Warren named Influential Woman of Northeast Indiana

Kayla Warren, MBA, senior vice president and chief finance officer for Trine University, has been named to the 2025 class of Influential Women of Northeast Indiana.

Sponsored by Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly, The Journal Gazette and KPC Media, Influential Women of Northeast Indiana recognizes extraordinary women who have overcome barriers, defied social norms and blazed trails for future generations.

In her role, Warren manages financial planning, budgeting and reports, accounting and business operations, and audits for an annual budget of \$110 million at Trine. In addition, she oversees housing and residence life, events and conferences, information technology, campus operations, the Thunder Ice Arena and Zollner Golf Course.

Warren earned her Bachelor of Science in business administration with a major in accounting from Trine in 2006 and has been a certified public accountant since 2010. She earned her MBA at Trine in December.



Trine grads have near-perfect employment for 13th year

Trine University’s Class of 2025 saw 99.2% of its members obtain their desired career outcome within six months of graduation, continuing a 13-year streak of employment and graduate school placement averaging greater than 99%. More than 97% of Trine’s Class of 2025 reported employment in their field of study.

Trine’s Class of 2025 saw more than 60% of its graduates employed in Indiana, with more than 86% staying in the Midwest. In addition to the overall figures, Trine’s Franks School of Education reported that 100% of its graduates seeking teaching positions have now been employed for 14 straight years.



Trine DPT among elite programs with 100% licensure pass rate

The 72 students who graduated from Trine University’s Doctor of Physical Therapy program over the past two years all passed their national licensure exam on the first try, a rate matched only by a handful of schools. In addition, all those students were employed as physical therapists within six months of graduation. Max Baumgartner, PT, Ph.D., director of Trine’s physical therapy program, said for the period ending with the 2023-2024 school year, the last year data is available, only four programs achieved 100% licensure for two years in a row.

TRINE UNIVERSITY



Trine, LECOM partner to provide doctoral degree pathways

Trine University and the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) will partner to provide Trine students with pathways to doctoral degrees and careers in osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and podiatry. Students admitted to Trine’s Bachelor of Science in biology beginning in fall 2026 will have the opportunity to apply for early acceptance into the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O.), Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D.), Doctor of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.) or Doctor of Podiatric Medicine (D.P.M.) degree programs at LECOM.



Trine career fair sets attendance record

The Trine University Career Center hosted its largest career fair on record on Sept. 25. The Tailgate for Talent Career Fair set an overall attendance record of over 700 students attending and over 140 registered employers recruiting. The annual event welcomes employers and job-seeking students to the center of campus along Trine University’s Thunder Drive.



Trine University's varsity Overwatch esports team, from left, Elton Langley, Jonah Kyle, Logan Gault, Brockstan Tschannen and Hudson Kelly, has been placed in the highest of seven divisions for competition by the ECAC national collegiate esports league.

Trine Overwatch named to top ECAC division

Trine University's varsity Overwatch esports team has been placed in the highest of seven divisions for competition by the ECAC national collegiate esports league.

The team will be among 14 in the ECAC Titans Division. ECAC has 187 members nationwide.

Other teams in the Titans Division include Washington State University, University of Kentucky, Louisiana Tech and University of Virginia.

Trine's team is made up of Elton Langley, a sophomore from

Indianapolis majoring in computer science and information technology; Jonah Kyle, a junior from Valparaiso, Indiana, majoring in computer science and information technology; Logan Gault, a junior from Indianapolis majoring in computer engineering; Brockstan Tschannen, a junior from Angola, Indiana, majoring in extended reality; and Hudson Kelly, a junior from LaGrange, Indiana, majoring in computer science and information technology.

Trine's varsity Overwatch team won the ECAC national title in Division D in fall 2024 and Division B in 2025.



Golfers enjoy beautiful weather while raising nearly \$100K for scholarships

More than 220 golfers enjoyed sun and a high temperature of 73 degrees to help raise nearly \$100,000 to support scholarships at the university's 35th annual Alumni and Friends Golf Outing on Friday, Aug. 1.

The event raised \$94,586 in addition to gifts in kind, with 224 golfers competing over the morning and afternoon flights.



Trine Fest 2025

Students, faculty, staff and members of the community enjoyed the activities in downtown Angola during this annual event on Aug. 23.

Trine welcomes record class of new students

Trine University welcomed a record incoming class of more than 760 new students this fall, reflecting continued demand for the university's career-focused academic offerings, affordability and close-knit community.

The record group contributed to overall enrollment of nearly 2,300 students on Trine's Angola campus.





From left: Chloe Bard, Allie Worman and Sarah Pfister.

PIONEER NURSES: FIRST ASN STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM TRINE

In December, Associate of Science in Nursing (ASN) graduates crossed the stage at a Trine University Commencement ceremony, the first of many to come.

The program, designed to help meet the growing need for healthcare professionals, launched on Trine’s Angola campus in fall 2023 in partnership with Cameron Health. The university has since launched an ASN program at the Brooks College of Health Professions in Fort Wayne.

“We’ve seen them come a long way, from being nervous and unsure to becoming competent caregivers,” said Amy Bortner, MSN, RN, CNOR,

director of the ASN program at the Angola campus. “We’re proud of their progress and excited to see what’s in store for their future.”

The pioneering nursing students came from different backgrounds and plan to continue to different fields and locations, but all expressed a deep appreciation for their Trine experience.

Chloe Bard

Chloe Bard of Montpelier, Ohio, began at Trine as a pre-medical student. As she continued into her medical school pre-requisites, she realized a nursing career was a better fit for her.

“I want to be more involved in patient care and be able to spend time with them and do everything that I can to help them to get better,” she said. “I feel that I have a heart for helping and serving people. Nursing is the perfect career path to be able to do that!”

She has especially enjoyed the realistic experience of working in the simulation lab at Cameron Health’s Joyce and Al Gutstein Education and Innovation Center and the personal attention she received from faculty.

“I felt that the professors truly cared about how I was doing in the class,” she said.

In addition to finding her passion for nursing at Trine, Chloe also met her fiancé at the university. She recently accepted a registered nurse position in North Carolina and will serve in a medical oncology intensive care unit.

“There are only three in the United States, so I am very excited about this opportunity!” she said.

“We’ve seen them come a long way, from being nervous and unsure to becoming competent caregivers.”

- Amy Bortner, MSN, RN, CNOR, ASN director

Allie Worman

Allie Worman has wanted to be a nurse for as long as she can remember.

“Even as a child, I was naturally drawn to caring for others — whether it was comforting a friend, helping family members or simply wanting to make people feel safe and supported,” she said. “That instinct to nurture has always been a part of who I am.”

She decided to study nursing at Trine because of the university’s close-knit, supportive community, its partnership with Cameron Health, where she currently works, and close proximity to her home in Fremont.

“Trine’s location allows me to continue pursuing my education without sacrificing time with my family, and that balance is something I value deeply,” she said.

She said the personal support she has received from Trine nursing faculty has helped her build confidence and truly understand the material.

“I have also benefited from having access to state-of-the-art equipment and supplies,” she said. “Being able to practice skills

in a realistic, high-quality environment has helped me feel more prepared for clinical settings and has strengthened my ability to transition smoothly into patient care.”

After graduation, she plans to continue in her current role as a clinic/telehealth nurse for Cameron Health within Fremont Community Schools.

“Working in the school setting gives me the opportunity to make a positive impact within my community. I’m able to support students not only medically, but emotionally as well,” she said. “Being someone they can rely on, trust and feel safe with is one of the most rewarding parts of my role.”

Sarah Pfister

Sarah Pfister, who plans to become a labor and delivery nurse after graduation, also chose Trine for her nursing education because of the personal connection with faculty.

“The professor-to-student ratio meant I could build strong relationships with my instructors and get the individual support I needed to truly succeed,” she said.

She said she has always felt a call to the nursing profession, a calling that was affirmed when her dad battled cancer.

“I saw firsthand the impact that compassionate nurses can have. Their care for him — and for our family — showed me that this is the work I’m meant to do,” she said. “Nursing is both a passion and a purpose for me.”

The hands-on experiences she has gained through clinical rotations and simulation labs have been “invaluable.”

“The clinical placements have allowed me to apply classroom knowledge in real healthcare settings, while the simulation experiences provided a safe space to build confidence, practice critical skills and learn to respond effectively in high-pressure situations,” she said.

“My favorite rotation was on the Labor and Delivery floor. I loved observing the teamwork between the staff and their willingness to teach students.”

The simulation labs also provided some of her favorite memories from the ASN program, particularly the interaction and support from her clinical educators.

“They showed compassion toward us and willingness to teach constantly,” she said. “Those experiences not only challenged me to think critically and work as part of a team, but also created moments of laughter, learning and growth with my classmates.”





HOT METAL, COOL PRODUCTS: TRINE CONTINUES TO SUCCEED AT CAST IN STEEL

It's not every day you get to make something fun while equipping yourself with skills that will allow you to succeed in a future career.

But that's what senior design teams of Trine University mechanical engineering majors have been able to do in the Cast in Steel competition for the past five years. And they've done it well.

The annual event, sponsored by the Steel Founders' Society of America (SFSA) and based on the History Channel's *Forged in Fire* TV show, challenges teams from universities across the nation to design and cast a prescribed item from steel.

"Very few engineers get to see a project from its inception to the final product, so this is an excellent experience for the students who compete," said Darryl Webber, Ph.D., chair of the Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering and one of the advisors for the team.

"Plus, they get to meet people from *Forged in Fire*."

For this year's competition, which will be held April 13-17 in Grand Rapids, Michigan, teams will produce a horseman's axe. The weapon was most famously used by Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

In 2025, a Trine team, dubbed "Foundry of Freedom," earned second place in the "Best Authentic George Washington's Sword" category and third place for "Best Casting" and "Best Design and Process" for its replica of George Washington's cuttue sword.

In 2024, the Trine team placed third for "Best Design and Process." Teams that year designed and produced a functioning Halligan bar, used by firefighters to, among other things, gain access to building spaces and vehicles.

Interest from a young age

Dakota Carter, a mechanical engineering major from Fort Wayne, Indiana, became interested in casting in high school after seeing an online video about melting aluminum cans and making items out of them. He built his own charcoal furnace at home.

For Peter Osborne, a mechanical engineering major from Crestwood, Kentucky, working with metals is a family tradition. He watched *Forged in Fire* with his father and his grandfather, who forged and finished his own knives.

"I really enjoyed the medieval weapons and getting to see people actually making these weapons and test them in battle-simulation type environments," Osborne said.

"When I heard that Cast in Steel is run by some of the same judges that run the *Forged in Fire* competition, I was like, I should really look into this. And here I am."

Garrett Spahr, a mechanical engineering major from Hillsdale, Michigan, also grew up watching *Forged in Fire*.

"Forming metal into a shape, into a weapon, something that could be useful, really interested me," he said.

Sean Kohloff, a mechanical engineering major from Clinton Township, Michigan, first heard about Cast in Steel during his Manufacturing Processes and Equipment course.

"What interested me in Cast in Steel was the concept of taking the molten metal that you have at 2000 degrees — it's very dangerous, and you don't know what's going to happen with it — and then you take that with a sand mold and combine it to make something that everybody uses in everyday life," he said.

Teams are required to shepherd underclassmen and prepare them for future years, so Carter was brought in to assist the Halligan bar team two years ago. He and the rest of the team also assisted Foundry of Freedom.

Designing for battle

The group started the design process with brainstorming, generating their own ideas as well as discussing the judging requirements. They added a list of recommendations from their faculty advisors and lab manager Joe Thompson.

The team researched depictions of Robert the Bruce's horseman's ax as well as others from that time. They also took extensive notes on videos provided by SFSA.

"Based off what we came up with, it was most likely a curved ax blade," said Carter. "Some of the depictions of the ax head actually didn't have a spike or a pick on the back, but because of the competition requirements, we know we're going to need to have them."

They then began to generate concepts, deciding which features to incorporate. The team used selection matrices to rank designs on criteria such as historical accuracy, durability and casting complexity.

"We would score each idea in the different categories," Carter said. "Based off of the scores, we were able to select what the best idea was."

Spahr said the team has tried to make their ax historically accurate while still making it easy to wield.

The team has access to industry-standard software for the project, conducting 3D modeling in SolidWorks and performing finite element analysis (FEA) in Ansys to help determine how their ax head will react to different stresses.

They use Magma to simulate castings and how metal flows into molds.

"We have already designed three different ax heads and two different gating systems (for controlling how the poured metal flows into a shape)," said Spahr.

The team has created three iterations so far of the ax head. They've created versions of each in aluminum, brass and cast iron to see how the various metals pour.

They meet with faculty advisors Dr. Webber and Rizacan Sarikaya, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Wade Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, each week to discuss their progress and plan for the week ahead.

"They're not giving us answers," said Kohloff, "but they're helping lead us in the process."

This semester, they will create and test the final ax.



From left, Zander Huss, a mechanical engineering major, assists Cast in Steel members Peter Osborne and Garrett Spahr with casting their ax head.

Advantages and challenges

Carter said the team designed their ax head to be poured as one piece instead of trying to weld together multiple castings.

“I think that certainly adds casting complexity, which, on one hand, makes our job a little bit harder for molding. On the other hand, it will look very good in the competition,” he said.

Other challenges the team has faced include shrinkage, where metal in the mold collapses in on itself. To prevent shrinkage, the team decided to create a secondary hole up to the surface of their mold, allowing them to vent their core.

Carter said another challenge is casting something that traditionally is forged.

“Finding the same metal structure and microstructure in our metal, to get the same performance out of our steel, will be really challenging,” he said.

To try to get the same effect as forging, Carter said the team will try placing their ax head into an oven and heating it up to a specific temperature and then quenching it in an oil or another liquid, or perhaps let it air cool.

“It just depends on what we’re trying to get the internal structure of the metal to do,” he said.

“Very few engineers get to see a project from its inception to the final product, so this is an excellent experience for the students who compete.”

- Darryl Webber, Ph.D., faculty advisor

Cast at Trine

While many teams in the competition have their entries cast by commercial foundries, Trine’s team does its casting in the university’s Foundry Lab.

“We make the sand on our own. We make sure everything’s consistent with the clay. We make sure we’re pouring ourselves,” said Kohloff.

“We’re physically trying to make sure our metal makeup is proper, and we’re using scrap and additives, versus just using the direct metal we would like to use.”

In addition to being able to learn more about the casting process, Carter said one of the biggest advantages of pouring their ax head in Trine’s foundry is that it gives the team more flexibility.

“With our pour days, we can pour many different times if we want to change our alloy. We have time to do that,” he said.



Hands-on learning

Designing and casting the ax has provided team members the opportunity to learn new skills. For instance, Spahr said he’s learned how to make a core.

“I’m also learning how to effectively use different equipment that’s found within the foundry,” he said.

Kohloff has been able to see firsthand how CAD creations translate into reality.

“In CAD, your objects are just floating in the sky,” Kohloff said. “Things will phase through each other. There’s no issues with contact. There’s no tolerancing. So seeing the physical side of it has been helpful.”

Team members hope to add flourishes like laser-etched symbols as well as the crest of the Robert the Bruce’s guild. In the meantime, they are proud of their creation and are looking forward to seeing it in action.

“We feel like we have created an ax head that looks very similar to something that we might have seen from the time that the competition is looking for,” said Osborne. “We feel like we’ve designed an ax head that has got enough beef to it, but is still going to be sharp enough that it’ll perform really well.”

Maintaining balance

Though planning, designing and pouring is a significant time commitment, team members say they are able to maintain balance with other commitments such as athletics.

“I personally keep a Gantt chart in addition to a team Gantt chart, just to keep track of all my different tasks,” Carter, a member of Trine’s ACHA Division 3 hockey team, said.

“The social aspect takes a little bit of a back seat, but then when it’s all over, you feel a sense of accomplishment,” said Kohloff, a member of the lacrosse team.

Team members all hope to go into metal casting as a career following graduation and say the competition is giving them invaluable experience.

“This project opened a couple connections with just being able to speak with people in the industry,” Osborne said.

For Osborne, it’s also a chance to honor his grandfather, who passed away several years ago.

“He worked in the sheet metal industry, and the processes we use embody what I feel he would really like to see me out doing,” he said.

Beyond the learning opportunities and career preparation, Cast in Steel team members are excited about the wow factor of their end product.

“Obviously, we’re getting to make a battle ax, so that’s pretty cool,” Carter said.



Scan the QR code for videos of the Cast in Steel project.



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

Greg Mikulich, 1999 BSPE, superintendent



of Knox Community Schools, believes leadership starts with positivity and connection. A former Trine football player and longtime educator, Greg spent 16 years teaching and coaching before moving into administration. Greg lives in Lowell, Indiana, with his wife and three sons.

2000s

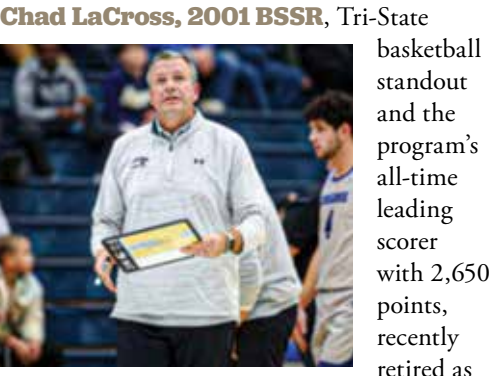
Jon Wolfe, 2000 BSCJ, turned a youthful



regret into a mission to help others heal. At 17, Jon got a dragon tattoo on his head—a decision he later came to regret. Years later, as he sought to have it removed, he decided to go a step further and become certified in tattoo removal himself. In April 2024, he founded Eraserhead Tattoo Removal in Brattleboro, Vermont, where he offers removal services — and even provides them free of charge for

tattoos tied to hate, gangs or trauma. Jon works as a machinist and runs his tattoo removal business on the side. A self-described former punk rocker, he's also a stained-glass artist and video game creator.

Mindy Bobay, 2001 BSACC, was appointed president of The Hicksville Bank, effective July 21. She joined the bank in 2020 and most recently served as executive vice president and chief financial officer. She and her husband, Steven, live in Hicksville, Ohio, where she volunteers as treasurer for the Fort Defiance Humane Society.



head men's basketball coach at the University of Saint Francis. Chad led Saint Francis for 15 seasons, compiling a 335-168 record and becoming the winningest coach in program history. A three-time NAIA All-American and two-time Wolverine-Hoosier Athletic Conference Player of the Year at Trine, he was also named the 2016 NAIA Division II Coach of the Year.

2010s

Stephanie (Lehman) Hawley, 2010 BSEA, a former Tri-State University soccer



player, has been named head girls soccer coach at Wawasee High School in Syracuse, Indiana. Stephanie fulfilled her longtime goal of coaching high school soccer and is now leading a rebuild of the Wawasee program. She and her sister, Jenell Lehman, who coaches the middle school team, founded the Wawasee Footy Club to help grow the game locally and develop young players.

Cassie (Byrd) Echegaray, 2011 BSCE,



has carried the lessons of teamwork and perseverance from the softball field into the classroom. A standout athlete at Trine and member of Scecina Memorial's 2007 state championship team, Cassie began her career as a civil engineer before feeling called to education. Now assistant principal at Little

Flower Catholic School in Indianapolis, she sees her work as an extension of faith and service. Cassie and her husband, Kevin, are raising three children — Franco, Francesca and Marco, all active in the parish community. In 2024, she was named a finalist for the Saint Mother Theodora Guérin Excellence in Education Award for her leadership and dedication to Catholic education.

Mack Otter, 2014 BSEIEd, and her husband Sully welcomed their son, Jensen Deane Otter, on April 16. The family resides in Angola, where the future Class of 2047 Trine graduate looks to carry on the family tradition.



Colin Meadowcroft, 2015 BACOM/ 2022 MSOL and **Brandi (Dawson) Meadowcroft, 2019 BSEXs**, were married on July 12, 2025 on Shipwreck Beach in



Hawaii on the island of Kauai. Both Colin and Brandi work at Trine University. Colin is the senior producer and creative specialist in the Office of University Marketing and Communications, and Brandi is assistant athletic director of compliance and senior woman administrator.

Spencer Sutton, 2016 BSCE, has been named head baseball coach at Washington Township Middle/High School in Valparaiso, Indiana. A former Trine University player under Coach Greg Perschke, Spencer also earned a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Kentucky. He previously spent eight years coaching at Chesterton High School, including five as head JV coach, and continues to play in men's leagues while working in his family's excavation business. He lives in northwest Indiana with his wife, Aubree, and their daughter Wrenn.



Alli (Marley) Snaden, 2017 BSMK, and Kai Snaden welcomed Baby Ellis on April 23. They reside in Indianapolis.



McKenzie (Smith) Gould, 2018 BSCJ, has been named assistant principal and media center coordinator at Bishop Luers High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana. McKenzie also holds a master's degree in educational leadership from Liberty University and brings over a decade of experience in education, program development and student services. She previously worked in admissions and student support roles at Trine University and Manchester University School of Pharmacy. McKenzie and her husband, Nick, are both members of the Bishop Luers staff and active in the Catholic school community.



2020s

Brad Ophoff, 2020 MPAS, has joined Michigan ENT & Allergy Specialists in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He serves patients in the field of ear, nose, and throat care and resides in Grand Rapids with his wife and daughters.



Jack Beakas, 2021 BSCE, a former Trine University and DeKalb High School standout, captured his second straight Carmel Marathon title, finishing the 26.2-mile race in 2:29:17, nearly five minutes ahead of the runner-up. Now living in Carmel, Indiana, Jack continues to train toward the U.S. Olympic Trials qualifying mark of 2:16.



Joshua Bohm, 2021 BSMGT, has been named manager for the Sturgis Branch of Southern Michigan Bank & Trust. Joshua brings more than ten years of experience in retail banking and lending to his new role. Joshua lives in Centreville and is currently active in the community. He serves as an ambassador for the Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce; a member of the Centreville Lions Club; Trustee for the Village of Centreville; and a committee member/treasurer for the Centreville Covered Bridge Days Festival.



2020s



John Roop, 2021 BSSM/ 2022 MBA and **Kennedy Otto, 2022 BSXS**, were married on Oct. 12.

Ty Hoover, 2022 BSXS, has been named head women’s and men’s track and field coach at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. Ty previously served as director of track and field and cross country at Adrian College, where he led his teams to multiple conference titles and national qualifications. A former member of Trine’s track and field program, Ty also served six years in the U.S. Air Force, achieving the rank of staff sergeant. He credits his Trine experience and mentors for helping prepare him for this leadership role in collegiate athletics.



Frank Trazzera, 2023 BSBA, has rejoined the Peoria Rivermen ahead of the team’s 2025–26 season opener. Frank played four years at Trine, recording 56 points in 95 games, before beginning his professional career in the SPHL with the Rivermen and other teams.



Grant Reppert, 2024 BSCJ, is serving in the U.S. Navy the Naval Aviation Schools Command in Pensacola, Florida. Grant joined the Navy after earning his degree from Trine and hopes to become a Navy fighter pilot. He says the discipline and work ethic he developed at Trine have helped him succeed in his training. One of his proudest moments so far has been graduating from Officer Candidate School earlier this year.



Colton Williams, 2024 BSBA,



has joined the City of Covington (Kentucky) Police Department as one of its newest officers. Colton earned his bachelor’s degree in business from Trine before beginning a career in education, teaching at Greensburg Community Schools in Indiana and Butte Falls Charter School in Oregon. He was recently sworn in during a ceremony at Covington City Hall and will now attend the Kentucky Department of Criminal Justice Training Academy before beginning the department’s 20-week Field Training Program.

Cristian Wong-Ramos, 2024 BSCE, has



signed with the Fayetteville Marksmen of the Southern Professional Hockey League for the 2025–26 season. The Alameda, California, native posted a 19-6-1 record, 2.24 goals-against average, and a .904 save percentage over four seasons with Trine.

Steve Faramelli, 2024 MSOL, received a 2024-2025 Best of CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) District V award for a hockey media guide cover he designed for Trine University. He is a creative media specialist in the Office of University Marketing and Communications at Trine University.



Refer a student to Trine

You can help a student benefit from a Trine education just like you did! Any new student who applies, is admitted and enrolls at Trine and is officially referred by an alum receives a \$500 award.

Learn more by visiting trine.edu/scholarships and selecting Alumni Referral Award.

FROM THE ALUMNI BOARD:

Each year many alumni return to the campus of Trine University. Regardless of whether you are a graduate of Tri-State College, Tri-State University or Trine University, we all come together to experience and witness the beautiful transformation that has taken place on our campus. As alumni, we enjoy participating in various events and activities that take place throughout the year. We enjoy seeing and talking with alumni as we share our college experiences and memories with one another.

An annual event that the Alumni Board members get involved with is New Student Move-In Day. It is an event we look forward to attending every year. We are there to greet our new students and their families, make them feel welcomed, answer any questions and help guide them through the process. It is always enjoyable to hear where our new students are from and what they will be studying. This year we welcomed a record class of over 760 new students.

One fun thing we have been doing for several years is a cap exchange. We procure 40-plus Trine caps from the bookstore. If we see a mom or dad with a cap from another university or any non-Trine cap, we tell them they need to remove it, and we replace it with a Trine cap. The recipient of the new cap and the family members get a kick out of it. We realize the cap will probably eventually end up with the new student, but that’s okay with us.

New Student Move-In Day is a fun time for members of the Alumni Board. It provides us the opportunity to mingle with incoming students and parents as well as reminisce about our own experiences of standing in line during our Freshman Registration Day.

Mark your calendar now for the next annual Scholarship Gala to be held Saturday, Feb. 14. We encourage you to register early on the Trine website for this fun-filled event you won’t want to miss. It is your presence on campus that helps create the wonderful memories we can share and pass on to current students and future alumni.

Go Thunder!
John Goudy
Denise Stump
Alumni Association Board of Directors





CAMPUS CORNERS:

Trine alum found great food, love at popular restaurant

For **James Place, 1967 BSEE**, the Campus Corners Restaurant once located near the Tri-State College campus wasn't just a place to eat. It was where he met the love of his life.



From left, sisters Karmen Perl, Carol Boyer and Christine Rosselot. Carol and Christine owned the Campus Corners restaurant and Karmen worked there. All three married Tri-State College graduates.

The restaurant, located where there is now a parking lot across Darling Street from Ford Hall, was owned by sisters Carol Boyer and Christine Rosselot when James came to Tri-State after serving in the Air Force.

A third sister, Karmen Perl, also worked at Campus Corners.

Carol and Chris bought Campus Corners, which had been a convenience store for students, in 1960 when the elderly couple who owned it wanted to retire. They turned it into a full-service restaurant serving three meals a day.

Convenient meal

The restaurant was open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday while classes were in session.

Located across the street from what was then the library, the restaurant was conveniently located for students to grab a quick meal or snack.

"The menu featured daily specials of home-cooked food, written on a

chalkboard, and an extensive grill menu," James recalled. "Special nights included Italian night with checkered tablecloths and Chianti bottles with candles on the tables as part of the decoration. Also part of the decor were fraternity paddles given to them to hang on the walls."

James said the spot was also popular thanks to its homey feel and the welcoming attitude of the owners.

"You were always greeted by name, or in the case of a few students who ordered the same thing every day, by their food choice, as in, 'Oh, hi, Hamburger Pickles,'" he remembered. "Carol was the personality of the restaurant; always with a big smile and personal welcome even during the 'rush' times."

Campus Corners employed local high school girls as waitresses, which also may have attracted the male-dominated student body. One of those waitresses, Dale Krantz Rossington,

went on to become a singer with .38 Special and Lynyrd Skynyrd, and lead singer for the Rossington Collins Band.

Washing dishes

James attended Tri-State on the GI Bill. Money was tight.

"I worked a couple other part-time jobs but can still remember sitting in my room in the evening wishing I had the spare cash for an Azar's Big Boy," he said.

He started working as a dishwasher at Campus Corners in 1965, receiving three meals a day in exchange for three hours of work in the evening.

He said the work was not easy.

"Being a low-budget operation, the dishes were in short supply, so they had to be turned around quickly," he recalled. "And it was not just washing dishes; it was doing whatever needed to be done. Oh, how I hated cleaning the grill hood and fan!"

Though it was hard work, he enjoyed the opportunity to build friendships with other students, particularly those in other majors.

"There was a feeling of accomplishment when we got through the evening rush and could sit down and have a conversation and a coffee," he remembered.

When Campus Corners closed for holidays, the sisters invited students who were not able to go home to join them for family dinners in the restaurant. They also sent care packages, including entire Christmas trees, to students deployed to Vietnam.

'Coolest person I had ever met'

Gradually, the working relationship between James and Chris developed into something more.

"I slowly became in awe of her ability to work that punishing schedule while maintaining such an even keel," he recalled.

"I really thought she was the coolest person I had ever met (and still do)."

However, he was still hesitant to ask his boss out on a date. The tipping point came when his roommate said he was going to ask Chris out if James didn't.

"I couldn't let that happen, so I summoned up my courage and one Friday night asked her," he said.



To his surprise, Chris said she and Carol were going to "Doc" Caccamo's Pizzeria in Fort Wayne and asked him to join.

"The first date was a little rocky as I recall, but soon it became clear that we had so much in common that I fell in love with her and her kids — really great kids who welcomed me into the family," he said.

Moving on

Eventually, working 14-hour days while raising two children each began to take its toll on Carol and Chris.

In 1970, Tom Putoff, who owned another small restaurant in Angola, purchased Campus Corners from the sisters.

All three sisters married Tri-State graduates. Karmen was the first,



From left, sisters Christine Rosselot, Carol Boyer and Karmen Perl operated the Campus Corners restaurant in the 1960s. Christine married James Place, 1967 BSEE, who worked at the restaurant while a student at Tri-State.

marrying Jim Cook, 1962 BSEE. Jim took a job with Florida Power & Light in Fort Myers, Florida, and the couple moved there.

Carol married Ray Klaviter, 1964 BSEE, and relocated to Munster, Indiana. Her daughter Linda, who worked at the restaurant as a waitress, married Tri-State graduate Bill Archer, 1962 BSEE.

James accepted a job as a design and application engineer with Indiana General Corporation, described as the world's largest producer of permanent magnets, in Valparaiso, Indiana, in 1967. Chris and her children joined him there after the couple married in 1971.

He remained in the magnet industry throughout his career. UGIMAG transferred him to San Jose, California, as director of disk drive products.

The couple stayed in California for 15 years. During that time, Chris had a business selling English walnuts she gleaned from local orchards after the crop had been picked. She also sold Dept. 56 Christmas houses for several years.

James retired in 2004 and the couple returned to Valparaiso.

Chris passed away in 2025, the last survivor of the three sisters who had purchased and worked at Campus Corners 65 years prior.

The building is gone, but for James, the memories remain.

"Carol and Karmen remained lifelong friends and Chris was my joy and soul mate for 53 years of marriage," James said.

ZAWISZA FOUND HEAVEN IN USA, SUCCESS AT TRI-STATE



From left, Suzette Dalrymple, Terenia and Andrew Zawisza at the 2025 Touchstone and Homecoming Celebration Dinner.

Andrew Zawisza, 1961 BSME, has been very successful thanks to his Tri-State College education, but his life could easily have taken a different turn.

In his earliest years, the Polish national moved constantly with his family to stay alive as they avoided the carnage of World War II. It was only once they came to the United States following the war that the family found stability.

Surrounded by fighting

Andrew was born in 1937 in Ukraine on land his family was farming about 50 miles from the Russian border. When World War II began the Nazis came through, but fighting stayed to the north and south of them.

In 1941, their area fell under Russian control.

His father, a leader in the community, was abducted multiple times by bands of Ukrainian nationalists and bandits. Eventually, his father escaped to another city where Andrew's aunt lived. The family joined him, living in the woods and underground.

The family eventually made a deal with German occupiers to serve in Germany as slaves in exchange for safe passage to that country. Eventually, they were taken to Bavaria and worked a farm there until the war ended.

After the war, they bounced around to 11 different refugee camps. The family came to the US in 1949.

"My older brother Walter, age 97, told me our family came 'out of hell and into heaven,' and he is 100 percent correct," Andrew said.

Late bloomer

Because of the upheaval during his childhood, Andrew was 12 before he learned to read and write. A Polish nun in Pulaski, Wisconsin, where the family lived and farmed on a two-year contract, took him under her wing.

After his family moved to Dowagiac, Michigan, Andrew excelled in school. A neighbor in Dowagiac encouraged him to attend college.

He went to junior college in Benton Harbor and then transferred to Tri-State, returning to Dowagiac each weekend to work at the local A&P.

"They wanted to make me a manager, but I said no, I wanted to try and make it through college," he recalled. "The manager said, 'Take any time you have to come and work.' "

He stayed in the barracks for his first quarter at Tri-State, then moved to a private house where he and another student rented for \$6 per week. Later he moved to the Newman Catholic House, which was located close enough to campus for him to walk across the railroad tracks to attend classes.

He usually cooked his own meals, but once a week would get a hot dog and coffee from the hamburger and hot dog stand in downtown Angola. He enjoyed his professors at Tri-State.

"I had fantastic teachers, especially those pertaining to math. Also my strength and material teachers," he said.

40-year career

He worked during the summer at Clark Equipment Company. He made almost enough at Clark Equipment to pay for his year and a half at Tri-State.

After graduating, becoming the first in this family to earn a degree, he got "the best job anybody could have" — a two-year contract at Ingersoll-Rand performing stress analysis on the transmission for amphibious tanks. He continued his career at Clark Equipment until retirement.

transmissions and axle designs in large vehicles like front-end loaders, dozers, ag tractors and mining equipment," he said.

His strong math education at Tri-State provided him the foundation to write the first vehicular computer performance program at Clark Equipment.

"I had to use calculus mathematics to find a point in space of two hyperbolic curves, to locate the engine governor point, as applied to the torque convertor — constantly variable hydraulic fluid, proving torque to the transmission, differential and wheels," he recalled.

Other companies wanted to know how the program was written and hire the writer, but Clark Equipment refused to sell the information, he recalled.

His Tri-State education also allowed him to see the world: He traveled to 11 different countries as part of his work.

His favorite was Brazil.

"The people were so nice and kind," he remembered. "They took me into their homes and showed me all over. One of them even came to visit me here at our home."

He worked at Clark Equipment for 40 years before retiring.

"It was a good life," he said. "I've had a very successful life because of my Tri-State education."

'Fantastic'

In retirement, Andrew has become a jack of all trades. He built a house in Michigan Center, Michigan. The only time he called

college graduates and one grandchild even has a doctoral degree from the California Institute of Technology.



Andrew and Terenia Zawisza.

He has returned to the Tri-State, now Trine, campus a couple of times since he graduated, most recently for the 2025 Homecoming. He attended the Touchstone and Homecoming Celebration Dinner with his wife Terenia and daughter, Suzette Dalrymple.

At the dinner, his wife's great-nephew, Cade Tyrakowski, a mechanical engineering major and football player at Trine, helped served tables.

Andrew said the campus is "unrecognizable."

“I had fantastic teachers, especially those pertaining to math. Also my strength and material teachers. I’ve had a very successful life because of my Tri-State education.”

"I started as a junior design engineer and progressed into management as chief engineer, international operation, controlling Clark Equipment's technology at its Jackson, Michigan, factory on design and manufacturing of power-shift

someone for service was to work on the electrical or the furnace.

Andrew and his wife Terenia have been happily married for 63 years. Andrew's drive for higher education has continued through the family: Their four children are

"I didn't know where I was at. It was all brand-new. It was fantastic," he said.

GIVING BACK AFTER RECEIVING MUCH

Laurence H. Keeler, P.E., 1967 BSME, said he owes everything to his parents, his employers, his wife and Tri-State College.

“I started from nothing. My dad didn’t even know what engineers did,” he recalled.

“I think his Trine education opened doors for him that would never have been opened otherwise,” said Larry’s wife, Adelle Schwan, an adjunct faculty member at Trine. “He’s never wanted a job he couldn’t get thanks to the degree he earned here.”

Lifelong interest in engineering

Growing up in New Haven, Indiana, Larry knew he wanted to be an engineer.

“From twisting wrenches and making go-karts and things, probably before I even got into high school. I knew it needed to be mechanical engineering,” he said.

He decided on Tri-State because of its small class sizes, quarter system for academics, hands-on education and reputation for job placement.

After graduating, Larry went to work full-time for International Harvester, where he had worked since he graduated from high school to earn money for his Tri-State education.

His career included patents at two companies. As an application engineer at Monroe shock absorbers, he created the opportunity for twin-tube, low-pressure gas-charged shock absorbers, which are the industry standard today.

Larry worked in the airbag division at TRW, one of the largest automotive suppliers in the world, serving as a program manager to Ford and General Motors. In that role, he implemented a chain stitch rather than a traditional lock stitch for the company’s airbags, resulting in huge annual savings. He holds a patent in airbag technology.

Teaching at Trine

He came back to Angola after retiring and began volunteering locally with Habitat for Humanity. While working on a Habitat home, he connected with Dr. John Wagner, the faculty advisor for Trine’s chapter.

Dr. Wagner asked if Larry would be willing to join the McKetta Department of Chemical Engineering as lab technician.

“I just dove in and worked together with the faculty in harmony with the students,” he said. “I helped make the labs better, cleaned them up, added things, got rid of things and organized the office.”

“I especially enjoyed my time with the students. They are so amazing.”

Adelle also began teaching psychology at Trine after working for many years in addiction counseling and education. She will begin her 19th year in January.



Gratitude

In addition to teaching, Adelle said she and Larry support the university by cheering on Thunder athletics, especially basketball.

“When we are South, we have two computers going,” she said. “One is watching the men and the other is on the women.”

They have given generously to the university, including a recently established charitable gift annuity that will eventually support the engineering labs on campus. Larry said it’s a way to express gratitude for how the university equipped him to succeed.

“You leave here with not only wonderful technical understanding, you leave here with hands-on concepts,” he said. “This is a smaller place, so each gift is important.”



THUNDER’S FINAL ROLL (current through Sept. 30, 2025)

1940s

Anthony V. Andolina, 1947 BSAE, Ballston Spa, New York, May 30, 2025

Peyton E. Wade, 1948 BSBA, Dallas, Texas, Aug. 23, 2015

William J. Hawryluk, 1949 BSRT, Monroe Township, New Jersey, June 21, 2025

Robert L. Heller, 1949 BSCOM, Montpelier, Ohio, July 22, 2025

1950s

James G. Wiatt, 1950 BSME, Montgomery, Ohio, July 3, 2020

Jerome F. Almond, 1952 BSCE, Highland, Illinois, Jan. 30, 2025

John E. Alexander, 1953 BSBA, Fort Wayne, Indiana, July 10, 2025

Kenneth C. Lew, 1953 BSME, West Caldwell, New Jersey, May 4, 2025

Irving Kurman, 1955 BSRT, Redondo Beach, California, March 15, 2025

Wayne C. Orwig, 1955 BSME, Marion, Iowa, May 14, 2025

Myron Weinstein, 1955 BSRT, Tallmadge, Ohio, Nov. 18, 2024

Harold J. Plourde, 1956 BSAE, Slidell, Louisiana, May 8, 2025

Donald R. Scharf, 1957 BSAE, Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Aug. 23, 2025

Charles F. Thomas, 1957 BSME, Thousand Oaks, California, June 25, 2025

Allen E. Easterday, 1958 BSACC, Troy, Ohio, Aug. 15, 2025

Robert H. Vaughn, 1958 BSME, Columbiana, Ohio, Aug. 17, 2025

Kermit G. Kope, 1959 BSCE, Chesterfield, Virginia, March 10, 2025

Connell Albert Wittkopp, 1959 BSME, Powell, Ohio, April 11, 2025

1960s

James A. Richardson, 1960 BSCE, Stevensville, Michigan, Sept. 23, 2025

Raymond D. Toth, 1961 BSEE, Severance, Colorado, July 7, 2025

James H. Donaldson, 1960 BSME, Hammondsville, Ohio, July 1, 2025

Garren E. Jones, 1960 BSCE, Williamstown, Kentucky, Sept. 15, 2025

Harry L. Klepp, 1960 BSEE, Pleasant Valley, New York, April 29, 2025

Dennis R. Norkus, 1960 BSAE, Mishawaka, Indiana, Aug. 7, 2025

Jerry A. Prescott, 1960 BSME, Coldwater, Michigan, May 11, 2025

Kip J. Hoag, 1963 BSEE, Concord, Michigan, April 14, 2025

John W. Murphy, 1963 BSEE, Mesa, Arizona, April 10, 2025

Henry E. Lung, 1964 BSChE, Winnabow, North Carolina, March 28, 2025

James H. Lustig, 1964 DDT, Aurora, Colorado, May 25, 2025

John J. Miller, 1964 BSEE, Auburn, New York, April 24, 2025

Earl F. Orr, 1965 BSACC, Smithfield, Kentucky, Aug. 18, 2025

Robert F. Robare, 1965 BSEE, Derby, Kansas, April 16, 2025

William L. Fish, 1966 BSBA, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Aug. 1, 2025

Carl H. Fry, 1966 BSChE, Defhance, Ohio, Aug. 10, 2025

James F. Golden, 1966 BSME, West Chester, Ohio, Sept. 18, 2024

Arnold W. Mosch, 1966 BSBA, Homer, New York, June 9, 2025

John C. Schueller, 1966 BSBA, Boynton Beach, Florida, July 21, 2025

Thomas M. Bell, 1967 BSME, Houston, Texas, Jan. 12, 2021

Ronald C. Gerard, 1967 BSBA, Bedford, Texas, May 8, 2025

Jerry L. Main, 1967 DDT, Ottumwa, Iowa, Sept. 15, 2025

James Raymond Nord, 1967 BSAE, Oregon City, Oregon, Aug. 8, 2021

David C. Fogg, 1969 BSBA, North Kingstown, Rhode Island, July 5, 2025

1970s

Anita J. King, 1974 ASACC/1978 BSACC, Findlay, Ohio, June 28, 2025

Lawrence A. Kopp, 1974 BSME, Westerville, Ohio, May 7, 2025

Robert R. Hanson, 1976 BSEE, Leonardtown, Maryland, June 18, 2025

Thomas K. Trout, 1978 BSBA, Spring Branch, Texas, Nov. 25, 2023

1980s

Allen E. Decker, 1980 BSACC, Colon, Michigan, April 13, 2025

1990s

Ruth D. (Martin) Fisher-Matthews, 1990 BSBI0, Auburn, Indiana, Aug. 6, 2025

Erwin Q. Dela Cruz, 1992 BSME, West Chester, Ohio, May 7, 2025

2010s

Jada L. (Tolbert) Bryant, 2011 BAM/BBA, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Aug. 24, 2025

2020s

Uzair Mohammed Wajid, 2024 MSIS, Glenview, Illinois, Jan. 29, 2025



Trine adds championship sign

The City of Angola and Trine University dedicated a sign on US 20 honoring the women's softball team's second NCAA Division III national championship on Sept. 10. Mayor Dave Martin and Executive Vice President **Tony Kline, Ph.D.**, joined players and coaches for the unveiling.

Women's cross country has historic season

The women's cross country team capped off the most successful campaign in program history with a ninth-place finish at the NCAA Championships.

Trine claimed its first conference crown at the MIAA Championships led by **Sidney Swick**, who became the third woman in program history to claim an individual conference title. She joins **Amanda (Portis) Malefyt** (2003, WHAC) and **Evie (Bultemeyer) Miller** (2019 & 2021).

The Thunder made history throughout the season with three separate additions to the highest national ranking. Trine checked in at #21, #15 and eventually #8 in the USTFCCA Coaches' Poll, setting a new benchmark each time.

The team also ranked first in the NCAA Great Lakes Region for the entire season, a ranking they backed up sans an injured Swick with their first regional title in program history. It was a dominant performance that saw all five scoring runners earn All-Region status.



Sidney Swick



With the winner of each region earning an automatic bid to the NCAA Championships, the Thunder found themselves in a familiar position, making their third trip in five seasons to the national meet. This is the first season the team earned an automatic bid, with 2021 and 2024 coming as at-large selections.

Swick and Co. proved their prowess on the national stage with the highest finish in Trine cross country history, topping the 1977 men's team's finish of 10th at the NCAA DIII Championships.

Women's triathlon continues streak of excellence

For the fifth straight season, the Trine University women's triathlon team secured a top-two finish at the Collegiate Triathlon National Championships, finishing as runners-up among NCAA Division III teams.

Grace Huisman paced the Thunder throughout the season, securing podium finishes at every event she competed in. Her best finish came at the East Regional race, where she finished first. She followed up with a third-place result at the national championships.

The East Regional was a dominating performance by the team, with Trine taking the top four spots in the race. In addition to Huisman, **Mia Griesmeyer**, **Lia Bartholomew** and **Tessa Szymanski** each earned All-Region status.

Alyssa Seiter added her name to the list at nationals, giving the Thunder five CTCA All-Americans. Huisman, Griesmeyer and Bartholomew were first team All-American while Szymanski came in on second team and Seiter earned honorable mention.

Before the beginning of the 2025 season, Huisman put Trine in the national spotlight after being named a finalist and ultimate winner of the 2025 Alexander award. The Alexander is college triathlon's most prestigious honor, recognizing outstanding individuals who excel not only in triathlon but also demonstrate exemplary achievements in academics and community service.



Mia Griesmeyer



Lia Bartholomew



Tessa Szymanski



Alyssa Seiter



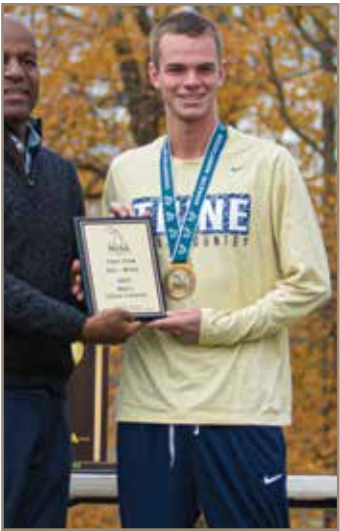
Grace Huisman

Men's cross country makes late push into regionals

The Thunder posted their best Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association finish since 2019 with a second-place showing at the MIAA Championships.

The Thunder were led by **Nicholas Spielman**, who earned his first All-MIAA first team honor with a fourth-place finish. **Ryan Hoopingarner** was named All-MIAA for the third year in a row after finishing 13th at the event, good for second team All-MIAA and adding to his pair of first team All-MIAA honors.

Trine continued its late-season charge with an eighth-place finish at the NCAA Great Lakes Regional Championships. **Blake Overmyer** placed 22nd and became the eighth Thunder runner to earn All-Region honors in the last six years.



Nicholas Spielman



Ryan Hoopingarner



Blake Overmyer





Men’s tennis battles through for perfect fall slate

After a quick and easy start to the fall, the Thunder had to battle in their final three matches to finish the first half of their season with a perfect 6-0 record.

The team started the year with three dominant wins, including sweeps of Manchester and Webster universities, along with a 6-1 win against Franklin College. The next match was a 5-2 victory over Indiana University East that saw the bottom half of the lineup secure the win during singles, despite the top four matches splitting.

Against Taylor University, the Thunder dropped three singles matches in tiebreakers before **Andrew Spirrisson** and **Asher Monson** secured the match with second-set tiebreaker wins. The final score was 4-3.



Landon Bassett

The last dual of the fall came down to the final two matches, with **Landon Bassett** picking up a No. 6 singles victory to secure the 4-3 win. Spirrisson was the lone member of the team to finish the singles portion of duals undefeated, going 4-0 as No. 2



Andrew Spirrisson



Asher Monson



Drew Hackney



Emmett Wirth

and 2-0 as No. 3. **Drew Hackney** and **Emmett Wirth** were the only perfect doubles team, finishing 6-0 in No. 2 matches.



Women’s tennis cruises through fall schedule

The Thunder finished the first half of their season with a perfect 6-0 record in dual matches. They never dropped more than one team point to their opponents. Four of their wins came by the score of 6-1 with the other two coming as sweeps.

They opened the season against Manchester University by securing one of those sweeps before following up with a two-win day in Franklin, Indiana, beating their hosts from Franklin College 6-1 and Webster University 7-0. The slate continued with 6-1 wins over Capital University, Taylor University and Anderson University.

Elina Locane led the way for the team, going 6-0 in the top singles matches and 5-1 in the top doubles with partner **Alexis Maloney**. Maloney also was perfect in singles, mostly in the No. 4 match.

Cali Mickley and **Emily Hatseras** both joined the perfect club as well, rounding out the bottom of the lineup.

Locane received the team’s first MIAA Athlete of the Week honor this season, capping a week that saw the team beat

Capital and Taylor. **Emma Beehler** took home a second after the team won their Anderson match. The sophomore was 4-2 in the No. 2 singles matches and perfect in her doubles matches, joined by **Addison Lockwood**.



Addison Lockwood



Emma Beehler



Cali Mickley



Emily Hatseras



Alexis Maloney



Elina Locane



Men’s golf leads MIAA after first half of season

The Thunder lead the MIAA standings by two strokes over Calvin following the fall portion of the season. They rank 41st in the nation.

Trine is led by **Garrett James**, who is ranked 17th individually and is tied for the national lead in tournament wins. James was named MIAA Golfer of the Week three times this fall and tied the school record for the lowest 18-hole round with a 65 at MIAA Jamboree #3. James posted two dramatic playoff wins at the Flyers Fall Intercollegiate and the Region V showcase.

Jack Besner claimed medalist honors at MIAA Jamboree #4 to help the Thunder claim their lead over Calvin. Besner earned MIAA Golfer of the Week for his performance.

At the Ken Venturi Invitational, freshman **Todd Kauffman** recorded a hole-in-one in just his fourth hole of collegiate golf. He made the shot on the 173-yard par three sixth with his seven iron.



Garrett James



Jack Besner



Todd Kauffman



Smith leads women’s golf to second place in MIAA standings

The Thunder women’s golf team claimed wins at three tournaments this fall, including their season-opening Kickoff Classic on Zollner Golf Course. Trine also won MIAA Jamboree #4 and The Marshall Masters.



Rylee Smith

The Thunder finished the fall second in the MIAA standings, just two shots behind conference leader Saint Mary’s.

Rylee Smith leads not only the Thunder but the MIAA as well, sitting four strokes ahead of second in the individual standings. She is tied for

second nationally with four tournament wins. Her round of 71 at the third MIAA Jamboree is the school record for a single round. Smith is ranked 52nd nationally while the Thunder are 51st as a team.



Women’s soccer reaches fifth straight MIAA semifinal match

Trine women’s soccer reached the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association semifinals for the fifth straight season and earned four MIAA end-of-season awards.

Abby Robison was named All-MIAA first team for the third consecutive season as she concluded her spectacular career. **Ava Leihgeber** became the first Thunder women’s soccer player to earn MIAA Freshman of the Year while also claiming All-MIAA second team. **Erin Scully** joined the second team.

The Thunder made a national mark early in the season when they ended defending national champion and then top-ranked Washington (Mo.) University’s 12-game win streak with a 1-1 draw on Weaver Field. Trine was unbeaten through the next four games before heading into MIAA play.

The Thunder responded to a 1-2 start to conference play by winning four of their next five to earn the conference’s third seed. **Julia Benham** played hero in the first round of the MIAA Tournament with a game-tying goal and winning penalty kick to advance Trine to the MIAA Semifinals. The Thunder again found themselves in PKs against Hope but fell to the Flying Dutch.



Abby Robison



Ava Leihgeber



Erin Scully



Julia Benham

Football team .500 with tough schedule

The Trine University football team ended up playing a tough slate of games during the 2025 season, featuring three NCAA Division III playoff teams.

They opened the year against Christopher Newport University, who finished the season third in the NCAA’s NPI rankings, before facing both Alma College and Hope College in Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association play. The Thunder fell to all three with their other two losses coming to strong squads from Adrian College and Calvin University.

Trine finished the season 5-5 while going 3-4 in MIAA play. The team secured the .500 record on the final day of the season with a 25-24 victory over visiting Kalamazoo College. The crucial win makes it the 12th straight season that the team finished .500 or better, including all 11 seasons under head coach Troy Abbs.

The team finished fifth in conference play and had six student-athletes earn All-MIAA honors. **Cortaveon Barnett** as a running back and **Rashawn Street** as a return specialist headlined the delegation as first team selections.



Tristan Burrus, wide receiver, **Jaiden Boykin**, offensive line, **Ridge Howard**, linebacker, and **Bryce Hufford**, kicker, all earned second-team honors.



Cortaveon Barnett



Rashawn Street



Tristan Burrus



Jaiden Boykin



Ridge Howard



Bryce Hufford



Women’s volleyball bounces back from tough start

The Thunder rallied from a 2-9 start to post an 11-15 overall record on the year, including a 5-3 mark in conference play, good enough for a fourth-place finish in the MIAA standings.

Trine advanced to the MIAA semifinals for the second time in three seasons before falling to the nationally ranked conference champions from Hope College.

Emmaline Leatherman and **Anna Zellers** were named to the All-MIAA second team for their performances. Following a tough start to the season, the Thunder put together a 13-game stretch that saw them go 9-4. Three of those losses came to nationally ranked opponents.

Trine defeated in-state rival Franklin in five sets and picked up five conference wins before advancing to the MIAA Semifinals with a dramatic five-set win over the Saint Mary’s Belles. They then fell to the seventh-ranked Flying Dutch.



Emmaline Leatherman



Anna Zellers

First season under new leadership for men’s soccer

The Thunder began the tenure of Tim McClements as head coach with a record of 1-13-3 overall, finishing the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association portion of their schedule 0-5-2.

Despite the struggles, they entered the final week of competition with a chance at a berth in the MIAA playoffs but couldn’t come up with the necessary results. **Ben Borak** led the team offensively through the season, recording 10 points on four goals and two assists.



Ben Borak



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