FALL 2026

MORAVIAN

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

AMERICA'S STORY. MORAVIAN'S CHAPTER.

Vince Stango '99 and Philadelphia's Constitutional Landmark

From Moravian to the World Stage: How John Gorka '80 Found His Voice

Preserving Hope's Moravian Heritage



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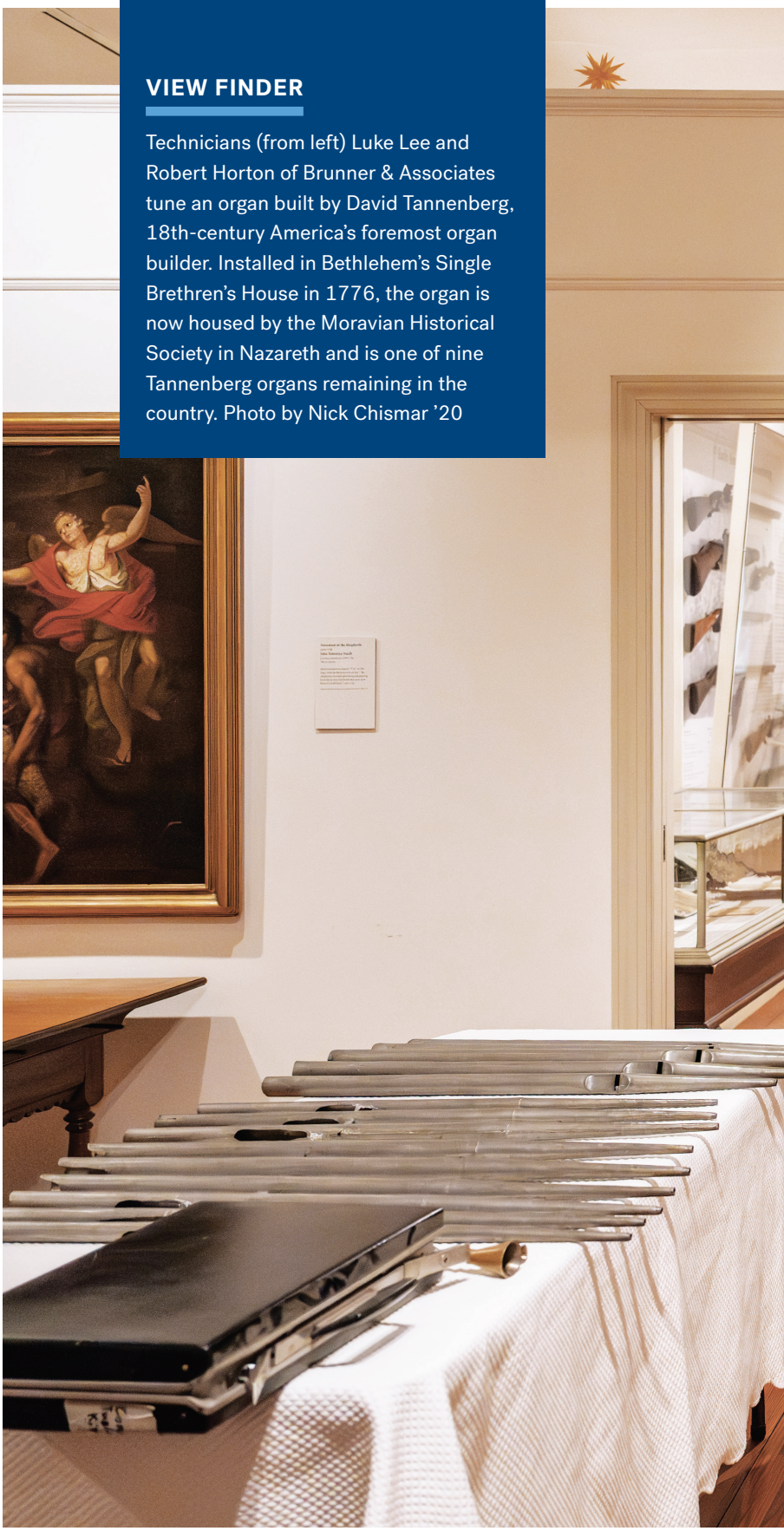
DIGITAL ISSUE

ON THE COVER

This issue celebrates the alumni, students, and Moravian University community members preserving our history, enriching our culture, and inspiring what's next. Cover illustration by Edwin Fotheringham

VIEW FINDER

Technicians (from left) Luke Lee and Robert Horton of Brunner & Associates tune an organ built by David Tannenberg, 18th-century America's foremost organ builder. Installed in Bethlehem's Single Brethren's House in 1776, the organ is now housed by the Moravian Historical Society in Nazareth and is one of nine Tannenberg organs remaining in the country. Photo by Nick Chismar '20







Moravian Greyhound family and friends,
This year, our nation turned 250. Moravian University turned 284. We were writing American history before there was an America to write about.

In 1742, Countess Benigna von Zinzendorf founded a boarding school for young women in Bethlehem, the first of its kind in the colonies. We were also the first to teach Native Americans in their own language. When the Revolution came, our campus became part of it: The Single Brethren's House was converted into a hospital for wounded Continental soldiers, and its halls hosted General George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette. That ground is now part of a UNESCO World Heritage site, and Moravian is only the second university in the country, and the eighth in the world, to hold that distinction.

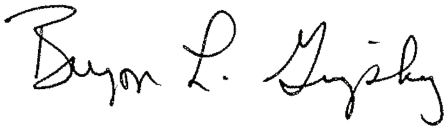
I share this not out of nostalgia, but because it explains who we still are. Moravian has never been a school that just watches history happen. We help write it.

That's as true today as it was in 1776. This fall, we launched new programs in aviation management and professional piloting, undergraduate social work, substance use counseling, artificial intelligence in business, and a new research doctorate in health sciences. Each one answers a real need in the world our graduates are entering, the same instinct that led Zinzendorf to open a school for women nearly 300 years ago.

You'll read more of that story in these pages: an alum now leading the National Constitution Center as the nation marks this milestone, another whose songs carried the sound of a Bethlehem coffeehouse to stages across the country, and members of our university community working to save Moravian-era homesteads in New Jersey for the next generation to learn from.

Our story is far from finished. Thank you for continuing to write it with us.

Sincerely,



President Bryon L. Grigsby '90, P'22, P'26, P'29

MORAVIAN
UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

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PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

The Story Continues

When I joined Moravian University last year, I learned about the Moravians' foundational role in our nation's history—a story that continues to evolve.

Last spring, I attended a talk at the Moravian Historical Society in Nazareth by historian Scott Paul Gordon about Bethlehem's Moravians during the American Revolution (see page 4). The upheaval of war transformed a peaceful community into a town suddenly overrun with convalescent soldiers and outsiders who challenged the Moravians' way of life.

And yet, the Moravians endured. Their resilience ensured that the community—and the school that would eventually become Moravian University—continued to grow and adapt. That spirit of perseverance and their cultural contributions inspired this issue of *Moravian University Magazine*. In honor of the nation's 250th anniversary, we highlight exceptional alumni, dedicated students, and community leaders who continue to build, preserve, and reimagine the American story.

Explore the intercultural contributions of Professor Natessa Amin and Caterina Filangeri'27 to Radical Americana, a Philadelphia-based creative initiative celebrating the 250th.

You'll also hear from Vince Stango'99, the interim president and CEO of Philadelphia's National Constitution Center, which recently unveiled two new—and timely—permanent exhibits: *America's Founding* and *Governing the Nation*. Stango built a nearly 30-year career at this institution that explores our nation's principles.

Learn about nationally renowned folk singer John Gorka'80, who got his first taste of performing on the stages of Moravian University's coffeehouse and Godfrey Daniels in Bethlehem with the Razzy Dazzy Spasm Band, founded by Gorka and his classmates.

You'll also read about Robert May'74, P'02, GP'22, and Pete Peterson P'19, who are among the volunteers preserving New Jersey's only Moravian-era village, featuring even more 18th-century buildings than Bethlehem.

I hope you learn something new and exciting about the Moravian story. I welcome your ideas and comments at tatuc@moravian.edu or by regular mail at Colonial Hall, 1200 Main St., Bethlehem, PA 18018.



Sincerely,

Christina Tatu

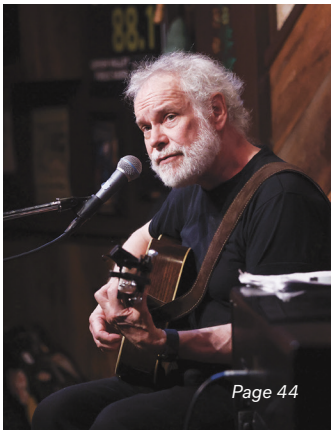
Christina Tatu, Editor



Natessa Amin, associate professor of art, and Caterina Filangeri '27 (from left). See page 18.



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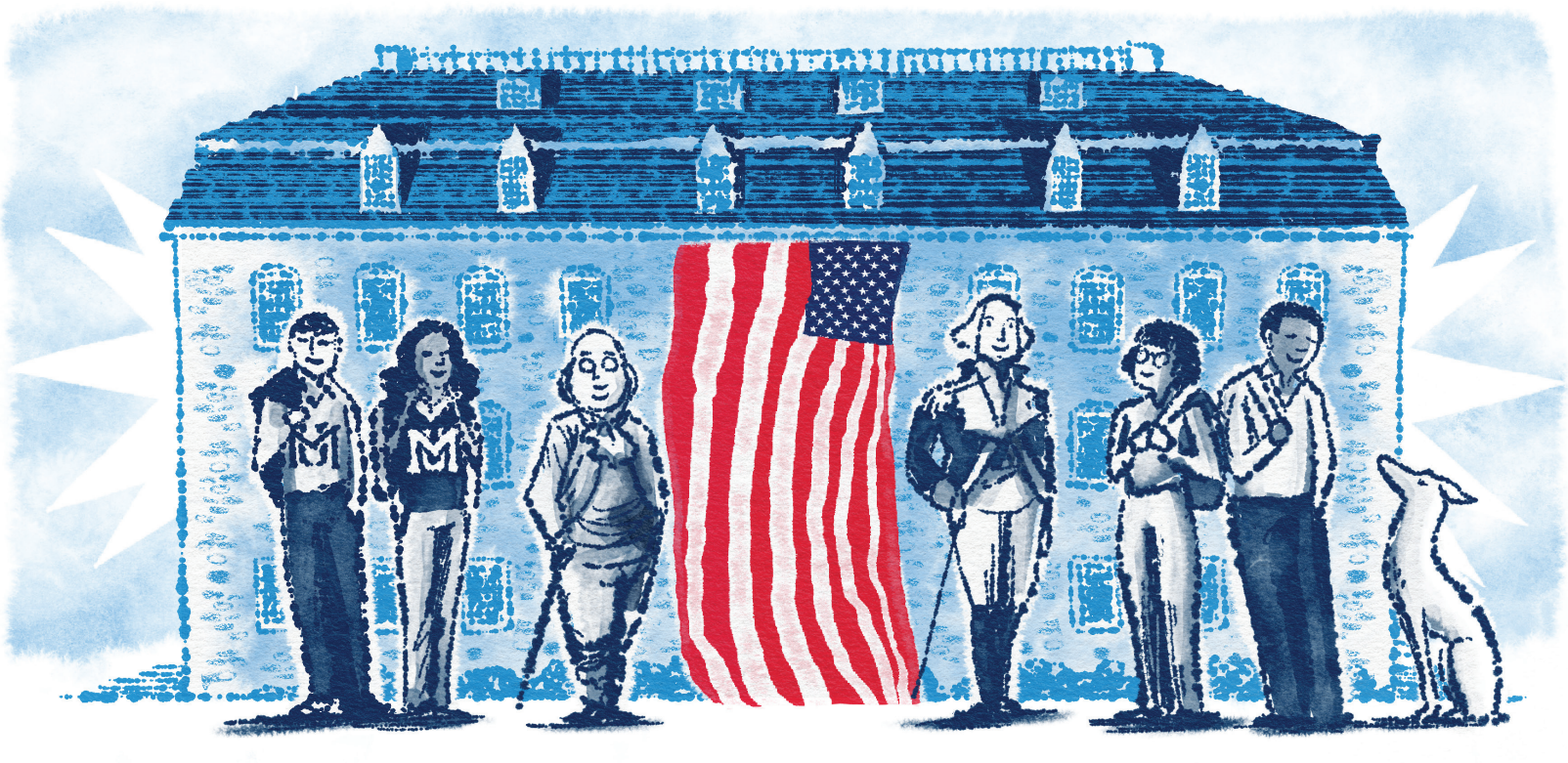
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Vince Stango '99, interim president and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia. See page 24.

NICK CHISMAR '20 (RADICAL AMERICANA, PRESERVING HOPE, STANGO), ASHLI TRUCHON NOVAK (GORKA)

The Hub



America's Moravian Story

Moravian history is, in many ways, early American history. Even before the American Revolution (1765–1789), the Moravians were shaping the nation's future. In 1742, Countess Benigna von Zinzendorf founded a boarding school for young women that would eventually become Moravian University.

As the Revolution unfolded, Bethlehem's Moravian community found itself deeply involved in the conflict. Committed to pacifism and neutrality, the Moravians struggled to preserve their faith and way of life while their town was occupied by Continental forces and prisoners of war.

Today, Moravian University stewards one of America's oldest historic campuses—a place where the story of early America was lived and shaped, and is now preserved. Bethlehem's Moravian Church settlements—including two university-owned properties—are part of the 26th UNESCO World Heritage site in the United States.

Moravian continues to preserve and share this legacy through its Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage.

On November 12–14, the institute will host its inaugural conference, welcoming more than 50 presenters and up to 250 attendees from around the world to explore the global history, heritage, and enduring influence of the Moravians. In honor of America's 250th anniversary, the institute is also hosting *Revolutionary Conversations*, a series of free discussions exploring Moravian Bethlehem's role during the American Revolution.

ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

The 90-minute sessions will be facilitated by subject experts and will foster small-group dialogue. They're scheduled through spring 2027 and will include a follow-up podcast for those who can't attend in person.

The following highlights offer a glimpse into the Moravians' remarkable contributions to early America. These historical snapshots were compiled with the assistance of Scott Paul Gordon, a leading scholar on Moravians during the Revolutionary War; Moravian University Archivist Cory Dieterly; and Rev. Dr. Craig Atwood S'87, professor emeritus and author.

★ John Ettwein, a leader of the Moravian Church, navigated the Revolutionary War by negotiating with Pennsylvania's Assembly, maintaining strict neutrality, and protecting the community from military service.

★ Following the Declaration of Independence, Pennsylvania adopted the Militia Act of 1777, requiring every man to drill and serve. To avoid serving, Moravians paid hefty fines. Pennsylvania's Test Act of 1777, which required men to renounce the British Crown and pledge allegiance to the new state government, was a greater threat to Pennsylvania's Moravians. Failure to do so meant their land could be confiscated.

★ Bethlehem hosted multiple notable leaders during the Revolutionary War, including General George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Benjamin Franklin.

★ Two hundred prisoners of war arrived in Bethlehem on December 6, 1775. At the time, the community had 550 residents. The Single Brethren's House eventually became a hospital for soldiers wounded in the fight for independence.

★ In September 1777, after the Battle of Brandywine, more than 1,000 soldiers arrived in Bethlehem and stayed through April 1778. During this time, 120 unmarried Moravian brothers vacated the Single Brethren's House. By December 1777, there were 700 wounded soldiers at the former Brethren's House.

★ Local patriots persecuted the Moravians for their lack of participation in the war. Ettwein successfully protected Bethlehem by seeking the aid of Pennsylvania's Assembly and the Continental Congress.

★ Moravian leaders appealed to Benjamin Franklin and the Continental Congress for protection from harassment and military interference. In September 1777, congressional delegates signed an order directing the Continental Army not to disturb the Moravians or their property in Bethlehem.

★ In June 1778, Washington's officers returned the Single Brethren's House to the Moravians. The Moravians sent the Continental Congress a bill for damages totaling £1,750, the equivalent of about £361,800 today, or $483,826.

★ According to Bishop Joseph Mortimer Levering's *History of Bethlehem*, the total included reimbursements for 17,000 fence rails, 200 fence posts, 594 cords of firewood, 22 acres of buckwheat, and other crops used or damaged by the army. The Moravians were eventually paid by the government.

★ Bethlehem's Moravians never fully recovered from the Revolutionary War. The single brothers, in particular, were no longer willing to submit to community decision-making. Authorities saw this as rebellion. By 1815, Bethlehem's Single Brethren's House was turned over to the girls' school, the Moravian Seminary for Young Ladies.

Today, Moravian University stewards one of America's oldest historic campuses—a place where the story of early America was lived and shaped, and is now preserved.

★ Impressed by the education Moravians provided to young women, notable American leaders chose to send their daughters and nieces to Bethlehem for their education. Well-known students include Eleanor Lee, the niece of George Washington; Maria and Ann Jay, the daughters of John Jay, chief justice of the United States; Anna Allen, niece of Ethan Allen; Margaret Payton, niece of Thomas Jefferson; and Phebe J. Vanderbilt, daughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt.

★ In 1807, the Moravian Theological Seminary, which also provided students with a liberal arts education, was established as an extension of Nazareth Hall Academy. In 1858, the school moved to Bethlehem, and in 1863, the school was chartered by Pennsylvania to grant degrees and was formally reorganized as the Moravian College and Theological Seminary.

★ In 1954, the women's and men's institutions merged, forming the first coed institution of higher education in the Lehigh Valley. Moravian College officially became a university in 2021.

To learn more about the institute and its events, visit moravian.edu/institute-moravian-worldheritage. *For more information on the conference, visit* mrvn.co/institute-conference.







1 Welcome to a Record-Breaking Class

Moravian University officially welcomed the largest incoming class in its 284-year history this fall. At the time of publication, 556 first-year students had enrolled in the Class of 2030, surpassing the previous record of 525 students set in fall 2024.

As universities across the nation struggle to meet enrollment goals and maintain financial stability, Moravian continues an upward trajectory, including being recognized as the fastest-growing university in the region since 2014.

2 President Bryon Grigsby Among Pennsylvania's Most Influential Leaders

Moravian President Bryon Grigsby '90, P'22, P'26, P'29 was named one of Pennsylvania's Most Influential Leaders by the *Central Penn Business Journal*. He was among 34 honorees from across the commonwealth recognized through the publication's recognition program. Recipients were honored during an awards ceremony on August 18 in Reading, Pennsylvania. The program celebrates outstanding leaders in government, business, higher education, and other sectors who exemplify exceptional leadership, integrity, vision, a commitment to excellence, strong organizational performance, and meaningful community service.

Additionally, Grigsby was named one of the most accomplished and influential business leaders in the Lehigh Valley this past summer by LVB 300, a *Lehigh Valley Business* recognition program. The publication's editorial team selected outstanding individuals who have demonstrated sustained success and adaptability in the face of economic change and a deep commitment to their industries and communities.

3 James Scifers Takes Helm as Moravian University Provost

This past spring, after serving in an interim position since July 2025, James "Jay" Scifers was officially named provost. He began at Moravian University 10 years ago, leading the rehabilitation sciences program. In 2022 he was named associate provost and dean of the new College of Health, overseeing the Helen S. Breidegam School of Nursing and Public Health, the School of Rehabilitation Sciences, and the School of Behavioral and Community Health.

As for his leadership philosophy, Scifers says it's important to continually evolve. "You need to keep moving, keep modernizing the curriculum, and be really innovative about the way you operate."

To learn more about his role, visit mrvn.co/jay-scifers.

4 Moravian Professor Awarded Visual Artist of the Year

Katie Hovencamp, an adjunct professor of art, was named Visual Artist of the Year as part of this year's Linny Awards, celebrating the legacy of Linny Fowler and the Lehigh Valley arts community. Hovencamp received her BFA from Arizona State University in 2009 and her MFA from Pennsylvania State

PHOTOS BY NICK CHISMAR '20 (1, 2, 3), KATIE CREIGHTON (5)

University in 2014. She has exhibited her work in numerous exhibitions in the United States, Europe, and Asia. At Moravian, she teaches sculpture, Visual Foundations, and Art History: Caves to Cathedrals.

5 Jen Norton Named Executive Director for Emerging Technologies

Moravian University has named Jen Norton its first executive director for emerging technologies, a new position created following the work of the university's Presidential Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

The task force has developed a comprehensive, four-phase road map to position the university as a national model for ethical, effective AI integration in higher education.

Norton's duties will include leading implementation of the AI Task Force recommendations, helping students across every discipline build the AI literacy required for success after graduation, guiding the launch of Moravian's Center for Emerging Technologies, and partnering with faculty and staff across the university to integrate AI into their work.

6 Moravian Grad Designs Art Installation for Pennsylvania 250

Caroline Melillo'26, a graphic and interactive design graduate, was selected by the Pennsylvania Art Education Association to design a 6-by-8-foot, three-panel collage that brings together approximately 200 works of art from Pennsylvania students in kindergarten through 12th grade. The project, titled *Many Communities: One Commonwealth*, was unveiled at the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda on July 28 as part of the Pennsylvania 250 celebration.

7 Robert Sparrow Jones Appointed Director of Payne Gallery

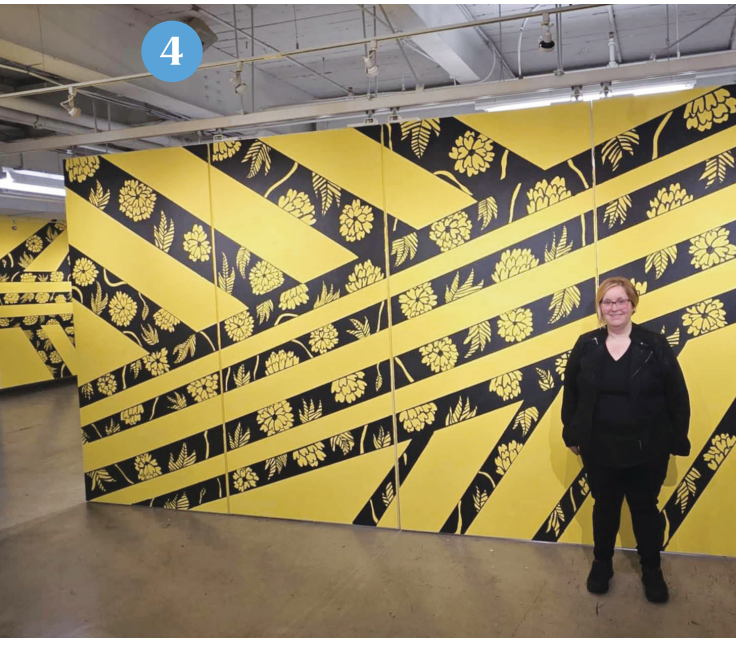
An accomplished artist, curator, and writer, Robert Sparrow Jones comes to Moravian with a deep background in gallery leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration. He most recently served as senior gallery director at Penn State's HUB-Robeson Galleries, where he curated exhibitions featuring both emerging and established artists while fostering meaningful dialogue across academic disciplines. Earlier in his career, Jones served as a painting assistant to world-renowned glass artist Dale Chihuly in Seattle.

At Moravian, Jones will oversee the Payne Gallery's schedule of exhibitions, permanent collections, and public educational programming. He will also collaborate with the Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage to promote international understanding of Moravian culture and World Heritage collaborations.

Moravian's Newest Programs

THE FOLLOWING ACADEMIC PROGRAMS WERE INTRODUCED THIS FALL.

- **Aviation, management** (UNDERGRADUATE)
- **Aviation, professional pilot** (UNDERGRADUATE)
- **Social work** (UNDERGRADUATE)
- **Artificial intelligence in business certificate**
- **Substance use counseling certificate**
- **Research doctorate in health sciences**









From Assistant Coach to Athletic Director



Rebecca May in the gymnasium at Johnston Hall. Photo by Nick Chismar '20

Rebecca M. May is the next leader of Moravian University's athletics department after being named director of Athletics and Recreation this past spring.

May has been at Moravian for nearly 14 years. She started as an assistant field hockey coach and assistant director of the Moravian Fund for Athletics before her career took her to Union College of Union County in New Jersey, where she spent more than seven years as assistant dean of college life.

May came back to Moravian in 2018 and has been working with the Greyhounds ever since. She was serving as senior associate director of athletics and senior woman administrator at the time of her promotion and says the new role is a full-circle moment for her.

"My journey began here, and every experience since has prepared me for this opportunity. I am honored to serve an institution that has given so much to me, and I'm excited to work alongside our incredible coaches, staff, student-athletes, alumni, and supporters as we build on our proud tradition and shape an even stronger future together," she says.

At Moravian, May has led numerous initiatives. She managed the operating budget and directed capital projects from locker room complexes to a donor-funded indoor golf center. She co-led the development of a department strategic plan and managed high-impact partnerships.

May also maintains memberships in the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics, Women Leaders in College Sports, and Minority Opportunities Athletic Association.

Her vision for athletics includes pursuing sustained championship success in the Landmark Conference and on the national stage, as well as investing in Moravian's facilities through strategic capital projects and the generosity of donors.

"Together we will honor Moravian's proud history while creating an even stronger future for Greyhound athletics," she says.

May succeeds longtime athletic director Mary Beth Spirk, who announced her retirement in February after 45 years at Moravian. Spirk died on April 10 after battling cancer.

To learn more about May, visit mrvn.co/rebecca-may.

ATHLETICS RECAP

Senior pitcher **Sarah DeStefano '26** was honored with a spot on the 2026 National Fastpitch Coaches Association Division III All-America Third Team.

Kyle Weiss '25, G'27, a sprinter/jumper, has been honored as the 2026 Landmark Conference Senior Scholar-Athlete for men's outdoor track and field.

Senior defender **James Panico '26** was named the Landmark Conference Senior Scholar-Athlete for men's lacrosse.

Former women's basketball and tennis athlete **Lynne Grzywacz Webb '99** was selected as part of the 15th class to be inducted into the Middle Atlantic Conference Hall of Fame.

The Moravian University softball squad ranked 16th in the final 2026 National Fastpitch Coaches Association/GoRout Division III Top 25 Poll.



Finding His Stride

There was never a question of whether Gavin Hefferan'27 would play a sport in college—it was which one. A runner since fourth grade, the West Chester, Pennsylvania, native excelled in swimming, basketball, and soccer. But placing for states in cross country during his senior year of high school sharpened his focus.

After settling on the sport, he chose Moravian for its academics, welcoming environment, sense of belonging, and personal attention from coaches who made him feel that they cared about him, not just the sport.

Hefferan balances a demanding schedule of cross country and track and field while maintaining a nearly perfect GPA, a testament to his dedication.

"I've definitely learned not to procrastinate and how to prioritize and manage my time," says Hefferan, who hopes to apply those skills as a professional athletic trainer. Beyond finding the field relevant and fascinating, the work, he says, "would also keep me involved and invested in a sport that I love and that has given so much to me."

Although he made consecutive NCAA Championship appearances, Hefferan cites a team nationals experience in his sophomore year as a Moravian highlight. "We were the first Moravian men's team in any sport to win a regional title, and we could all tell how much it meant to everyone—our team, our coaches, even the alumni who came to our regional meet. You could see how much they really cared."

The level of support and encouragement he's found through Moravian coaches, professors, and fellow athletes serves as Hefferan's primary motivation.

"They really set you up for success," he says. "It's a great group of guys who show up every day to get the work done. And Coach Jesse [Baumann] is just a great dude, a mentor, and a friend. The whole experience has been everything I could have asked for, and more." *—Linda Harbrecht*

> **"It's a great group of guys who show up every day to get the work done. . . . The whole experience has been everything I could have asked for, and more."**
>
> —Gavin Hefferan '27

PHOTO BY CARLO ACERRA

COMMUNITY

Following God's Call to Nepal

In 2024 Trina Holmberg S'09 and her husband, Ken Holmberg, took a leap of faith. They sold everything and moved from Alberta, Canada, to Nepal.

In 2007, my husband, Ken Holmberg, and I moved to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, so that I could attend what was then Moravian Theological Seminary (now Moravian University School of Theology). Neither of us could have imagined that this move would lead to lifelong friendships, and a connection to a country halfway around the world that would shape our lives for years to come.

In seminary, we met Shanti Pradhan S'09 and Vani Pradhan S'09. The Pradhans were already a year into the program, while I had completed my first year of seminary in my hometown of Alberta. Before long, we became close friends, sharing meals, study sessions, classes, and conversations during those formative years.

After graduation, the Pradhans extended an invitation that would open a whole new chapter in our story: "Come visit us in Nepal." Two years later, Ken and I took our first trip here together and led a conference the Pradhans were hosting for Christian married couples. We were captivated by Nepal's beauty, inspired by the warmth and hospitality of its people, and deeply moved by the relationships we formed. By the end of that first trip, Nepal had found a special place in our hearts.

It's so beautiful here. Nepal is only a little larger than the state of Tennessee, but its landscapes are among the most spectacular in the world. The Himalayas stretch across the entire country, creating breathtaking scenery at every turn. Nepal is home to eight of the world's tallest mountains, including Mount Everest, which sits along the border between Nepal and China. There's just something about this place that pulls you in and keeps your heart here.

Ken and I knew we wanted to come back for a longer stretch of time to assist the Pradhans with their mission to grow the Moravian Church in Nepal. In 2014, I resigned from my pastoral role at a Moravian church in Michigan, and Ken and I returned to Nepal for 10 months.

During that stay, we partnered with the Pradhans in serving at their International Kindergarten (IKG) for children ages 2 through 6. I worked with the students to improve their English speaking skills and help out in the office. I have worked in the library since 2025.

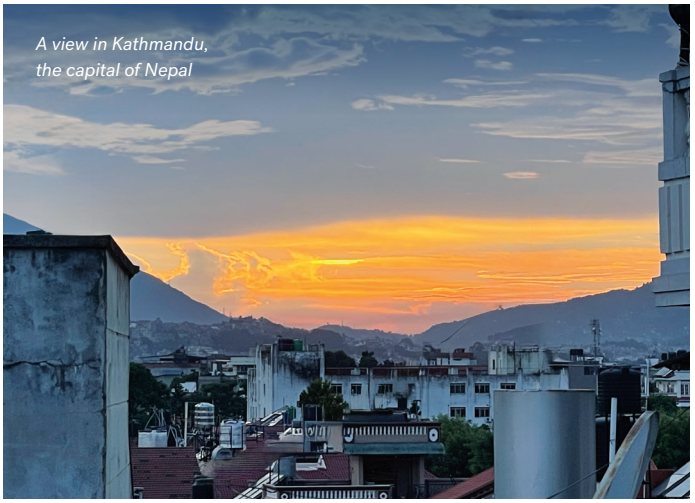
As the ministry grew, we prayed and planned for the development of an expanded grade school, intending to remain in Nepal and help bring that vision to life. However, on April 25, 2015, those plans were abruptly



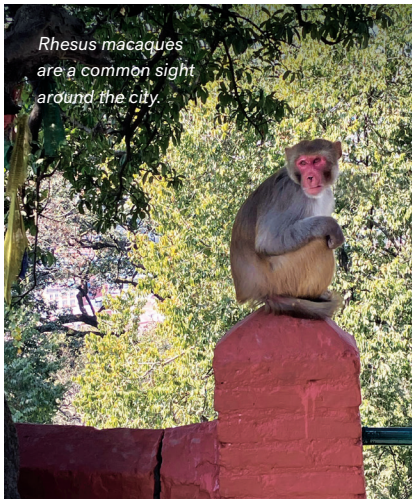
Trina Holmberg S'09 and her husband, Ken Holmberg, at their Kathmandu Nobel Guesthouse in Nepal

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRINA HOLMBERG S'09





A view in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal



Rhesus macaques are a common sight around the city.

interrupted when a devastating earthquake struck the country, causing widespread destruction and loss.

For the first 72 hours after an earthquake, they tell you not to stay inside any buildings because of the risk of collapse, so Ken and I headed out of the valley with our fellow Moravians to a field near a fellow parishioner's house. We cooked outside on propane stoves, and Ken and I slept in one of the minivans we used to pick up and drop off students at the IKG.

Shortly after the earthquake, we returned to Canada, but it wasn't long before we felt the calling to go back to Nepal. We made trips in 2016, 2017, and 2019, then didn't return again until 2024—this time for good.

That January we decided to take my sister and her husband to visit Nepal. While we were here, a friend let us know about a guesthouse for sale in Kathmandu. We realized God was saying it was time to make a permanent move. Later that year, we sold almost everything we owned, put the rest in storage, and got on a plane.

Ken arrived in July of 2024 to process all the paperwork we would need, and I arrived in October of that year after selling our house in Alberta. Ken runs our Kathmandu Nobel Guesthouse, and I volunteer at the IKG and Shristi Academy. The Pradhans opened Shristi in 2016 for students up to 10th grade. In addition to the school, there are three Moravian congregations and two fellowships in the area, where I occasionally preach.

The transition hasn't been without challenges. Our three daughters and eight grandkids still live in Canada, and visits are difficult. Nepal is also experiencing political upheaval. Frustrated with the government and economy, young people led major protests last year.

Still, Ken and I plan to stay here as long as we can. Our guesthouse hosted a couple of long-term missionaries, and we hope to attract more volunteers for the church and schools.

Ken and I will always be adventurers at heart. Our journey has been a learning opportunity and an experience a lot of people never get to have. Nepal is an amazing place, and we feel very much at home, even if we still have a hard time with the language. We hope that others can have a similar, life-changing experience that will help them boldly follow God wherever they are led.
—Trina Holmberg S'09, as told to Christina Tatu

Editor's Note: August's catastrophic flooding devastated central Nepal, but the Holmbergs, who live 50 miles away, were not directly affected.

When you arrived at Moravian, what was one thing you couldn't leave home without?

Every student arrives on campus with a few essentials. Some items offer a comforting connection to home, while others become humorous reminders of college days gone by. From jars of beach sand to typewriters and CD collections, Moravian alumni share the one item they simply couldn't leave at home.



My jar of sand, shells, and sea glass from the Jersey shore. I'm a native Jersey girl who grew up less than 5 minutes from the beach, so the shore has always defined what home means to me. That little jar helped me stay connected to home. Whenever I looked at it, it reminded me of the beach, my family, and the place that has always grounded me.

—JULIANNA THOMPSON '25

My girlfriend's dorm hall phone number. She was a year ahead of me at Dickinson College in Carlisle.

—DOUG MCCLELLAN '77

My CD collection.

—ANDREW LYNN '08

My portable typewriter and the Webster's dictionary I received as high school graduation gifts. I know they're both dinosaurs today, but they were essential then. I have fond memories of sitting on the lawn behind Main Hall typing papers in the spring.

—JOAN TAGGART KOCH '72

My best friend from high school. We both got accepted and became roommates!

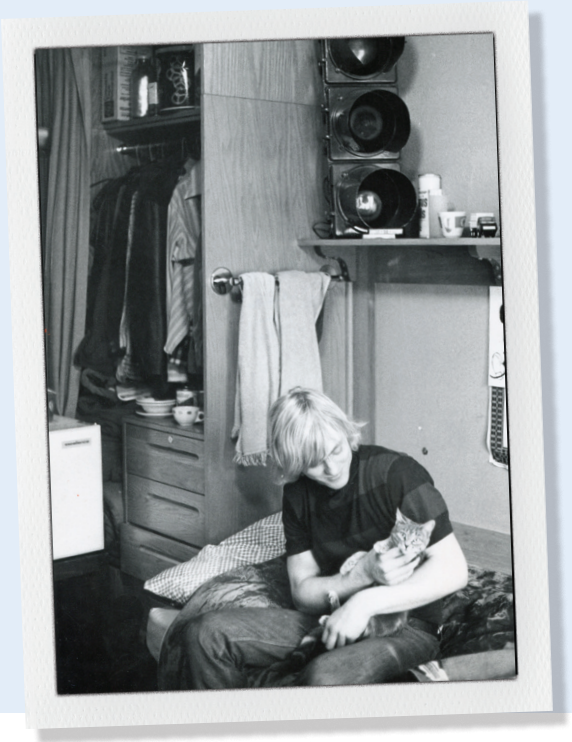
—DIANE SCIABICA MANDRY '84

My Sony reel-to-reel tape recorder and music tapes.

—R. DALE GINTER '72

Not sure why the hot pot was such a mandatory item, but I had to get one of those. I also had a large bulletin board on top of my parents' car, but it flew off on Route 22 before arrival. . . . To give context as to how long ago this was, Live played on campus, and "Smells Like Teen Spirit" was playing in heavy rotation on student radio.

—JUSTIN THOMAS '94



NEXT UP

What's your favorite piece of Moravian memorabilia that you still proudly wear or use today?

Follow Moravian Alumni on Facebook and @moravianalumni on Instagram to see upcoming questions. Answers may also be submitted at *mrvn.co/ask-an-alum.*

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

A Conversation with Richard Anderson

An assistant professor of history, Richard Anderson helps students move beyond textbooks and academic papers to discover how history can be shared with broader audiences. Whether they're producing podcasts, creating museum exhibitions, filming documentaries, or developing interpretive materials for historic sites, students learn how to tell compelling stories that connect the past to the present. Anderson is also director of public humanities and academic programs for the Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage.

What inspired you to study history?
I decided to become a historian in the years following September 11 and the start of the US War on Terror. During those years, Americans across the political spectrum looked to the past to explain current events. To my untrained eye, they seemed to be cherry-picking historical episodes and applying them to the present to justify their own political positions. I pursued a history PhD so that I could offer more analytically rigorous accounts of the past during future periods of crisis.

Why the focus on public history?
I love collaborative, experiential learning. Public historians work with constituencies outside their own institutions, providing opportunities for nonacademic audiences to engage in research and historical analysis. I wouldn't be happy if I just wrote alone in my office and confined my teaching to the classroom. Nothing energizes me more than taking students off campus to collaborate with community organizations on projects that make immediate, tangible impacts.

Why do you think history is important?
History helps us understand why things are the way they are, what could have been different, and what could be different in the future. Yet the lessons of the past are not self-evident; they're contestable. I really dislike the frequently quoted line from the musical *Hamilton*, "History has its eyes on you." History isn't a judge. This view ascribes false notions of objectivity and consensus to my discipline. Two scholars can draw opposite conclusions about the meaning of the same historical event based on their sources, methodologies, and theoretical frameworks. We should be more rigorous in analyzing the context, causes, and consequences of past events. This is what I teach my students to do.

What research are you currently working on?
I am writing a book called *Machine Politics: Richard J. Daley, the Democratic Party, and Liberalism in Chicago*, which explores how the city's legendary Democratic political machine shaped American liberalism between 1945 and 1976. My research demonstrates that the Democratic machine placed redistributive mass politics at the center of postwar liberalism while reproducing liberalism's repressive social hierarchies. *Machine Politics* will introduce readers to a range of constituencies who worked for or against Chicago's Democratic organization. It's a big, messy story full of contradictions and unintended consequences, with few pure heroes or villains.

What are your goals for the institute?
I want to make it a hub for pedagogy, scholarship, and public programming that documents and critically analyzes local and global heritage. That means being a vital resource for the new Moravian Church Settlements–Bethlehem World Heritage site. I also hope to foster research on under-studied aspects of our regional heritage, such as late-20th- and early-21st-century immigration and post-industrial economic transformation. Next year one of my key tasks will be developing an online continuing education certificate in public humanities and digital heritage.

How do students benefit from the World Heritage sites?
The sites offer students a laboratory for collaborative, experiential learning. These engagements will launch some students toward careers in museums or tourism. Others will gain transferable skills in nonprofit administration, archival management, exhibit curation, web design, community engagement, and digital media production. Public history students are already producing videos, podcasts, virtual-reality tours, databases, and web pages for the sites.

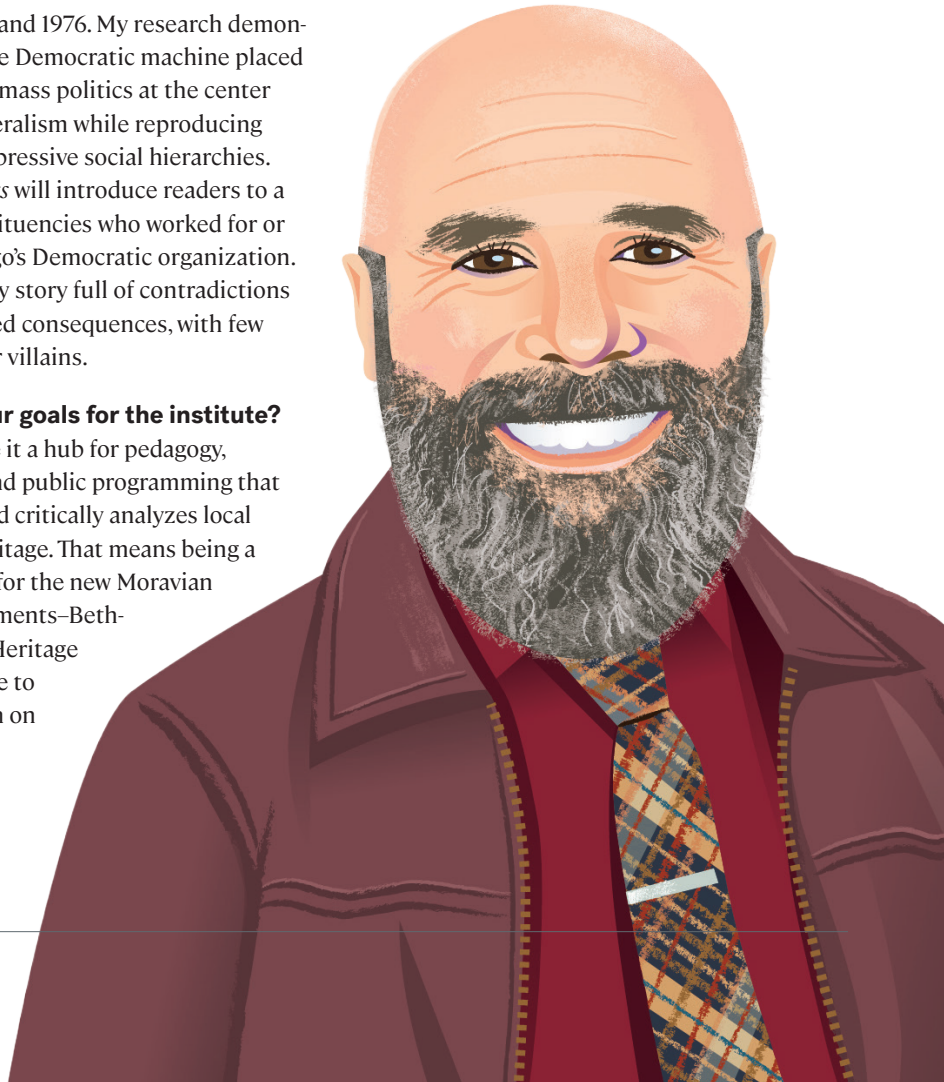
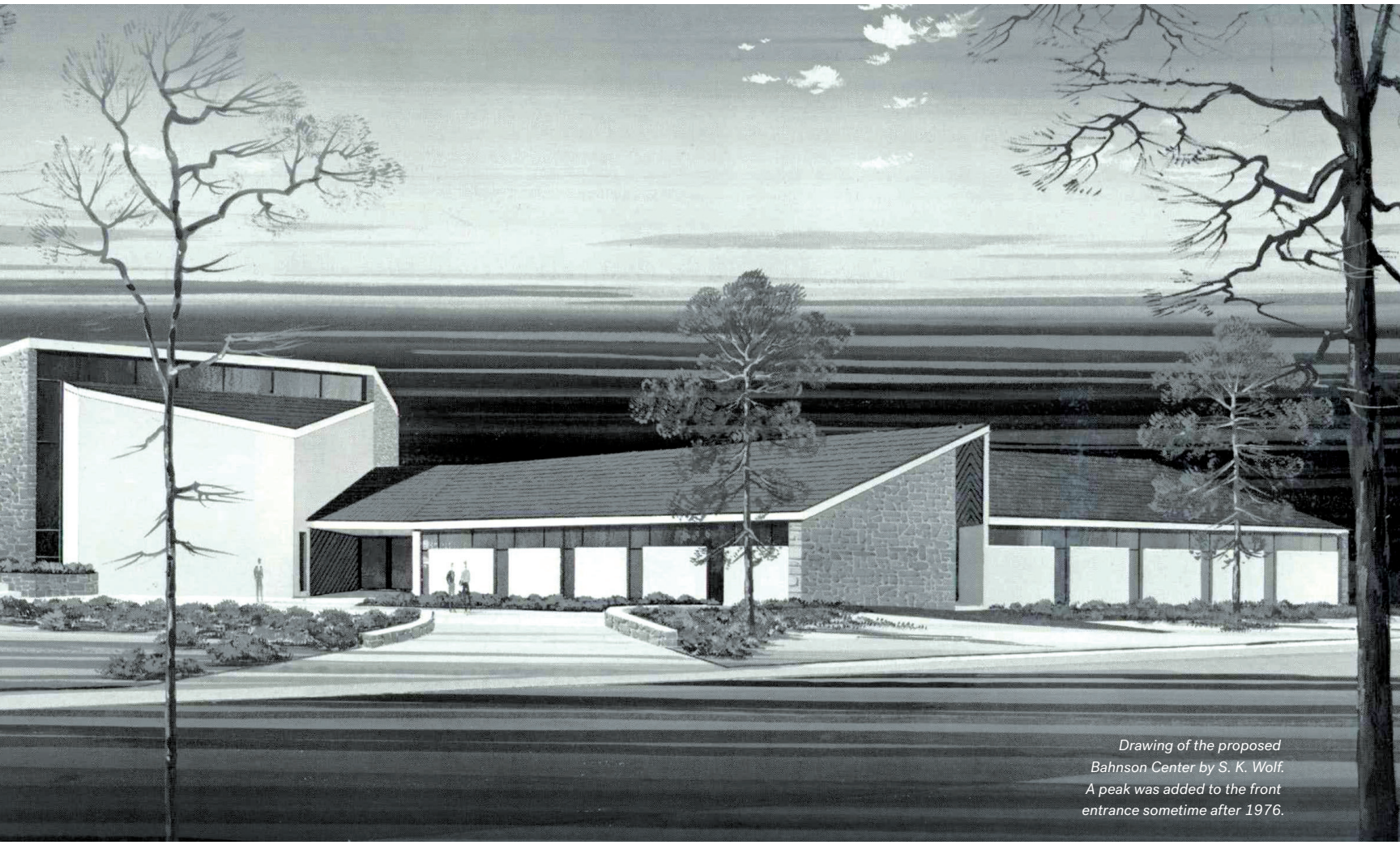


ILLUSTRATION BY COLLEEN O'HARA



Drawing of the proposed Bahnson Center by S. K. Wolf. A peak was added to the front entrance sometime after 1976.

A Home for Moravian's Seminary

Paul G. Bahnson 1919 saw a need at his alma mater. In the mid-1950s, Moravian College was thriving, but the theological seminary seemed left behind, never having a campus space officially designated for its growing body of seminarians.

In the decades since Bahnson's graduation, enrollment had grown at both the college and the seminary. School records show that in 1920 there were eight seminary students. By 1950 that number had risen to 40.

An active layperson in the Moravian Church, Bahnson valued the seminary as the heart of the church's future—and he determined that its students should have a building befitting their calling. He wanted Moravian to be able to effectively recruit future ministers from across the country and beyond.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Moravian University's Bahnson Center, the permanent home of Moravian's seminary and a lasting testament to the vision and generosity of the Bahnson family, whose fundraising efforts made possible the construction of the 10,000-square-foot building on West Locust Street.

Finding Room

From its very beginning in 1807, Moravian Theological Seminary shared space with others, starting at the boys' school at Nazareth Hall. In subsequent years, the seminary's locations included the Whitfield House, Sisters' House, and Gray Cottage, all in Nazareth, as well as buildings on Broad Street and Church Street in Bethlehem.

After incorporating as Moravian College and Theological Seminary in 1863, both the seminary and the college shared Comenius Hall, built in 1892. As years passed and the campus expanded, locations such as the former dining hall, Zinzendorf Hall, lent space to the seminary. But with rising enrollment, negotiating classroom and meeting spaces became more complicated.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

A Financial Challenge

After college, Bahnson lived in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and began work at Fogle Brothers Company, a lumber and millwork supplier, where he met his future wife, Evangeline Butner. They were married in 1943, with Evangeline taking an active role in the Southern Province of the Moravian Church in Winston-Salem.

The Bahnsons maintained interest in Moravian Theological Seminary. In the 1960s, the couple set up the Bahnson Fund, intended as a gift for the purpose of building a dedicated seminary. When Paul Bahnson passed away in 1973, the fund had accrued $100,000. The two provinces subsequently raised a combined $460,000, which was added to the Bahnsons' challenge gift.

Building Milestones

Designed by Bethlehem architectural firm Spillman Farmer, the Bahnson Center broke ground in February 1976, with a traditional Germanic topping-out ceremony to mark the placement of the highest beam and celebrate the project's safe construction. Seminarians Blair Couch S'78 and B. David Smith S'77 had the honor of climbing the structure to place a blue spruce and a Christian flag. "Climbing up was really fun," Couch reminisced.

The building was completed by the fall semester of 1976. A three-day dedication ceremony that September included an address by a notable guest speaker, the Anglican Church's archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Donald Coggan. A microfilm copy of "Proclamations of Participation" signed by Moravian Church elders was ceremoniously placed in the building's date stone, and a lovefeast was held at Central Moravian Church. More than 600 people attended the events.

The Bahnson Center's completion marked the first time the seminary had a building designed specifically for its needs. The spacious assembly room called the Saal, open and filled with natural light, accommodated larger gatherings, lectures, and group worship. The building's four classrooms, study area, and recreation room allowed a more flexible learning schedule for the growing seminary.

"What a Change"

Terry Folk S'78, along with Couch, began seminary in 1975, so they experienced life both before and after the Bahnson Center.

Seminarians in 1975 would have mostly found themselves in the brick-clad buildings across from Reeves Library, according to reporting from *The Comenian* that year. Both Folk and Couch recall the seminary using rooms in Hamilton and Zinzendorf Halls, with occasional forays into basement rooms for classes. Due to tight space, Folk surmises that his professors must have held internal negotiations to arrange the lecture schedule. He says the classes were held one right after another throughout the day. "What a change when we finally got over to the Bahnson Center," Folk says.

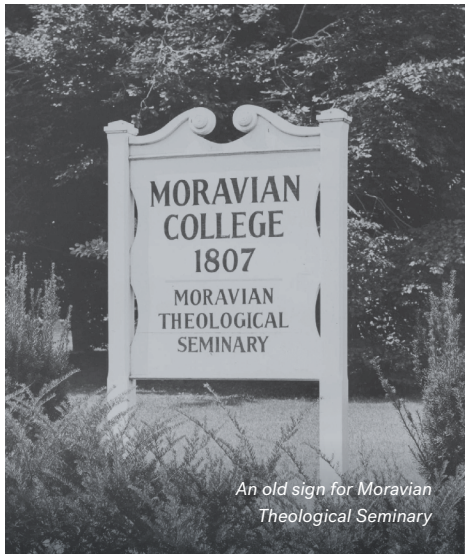
The new facility felt remarkably spacious to Folk, even with the seminary's student body growing to 54 students that year. The Saal, designed to hold 175 people, offered new opportunities for fellowship, with space for covered-dish meals, special gatherings, and vespers services, he says.

"Those were the three best years of my life," Folk says of his time in the seminary. "They just transformed me in so many ways."

Couch remembers the building bringing a new sense of unity. She recalls spirited table tennis matches in the recreation room, where students and professors alike joined in the competition. "We all gathered, and if we weren't playing, we were cheering on," she says. "That really did contribute to the life of the seminary community."

—Lindsey Poncavage

In August 2025, Moravian Theological Seminary and Lancaster Theological Seminary formally merged, becoming Moravian University School of Theology. The school accepts students from all denominations and faith traditions.



An old sign for Moravian Theological Seminary


The Bahnson Center as it stands today. Photo by Nick Chismar '20

Making History Matter

With her work, Ellie Umstead '28 brings the past into the present.

Ellie Umstead'28 has always considered herself captivated by history. The history/political science major recalls that even as a young child, she had teachers who made history come alive through stories about ancient cultures, dramatic conflicts, and heroic leaders. She has vivid recollections of visits to the Smithsonian, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Women's History Museum, the 9/11 Memorial and Museum, and the "small but mighty" Gather Place in Yardley, Pennsylvania, which celebrates local history.

"I think I always appreciated how museums and public history collections could bring the emotion out of you, especially when it comes to important stories we need to tell," says the Bucks County native. "It's crucial that we don't whitewash our history and that we share those stories, even if they are inconvenient or uncomfortable. Being able to do that, to advocate for different people while I'm curating and continuing to learn … it seems like it would be a dream job."

At Moravian, Umstead has found herself on a glide path to that career choice through her studies in the public history certification



Ellie Umstead '28 stands next to a collection of dollhouses at the Kemerer Museum of Decorative Arts in Bethlehem.

PHOTOS BY NICK CHISMAR '20



Part of the pie and baking exhibit Umstead curated at the Kemerer Museum

> **I think I always appreciated how museums and public history collections could bring the emotion out of you, especially when it comes to important stories we need to tell."**
>
> —Ellie Umstead '28

program and an art history minor, as well as a series of projects and experiential learning programs with Historic Bethlehem Museums and Sites and her SOAR (Student Opportunities for Academic Research) project. Working closely with her academic advisor, Assistant Professor of History Richard Anderson, Umstead is studying gender equity and the history of welfare rights activism in Chicago during the mid–20th century.

Anderson says Umstead's passion for history makes her "the ideal student for this research" and notes that she's already built an impressive résumé, with varied experience in research and museum curation. "She is," he says, "the exact type of student I was imagining when I proposed the Public History Certificate program."

Umstead also serves as president of Moravian's history club, is a graduate of the Millennium Fellowship Program, and is cofounder of the Spread the Spark Club, which is designed to reinforce UN development goals of health and well-being and quality education.

Collectively, these activities represent precisely the kind of extraordinary educational experience she hoped for after meeting several members of Moravian's history department before enrolling. "The professors I spoke with were so incredibly thoughtful about their work and their approach to teaching," she says. "They are just true scholars, and I could not have asked for better people to teach me and continue to nurture that love of history."

Umstead also could not have found a better location than Bethlehem, a city that has always embraced and preserved its Moravian history. Just two years ago, Bethlehem's Historic Moravian District earned UNESCO World Heritage site designation, sharing that distinction with other Moravian congregational settlements in the UK and Ireland, Denmark, and Germany.

This past May, Umstead was part of a small group of students who accompanied Moravian University President Bryon Grigsby '90, P'22, P'26, P'29, his wife, Lea, and Katherine Faull, the founding vice president and executive director of Moravian's Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage, to visit each of the international Moravian settlements, as well as the Comenius Museum in Prague. It was, Umstead says, "an absolutely awesome experience."

That UNESCO designation carries additional resonance with Umstead because of her Quaker background and embrace of pacifist principles. "Quakers do share a lot of values with Moravians," says Umstead, who noted her own deep roots in faith and community. "I worked on an exhibit with Historic Bethlehem on the role of Moravians during the Revolutionary War and their support of the Continental Army with food, clothing, and medical care—even though they were and have always been essentially anti-war. The army stayed a full year here in Bethlehem, and it was fascinating to learn about that experience."

Her additional Historic Bethlehem projects are providing insights into the curation of an informative and meaningful museum experience. In one project, for example, Umstead will be curating a new exhibit titled *No Place Like Home*, drawing on 44 antique dollhouses and miniature buildings and more than 6,000 miniature objects donated by Elizabeth Johnston Prime, who spent decades building one of the largest dollhouse collections in the country.

Walking through a final exhibit, Umstead says, is an incomparable feeling. "Your heart just feels so light," she says. "You're happy, you're proud. You have this feeling like 'I helped make this happen.' You helped pull together these objects from a million different sources, and you're serving it up to the public so people can absorb it, appreciate it, and learn from it. It feels unreal, and wonderful too. And I hope that feeling never goes away."
—Linda Harbrecht

BRILLIANCE



Professor of Art Natessa Amin in front of her painting Tree of Life (The Shape of a Song)

A Tree of Many Roots

As part of a Philadelphia-based creative initiative celebrating the country's 250th anniversary, Natessa Amin created work exploring migration.

In a narrow, worn-white studio on the third floor of Moravian's South Hall, a 9-by-4-foot raw artist's canvas is taped to the floor. Natessa Amin, associate professor of art, and art student Caterina Filangeri '27 pour water onto the canvas. Each takes a pole with a paintbrush taped to the end and pushes the water around and into the fabric. "The wet canvas will help the paint disperse," Amin explains.

Next, they pour and drip the paint. First the lightest color, a parakeet green. With their brushes, Amin and Filangeri push the paint across the canvas. As it spreads, it becomes chartreuse, and eventually, its yellow hue blooms.

Following her artistic vision, Amin pours cobalt blue and purple, pressing them across the canvas. The paints migrate and mix, creating new blended colors: moss, sage, olive, plum, orchid, amethyst, petrol blue, slate, teal, denim. The result resembles a vibrant watercolor. This is the base of Amin's painting *Tree of Life (The Shape of a Song)*, for her solo exhibition at the John James Audubon Center at Mill Grove in Audubon, Pennsylvania.

Picking up a plate of wood cut into the shape of an owl, Amin paints one side purple and

PHOTOS BY NICK CHISMAR '20







Amin and student Caterina Filangeri '27 work on the Tree of Life *painting in the studio at Moravian's South Hall.*

presses it into the canvas. "All of this will be covered up," she says, "but I add symbols to embed them into the painting."

Radical Americana

Amin's exhibition is one among a series organized by the Clay Studio in Philadelphia in celebration of the country's 250th anniversary. The initiative, Radical Americana, asks artists to examine and reflect on the art and history of Philadelphia since the nation's founding in 1776 and to create new work that advances conversation around the country's past, present, and future, while adding to the rich tradition of art and creativity in the city. Forty-five artists, including Amin, were selected to participate.

Each was assigned to a research institution and exhibition site. Amin was paired with Winterthur Museum, Garden, and Library in Winterthur, Delaware, for research.

Radical: of, relating to, or proceeding from a root

Americana: materials concerning or characteristic of America, its civilization, or its culture
—Merriam-Webster

Radical Americana parallels Amin's personal exploration of her family's histories and legacies, allowing her to reflect on her heritage through her work. She examines the roots of her heritage and considers how it manifests within her identity.

Born in India, Amin's father moved with his family to Kenya when he was very young and immigrated to the United States in the 1970s, beginning a career as a surgeon in 1976. "He's an outsider to his birth culture, as am I," Amin says. "I've always wondered how I fit in. . . . Am I Indian?"

Amin's mother emerges from a long, multigenerational Pennsylvania Dutch and Welsh lineage dating back to the 1850s and distinguished by labor in slate quarries, cement factories, and blouse mills. "Through much of this work for Radical Americana, I am processing this disparate cultural heritage and trying to understand and find a sense of belonging."

At Winterthur, Amin conducted research in the textile archives, where she found an

A PARALLEL ART

Art student Caterina Filangeri '27 and Natessa Amin, associate professor of art, bonded over their experiences growing up as children of split cultural heritages. Filangeri's father immigrated to the United States from Sicily, and her mother emigrated from Ecuador. Amin's mother is Pennsylvania Dutch, and her father was born in India.

From their connection sprang a SOAR (Student Opportunities for Academic Research) project. Filangeri assisted Amin with her Radical Americana exhibition, while also creating her own art on the theme of immigration.

"In the United States, we acknowledge the challenges immigrants face but assume that the lives of their children born in America have a clean start with all the advantages and opportunities their parents didn't have," says Filangeri. "We may not be starting where our parents did, but we're still figuring things out. I wanted to capture and shed light on these experiences."

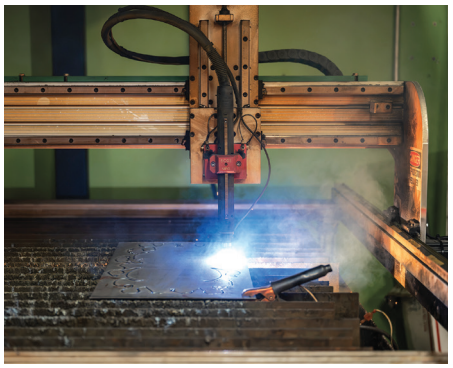
Filangeri interviewed 13 Lehigh Valley residents who are children of immigrants to the United States. She transformed the interviews into a single work of art she will present at Moravian's Student Scholarships and Creative Endeavors Week in the spring.

"I felt blessed to have access to their stories and to give them a space to open up," Filangeri says. "I matched an emotion or feeling to each person, and it was exciting to see how that played out in my painting—how an emotion translated into a color or texture."





Amin works on sculptures at Northampton Community College's Fabrication Lab.







Amin stands with her sculpture Meeting Place *at the John James Audubon Center in Mill Grove.*

Indian palampore—a bedcover—decorated with the tree of life. In the main house, Matthew Monk, the Linda Eaton Associate Curator of Textiles, pointed out an extraordinary silk-embroidered rendering of the tree of life stitched in 1754 by Philadelphian Mary King.

The tree of life has meaning across cultures and religions worldwide, symbolizing, among other themes, growth, wisdom, spirituality, and the interconnectedness of all living things. As an image with roots in Indian and Pennsylvanian cultures, it became the central motif of Amin's painting.

Of Murals, Birds, and Cutouts

The John James Audubon Center spans roughly 175 acres. The 1762 house where the French-American artist, naturalist, and ornithologist lived still stands and serves as an exhibition space. A museum, opened in 2019, celebrates Audubon's work and educates visitors about birds. Across the vast expanse of meadows, hills, and trees, the center welcomes birds to feed, nest, and stop over during migration.

The site reflects Amin's internal and artistic work, and her work responds to the site.

Over top of the base of *Tree of Life*, with its migrated and blended colors, Amin structured her painting to resemble the wallpaper-like murals in the Audubon house, painted by Pennsylvania artist George M. Harding. She included several birds—symbolic of Audubon's art, the center's work, and stories from her family history.

"My mother told me that when you see a cardinal, it's a past loved one visiting you," says Amin. "When my grandmother passed away, a cardinal would show up all the time. It would knock on the window, and we'd say, 'It's Nana!'"

The sparrow recalls her maternal grandmother's work in the Sparrow Blouse Mill in Plainfield Township, near Bethlehem.

Amin poured herself and her family into the painting with images that capture her split inheritance. Birds, tulips, stylized

plants, hearts, and geometric shapes figure heavily in Pennsylvania Dutch art. From India, inspiration came from decoration, textiles, and ornamentation displaying tulips, carnations, lotuses, leaves, and vines. Both traditions favor vibrant colors.

She applied these images and shapes with wood cutouts that she drew and cut at the Northampton Community College Fabrication Lab in Bethlehem. The motifs were inspired by scherenschnitte, a distinctive style of Pennsylvania Dutch paper cutting, on display at Winterthur. "The cutwork also ties into my family legacy," Amin says. "My father is a surgeon. And one of my maternal grandmother's jobs at the Sparrow Blouse Mill was to cut out the pieces of blouses, which eventually were assembled."

To complete the work, Amin wove a tree of life into the painting. Its branches reach across the canvas, touching the many shapes and images. *Tree of Life* is multidimensional, multicultural, blended, rich with color and story, a collection and connection of legacies that form a singular art—like the United States, like the artist herself. *—Claire Kowalchik P'22*

SPLIT INHERITANCE SERIES


An Enduring Thread

Migration is the central theme of Associate Professor of Art Natessa Amin's *Split Inheritance* series. The exhibit itself migrates across the John James Audubon Center in Mill Grove.

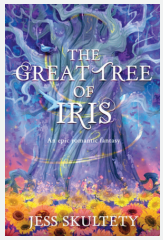
The art was installed in September and is on view through March 14, 2027. A printed visitor guide, designed by Amin "as both a way-finding tool and a contemplative companion," takes visitors through the exhibition.

Beginning in the museum, Amin's painting *Tree of Life (The Shape of a Song)* draws visitors from the gift shop to a gallery where they can view additional paintings and three small sculptures. Wallpaper designed by Amin covers the far wall of the gallery.

Outdoors, three sculptures fashioned from pieces of cut steel serve as bird feeders, and down the hill, in Audubon's historic house, Amin's series continues in three rooms. An experimental drawing space includes cyanotypes and drawings made on teabag paper. In another room, Amin's research materials and family ephemera are on display. And the third room, "Friendship Token," is a curated gallery of artwork created by the Gulls, a group of Amin's college artist friends. Each artist selected a gull plate from Audubon's *Birds of America* series and created a piece of art in response.

The images described in *Tree of Life* appear across Amin's works at the Audubon Center. "The shapes have become the tree of life," says Amin, "reinventing itself across mediums and processes and materials."

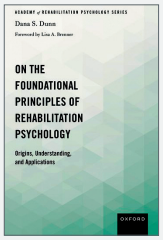
For more information on the John James Audubon Center, visit audubon.org/john-james.



The Great Tree of Iris

By Jess Skultety, Moravian University student experience mentor

This romantic fantasy novel follows seven unlikely companions, including dragons, elves, and other mythical creatures, as they race to find pieces of a prophecy to prevent the destruction of the Great Tree of Iris. The tale blends fantasy with action and adventure.



On the Foundational Principles of Rehabilitation Psychology: Origins, Understanding, and Applications

By Dana S. Dunn, professor of psychology and director of academic assessment

This book codifies and applies the core principles of rehabilitation psychology, viewing disability as a form of diversity. It explains the history, theory, and practical use of these principles, emphasizing resilience, identity, and intersectionality to foster well-being.



Gone Before You Knew Me

By Renate (Muller) Wildermuth '91

A young-adult spy thriller about a high school senior, Talya, who, after losing her parents and her memory, believes a new student named Axel is a spy. The book uses a "redacted confessions" format to explore themes of survival, identity, and the pressures of high school.



Steady Ground in Shifting Terrain

How Moravian is investing in academic innovation

By James Scifers
Moravian University Provost

The landscape of higher education has shifted significantly. The long-anticipated "enrollment cliff," a decline in the number of traditional college-age students as a result of falling birth rates, is no longer a projection; it's a reality.

Nationally, the pool of 18-year-old high school graduates is expected to shrink roughly 15 percent by 2029, and small, tuition-dependent institutions like Moravian University feel that shift most directly.

Layered on top of changing demographics is a second, quieter trend: A growing number of high school graduates are choosing not to enroll in college. Public confidence in the value of a four-year degree has softened, despite clear evidence that demonstrates the social and financial benefits of completing a college degree. This, alongside rising costs, has students and families asking more pointed questions about return on investment.

Furthermore, changes in federal policy have added new complexity. New federal caps limit graduate student borrowing, while the Grad PLUS loan program, long a primary financing tool for graduate education, is being phased out for new borrowers. This means students and families will lean more heavily on program value and cost discipline when they decide where to enroll. Finally, running through all this is the rise of artificial intelligence, a reality impacting

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES O'BRIEN

how students learn, how faculty teach, how outcomes are assessed, and how employers' expectations evolve.

Every institution of higher education is facing the same challenges. However, what differentiates one institution from another in this new environment is how each responds, and at Moravian, the story is genuinely encouraging.

Nowhere is the question of Moravian's return on investment answered more directly than through the Elevate program, our signature undergraduate experience woven into every student's four-year plan, combining career preparation, leadership development, global travel, and hands-on learning from day one. The results speak for themselves: This spring, the Laurie Riley '82 Center for Career Success, which anchors Elevate, received the 2026 Career Readiness Excellence Award from the National Association of Colleges and Employers, recognizing Moravian as a national model for integrating career competencies into the undergraduate experience.

For families weighing whether a degree is worth the investment, Elevate offers a concrete answer: a structured promise of career support that begins the day a student arrives on campus.

Moravian's response to these challenges also includes curricular innovation. The university's new general education program reflects a deliberate rethinking of what a broad-based education should deliver. The program focuses less on disciplinary content knowledge and more on building demonstrable, transferable skills that students, and the families investing in them, can see the value of immediately.

The program focuses on the skills employers tell us graduates need to possess, including written and verbal communication, teamwork, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and information literacy. To address the opportunities and challenges AI is presenting, Moravian created a task force on artificial intelligence that developed a comprehensive plan to ensure every student who graduates will be AI competent.

Moravian also continues to innovate with new academic offerings. This past academic year, the institution added an undergraduate program in criminal justice and a graduate program in sports psychology.

In 2026–27, new educational offerings include aviation management and professional pilot training, an undergraduate social work program, graduate courses focused on substance use counseling and artificial intelligence in business, and a research doctorate program in health sciences designed to prepare the next generation of healthcare faculty. These are just a few examples of how the programs offered at Moravian have evolved over the past decade.

Once an institution rooted in undergraduate liberal arts education, Moravian is now a regional comprehensive institution that boasts more than 20 master's degree programs and seven research and clinical doctoral programs.

Through the new Center for Teaching and Learning Innovation's Faculty Learning Communities, professors across departments are collaboratively researching how to improve their teaching, examining how artificial intelligence is changing education, and ensuring that Moravian's programs continue to demonstrate the strong student learning outcomes that accreditation requires.

Across campus, faculty workshops, including sessions built around current thinking on AI in higher education and the scholarship of teaching and learning, are helping faculty adapt to new tools and teaching strategies without abandoning what makes a Moravian classroom distinctive: close relationships, intellectual rigor, and respect for faculty judgment about their own disciplines.

This 284-year-old institution has weathered structural change before, and it will again through renewed investment in the academic core, curriculum innovation, faculty development, and student-centered programming.

This 284-year-old institution has weathered structural change before, and it will again through renewed investment in the academic core, curriculum innovation, faculty development, and student-centered programming. That is where a bright future gets built; not around the challenges, but in the classroom, the laboratory, the meetings with mentors, and the time spent with peers honing the skills required to succeed after graduation.

Moravian's plan is clear and continues to resonate with students and families who have made the institution the fastest growing in the region. This is the innovation that Benigna von Zinzendorf brought to Bethlehem in 1742, and it is the innovation that keeps Moravian University vibrant.

To learn more about James Scifers, visit mrvn.co/jay-scifers.



Vince Stango '99, interim president and CEO of the National Constitution Center (NCC) in Philadelphia

The Man Behind Philadelphia's Constitutional Landmark



Alum Vince Stango '99 was named interim president and CEO of the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia this year, a journey he says began with a connection made at Moravian University.

By Anndee Hochman
Photos by Nick Chismar '20

ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Vince Stango

put Philadelphia's National Constitution Center on the map.

Literally.

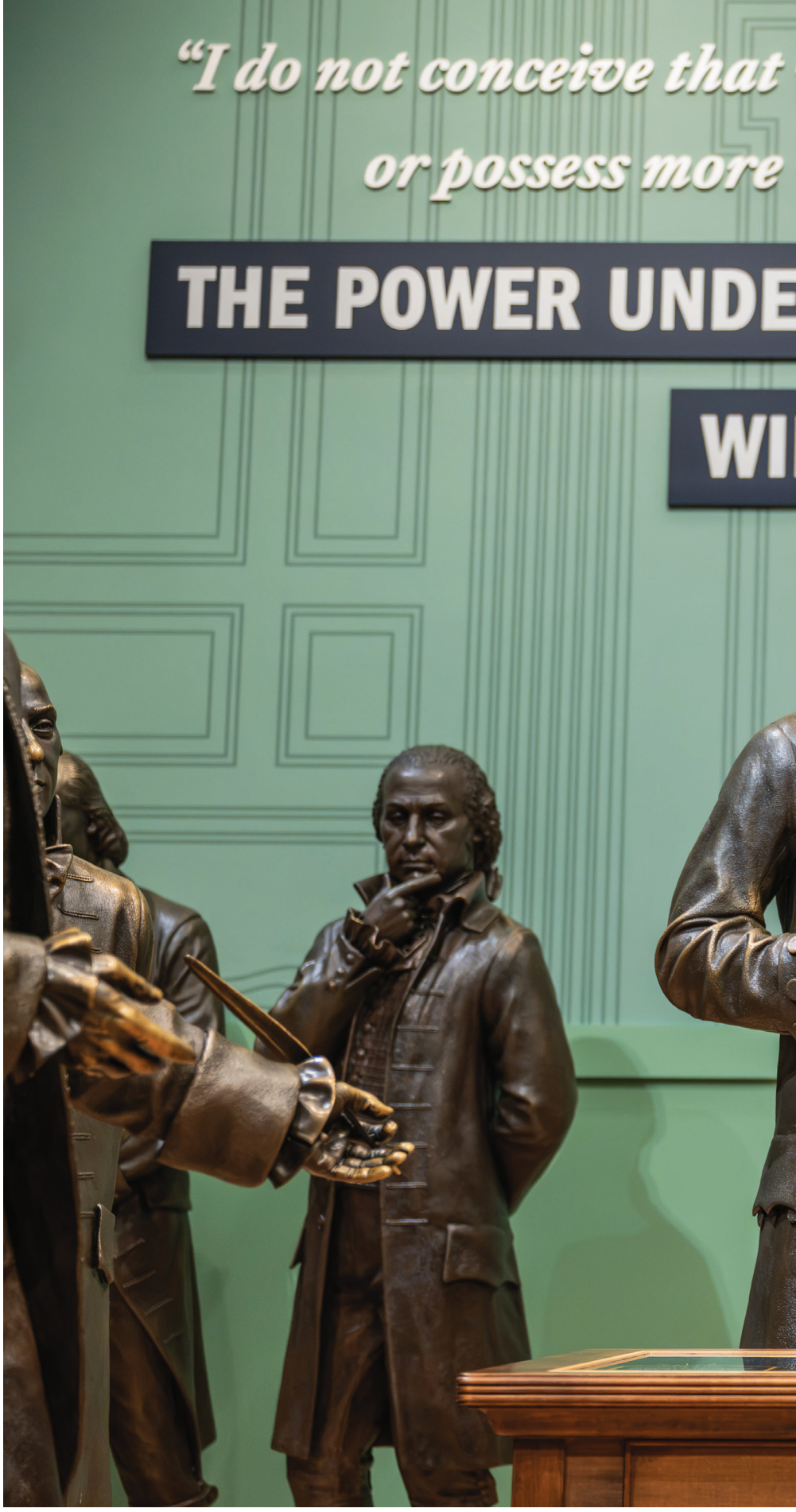
When the building was still under construction, it needed an address, and because it occupies the entire block between Fifth and Sixth on the north side of Arch Street, any odd number from 501 to 599 was up for grabs.

Stango, 24 at the time and special projects coordinator at the yet-to-open museum, chose to honor a date American history nerds would love: May 25, the day the first quorum convened, officially beginning the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

Today, the National Constitution Center (NCC) draws 140,000 visitors a year to its building at 525 Arch Street. And Stango, who worked his way steadily through positions in human resources and senior management to become the NCC's interim president and chief executive officer in January, has been leaving his mark on the place ever since.

Stango stepped into his latest role during a pivotal time for both the NCC and Philadelphia: the run-up to the nation's semiquincentennial on the Fourth of July. As the incubator of American independence—and home to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed—Philadelphia became a nexus of the anniversary observance, and the NCC occupied one of the central stages.

On July 3, while a heat wave rippled across the country, Pope Leo XIV addressed the nation in a





Stango in Signers' Hall at the NCC. The exhibit features 42 life-size bronze statues of the framers of the Constitution.



Stango delivers remarks during the 2026 Liberty Medal ceremony honoring Pope Leo XIV. Photo by Jason E. Miczek

livestreamed speech from the Vatican to the NCC and around the world. He described Americans' efforts to fulfill the promises of the Declaration of Independence as "still a work in progress" and exhorted listeners to recommit to ideals "that have made America a country that values peace and prosperity, a country characterized by generosity and nobility of heart."

Before his speech, viewers watched a video of Stango, NCC trustees, and Nelson J. Pérez, the archbishop of Philadelphia, visiting the Vatican in April to present the pope with the Liberty Medal in recognition of his lifelong work advancing religious liberty and freedom of conscience. The group also brought a few Philadelphia-themed gifts, including swag from the pope's alma mater, Villanova University, and a Wawa tote bag filled with Tastykakes.

For Stango, the semiquincentennial is more than a celebration; it is an opportunity, he says, "to look back at our history and understand the ideas of the American founding, to think about where we've succeeded and where we've fallen short. What better place than the NCC to be at the center of that, a birthplace of civic renewal?"

History Opens the Door

Stango grew up alongside the NCC. In 2000, his name, along with those of others who attended the center's groundbreaking, was etched into the building's structural steel, becoming yet another permanent part of the institution he helped bring to life.

"When I started, I thought it was going to be a job to pay the rent. Then we opened, and I got to see the fruit of that labor: schoolchildren coming in and walking among the statues in Signers' Hall … It became a vocation. This is what I was meant to do."

The big-picture view of history he acquired at Moravian, along with the influence of his parents—neither of whom attended college but who read to him at night, took him on weekly trips to the public library, and encouraged conversation about national politics—helped school him for the role of CEO.

"Relationship building, diplomacy, empathy, coupled with my upbringing and education … Those are things I had, coming in. What I've learned in the past 27 years is resiliency, dedication, sticking to an idea you believe in. I've learned a lot about coalition building and project management."

Stango credits his path to a series of choices that seem weightier in retrospect, a journey marked equally by happenstance and



Stango joins NCC staff at the 2026 Red, White & Blue To-Do. Photo by Jason E. Miczek



Stango speaks with the media outside the NCC on July 2. Photo by Jason E. Miczek

volition. He went to Moravian because he wanted to attend a smallish school—his high school graduating class, just outside Scranton, had a mere 85 students—and one that would perpetuate the value of service he'd learned from his family and from 12 years of Catholic education.

"My best friend's older brother went [to Moravian]," he recalls. "I liked the campus, the community. Looking back at the way it set up the rest of my adult life, professionally and personally, it was one of the most consequential decisions I ever made."

Stango had played football in high school and began his freshman year thinking he might become a high school social studies teacher and coach. He lasted just 48 hours at football camp; later, a semester student-teaching eighth graders quickly convinced him that being a classroom educator was not his path.

Moravian professors encouraged his passion for history, pointing out that a degree in the field could open multiple career doors. Stango particularly remembers Robert Stinson, whose introductory history course changed his approach to learning after Stango was stunned by a lower-than-expected grade.

"He told me that I wrote the way I spoke, that I was too casual, not specific enough in my citations. It was such a wake-up call for me; it set me down a more serious path. From then, writing and communication became more important and more purposeful."

Rosalind Remer, the other American historian in Moravian's department at the time, was Stango's freshman-year advisor and taught him Colonial American History. Stango impressed Remer enough that when she took a leave from Moravian to become a consultant on a still-in-blueprint-stage Philadelphia museum aimed to educate visitors about the US Constitution, she recommended him for an entry-level job there.

Stango had just moved to Philadelphia to start a master's degree in public administration at Villanova University. "I had roommates, I had an apartment, but no job. I reached out to [Remer] and asked if the museum was hiring." He faxed his résumé from a Staples store, earned an interview, and was hired as special assistant to the NCC's founding president and CEO, Joe Torsella.

Early Days at the NCC

The NCC was off to a shaky start. It had launched with the 1988 Constitution Heritage Act, passed by Congress and signed by President Ronald Reagan, calling for the creation of a nonpartisan, nonprofit museum and education center to "increase awareness and understanding of the Constitution among the American people."

But the project had languished for more than a decade. Torsella nudged it back on track, raising $185 million in public and private funds, forming a high-octane board of trustees, and overseeing the development of a sleek, glass-fronted, 160,000-square-foot building anchoring the north end of

> "Looking back at the way it set up the rest of my adult life, professionally and personally, it was one of the most consequential decisions I ever made." —Vince Stango '99



A copy of the Declaration of Independence is on display in the NCC's new America's Founding *exhibit, which opened in February.*

Independence Mall. The center opened on July 4—another date to gratify the history buffs—of 2003.

Being part of the NCC's team was like participating in a start-up company, a construction project, and an education venture all at the same time, Stango recalls. "I got to learn the entire organization literally from the ground up. I got to sit in on meetings and meet city leaders, world leaders. I was a sponge. I was exposed to everything from exhibit designs to how the money was being raised."

Torsella recalls a young man who seemed wise and unflappable beyond his years. "He was immediately a stabilizing sort of influence," he says. "He was someone to whom I confidently gave the most delicate of tasks, even at that age, and he intuitively grasped them."

The 1990s and early 2000s marked a time of municipal renaissance in Philadelphia that included a more collaborative, integrated vision of the historic district that houses the Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Betsy Ross's house, and other landmarks.

"A long time ago, a visit to the historic district was a drive-by: Independence Hall and the Bell," says Amy Needle, who met Stango in the early years of the NCC's existence and is now CEO and president of Historic Philadelphia, a nonprofit whose mission is to enliven historic sites through storytelling and education.

While it's natural for directors to boost their own institutions, Needle says, Stango always leaned toward the "common good" of all the museums and attractions in the area. This year, many of those entities joined forces for Fourth of July weekend events that included a drone show on Independence Mall and a children's wagon parade.

"Our two teams work very well together," says Needle. "[Stango] is a very calm but authoritative, smart, and fun person to work with. He's good at talking not only to donors and sponsors and board members, but also to staff and coworkers and the public."

A Mentor to Others

Once the NCC was built and beginning to attract visitors, Stango recalls, he itched for a more challenging job. "I told [Torsella] and the powers that be that I was loving the job, but it was not my career goal to be an assistant forever. I said I'd like to get more involved in human resources." His aspiration was answered with a promotion to special projects coordinator.

"At 24, 25, I was hiring staff, creating policies, developing HR functions, helping to build out visitor amenities," he says. Later he oversaw the NCC's security, information technology (IT), and building operations; for 17 years Stango served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of the center.

It was during his stint with the HR department that he hired Kerry Sautner—a program developer at the Franklin Institute who was eight months pregnant at the time—to become the NCC's director of public programs.

Once she returned from maternity leave, Sautner says, she and Stango proceeded to be "thick as thieves" for the next 17 years, planning NCC exhibit openings and flag-raising ceremonies, the establishment of new ticketing systems, and a redo of *Freedom Rising*, the multimedia presentation—with a live actor, archival film, and music—that introduces visitors to the Constitution Center's themes and questions.

Sautner describes Stango as "a mentor, a great friend, and a wonderful leader" with an intuitive capacity for knowing when to gently boost a coworker and when that person needs a tougher approach.

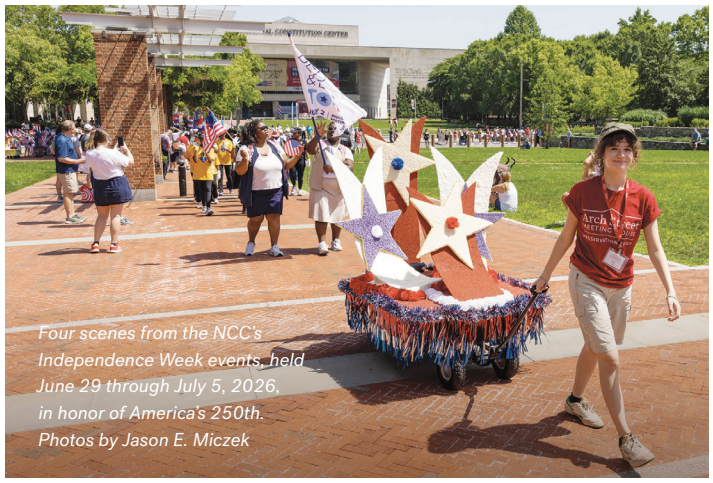
She recalls a time during her first seven years at the NCC, as the organization transitioned to a new CEO, when she found herself floundering through a two-day board meeting attended by nationally recognized leaders.

"Vince picked up on it. He pulled me to the side and said, 'What's going on here? You've got this. You know this stuff better than anybody in the room. Don't let them question your authority.' He did that as a colleague, a peer, a friend, and a mentor. It saved me and saved my work."

Sautner notes that she, Stango, and their peers in the Philadelphia history community learned from the generation that preceded them, including Torsella and former mayor Ed Rendell, who asked Torsella to become the NCC's first leader. "They set the stage," she says, by garnering public and private investment in the city's historic core.

"Our generation did a better job of saying, 'We'll share. I'll help,'" she says. "What Vince did really well was to connect the dots and pull resources."

Over the years, Stango also worked on projects with Remer, his former Moravian advisor, now senior vice provost of libraries, collections, and archives at Drexel University. "He is really the glue that holds the history community together in Philadelphia," Sautner says.









Four scenes from the NCC's Independence Week events, held June 29 through July 5, 2026, in honor of America's 250th. Photos by Jason E. Miczek



Stango in the NCC's Grand Hall Overlook, which features 56 state, commonwealth, and territorial flags

Stepping Into the Role of CEO

From 2009 until early this year, Stango served as the Constitution Center's chief operating officer, overseeing its day-to-day operations while CEO Jeffrey Rosen—widely admired as a public intellectual and champion of the center's mission—helped elevate the institution's national profile as a leading forum for constitutional education and civic dialogue. When Rosen stepped down in January, Stango took over the role.

What has changed in 27 years is the political landscape: more divisive and more volatile than when the NCC team was first shaping a nonpartisan education center that would connect Americans to the nation's founding aspirations and debates.

Torsella, Stango's first boss at the NCC, says his former assistant is the ideal person to meet this moment. "What's most exciting to me about Vince in his current position is that despite his 25-years-plus of history [with the NCC], he's more about looking forward. He's got this very clear sense of how to make the institution more relevant, to have it really speak to these difficult and tricky times."

For Stango, the NCC's mission is both a duty and an opportunity. "At a time of great disagreement, discontent, and uneasiness, we have an obligation to teach, to educate, to inform, and hopefully to inspire curiosity about the American idea," he says. And the semiquincentennial is only a jumping-off point. The NCC's upcoming Civic Decade will gear up for the 250th anniversary of the US Constitution in 2037 and the Bill of Rights in 2041. During this time, the NCC plans to introduce new programs, educational experiences in constitutional literacy, and intergenerational learning rooted in homes and communities across the country.

Stango has been at the NCC long enough to note distinct phases in its development. The first three included the project of simply getting it off the ground; the period of gaining clarity regarding the center's mission; and Rosen's 12 years of "building our brand" as a national education institution.

Over the years, the NCC became the permanent home of the annual Liberty Medal ceremony. In 2008, the center was the venue for then-Senator Barack Obama's landmark speech on race relations and, later that year, a presidential primary debate between Senators Obama and Hillary Clinton.

The NCC offers podcasts and courses for students, as well as professional learning for educators. The center reaches nearly 6 million students nationwide with its educational resources every year. It hosts town hall events on topics such as "Freedom of Conscience and the First Amendment."

In collaboration with Philly Touch Tours, and with increased accessibility in mind, the NCC also offers periodic hands-on tours for blind and low-vision visitors, as well as sensory-friendly days.

Just in the past seven months, the NCC opened two new permanent exhibits. *America's Founding* tracks the pivotal period from the colonies' rising tensions with Great Britain through the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and *Governing the Nation* explores how the Constitution splits power among the government's legislative, executive, and judicial branches.

Stango wants to continue to expand the NCC's influence beyond the building's walls, becoming a "leader in civic formation." What he means is something both old school and forward-thinking: that the NCC can help foster dialogue across generations, in Philadelphia and around the country, about what it means to be a citizen of a nation whose power is vested in its people.

And at a time when constitutional questions—the same ones that preoccupied the nation's founders, about the limits of executive power, the boundaries of free speech, and the relationship between the federal government and the states—still ignite vociferous debate, Stango's colleagues say his unflappability and clear sense of mission serve him and the NCC well.

"He's built that place quietly and steadily," says Remer. "I don't think he lets himself get distracted by politics or by rhetoric."

Stango agrees. "We have an obligation to teach the Constitution through historical storytelling and contemporary issues, warts and all. Regardless of who's sitting in City Hall, the State Capitol, or the White House, our work continues."

His advice to current and future students, especially those who might be holding humanities degrees and wondering, *What am I going to do with this?*: "Find mentors, people you can learn from," he says. "I learn just as much from people younger than me, who are earlier in their careers. There's a whole big world out there. Be curious. You never know where it can lead."

> "We have an obligation to teach the Constitution through historical storytelling and contemporary issues, warts and all." —Vince Stango '99



Preserving Hope: A Grassroots Effort to Save Moravian History

Robert May ’74, P’02, GP’22 and Pete Peterson P’19 are among the dedicated volunteers conserving New Jersey’s only Moravian-era settlement.

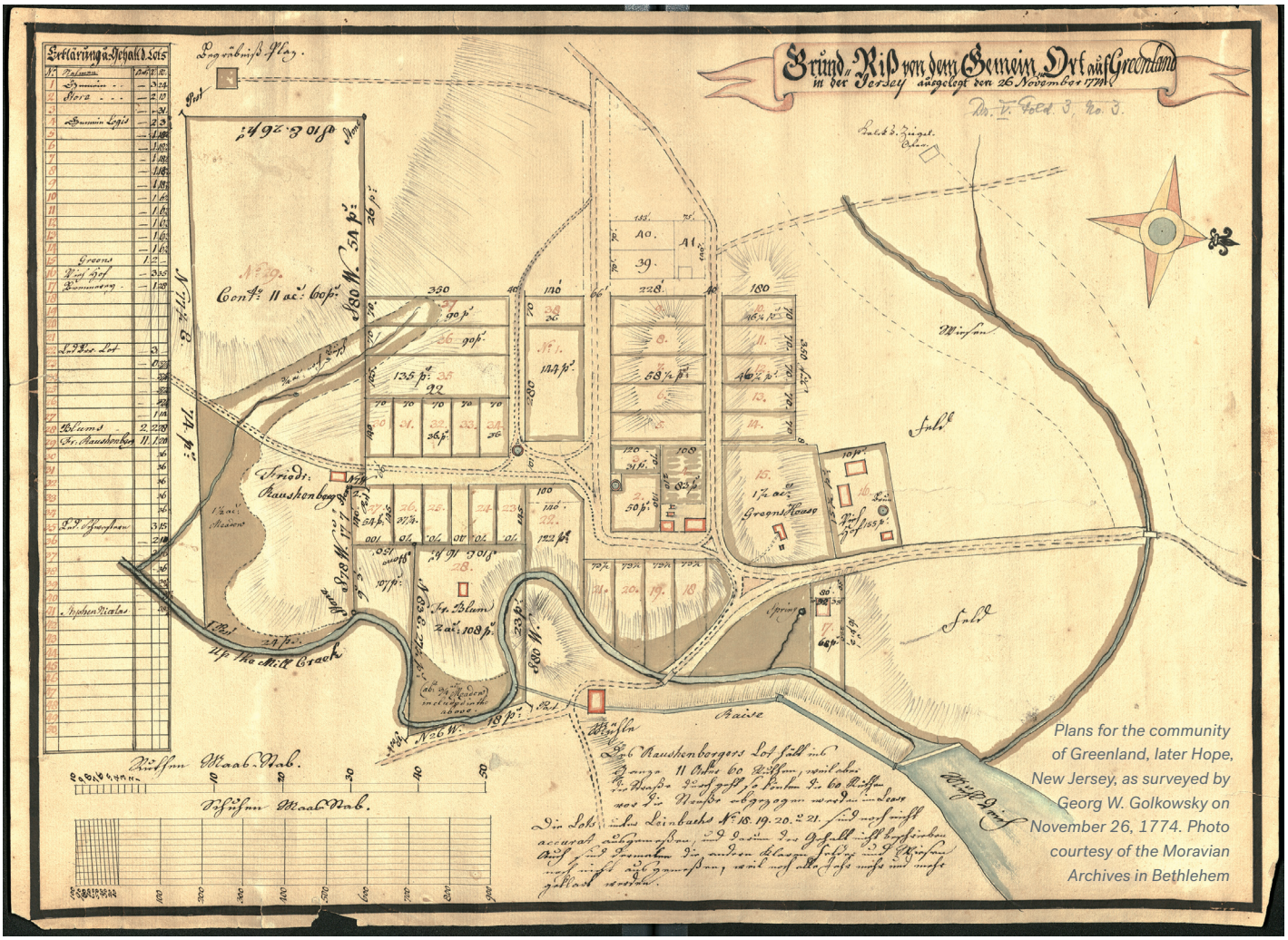
By Christina Tatu
Photos by Nick Chismar ’20



ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM



An aerial view of Hope at the center of town, where County Route 519 intersects High Street. Photo by JPennucci Photography



Plans for the community of Greenland, later Hope, New Jersey, as surveyed by Georg W. Golkowsky on November 26, 1774. Photo courtesy of the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem

A visit to Hope Township is like stepping back into the 18th century, when the Moravians established this quiet German colonial village in the rolling hills of northwestern New Jersey.

Surrounded by miles of open farmland and nestled at the base of Jenny Jump Mountain, Hope reflects the vision of its Moravian founders. Quiet streets are lined with limestone buildings, many of them with herringbone doors, and redbrick lintels over the windows.

Remnants of early industry offer a glimpse of the Moravians' ingenuity. A rustic 3½-story gristmill (1769–1770) was Hope's first building and supplied troops stationed at Jockey Hollow in Morristown with grain during the Revolutionary War.

On the other side of town, the Gemeinhaus (1781)—once the Moravians' church and community center—is capped with a belltower between two brick chimneys. For more than 100 years, it has served as the headquarters of First Hope Bank. A handgun encased in glass and a gas mask hang on the wall behind the bank tellers, hearkening back to a time when employees in the remote Warren County town had to protect themselves against would-be robbers.

The village was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and concurrently recognized by the state's register program. Everywhere you look, Hope's history endures, preserved by dedicated volunteers like Robert May'74, P'02, GP'22 and Pete Peterson P'19.

In October 2024, May and Peterson stepped in to lead Help Our Preservation Effort (H.O.P.E.), a nonprofit that since 1982 has been dedicated to safeguarding Hope's Moravian heritage, which includes 17 buildings from the Moravian era (1769–1808).

The H.O.P.E. organization already owns and has restored the Long House on Walnut Street. The Moravians constructed the



Robert May '74, P'02, GP'22 and Pete Peterson P'19 with the Cooper and Crusen Houses (from left) behind them



The white-clapboard-sided Cooper House stands along Hope-Bridgeville Road.



The first floor of the Cooper House



The attic of the Cooper House

building's original section in 1777 and completed four additions by 1870. Today, it houses several businesses, whose rental income helps cover the cost of maintenance.

Restoring the Long House took 14 years, from 1998 to 2012, and $1.4 million. But the members of the grassroots organization have never been discouraged by the scale of a project—or the time required to preserve their town's history. Under the leadership of May and Peterson, the members of H.O.P.E. have turned their attention to the next project: preserving the Cooper and Crusen Houses.

Taking Action

Peterson recalls two years ago when the neighboring properties on Hope-Bridgeville Road were listed for sale by First Hope Bank.

There was a lot of interest in the Crusen House—its limestone construction has withstood time far better than the post-and-beam, clapboard-sided Cooper House. There was talk of razing the Cooper House, "and if they had bulldozed this house, I wouldn't have been able to live with myself unless I tried to do something," Peterson says.

He ran into May at the post office one day and told him about the possibility of the house being destroyed. "Bob goes, 'Well, we can do something about that,'" Peterson says.

At the time, the H.O.P.E. organization was talking about selling the Long House, and there was speculation that the group might disband. May, who owns the 60-acre Swayze Inn Farm outside of town with his wife, Diane, put together a proposal for continuing the leadership of H.O.P.E. and acquiring the Cooper and Crusen properties.

May and Peterson spent the next year convincing H.O.P.E.'s leaders that they had a viable plan.

First Hope Bank had purchased Cooper and Crusen with the intention of expanding operations, but the pandemic changed those plans, Peterson says. The bank president wanted to see the properties restored, so an arrangement for the sale of both properties to H.O.P.E. was negotiated, Peterson says.

> "If it's related to Hope, there will be many individuals who will step forward to help."
>
> —ROBERT MAY '74, P'02, GP'22

Under the restoration plan, the original Moravian section at the rear of the Cooper House will become a museum, while the front portion will be rented to generate income for H.O.P.E. and ongoing maintenance of both properties. At the Crusen House, the cellar kitchen and first floor will serve as museum space, while the upper floors will house H.O.P.E.'s administrative offices and archives.

But there's much work to be done. The Cooper House was last inhabited more than two decades ago, Peterson says. And the Crusen House hasn't been inhabited since the 1950s.

The latter was named for Ed Crusen, who inherited the property. Though he lived next door in the Cooper House with his sister, Margie Cooper, he maintained the Crusen property, Peterson says.



May points out the original mud and horsehair insulation visible behind a peeling wall in the Cooper House.

The Preservation Plans

Artefact Inc. of Bethlehem is developing preservation plans for the Moravian-era Cooper and Crusen Houses in Hope, New Jersey.

Founded by Christine Ussler in 1986, Artefact specializes in adaptive reuse and historic renovation and restoration. Ussler helped renovate portions of Bethlehem's Moravian-era buildings, including three in the city's UNESCO World Heritage site: the Single Sisters' House, the Bell House, and Peter Hall in the Single Brethren's House. Her team also did renovation work on the Grist Miller's House, adjacent to the World Heritage site.

The Hope project is Ussler's first work in the village. She and her team began developing preservation plans last fall, with funding from New Jersey Historic Trust grants.

"What's unusual about this town is that it's a living town. People are occupying these Moravian buildings, but they haven't altered them that much," Ussler says.

To develop the preservation plan, Ussler and team member Cassie Rogg examined historic maps, visited the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, and worked with an engineer to assess the structural stability of the houses.

They also created as-built architectural drawings showing the properties as they were originally constructed. These drawings revealed changes over time. At the Crusen House, the team determined that the stairs had been moved and one fireplace had been removed. The Cooper House has two additions dating to between 1800 and 1840. Horsehair mixed with mud was used as insulation and is still visible inside the walls of both houses.

Artefact's finalized plans will include recommended work, estimated costs, and a maintenance plan for each property.

"Preserving these properties isn't just important for the community itself," Ussler says. "These are historic resources that inform our lives and can educate all of us going forward."



The outside of the Crusen House



Katie Faull, who leads the Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage, and May inside the Crusen House



The first floor of the Crusen House

There's no heating or plumbing in the Crusen House, though water flows from a cistern-fed spigot inside the remarkably preserved cellar kitchen, which includes a cooking fireplace with a bake oven. The house dates to 1785.

By comparison, the Cooper House is in poor condition. In May, it was added to Preservation New Jersey's 10 Most Endangered Historic Places list. The list recognizes the building's significance to the state's heritage, better positioning it to receive essential grant money. It also entitles H.O.P.E. to technical assistance and guidance from Preservation New Jersey.

Because of its age, its lack of modern conditioning systems, and the fact that it has been vacant so long, the Cooper House needs structural work, according to Preservation New Jersey's report.

The rear section of the house is the oldest part and was constructed by the Moravians before 1808, when the financially troubled mother church in Europe sold the village of Hope to help pay its debts. The Cooper House is one of only three Moravian-era frame houses known to remain in Hope, according to Preservation New Jersey.

A Volunteer Effort

Last spring, May took over the role of president of H.O.P.E., and Peterson became vice president.

May says studying business and economics at Moravian University equipped him with skills he used throughout his 40-year career as managing director and staff counsel at the New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers (NJ CAR) and now as president of the H.O.P.E. nonprofit.

Over the past year, H.O.P.E. has raised nearly $90,000. The money includes historic site management grants from the New Jersey Historic Trust, as well as $13,000 raised from two dinners prepared by H.O.P.E. volunteers.

"The village of Hope flourishes because of the overwhelming number of community members who give so generously of their time and talents to help in any way they can," May says. "It doesn't matter the cause. If it's related to Hope, there will be many individuals who will step forward to help."

May and Peterson have successfully rallied residents around the vision of preserving Hope, inspiring others to lend their time, says Mayor Tim McDonough.

"People who live here are aware of the historic nature of the town, and they feel obligated to keep that alive," McDonough says. "We teach that history in our schools; we have historic tours in our town. It's ingrained in our community."

H.O.P.E. has 65 memberships, many of them representing couples. Contributions from members are expected to exceed $40,000 this year, May says.



Cory Dieterly, Moravian University's archivist, and Peterson in the attic of the Cooper House



First Hope Bank on Hope-Bridgeville Road is housed in the Moravians' former Gemeinhaus (1781).

This past spring, more than a dozen members came together to clean the Cooper and Crusen properties. "The longtime residents especially acknowledge, recognize, and value the history of the community, because it really is unique," Peterson says.

The Bethlehem Connection

Hope occupies just a few square blocks amid acres of woods and farmland. Settled in 1769, it was established nearly 30 years after Bethlehem, about 35 miles south, Pennsylvania's main Moravian settlement.

Hope was originally called Greenland, named after Samuel and Abigail Green, who owned about 1,000 acres that would eventually become the village. The Greens had a friendly relationship with the Native Americans, who warned them of impending danger during the French and Indian War of 1754, according to *The Moravian Contribution to the Town of Hope, New Jersey*, published by the Hope Historical Society in 1955.

During that time, the Greens temporarily relocated to Emmaus, near Bethlehem, and became attached to the Moravian way of life. They offered the Moravians their land in New Jersey to establish a settlement.

The Moravians decided it would be fair to purchase the land from the Greens for £1,000—equivalent to about $320,600 today. The sale was finalized in 1769. That same year, Peter Worbass, the former manager of Bethlehem's famed Sun Inn, moved to Hope and became the village's first farm manager, according to *The Moravian Contribution*.

Hope was an important stop for Moravians on the way to Staten Island, where they would preach to enslaved African Americans working in the iron industry, says Katie Faull, founding vice president and executive director of Moravian University's Institute for Moravian History and World Heritage. This past summer, Faull toured the village and visited the Cooper and Crusen Houses.

Hope has the largest collection of 18th-century Moravian buildings still standing in New Jersey, she says. It has even more remaining Moravian-era structures than Bethlehem.

"Standing in front of the Cooper and Crusen Houses, you can still trace the shape of the 1774 survey, the plan Bishop Ettwein and the church authorities laid out five years after Peter Worbass first arrived to manage the farm," Faull says.

Bishop Johannes Ettwein became one of Hope's first spiritual leaders. His memoirs are part of Moravian Lives, a digital humanities project and archival database now managed by Moravian University that has indexed and transcribed 300 memoirs of 18th- and 19th-century members of the Moravian Church.

Faull started the project during her time at Bucknell University and is adding to it. She and Moravian University Archivist Cory Dieterly are digitizing 24 memoirs of Moravians who lived in Hope.

Bringing the project to Moravian University feels like "bringing it home," Faull says. "It began at Bucknell because that's where I was teaching, but the archive, and so much of what we are now digitizing, the Hope memoirs among them, lives here in Bethlehem," she says.

Going through Hope's memoirs, Faull was struck by how much illness moved through the community. Several residents, including young Jacob Biewighausen and Joseph Renatus Frevel, died at age 21 of a "*heftiges Brustfieber*," a feverish chest complaint.

For such a small settlement, the lives recorded there are "strikingly international," Faull says: Christian Renatus Heckewelder

> "I'd like visitors to be able to move between these places . . . and get a sense of how interconnected the Moravian settlements were."
>
> —KATIE FAULL, INSTITUTE FOR MORAVIAN HISTORY AND WORLD HERITAGE

was born in Yorkshire and came to America as a child in a Moravian group, or *colonne*. Johannes Ludwig Luckenback was born in Höchstenbach in western Germany and became a shoemaker in Hope. Magdalene Colverin's memoir traces her moving between the farm and the village inn no fewer than

four times,"which says a good deal about how fluidly ordinary members took on different kinds of labor for the Moravian congregation as it needed them," Faull says.

As the World Heritage site manager for Bethlehem, Faull would like to eventually offer tours connecting Bethlehem to other Moravian sites, such as Hope.

"I'd like visitors to be able to move between these places—Bethlehem, Nazareth, Hope, Emmaus, and Lititz—and get a sense of how interconnected the Moravian settlements were; how much members, like Peter Worbass or the Green family, were constantly on the move between them," she says.

Rooted in Hope and Moravian

May fell in love with Hope as a young boy, when his family would take Sunday drives from their nearby home in Washington, New Jersey. He and his wife, Diane, purchased Swayze Inn Farm in 2001.

May was inspired to start giving back after completing his Moravian University education, made possible by a significant financial aid package. He enjoyed his educational experience, which included an Independent Study and Honors project in economics, as well as four weeks spent in Paris during his senior year.

May and his Moravian classmates established the Class of 1974 International Experience Fund to support Moravian's goal of providing at least one international travel experience for each undergraduate.

After Moravian, May went on to earn a degree from Seton Hall University School of Law.

May's daughter, Rebecca (May) Driscoll'02, graduated with a degree in elementary education. His granddaughter, Taylor Rasley'22, graduated with a degree in psychology.

"Leading H.O.P.E. and the effort to see the Cooper and Crusen Houses restored is another way for me to give back," May says. "Not only will the restoration of these two houses benefit the historic streetscape of Hope, but the museum spaces that will be created in both the Cooper and Crusen Houses will allow individuals to see firsthand two early Moravian homes."

Peterson and his wife, Betsey, have lived in Hope for more than 40 years and raised their family in a farmhouse from the 1790s.

His son, Luke Peterson, graduated from Moravian in 2019. Luke now works as a microbiologist for Quva Pharma in Greenwich Township, New Jersey. Luke still lives in Hope with his wife, Lauren (Steinert) Peterson'20, and the couple volunteers with H.O.P.E.

Preserving historic properties such as the Cooper and Crusen Houses is "one of the best things humans can do for legacy," Luke says. "With warehouses going up all around us and the landscape changing so drastically, there's a certain peace of mind in knowing that some things are here to stay—that these historic properties will remain part of the community for generations to come."

For more information on Help Our Preservation Effort or to volunteer, visit hopepreservation.org.

Clues from the Ground

During the spring and summer, archaeologists from Hunter Research of Trenton, a Mead & Hunt company, conducted excavations around the historic Cooper and Crusen Houses in Hope, New Jersey.



Their findings included hundreds of pieces of ceramic, vessel, and window glass, animal bones, smoking-pipe stems and bowls, and corroded nails, says Jim Lee, vice president and principal archaeologist at Hunter Research.

In May, archaeologists excavated 30 pits around the Cooper House, each about 18 inches in diameter and up to 3 feet deep. The dig yielded 363 artifacts.



"Generally, the artifacts suggest occupation dating back to a little older than the supposed construction date of the existing Cooper House (1770–1785), but they may be artifacts from other nearby 18th-century properties," Lee says.

Excavation was conducted at the Crusen House in July, when 33 pits were dug and 412 artifacts uncovered. Discovered during the dig was a cut stone block against the south foundation of the house, likely indicating a support footing for a former porch, says Joshua Butchko, a laboratory manager with Mead & Hunt.

Additionally, a pit dug in a "stone ring" in the backyard revealed a nearly 1½-foot-deep deposit of coal ash and clamshells, but it's unclear whether the stone ring was a firepit or a well, Butchko says.

The artifacts are being sorted and cleaned by Hunter's lab team and will eventually be returned to the H.O.P.E. organization.



John Gorka '80 strums his guitar on the lawn of Comenius Hall.

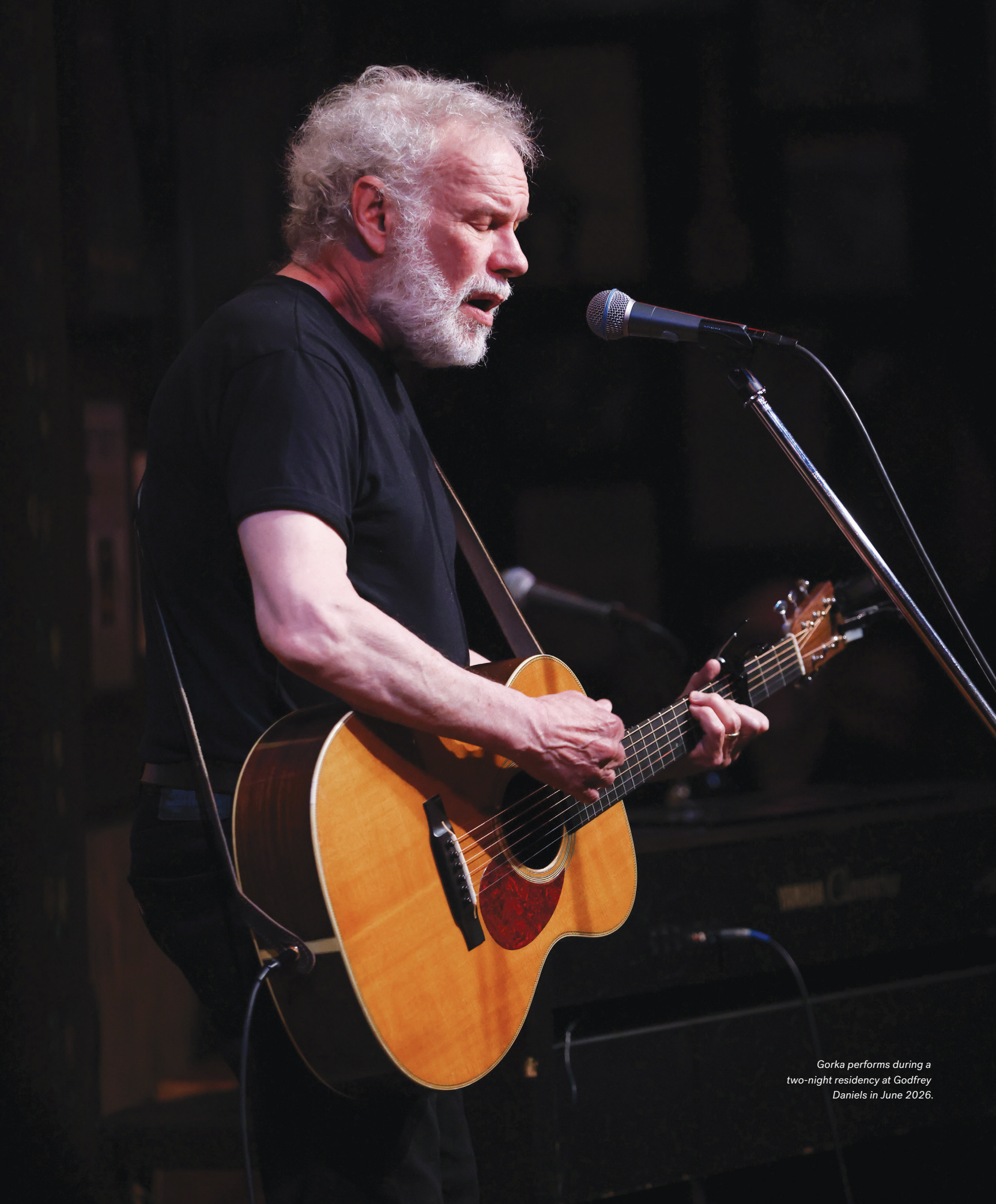


OUT OF THE VALLEY AND BACK AGAIN

FOLK SINGER-SONGWRITER JOHN GORKA '80 FOUND HIS VOICE AT MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY AND GODFREY DANIELS, LAUNCHING A RENOWNED CAREER THAT'S TAKEN HIM AROUND THE WORLD.

BY JODI DUCKETT ★ PHOTOS BY ASHLI TRUCHON NOVAK

ILLUSTRATION BY EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM



Gorka performs during a two-night residency at Godfrey Daniels in June 2026.



In 2026 Godfrey Daniels celebrated 50 years as a music venue on East Fourth Street in Bethlehem.

DURING THE FIRST OF TWO SOLD-OUT SHOWS LAST JUNE AT BETHLEHEM'S GODFREY DANIELS LIVE MUSIC LISTENING ROOM,

folk singer-songwriter John Gorka'80 reflected on his first day at Moravian—and the beginning of an acclaimed musical career that would lead to 17 solo albums and bring his songs to audiences around the world.

"I went to Moravian College, and on the very first night of the very first day, they had a freshman orientation coffeehouse. I had never played at a coffeehouse before. I didn't even drink coffee then."

Gorka, his signature black T-shirt a striking contrast to his frizzy white hair, beard, and mustache, pauses and flashes a mischievous smile. The audience laughs on cue.

"I played banjo and guitar and sang. Another guy [Russ Rentler'80] played mandolin. We saw the beginnings of a bluegrass band."

Gorka often recounts his life-changing years in Bethlehem when he takes the stage at Godfrey Daniels, the renowned venue near Moravian that he credits with helping launch his career. It was there that he met musicians who inspired him and friends who encouraged him.

Gorka arrived at Moravian in the summer of 1976, a New Jersey native with a banjo in hand and a desire to expand his intellect through the study of philosophy and history.

That first night's event in the cafeteria spawned the Razzy Dazzy Spasm Band—named, oddly, after a New Orleans group some consider to be the first jazz band. Gorka's band performed frequently in the Lehigh Valley and set the stage for his future.

Gorka's career as a musician has now spanned 50 years. In 1991, *Rolling Stone* magazine called him "the preeminent male singer-songwriter of the New Folk Movement." He is known for his expressive baritone voice and well-crafted songs that explore our lives and times with empathy, intelligence, critical awareness, hope—and, often, humor.

He writes about places and people while musing on philosophical and social issues.

"I tend to be more interested in the people on the edges of society than the more prominent people," he says. "I hope my music helps people feel less alone."

Much of Gorka's work is inspired by his years in the Lehigh Valley and at Godfrey Daniels, an acclaimed venue on East Fourth Street visited by folk musicians from around the world. It opened the same year that Gorka started as a freshman at Moravian, and marked its 50th anniversary on March 19.

"I Know," the title song on Gorka's first album, released in 1987, begins: "I know where the cops hang out / When I come home late at night." It's a reference to nights jamming with musicians at Godfrey's and driving back to his apartment.

"Out of the Valley," the autobiographical title song of his 1994 record, offers this reflection:

> You don't know if you're good enough
> You can bet your dreams will be battered
> So just go after what you love.
>
> They talk of getting out of town
> This little city made of steel
> Take a giant step and don't look down
> Because I do know how you feel.
>
> They talk of getting out of the valley
> Out of the valley here below
> Maybe ride the river and run off
> 'Cause there's no place left to go.

Then there's "That's How Legends Are Made," from Gorka's critically acclaimed second album, *Land of the Bottom Line* (1990). It tells of his experience at Godfrey Daniels:

> I worked at a place
> Where the bands came through
> Some of them ran false
> And some rang true
> I'd stick around
> After they played
> To see how legends were made.

THE BEGINNING

Gorka grew up in a working-class family in Colonia, New Jersey, the youngest of three kids. His mom was a homemaker; his dad ran a printing press at a tag and label factory. Gorka remembers his dad bringing home samples of tags for tea bags, which were printed with wise sayings.

"I was struck by the power of words," he says. "How much impact one phrase could have."

Gorka was always curious and motivated, but a bit shy. He says he liked to read and to explore rocks and fossils and coins. The captain of his high school soccer team, he was also a good student and graduated 12th in his class of 500.

And he loved music. His father played drums and jammed with his uncles at home; one uncle played fiddle and accordion. John's first instrument was the viola. It was actually his grandfather's violin, restrung as a viola.

Gorka says he was drawn to the sounds of "Dueling Banjos" from the movie *Deliverance* and Earl Scruggs's "Ballad of Jed Clampett" from *The Beverly Hillbillies*. So he bought a banjo and picked up the guitar soon after.

"I wrote a fan letter to Earl Scruggs and got a catalog back to order a book to teach you how to play," he recalls.

Like most teenagers, Gorka went to concerts. His first was the Earl Scruggs Review. He saw Pete Seeger in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, at its blueberry festival.

Gorka says he listened to his brother's records and was drawn to the acoustic music of singer-songwriters such as Jim Croce and James Taylor.

Gorka started writing songs as soon as he took up the banjo, and found opportunities to play at school and at church.

"The reason why I started writing songs is I wasn't happy with the way I expressed myself through normal speech and



"I WAS STRUCK BY THE POWER OF WORDS. HOW MUCH IMPACT ONE PHRASE COULD HAVE." —JOHN GORKA '80



Gorka poses in front of Comenius Hall before a performance at Godfrey Daniels this past June.

NOTES FROM JOHN GORKA '80

What's one song you wish you had written?
"Wichita Lineman," by Jimmy Webb.

What's one lesson from Moravian that you still carry with you?
There is always more to learn. Learning is a lifetime activity.

What piece of advice would you give to today's aspiring musicians?
I usually quote Jackson Browne, who sang in his 1977 song "Running on Empty," "Gotta do what you can just to keep your love alive / Trying not to confuse it with what you do to survive."

Vinyl, CDs, or streaming?
CDs and streaming.

What's a favorite memory from your time on Moravian's campus?
Bringing the bluesman B. L. Cripple to a coffeehouse at the HUB.

Besides your guitar, what's one item you always carry in your guitar case?
A pack of song lyrics.

If you weren't a singer-songwriter, what would you be?
I would have liked being an archaeologist or a paleontologist.

conversation," he says. "That's still true. The need to write songs is still there."

Gorka attended Moravian on the recommendation of a friend from the high school soccer team. "I liked the size of Moravian. Not being a really outgoing person, I figured a smaller school would be a better fit."

It was a good fit. Gorka says he enjoyed college and received a "well-rounded" education. He liked his professors and went on several life-changing trips with them, including to Washington, DC, for then-President Jimmy Carter's inauguration, to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, to Spain and Italy, and to Nashville and Memphis. He did work-study with Winfred Kohls, a professor of history, and attended concerts at Moravian, recalling Steve Martin, Livingston Taylor, and John Raitt, Bonnie Raitt's father.

Gorka pursued music passionately. As a sophomore, he took over programming for the coffeehouse. He practiced in the basement of Clewell Hall, where he lived on South Campus. Gorka and Rentler played at the Catholic Folk Mass on campus on Saturday nights.

Says Rentler, another New Jersey native who now lives in the Allentown area: "I didn't know how amazing he was until we were both in the Folk Mass. John did a special song during Communion. My jaw dropped and hit the ground. His voice was incredible—deep and pure."

Razzy Dazzy Spasm Band flourished, with Gorka on banjo, guitar, and vocals; Rentler on mandolin; and another fellow student, Doug Anderson '80, on guitar and vocals. Richard Shindell, a fellow New Jersey native, was in the band when he attended Moravian from 1978 to 1980. Shindell, who now lives in Argentina, also went on to have a successful career as a folk musician.

"John was an amazing banjo player. And his heart was in songwriting," says Rentler. "I'm still in awe. He made it. We all wanted to make it at one point."

Gorka thinks it was during his second semester that he first visited Godfrey Daniels. He tagged along with Anderson, who wanted to talk with Dave Fry, a singer-songwriter who cofounded Godfrey's, about a booking for a friend. The coffeehouse had been open only a year. What Gorka found was a revelation.

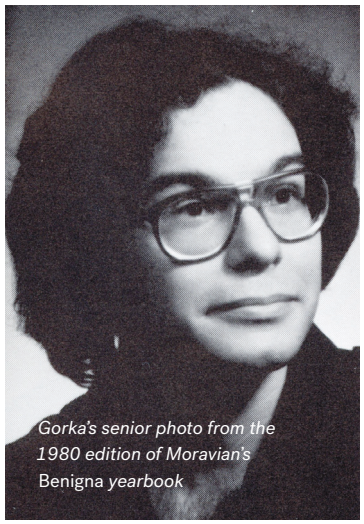
"The lights were on, and people were gathered in the front room making music," he says. "I looked at the pictures on the walls and thought, *Wow, this is what Greenwich Village was like in the 1960s*. I felt like I'd discovered a whole world of music I didn't know existed."

Gorka quickly became a regular at the club. He volunteered as an usher, a sound man, and an emcee. He played at and hosted open mics.

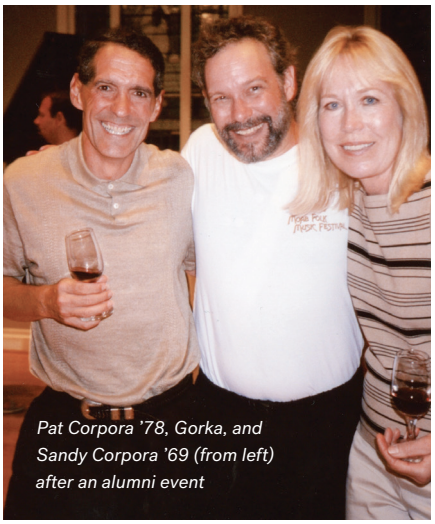
"I saw people who were doing what I realized I wanted to do," he says. "The people I saw at Godfrey Daniels were making a living. I felt like I would love to be able to be a person who does this."

Fry recalls those days vividly.

"I remember him coming to open mics consistently, and at every appearance he would have new songs scrawled in his spiral-bound ratty notebook, and he would flop it down on the chair next to him and deliver these wonderful songs—a lot of them focusing on Bethlehem characters. The songs were real and relatable. It was astounding, and of course the rest of the people in the open mic would go, 'I have to follow that?'"



Gorka's senior photo from the 1980 edition of Moravian's Benigna yearbook



Pat Corpora '78, Gorka, and Sandy Corpora '69 (from left) after an alumni event



In September 1998, Gorka performed on campus. He is pictured after the concert with Bertie Knisely, former director of alumni relations.

In June 1979, Gorka and the Razzy Dazzys opened at Godfrey's for a Greenwich Village–based singer-songwriter named Jack Hardy. Hardy became a mentor, and Gorka became a part of his songwriting dinner circles in New York City, frequented by all the rising folk music artists.

"He's the first person I met who wrote songs on a schedule," says Gorka. "His schedule was to finish a song every week. I loved the idea. I thought you just waited for inspiration to strike. I found that if you put yourself on a schedule, you come up with more songs and better songs. After the first year, I ended up with 16 songs."

When Gorka was a senior, he and Fry organized a Floating Folk Festival that played at all the local colleges. Razzy Dazzy was on the bill.

After Gorka graduated—with honors—he played music and worked various jobs to pay the rent. For more than three years, he delivered flowers. For a time, he worked as an assistant editor of *Sing Out!* magazine, an influential music publication based in Easton. That provided him with tickets to lots of music festivals.

At one point, in 1982, he had no place to live and found a temporary home in the basement of Godfrey's.

His 1990 song "Land of the Bottom Line," the title song from his second album, reflects his mood at that time: "My fortune was as sure as the wind / But I was free to wonder / And time was on my hands / It was mine to burn and to bend."

Gorka says he first performed solo as a headliner at Godfrey's in 1987, when his first record was released. He recalls Shawn Colvin, an internationally known folk singer with whom he has collaborated, doing a guest set.

Asked how it went, Gorka responds, "Performing was always terrifying. It was another night of terror."

Gorka met many artists at Godfrey Daniels who opened doors for him. After he opened for Nanci Griffith, she recommended he enter the New Folk Competition at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas, a launching point for new talent. Gorka won and opened the festival in 1985.

Says Gorka: "There were no big breaks, just lots of little ones."

THE MUSIC

Onstage—and in private—Gorka is reserved, a bit timid, and full of nervous energy.

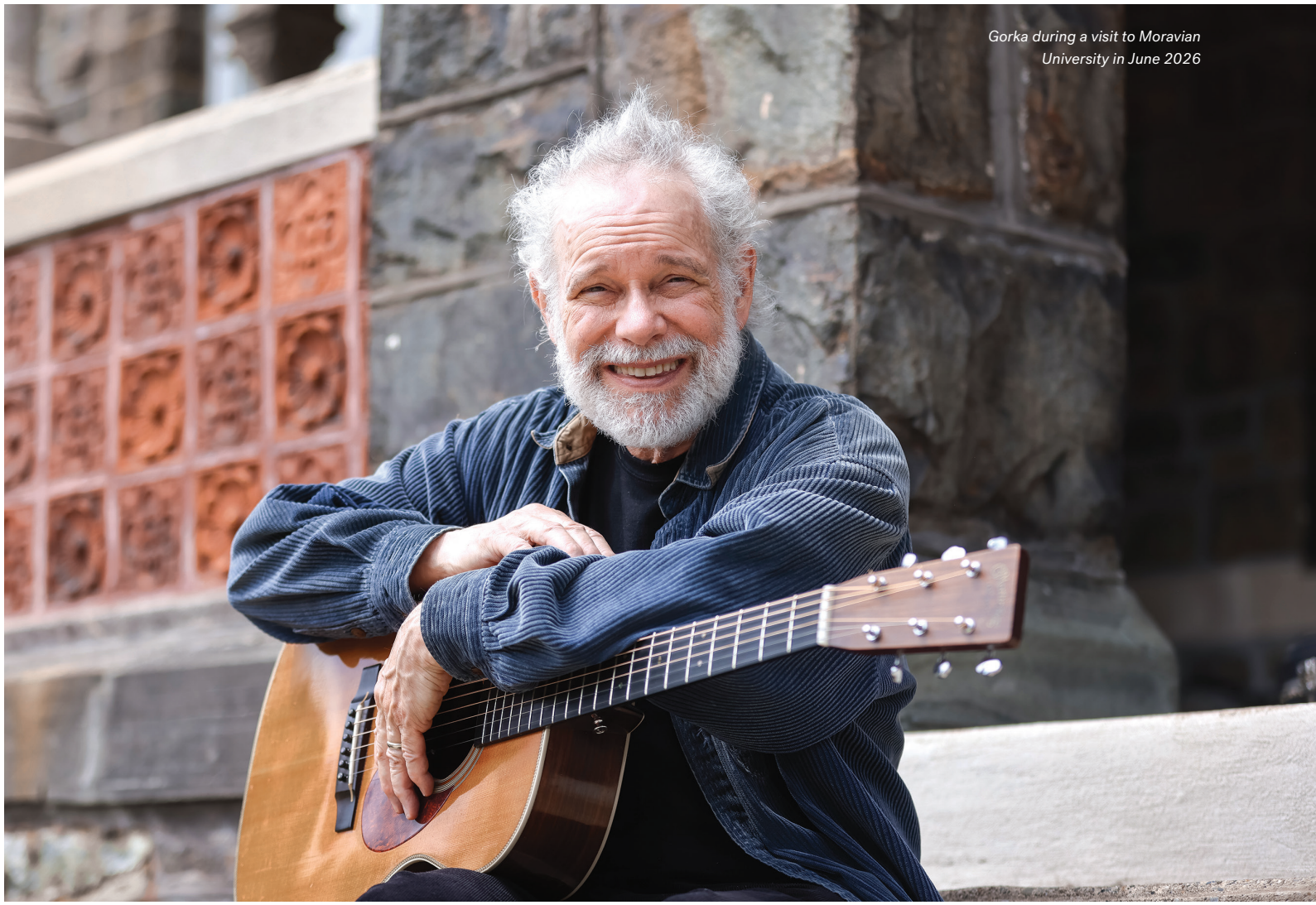
"I think there's a point where you make that nervousness work for you. You don't think of it as nervousness; you think of it as excitement. Nervousness can add excitement to the performance," he says.

Gorka says he was always driven to perform, but never entirely comfortable doing it. He says he has to "come to terms" with his own discomfort. "You have to keep showing up."

Gorka writes and performs mostly solo. But he sometimes collaborates on songs and usually has guest musicians on his albums. When those guests are singers, beautiful harmonies emerge.

"THE PEOPLE I SAW AT GODFREY DANIELS WERE MAKING A LIVING. I FELT LIKE I WOULD LOVE TO BE ABLE TO BE A PERSON WHO DOES THIS." —JOHN GORKA '80

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



Gorka during a visit to Moravian University in June 2026

His list of collaborators is impressive. Among them are country music superstars Kathy Mattea and Mary Chapin Carpenter, folk superstars Susan Werner and Patty Larkin, guitarist Leo Kottke, and bluegrass virtuoso Jerry Douglas. Gorka also continues to collaborate on occasion with Rentler and Anderson. Rentler plays mandolin on Gorka's newest record, *unentitled*.

In 2010, Gorka was part of the folk supergroup Red Horse, with Eliza Gilkyson and Lucy Kaplansky, label mates on Red House Records. They released an album and toured extensively.

At his June concert at Godfrey Daniels, Gorka, strumming his 28-year-old Martin guitar, a gift from the renowned Nazareth-based company, opened with Pete Seeger's "Hammer Song," a classic protest sing-along about justice, freedom, and love. Gorka says he's not big on sing-alongs but thought it appropriate for this moment. "The forces of darkness want to make you feel alone," he says.

"Hello, my name is John. I will be your singer this evening," he says to the audience when "Hammer" ends. It's typical Gorka, a little awkward, a little funny, and all heart.

"To the new people, thank you for coming. To the people who came before, I owe you my living."

He plays for about two hours, telling stories sprinkled with self-deprecating comments. He loosens up the audience further with his 1991 crowd-pleaser "I'm from New Jersey," a silly song with a stop-and-start cadence that leaves space for the inevitable laughter.

I'm from New Jersey
I don't expect too much.
If the world ended today
I would adjust.

I'm from New Jersey
No, I don't talk that way
I watched too much TV
When I was young.

I'm from New Jersey
My mom's Italian
I've read those mafia books
We don't belong.

As is usually the case, the set list featured lots of older favorites, including the comical "People My Age," the reflective "Land of the Bottom Line," and the romantic "I Saw a Stranger with Your Hair" and "Love Is Our Cross to Bear."

These days, Gorka's concerts feature songs from *unentitled*, a hopeful perspective on our troubled times. On its own, the title says a lot about Gorka's humble view of life.

He shares "Favorite Place," a catchy, upbeat commentary on a songwriter's life: "My favorite place to be is in the middle of a song / When it isn't completely right, but it's not hopelessly wrong."

Gorka also offers up "Particle & Wave (Goodness in the World)," a declaration of both dissatisfaction and optimism, with the anthemic chorus line "Never stop believing / There is goodness in the world."

> You can't beat fear with fear
> You can't beat hate with hate
> Only love can do that
> It's not too late
> No, it's not too late
> No, it's not too late
> Though justice seems to hesitate
> It's not too late.

Says Gorka: "I think music has a healing effect, and people need to hear the truth. Despair is not an option. There's no hope without action."

NOW AND TOMORROW

Gorka returns to Godfrey Daniels about twice a year, flying in from Minnesota, where he has lived since his 1996 marriage to his wife, Laurie, a writer and poet.

It's the afternoon before a concert, and Gorka is sitting at a table in the 90-seat listening room, flooded with emotion about this place that influenced his life so much. It doesn't look that different than it did 50 years ago, with concert posters, photographs, and other memorabilia covering every inch of the wood-paneled walls.

"It's so full of memories, it's overwhelming," he says.

"It's right here that I met Stan Rogers," Gorka recalls about the December 1980 concert by the acclaimed folk singer. "It was my first time as an emcee, and I was pretty starstruck. I was such a big fan of the man." That night, Gorka asked Rogers to play his "Harris and the Mare," a dramatic narrative poem that Gorka covers on *unentitled*.

Gorka points to the back wall, where a balalaika hangs atop a profusion of photographs, including one of Peter Tork, a member of the Monkees. Gorka says he bought the stringed instrument in the Soviet Union on one of his winter semester trips. He gave it to Godfrey's, he thinks, because he couldn't transport it at some point. In the lobby is a mandolin Gorka acquired in Spain.

Looking around, he says, "There are posters of shows I was here for. That's about as good as it gets."

In 2022, the Razzy Dazzy Spasm Band had a joyful reunion at Godfrey's, with Gorka, Rentler, and Anderson. Both Rentler and Anderson have continued to perform solo or with other groups. Sitting in place of Shindell was Alex Radus, a local musician and attorney who is Anderson's nephew.

Gorka invites Rentler to share the stage with him from time to time. In fact, Rentler is scheduled to perform with him in December, when Gorka returns for two shows. And Gorka's folk singer son, Joe, made his own Godfrey Daniels debut in March.

Gorka returned to Godfrey's on March 19 to celebrate the renowned listening room's 50th anniversary. Fry joined him onstage.

Fry calls Gorka "Godfrey's native son. He takes a piece of Godfrey's out with him in every show. His vulnerability, his honesty, and his creative talent as a songwriter and performer are all integral to what happens at Godfrey's and what sets Godfrey's apart from other folk clubs.

"You can't come across cocky and arrogant on a stage like Godfrey Daniels. You've got to be real on this stage," says Fry.

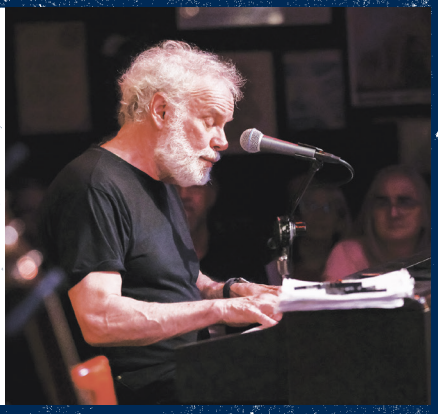
Godfrey's truly is Gorka's second home, but, interestingly, he says he's more nervous playing the club than anywhere else. "Because I know everyone. It's much easier playing for strangers."

At 68, Gorka may have slowed down a little, but he's still excited about his music and is working on a new record.

"I don't know how many more records," he says. "I imagine I will continue to write songs. Beyond that, continue the discovery. Find out what I'm capable of, what more I can learn. Not knowing is part of the attraction for the future. The fear and the hope.

"I feel like I've been one of the lucky ones in terms of being able to make a living and work with a lot of great people along the way."

John Gorka will hold a two-night residency at Godfrey Daniels at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 2, and Thursday, December 3. For more information about Gorka and his tour dates, visit johngorka.com.



ALUMNI

The Future is Brighter

Past and present presidents of Moravian University's Alumni Association reflect on the generosity, pride, and shared commitment that helped the Lighting the *Way* campaign achieve more than $100 million for students.



"Reaching and surpassing the $100 million goal is an incredible accomplishment, but what means the most to me is what it makes possible for the generations of Moravian students who will follow us. Every scholarship, new experience, and investment in technology or campus spaces helps ensure those students are prepared not only to succeed, but to carry Moravian's values and reputation forward.

"Serving as Alumni Association president gave me an even greater appreciation for the strength of this community and for the responsibility we share to leave Moravian stronger than we found it. Lighting the *Way* does exactly that. It gives future students the tools, opportunities, and support they need to continue making all of us proud for years to come. I am grateful to everyone who helped turn that responsibility into a historic accomplishment."

—George R. Wacker '03
President 2020–22

"It is hard to put into words how special it is to have been part of Moravian's Lighting the *Way* campaign as an alumna and past president of the Alumni Association Board. From helping champion the association's largest gift in its history as treasurer to celebrating the groundbreaking of the new HUB and reaching the $75 million campaign goal during my time as president, I have had a front-row seat to an extraordinary chapter in Moravian's history.

"As a proud member of the Class of 2014, I know that Moravian has given me so much, and it has been incredibly meaningful to give back and help create new opportunities for the students following in our footsteps. Seeing the campaign reach its $100 million milestone is a testament to what is possible when the Moravian community comes together with passion, generosity, and a shared belief in our university's future. I am so proud to have played a small part in this historic campaign as Moravian continues to invest boldly in the experiences, opportunities, and successes of today's students and generations of Hounds to come."

—Angela DelGrosso Stein '14
President 2022–24





"As Alumni Board president at Moravian University, I was thrilled to celebrate the extraordinary success of the Lighting the *Way* campaign as it surpassed $100 million. Throughout the campaign, I encouraged fellow alumni, students, and board members to give generously, and I tried to lead by example by giving an early gift and participating on the first day of the annual giving day challenge. I was also proud to support the effort by agreeing to record any advertisements needed to help spread the word.

"This campaign far exceeded expectations, helping make possible the new HUB and creating lasting benefits for Moravian students for years to come. I feel truly privileged to have played a role in such a meaningful and transformative effort for the university community."

—Jennifer Jimenez '14, G'24
President 2024–26

"As I step into the role of president of the Moravian University Alumni Association Board of Directors, I look back on the Lighting the *Way* campaign with pride, knowing that our future is in good hands. Having served on the board in various roles during the campaign when construction of the new Haupert Union Building was underway, I saw firsthand how this campaign directly impacted our students and alumni. I was able to see in real time what our community's generosity could do and the future that it was building. Speaking with students on campus, I found they were excited and proud of the university; they shared a deep sense of care. That's what this milestone is truly about: being part of the caring community that is Moravian. I was honored to be a part of this campaign, and I look forward to participating in the next one!"

—Christopher Ossont '15
Current president





2025–2026 Annual Report

This year's report features stories of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and supporters who help carry forward Moravian University's legacy of opportunity, accessibility, and impact. Together, we have reached historic milestones, expanded innovative academic offerings, and deepened our commitment to student success.
Learn more at moravian.edu/giving/annual-report/25-26.

A Shining Legacy

After eight years, Moravian's Lighting the *Way* campaign wrapped up in June 2026, far surpassing its $75 million goal. Here's a look at the numbers.

$102.1 million
TOTAL

$53.9 million
FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

$18.8 million
FOR THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

$29.4 million
FOR SPACES, TECHNOLOGY, AND RESOURCES

TOTAL DONORS: **13,460**

NEW UNIVERSITY DONORS: **7,410**

NEW SEMINARY DONORS: **152**

ALUMNI WHO GAVE TO THE CAMPAIGN: **6,510**

ALUMNI WHO VOLUNTEERED DURING THE CAMPAIGN: **624**

NEW SCHOLARSHIPS CREATED FOR UNIVERSITY AND THEOLOGY STUDENTS: **124**

SPORTS CREATED: **3**
Men's and women's swimming; women's golf

CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS: **29**
Included enhancing academic, athletic, community dining, and student-life spaces.

UNIVERSITY AND THEOLOGY STUDENTS SUPPORTED: **Countless**



Class Notes

The editors of *Moravian University Magazine* publish all class notes that we receive. We reserve the right to edit for space or style. Some information may appear only online at *moravian.edu/classnotes*. If your class year or a named correspondent is not listed online, email your information to alumni@moravian.edu or mail to Class Notes, Alumni Engagement Office, Moravian University, 1200 Main St., Bethlehem, PA 18018.

Deadline for Submissions

Spring 2027 issue: January 18, 2027
Summer 2027 issue: May 17, 2027

Photo Policy

Please send us your image as a jpg file at 300 dpi or higher. For photos taken with a smartphone, send the largest image file. We publish one photo per wedding or birth. We welcome photos of gatherings of alumni.

For More Information

moravian.edu/classnotes

1985

Change, Culture, and Campus Milestones

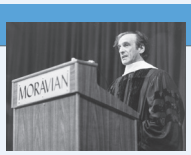
Nelson Mandela rejected a conditional offer of freedom, becoming an enduring symbol of resistance against apartheid. Blockbuster films including *Back to the Future*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* defined 1980s pop culture. At Moravian University, renowned journalist David Brinkley and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel visited campus, reflecting the university's commitment to familiarizing students with influential voices and global issues.

January



WORLD
South African President P. W. Botha offers to free Nelson Mandela if he denounces the apartheid protest across South Africa. Mandela rejects the offer.

February



MORAVIAN MOMENT
Elie Wiesel, a survivor of Auschwitz, becomes the second recipient of the Comenius Medallion.

1966

Jane Wolfe '66 and **Peter Wolfe '73** are avid birders and log their sightings on eBird, a free global database run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

1968

Ginger Stage is blessed with five grandchildren, a wonderful church, and a wonderful neighborhood. She still does occasional speaking engagements and enjoys travel and her German shepherd.

1969

V. Ann McNell recently moved from Maryland to Indiana to be closer to family. She found a lot of Moravian memorabilia in the process of downsizing. It was fun to remember those days!

1971

Erma L. Hoover planned to see the solar eclipse in Iceland this past August. It was Iceland's first total solar eclipse since 1954.

Johns Hopkins University Press recently published *Connecting Emotional Intelligence to the Online Classroom* (2025), by authors **Monita Leavitt** and Kirsten Stein, with a foreword by Ljiljana Krneta.

1972

Virginia M. Stanglein is an active volunteer in numerous Lehigh Valley theater and social service organizations.

1976

Betsy Ann Stahl-Worthen is the grandparent of a graduate of Moravian's speech-language pathology master's program. She has another grandchild who is also considering applying to the university for the 2027–28 academic year.

Marie A. Accunzo retired from a career that spanned more than 40 years in financial services and financial planning. During that time, she was fortunate to experience living and working (with American Express) in Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Australia. After returning to the United States, she became a private wealth advisor. Now in retirement, she enjoys traveling, playing

Upcoming Events

Additional details can be found at moravian.edu/alumni/events.

NOVEMBER 19, 2026
Evening on Main
Pre-holiday shopping event in Bethlehem

DECEMBER 3, 2026
Young Alumni Happy Hour

DECEMBER 4, 2026
MTS Alumni Day
Celebrate the Moravian Theological Seminary.

FEBRUARY 5, 2027
Athletics Hall of Fame

MARCH 25, 2027
Founders Week Tea
Enjoy tea with First Lady Lea Grigsby P'22, P'26, P'29 as we celebrate Moravian's founding.

MARCH 26, 2027
Founders Forum
This symposium celebrates Moravian women and provides continuing professional development for students, alumnae, and friends of Moravian.

MARCH 30, 2027
Day of Giving
Celebrate our 285-year legacy and show the world what it means to be a Greyhound during our 12th annual campus- and community-wide fundraising event.

APRIL 9, 2027
Shining Lights
The Moravian University Alumni and Community Awards

Illuminate Moravian
The Alumni Learning Collective

This new, lifelong learning program is designed to keep Moravian alumni connected, curious, and inspired. Through engaging learning opportunities led by expert alumni and faculty, Illuminate Moravian invites alumni to explore timely topics, deepen personal and professional knowledge, and reconnect with the Moravian community.

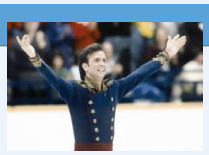
Upcoming Illuminate Sessions

- Young alumni, November 24, 2026
- Seminary, January 14, 2027
- General session, January 20, 2027
- Golden Greyhounds, March 8, 2027
- Seminary, March 10, 2027
- Young alumni, March 23, 2027

March



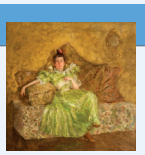
MUSIC
Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie write the single "We Are the World" to raise money for the victims of a famine in Africa.



SPORTS
Brian Boitano wins his first US Men's Figure Skating Championship. He went on to win three more consecutive national titles.



FILM
The Breakfast Club debuts, starring Judd Nelson, Emilio Estevez, Ally Sheedy, Molly Ringwald, and Anthony Michael Hall.



MORAVIAN MOMENT
Priscilla Payne Hurd donates *In the Studio*, a 19th-century painting by Susan Macdowell Eakins, to the university's art gallery.

A Legacy of Brotherhood



Former members of the Moravian University chapter of Beta Lambda Chi gather in the Haupert Union Building this past summer. Photo by Nick Chismar '20

William H. "Rick" Eberts Jr. '73 cherishes memories of his time at Moravian University: making the varsity tennis team, winning a team academic competition, and finding a true mentor in political science professor and tennis coach Tim Mead. But the most enduring take-aways are the friendships he forged in Beta Lambda Chi.

After raising more than $190,000, Beta Lambda Chi alumni are creating a legacy space in the Haupert Union Building that will bear the fraternity's name and serve current and future students. It will occupy Room 302, located prominently off the HUB's main stairwell.

"Our fraternity was an integral part of our experience for so many of us," says Eberts. "It was a meeting place where a group of guys who knew very little about one another developed a strong bond that only continued to grow after graduation."

Fellow Beta **Bob Mende '74** echoed that sentiment when he joined with nearly 35 of his brothers for breakfast in the HUB in late August. "My Moravian education was the making of me," he says. "It helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my life. I met my late wife here, and I met the best friends I've ever had here."

Long after Eberts, Mende, and their brothers graduated, the Beta Lambda Chi fraternity chapter lost its privileges on the Moravian campus. But the group's bond endured, and many share a conviction that the Beta Lambda Chi name should live on in a meaningful way on campus. Their space will support student organizations, leadership development, and community-building.

The seeds of a project to accomplish that were planted during the rededication of the HUB in fall 2025 after Moravian Director of Leadership Society Giving and Impact John Andreadis provided a detailed tour.

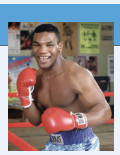
Says former Beta **John Harting '71**, "The Beta that I was a part of would add so much opportunity for men on campus today. I feel strongly that it is important that everyone associated with the university know that, at one time, there was a fraternity here that made a difference and added to the quality of student life." *—Linda Harbrecht*

1985

March

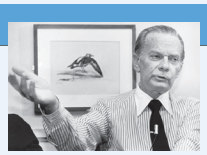


MORAVIAN MOMENT
A microcomputer lab launches on the first floor of Hamilton Hall.



SPORTS
Heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson debuts, knocking out Hector Mercedes at 1:47 of the first round at Empire State Plaza Convention Center.

April



MORAVIAN MOMENT
David Brinkley, a 40-year veteran of *ABC News*, gives a lecture at Johnston Hall.



FILM
Roger Miller's Tony Award–winning musical, *Big River*, based on Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, opens at Eugene O'Neill Theatre in New York City.

golf, volunteering at a local church, and spending time with her daughter.

1978

Judith A. Colt taught music for 10 years in Pennsylvania and New Jersey and then received a master's degree in special education. She taught in the Council Rock School District for 20 years before becoming a special education supervisor for 10 years. She also taught in the master's program at Delaware Valley University for 12 years.

1979

Lyle T. Sara retired after 42 years in the distribution business of building materials after holding many roles along the way, including branch manager, New Jersey assistant regional manager, and commercial roofing/waterproofing sales manager. He is currently enjoying retirement near the Jersey shore, playing golf, cooking, discovering new cuisines and restaurants, and still taking in some shows and concerts at various venues.

1987

Jeffery R. Frekot's son, Jarod Frekot, graduated from Moravian University in 2021 with a bachelor of science in computer science and in 2026 with a master's in cybersecurity.

2011

Suzanne Diehl released her debut romance novel, *Checking You Out*, on July 14, published under her pen name, Miranda Reese. Set in a small-town public library in 1998, the book centers on the intersection of tradition and modern technology through the story of an analog-loving librarian and a tech consultant navigating change.

2013

Kyle R. Stackhouse was selected for the US Navy's Chief Petty Officer Class 133 on July 10. His pinning ceremony was held on September 12. At the time of the pinning, Stackhouse was expected to earn the title of chief petty officer as a gunner's mate. He was previously honored as Navy Cargo Handling Battalion Eight's Sailor of the Year for Fiscal Year 2025.

2020

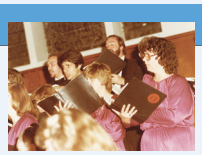
Brianna Suvire recently published her debut novel, *Crossing Paths*, a character-driven contemporary tale that explores grief, healing, identity, and human connection through the lives of two strangers whose paths become unexpectedly intertwined.

Dr. Margaret Qiumin Jones followed in the footsteps of alum **Michael Magee '82** by attending his graduate school, the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy at Saint Joseph's University. Jones earned her doctor of pharmacy degree there last year, and this past June began a psychiatric pharmacy specialty residency program at the William S. Middleton Memorial Veterans' Hospital in Madison, Wisconsin. She is now a provider and prescriber to veterans across Wisconsin and northern Illinois. "I have pursued and achieved my dream of becoming a psychiatric pharmacist in part thanks to my Moravian University neuroscience advisor, Cecilia M. Fox, and alumnus Michael Magee, who introduced me to the realm of pharmacy through Moravian's Coffee and Connections program," she says.

2025

Julianna Lynn Thompson started working as a paraprofessional at a private special education school, where she's been able to apply much of what she learned through her psychology courses at Moravian. At the same time, she has been focusing on reconnecting with herself and prioritizing her mental health and overall well-being. She has also begun exploring graduate programs as she plans for the next step in her education and career. "Looking ahead, I hope to start traveling internationally and continue broadening my personal and professional experiences," she says.

May



MORAVIAN MOMENT
To celebrate its 126th anniversary, the Moravian church in Egg Harbor, New Jersey, invites the Moravian College Choir to perform.

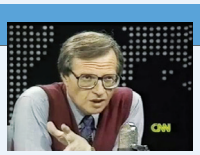


WORLD
President Ronald Reagan declares a national emergency, enforcing a total trade embargo against Nicaragua.



NATION
Reagan awards US Air Force Brigadier General Jimmy Stewart the Presidential Medal of Freedom, recognizing Stewart's acting career and military service.

June



FILM
Larry King Live debuts on CNN, airing each weeknight through December 2010.



Maggie S. Riegel '10 graduated from Drexel University's PhD program in communication, culture, and media in June 2026.



Bob Frey '03 and **Jeff Meila '03** played baseball at Moravian College from 2000 to 2003. They both also enjoy careers as educators. Frey and Meila were chosen to umpire the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) 4A Baseball Championship at Penn State's Medlar Field at Lubrano Park on June 11, 2026. From left are Frey, Meila, Mike Groody, and Jeff Erie.



Former Beta Lambda Chi brothers **Barry Scheinberg '68** and **Jeff Gernsheimer '68** are pictured during a trip to Iceland.



Don Kemmerer '99 retired as the director of the Bethlehem Municipal Band after 36 years. In recognition of his dedication, Kemmerer was presented with a citation from Bethlehem Mayor J. William Reynolds and a plaque naming him director emeritus. Pictured are Don and his wife, **Barbara Doyle Kemmerer '76**.



North Myrtle Beach provided an opportunity for former classmates to catch up and regale their wives with stories of Moravian University and Omicron Gamma Omega. From left are **Barry Vernon '73, S'76** and his wife, Lynne, with Kathy Parseghian and her husband, **Mark Parseghian '75**.



Susan Hyer (Susiehyer) '76 won the Landscape Award of Distinction at the Oil Painters of America Exhibition this year. The Art Center of Western Colorado in Grand Junction will host a solo exhibition of her work in March–April 2027.

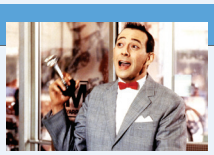
1985

July



FILM
Back to the Future is released in theaters. Directed by Robert Zemeckis, it stars Christopher Lloyd and Michael J. Fox.

August



FILM
The comedy film *Pee-wee's Big Adventure*, starring Paul Reubens, is released.

September

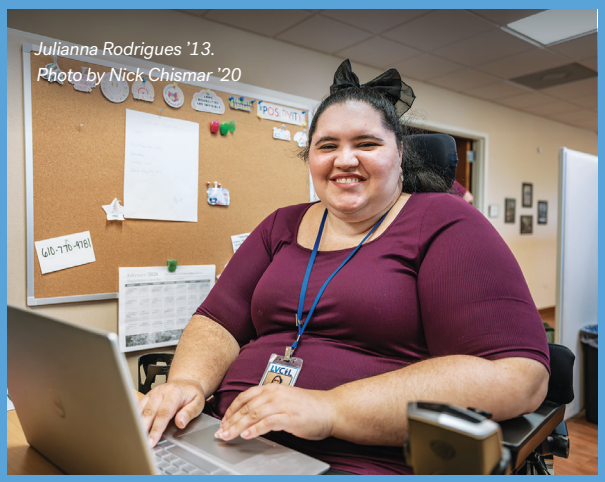


MORAVIAN MOMENT
In response to an increase in theft, Moravian officials allocate $85,000 to be used for campus security.



TECH
The *Super Mario Bros.* video game, created by Shigeru Miyamoto, debuts in Japan.

Champion for Change



Julianna Rodrigues '13. Photo by Nick Chismar '20

Growing up in Bethlehem, **Julianna Rodrigues '13** was constantly on the move, filling her days with sports, dance, and band. Everything changed in high school when she fractured her foot. Despite multiple surgeries, the injury left her with lasting weakness.

"I started having difficulties going up and down the stairs," Rodrigues says. "I couldn't run. I couldn't get up from a seated position, and even sitting was difficult," she says.

It wasn't until Rodrigues was a student at Moravian University, majoring in political science with a minor in sociology, that she was diagnosed with limb-girdle muscular dystrophy type 2B, a genetic disease with no known cure. Alongside her studies, Rodrigues learned about her body, how to navigate the world with a disability, and how to advocate for her rights and needs.

Rodrigues planned to attend law school after graduating, but a counselor at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation encouraged her to consider a career in disability advocacy. She earned her master's degree in rehabilitation counseling online from Assumption University and interned with the Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living, an Allentown nonprofit that provides services and resources for people with disabilities.

Now, Rodrigues works at LVCIL as the Community Inclusion for Young Children project coordinator. Funded through the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council, the project helps families of children with disabilities access resources and build advocacy skills.

Last spring, Rodrigues became the first recipient of Moravian's Health Sciences Champion Award, recognizing her outstanding leadership and commitment to preparing students for careers in health sciences. This past summer Rodrigues was one of 28 commonwealth residents appointed to the new Governor's Advisory Commission on People with Disabilities.

At Moravian, Rodrigues has been a regular guest speaker, sharing her lived experiences during the capstone course Social Issues in Health Sciences.

Rodrigues stands out for her work at LVCIL and being a recurring guest speaker, says Colleen Payton, associate professor of public health and chair of Moravian's Public Health and Health Sciences Department.

"Julianna is someone who does a fantastic job of not only sharing her own personal experiences, but also all the advocacy work and all the work that she does in the community," Payton says. "I think it's really inspiring for our students to be able to hear about those stories as they embark on their own career journeys, to think about the advocacy work that they can do." —*Molly Bilinski*

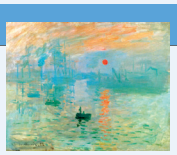
October



MORAVIAN MOMENT
Hurricane Gloria hits Bethlehem, leaving buildings around campus with minor flooding.



MORAVIAN MOMENT
Legendary American folk singer and actor Burl Ives performs to a full house at Johnston Hall.



WORLD
Art thieves steal nine paintings, including five Monets and two Renoirs, from the Musée Marmottan Monet in Paris.

December



WORLD
Pope John Paul II proclaims the first-ever World Youth Day.

A Dedicated Educator and Mentor



John McDermott Jr., former professor and administrator. Photo courtesy of Moravian University Archives

Former longtime professor and administrator John McDermott Jr., 85, died at home in Amherst, Massachusetts, on July 26, 2026.

McDermott attended Amherst College and later earned a master of arts in teaching from Johns Hopkins University, where he met his wife, Emily Sykes.

The couple taught in public schools in the Baltimore area before moving to Davis, California, where McDermott pursued graduate studies in history. They were married for 62 years.

In 1968, McDermott joined the faculty of what was then Moravian College while simultaneously pursuing graduate studies at Temple University. He earned a doctorate in history and education policy from Temple in 1976.

At Moravian, McDermott prepared social studies teachers and taught courses in history and foundations of education. In 1987, he was named Pennsylvania Teacher-Educator of the Year, the same year he became Moravian's vice president for planning and enrollment.

McDermott retired in 2003, and he and Emily moved to Amherst to be near their daughter, Katie McDermott, and her family.

During retirement, McDermott mentored students at Amherst College and Hampshire College. He also sang baritone and enjoyed attending Baroque and classical music concerts.

McDermott loved animals, whether they were his own pets or not. Over the years, he and Emily had numerous cats and five English cocker spaniels. He also enjoyed bird-watching.

A Life of Learning



Professor Emeritus George Diamond. Photo courtesy of Moravian University Archives

Professor Emeritus George Diamond, 90, died August 28, 2026, at Holy Family Manor in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Diamond earned a bachelor's degree in English literature from Allegheny College, a master's degree from New York University, and a PhD from Lehigh University.

He joined Moravian University's English department in 1966 and taught there for nearly five decades before retiring in 2013. He continued teaching for another decade through the Executive Retiree Program at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Throughout his career, Diamond received numerous awards and honors, including a tour of Israel for academic scholars sponsored by Lehigh University's Berman Center for Jewish Studies; a Carnegie Mellon grant to study the Dead Sea Scrolls at New York University; and a National Endowment for the Humanities Institute Award to study postcolonial literature in London.

He was remembered by his former colleagues as "a real intellectual who was truly interested in anything" and for his "impeccable sense of humor," said an email to campus earlier this fall from Jennika Eckhaus, Moravian University's dean for spirituality and inclusion.

Diamond was a member of Congregation Brith Sholom in Bethlehem. He was also a devoted husband to his wife, Roberta, and a firm but nurturing father to his daughters: Allison, who predeceased him, and Robin, of Washington, DC.

1945 LOIS ADELE MOSER HARKE
May 12, 2026

1951 MAE ROSE MORRISON KUENTZ
May 31, 2026

1956 JOANNE L. ALBRIGHT HOODMAKER
July 18, 2026

1959 NICHOLAS CUTTIC
June 15, 2026

1961 DIANNE BILGER
January 7, 2026

1962 JOHN F. SCHULTHEIS JR.
March 18, 2026

1963 REV. ALBERT E. SCHNEIDER JR. P'93, GP'11
July 4, 2026

1963 GEORGE WILLIAM BANASH
June 2, 2025

1964 JOHN PRESTON KOHL
December 11, 2021

1965 JEANNE ELIZABETH THIBOU EROH
June 6, 2026

1966 GEORGIA DREYER FREAS
June 19, 2026

1968 MARTHA GENUA WILLIS
March 30, 2026

1970 WALTER IRVIN WILLIAMS
June 23, 2026

1972 STANLEY E. ZAVILLA JR.
June 26, 2026

1976 CONRAD M. MYERS
September 16, 2025

1979 DAVID C. MUTH P'09
January 21, 2026

1988 TRACY L. HEIMBACH
May 28, 2026

2020 REV. A. PAUL SILWAMBA
July 7, 2026



Get to know Winnie



It was seven years ago when Winnie the Bichpoo joined the family of Michael Irving '24 just in time for the holidays. The lively pup brought an extra dose of joy and excitement to the Christmas season that year, Irving recalls. "From the moment he sprinted through the door, he's filled our days with energy, laughter, and love."

1 What is something Winnie has taught you?

No matter what kind of day we're having, he's always there with his wagging tail and happy heart, reminding us that love doesn't have demands or conditions.

2 What is the funniest thing your dog has ever done?

Winnie knows exactly when spaghetti is being cooked—even though he's only a foot tall and can't see the stovetop. He will go bananas until the spaghetti is available to him, going as far as booty scooting and barking nonstop to spite us.

3 What is Winnie's favorite toy, food, or activity?

He has a stuffed dog that we call his "baby." He consistently grooms, pampers, and cuddles with this toy as if it were his baby.

4 If Winnie had a theme song, what would it be?

"My Way," by Frank Sinatra.

5 What would be Winnie's favorite spot on campus?

The cafeteria. Wherever the treats are, Winnie belongs.

6 What major would your dog choose if he could study at Moravian?

Prelaw. Winnie is the judge and jury of the household. He also commands the backyard. Any squirrels or birds present on his property will be charged with trespassing to the fullest extent of the law.

SUBMIT YOUR DOG'S BIO

Who doesn't think their dog is the pick of the litter? Tell us about your best friend, send us a pic, and he or she just might be featured on this page. Go to *mrvn.co/hounds-mu* to fill out a submission form and send us a photo—a clear portrait shot of your dog's face.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREATPETSPORTRAITS.ETSY.COM

Alumni History

Share Your Moravian Story

As Moravian University celebrates its 285th anniversary, we're honoring our alumni and the stories that make Moravian special.

Moravian has partnered with Publishing Concepts Inc. (PCI) to create the Alumni History Project, a collection of alumni stories that will preserve our shared history for generations to come.

Through February 2027, alumni will receive invitations by mail and email to participate in a brief telephone interview with a live call taker. You will have the opportunity to share a favorite memory, meaningful experience, beloved tradition, or story about the people who made your time at Moravian memorable.

There's no cost to share your story, and all Moravian alumni are invited to participate. Stories collected through the project will be compiled into a hardbound keepsake book. At the conclusion of your interview, you will have the opportunity to purchase a copy.

Haven't received a postcard or email from PCI? You can still participate by calling 800-726-7648. Whether your Moravian memories are from decades ago or recent years, your story is part of Moravian's legacy. We hope you'll take the time to share your memories that made Moravian home.

To learn more, visit **moravian.edu/alumni-history-project**.



MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY

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Bethlehem, PA 18018

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Students gather on John Makuvek Field before the start of Moravian University's Heritage Day on Sept. 24, 2025. The annual day of community service celebrated its 10th anniversary this year with a record 1,337 volunteers contributing 3,384 hours of service.

PHOTO BY REY GABRIEL '28