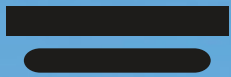


Alumni Echoes



UPPER
COLUMBIA
ACADEMY

a place to grow





Principal's Message

I never cease to be amazed at how God continues to bless Upper Columbia Academy! We began the year on August 24 with 252 students. In the past four months, we have only had one positive case of Covid-19 on our campus. This is nothing short of a miracle.

It has been so nice to have our students back here on campus in person. I don't think we truly realized what a blessing our students are until we suddenly had an empty campus last spring.

We have officially opened our new Wellness Center located inside the Olin Peach Powerhouse. This is a space where Christian counselors can meet with our students and help them through difficult times. This will be such a blessing to our students!

In addition to the new Wellness Center, we are also nearing construction of UCA's very own recording studio. The existing choir room has been completely remodeled and we have state of the art recording equipment in place to make recordings of both our vocal and instrumental groups that we can share online. Both the Wellness Center and the recording studio have been made possible through the gifts of generous donors.

Thank you again for the wonderful support that you give to your school! It is only because of the faithful support of our alumni and friends that we are able to operate and provide a quality Adventist education for today's youth. May God richly bless you in 2021!

Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Eric Johnson

Merry Christmas

from your UCA Family.

As we think back on the past year, it is with hearts full of gratitude for all the blessings we have experienced. We are so thankful to God for allowing us to be in person for school and for His protection during this time of uncertainty. We are also incredibly blessed by our extended community—all of you! Thank you for the way you came through for us during our time of financial need this spring and for your continued prayers and support. We are making plans to gather on campus in September of 2021 for Alumni Homecoming Weekend, and we look forward to seeing each one of you here. In the meantime, we always love to hear from you, and we wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!

Alumni Echoes

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A Note from The Alumni Director

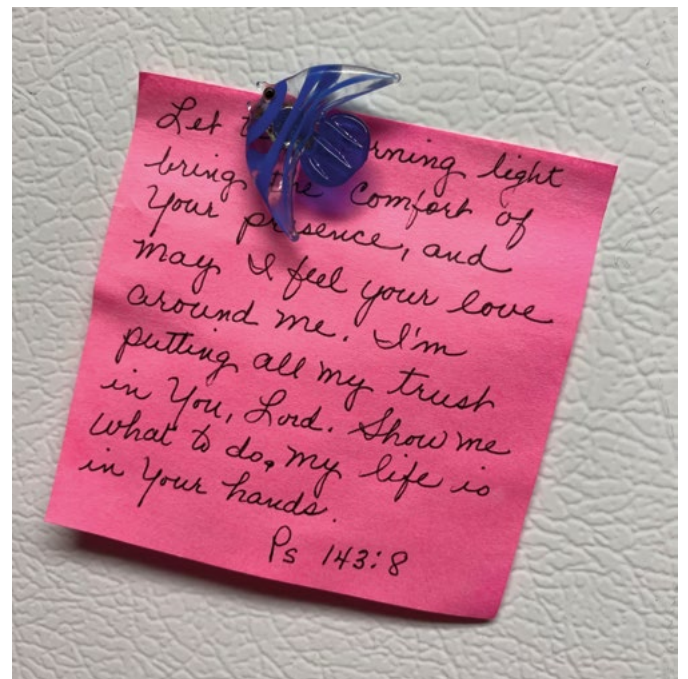
“Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep His promise.” Hebrews 10:23

I have a pink sticky note on my refrigerator with a Bible text written in my mother’s handwriting. “Let the morning light bring the comfort of Your presence, and may I feel Your love around me. I’m putting all my trust in You, Lord. Show me what to do. My life is in Your hands.” Ps. 143:8

This verse became very meaningful to my mom during a difficult time in her experience, and she shared it with me years later when I was struggling. When it catches my eye as I pass through my kitchen, it brings new calm and comfort. Not only is it a beautiful expression of trust in Jesus, but it also was written down for me by someone who loves me and is praying for me each day.

The last few months have brought challenges that none of us could have imagined, but each time I pick up my Bible, I am encouraged and strengthened. I know that all the promises in God’s word are inspired by Someone who loves me and who knows exactly what I need. It is so amazing how words that were written centuries ago could be so pertinent to what I am experiencing today—they are truly “living and powerful!”

Our holiday celebrations are likely going to look a little different this year. Whether you end up celebrating in person with your loved ones, or doing your best to connect virtually, I pray that you will experience peace and assurance. Is there a promise that is especially important to you right now? Take a moment to share it, and maybe even write it on a sticky note for someone’s refrigerator.



Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!

Krista

Krista Phillips

Senior Survival – Another Miracle Story Outside the Box

I have heard many, many stories about incredible events that have no explanation besides God. Growing up as a Seventh-day Adventist, going to church and Sabbath School, and attending Bible classes since the first grade ensured that I knew all about the miraculous signs and wonders that Jesus performed during His time on earth, and all of the times that God delivered His people from seemingly insurmountable odds. I also heard many similar anecdotes from guest speakers, pastors, teachers, and even students on mission trips. Until I went on Senior Survival, I never experienced what we tend to define as a miracle: an obvious act of God that is, well, miraculous!

Having arrived at the Senior Survival site near Camp MiVoden on Thursday, all the groups set up their camps. Friday was bright, sunny, and thoroughly

enjoyable. But when I awoke on Sabbath morning and peered out of my tent, there was a fog that must have rolled in overnight. I proceeded through the rest of the day without giving the clouds a second thought. Later, one of our sponsors, Mr. Melendy, got up front and shared something truly remarkable. He started talking about the smoke from all of the wildfires that were burning. In all his years of experience as a firefighter, he had never experienced an oasis of clean air inside the haze of wildfires. The fog was not fog, but smoke! The amazing part is that I thought it was fog because I could not smell any smoke. God put us in a “bubble” of clean air, but the air surrounding the bubble was nearly unbreathable. Because of His miracle, I believe that God used the rest of our time at Senior Survival to touch many hearts, including mine.





Looking back on my Senior Survival experience, I never expected a physical miracle like the one that took place. Yet it still happened, and I was blessed because of it. I think that sometimes we expect specific things from God. We all think that we know what we need; why won't God just give it to us? He loves us, right? He absolutely does, more than we will ever comprehend. But that kind of thinking creates a box around our perception of God. He knows us and what we need far better than we will ever know ourselves. For me, this experience was a lesson to slow down and trust God. When we build that box around God, we just place limits upon our own faith. Even so, God is constantly seeking to let us out of our boxes. All we have to do is let Him lead us forward to freedom.

By Ian Schroetlin, ASB President 2020-2021



An Alumni Generational Success Story

Blueberry Hill Farm

The Weijohn name is a familiar name at Upper Columbia Academy, and I had the privilege of visiting their farm in Wapato, Washington, a few weeks ago. Three generations of Weijohns have graduated from UCA over the years, and several of them are celebrating honor year milestones in 2020.

The blueberry bushes were turning red, and the apple and hazelnut trees were harvested, but things were far from quiet when I arrived at Blueberry Hill. Jeff Weijohn, the farmer and CEO, met me in the driveway on his Onewheel, which is something like a motorized skateboard that he claims is the quickest way to get from one end of the acreage to the other. His passion for what he does was evident, and the easy camaraderie between him and his employees made it a delightful interview.

Bud Weijohn, Jeff's father, graduated from UCA in 1954. Bud and his wife, Mary, raised their three children on the farm. Jeff, the youngest son, also attended UCA, graduating in 1980, and he and his wife, Terri (Thomas, '79), met there.

After attending college and earning degrees—Jeff in business, and Terri in nutrition—they returned to Wapato and began farming in 1986.

Jeff and Terri's three sons, Brady, Zach, and Spencer, all grew up on the family farm. As they got older, Jeff began thinking of ways to teach them the value of work and how to operate a business. "It was not easy for kids to find jobs," says Jeff, "and I planted the blueberries with my sons and their friends in mind." Brady and Zach shared a conspiratorial smile as they reminisced about their many hours working together in the berry patch, and I got the distinct impression that there were antics I would never hear about! Zach shared, "While we were waiting for the blueberry bushes to mature, Dad planted strawberries in between the rows of blueberry plants. We picked them and sold them to local fruit stands and markets." Once the blueberry plants started producing, Blueberry Hill has been able to provide numerous opportunities for young people to earn money for a Christian education, even offering summer internships to college students.





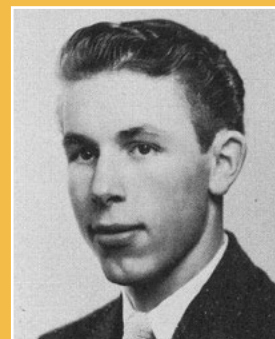
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I had heard of Sorbatto, so I was anxious to taste it. The creamy, sweet treat was created from a recipe handed down by Jeff's grandmother.

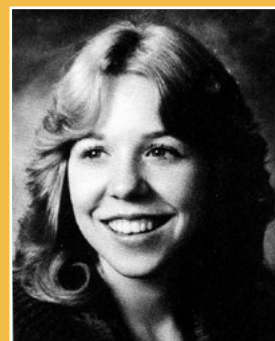
Right now, all three of the Weijohn boys are working at the farm. Brady, who graduated from UCA in 2008, is the Office Manager and supports the farm's IT needs. Brady is married to his high school sweetheart, Bethany (Andrews, '08), and the pair have two children. Zach, a physical therapist, is relocating to the northwest and is temporarily helping with web development, among other things, at the farm. Zach is a 2010 UCA graduate. Spencer, UCA class of 2012, is the Operations Manager for Sorbatto, Blueberry Hill's frozen dessert. He and his wife Kalyse (Rose) have a new baby daughter. Cousin Jerrod Gabel, UCA Class of 2000, is the VP of Operations, and he and his wife, Jennifer, have two daughters.

I had heard of Sorbatto, so I was anxious to taste it. The creamy, sweet treat was created from a recipe handed down by Jeff's grandmother. Terri, who has a master's degree in nutrition and is a registered dietitian, worked to develop the current recipes, which are allergy friendly and made almost entirely from blueberries. Sorbatto is currently available in stores across the northwest, and the demand is growing. I chose to sample the Lemon and the Raspberry flavors, and I couldn't decide which was my favorite. I believe it will take many more taste tests to be sure! The farm also sells delicious jams and jellies, as well as roasted hazelnuts.

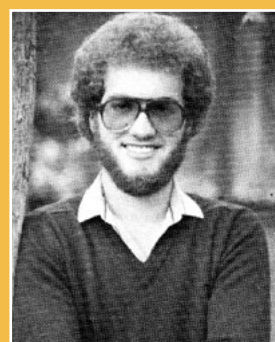
Weijohn Alumni Family



Bud Weijohn
1954



Terri Thomas Weijohn
1979



Jeff Weijohn
1980

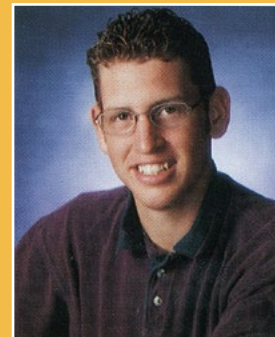


Jeff is always looking for new ideas to keep Blueberry Hill on the cutting edge. After several years of research, he and another area grower pioneered the planting of the first hazelnut groves in Washington. Because of the dry climate and the colder weather, they believed that the trees would thrive without some of the pests and diseases that plague growers in warmer, wetter climates. This venture has proven to be a success, and not only does Blueberry Hill Farm package and sell roasted hazelnuts, they have a hazelnut tree nursery and sell the saplings.

Jeff is also working to construct a greenhouse. Using plans that were originally detailed by Ellen G. White, they are carefully aerating and preparing the soil to optimize growing conditions for healthy plants. Large tubes under the ground circulate the air and keep it the correct temperature during both hot and cold weather. The greenhouse will require very little energy for heating and cooling. Listening to Jeff's enthusiasm for the project highlighted his commitment to environmentally responsible farming practices.



As I prepared to leave, Terri produced pictures of the grandchildren and grand nieces to show me. These beautiful kids are so blessed to grow up at Blueberry Hill, surrounded by their close-knit family, and Upper Columbia Academy eagerly anticipates another generation of Weijohns enlivening our halls!



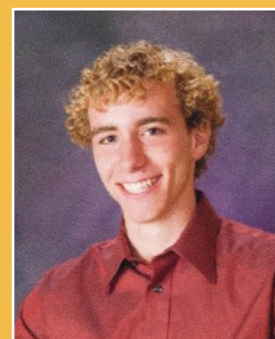
Jerrod Gabel
2000



Brady Weijohn
2008



Zach Weijohn
2010



Spencer Weijohn
2012



The Olin Peach

Powerhouse Wellness Center

The Wellness Center in the Olin Peach Powerhouse is almost finished. After a slow start when everything shut down this past spring and summer, renovations have progressed and the grand opening of the center is planned for shortly after we return from our Thanksgiving break.

Our students are excited about finally being able to make use of the space. They are especially looking forward to having a place to go where they can engage in relaxing, quiet activities that promote mental wellness. In the main area of the powerhouse, a facilitator will be present during select times of the day to oversee students who wish to color, build with Legos, or paint with watercolors. An electric massage recliner will also be available.

The main space will also be used for group counseling and support. To begin with, group sessions for anxiety, grief and loss, and eating disorders will be offered. Three offices for individual counseling are almost completed as well as a fourth office set aside for telehealth appointments. College planning and career counseling will also be available.

The need for these services is great. Between individual counseling, group therapy and career counseling, well over half of our students have requested services. Stephanie Gladding, the Program Coordinator, has met with many of the students to get them established with the appropriate programs. “We have worked hard over the past few years to build a culture where seeking help for mental wellness is a positive choice,” says Gladding. “Some of our students have experienced major losses or traumas, but others are just realizing that asking for some guidance and making small adjustments can really steer the trajectory of their lives over time.” Gladding also points out that current events in our world result in increased anxiety for many young people, and our kids need extra support right now.

”

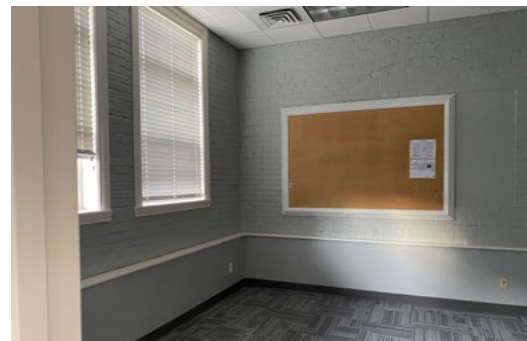
The generous donors who provided the funds for the center also made provision for scholarships. These are available to students who don't have health insurance, and who would otherwise not have the financial resources to access mental health services.

The generous donors who provided the funds for the center also made provision for scholarships. These are available to students who don't have health insurance, and who would otherwise not have the financial resources to access mental health services. Also, as part of UCA's commitment to excellence, college planning and career counseling is offered free of charge to any student.

The calming colors and the quiet, peaceful environment are the result of Stephanie's research and her eye for design and decorating. “I have enjoyed choosing the paint and carpet colors and shopping for the new furniture for the space,” she

says. “We are so grateful to those who have made this possible, and we pray that many lives will be changed for the better as a result of time spent here.” Stephanie will be working closely with Clinical Director Michelle Melendy as well as the deans to oversee the opening and ongoing use of this much needed new resource.

by Krista Phillips





The UCA Farm Stand

Students in Jesse Melendy's Home Renovation class were given the assignment last school year to construct a farm stand. With Melendy's guidance, the stand took shape adjacent to the greenhouse, but progress stalled when we had to switch to distance learning in order to comply with our governor's order to "stay home, stay healthy." During the summer, several UCA staff members worked together to finish the stand and landscape the surrounding area.

Beginning in August, as the project grew and developed, many different groups of people and students contributed. Bryce Reading, UCA Farm Manager, is working with his student workers to grow produce, which will be offered for sale in the stand. Devotional books, designed and written by UCA students in several classes, will be sold as well. Paintings and pottery, created by the many talented students in Karyl Kramer's art classes, will also be offered for sale. Even the elementary school students are getting involved by designing brochures and flyers to help market the stand.

Thanks to substantial donations by generous friends of UCA, a new school bakery will be established. Construction is already underway in the old cafeteria building, and we hope to have baked goods available

soon. Under the direction of Sheila Allison, students will be doing much of the baking. The local community has already had their appetites whetted by the delicious baked goods offered for sale during the spring and summer of this year. We are frequently asked when cinnamon rolls and bagels can be purchased again.

Jami Fleck, our current internship coordinator, has been working with farm manager Bryce Reading and a number of students, to finish the inside of the farm stand and get it ready to open. She was excited to share her ideas for future plans. There have been discussions of joining farmers' markets to sell produce this coming summer. Also, in an effort to grow community relationships, we hope to partner with local artisans and growers to sell their products. With the addition of a picnic table, hot cocoa, and tea, it is our hope that this will become a place to gather and socialize.

By Lorelei Harbour, 2021 Senior Class President



NEW RECORDING STUDIO AT UCA

At the moment the sounds coming from the third floor of the UCA music building sound more like a construction zone than a music group. That's because the Choral Director's office is being transformed into a recording studio. Adjoining the choir room, the studio will have two sound proof recording rooms as well as an office space. Students in the Home Renovation class, taught by Jesse Melendy, are doing the remodeling.

Funded by a generous donation, the new studio is taking shape now. "It was fun to grab a sledge hammer and start destroying sheetrock," says sophomore Kaitlyn Johansen. "I think most of the class got to take out their frustrations while demolishing those old walls." A professional sound

technician from Spokane is consulting about design and equipment, but the actual hands-on construction is being done by the UCA students under Melendy's supervision.

Andre Vivier, a junior, is happy about the construction skills he is learning in the class. "I have been able to get experience in many different aspects of building, and I'm excited to learn some electrical things in the next few days," he says. "I think it will help me when I try to get a job later."

The dream for the recording studio was born several years ago when Principal Eric Johnson asked Curtis Anderson, UCA Choral Director, what he would wish for the music





department if money was not an obstacle. “We wanted to provide a place for our most talented students who want to experiment with recording, with composition, and with publishing their music,” says Anderson. “Throughout my teaching career, I have come in contact with multiple students who could have a performance career if they chose to do so. It has been my dream to provide a venue for those kids to be able to take their art to the next level.”

When the new space is finished, a professional studio artist will be coming in to teach the students how to use the equipment. The first planned project will be the UCA Vocal Octet recording music to be published on YouTube and Spotify. The studio will also be available for any student who wants to experiment musically.

By Krista Phillips

2020 Honor Class Updates



Class of **1960**

Greetings to UCA Classmates of 1960. 2020 arrived with a BANG!! Many unexpected events were upon us, Covid19 restrictions, schools closed, the doors of churches shut tight, restaurants and hair salons closed, empty gyms and malls. And then the hunt for TP along with hunting for flour and yeast. We all found ourselves adapting to these changes by more home-fixed meals and the smell of homemade bread baking in the oven, less going anywhere by car, jigsaw puzzles spread out on the dining room table, and unread books opened. And what about the longer gray hair that needed a trim cut? Whew, and we by God's grace survived.

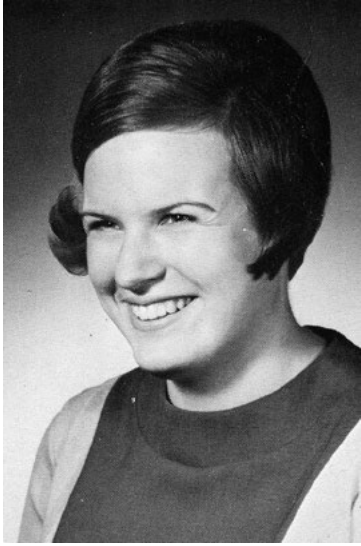
We hope that each of you are staying well and have avoided the virus and that you are looking forward to our postponed 60th class reunion in September 2021. Don and I are looking forward to planning the same thing that we were going to do this past September. More information will follow in a few months.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention that Bob Sutton and James Schoepflin went ahead and had their own private reunion in September. I loved their spunk and class spirit.

So let's all plan on being together in September 2021 for our reunion. May God bless you and keep you in His care.

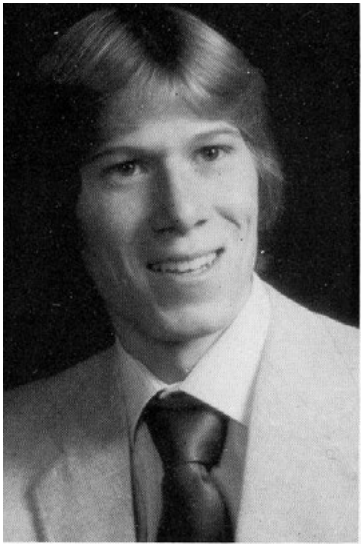
Don and Sharon Ammon





Class of **1970**

Who would have thought 50 years ago when we graduated, that in 2020 the world would experience a pandemic that has turned most everything upside down with so many restrictions and cancellations, that included our honour 50 year celebration? Your planning committee was so excited to be seeing you and the plans we had formulated. UCA is optimistic that there will be an Alumni weekend in 2021. They plan to honour both the '0' years and the '1' years (i.e. 1970 and 1971). I heard from many of you that we haven't seen in a long time or have never attended one of our 5 year reunions, that you were planning to attend Alumni weekend this past September. It is our hope to proceed with our plans to celebrate if UCA goes ahead with the Alumni weekend in 2021 providing it's safe for everyone. Keep an eye out for the date. Wishing each and every one of you and your families good health. Stay safe. Prepare, hope and pray for better times. Betty (Bendixen) Campbell



Class of **1980**

Greetings from Cairo, Egypt!
It's nice to have this link to stay in contact with friends and classmates. My wife Candace (West) and I returned to Egypt in July 2018 after living for 8 years in Maryland. Working just outside Washington DC as Undersecretary at the General Conference of SDA was a very interesting experience. It took me to many countries recruiting and placing missionaries around the world. However, I felt God's call to go back to Egypt (where I had served as treasurer of our church organization from 1996-2001) this time to lead the Adventist church for the countries of Egypt and Sudan.

We have a huge job to share Christ's love with the more than 140 million mostly Muslim people living in these 2 countries (almost double the population of the western 1/2 of the US). We live in crazy times but are thankful that God will soon come to put an end to the mess we've made of our lives and this world. We would appreciate your prayers for our work here and would welcome hearing from you or a personal visit.

Myron Isminger



Class of **2010**

My wonderful husband, Leonardo, and I celebrated three years of marriage this year, and in August we welcomed our beautiful daughter, Aiyana, into our lives. I work as a registered nurse on the intermediate care unit at Kadlec hospital in Richland, Washington. We enjoy traveling and spending time with family.

As we look back on the last ten years we have changed so much but we are all graduates of UCA. Let's reflect on the good memories and values we gained from UCA. God bless!" Amanda (Johnson) Calderon



Class of 1990

Today I am thinking of you. I am looking at your pictures in my yearbook. I am wondering how you are doing.

Life has extra challenges these days, but also many blessings. God has been teaching me about unconditional love. I want to say “I love you and I care about you, whether you are tall or short, red or blue, discouraged or happy, whether you are Christian or not.”

I am praying some of God’s promises for you today. “For I know the plans I have for you....plans to prosper you and not to harm.” Jeremiah 29:11.

“God will keep [you] in perfect peace when [your] mind is stayed on God, if [you] choose to trust in God.” Isaiah 26:3

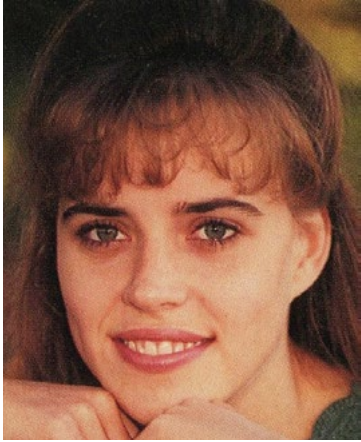
As for me, despite the struggles of this year, I am truly blessed. I am especially grateful for my husband, Eric Haeger. We married in 1992 and live in my outdoor playground hometown of Brewster, WA. Eric is a hardworking physician and business owner, board certified in Family and Sleep Medicine and Addiction Medicine board eligible. I have done hospital nursing and nurse practitioner work (before parenting became so busy). I love being a mom of four children and teaching some music. Our older daughter Carly is a senior at UCA, son Jonathan a freshman at UCA, daughter Noelle 7thgrade and son Seth 4th grade.



Hang in there! God loves you. I am trying to do a better job of keeping in touch with people. I

hope to connect with many of you this year. I’m very excited that UCA is putting in a music recording studio, and that’s just one of many awesome things happening on campus. Maybe they’ll let me record too...

Yours truly, Michelle (Stout) Haeger



Class of 1995

Class of 1995: From Junelle Pellow McCombs

Hello class of 95! What a year we've had! It was certainly a hard year to start my journey in real estate. I got my license in March as the rumors of shutting down were making its way through mainstream media. And then...Lockdown, homeschooling, zoom meetings, bad internet, no church, and no toilet paper!

With all the crazies going on, our oldest son, Hayden (class of 2019) came home from college, which gave us another year of memories as a complete family unit. What a special treasured time for our family! This pandemic has taught us a lot about the importance of family, church, friendships, and the network of believers we are surrounded by.

Living near UCA has been a bright spot in our lives. We are all flourishing in the wealth of this community. Our son, Kyler (sophomore) has excelled in his writing skills at UCA and loves the teachers here. We have two more sons (Dylan and Landyn) that will be going to UCA in the future and we look forward to seeing how UCA impacts their lives as well.

I pray that in spite of the struggles this year that it has brought you the closeness of family, and a better grasp on what you value most. Like friendship. Friendship from years past at UCA! I hope to see all of you there at our reunion. It's one year late, but one year closer to Jesus' return!



To my classmates in the class of 1995:

I live in Spokane, Washington, with my wonderful husband Kyle and our four awesome kids. I've been a massage therapist for 24 years now, and have my own practice. I've been so blessed with wonderful clients and a career that I really love. My husband is a teacher at our local Adventist K-10 grade school, where our youngest two children attend, William in 9th and Lily in 6th. Our oldest two boys, Alden and Alex, are seniors this year at UCA. It's so hard to believe we have seniors already! Can it really be 25 years since I was a senior? We've been so blessed to have raised our family here and are really thankful for our church and school families! This year we're especially thankful for the dedication of our schools to be open and in person!!!
Margie Heyden Wilfley



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