

COVENANT COLLEGE ■ AUTUMN 2007

THE VIEW

CAREFUL STEPS

A team of students and the Nielsons venture into the heart of Africa's largest slum.

New Residence Hall Opens • The Class of 1982: 25 Years Later

In this issue of *The View*, you will read about a marvelous trip to Kenya that Kathleen and I were privileged to take this past May with students who had just completed their freshman year at Covenant. Kathleen and I had team-taught these same students last fall in a course titled "Character and Leadership," and the Kenya trip gave us the opportunity to build on our relationships, extend our discussions about leadership, and get a larger sense of God's calling as we served together in the Kibera slum of Nairobi.



Then, in mid-September, the Archbishop of the Anglican Province of Uganda, the Most Reverend Henry Luke Orombi, was the keynote speaker for our annual Neal Conference on True Spirituality. The Archbishop spoke five times on a theme taken from Luke 9: "Who do you say that I am?" His messages were clear and compelling challenges to take seriously the gospel call and the obedience call that the Lord Jesus Christ gives us. Archbishop Henry spoke faithfully from the Word and also poignantly and powerfully from the context of his ministry, which involves his leadership in the worldwide Anglican Communion. His courage in the midst of fierce battles over biblical truth and morality comes through loud and clear, as does his gentle and strong heart that seeks the salvation of the lost and the purity, peace, and glory of Christ's church.

These opportunities for our students to gain a perspective on the work of God around the world are unforgettable and will shape their thinking and living for the rest of their lives. What a delight to look forward to how God will use these amazing experiences for his glory in the decades ahead!

I hope you enjoy reading about Kenya and about all the other people and happenings that help make Covenant such a vibrant and promising place.

Niel Nielson
President

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MISSION STATEMENT

The View's purpose is to: Encourage alumni, parents and friends to keep Christ preeminent in all areas of their lives • Give alumni, parents and friends—our most important ambassadors—stories and information about the College, its students, alumni, faculty, and staff • Provide alumni with an ongoing connection to the Covenant community • Give God's people news about Covenant that will encourage them to praise, thank, and petition our Heavenly Father.

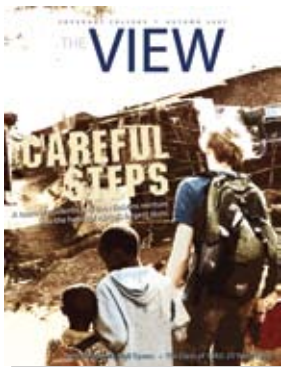
COVENANT
COLLEGE

IN ALL THINGS CHRIST PREEMINENT



BUILD CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER

The BUILD campaign is Covenant's current five-year, \$31 million effort to advance the College's mission. Read about the newly opened residence hall in the enclosed newsletter.



ON THE COVER

Drew Belz '10 walks with African children through the Kibera slum. Read about a Covenant team's eye-opening trip to Africa's largest slum on pages 7-10.

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Do your children know how to read online? Professor Rebecca Pennington discusses strategies.

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Alumni News

Updates and pictures contributed by alumni.



Fall 2007 enrollment is at an all-time high. The class of 2011 (pictured above) numbers 351, and total College enrollment stands at 1,343.

Change of View

You will notice in this issue of *The View* a few changes. These are primarily changes in design—to give the magazine a fresher and more organized feel—but also include a few substantive changes. The former Campus Notes section has now merged into what is called ScotStuff—a compilation of college news. Faculty View and Alumni News remain the same in substance but have received a facelift.

We always welcome your comments and suggestions for further improvement at theview@covenant.edu.

Getting Down to Business

Barbecue and denominational business were on the agenda this summer in Memphis. Covenant administrators and representatives from several offices joined commissioners from around the country in June for the Presbyterian Church in America's General Assembly.

As an agency of the PCA, the College takes an active role in the annual meeting, partnering with hundreds of churches and church leaders.

To watch the video of Covenant's report at General Assembly, presented in concert by President Nielson, Dr. Render Caines, and Chaplain Aaron Messner, visit covenant.edu/pcaga.

Moving Up

U.S. News & World Report, in its 2008 edition of America's Best Colleges, ranks Covenant #7 among baccalaureate colleges in the South. This ranking is up from Covenant's #9 rank in 2007, and represents the College's fifth consecutive year with a solid position in the top ten colleges in its field.

Covenant continues to have the fourth highest graduation rate among baccalaureate colleges in the South. *U.S. News* named Covenant #6 among colleges in the South in the "Great Schools, Great Prices" category—a rise from its #9 position in the category in 2007. This ranking recognizes the value of a Covenant education, taking into account the high quality of the College's academic programs and the average amount of financial aid awarded.

"We are pleased," said President Nielson, "that the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings recognize the strength and value of a Covenant College education. Covenant is blessed: we have another year of record enrollment, a new residence hall is open for students, and construction is progressing on a new academic building. We're delighted that this growth allows us to equip more and more students with a first-rate, Christ-centered education."

Covenant Arts

The third season of Covenant Arts is underway, and there is still time to catch a concert—or a few concerts. This year brings the Biava Quartet, The Washington Saxophone Quartet, pianist Jean-Louis Haguenauer, The Dismembered Tennesseans, and Cantus to the Dora Maclellan Brown Memorial Chapel. To learn more about the concert series and subscribe, visit covenant.edu/covenantarts.



Vocal ensemble Cantus will perform at Covenant April 11 in the final performance of the 2007-2008 Covenant Arts concert series.

Campus Preview Weekend

Prospective students are invited to campus March 27-29 for our annual spring Campus Preview Weekend. They will get a taste of what life is like for Covenant students—from sitting in on classes and meeting professors to staying in a residence hall and getting to know current students.

If you know a high school student who may be interested in visiting Covenant, you can refer them to

covenant.edu/cpw to sign up for Campus Preview Weekend.

President's Blog

President Nielson has entered the blogosphere. He will blog every other week, sharing his reflections on educational, economic, theological, and all variety of topics. Visit **president.blogs.covenant.edu** for some interesting reading—and subscribe to the feed so that you don't miss any new posts.



Visit President Nielson's new blog at president.blogs.covenant.edu.

Pretty Picture

Covenant's beautiful mountain-top setting has earned it a spot on MSNBC's "Pretty College Campuses." Matt McLelland, partner in Warren-McLelland Aerial Photography and son of retired Covenant professor Reg McLelland, shot and submitted the photograph of the College that was selected by MSNBC. View all of the recognized colleges at www.msnbc.msn.com/id/20200955/nPage/1.

New Residence Hall

Construction of the new residence hall is complete, and its first student residents moved into their freshly painted rooms in August. Read all about the new residence hall—including the mountain stone in the lobby and the fourth-floor balcony—in the BUILD campaign newsletter inside this issue of *The View*. And visit **build.covenant.edu** anytime for up-to-date information on the College's campaign.



Matt McLelland of Warren-McLelland Aerial Photography took this picture of Covenant that was selected for MSNBC's "Pretty College Campuses" feature.



Covenant's newest residence hall opened in August and is now home to over 100 students.

Parents eNewsletter

Parents, if you would like to receive regular e-mail updates with information we think you would find helpful, sign up now at **covenant.edu/parents**. Even if your students don't tell you what's going on here, we will!

Five New Minors Added

Covenant's academic programs continue to grow this year, as five new minors have been rolled out: biblical languages, computer information systems, physical education–science track, physical education–sports management track, and sport ministry.

Education Interns in Budapest

An international school in Hungary seems to be a magnet for Covenant

students and alumni. For the third year, Professor Steve Kaufmann took students in Covenant's Teacher Education Program to the International Christian School of Budapest for a monthlong teaching practicum.

There, these seven rising seniors joined David Welsh '96, director of the school, and six other Covenant alumni who are on the school's faculty. Through this internship, these future teachers not only gained practical education experience, but also got a taste of how Christian educators can make a global impact.

To read a firsthand account of the practicum by Charlotte Okie '08, visit covenant.edu/budapest.



Covenant education students along with Professor Steve Kaufmann spent the month of May in Hungary participating in a teaching practicum.



Meet Covenant's newest faculty. Front (left to right): Sanford Shaw, modern languages; Antonio Chiarelli, sociology; Ginner Huson, organizational management and executive education; Eric Wilson, mathematics; Sarah Huffines, English; with President Niel Nielson. Back (left to right): Jeff Dryden, biblical studies; Steve Corbett, community development; Aaron Messner, chaplain; William Tate, English; John Wingard, philosophy;

Athletes Overseas

Even in the off-season Covenant athletes are on the move. The men's soccer team traveled to Monterrey, Mexico, this summer to work alongside Mission to the World. They played several matches, met and shared their testimonies with other teams, painted a church, and assisted the local MTW team in building relationships.

San Jose, Costa Rica, was the destination of the women's soccer team. Collaborating with SCORE International, the women played matches against four teams, sharing testimonies after each one, and worked in an orphanage and a kindergarten class in a local school.

Athletic mission trips don't stop when classes start: the men's baseball team is traveling to the Dominican



The women's soccer team worked with children on a trip to Costa Rica this summer.

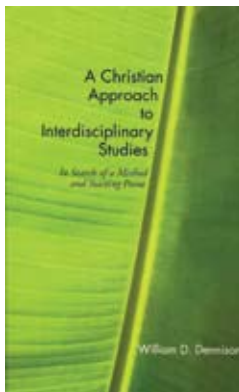
Republic during Fall Break.

Go to athletics.covenant.edu to keep up with the latest in Scots athletics—both at home and abroad—year-round.

Professor Dennison Authors Book

Dr. William Dennison, professor of interdisciplinary studies, has authored *A Christian Approach to Interdisciplinary Studies: In Search of a Method and Starting Point*, which has been published by Wipf and Stock. "A joy to read," says one reviewer, "this scholarly work defends and articulates the interdisciplinary approach provided by the Triune God of the Scripture, the 'author of integration.'"

Order *A Christian Approach to Interdisciplinary Studies* and other faculty books from the Tuck Shoppe at covenant.edu/tuckshoppe.



goFigure

8900

Conference attendees on campus during the summer

303

Doors in the new residence hall

2

Miles to the nearest Starbucks

250

Average membership of churches that give to Covenant

7

Students for every residence life leadership team member

351

New students

21

Alumni on the faculty

7

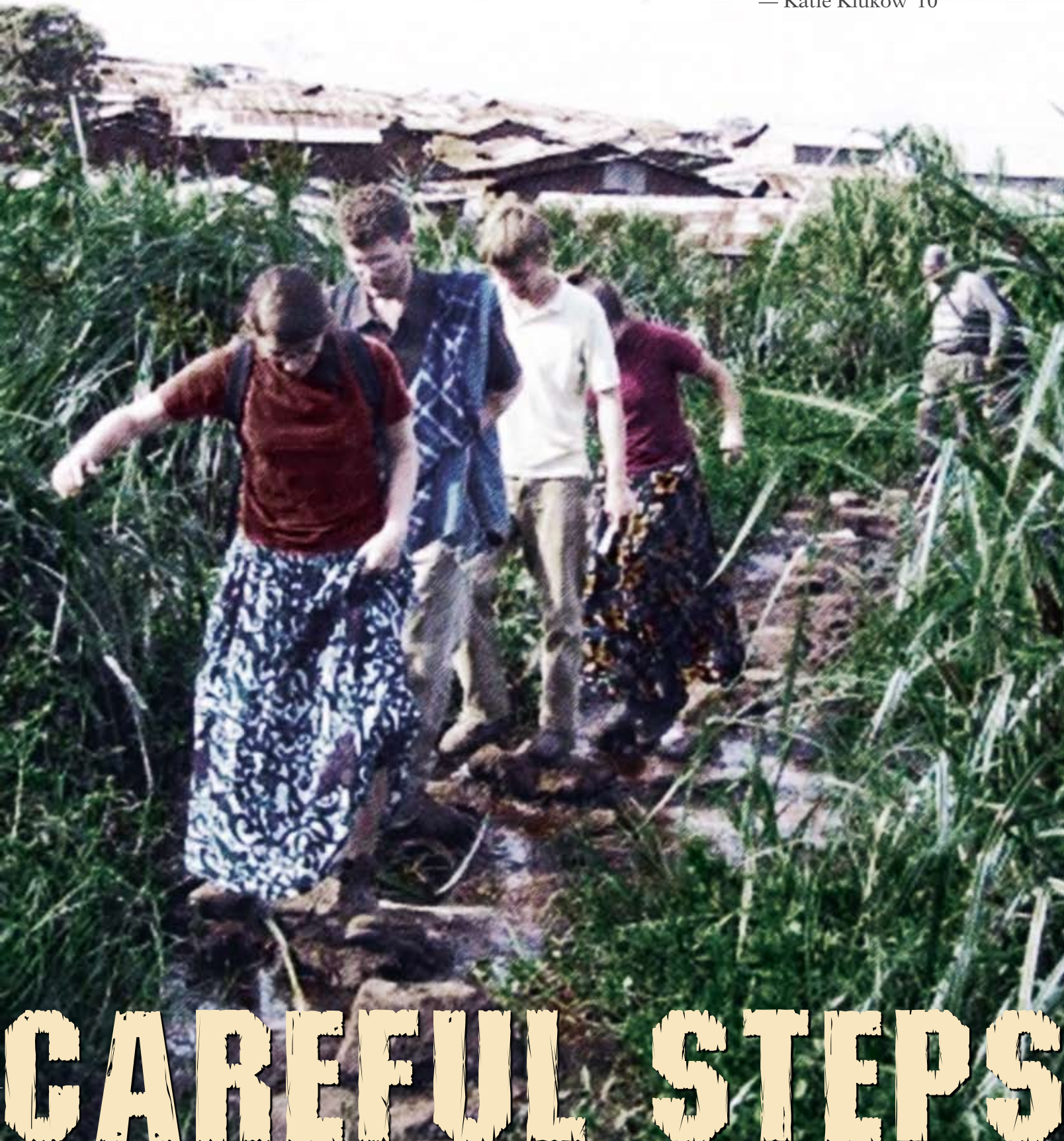
States you can see from the Overlook on a clear day

1135

Pints of blood donated at Covenant last year

*“God is moving, doing a work of redemption,
rescuing souls from their spiritual mire and filth and
giving them citizenship in His heavenly kingdom.”*

— Katie Klukow '10



CAREFUL STEPS

Holding hands, they stepped carefully and deliberately on a series of stones and wooden planks lest they slip into the runoff of raw sewage that bleeds from the slum. And so went the morning ritual as eight Covenant students and President Niel and Dr. Kathleen Nielson entered Nairobi, Kenya's Kibera slum this past summer.

Africa's most populous slum, Kibera is a dense shantytown that is home to about a million people living within one-

and-a-half square miles. Peering down upon the slum, one is met with a sea of mud-walled, tin-roofed huts, separated by narrow alleyways awash with garbage and human excrement. There is no electricity, no running water, no sewer system. It is a profoundly poor land.

Pastor Imbumi Makuku and his wife, Martha, led the Americans on their walk into the slum. Imbumi is the pastor of Kibera Reformed Presbyterian Church, which he started in 2002. A graduate of Orlando's Reformed Theological Seminary, Imbumi brings rare theological training to Africans who crave scriptural edification.

On the group's first morning in Kibera, Imbumi asked one of the team members to bring God's Word to the people. "Preach exhaustively," he instructed. And for twenty minutes—forty including translation—Sam Belz '10 did. From the trip's first hours, the group learned the power of the gospel and the importance of always being prepared to give the reason for one's hope.

The students on this mission were all Maclellan scholars. It is traditional that participants in the Maclellan scholarship program embark on a group trip after their freshman year, and the students themselves are largely responsible to select their destination. The group spent ten days in the Kibera slum, followed by a long weekend in Lokichoggio, Kenya, fellowshiping with pastors-in-training, and another week in Mutulu, Kenya, teaching, painting, visiting.

In Kibera, they endeavored to come alongside the Christian ministers, observe, learn, and help, according to each



A team of eight Covenant students and President and Dr. Nielson ministered alongside Pastor and Mrs. Makuku this summer in Kenya's Kibera slum.

"Always bring your Bible, because in the African church, they will call upon you at any time to give a word. I'm amazed at the readiness of Imbumi's church and school staff to sing and speak and pray."

— Sam Belz '10

individual's unique gifts. And so they did what the Kenyans did. The church operates a school, a kitchen, a women's ministry, and a health services ministry. The students and the Nielsons aided the schoolteachers by helping with English lessons, art projects, Bible classes—all sorts of activities that are part of a regular school day.

Every day one or two team members helped in the kitchen, which serves lunch to all the schoolchildren—probably the only square meal these children receive each day.

The school staff carefully plans and prepares a nutrient-rich menu. Stews served on chapatti (a rice alternative) are common, and meat is rare. Operating in assembly-line fashion, the kitchen crew fed about 170 people in ten minutes.

The church maintains an extensive women's ministry, in which Martha Makuku, her sister Mary, and a woman named Nancy, whose title is simply "evangelist," play a significant role. Kathleen Nielson observes that the women in





*"We learned that
the gospel of Jesus Christ
is always relevant."*

— Bethany Vannette '10

Kibera are "the fixed points." The children energetically move about and the vast majority of men leave their wives, but by and large the women hold fast and try to maintain a strong, stable home.

A few team members accompanied Mary and Nancy on their daily home visits. They always shared scripture with the women they visited and prayed for them—whether petitioning for a husband to find steady employment, a wife to be godly in the midst of her husband's infidelity, or a woman to receive Jesus. President Nielson recalls the strength of Mary and Nancy: "There are no holds barred in

what they say to these women." Their message is biblical and straight to the point, he says. "When Mary and Nancy visit homes, they never spend time lamenting or weeping over the situation with the women. 'Oh, we feel like weeping,' they say, 'but these women don't need someone to feel sorry for them. They know what their situation is. They need someone who will come and tell them that with the Lord and the community of the church they can survive this. We save our weeping for our homes. We weep at night.'"

Kibera Reformed Presbyterian Church is a haven in a dark

THE TEAM LEARNED A NEW FAVORITE SONG IN KIBERA

*Mambo sawa sawa,
Mambo sawa sawa.
Yesu akiwa enzeni,
Mambo sawa sawa.*

TRANSLATION

*Things are getting better,
things are getting better.
When the Lord is on the throne,
things are getting better.*

"It was marvelous to me how, in the midst of such degradation, the Christians in Kibera were singing that everything was getting better," says Katie Klukow '10. "They have so much hope."

"The hope that they possess," says Bethany Vannette '10, "is not in their ramshackle homes, broken families, or corrupt government. It is in Jesus Christ, the King of the world who sits on the throne! I was challenged to examine my own life. My home may seem neat and clean, yet it is tainted with the rotting sewage of sin. Have I put my hope in my own accomplishments, my friends, my family? Only Jesus can fulfill my expectations for salvation, and one day I and the believers of Kibera will escape this polluted world through His redemption."

*"The poverty was extreme,
but far heavier on my heart was the moral poverty
in a place where the church had no elders, primarily
because so few men qualify due to sexual promiscuity."* — Matthew Baddorf '10

place—and an organization committed to enabling people to escape the slum. Imbumi and Martha Makuku have two young boys and commute to the slum each day. "We're not going to raise our boys in the slum," Imbumi states emphatically. "Why would we raise our boys in the slum? We're trying to get people out of the slum!"

The church property is conspicuous for its cleanly swept pathways and its latrines. The latrines are nothing fancy, but are significant for the simple fact that they exist. There is an emphasis on the reality that Christian living involves being clean. One woman has learned to dump her family's waste out the back door instead of the front door, and her neighbors are taking note. "Step by step, square meter by square meter, they are creating a brightness, which they believe and I believe is directly related to the gospel," says President Nielson. "In really down to earth, nitty gritty ways, the gospel affects everything."

The church's health services ministry largely serves women who are HIV-positive. The staff oversees the administration of medicines that make it less likely that the children of



these women will contract HIV. They comfort and care for these women as they die of AIDS. And they find new homes for their children. Oftentimes, when a mother approaches the end of her life, a meeting will be called and another woman with children of her own, for whom she can barely provide, will volunteer to take in the soon-to-be orphaned children.

"I have never before," says Katie Klukow '10, "seen such unshakable faith in the midst of such circumstances. God is moving, doing a work of redemption, rescuing souls from their spiritual mire and filth and giving them citizenship in His heavenly kingdom. These people know

it. They see God moving. . . . The work God is doing in Kenya is no different from the work He is doing in America. The same God is moving on both continents. And it is brilliant."

The team recognized the similarities between America and Kibera. "Our filth is a different kind of filth," says President Nielson, "but our culture isn't all that different. Christians have to pick their way through the muck in our culture as well. Our world is consumed with sin, and our job is to be a light, and to step carefully while we seek to serve wholeheartedly." Whether we are traveling through the narrow passageways of Africa's poorest slum or the marbled halls of an executive suite, may we all step carefully as we walk in the light and the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. 🙏

— by Jen Allen





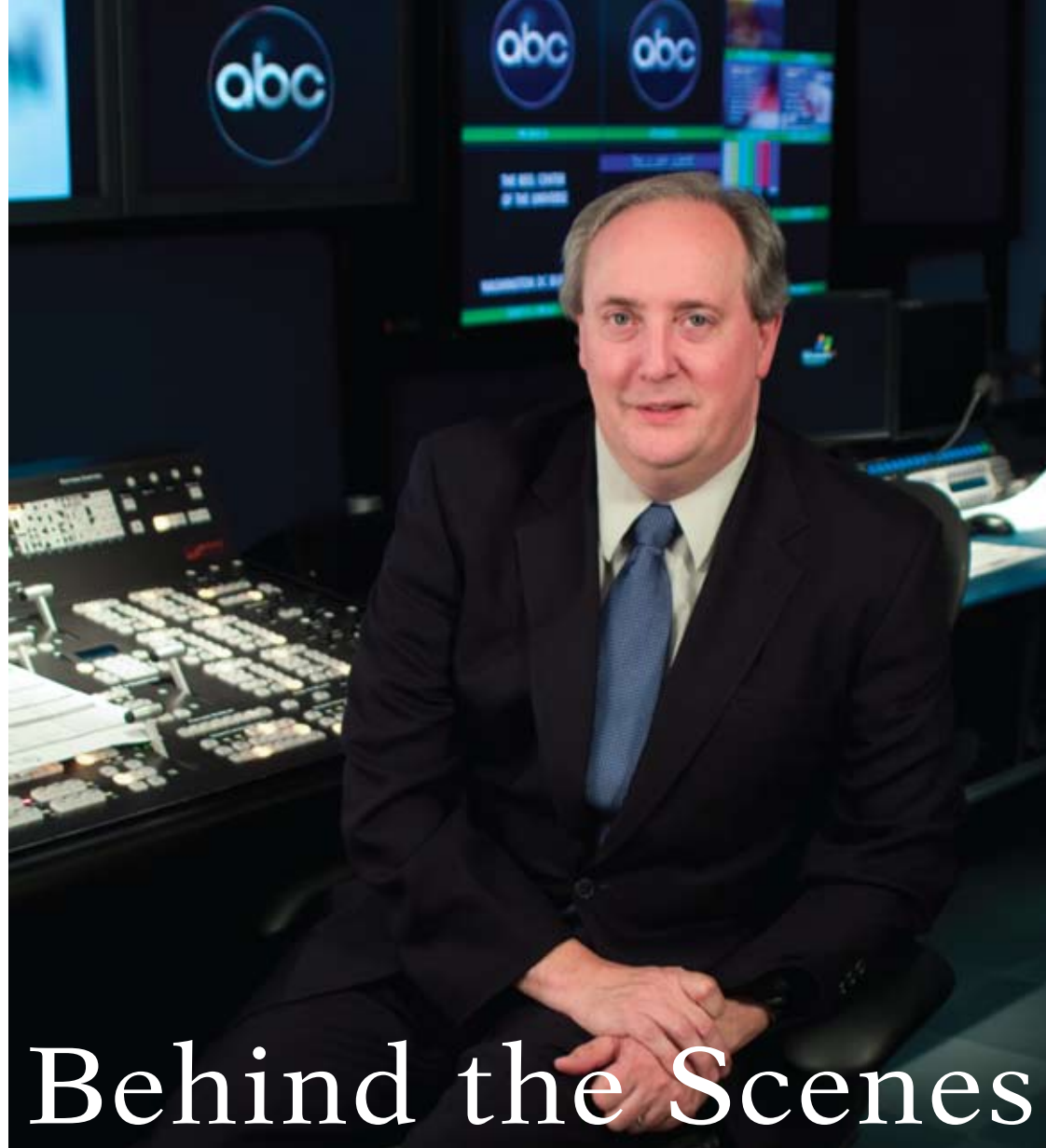
THE CLASS OF
1982
25 years later

Eighty-two optimistic, young adults walked onto campus in the fall of 1978 and strode across the stage to accept their diplomas in 1982. Back then, tuition was \$3760 per year, all students lived in Carter and “the men’s residence hall” (Belz), and Dr. Essenburg was the College’s president. On any given day, one might find Professor Chuck Anderson lecturing on the New Testament and Dr. John Hamm directing the Covenant Chorale.

The United States was in recession, and a global surplus of crude oil led to a drop in gasoline prices. Ronald Reagan was president, and Michael Jackson’s album Thriller was just released, becoming the best-selling album to date at the time. The Commodore 64 made its first appearance, as did the Toyota Camry, the CD player, and Knight Rider. The Cold War continued.

Fast forward a quarter of a century, and alumni from the class of 1982 dot the globe—from Chile to Amsterdam to Philly—and do everything from prosecute criminals to manage businesses to practice psychiatry.

Glimpse into the lives of four of these alumni on the silver anniversary of their graduation.



— by Rachel Tilley Witherow '00

You know that game: “what five people, living or dead, would you like to meet?” Who would be on your list? Ronald Reagan? James Earl Jones? The Beach Boys? (OK, that last one would take up all five, but hey, if you’re a fan....)

But what if it weren’t just a game? What if you really could meet people you’ve only ever seen on television or read about in the newspaper? For Ed Stoffel ’82, meeting people the rest of us only talk about is just another day at the office.

Though you may not be aware of it, this probably isn’t the only time Ed Stoffel’s name has appeared in your home. If you’ve seen Charlie Gibson or the late Peter Jennings on ABC’s World News Tonight or stayed up late to catch Ted Koppel’s Nightline, Ed’s name has probably scrolled through

the credits on your television screen.

Ed’s interest in broadcasting and his faith in God became forever entwined one night after having graduated high school, when he was working as an announcer for a Christian radio station. He had become accustomed to people calling the station for counseling or advice, but this night,

the man calling was inconsolable—in utter despair and suicidal.

What if you could meet people you’ve only seen on TV or read about in the newspaper?

Ed recalls: “Here I was, a young kid of eighteen or nineteen, trying to give him advice. He said ‘Young man, I’ve heard all that; I’ve been a pastor.’ So what do you tell somebody like that? I decided then that whether or not I stay in broadcasting, no matter where I work, I need a strong Christian foundation and a good education behind that. That’s why I came to Covenant.”

Ed did remain in broadcasting, working at WMBW radio and the WRCB and WDEF TV stations in Chattanooga during his years at Covenant. Since then, Ed has been a broadcast engineer for the American Broadcasting Company, working at their news headquarters in Washington, DC. Over the years, he has operated cameras, lights, and sound, and has held numerous other technical positions. Currently, he is a technical director, working as the “crew chief” on whatever show he’s assigned to, coordinating and engineering all technical aspects of the program and working alongside the production director to create the product we see on the air—oftentimes live.

This career has placed Ed on the sidelines during numerous interviews with well-known people. Like the rest of us, Ed also has a list of people he would still like to meet. But the list of people he has already met is substantially longer. Meeting his hero, the late President Ronald Reagan was a highlight of his career, as was meeting former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. In addition to Reagan, he has met former Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton, along with numerous politicians, actors, and other celebrities. He also counts among his favorite career moments meeting the late pastor and author James Montgomery Boice, whom he calls a “rock star” for Presbyterians. And yes, he has met James Earl Jones and the Beach Boys.

A conversation about the immediacy of today’s broadcast communications will almost always come around to a discussion of September 11, 2001, when the nation was riveted to their television screens, desperate to know what

was going on. Ed recalls that morning vividly: driving into the capital and seeing smoke rising from the Pentagon as most people were fleeing the city. He remembers thinking: “Everyone is leaving town, and I’m going in. But God help us; people have their TVs on, and they need the information.”

ABC won a number of awards for its coverage of those attacks—work of which Ed says he is probably most proud. When the World Trade Center was hit, New York’s WABC went off the air and lost a number of its employees, including the engineer who was working on their rooftop tower. To be responsible for broadcasting an event of this magnitude, while at the same time mourning the lives of his co-workers, made for what Ed states was “definitely the most stress I’ve had on the job, but I know that the whole nation was feeling it.”

Working in an industry that isn’t known for being evangelical or conservative—or typically kind to those who are—has presented challenges to Ed, who is unabashedly pro-life and serves as clerk of the session at Bethel Presbyterian Church in Leesburg, Virginia. “What is very difficult,” states Ed, “is when I see a situation where [the producers] are looking for the best and brightest voice to represent the pro-abortion side, and then they basically



from Loren

want to pick the worst kook off the street to represent the pro-life side. That’s when I have to decide whether to bite my tongue or speak up, and I try to weigh my response on whether I think it will be effective or not.”

Ed strives to “live a life worthy of the gospel” not by proselytizing, but by living in such a way that when he has the opportunity to speak up, he has credibility and respect. “Over the years, I have had opportunities to influence for good, I think, to try to nudge them back towards center, to remain balanced. When Christians are in the workplace, they have an effect. The news is still very different than it would be if Christians weren’t there at all.” 





Do Justice **Love Mercy**

— by Rachel Tilley Witherow '00

The phone rings in an upscale suburban home. A man in his sixties answers and listens to the voice on the other end, his face first registering shock, then anger, then resolve. “I’ll do whatever you need,” he says quietly.

A small crowd has gathered in an apartment. The sixty-year-old man is slumped in the corner of what appears to be a shower stall. Blood spills from the bullet-sized hole in his temple. He isn’t moving. A camera flashes. “OK, we’ve got it,” says one of the observers. He extends a hand to the man, who takes it and rises slowly. “Good work,” says the make-up artist. “This should do it.”

At a truck stop parking lot, the observer shows the picture to a nervous-looking man. “Good work,” the man says as he hands over an envelope filled with cash. His extended arm feels the cold steel of clicking handcuffs instead of the handshake he expected.

“The evidence is overwhelming,” states the prosecutor. The jury agrees, and the man who had unwittingly hired an undercover FBI agent to kill a rival business owner will spend the rest of his life in prison. “Good work, Charysse,” says the prosecutor’s co-counsel.

Sometimes, the life of Charysse Alexander ’82 looks like an episode of *Law & Order*. But in her world, the conviction does not come a mere

sixty minutes (including commercial interruptions) after the crime took place. Charysse knows how much work it took to investigate and convict the murderous business owner: she keeps a surveillance photograph of the man that was taken during the investigation, as he walked out of a truck stop accompanied by the undercover agents he thought were hit men. For Charysse, the picture represents justice.

When Charysse Alexander was a little girl, she never said,

"When I grow up, I want to be an executive assistant United States attorney." In fact, when she came to Covenant College in 1978, she wasn't sure what she would do with

her life. It was during her junior year as a sociology major that she began searching a number of different career options and finally decided on law, simply because she saw it as "the most reliable and interesting way of making a living."

After graduation, she attended law school at the University of Alabama, where a professor told her that she should consider becoming a district attorney because, as he said, "You have those kinds of morals." Despite this, she was intent on going into private practice until a friend recommended her for a position at the US Attorney's Office in Montgomery.

She agreed to interview, but she recalls sitting in her car across from the courthouse thinking and praying, "God, I really don't know why I'm doing this. This is not the kind of work that I envision, but

"Sometimes bringing criminals to the end of themselves by getting them convicted of a crime may be truly showing them grace."



please help me to go into this with an open heart." During the interview with the US attorney (who she later discovered was a member of a PCA church) and the chief criminal attorney (also a Christian) she realized that this was the career God intended for her.

Working as a federal prosecutor means that Charysse and her colleagues handle cases that are too complex in their scope to be dealt with by local jurisdictions. That is, if a crime is committed against the government or a government agency, involves victims who either live in or were forcibly moved to more than one of the ninety-four US districts, or involves other interests that the federal government has chosen to protect (such as civil rights violations), it is considered a federal offense. Charysse has handled cases ranging from mail fraud to bank robbery to murder for hire.

"It does get ugly," she states, "and you do become a little calloused, except for crimes against children. Those are enraging. When you see that kind of depravity,

when you see people who are hurt, particularly by violent or sexual crimes, that can get so discouraging. More than once I have gone to God with what I thought was a terrible crime or other terrible outcome in a case. He's still teaching me to trust Him."

Charysse feels strongly about how her career and her faith meet: "God is all about justice." If anything, she says her faith provides the best foundation for being a prosecutor "because it allows me to do something good for my community and try to make the world a better place—or as good as it can be in this world that's fallen. Sometimes, bringing [criminals] to the end of themselves by getting them convicted of a crime may be truly showing them grace, because you're stopping their foolishness, at least for the time being. It may only stop for fifteen minutes, or until they're out of prison again, but it gives them a chance to stop and consider the course that their life has taken."

In the twenty-two years Charysse has spent as a federal criminal prosecutor, she has never considered switching to the defense side. Her job has not always been smooth sailing, but she says that it has been very interesting and rewarding. "I would probably be a pretty good defense lawyer," she says, "but I have no desire to represent people who have been charged with crimes. I like being on the side I'm on. You can make a whole lot more money in private practice, but I don't think I could sleep as well at night." 



REDEEMING THE BROKEN

— by Ashley Lesondak '03

A day at a time.” That is how Dr. Mike Del Vecchio ’82 describes his life and work in Pennsylvania. The father of four and a pediatric hospitalist, Mike is a living representation of perseverance and unyielding faith.

Though he grew up in rural Alabama “beyond the suburbs,” Mike has spent the last sixteen years taking care of sick children in the bustling metropolis of Philadelphia. His call to the city first began at Covenant during his undergraduate years. There, Mike encountered a few passionate individuals who would instill in him the desire to minister in urban areas.

Mike came to Covenant for several reasons, including the presence of his older sister, Linda. And though many students at his Christian high school were avoiding Christian colleges in favor of Ivy League schools, Mike chose to attend Covenant and study engineering from a Reformed perspective. During his junior year, Mike changed his major to biology in order to become a doctor. He had been around the practice of medicine his entire life—his father was a doctor—yet only decided to pursue this career path

while under the teaching of Professors John Lothers and Ray Dameron at Covenant. He remembers Dr. Lothers as the “cornerstone of the biology department,” and appreciates the opportunities he had in college to volunteer in local hospitals and children’s group homes.

After Mike earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Covenant in 1982, he studied medicine at Vanderbilt University and later spent his residency as a pediatrician in Birmingham, Alabama. But the call to urban ministry that Mike first experienced at Covenant led him and his family to Philadelphia in 1991. He now practices medicine at Temple University Children’s Medical Center and cites

patient care as the best part of the job. Mike compares his career to that of a marriage counselor, accurately identifying and describing the call all believers have to help redeem a broken world. In the Reformed tradition, he says, there is no distinction between the sacred and the



from Tarrant

secular. Being a faithful physician is an outworking of Mike's belief in the integration of his faith and his work.

There is no such thing as a typical day for a pediatric hospitalist. Mike works both day and night shifts, making his life anything but ordinary. This variance in work schedule, he says, has been a blessing to him and his family over the years because it has allowed him to spend more time at home during the day with his children. Mike and his wife, Cindy (Smallman) Del Vecchio, whom he first spotted across Covenant's Great Hall during his college years, are the proud parents of four children: Anna, Sarah, Luke, and Grace. Mike is especially thankful for the extra time his schedule allows him to spend with Luke, who has autism. Mike describes Luke as a three-year-old in an eleven-year-old body who demands a parent during every waking hour. Though Luke is in constant need

of attention, Mike believes he has "done more good for [the Del Vecchio] family than any other person or experience."

Mike lives each day with an unyielding faith and a sincere humility. "Either you believe God is sovereign and loving or you don't," he states. And though his words sound casual, he makes such claims with profound meekness and conviction.

"All of life is part of God using us to redeem a broken world in some form or fashion."

"I integrate my faith in every moment that I breathe. The job's just part of it. . . . God calls us to an array of things. Whether I'm at the hospital working with a sick kid, working at

home with my autistic son . . . or if I'm painting the house like I was today, it's all the same thing in reality. If there's something you can do to God's glory, if it's your calling, you're going to work at it as best you can. Certainly there are times where it may seem like there is more of a sacred component to it, but I really think the Reformed faith [explains] it the best: all of it is part of God using us to redeem a broken world in some form or fashion."

The Reformed principles taught at Covenant have stayed with Mike and Cindy since their college years and are clearly evidenced in their work, in their church – New Life Philadelphia, of which Mike is an elder; and in their family. And when asked about his goals for the future, Mike candidly responds, "My goal is to finish well, fulfill the Lord's calling . . . and pray I don't implode." 🙏





Revitalized

Jim Grauley '82 is a man of startling accomplishment and humility. As the real estate development executive and president of the Bank of America Community Development Corporation (BACDC), Jim oversees projects throughout the country to rebuild and revitalize disinvested communities. The BACDC is the premier community development corporation of its kind in the United States and is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year.

Jim's projects are focused in fifteen major metropolitan areas and include the recent revitalization and development of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District in Atlanta, the redevelopment of the First Ward and Garden District in

downtown Charlotte, and the redevelopment of Cityview in the Parramore neighborhood of Orlando.

These projects span a great variety of community-driven visions, specific to the city in which they are implemented. In Jim's words, the BACDC "brings the technical and finan-

"This organization brings the technical and financial capacity, as well as the experience, to the visions and dreams of communities that organize to improve and revitalize themselves."

cial capacity, as well as the experience, to the visions and dreams of communities that organize to improve and revitalize themselves."

By partnering with other organizations (non-profits, for-profits and public agencies) and providing financial support such as loans, grants and direct financing, the BACDC brings the backing—financial and organizational—of a huge corporation to the people who are close enough to these



— by Amy Robinson '06

communities to know their real needs. All projects are focused on the common goals of economic sustainability, community development, and environmental and neighborhood stability. Thus, the BACDC brings realistic definition to the visions and dreams of the local people and ensures that the changes made will be lasting ones.

So far, Jim and the BACDC have built tens of thousands of affordable housing units, including the construction of new homes, the redevelopment of distressed properties, and the development of mixed-use properties. In places such as the First Ward and

Garden District in Charlotte, hundreds of well-designed, carefully planned housing units have been made available to low-income families and middle-income families alike. With a variety of housing types and a wide range of prices, these communities have been strengthened through diversity and heavy redevelopment.

As president of the BACDC, Jim views his position at this remarkable corporation as his opportunity to live out his faith using his natural gifts and the experiences that have prepared him for the job. The son of a minister, Jim grew up under the example of a father who served his congregation well. At the time Jim enrolled at Covenant, however, he was unsure of how to live out that same commitment without entering the ministry, to which he felt no particular draw. One of Covenant's greatest gifts to him, he says, was the concept of the integration of his faith and learning.

It was this theme that led him to understand that his dual degree in engineering would be no less effective in leading him to a career where his gifts would best serve the kingdom than any other degree at Covenant. So, after three years at Covenant, he completed the pre-engineering program at Georgia Tech and then worked as a design engineer before earning a master's in engineering from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

After graduate school, Jim worked for a predecessor of Bank of America, doing mergers and acquisitions. Though he was good at the work and enjoyed it, he felt frustrated by his distance from his true passion of economic development. He heard about the subsidiary that is now known as the BACDC and expressed his interest

in those projects to its president. Before long, the company opened an office in Atlanta and Jim began working on developments in the metro area in 1992.

Four years later, Jim met and married Christy. In the eleven years they've been married, Jim and Christy have borne five children: Nina, Amy Brooke, Malcolm, Margaret Anne, and James. When Jim talks about his family, he speaks joyfully of the way they have impacted his life, changing his priorities and refocusing his energies.

Their lives are now geared toward the careful and love-imbued rearing of their children. Christy works in the home, investing herself and her gift for teaching in the kids. Both parents invest time in their church, Intown Community Church, teaching

Sunday school classes and participating in community groups. "I see it as a priority," says Jim of his home and church life, "for where I focus my energies and resources in ministry—given the critical window of our children's spiritual development, education, and

growth."

Jim's life as he describes it is one that has been fraught with blessing. Through the legacy of faith in his and his wife's families, they have been blessed. Through the extraordinary education afforded him at Covenant, Georgia Tech, UNC, and a year as a Loeb Fellow at Harvard University, he has been blessed. Through the desires God placed early in Jim's heart, longing to serve the inner cities and to better understand how to minister to those who have less, he was led to a career that is blessing thousands upon thousands. 🙏



A New Literacy: Reading the Internet

When considering kids and the Internet, parents' thoughts often turn toward protecting them from harmful content. Health-conscious caregivers worry that children spend too many sedentary hours in front of computer monitors, increasing the risk of obesity and damage to eyesight. As a parent who is also a teacher educator, I find myself asking a new question about kids on the Internet recently. How is the Internet affecting my daughter's reading ability? What new skills does she need to effectively use current technology?

Teachers and reading researchers are asking these same questions and are beginning to develop helpful answers. Considering the Internet's popularity and potential, parents and teachers are paying attention to its impact on today's student population. How can we understand this new literacy tool and maximize its benefits?

Reading online is firmly embedded in a solid foundation of competence with printed text. Children who struggle with vocabulary skills and comprehension strategies when reading printed text experience frustration when reading online and may have difficulty realizing the Internet's potential as a learning resource. In addition to basic word recognition and vocabulary, online reading and research requires advanced development of cognitive skills such as determining importance, summarizing, and skimming and scanning.

Adults who guide technology use with children will benefit from a clear understanding of the strategies needed to read multi-media formats. The first essential skill Internet users must develop is to establish a purpose for the search and stick to it. While hypertext links engage



by Rebecca Pennington '82, Assistant Professor of Education

young readers and offer choices, they may also distract their attention and overload short term memory.

Second, young searchers need to develop expertise with locating appropriate information efficiently. Kids can spend hours "googling" topics without direction and waste precious learning time. They need direct guidance regarding search engines, key words, and

"How is the Internet affecting my daughter's reading ability?"

search processes. Adults can model Internet reading strategies and help them negotiate the many options vying for their attention. Laurie Henry suggests children remember the acronym SEARCH: "Set a purpose for searching, Employ effective search strategies, Analyze search-engine results, Read critically and synthesize information, Cite your sources, and [ask] How successful was your search?" ("SEARCHing for an Answer: The Critical Role of New Literacies While Reading on

the Internet," *The Reading Teacher* 59 [2006]: 618).

A third crucial skill for effectively navigating the online environment is managing the barrage of graphics, including charts, diagrams and flashy advertisements aimed at young consumers. Kids may not know the difference between valid sources and those designed to influence opinions or promote products. Partnering with children to work on projects or locate products enables parents to help them build wise consumer decision-making skills and develop careful research habits.

Parents and older siblings can have fun and assist younger children with newly emerging skills by exploring tools such as Internet Workshops and Internet Scavenger Hunts.

Reading the Internet successfully is an important capability for young citizens in 21st century society. Christian parents who envision preparing their children to engage and transform culture will ensure that they can use these "new" tools well.



"Stars"

photographed by Ken McElrath '85

In the *Desert Dialogues* series, of which "Stars" is one piece, Ken McElrath '85 seeks a positive connection with his current southwestern locale.

"The 'dialogue' is about an emotional engagement with desert forms and a discourse with the photographic medium," says the Phoenix, Arizona, resident. "Through the interplay of color, shape, tone, focus, framing, and scale, I seek to decrease the dependency on narrative by engaging formal means to push the boundaries of both plasticity and expressiveness within the photographic medium."

Ken hopes that his photography elicits responses and feelings not directly related to the subject matter.

He and his wife, Donna, have three children, two of whom are students at Covenant. In addition to his work in photography, Ken leads a marketing agency he founded called CAZABBA Studios. He co-authored the book *The Ascent of a Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character and Influence* with Bill Thrall and Bruce McNicol.

To view more of Ken's photography, visit kenmcelrath.com.



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