
Thank You

Thank you for being a part of our
2025 Alumni Awards Banquet.
We are grateful for the opportunity
to gather together to recognize the
accomplishments of our alumni.

For more information on our alumni awards
and becoming involved at Concordia St. Paul
visit one.csp.edu/welcome.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Awards

2025

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL

PROGRAM

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Rev. Dr. Brian Friedrich, B.A. '79, *President*

DINNER

PRESENTATION OF THE ALUMNI AWARDS

Sarah Glad, *Director of Philanthropy & Engagement*

ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Lee Belmas, B.A. '85

Angie (Beaumont) Biersach, M.A. '07

Joy (Blasingame) Mueller, B.A. '77, M.A. '98

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Anne Neilitz, B.A. '00, M.A. '09

SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

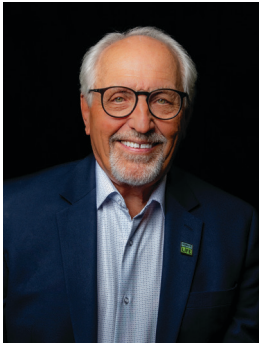
Michelle (Moorhead) Diercks, B.A. '91

Becky (Tegtmeier) Grossmann, B.A. '85

Andrew Jones, B.A. '06

CLOSING REMARKS & PRAYER

Sarah Glad, *Director of Philanthropy & Engagement*



Alumni Distinguished Service

Lee Belmas

B.A. '85

Lee Belmas has devoted more than five decades to education, ministry, and community service. He attended Concordia University, St. Paul, from 1983 to 1985 to earn his Director of Christian Education certification, building on a public-school teaching career that began in 1971.

From 1971–1983, Lee taught in Wisconsin schools: fifth grade in Superior (1971–1973); third/fourth grade and varsity boys' basketball in Mellen (1973–1975); and fifth grade in Rhinelander (1975–1983), where he also served as a teaching principal and coached multiple sports.

Called to district leadership, Lee served 28 years as Assistant to the President of the North Wisconsin District, LCMS (1985–2012). His portfolio spanned youth, adult, and older-adult ministry; care and family ministry; a resource library; and support for retired pastors. He founded and helped fundraise for the Every Kid to Camp initiative at Camp Luther, opening the camp experience to children who might otherwise miss it.

In retirement, Lee continues to serve church workers in the area of ministerial health and wellness and remains deeply involved at St. Mark Lutheran Church in Wausau. He's led a men's Bible study for 18 years. This group conducts community service projects—including clothing, toy, and school supply giveaways, quilts, and meal boxes. Lee makes monthly nursing home visits, leading mini worship services and communion.

Lee's lay leadership includes service on school boards (one as president), multiple church councils (one as chair), and both past and current call committees. He also worked as an usher at Green Bay Packers home games from 2015–2022. Camp Luther honored Lee's legacy by establishing the Lee Belmas "Every Kid to Camp" Endowment Fund, which has enabled several thousand children to attend camp at no cost to their families.



Alumni Distinguished Service

Angie (Beaumont) Biersach

M.A. '07

Angie (Beaumont) Biersach, M.A. '07 has dedicated her career to walking alongside children and families through life's challenges and joys. She earned her Master of Arts in Human Services with a concentration in Family Life Education from Concordia University, St. Paul, in 2007.

With nearly three decades of experience, Angie has worked in children's hospitals, nonprofit agencies, and community organizations before establishing her own private practice in the North Shore communities of Milwaukee, Wisc. She remains a Certified Child Life Specialist, Family Life Educator, and Infant Massage Instructor. In November 2024, she expanded her impact by founding Beaumont Consulting, LLC, a healthcare educational consulting practice serving Milwaukee, Ozaukee, and parts of Waukesha Counties. In addition to her work with children and families, Angie also serves as a Menopause Specialist Coach, further broadening her commitment to supporting women's health and well-being.

A member of Fox Point Lutheran Church since 2007, Angie is actively involved in her congregation, where she leads a Mom-to-Mom group and teaches baby and parent massage classes. Her work is deeply rooted in compassion and service, reflecting her belief in building strong, supportive communities.

Outside of her professional life, Angie finds joy in family. She and her husband are the proud parents of two children, a daughter currently in college and a son entering high school, as well as the family's beloved black lab. Angie credits her own village of mentors and friends, and her faith community for guiding and encouraging her in her journey, just as she has devoted her career to guiding others.



Alumni Distinguished Service

Joy (Blasingame) Mueller, B.A

B.A. '77, M.A. '98

Joy (Blasingame) Mueller says her greatest accomplishments are found in her family—married for 47 years to Paul Mueller, B.A. '77, mother to three children (two CSP alumni), and grandmother to seven. At the heart of it all is her faith in Jesus Christ as her Savior, which has guided her life and work.

Joy began her studies at St. Paul's College, Concordia, Mo., before transferring to CSP. She earned a B.A. in Elementary Education and K–12 Physical Education from CSP, followed by an M.A. in Education, multiple certifications, and a Sixth Year Certificate in Educational Administration from Mankato State University.

Joy Mueller has worked around the globe. She served the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) as Evangelistic Missionary in Liberia, West Africa, among the Kisi People (1983-1990), worked with the Department of Education and Health, World Health Organization, and the Christian Health Association of Liberia. She organized immunization campaigns and developed health education opportunities. She developed a K-5 school in the “bush” of Liberia, serving as Principal, and training the teachers.

Later, Joy served as the African Regional Director for LCMS projects (2006-2008), working in 24 African countries, developing sustainable and reproducible education, health, and agricultural projects. She served as an educational consultant in Africa and Jamaica, and in Malawi as a staff developer, evaluating literacy and HIV/AIDS curriculum.

In the U.S., Joy devoted nearly two decades to North St. Paul–Maplewood–Oakdale Schools in Minnesota as a middle school instructional coach, curriculum leader, and program coordinator. She also served as principal at Trinity Lutheran School in Portland, Ore., and later as an associate professor in the College of Education at Concordia University, Portland, retiring in 2019.

Today, Joy continues to serve on the board of Salam Ministries and leads women's Bible study. In her free time, she enjoys pickleball, tennis, traveling, and most of all, time with her husband, children, and grandchildren.



Educator of the Year

Anne Neilitz

B.A. '00, M.A. '09

Anne Neilitz transferred to Concordia University, St. Paul in 1997 and graduated in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Lutheran Confessionalism. She went on to complete a Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction with a K–12 Reading Endorsement at CSP in 2009. Over the years, she has been blessed by many CSP connections, especially through her advisor and mentor, Dr. Lonny Maly, who later nominated her for this award.

Her vocation in Lutheran education spans 25 years. She began her ministry at East St. Paul Lutheran School (2000–2004), later serving at St. Paul's Lutheran School in Prior Lake (2004–2018). From 2010–2019, she also taught as an adjunct professor in CSP's graduate program in Curriculum and Instruction. Since 2018, she has served as administrator and middle school teacher at Prince of Peace Lutheran School in St. Cloud, Minn. In addition to her school roles, she has been active in Vacation Bible School, church youth ministry, LCMS Youth Gatherings, and Lutheran school accreditation teams.

In 2022, Anne was diagnosed with stage IV breast cancer, a challenge that has only deepened her faith and sense of mission. Since December of that year, she has lived with no active cancer growth while continuing treatment. Reflecting on her journey, she holds fast to Psalm 37:5, her confirmation verse: “Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.”

Faith and family remain at the heart of Anne's calling. She and her husband, David, have been married since 2002 and are blessed with three children: Maddux, a freshman at CSP; Samuel, a high school sophomore; and Steven, an 8th grader at Prince of Peace.



Service to the Church

Michelle (Moorhead) Diercks

B.A. '91

Michelle (Moorhead) Diercks has dedicated her life to teaching God's Word and encouraging others to rest in His promises. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree at Concordia University, St. Paul in 1991, graduating with certification as a Director of Christian Education (DCE), minors in Youth and Family Ministry, and certification in elementary education.

Michelle began her ministry teaching English as a second language in China, where she loved her students, and later served for nine years as a DCE. Over the past 30 years, she has continued to share the Gospel through teaching, leading retreats, writing, and podcasting. Her podcast, *Peace in His Presence*, has reached listeners in 105 countries and was named one of Podcast Magazine's Top 50 Mom Podcasts for three consecutive years. She also provides free online Bible study resources, including reading plans, devotionals, and journal pages.

In recent years, Michelle has published two Bible studies, *Promised Rest: Finding Peace in God's Presence* (2022) and *Promised Hope: Finding Peace in God's Faithfulness* (2024), where she weaves together Scripture and her personal story to help readers experience God's peace and hope. She also serves as a Christian life coach, guiding women through seasons of overwhelm by pointing them to God's promises.

Michelle's commitment to faith and service flows into her family life as well. She and her husband, Troy, have been married for over 26 years and live on their farm in eastern Iowa, where they serve their local congregation. Their two sons, Jacob and Matthew, are preparing for pastoral ministry, continuing the family's legacy of service to the church.



Service to the Church

Becky (Tegtmeier) Grossmann

B.A. '85

Becky (Tegtmeier) Grossmann has dedicated her life to sharing God's Word through Bible translation. At Concordia University, St. Paul, she collaborated with her advisors to build a Bible Translation Studies major, earning her degree in 1985. Alongside her studies, she gained cross-cultural experience through an internship in El Paso, Tex., and was deeply involved in campus life—participating in band, student choirs, student council, and serving two years as a resident assistant.

Becky answered the Lord's call to mission work with Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT) in 1986. Over the years, she has served in multiple roles: Language Programs Assistant, Language Programs Manager, Bandi Translation Advisor, and Translation Consultant for Bandi, Dan, Maan, Themne, and Gola language projects. She has contributed to both the New Testament and the whole Bible translation efforts. To further her expertise, Becky earned both a master's degree and a doctorate in Bible translation.

Her professional journey also included teaching English and study skills at Waubensee Community College in Aurora, Ill., and Kalamazoo Community College in Michigan, where she served as adjunct faculty from 2006–2013.

Music has remained a lifelong joy, whether through church choir, solo work, or community ensembles. More importantly, Becky's foundation of faith—rooted in a family legacy of Christian witness—has guided her path since childhood. As she prayed for missionaries growing up, God placed the desire for translation work on her own heart.

Becky and her husband, Al, met in Sierra Leone and later served together in Liberia from 1992–1996. Married for 34 years, they are blessed with four adult children and four grandchildren. Reflecting on her ministry of more than 25 years, Becky gives all praise and glory to God for the privilege of serving His mission around the world.



Service to the Church

Andrew Jones

B.A. '06

Andrew Jones lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with his wife, Stephanie (Olson), B.A. '07. Married in 2008, they enjoy writing, hiking, and adventuring together. You can often find them in a national park, at the bookstore, or on the search for the perfect pizza.

After graduating from Concordia University, St. Paul, Andrew joined the university staff as campus ministry associate, serving until 2009. He and Stephanie then moved to Ankara, Turkey, where they taught English from 2009–2011. From 2011–2013, they served with the LCMS Office of International Mission in Germany, where Andrew was the youth and education assistant at Trinity Lutheran in Frankfurt.

In 2013, Andrew began studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, earning a Master of Divinity (2017) and a Master of Sacred Theology (2018). He was ordained into the pastoral ministry on August 5, 2018, and since then has served as pastor of First Lutheran Church and Preschool in Concord, California. He has also been a guest instructor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, teaching homiletics courses.

In addition to his pastoral work, Andrew has written extensively. He is the author of two books published by Concordia Publishing House—*Ten Questions to Ask Every Time You Read the Bible* and *Ten Lies Satan Loves to Tell*. He has also spoken as a keynote and sectional presenter at a variety of conferences on topics including spiritual formation, biblical fluency, Sabbath rest, and curiosity.

His encouragement to the church and the world is ever this refrain: *Curiosity is an act of love.*

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Awards

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL

PAST RECIPIENTS

ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

1979 Mr. Carl E. Schroeder, H.S. '28, J.C. '30
1980 Rev. Dr. Oswald C.J. Hoffmann, J.C. '32
1981 Mrs. Linda (Guse) Walgenbach, J.C. '62
1982 Rev. Dr. Willard L. Burce, J.C. '43
1983 Rev. Clarence H. Pauling, H.S. '28, J.C. '30
1984 Rev. Herbert E. Hoefler, J.C. '61
1985 Rev. John G. P. Naumann, H.S. '23, J.C. '25
1986 Rev. Berthold O. Streufert, H.S. '35, J.C. '37
1987 Rev. Arlen Bruns, H.S. '32, J.C. '35
1988 Dr. Edward C. May, J.C. '40
1989 Rev. Dr. Martin Lieske, H.S. '29, J.C. '31
1990 Rev. Ewald Mueller, H.S. '34, J.C. '37
1991 Rev. Louis F. Brandes, H.S. '09, J.C. '11
1992 Rev. Fred Miller, H.S. '28, J.C. '30
1993 Rev. Warren H. Davis, B.A. '69
1994 Rev. Dr. Alvin, H.S. '50, J.C. '52
Mrs. Sylvia Franzmeier, J.C. '56
1995 Rev. Dr. William F. Meyer, H.S. '58, J.C. '60
1996 Ms. Mary K. Murray-Boyd, B.A. '73
1997 Dr. Delphin L. Schulz, H.S. '43
1998 Rev. Dr. Dale D. Hansen, J.C. '52
1999 Rev. James P. Lauer, B.A. '57
2001 Dr. Robert T. Kuhn, H.S. '55, J.C. '57
2003 Dr. Lorman Petersen, H.S. '34, J.C. '36
Mr. Phil Fandrei, H.S. '51
Mrs. Rhoda Bork, B.A. '69
2005 Dr. Ella Gates-Mahmoud, B.A. '97, M.A. '99
Rev. Vernon Gundermann, H.S. '55, J.C. '57

Rev. Gerhard Michael Jr., H.S. '57, J.C. '59
Mr. James R. Spitzack, J.C. '63
Dr. LeRoy Wilke, B.A. '72
2007 Capt. Rev. Jonathan Frusti, B.A. '76
Mrs. Darlene Johnson, J.C. '55
Mr. Charles Nuernberg, H.S. '53, J.C. '56
Rev. Dr. Stephen Stohlmann, J.C. '62
2009 Rev. Kevin Bonine, B.A. '75
Rev. Dr. Roger Theimer, B.A. '77
Ms. Jane Wilke, B.A. '75
2011 Mr. Gerald Fiechtner, H.S. '55
Mr. Stephen O'Hara, B.A. '02
Rev. Dr. Luther Otto, H.S. '55, J.C. '57
Ms. Barbara Porter, M.A. '03
Mr. Fredrick Voigtmann, H.S. '58, J.C. '60
2013 Mrs. Gretchen (Gienapp) Beecroft, B.A. '67
Rev. Dr. Eugene Bunkowske, H.S. '53, J.C. '55
Mrs. Sally (Clingenpeel) Cordes, J.C. '55
Dr. Rebecca Thomley, M.A. '02
Rev. James Vehling, H.S. '58, J.C. '60
2015 Linda (Ferber) Anderson, B.A. '70
Diane (Heintz) Borchardt, B.A. '76
Rev. Robert Cordes, H.S. '53, J.C. '55
Rev. Robert Smith, J.C. '61
2017 Thomas Kuseske, H.S. '64, B.A. '68
Rev. Dr. David Preuss, H.S. '57, J.C. '59
Rev. Dr. Robert Rahn, H.S. '54, J.C. '56
Alice Smith, J.C. '62, M.A. '00
2018 Dr. Allan Buckman, H.S. '61
Timothy Hetzner, B.A. '78
Susan Hewitt, M.A. '06

Margaret (Rickers) Hinchey, B.A. '75
Paul Wessel, B.A. '97

2019 Dr. Michael A. Brooks, Jr., B.A. '08
Rev. Kelly Chatman, A.A. '73
Rev. Dr. Daniel Mattson, J.C. '62
Rev. William Otte, H.S. '64, A.A. '66
2020 Michael Flynn, B.A. '75
Joseph Fountain, B.A. '68
Rev. Timothy Runtsch, B.A. '86
2021 Rev. Dr. Robert Kolb, J.C. '61
Col. Kevin Olson, M.A. '09
2022 Rev. Dr. Robert Holst, H.S. '54, J.C. '56
Re. James Laatsch, A.A. '61
Jamie Walker, B.A. '07, M.B.A. '19
2023 Rev. Dan Galchutt, B.A. '00
Jim Schlie, COL (Ret) USA, H.S. '60, A.A. '62
Chanda Smith Baker, M.A. '09
Dr. Lori (Luckwaldt) Utech, B.A. '79
2024 Tom Evans, B.A. '81
Domonique Gilmer, B.A. '11

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

2018 Lee Ann Evans, B.A. '81
2019 Joy (Blasingame) Mueller, B.A. '77, M.A. '98
Janet Pesch, B.A. '91
Koryn Saunders, B.A. '01
Lee Vang, B.A. '02
2020 Ryan Austin, M.A. '02
Dean Dunavan, B.A. '91
Linnette Fehr, B.A. '82
Rodney Lenz, B.A. '79
2021 Laura Hillman, B.A. '09
Peter Klemp, B.A. '92
Noorulain Syed, B.A. '09
2022 DeWayne Combs, Jr., B.A. '99
Rebecca (Wiegert) Fritz, B.A. '88
Michele (Rodemeyer) Pickel, B.A. '76
2023 Wendy (Wedo) FitzHenry, B.A. '95
2024 Michael Houston, B.A. '04
Brittany Larson, M.A. '17

SERVICE TO THE CHURCH

2020 Kathryn (Day) Freudenburg, B.A. '68
Rev. Robert Gehrke, B.A. '78
Rev. James Kroonblawd, B.A. '82
Sandy (Hilbert) Wendelin, B.A. '82, M.A. '04
2021 Enith (Degler) Bailey, B.A. '69
Mary (Schultz) Golnitz, B.A. '71
Rev. Bruce Harrmann, B.A. '71
William Johnson, B.A. '79
Amanda (Romba) Knoell, B.A. '00
2022 Paul Otte, B.A. '69
David Saving, B.A. '78
Denise Sprengeler, B.A. '81
Rev. Dr. Larry Stoterau, A.A. '67
2023 Gary Bach, B.A. '82
Brian Betts, B.A. '92
Karen (Pesch) Inwards, B.A. '91
2024 Rev. Aaron Gehrke, B.A. '06
Rev. Keith Grimm, B.A. '87
Paulette (Polly) Wegner, B.A. '87
Sarah Wippich, B.A. '09