

It may be true that even when we graduate from Ohio University, we can never really leave it behind. This story celebrates the relationships of alumni and the bonds that — once made here — can't be broken.



As far as friendships go, college is the golden age of connections. It's where we make friends for life, join groups that define us for years and sometimes, fall in love with our future spouse or meet the perfect business partner.

Friendships have long fascinated Stocker Professor of Communication Studies William Rawlins, who has studied them for more than 30 years and is the author of "Friendship Matters." He is well aware of the significance of college as a particularly vibrant time for new friendships.

"People make a lot of the friends who stand the greatest chance of being sustained across their lives during college," Rawlins says. "There's good reason for that. Students are all pretty well in the same boat. They've got classes together and similar schedules. They're learning things, and they're figuring out who they are. There's really something to be said for being in these similar circumstances."

If only the same could be said about the years that follow graduation. Friendships often unravel as we find ourselves

scattered across the country, navigating complex work environments and social worlds that are usually quite different from our friends' new experiences.

But true friends find a way to hang on. Friends, Rawlins says, grant each other two freedoms: the freedom to be independent and the freedom to be dependent. Friends need each other, but also need their space to grow. "This is one of the mysteries of friendship," he says.

In this story, *Ohio Today* celebrates the connections that have survived graduation, the friendships that have strengthened, and the unbreakable bonds that had college as their starting point. Whether they play out in cyberspace — where one group of alums connects for a good cause — or at annual golf outings, the friendships in this story have one thing in common: They all call Ohio University home.

"I think wise people — and what I teach seriously, what I stress to my students — form the habit of making a place for friends in their lives," Rawlins says.

— Mariel Betancourt

Love is in the air — and the newsroom, too

Of all the relationships formed at Ohio University, it is perhaps in life-long romance that memories of Athens are most vividly preserved.

In that spirit, last fall the Ohio University Alumni Association asked couples who met here to enter the first-ever Ohio University Couples Contest. Forty-one pairs submitted entries.

Bruce and Deb (Emil) Jorgensen sent in the winning essay and received a two-night stay at the Ohio University Inn in April as well as meals at local restaurants and tickets to local events.

In her essay, Deb, BFA '71, described how the couple met (she was trying to sell her dead 1952 Plymouth, and Bruce, BSJ '71, answered the ad in the paper) and how, from that moment, they were friends. Soon they were meeting to talk politics at the old Lantern bar on Court Street.

Eventually the friends became a couple, so much so that they were kicked out of Deb's apartment on a morals charge for cohabitation.

To make sure something like that never happened again, and, as Deb wrote, because "we *loved* each other," Bruce and Deb were married in the summer of 1970. In keeping with the spirit of the times, the bride was barefoot with wildflowers in her hair.

The Washington, N.J., couple (who have three grown children) remembered how politically charged the times were, and how *The Post* played a central role in their lives. Both Deb and Bruce worked at the newspaper (Bruce as an editorial cartoonist, and Deb as a typist).

And they continue to use the skills they learned at Ohio University. Deb (who was a graphic design major) has worked in that field her entire career, and Bruce has been for many years both a commercial artist and a syndicated editorial cartoonist.

All these years later, Deb is happy she talked Bruce out of buying the Plymouth, even though he wanted to. "He looked kinda cute . . . so I finally said, 'No! You're too nice a guy — the car died, and I won't sell it to you!'"

— *Stephen McKean*



--- Bruce Jorgensen, BSJ '71

--- Deb Emil Jorgensen, BFA '71

Kim Walker

The fine art of inspiration

The words of Phoebe Beasley's high school guidance counselor were so motivating: "You can't be an artist. There are no black artists."

Beasley, BFA '65, would prove her wrong — and then some. Her work has been exhibited in the Smithsonian Institution, featured as part of two presidential inaugurations and celebrated by private collectors. In 1998, she collaborated with Maya Angelou on a limited-edition book featuring the poems of Langston Hughes and several of Beasley's serigraphs (one appears on the table of contents and the facing page).

"It wasn't the easiest road," Beasley admits. "There was no script, no score."

Thankfully, she could draw on the advice of her professors: Aethelred Eldridge urged her to make her own path, not to follow the Jackson Pollocks of the world. She did. Henry Lin wanted her to be, not the best potter, but a self-disciplined artist. She is.

"When I got to Ohio University, they were so supportive of me being an artist," says Beasley, who — after her college graduation — taught high school art for four years at Cleveland's Glenville High School. There, she inspired one of her students to consider Ohio University.

"She was the main reason I decided to attend OU," says Robert Peppers, BFA '71 and MFA '73, an 18-year School of Art faculty member who, like Beasley, has worked in both collage and figurative art. "She was a major influence in my art-making."

She also did for Pepper and other African-American students what her guidance counselor failed to do for her.

"She showed us other black artists' work," says Pepper, who recalls being inspired by Beasley to buy one of the first books he ever paid for himself, "American Negro Art" by Cedric Dover. "I remember how encouraging that was."

— *Mary Alice Casey*

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To read romantic essays submitted for the Couples Contest, hear songs from an '80s band that still plays together and more tales of friendship, visit Ohio Today Online at www.ohio.edu/ohiotoday.



--- Susan Seiling, BSJ '95

--- Terrance Reimer, BFA '92

--- Rich Seiling

MICHAEL JONES

Picture perfect: Across the miles, alumni give tattered images a new life

At home in Syracuse, N.Y., Becky Sell answers an e-mail from fellow alumna Liz Condo, in Baton Rouge, La., as the two coordinate an upcoming trip to collect photos in need of restoration.

Just months later, digital copies of the photos find their way to Oakhurst, Calif., where yet another alumna, Susan Seiling, BSJ '95, and her husband, Rich, print them and ship them back to Operation Photo Rescue headquarters in Fredericksburg, Va.

This is just one example of how the complex network of Operation Photo Rescue works. The nonprofit depends on volunteers all over the globe to achieve one goal: digitally restore family photos damaged by natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, and ship high-quality prints of them to their owners.

And this network — which today spans the world and dozens of Ohio University

alumni — owes its inspiration in part to a photograph taken by Sell, BSVC '05.

It all started while Sell was working her first full-time job out of college as a staff photographer at the *Free Lance-Star* in Fredericksburg, Va. Back from a trip to Louisiana, she returned to the newsroom with a photo of a woman throwing out damaged family photos while cleaning up after Katrina destroyed her house.

Sell's photo editor at the time, Dave Ellis, took one look at the photo and decided to help. He knew he — and other photographers like him — had the skills needed to salvage those photos.

A couple of brainstorming sessions later, the two came up with the vision for OPR and set up shop about 70 miles northeast of New Orleans.

Operation Photo Rescue volunteers have restored more than 1,500 photos.

During an initial four-day visit in early 2006, they collected, photographed and digitally restored the first few images.

Now, some 18 months later, the organization unites more than 1,200 people representing 49 states and 37



REBECCA SELL

countries. OPR is responsible for the restoration of more than 1,500 photos belonging not only to victims of Katrina but also those who have survived other natural disasters and house fires.

For Rich Seiling, who studied at VisCom from 1991 to 1994, the work has been rewarding. The photos he and his wife, who co-own West Coast Imaging, print for OPR are quite different from the exhibition and art photos that come through their studio on any given day.

“Many of them are the typical photos we all have of babies, weddings and other special moments,” Seiling says. “But when you see these everyday images, they are that much more precious. These are the only photographic memories (the families) have left, and it’s great to give these people back their memories.”

Examples of the volunteers’ restoration work are posted on the OPR Web site, and the results can be stunning. A flawless black-and-white photo of a couple in formal attire was recreated from a yellowed original riddled with creases and even holes.

“The thank-you notes make it worth it,” Sell says, recalling a note from a man losing his sight, who was grateful to have his photos restored while he could still enjoy them.

She acknowledges that there are days she feels exhausted by the work of coordinating OPR. But the kindness of the volunteers, such as the Seilings, keeps her going. Their initial donation of 1,000 prints became 2,000 when they heard OPR was struggling to make ends meet.

“I don’t think I can put into words what the people at West Coast Imaging have done for OPR,” Sell says.

It’s all about the Ohio University connection, says Rich, whose company also employs custom printmaker Terrance Reimer, BFA ’92, another OPR volunteer. “If you see a fellow alumnus of the visual communication program out there, you root for them. We contacted Operation Photo Rescue and said ‘Hey, we’re OU alums and would love the chance to help out.’”

To learn more about Operation Photo Rescue or make a donation, please visit www.operationphotorescue.com.

— Erin Rutter Roberts

A true friend makes her mark



--- **Kari Rosenberg,**
BFA '03

Pure passion. That is how friends and faculty remember Kari Rosenberg, a graphic design major who graduated in 2003. Her vibrant personality spilled out into all aspects of her life, including her artwork.

“She took risks where no one else did. Her art was big and bold; her artwork was herself,” says Patricia Cue, chair of the School of Art’s graphic design program.

Thanks to friends and family, this passion lives on.

After Kari’s death in a 2005 car accident, students and faculty organized a benefit concert in Cincinnati that featured a silent auction of artwork donated by Ohio University professors and students as well prints of Kari’s artwork. The event provided the financial backing for the university’s Kari Rosenberg Scholarship.

Like Kari herself, this scholarship will take a unique approach. This year, faculty members plan to allow junior graphic design students to vote on which fellow classmate is the most imperative to the graphic design community. The selected recipient will mirror the instrumental and charismatic role Kari held in the department.

“Kari had an innate ability to affect people,” says Joe Anderl, BBA ’01, who helped organize the benefit. “You just wanted to be around her. She had friends everywhere she went. They weren’t just the lighthearted kind, either. These were true friends. You could see it in their eyes when Kari walked into a room. She was not a girl to love lightly.”

— Laura Yates



On the road again

What could be more fun than going on a road trip with a car full of friends? How about doing it every year? That’s exactly how a group of sisters from Theta Pi Alpha Sorority has kept in touch after graduation. For the past 20 years, nine sisters — who graduated between 1957 and 1960 — have been hitting travel hot spots across the United States to keep the bonds of friendship strong. They first bumped into one another at a class reunion and decided to take future gatherings into their own hands. “We thought we would have more fun making our own,” explains Della Greco, BSJ ’56 and MS ’57. At first, one sister hosted the rest at her house for a few days, but soon they decided to be more adventurous and have visited New York City, the Alamo, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and New Orleans, just to name a few.

— Sarah Ryan

Flying home, with all the latest technologies

With 50,000 takeoffs and landings every day in the United States alone, the skies are getting a bit crowded up there.

To maintain efficiency — and more importantly, safety — newer and better satellite technologies are in ever-increasing demand. And when Tim Murphy, MSEE '84, a technical fellow at Boeing Aircraft, is in need of aviation electronics research, he knows exactly where to look: his alma mater.

Murphy, a product of Ohio University's Avionics Engineering Center, is one of the world's foremost experts on avionics, which is, broadly defined, the study of navigation systems for aircraft. Because of its respected reputation and his own experiences there, Murphy has contracted the center to build and test prototypes of various satellite technologies for Boeing since 1996.

The relationship has proven to be mutually beneficial, with Boeing receiving top-quality research in the field, and Ohio researchers, faculty and students getting the opportunity to work on practical, real-world satellite applications. The university also has sent several students to Boeing over the years to work as interns at the company's Seattle headquarters. "They always do good work," says Murphy.

Currently, the center is helping to develop monitoring stations for the collection of data on the satellite constellation. Ohio University senior research engineer Trent Skidmore, a friend as well as a colleague of Murphy's on various industry standards groups, says the center's long history makes partnerships with companies such as Boeing possible.

Considering that over the past decades, the center has "worked on all of the major navigation systems that the world has used to get airplanes from point A to point B," Skidmore thinks the relationship with Boeing will be ongoing.

Murphy thinks so, too, and he plans to continue his work with the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science's Board of Advisors, on which he's served since 2005.

"I'm very interested in things like where the curriculum is going and how they're preparing students for the realities of working in engineering today," he says.

— *Stephen McKean*

Fifty years of friendship, and counting

Bob Wren must be pulling his ears from a third base in heaven.

The legendary baseball coach passed away a few years ago, but "the Bird" still gives signs to former players who reunite every year to celebrate the commitment to teamwork and, more importantly, to one's teammates, that he instilled in them.

Gathering at golf courses around Ohio since 1979, these old jocks have seen a few swings go south, and they've lost some of their compatriots. But come hell or high water or heart trouble, they shoot a few rounds, drink a few rounds and hearken back to a golden era of Ohio sports.

Don Lundstrom, a shortstop on the Mid-American Conference champion baseball teams of '54 and '56, says it all goes back to the iconically bespectacled Wren, BSED '43. "It was really our coach who kept us together," says Lundstrom, BSCOM '56 and BSME '56. "He was such a great guy."

Another person who has helped maintain the friendships is former All-American outfielder Dick Murphy — one of the four original progenitors of the gathering (along with Vince Costello, BSED '53 and MED '60; John Such, BSCOM '51; and Bill Bevan, BSED '53). An indefatigable organizer, Murphy yet again gathered his mates for the most recent outing held July 20–21 at the Black Hawk Golf Course in Columbus. "We just had a great camaraderie," says Murphy, BSCOM '55. "And it's still apparent to this day."

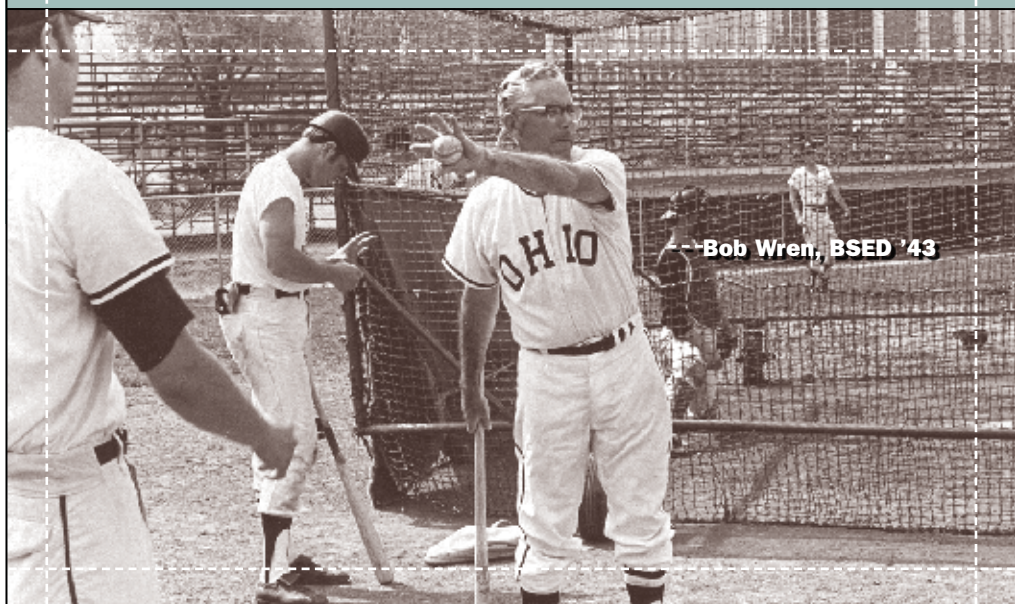
One thing the guys talk about is how much things have changed. There were, perhaps, more intertwining narratives back in the old days. Football coaches coached basketball, and baseball coaches coached golf. It may have been a time of the single wing and wooden bats, but one of the most remarkable things about the era is how they supported each other regardless of the sport.

"After 50 years, it's really good to get together with the guys you went to college with," says Chuck Bell, AB '55, a halfback on the '53 MAC championship football team.

Canton-based artist Lundstrom, who immortalized his old coach with a bronze statue in front of Bob Wren Stadium, puts it this way: "When Coach Wren was around at the golf outing, he used to say, 'You honor each other by being here.'"

In that spirit, Murphy is probably already organizing next year's event.

— *Stephen McKean*



— **Bob Wren, BSED '43**



PATY MITCHELL

--- Jody Gildersleeve, BSC '85

--- John Morgan, BSC '89

--- David Weber, BSED '88

--- Dan Reed, AB '85

--- Tim Reed

Where are they now? Still making music, of course

Something about Athens breeds bands. It might be the wealth of young talent — not to mention venues — combined with the town's affinity for homegrown sound. Whatever the mix of reasons, for musicians who play together at Ohio University, the bonds are hard to break.

Just ask the former rockers of Athens' own '80s band Myriad Creatures.

Decades after headlining the uptown weekend soundtrack, three members of this band continue to cross paths in the Bloomington, Ind., music scene.

Bassist Dan Reed, AB '85, is an associate professor of ethnomusicology. His brother, Tim, who attended Ohio in the '80s and '90s, teaches piano and voice. And Dave Weber, BSED '88, runs the successful Air Time Studios (which fittingly got its start recording Dan's group Monkey Puzzle).

Though they no longer play in the same band, they often see each other at

local concerts, says Dan Reed. They have many memories of the Myriad Creatures days, including Dan's personal favorite: the night they inspired throngs of patrons to stream out of O'Hooley's and dance on Union Street during a typical Athens spring downpour.

"We all shared a dream together of making a living as musicians and doing music that we hoped would change the world a little," Dan says. "We made music and laughed a lot, about in equal measures."

Dan, who now specializes in West African music, recalls his days in the language lab formerly in Ellis Hall, where he discovered music from all over the world that helped shape the band's sound. Myriad Creatures' high-energy originals also revealed influences of punk and new wave; covers included songs by The Police, King Crimson and the Talking Heads.

It was a Talking Heads song that helped

spark the Myriad Creatures reunion show last summer at Athens' beloved Casa Cantina. A gathering for friends was already in the works when Dan heard "The Great Curve," which Myriad Creatures used to cover, on the radio.

"I called Dave Weber," he says, "played him the song over the phone and said, 'We have to get back together!'"

The guys practiced just twice and were admittedly a bit rusty. Still, it was "really musically satisfying" to play in Athens, Dan says.

Some things — like The Union, where Myriad Creatures played its first gig — always stay the same.

"Athens will always feel like home," he says. "It's where I developed a sense of who I am. When you share those formative college experiences, and you remain friends well into your 40s, then you know you are friends for life."

— Anita Martin