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Rhetoric Newsletter

August 2021



Message from the Chair, Sara Drury

The 2020-2021 academic year was certainly one unlike any other. Like many departments at Wabash, the Rhetoric Department began the fall 2020 semester with innovations to create a residential, on-campus learning environment during a global pandemic. Students in RHE101 Public Speaking found themselves speaking in unexpected locations, including the Goodrich Ballpark, an outdoor tent on Harry Freeman Place, the Experimental Theater, and the Chapel. Carrying on the Speech Department's tradition of speaking with "room-filling energy," the faculty encouraged students to have "ballpark-filling energy" or "tent-filling energy" when they spoke. As the weather turned colder, faculty in the department worked with our peer tutors to instruct Wabash undergraduates on how to deliver presentations in online settings. Meanwhile, in other courses, faculty incorporated material about the pandemic experience, applying rhetorical analysis to institutional and public discourses to facilitate on-going learning. In addition to the core Rhetoric offerings, this year the department offered courses on Political Campaign Communication, Gender and Communication, Strategic Communication, Presidential Rhetoric, and Digital Rhetoric and Public Life in the 21st Century.



The Rhetoric Department continues to thrive as a major. In May 2021, we celebrated our in-person commencement with 22 graduates, the largest major in the graduating class. Our Wabash chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the communication honors society, had 10 members: Seth Gallman, Simon Hacker, Andrew Jumonville, Benjamin Manahan, Tyler Ramsey, Hunter Seidler, Michael (Dane) Smith, Brent Strahla, Pete Trotter, and Nicholas Winter. You can read more about the accolades of our students on pages 3 and 4 of this newsletter.

The coming year will bring new faces to the second floor of the Fine Arts Center. We bid farewell to Professor Cory Geraths, who leaves Wabash after four years as Visiting Assistant Professor of Rhetoric. We wish Professor Geraths well as he begins a tenure-track position at Eureka College in Illinois. Wabash Democracy & Public Discourse Program Associate Hayley Blonsley has left Wabash to work in the Mayor's Office in Portland, Oregon, where she will focus on public engagement. This fall, we are joined by Visiting Assistant Professor of Rhetoric Jordin Clark; WDPD Program Associate and Visiting Instructor of Rhetoric Chris Anderson; and WDPD Program Associate and Visiting Instructor of Rhetoric James Proszek. Professor Todd McDorman will continue for a second year as Acting Dean of the College.

In late August, we received the sad news that legendary Speech Professor Joseph O'Rourke had passed. We include reflections about Professor O'Rourke on page 2.

We thank all alumni who shared updates (see pages 13-14). If you would like to be included next year, please email your note to Ms. Julia Phipps, the Fine Arts Center Academic Administrative Coordinator, at phippsj@wabash.edu.

Cordially,
Professor Sara Drury, Chair and Associate Professor of Rhetoric

Wabash Mourns Joseph O'Rourke

By Jim Amidon '87



Joseph O'Rourke, Jr., who taught speech and debate at Wabash for 37 years, has died at the age of 93.

Affectionately nicknamed "Papa Joe" by his adoring students, O'Rourke joined the Wabash faculty in 1960 and taught continuously until his retirement in 1997. Together with Vic Powell, they produced generations of articulate communicators and brilliant lawyers, as well as state and national debate champs. O'Rourke chaired the Speech Department (now Rhetoric) for 20 years.

He was born May 11, 1928 in Davenport, Iowa and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated from Southwest High School in 1946, after which he enlisted in the Army and served as part of the General HQ staff during the occupation of Japan.

After his service, Joe returned to attend the University of Missouri for undergraduate studies and enlisted in the ROTC program. While at Missouri, he met the love of his life, Beverly Miller, while both were working together in the Theater Department.

Upon Graduation in 1952, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and served as an Information and Education Officer with multiple assignments stateside. Joe and Bev were married in 1952 and stood united for the next 66 years until Bev's passing in March of 2018.



Joe began his teaching career in Speech and Theater at the University of Hawaii-Hilo from 1954-

1956, after which he returned to University of Missouri to teach while earning a master's degree and Ph.D.

Bev and Joe moved to Crawfordsville in 1960 for what Joe described as "a temporary assignment." But the two of them fell in love with West Central Indiana and would spend the rest of their lives at Wabash in Crawfordsville.

Joe was very active in the community, serving in Kiwanis and at his church, St. John's Episcopal Church. He helped launch the Sugar Creek Players and Vanity Theater, was a leader of the Montgomery County Democrats, and was a founding member of the Montgomery County Leadership Academy. He was also instrumental in launching the Opportunities to Learn About Business program at Wabash.

At his retirement ceremony in 1997, friends from campus and alumni across five decades of Wabash alumni gathered to celebrate his accomplishments. Long-time Wabash Magazine Editor Steve Charles captured the event – and Joe's impact on Wabash students – perfectly in his [coverage of Joe's retirement ceremony](#). Follow-up letters from alumni appeared in a subsequent issue of Wabash Magazine, which included some of O'Rourke's famous witticisms.

He is survived by son Jerry (Linda) O'Rourke; grandsons Jonathan (Stacy) O'Rourke, Colin (Kristin) O'Rourke, and Christopher O'Rourke; niece Leslie Griffith and nephews Todd (Sue) and David (Susan) Griffith; and many great nephews.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Joseph O'Rourke, Jr. Award in Rhetoric, which is presented to the graduating senior with the best senior project in the Rhetoric Department. Gifts may be made through the Wabash Advancement Office, 301 West Wabash Avenue, Crawfordsville, IN 47933, [online at wabash.edu/give](http://www.wabash.edu/give), or by phone at 877-743-4545.

Online condolences are welcome at www.llesCares.Com



Celebration of Student Research



Simon Hacker '21 presents his senior project at the Celebration

On Friday, April 16, the college held its 21st Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work. Among the student presenters were three Rhetoric majors and two minors.

Pete Trotter '21, **Simon Hacker '21**, and **Joe LaRue '21** all presented the senior projects they developed in Fall 2020 during Senior Seminar. Pete's project was overseen by **Professor Cory Geraths** and was titled, "New Testament Narratives: Parables as Tools for Invitation and Identification in the Synoptic Gospels." Simon's project was supervised by **Professor Jennifer Abbott** and was titled, "Critical Rhetoric Analysis of Common Rhetorical Tropes in News Coverage of the Death Penalty." Joe's senior project was advised by **Professor Jeff Drury** and titled, "Coercive Administrative Rhetoric: Theories on Application and a Rhetorical Analysis of Donald Trump's June 1, 2020 Address." All three papers won awards; please read the article on p. 4 for details.

Two students pursuing Rhetoric minors presented work they developed in other core Rhetoric classes. **Connor Brens '21** presented the paper he prepared for RHE 350 Contemporary Rhetorical Criticism, entitled "Rhetorical Criticism of Tucker Carlson." **Andrea "AJ" Martino '22** shared his work from RHE 320 Classical Rhetoric. It was titled, "The Virtuous Zombie Slaying Dad: A Classical Analysis of *The Last of Us*."



Friends and roommates **Connor Brens '21** and **Simon Hacker '21** pose after their presentations at the Celebration



Joe LaRue '21 explains his senior project at the Celebration

NCA Research Presentation



Wabash senior **Brenton R. Strahla '21** presented his rhetorical criticism essay, "The Audacity of Obama: Covenantal Creation in Barack Obama's 2004 Keynote Speech," at the National Communication Association's 106th Annual Convention. Brenton's paper was competitively selected to appear on a panel sponsored by Lambda Pi Eta, the National Communication Association Honor Society, of which he is a member

of Wabash's chapter. Although the convention was originally scheduled to take place in Indianapolis, Brenton represented Wabash by submitting a virtual presentation of his research.

Lambda Pi Eta

Wabash's Alpha Gamma Nu chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the honor's society of the National Communication Association, added to its long history of student success during the 2020-2021 academic year. Led by LPH President **Simon Hacker '21** and the Rhetoric Department faculty, LPH inducted five new members: **Seth Gallman '22**, **Michael Dane Smith '22**, **Hunter Seidler '22**, **Pete Trotter '21**, and **Nicholas Winter '21**. These new members joined an illustrious group of Wabash men and will, we trust, continue to champion the importance of successful communication, persuasion, and truthful circulation of information in the coming years. These young men's success is particularly striking, set as it is against the enduring COVID-19 pandemic. Congratulations to Seth, Dane, Hunter, Pete, and Nick!

Brigrance Forum Lecture

In March 2021, [Dr. Dave Tell](#), Professor of Communication Studies and Co-Director of the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Kansas, visited campus virtually to deliver the 36th Brigrance Forum Lecture. His lecture, "Remembering Emmett Till," considered how people have memorialized the murder of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old African American boy from Illinois who was lynched in Mississippi on August 28, 1955. In the talk he discussed the history of public memorials to Till and the rhetoric surrounding the "official" and unofficial sites of Till's murder.

The lecture was based in part on the Dr. Tell's recent book of the same name, published in 2019 with the University of Chicago Press. The book has earned critical acclaim, including being named a 2019 "Book of the Year" by The Economist. Tell is accomplished as a rhetorical scholar as well as a digital humanist, having created the [Emmett Till Memory Project](#) and app.

Drawing on this expertise, Dr. Tell also delivered a lunch-time presentation, "Digital Storytelling for the Public Humanities," that offered practical advice about digital storytelling based on his own experience with a variety of projects. Both events were well-attended through Zoom and offered faculty, students, and staff numerous insights about the power of rhetoric for commemorating history and telling stories.



Rhetoric Student Awards

Rhetoric students have distinguished themselves as effective researchers, strong writers, and college leaders. This year, our majors received the following accolades:

Joseph O'Rourke, Jr. Prize



Simon Hacker
'21



Peter Trotter
'21

The Joseph O'Rourke, Jr. Prize in Speech is given annually to the top senior project in Rhetoric, as determined by the faculty. In 2021, given the unprecedented size of the senior class at 25 students, the faculty awarded the prize to two students:

Simon Hacker '21 and **Peter**

Trotter '21. The projects both demonstrated thoughtful analysis of their chosen texts, clear writing, and important lessons for the reader. The faculty felt they learned a lot from both analyses. Both students presented their projects as part of the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work in April (see p. 3 for more information). Congrats, Simon and Pete!

Nicholas McCarty Harrison Essay Award



Joseph LaRue
'21

The Nicholas McCarty Harrison Essay Award is awarded annually to the students who write the best essays in American studies. **Joseph LaRue '21** received this award for his Rhetoric senior project analyzing President Trump's rhetoric. Joseph presented his project as part of the Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work in April (see p. 3 for more information). Congrats, Joe!

Lewis Salter Memorial Award



Johnathan
"Kenny"
Coleman '22

All faculty at the college vote for the recipient of the Lewis Salter Memorial Award, given to the member of the junior class "who best exemplifies the characteristics of scholarship, character, leadership, and service Dr. Lewis Salter H'57 embodied." This year's winner was **Johnathan "Kenny" Coleman '22.** Kenny, a Rhetoric major and Black Studies minor, has served as a campus leader on race issues over the past few years, most recently as Chair of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies. Congrats, Kenny!

Distinction on Comprehensive Exams



Tyler Ramsey
'21

Tyler Ramsey '21 and **Peter Trotter '21** earned distinction on their comprehensive exams as part of the rhetoric major. Congrats, Tyler and Pete!

Moot Court

Like all College events last year, the 27th annual Moot Court competition looked quite different from prior years. While it was still a partnership between the Rhetoric Department and the Indianapolis Association of Wabash Men, this year's finals round was on March 24 rather than its typical late October date and occurred over Zoom rather than being conducted in person. The changes required **Professor Todd McDorman**, the event organizer, to develop new competition guidelines and all participants and judges to adapt to the new environment.

The 2021 case addressed issues related to the right to vote. Specifically, it considered a rule adopted by a state that allows certain felons to regain their voting rights after completing all terms of their criminal sentence including imposed financial terms. The arguments addressed two key questions: (1) whether the financial terms of the re-enfranchisement violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution by discriminating against the poor and (2) whether the same financial terms violate the Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which prohibits a "poll tax."

Thirty-four Wabash students participated in the competition and 13 advanced to the semi-finals round. The finalists were **Jakob Goodwin '23**, **Kwaku Sarpong '22**, **Cooper Smith '23**, and **Jake Vermeulen '21**. Vermeulen, the first four-time finalist in the competition's history, earned his first Top Advocate award in what was fierce competition. **Professor Jeff Drury** helped select the winner by serving as one of the finals round judges who asked tough questions of the advocates. His fellow judges included United States District Court Judge **Theresa Lazar Springmann**, Indiana Court of Appeals Judge **Leanna K. Weissmann**, and former competition winner **Nicholas Maraman '10**, Senior Attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Louisville.

It was another exciting competition despite its unconventional format. You can read more about the competition on the College's [website](#). We look forward to the next Moot Court competition in October 2021.



The finalists and judges of the 27th Moot Court competition.



Acting Dean of the College and Moot Court co-organizer Professor Todd McDorman presents **Jake Vermeulen '21** with the Top Advocate Award.

WDPD Update

Despite obvious challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic for in-person deliberation, the 2020-2021 academic year was a busy one for Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD). WDPD Director **Professor Sara Drury** was joined for a third year by Program Associate **Hayley Blonsley** to lead 13 Democracy Fellows and 17 Direct Admit students. The WDPD team facilitated 31 events, engaging more than 1000 people in virtual and in-person formats.

In Fall semester, WDPD hosted Constitution Day as well as our annual on-campus Mental Health outreach events virtually, continuing our partnerships with the Political Science Department, Counseling Services, and the Dean of Students Office. In addition, WDPD worked with the Chemistry department, facilitating events for CHE101, CHE111, and CHE361.

This year, WDPD hosted five free speech dialogues, led by **Pete Trotter '21**, **Morgan Seagrave '22**, **Bryce McCullough '23**, and **Clayton Allen '23**. This project team virtually hosted four professors who spoke about free speech and social media, censorship, tensions between private and public schools, and free speech laws in similarly developed and governed nations. In April 2021, this same group, with the addition of **Alex Rotaru '22**, designed and hosted an event that sought to dig deeper into the concept of unity in the face of division. Current students, staff, faculty, alumni, and other members of the Wabash community were invited to consider how to come together in their communities.



WDPD 2020-2021 Senior Democracy Fellows **Pete Trotter '21**, **Jared Timberman '22**, **Noah Miller '22**, and **Davionne Garrett '22**.

Throughout fall and spring, WDPD partnered with the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee to bring 6 events to campus in virtual and socially distanced formats. Led by **Davionne Garrett '22**, **Zachary-Mark Mills '22**, and **Mark Magnon '23**, these events touched on a variety of topics related to racial injustice, diversity, equity, and inclusion on and off campus. WDPD anticipates a continuation of this series in the 2021-2022 academic year and beyond as part of our ongoing commitment to anti-racism work.

This year, Wabash alumnus and Lilly Scholar **Jeremy Wentzel '14** partnered with WDPD, and together were awarded a Lead Forward Community Grant from the Lilly Scholars Network. WDPD hosted a Community Conversation on Diversity and Inclusion, an event co-sponsored by the City of Crawfordsville, the Mayor's Special Commission on Racial Equality, Humans United for Equality, and the League of Women Voters. The April 2021 event was held in two formats: one virtual and one socially distanced in-person.

WDPD said farewell and best wishes to Program Associate Hayley Blonsley, who leaves Wabash to bring her talents in community engagement to the Mayor of Portland. This fall, two Program Associates and Visiting Instructors join the WDPD; **Chris Anderson** is a PhD candidate from University of Oklahoma, and **James Proszek** is a PhD candidate from Northwestern University. Both Anderson and Proszek will support the growth of WDPD in student experiences, campus programming, and community partnerships.



WDPD students facilitate the Community Conversation on Diversity and Inclusion in Crawfordsville.

Welcome WDPD Program Associates

Chris Anderson



Professor Chris Anderson is excited to join the Wabash community in the Rhetoric Department. He spent the last seven years at the University of Oklahoma researching deliberation and dialogue processes and interdisciplinary education. His publications appear in a range of places because his coauthors are from diverse academic disciplines that are united by a love for applied problem solving.

Professor Anderson will continue to do multi-disciplinary research with the WDPD. This work includes helping design and implement deliberation on management of the Sugar Creek Watershed. He also plans to leverage the impressive number of events hosted by the WDPD each year by creating more consistent evaluative tools to help students report back to the communities they are working with.

James Proszek



Professor James Proszek is excited to join Wabash College for the 2021-2022 academic year as a Program Associate for the Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse Initiative and Visiting Instructor of Rhetoric. He is currently completing a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from Northwestern University with a focus on digital rhetoric and the public sphere. His research focuses on technology and public discourse, with a specific focus on the emerging role of artificial intelligence (AI) in democratic deliberation and civic engagement.

As a Program Associate, Professor Proszek works with WDPD's Direct Admit students to build their interests and skills in civic engagement, public leadership, and free speech through immersive seminars. His background in dialogue and deliberation emphasizes principles of "good faith" discussions. This Fall, he is looking forward to working with his WDPD team to facilitate a Freshman Mental Health Dialogue on campus.

Faculty Updates



Professor Abbott spent the year continuing to adapt her teaching due to Covid concerns and finishing some research. She and **Professor Geraths** completed and published their article on the ABC sitcom *Modern Family* in the [*Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*](#). This was a very satisfying result to a research project she had returned to off-and-on for several years. The article explores how the show draws viewers'

attention to the socially constructed nature of hegemonic masculinity and authorizes feminine and flamboyant behaviors as appropriately manly. Give it a read!

Her teaching consisted mostly of core Rhetoric courses, including Senior Seminar, RHE 350 (both fall and spring semesters because of our large number of majors), and Public Speaking. But she also devoted significant attention to gender studies. Prof. Abbott taught GEN 101 Introduction to Gender Studies in Spring for the second year in a row. In the fall, she taught RHE 360 Communication and Gender for the first time in seven years and really enjoyed reconstructing the course. She more fully committed the course to the rhetorical analysis of gender in a variety of texts, using gender studies theories. On many Fridays, students brought in relevant texts they thought exemplified a gender studies theory we were learning. The spontaneous, free-flowing, and collaborative critical conversations they sparked emerged as among the students' and her favorite parts of the course. Finally, as a member of



Prof. Abbott, her daughter, and her sister's family embark on their journey inside the St. Louis arch.

the Gender Issues Committee, Professor Abbott contributed to the production of a [*Wabash On My Mind*](#) podcast that explored to the history of 'shOUT at the college. Through Rich Paige's conversation with three alumni, the podcast explores the initial establishment of the gay-straight alliance and its evolution over time.

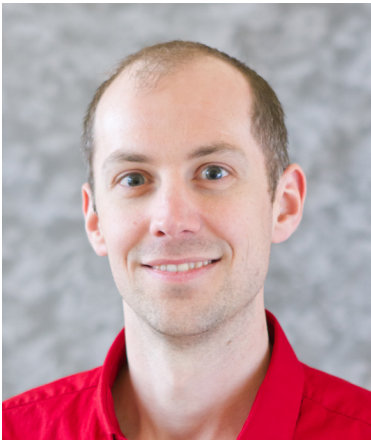
Professor Abbott also devoted this past year to more intentionally including conversations about race in her classes. Spurred by BLM protests after George Floyd's death, she added readings and class time to focus on the rhetorical construction of race and its intersection with gender. To help prepare for those conversations, she joined a faculty reading group that discussed the book, *Not Light But Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Race Conversations in the Classroom*, and attended a related virtual session by the USC Race and Equity Center through the Liberal Arts Colleges Racial Equity Leadership Alliance. She still has much to learn about helping students talk productively about race, but she's devoted to improving and to continuing to include this important and complicated topic in her classes.

This summer, Professor Abbott visited her family in San Diego, California after two years apart due to Covid worries. She also travelled to St. Louis to watch her nephew compete in a national gymnastics competition. While there, she travelled to the top of the St. Louis arch. Once back home, she met virtually with her incoming freshmen advisees as well as some of the rising seniors to help them prepare for Senior Seminar, and she helped plan for the annual Celebration of Unity organized by the local nonprofit organization Humans United for Equality (HUE). If you're in Crawfordsville on September 18, stop by Pike Place to check it out!



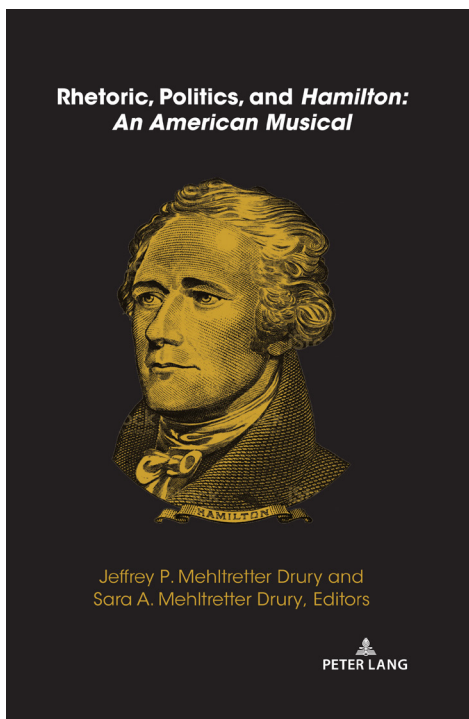
Prof. and Michael Abbott ('85) enjoy dinner on the water at Seaport Village in San Diego.

Faculty Updates



Professor Jeff Drury spent the year adapting his teaching to COVID-19 precautions on campus. For teaching, Professor Drury experimented in RHE 101: Public Speaking and RHE 201: Reasoning and Advocacy with assignments that taught students how to deliver oral presentations in a virtual environment (both pre-recorded and live). In Fall 2020, he taught RHE 497: Senior Seminar (with **Profs. Abbott and Geraths**) for the first time since 2016.

In Spring 2021, Professor Drury was excited to teach two special topics courses. He taught U.S. Presidential Rhetoric (RHE 370) for the first time since 2015 and enjoyed revisiting historical speeches, many of which the students were discovering for the first time. He also taught Strategic Communication (RHE 270) because the Marketing Immersion Program that he normally administers was unable to happen due to the pandemic. Strategic Communication was divided into three modules: marketing and advertising, public health campaigns, and crisis rhetoric. The students indicated that they learned a lot from the course, with a few noting that they had not learned about crisis rhetoric in any of their other courses.



The spring semester was also exciting for the publication of Professor Drury's book, [*Rhetoric, Politics, and Hamilton: An American Musical*](#). Co-edited with **Associate Professor of Rhetoric Sara Drury**, this book includes ten chapters from communication scholars analyzing different dimensions of political rhetoric in the musical. Professor Drury helped write the introduction (along with Sara Drury and **Henry Egan '22**) as well as a solo-authored chapter, "Political Niceties and Rap in Hamilton," that analyzes the political debates in the musical from the vantage points of political civility and rap. He is excited to see this 3-year long project come to fruition!

During July 2021, Professor Drury taught RHE 101 as part of the Wabash Liberal Arts Immersion Program (WLAIP). He worked with 11 incoming freshmen who took RHE 101 for credit while also acclimating to being a student at a residential liberal arts college. The experience was very rewarding, as he got to see students develop confidence and maturity over the course of a short month. Professor Drury will teach the other 13 WLAIP students, who took ENG 101 during the summer, in their own section of RHE 101 this fall. For more information about the 2021 WLAIP, check out this [news story](#).

On a personal note, Professor Drury used the pandemic to refine his practice of yoga, to become a better home cook, and to complete a number of jigsaw puzzles. As the population begins to reach herd immunity, he looks forward to traveling again in the future.



Profs. Jeff and Sara Drury dressed for the 2021 Commencement Ceremony

Faculty Updates



The 2020-2021 academic year fostered fruitful partnerships and collaborations in **Professor Sara Drury's** teaching and research. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the opportunity of creating online deliberations and dialogues for campus and external partners. A highlight of the year was giving Wabash students the opportunity to facilitate public conversations with partners in New York,

Texas, and South Dakota. Professor Drury's work included beginning research on deliberation and science as part of a NSF Award (with Wabash Chemistry **Professor Laura Wysocki**) and examining the opportunities of online environments for cross-campus deliberation, a project conducted with the University of Houston-Downtown and supported by the Kettering Foundation.

In the fall semester, Professor Drury taught her quadrennially offered elective, Political Campaign Communication (RHE270). The students analyzed historic and contemporary campaign rhetoric, and took part in Wabash College's first ever Discord DebateWatch event for the presidential debates. Her spring Public Dialogue and Deliberation course had the new aspect of partnering with the Interactivity Foundation to enable students to earn the Collaborative Discussion Certificate while completing the course. In her tenth year at Wabash College, she continues to serve as Department Chair and Director of Wabash Democracy & Public Discourse.

This year, Professor Drury published an essay about community-based participatory research in *Rhetoric of Health and Medicine*, and an essay on theorizing rhetorical eras of presidential debates. She was thrilled to co-edit (with **Professor Jeff Drury**) the [book *Rhetoric, Politics, and Hamilton: An American Musical*](#). Chapters in the book explore *Hamilton* and public memory, the musical's connections to identity, and the intersections of *Hamilton* and democracy. Professor Drury co-wrote a chapter for the book, with Wabash alumnus **Anthony Williams '20**, entitled "Exhibiting Hamilton: History, Memory, and Musical Theater."

This summer, Professor Drury joins a [cohort of Wabash faculty as an Equity and Inclusion Pedagogy Fellow](#). As part of her work for this program, she will design a new course-Rhetoric, Science, and Public Policy.

Introducing Prof. Jordin Clark



Professor Jordin Clark received her PhD from Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. Her scholarship focuses on the rhetoric of space/place and everyday life with specific attention to the relationship between the built environment, our daily performances, and dynamics of power and resistance. From examining city landscapes to analyzing dance protests in the suburbs, she is interested in understanding how everyday spaces and routines can be and are resources that build our ways of being together in the world. Her recent publications include "'Daddy Pence Come Dance': Queer(ing) Space in the Suburbs" in *Western Journal of Communication* and a co-authored book chapter entitled "Under Quarantine in a City Project: Stories of Food, Family, Fear and Community" published in an edited collection entitled *Global Reflections of COVID-19 and Urban Inequalities*. Bringing her research into the classroom, she loves helping students connect course concepts to their day-to-day lives as they grapple with what it means to an active participant in their communities. For this upcoming academic year, Professor Clark is excited to be in the classroom again and to learn more about everyday life at Wabash College.

Faculty Updates



This is a bittersweet update for **Professor Geraths**. Having spent the past four years at Wabash College, he has accepted a tenure-track offer at Eureka College, a small liberal arts college in Eureka, Illinois. Professor Geraths will begin teaching there in August 2021 as an Assistant Professor of Communication. It is with a heavy heart that he leaves Wabash. He has enjoyed the myriad conversations

he has had with students, the unique classes he has had the opportunity to teach, and all that he has learned from his colleagues in the Rhetoric Department and everyone else at the college during his time there.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, Professor Geraths joined his colleagues **Professors Abbott** and **J. Drury** in co-teaching the department's Senior Seminar course for the second time. He also taught Classical Rhetoric and Public Speaking each semester and worked to reinvent some of the content and assignments in the former. In particular, he tasked students with developing a short essay in the style of the digital Classics journal, *Eidolon*. Students composed and circulated their projects through the online platform, *Medium*; each essay was designed to apply the ancients' rhetorical theories to some aspect of modern life in a creative, compelling, and critical fashion. A particularly worthwhile example of this assignment is a student's discussion of the hit farming simulation video game, *Stardew Valley*, which was analyzed through a focus on Aristotle's work on agriculture.

In Spring 2021, Professor Geraths taught a version of his Digital Rhetoric course, which he adapted as a 300-level upper division seminar. The course was centered around five key terms of importance to contemporary digital discourse: circulation, information, network, attention, and future. Students read a variety of recent work by rhetoricians as well as interdisciplinary artists and scholars; notable examples include Adam Kucharski's *The Rules of Contagion: Why Things Spread and Why They Stop* and Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*. With these and other scholars' ideas in hand, students were tasked with developing projects analyzing pieces of digital rhetoric; importantly, each student's project was required to have a Digital Humanities component. This DH focus was challenging for both his students and Professor Geraths alike, as it necessitated rethinking and adapting some of the core tenets of rhetorical criticism. By semester's end, however, many students' projects offered unique insights on rhetorics such as

misogyny within anime, news media's framing of presidential elections, and the challenges of virtual reality.

Alongside his teaching, Professor Geraths continued his research. In particular, he published (or is soon to publish) two pieces and has drafted an additional book chapter as well. Alongside his colleague, Professor Abbott, Professor Geraths was second author on an essay published in the *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*. This essay, titled "Modern Masculinities: Resistance to Hegemonic Masculinity in *Modern Family*," was a labor of love; after over a year of work and multiple revisions (including some crucial feedback from colleagues and students in the Rhetoric Department) the piece was accepted and published! Professor Geraths is grateful for the invitation to join the project and, moreover, for the chance to work with and learn from his friend and colleague, Professor Abbott. He also completed the drafting and edits on a book chapter, "Agnostic," which will be featured in a forthcoming collection (out in September 2021), *A New Handbook of Rhetoric: Inverting the Classical Vocabulary*, edited by Michele Kennerly. His chapter explores the theoretical importance of "not knowing" and "unknowing" through an analysis of the *Black Mirror* episode, "Striking Vipers X." Finally, Professor Geraths has finished an initial draft of a book chapter, "Anthos, Bottoms, and Anal Sex in Troye Sivan's 'Bloom,'" which was written for inclusion in an edited collection, *The Routledge Handbook of Queer Rhetoric*, edited by Jacqueline Rhodes and Jonathan Alexander. The chapter, drawing upon the ancient Greek word *anthos* ("blossom," "flower"), studies the queer construction of the identity of "bottom" through an attunement to the sonic rhetoric of anal sex in Troye Sivan's 2018 song, "Bloom."

After four years at Wabash College, Professor Geraths is a different professor, scholar, and citizen. Wabash, as it does for so many of the students, faculty, and staff that enter its hallowed halls, changed him for the better. He is sad to leave but knows that Wabash will always be an academic home. And, thankfully, his new job at Eureka is only two hours away! He plans to visit often!

Faculty Updates



It was a different year for **Professor McDorman** as he served as Acting Dean of the College in 2020-21. Summer 2020 was hectic and full of uncertainty as the College worked to identify a path to offer in-person learning in the fall. Dean McDorman oversaw classroom redesigns and set-ups, served on the COVID-response team and the Healthy Campus Task Force, and worked with faculty and

staff on devising our approach to the year, including leading the Academic Policy Committee through conversations about classroom guidelines, how to adjust comprehensive exams, and a revised spring calendar. It was a unique year but Wabash was the rare school that was open for in-person learning everyday while seeking to support students, faculty, and staff with a variety of differing circumstances. Importantly, none of it would have been possible without Wabash faculty trusting our efforts and buying in. I admire the commitment they—and Wabash staff—exhibited this year to make it all work .

It wasn't all about COVID of course and Dean McDorman worked on faculty reviews and faculty hiring and learned more about the day-to-day administrative work of the Dean of The College, particularly as it relates to College Advancement and financial operations. He also worked on new faculty development and student support opportunities, including the development of Wabash's first regular offering of summer courses to help students with credit recovery and directing Wabash's participation in the Council of Independent College's Online Course Sharing Consortium.

Professor McDorman has agreed to continue as Acting Dean of the College in 2021-22. The summer includes working to revise many COVID protocols and practices including returning classrooms to their traditional designs and getting back on track with regular College operations while also thinking about changed practices that should be retained based on the experiences of last year. The coming year will also bring new tasks including another set of faculty reviews, new tenure-track hires, the College's reaccreditation self-study, and continuing to develop ways to support and improve diversity, equity, and inclusion at the College.

No teaching and very little opportunity for research made for a very different year, but Professor McDorman did participate in the 32nd Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, presenting "Pete Rose's *Play Hungry* and Nostalgic Remembrance: Recalling the Good Old Days and Forgetting Nearly Everything Else." Although the conference was virtual, he followed it up with a road trip with his son Carter that featured baseball games in Pittsburgh and Cleveland, Carter's first visit to the Baseball Hall of Fame, and a first visit for both of them to Niagara Falls. The family is starting to venture out too with a trip to Cincinnati (with a Reds game and Kings Island visit of course) and an upcoming trip to a Florida beach.



Todd and Carter at Niagara Falls



The McDormans at a Reds game in June 2021

Alumni Updates

John Bachman '61. John's career in sales and management as well as community projects has required frequent and occasionally unplanned requirements to stand to project a message. Vic Powell and Joe O'Rourke prepared him for these opportunities, and he is thankful for Wabash every day.

Greg Scott '79. Greg published two novels with a cybersecurity theme; "Bullseye Breach" in 2015 and "Virus Bomb" in 2019, with more to come. Greg tells people that IT service is like stocking toilet paper – nobody cares until there's an outage. This means every cybersecurity radio interview he does has to be extra lively to keep the audience engaged; he uses his Wabash Speech training to make those WCCO radio interviews the best he can make them. Greg is called upon to comment on local cybernews, and announcer Cory Hepola calls him the Batman of cybersecurity.

Greg Hockemeyer '85. Greg has been practicing law in Columbia City, Indiana, since 1992.

Bill Niemier '87. Bill was recently elected as the President of the Town Council in New Palestine, Indiana.

Mike Langford '91. Mike Langford has transitioned from a 27 year career as a trial attorney to becoming a full-time mediator and arbitrator with the Mediation Group in Indianapolis.

Steve Campbell '92. Steve and Colts Communications were honored with the Pete Rozelle Award by the Pro Football Writers Association in 2020 as the NFL's top communications team. Steve is honored to have finished his first year as a member of the Wabash Board of Trustees.

Todd Rokita '92. Todd Rokita was elected Indiana's Attorney General in 2020—earning the highest number of votes of any state officeholder in Indiana history. As the state's top legal officer, Todd works to uphold the rule of law, protect Hoosiers, support our prosecutors and police, and safeguard our constitutional liberties. Todd previously served Hoosiers in the U.S. Congress and, before that, as Indiana's Secretary of State. He practiced law for several years, including serving as General Counsel and Principal at Apex Benefits. In addition, he serves in multiple leadership positions on the boards of publicly traded and private companies. Todd Rokita has been a major advocate for Wabash, crediting his education for providing a strong foundation of knowledge to build a successful career. Todd and his wife Kathy reside in Hendricks County with their boys, Ryan and Teddy.

Jacob Isaacs '99. Jacob has been selected as the new Director of Student Success and Academic Advising for the University of Minnesota at Crookston. In this role, he will be working with academic advising, tutoring, first-year experience, multicultural education, and career services for the institution.

Brooks Cannon '02. Brooks has been the Operations Manager for S-E-A, Ltd. in Golden, CO for five years. S-E-A is a Forensic Engineering company. Brooks was pleased to welcome Myles DuBose (Wabash '21) to the staff.

Andrew Weintraut '07. Andrew has been working for Purdue University for over 13 years, and is currently the Executive Director of Foundation Relations. He oversees an office staff with the goal of facilitating and strengthening relationships with private philanthropic foundations and the University. This involves a significant amount of project management, relationship building and proposal writing where Andrew get to use the skills he learned at Wabash on a daily basis. Thank you Rhetoric/Speech Department! Personally, Andrew has been married to his wife Kristen for a little over 12 years. They have 3 kids (Audrey, Nicholas, and Zachary) and live in Lafayette, IN.

Brian David '12. Brian and his wife welcomed their daughter, Emerson, last September. They are still loving Southern California and enjoy the amazing weather and culture. Brian is currently a teacher/administrator for Tustin Unified and looks forward to having all of his students back in person for an entire school year next year.

John Janak '19. John has moved from his position at Spot Freight and will begin at John Marshall Law School – University of Illinois Chicago in August.

Charlie Brewer '20. Charlie is currently working at Spot Freight, and was grateful to return to campus for an in-person commencement ceremony for the class of 2020.

Kordell Prescott '20. Kordell is working for All-Phase Electric Supply as a management trainee. He is thriving in the program, loving every second, but missing Rhetoric classmates and professors at Wabash.

Alumni Updates

Austin Bethel '21. Austin will begin teaching US History, Current Events, and Geography at Mount Vernon High School (Posey Co.) this fall, which also happens to be his alma mater. He will also be the Assistant Coach for the Wrestling team.

Myles DuBose '21. Myles has started a full-time position at S-E-A Ltd. at the Columbus, OH headquarters. S-E-A is a powerful resource in litigation and also specializes in failure analysis and investigation. Beginning this fall, he will begin traveling for training and then will be stationed at the S-E-A Denver Office serving as Business Development Representative.



Rhetoric class discussions get lively! Our fall 2021 RHE497 Senior Seminar course engages in small group discussion on their senior research projects.

Thank you to those alumni, families, and friends who were #AllforOneWabash on our eighth Day of Giving. The Wabash family came together to celebrate on 4.08, breaking records once again in raising more than \$1.37 million from more than 3,400 alumni, family, and friends. Best yet, you helped us raise more than \$1,630 per Wabash student! A special thanks to those of you who supported the WDPD affinity challenge, which raised \$8,753.16 from 111 gifts by 88 unique donors.

WDPD Affinity Challenge
Number of gifts: 111
Number of unique donors: 88
Amount raised: \$8,753.16

Thank you to all who so generously supported the College through the Day of Giving.



William Norwood Brigance
Professor of Speech
1922-1960

ALUMNI: YOU'RE WANTED!

We will continue to include updates from our Rhetoric and Speech alumni in future Rhetoric Department newsletters.

It's a wonderful opportunity for our current students to see where a Rhetoric major and minor can take you!

Please send updates to phippsj@wabash.edu, subject line "Rhetoric/Speech Alumni Update."

Rhetoric Department

Professor Jennifer Abbott
Professor Jordin Clark
Professor Jeff Drury
Professor Sara Drury, Chair
Professor Todd McDorman

WDPD Program Associates

Professor Chris Anderson
Professor James Proszek

Wabash.

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