

Wendt



UNIVERSITY of
DUBUQUE

20
YEARS

Character Initiative

FALL 2023

Wendt Character Lecture—Rev. Greg Drumwright

More Character, More Justice

Rev. Greg Drumwright, pastor of the North Carolina church the Citadel and founder of Justice 4 the Next Generation, called for practicing justice with character as we work toward racial reconciliation and equity in his visit to UD's campus October 2 and 3.

*Oh, freedom! Oh, freedom!
Oh, freedom over me.
And before I'll be a slave,
I'll be buried in my grave
And go home to my Lord and
be free.*

Rev. Drumwright opened and closed his talk with a song.



Meet & Greet with UD community



Sharing time with audience members after the lecture

When Drumwright is not preaching, teaching at High Point University, or serving as North Carolina courts commissioner, he's advocating for justice, whether it's giving pastoral support to George Floyd's family during the Derek Chauvin trial, speaking with leaders of NASCAR, or promoting voting rights.

Drumwright delivered the keynote Michael Lester Wendt Character Lecture, endowed by the Wendt family and co-sponsored by UD board member, Cathy Young, "Joseph, Jesus, Justice, and George: How I Avoided a Life of Crime and Still Found Myself in Court."

Drawing parallels between Joseph and Jesus, he linked their suffering to George Floyd's. That tragedy and the misrepresentation of the event shows us the need for character in practicing justice, whether it's in honesty from the authorities or commitments to non-violence, or respect for and from everyone involved.

His time on campus included conversations and meals with students and faculty and a podcast interview for *Character Explorations*.



Rev. Greg Drumwright



Making connections with students

Character Day at UD

Character Scholar Megan Cooley crept up behind a passing student and quietly clipped a paper acorn to his backpack. Success! He didn't even notice. Later, Megan hoped, he would find the acorn and read the virtue (compassion) printed on it, then tag another unsuspecting student with it, passing on the message that UD values good character.

(Continued on p. 4)



Tag! You've got character!

Character in the Disciplines

Faculty/Staff Cultivate Compassion at Teaching and Learning Conference

UD's annual Teaching and Learning Conference provides space and time for faculty and staff to prepare for the fall semester with workshops and informational sessions on topics such as teaching strategies, supporting students, and utilization of software and other resources.



The Wendt Center presented on cultivating a culture of care and compassion. Adam Hoffman, Kristen Eby, and April Elsbernd shared their work of intentionally and compassionately connecting with students.

In our department, we try hard to care to connect, and that means two important things:

We have to care enough about students learning to connect the content in the classroom to the real world.

We have to care enough about students to connect with them individually.

—Adam Hoffman

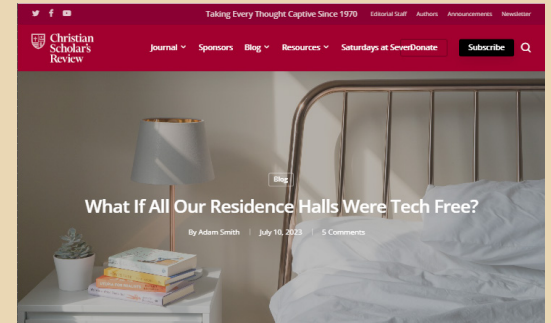
This year's conference focused on cultivating a culture of care and compassion. The Wendt Center for Character Education, The Academic Success Center, and the Smeltzer-Kelly Student Health Center presented suggestions for practicing care and compassion in support of students.



Regina Torson, of the Smeltzer-Kelly Student Health Center, shared information and strategies for trauma-informed education.

Fall Wendt Reading Groups

Faculty and staff gathered to discuss Adam Smith's article, "What if All Our Residence Halls Were Tech Free?" that was shared on *Christian Scholar's Review's* blog.



Later this fall, they'll discuss the *Christian Scholar's Review's* theme issue: *Vocation*.

These essays consider vocation through various lenses, including vocation within

particular contexts, calling in everyday life, and why vocation is good news for all of us.



The Academic Success Center provided guidelines on how to best help students who are struggling. Carly Stork, Robbie Sieverding, Sheila Sabers, and Jenn Supple shared examples from their experiences teaching and coaching.

World View Seminar I

Antonio Mouzon shared the story of his journey through life, connecting it to the CliftonStrengths that all World View students are using.



Wendt Tea

Ever wondered what Wendt Grants do? Students and Faculty answered that question with a variety of reports on the grants they received. Faculty use the money to connect character to a particular topic, speaker, field trip, or experience in ways that further character education and reflection.



Victoria Zoltowska Makenzie Schussler

From the Sami people in Sweden's practices of stewardship to a Gallery show on Inclusion, Intentionality, Equity, and Diversity, to character and leadership training with area high school students, to field trips, speakers, and service learning. If you'd like to review these brief reports at the Tea, go to <https://youtu.be/L400GegZIH0>.

2023

Wendt Tea

Celebrating our 2022-23 Grant Recipients

Adam Hoffman | Amy Baus
Jonathan Barz | Brian Hallstoos | Beth McCaw
Michele McKinlay | Kim Hilby & Ken Godwin
Rochelle Morgan & Carissa Brown | James Sizer



Character and . . .

Play

Volume: 9 / 2023

ANNALEE R. WARD *Character and Play: Worth Playing Together*

Articles

MARY K. BRYANT *Gameplay and Human Flourishing*
KRISTEN EBY *Performance, Play, and Hospitality*
BRIAN HALLSTOOS *Defusing Racism: Olympian Sol Butler's Serious Playfulness*
ADAM J. KLEINSCHMIT *Transformative Discovery Science: Character and Play as Key Elements*

Response

NAAMAN WOOD *Turning Poison into Medicine: Play and Decolonizing Our Future*



Character and . . . Play

Striving for good character doesn't mean all work and no play! In fact, the 2022-23 research team dug right into this topic with the Wendt journal's new issue, *Character and . . . Play*, available at www.dbq.edu/WendtCharacterJournal.

This issue explores the ways in which play intersects with character formation both as an action and as an attitude. That left room for authors Mary Bryant, Kristen Eby, Brian Hallstoos, and Adam Kleinschmit's diverse interests. The topics range from playing games to flourish, to play in performance, to playfulness as a strategic attitude to manage racism, and to the need for play in science. Join us in celebrating this good work.



Character and . . . Play authors, Adam Kleinschmit, Kristen Eby, Mary Bryant, and Brian Hallstoos

You can find us at <https://www.dbq.edu/Wendt/Publications>. You can also listen to the authors discuss their essays in our Character Explorations Podcasts, available on most platforms.

This year's research team, Donovan Tann, Daniel Fleming, Katie Boyer, and Dale Easley, are busy researching and discussing character and inevitability.



The new research team won't let a fire drill stop them from sharing their ideas about character and inevitability!

Character on Campus

20th Anniversary

We have some special plans for celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Wendt Character Initiative this year!

- Oct. 21: **20 Years of Wendt Character Scholars Celebration Breakfast** and **Homecoming Tailgate** (find our tent!)
- Nov. 13-17: **Gratitude Week**
- January: **Campus Coffee Specials at Sylvia's**
- February: **Character Explorations**, Wendt Scholars' Bisagnano Art Gallery Show
- March 25, 2024: **Freshta Tori Jan** Wendt Character Lecture (see pull-out box, right)
- April: **Faculty Character Advancement Awards**

From the President's Report 2006 & 2007

Our Mission and Vision has provided solid groundwork for the broader and deeper scope of the Initiative's challenge: creating a culture of character that enriches and imbues every aspect of our lives as academics and individuals.



Character Day (continued from p. 1)

When the Wendt Character Scholars got together to plan Character Day this year, they chose activities that focused on reaching their fellow students. They set out a table to catch passersby and draw them into conversation about character, sent out a video about character to campus that professors played for their classes, and played a massive game of stealth acorn tag.

Next step: Make every day Character Day!



Megan Cooley tags a student.



Megan Cooley and Makenzie Knapp share acorn tags and chat about character.



Sean Wright and a friend receive acorn tags.



Nora Ralfs and Caitlin Jensen oversee the info table.



Elise Kehoe and Vladimir Hudson prepare a video on character.

Character on Campus (cont.)

FALL 2023



Character Sightings

Our UD community continues to inspire us as they practice good character in their daily work.

Despite intense heat, Russ Pfeiler, Denny Stillmunkes, and Randy Potter kept working—making our campus beautiful!



The Office of Financial Planning and Aid staff, Teresa Brahm, Melissa Schmitt, Sara Sroka, and Janell Schueller, kindly provide crucial services to make a UD education possible for all of our students.



Spring Wendt Character Lecture



Fresta Tori Jan
Monday, March 25, 2024
7:00 p.m. Butler Hall

As a female Hazara and Shia Muslim—a member of both ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan—

Fresta Tori Jan endured persecution even as she continued to pursue an education until the Taliban closed her school. She experienced threats of kidnapping, murder attempts, and loss of friends before escaping the country at 15 to live with a foster family in the U.S. Author of *Courage: My Story of Persecution*, a book for young readers, she founded Hazara Advocates USA to inform the world of the Hazara genocide.

Wendt Center Transitions



Lindsey Ward

Welcome to the new Worldview Studies Director and thanks to Dr. Lindsey Ward for her years of faithful service in the role. Anne Funke accepted the part-time position as Director and brought it into the Wendt Center to better facilitate the integration of a character focus in these core classes.

Ward, Director of Seminary Vocation, directed the worldview classes for the last ten years. In that time, she (along with a team of faculty) put the new learning outcomes into practice, systematizing and coordinating as many as 32 sections of Worldview I and nearly that number of Worldview II classes. Funke, who began at the University as a graduate assistant with Ward in Student Life, also teaches Personal Empowerment and Mindfulness classes. In addition, she's also leading the Wendt pilot project with the Volleyball team. Welcome, Anne Funke!

Welcome also to our new Administrative Assistant, Lizz Tyler. Lizz will be in the office mornings helping to keep things running. In the rest of her time, she is a political consultant who has helped organize campaigns for Lindsey James, Brad Cavanaugh, and Deidre DeJear. Welcome, Lizz Tyler!



Lizz Tyler



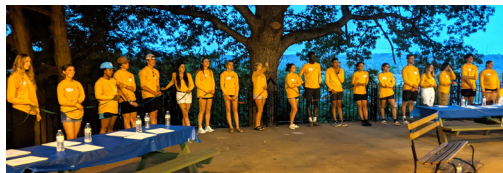
Anne Funke



The volleyball team is working with Anne Funke on their mission to be a *well* team that performs with C.A.R.E. (Compassion, Accountability, Respect, and Excellence).

Character Scholars

This year's theme is Character Explorations, with an emphasis on justice. Character Scholars kicked off the year with a picnic together and began the semester focusing on service and servant leadership. We look forward to a year full of reflection and growth as we consider together how best to strive for excellent character.



Scholars and mentors kicked off the fall semester with a picnic. We shared a meal, made some new friends, and ended the evening with linked together by shared interests and experiences.



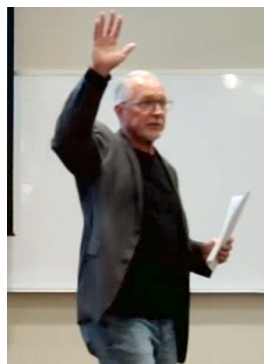
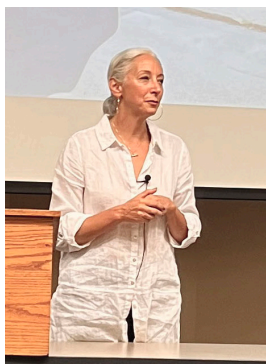
Lilly Duff making announcements before the Scholar meeting.



New scholars met for coffee with Annalee Ward and got to know each other.



Wendt Scholars share about the Wendt Center's activities at the Student Resource Fair.



Adam Smith, Leslie Shalabi, and Mike Durnin presented during Wendt Scholar meetings "Character, Virtues," "Service in Dubuque," and "Servant Leadership," respectively.



Scholars get to know each other better and share their insights during small group time.



We play many roles as we go through daily life. How we interact with others can change according to where we are and who we are with. We may be more relaxed at home, with family and friends, than at work or school. But wherever we are, the fact that we strive for good character remains. We asked Character Scholars for their thoughts on the relationship between setting and practicing good character.



Taking character into my home and workplace means to bring patience for people and to put myself in their shoes. By doing this, I can look at my actions from a different perspective and see how they could impact other people. As I work in the restaurant industry, I see all kinds of people and it can be difficult to adapt to each kind of person. Taking good character to work with me means coming to work in a positive headspace to help create a positive work environment for myself and my coworkers. By doing this, it can uplift other people and make our shifts go by seamlessly.

—Lilly Duff

To maintain good character is to maintain a happy and productive life. By fostering a positive relationship with growth, you can better appreciate the beauty in all avenues of life. For example, at school you may be more thankful for your educators and the wisdom they share. Moreover, at work you may be more thankful for your colleagues. The list goes on and on.



—Vladimir Hudson

Taking character into my home, workplace, and school means I try and make decisions based on honesty, respect, and fairness.

— Elise Kehoe



Acting with character takes different forms depending on where you are. Character at home could be seen as helping out around the house or treating siblings with kindness, but character in the workplace would be something like treating all coworkers with respect and always putting full effort into what you're doing. My character doesn't differ much from one place to another, but I think in a home setting it is more informal, I still act with good character, but it is less formal than when I am in the workplace.

—Kailey Tyburski



Director's Note

Mirror, Mirror . . .

Who do you see when you look at your reflection? Perhaps a more important question, can you make time for personal reflection? Why does it even matter?

If you've read this column, you know I often draw lessons from nature, often discovering rich metaphors for my life. When I came across this photo I began to ponder "reflection" and our Wendt theme for the year, Character Explorations. This theme could easily be related to discovering the natural world. But another way to think about it calls us to explore the landscapes of our hearts and minds—to reflect on who we are and who we are striving to become.

Making time for reflection can seem self-indulgent. Research shows otherwise. An [article in the Harvard Business Review](#) demonstrates the power of habitual self-reflection to move leaders to greater effectiveness. When they explored the topics of surprise, frustration, and failure, three themes emerged. As people reflected on the situations and their actions, they became more honest with themselves, more willing to admit mistakes, and more hopeful about learning better ways to move forward.

A similar practice occurs in many weekly Christian church services. The liturgy includes a time for corporate and individual confession and assurance of pardon. Acknowledging our shortcomings honestly makes room for learning and growing as individuals and as a community.

We talk about college as a time to learn and grow and discover who you are. Let's encourage one another in the practice of reflection, facing it with courage and compassion to be reminded of who we are and who we are becoming—excellent people who reflect excellence, who reflect the beauty of God.

—Annalee



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<https://www.facebook.com/SamuelPGonzales>

WENDT CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION



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Director



Mary Bryant
Dir. of Media and
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