



Marcus Eriksen Delivers Character Lecture

Surrounded by Plastic Pollution

Plastic pollution affects everything about our environment, from the fish that we eat to camels dying from stomachs full of plastic in the Middle East, to neighborhoods filled with trash across the globe.

It is very easy to get rid of plastic, send it somewhere that you will never see it again. It takes good character to understand that the issue of plastic pollution is affected by everyone. Everyone has to do their part and do the right thing if the issue is to come to an end.

—Nathan Rauenbuehler
Wendt Character Scholar

We all treasure the nature around us, and we want to live healthy lives with access to clean water and good food. But plastic in all shapes and sizes—microbeads, single-use plastic bags and straws, styrofoam cups, packaging—now fills every part of our world.

Marcus Eriksen, environmental scientist and educator, helped us to understand the nature of the problem plastic pollution poses and spoke to solutions that are being planned, giving us hope and goals for the future. *(Continued on page 3)*



Plastic from a camel stomach



Plastic from a fish stomach



Water systems filled with trash



Eriksen's Pacific junk raft

Sandy Dremmel, Vietnamese Refugee

Imagine a young teenager trying to escape in the middle of the night from a violent communist regime that had been threatening her family. Caught, imprisoned, eventually freed, Sandy Dremmel crossed international waters in a packed and leaky boat, threatened by pirates and drowning.



Sandy Dremmel at a Wendt Character Scholars meeting

Dremmel, who works in UD Housekeeping in the Science Building, visited with the Character Scholars to share her harrowing story of escaping post-war Vietnam as a teenager and finding a home in the U.S. *(Continued on page 4)*

Character Scholars

Programming

Curriculum

The theme of Cultivating Character continued this spring, applied to a variety of topics.

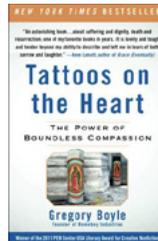
We read about gang intervention and listened to Father Greg Boyle's talk on boundless compassion. A performance about the *Freedom Riders* led to discussions of approaching history with humility and the role of compassion in the pursuit of justice.

Over the course of multiple meetings, we delved into compassion in relation to the topics of immigration and the environment (see pp. 1, 3-5).

Wendt Mentors Ken Turner and Adam Kleinschmit spoke to Wendt Scholars about responding compassionately to environmental issues, focusing in on two specific examples:

- Soil erosion, its causes, consequences, and new agricultural strategies for avoiding causing harm to the soil;
- Whanganui River in New Zealand, now protected by Maori after centuries of misuse and degradation under British rule.

The semester closed with a viewing of *Prison Terminal: The Last Days of Private Jack Hall* followed by conversations around hospice, compassion, and criminal justice.



Ken Turner



Adam Kleinschmit



Scene from *Prison Terminal: The Last Days of Private Jack Hall*

It was amazing to see such a small thing starting out from just asking a few questions to a full blown organization helping gang members (Homeboy Industries). I will always remember that all it takes is to ask people what they want in life and to not pity anyone or tell them what they should do. Instead lead with compassion and help them achieve their goals.

—Sharon Moscoso
Wendt Character Scholar

I learned new ways farmers can help care for the land and how their caring can impact the rest of the world.

—Miguel Vega
Wendt Character Scholar

Compassion is a characteristic of good character and I have SO MUCH compassion for people like my grandfather, father, and brother who toil their whole lives to farm to benefit others. It is not farmers' intention to do harm, rather they are good-hearted people that want to benefit those like us.

—Maddy Huschitt
Wendt Character Scholar

Scholar Applications

The application process for the Character Scholars Program entails answering essay questions and getting two recommendations. Our 144 applicants worked hard!

The 12 faculty and staff on the selection committee made sure each complete application was given full consideration and scored by two different readers. 25 new scholars will join 25 returners in the fall!

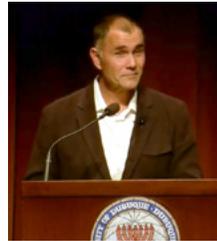


Compassion and Environment

(Continued from page 1) Eriksen spoke at nine different events, inspiring audiences—from middle schoolers to naturalists to the Dubuque public at UD and the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium—to aim beyond sustaining the earth and make our goal regenerating what we’ve lost.



Speaking with seventh and eighth graders at Eleanor Roosevelt Middle School, whose science curriculum includes Eriksen’s research on plastic pollution



Marcus Eriksen, Character Lecturer



Eriksen with his former professor, Dale Easley, UD Professor of Geology, at Naturalists Conference

He is an inspiration to chase your dreams while making a lasting impact on the world. . . . Marcus did a great job letting us know that our voices cannot be silenced and we can make a difference here in the state of Iowa.

—Jenna Bidlingmaier
Wendt Character Scholar

Environmental Efforts at UD

Wendt book discussion groups tackled Katharine Hayhoe’s *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*. We discovered that even when we disagree on topics of policy, we often have much more in common.



Cutting through the division and incivility common to many politicized topics requires finding shared values and real connection. We left our discussions with renewed hope.

Across campus, our dining areas now offer Spartan Sustainable Shells, reusable take-home containers! Chef Andrew Mettert, Stewardship & Sustainability Coordinator Joshua Chamberland, and SGA representatives Maryn Winders and Elissa Dynes spearheaded this effort to reduce waste at UD.

If you regularly get food to-go as part of your daily routine, this is an excellent opportunity for you to make a positive impact in our world by conserving natural resources and reducing landfill waste. Small daily actions across our entire campus add up to big cumulative impacts!

—Joshua Chamberland
Stewardship & Sustainability Coordinator

Every problem seems so big – but the author, Katharine Hayhoe, proclaims there are reasons to remain optimistic. The book and engaging discussions with our group helped show why it is so important to have hope for the future, and that each of us can make choices to help and heal the world.

—Emily Blue
Director of Continuing and Lay Education
Pastor to Seminary Students



Spartan Sustainable Shells (reusable take-home containers), brought to UD by Maryn Winders, Andrew Mettert, Joshua Chamberland, and Elissa Dynes

Compassion and Immigration

Navigating a Complex System

(Continued from page 1) Dremmel's mother spent years working to smuggle her ten children out of Vietnam. Dremmel was arrested multiple times on failed escape attempts and once spent over a month in jail, but she and her mother never gave up, and in the end, Dremmel successfully reached a refugee camp on Bidong Island in Malaysia.

Eventually, Dremmel was approved to travel to the U.S., sponsored by siblings who had already made their way to the U.S. in previous years. She also expressed her profound thanks for the U.S.'s Vietnam veterans who sacrificed so much for her country.

Sandy Dremmel's story of continued resilience and gratitude despite extreme hardship serves as a reminder that perseverance so often leads to hope and strength of character.



We need to have compassion for those going through immigration, those who have immigrated, those who immigrated illegally, etc. Taking the time to hear and understand their problems is just one basic way to show compassion. Contacting representatives and voting for those who stand up for what's right is also another way to show compassion.

—Abby Scroggs
Wendt Character Scholar



Pulau Bidong Refugee Camp, where Dremmel found shelter

After hearing Sandy's story I absolutely cannot imagine living the life she did. She had so much joy in her voice and her words were so empty of any anger about the time she was coming here. She truly was determined.

—Naf McMillian
Wendt Character Scholar



Boats used by Vietnamese refugees to flee Vietnam through the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand



Encountering Law and Real People

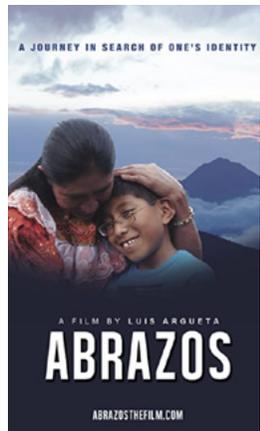
As Wendt Character Scholars focused in on compassionate responses to immigration, they heard from people directly involved in the U.S. immigration system and participated in an immigration simulation.

Bram Elias, Law Professor at the University of Iowa, gave an overview of the U.S. legal system. His talk revealed that, even when people face terrible conditions in their home countries, there are few options for anyone to come legally to the U.S.



I listened and learned the struggles from many that have gone through so much paperwork, pain, waiting and inconveniences/setbacks just to enjoy a portion of the freedoms in this country I take for granted.

—Luke Hilliard
Wendt Character Scholar



The documentary *ABRAZOS* follows U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrants as they travel from Minnesota without their parents to Guatemala to meet their grandparents and other family members for the first time.



Sharon Moscoso, Wendt Character Scholar, spoke about her experience as a U.S. citizen and the challenges of seeking visas for her mother and younger sister, citizens of Guatemala.

Franklin Yartey, Associate Professor of Communication, shared how he attained U.S. Citizenship for himself and later managed to bring his wife and son to the U.S. as well.



Immigration Simulation

Scholars encountered paperwork and unexpected situations during the immigration simulation. Yer Vang, Ry Meyer, and Lela Udry of Catholic Charities' legal department supplied the simulation and legal expertise. Eight generous UD faculty and students volunteered to help us run the simulation.



When trying to play my role, I was getting very frustrated. I kept getting sent from one table to another and it seemed as if no one could help get me on the right track to become a citizen. Unfortunately for me, my time ran up so I was no longer able to apply to stay in the US because I was over 18. I then turned myself in and got deported because I had no other option.

—Kaelyn Weigel
Wendt Character Scholar

Character On Campus

Multicultural Center Promotes Character

The Wendt Center promotes justice and values diversity. These virtues are furthered by the work of James Sizer, Director of Multicultural Student Engagement. The Multicultural Center provides a hospitable space for a variety of groups and programs, and James often collaborates with others to put on special events. This spring he also curated resource lists by academic department for Black students (to honor Black History Month) and for women (to honor International Women's Day).

Not only do all of UD's Social Identity Organizations (African Student Association, Asian Student Union, Black Student Union, Latinos Unidos, ProUD) hold their weekly meetings in the Multicultural Center, this spring also saw many notable events happening there.



Women's Basketball and BSU celebrating Black History Month together



Dubuque Black Men Coalition



Nathaniel Morgan Memorial Fundraiser and Auction



International Coffee Hour



Asian Student Union's Spicy Noodle Challenge

- Nathaniel Morgan Memorial Fundraiser and Auction with Nathaniel Morgan Memorial Committee
- Dubuque Black Men Coalition monthly meetings
- International Women's Day event
- Celebrate Africa event
- Dia De Los Muertos event with Latinos Unidos
- COVID-19 & the Latinx Community Panel Discussion with Latinos Unidos
- LGBTQ+ Ally Trainings with ProUD
- International Coffee Hours
- Indigenous Mascot discussion with Multicultural Group
- Lunar New Year event with Asian Student Union
- Black Love event with Black Student Union
- Spicy Noodle Challenge with Asian Student Union
- Mann v. Ford documentary screening and discussion
- "Learn about Winter Holidays" events with Multicultural Group (Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah)
- "Let Me Be Myself: The Life Story of Anne Frank" Traveling Exhibit with the UD Education Department
- Sampson Brothers presentation with Multicultural Group
- MLK Breakfast viewing location
- Professional headshots photography event with the Office of Vocation, Career Services, and Community Engagement

Character in the Disciplines: Language & Literature

By Jessica Schreyer
Professor of English, Language & Literature Department Head

Our department is a perfect fit for discussions of character. Whether students are discussing the motivations of characters in a work of literature or the narrator in their own creative manuscripts, the integration of questions regarding character comes quite naturally. In our composition courses, reflective writing assignments allow students space and time to consider character growth during the college experience.

One of our revised student learning outcomes asks students to demonstrate how writing, literature, and language inform and enhance the human experience by developing empathy, fostering inclusion, and promoting reflection. This call requires us to frequently navigate discussions of character in our courses. Within our department, we also have frequent discussions about how we can model character growth and reflection through our teaching and interactions with students.



This spring's Environmental Literature course, an interdisciplinary effort that teaches about environment and stewardship through literature

We are eager to help students reflect on and work on developing their own conceptualization of their growth as people through our courses.

—Jessica Schreyer
Professor of English

We want students to view history and literature not as an abstraction, but essential to understanding our world today. . . . We hope they see their new insights as a call to action to make the world a more just and compassionate place for all.

—Jonathan Barz
Professor of English



The Literature and Culture: NYC course, with diverse authors and cultures for students to consider and analyze (often including a visit to New York City and direct experience to complement the textual)

Literature and Authors of Poor Character

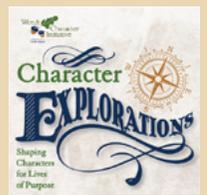
The *Wendt Center's* latest episode of *Character Explorations* posed the question: *What changes if the author of a text is a model of bad character?*



Jonathan Barz, Michele McKinlay, Katrina Owensby

Michele McKinlay, Assistant Professor of Literature, moderated the conversation between Jonathan Barz, Professor of Literature, and Katrina Owensby, UD Student. They pondered questions of separating authors' personal lives from their work, considered whether the culture and age an author lived in matter, and discussed how to respond with compassion.

Subscribe to *Character Explorations* on your favorite podcast app or on our website at www.dbq.edu/Wendt/Publications/.



Character Sightings

Serving Each Other

Hilby Honored for Efforts Against Human Trafficking

“Today, so many years after we supposedly abolished slavery using the 13th Amendment, we have more humans owning other humans in America than at any point in history. Modern day slaves are forced to do unspeakable things and suffer from such traumas that we can’t even fathom,” reports Kim Hilby, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice, who passionately advocates for victims of human trafficking and organizes events such as Run the Runway, a benefit for victims of trafficking.

Though Hilby has been actively educating the public and supporting trafficking victims for years, she sees much more work to be done. “We still have so many persons in our own communities who don’t even know human trafficking is happening in their own back yards. Victims and survivors of human trafficking deserve our support and services, and yet, we are far from where we need to be.”

Hilby’s efforts recently gained the attention and support of Governor Reynolds, who recognized Hilby for her tireless work with the 2022 Outstanding Anti-Trafficking Service Award. Congratulations, Kim!



Kim Hilby (back right) with Run the Runway volunteers

Faculty Character Advancement Celebration

“A respite from cynicism!” Or so one attendee called the Faculty Character Advancement Celebration.

We honored nominees for the Faculty Character Advancement Award and panelists Kevin Cattani, Sheila Sabers, and Rafic Sinno spoke about their understanding of character, of role models, and of ways to advance it in their discipline. The approaches vary, the disciplines differ, but each contributes to our understanding.



Kevin Cattani, Sheila Sabers, and Rafic Sinno



Community time at the celebration

Congratulations, Craig Marty!

Craig Marty, Associate Professor of Business, received the 2021-22 Faculty Character Advancement Award for advancing the Wendt virtues of excellent moral character in teaching, learning, or living. His students provided glowing support for his nomination:

“He’s compassionate, understanding, and someone everyone should meet. He made a huge impact on my future career, my learning, and life.”

“Everything Professor Marty has taught me has prepared me for something greater.”



Craig Marty



Faculty and Staff Share Their Gifts

Mettert Serves the Community

Andy Mettert, Chef with Aladdin (UD’s food service), has a calling to nourish the community. Along with colleagues who are passionate about serving, he is active with numerous community events and fundraisers, such as:

- Project Rooted (connecting kids to real food)
- BaconFest (supporting non-profit, the Arc)
- Mac & Cheese Fest (raising money for the Iowa Stead Family Children’s Hospital)
- Guest speaking at local schools
- Preparing elaborate dinners to raise funds for area non-profits
- Donating perishables to the Dubuque Rescue Mission when UD breaks begin.

“When I think of the word ‘community,’ I think of people—those I work for, alongside with, or even just pass by in the grocery store,” says Mettert. “I am fortunate my work community, both at UD and beyond, includes the diversity to make my life more fulfilled. It would be very selfish of me not to want to share this in meaningful ways with others.”

Thank you, Andy, for reminding us that preparing and sharing food with others nourishes not only our bodies but also our sense of community and shared humanity.



Andy Mettert working with children through Project Rooted

African American Museum of Iowa Visit

Supported by a Wendt Faculty Grant, Brian Hallstoos and Jonathan Barz took 19 students to visit the African American Museum of Iowa to learn about Iowa’s Black history and how housing discrimination has created inequality.

The exhibits brought to life many injustices in our state’s history. As one student noted, “No matter what is done today, history cannot be re-written. It can be taught and understood and we can have compassion for the people that were involved, but it cannot be undone.”



Biermeier Steps in at a Time of Need

After a member of the East Dubuque City Council passed away last spring, Chad Biermeier, Assistant Professor of Education, took on the substantial role of serving in his place on the council for the past year.



Despite the time commitment required, Biermeier considered it a call to serve, saying, “Part of the mission of UD is giving back to our communities and I saw this as an opportunity to get more involved in city government and help grow the City of East Dubuque.”

Ripperger Shares His Love of Dubuque

Director of Digital Media Production, Nathan Ripperger, has a busy schedule providing video and streaming support to everyone at UD.

Did you know that Nathan also stars in a television show all about the attractions the Dubuque area has to offer? Using his gifts to serve the community, Nathan brings a love of Dubuque to the viewing audience. Watch Nathan in action on “Travel the Tri-states” on MC22.



Awards

Athletics

Character Athletes of the Year

Allison Bailey and Mitchell Pomeroy are the 2021-22 Female and Male Character Athletes of the Year! Congratulations to you both. Thank you for striving to be excellent people and modeling the core character virtues of integrity, justice, and compassion.



Allison Bailey, Female Character Athlete of the Year



Mitchell Pomeroy, Male Character Athlete of the Year

Character Athletes of Each Sport

The Character Athletes of the Year are selected from the Character Athletes of Each Sport, nominated by coaches for demonstrating good character on and off the field.

Baseball: **Mitchell Pomeroy**

Women's Basketball: **Allison Bailey**

Men's Basketball: **Keegan Zimmerman**

Cheer & Stunt: **Kaylene Hess**

Men's Cross Country: **Tyler Cernohous**

Women's Cross Country: **Riley-Quinn Roman**

Football: **Tyson Welsch**

Men's Golf: **Isaac Meyer**

Women's Golf: **Morgan Hawkins**

Men's Lacrosse: **Zachary Schmitt**

Men's Soccer: **Lucas Von Braun**

Women's Soccer: **Mya Wesling**

Softball: **Lauren Brown**

Men's Tennis: **Stefan Zrnic**

Women's Tennis: **Reese Gottman**

Men's Indoor Track & Field: **Garrett Byrd**

Women's Indoor Track & Field: **Annika Braaten**

Women's Outdoor Track & Field: **Victoria Zoltowska**

Men's Outdoor Track & Field: **Noah Gabrys**

Volleyball: **Emma Powell**

Wrestling: **Robert Melise**



Character Scholars Banquet

Completing Scholars

Twenty students completed their time in the Wendt Character Scholars program. Congratulations to those who are graduating in May! We look forward to hearing about where you go next in the world and the impact you make on it.



Completing Scholars. First row: Bailey Iverson, Nafaria McMillian, Kira Finifrock, Patient Jabbah, Emily Swanson; Second row: William Kowalewski, Nathan Rauenbuehler, Bryce Walter, Nicolette Evans, Nicholas Kremer; Third row: Christian Molosz, Luke Hilliard, Mitchell Heinzen, Bradley Buechel, Brady McIntyre, Colby Molosz, Not pictured: Christian Campbell, Kathleen Mathias, Olivia Miller, Kaitlyn Wilder

Alumni Keynote

Sam (En-Yu) Wu (C'21) inspired us with character lessons he took from his time as a Character Scholar and challenged us to be people of compassion.



Mentor Appreciation

Check out our social media pages for posts about our five Wendt Character Scholar Mentors.

Ken Turner and Ben Bartels have served faithfully as mentors for the past three years and are completing their terms. We are grateful for their dedication and will miss them next year!

MENTOR APPRECIATION SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Ken Turner

SCIENCE EDUCATION

"Dr. Turner does a great job making sure we get the most out of our Wendt experience."
-Bryce Walter

MENTOR APPRECIATION SPOTLIGHT

Prof. Ben Bartels

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

"Professor Bartels is always encouraging us to be intentional and realistic while shaping our outlook on life and creating our service goals."
-Sydney Killeen

Service and Scholar-of-the-Year Awards

Every year, we recognize scholars who have gone above and beyond as they serve the community and participate in the Character Scholars Program. Thank you for your commitment!



Scholar-of-the-Year Award Recipients. First row: Jenna Bidlingmaier, Nicolette Evans, Kaelyn Weigel, Makenzie Knapp, Sammi Tolnai; Second row: Abby Scroggs, Nicholas Kremer, Colby Molosz, Kailley Tyburski



Service Award Recipients. Brady McIntyre (123 hours) and Isaac Hays (88 hours)



Service Honorable Mentions (50+ hours). Patient Jabbah, Madelyn Huschitt, Jenna Bidlingmaier, Alyssa Stevenson; Not pictured: Olivia Miller

Director's Note

Called to Lifelong Service

The pandemic shook our sense of normalcy, shattering our illusions of control. Just when we were hoping we were coming out of this “crazy” period of life, the world order began to shake with Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and President Biden reminded us that whatever form of opposition we exercise, it will be costly.

Talk of hardships and sacrifices may be out of our “normal” experience. It certainly doesn’t jive with so much of the self-care talk.

Using self-care as an excuse to not give of one’s self, to avoid leaving our comfort zone, might at times be an expression of privilege and self-centeredness (I’m talking to myself here). I acknowledge that sometimes people give of themselves so much, they put themselves in crisis and a dose of self-awareness is necessary. But how many of us just want to avoid being tired or busy?

One of UD’s key values is service—service motivated by an identity of being a follower of Jesus Christ. Julie Canlis, author of *A Theology of the Ordinary* writes: “Knowing oneself and being oneself can only happen in relationship with knowing and being known by God and others. And to go one step further: Truly caring for oneself only happens when we have something bigger than ourselves to care about.”¹

An old hymn comes to mind and speaks to me in fresh ways as I consider how to live with the integrity of my convictions to practice justice and compassion.

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day his voice invites me,
saying "Christian, follow me!"

As the first disciples heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and
kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.

In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than
these."

Jesus calls us! In your mercy,
Savior, help us hear your call;
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all!²

I imagine that when Jesus called the disciples, they had many legitimate reasons to turn him down, from keeping their father’s business running, to feeding their families, to keeping their well-paid government jobs. But they had a glimpse that their sacrifices were for something bigger. They loved God enough to know they were beloved by Him and had a purpose that could help them not only take care of themselves, but serve others for Jesus’ sake.

As you live your busy, often care-laden lives, remember how much you are loved so that when you say yes to serving and sacrificing you do so in the freedom of gratitude and knowledge of being loved.

—Annalee

WENDT CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION



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¹ <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2022/march-web-only/lent-self-care-discipline-discipleship-works-gods-care.html>

² https://hymnary.org/text/jesus_calls_us_oer_the_tumult