

THE
CITY OF
AKRON



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Whether they're living away from their families for the first time or commuting from home while pursuing their higher education goals, students at The University of Akron (UA) always manage to find a place on campus that feels like home to them. Sometimes, if they can't find the exact sense of home they need, they create it for themselves.

Our faculty and staff work hard to ensure each student finds a place at UA, and in this issue of The University of Akron Magazine we explore how members of the UA community make a home here.

Many of us think about home as a physical place where we live our private lives. Home certainly can be the building or room in which we sleep and, as we learn in a story about residence hall life, our students create comfortable spaces and welcoming environments where they can truly be themselves. We also learn about how UA's Greek organizations create a sense of home and belonging for students.

UA community members also find home on campus, such as the Zips Athletics season ticketholders whose home in the JAR has been the same seats for decades.

Home can sometimes be much more than a physical place, as highlighted in a Cummings Center for the History of Psychology's exhibit that explores the concept and definition of "home." It can be a feeling of security, like the ways in which ZipAssist supports students with temporary housing and other needs.

UA's athletic teams create a sense of home for the student-athletes who come to Akron from all over the world. Home can also be a student organization or club. And there are many ways in which we create the feeling of home around food and events such as our annual Robsgiving dinner.

UA's performance spaces, such as Guzzetta Hall and E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall, and places like the Emily Davis Gallery and Dr. Shirla R. McClain Gallery feel like home at times to me and my wife Georgia because of our deep appreciation of arts and culture.

I always feel at home in my office in Buchtel Hall, which for UA's presidents has been a home base for more than a century. What truly makes my office feel like a home is not necessarily the physical elements of the space, but the colleagues with whom I share it. I am so grateful to all the UA students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members who contribute to that feeling of home on campus by filling it with warmth, energy and UA spirit.

Gary L. Miller
President



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BY BREE SABIN

Over the years, the campus has changed quite a bit. Yet, amidst this evolution, one constant has remained: "The Rock." Positioned in the center of campus for more than 144 years, it stands as a steadfast symbol of tradition at UA.

What most don't realize is that UA is home to two separate rocks. The smaller of the two is the original rock, from the Class of 1879, whereas the larger rock is from the Class of 1880.

The Class of 1880 wanted to outshine the Class of 1879, so they discovered a much larger rock that would do just that. Originally situated in West Akron on the farm of Col. Simon Perkins, son of Akron's founder, Gen. Simon Perkins, "The Rock" found its way to campus.

However, its journey was far from simple. Transporting the massive boulder via wagon posed challenges, particularly when a bridge along the route was unable to bear its weight. This obstacle led to a delay until the bridge could be reinforced, allowing "The Rock" to continue its journey.

"The Rock" stood firmly for nearly eight decades, while the campus surrounding it changed. In September 1961, it was decided that the landmark stood in the way of progress, which led to its relocation.

The move to its current location became inevitable with the construction of Zook Hall, which today houses the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education.

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OPPORTUNITIES IN chiropractic medicine

UA students interested in chiropractic medicine will have a new opportunity to complete their bachelor and doctorate degrees in less time as part of the Advanced Scholar Program. National University of Health Sciences (NUHS) has partnered with UA to allow students to complete both undergraduate and Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.) degrees in as little as seven years.

The Advanced Scholars Program is a joint recruitment and dual admission effort that creates a coordinated curriculum specifically for exceptional students who maintain a 3.5 GPA or higher at UA. Students have the option of enrolling in the chiropractic program at NUHS's Illinois campus or at its Florida site. ■

Welcome TO THE BOARD

Mark Lerner '75 was appointed to the UA Board of Trustees on November 13, 2024. He is a 1975 graduate of the University of Arkansas and has served on the board since 2019.

ensure students are safely housed



BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

As winter break drew closer near the end of the fall 2023 semester, Elise*, a University of Akron (UA) freshman from Cleveland, realized she might not have a place to stay from December to January. She couldn't return to her home — it wasn't a healthy place for her at the time — and with the UA residence halls closed between semesters, she was running out of housing options.

Elise remembered that in previous visits to UA's ZipAssist office in Simmons Hall, she had seen information about temporary housing opportunities. She spoke with Heather Barhorst, assistant director of student basic needs, who works closely with students who come to the Campus Cupboard for food supplies. Elise learned about her options and applied for funding from the University's Student Emergency Financial Assistance (SEFA) program and another special fund designed to help students remain in on-campus housing due to unique circumstances, like displacement, homelessness or emergency need. She was approved, and was granted a temporary place to stay on campus during winter break.

"I have a lot going on at home, so it was like an escape for me to be here," said Elise, who is undecided on a major. "It was nice just to be in my own space. It gave me more of a sense of learning how to be fully independent."

Independence is one of the goals of ZipAssist, UA's multifaceted student advocacy and support office. ZipAssist operates the Campus Cupboard and a host of other initiatives such as financial wellness courses, parent and family relations, off-campus and commuter student assistance and the Help-A-Zip program.

ZipAssist also manages the SEFA program, which provides critical support to at-risk students who must overcome financial obstacles to persist at the University. Students who meet the eligibility criteria can receive up to \$1,000 non-tuition-related emergency need. Examples of expenses that are eligible for funding include childcare, food or meals, gas, housing/rent, personal automobile expenses and utilities.

"We know that a student's academic progress can be derailed if emergencies aren't addressed quickly," ZipAssist Senior Director Alison Doehring said. "That's why the programs within ZipAssist are so important. They address not only the immediate hardship facing a student, but also get to the root cause."

Students self-identify to ZipAssist when they need emergency funding or can be referred by a faculty or staff member through Help-A-Zip, the University's student early alert and intervention program. ■



NEW re:center IS A cozy campus spot

BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

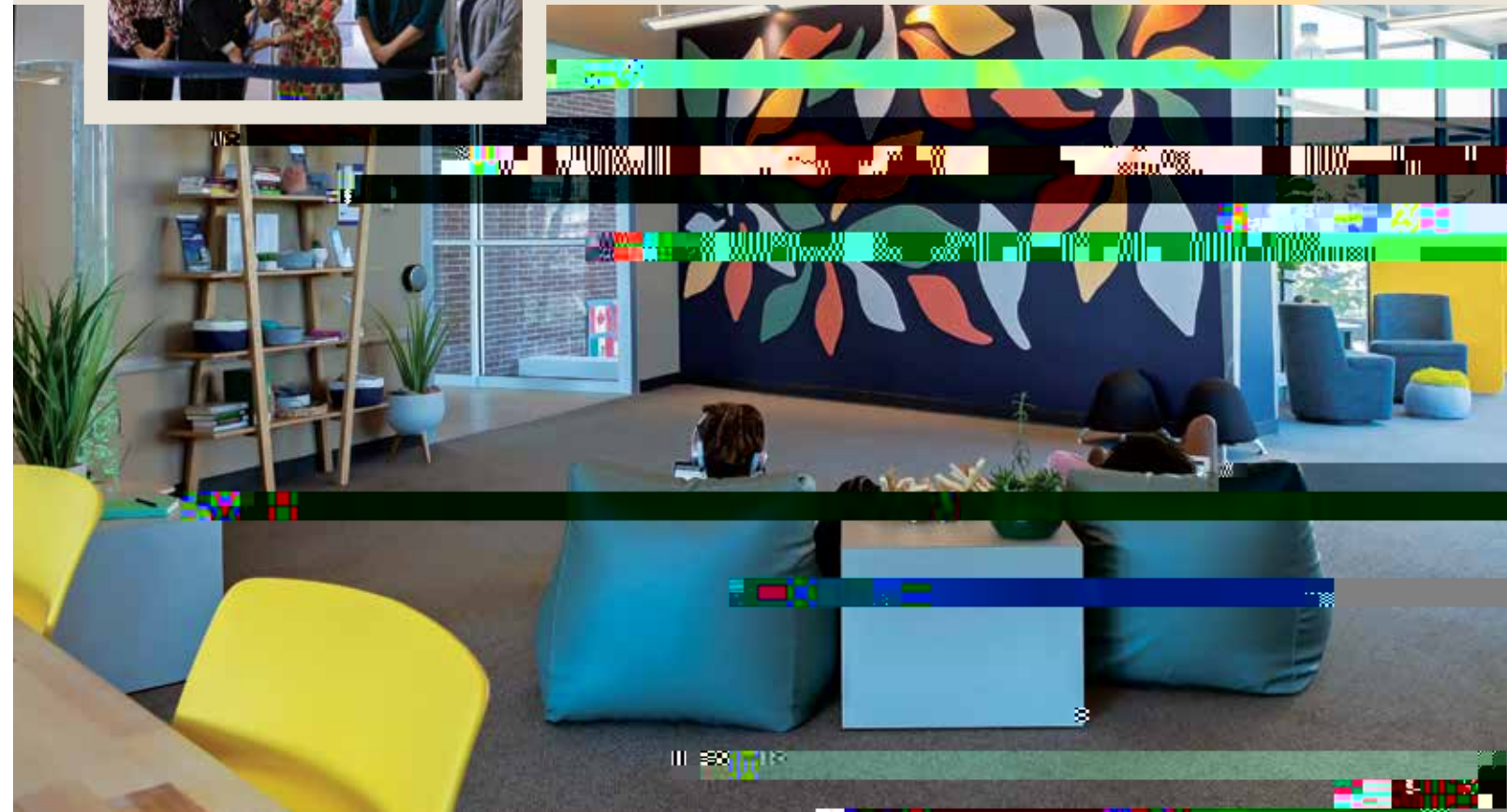
UA students now have a cozy, home-like spot in UA's busy Jean Hower Taber Student Union with the fall 2023 opening of the re:center, a former student lounge space that was renovated and transformed into an oasis where students can rest and recharge. ZipAssist played a major role in the development of the space.

The center was funded by a gift from the Women in Philanthropy program of the University of Akron Foundation's Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee. Alison Doehring, senior director of ZipAssist, and Anna Ball, senior associate director of ZipAssist, who co-taught the Zips Recharge Together [Un]class, a spring 2023 course offered by the EX[L] Center for Community

Engaged Learning, encouraged their students to gather ideas for their vision of the space. With the help of an interior designer, the room was thoughtfully crafted as a soothing environment to support mental health and wellness. These features include a nap pod, comfortable furnishings, plants and expansive windows for natural light. Students from UA's Myers School of Art crafted a mural for the space.

ZipAssist added stress-relief items such as stress balls, stickers and coloring books, and keeps the space stocked with information on health and wellness resources available to students. ZipAssist recently ordered additional furniture and seating, which is an indication that the re:center is being used regularly by students who want a quiet retreat during their busy days. ■

A group of UA staff, students and supporters gathered in 2023 to formally open the re:center in the Jean Hower Taber Student Union. Left to Right: Georgia Miller, President Gary L. Miller, Marlene Toot, Alison Doehring, Briana Kean '23

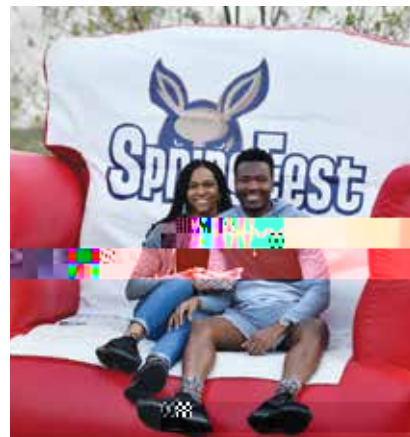




BY BREE SABIN

New and returning students often ask, "What is there to do around here?" Zips 100 is the answer to the question.

Originally launched in 2017, the Zips 100 list is a carefully curated list of 100 exciting activities and must-visit places designed to elevate the UA experience. The list is a combination of on-campus and Downtown Akron opportunities, encouraging students to take advantage of the unique setting of UA as an urban campus with downtown just a stone's throw away.



Recently updated, the list has a variety of things to do — from solo adventures to group outings. It includes recommendations for things to see, and food and drinks to try, all while catering to both those on a budget and those looking for free opportunities to create lasting memories.

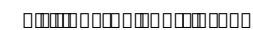
A unique element to the Zips 100 list is that some of the downtown businesses are also owned by UA alumni. One of the businesses

featured at #18 on the list, "Create art in Splatter Alley in Street Craftery" is owned by DaShika Street '16. Street was extremely honored to have her business added to the list.

"As a UA grad, it's especially gratifying to be supported by the university that I love so dearly. It's exciting to see UA making such great efforts to connect students with the community around them," said Street. "As a business owner, we have such anticipation for activating student culture in our storefront and throughout downtown and look forward to seeing how the guide helps make that connection."

The possibilities of things to do are endless, but the Zips 100 list makes it easy for students (and alumni/friends) to cross things off their UA bucket list.

At UA, we strive to create a sense of belonging, inspire personal growth, and nurture a lifelong connection between students and their surrounding communities. Zips 100 is just a piece of that puzzle, and a fun one at that! ■



— BRINGING HOME TO CAMPUS



OPENING THE DOOR TO A HOME OF POSSIBILITIES



BY ALEX KNISELY

In the heart of Akron, Ohio, 4,000 miles away from her native Brazil, Ana Clecia Alves Almeida has found more than just a university; she's discovered a new home in a small corner of the world at The University of Akron (UA).

As a senior studying mechanical engineering, Almeida's journey embodies the transformative power of education and the profound sense of community that transcends borders.

In Brazil, Almeida learned about UA through a friend while exploring college options. She was captivated by UA's prestigious engineering and polymer science program, as well as its appealing opportunities, such as scholarships and co-op placements. These all helped form the foundation of her "home away from home" at UA.

"I considered pursuing a degree in engineering and I have always been passionate about space," Almeida said. "So, I sought a school that could fulfill me in both areas. The Akronauts student-design team already fascinated me."

Since enrolling at UA four years ago, Almeida has built her home with its walls supported by the Akronauts, where she serves as liquid propulsion lead, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) where she is currently president of the UA chapter, and UA's Williams Honors College. She's also an engineering Dean's Team member and a UA Ambassador.

Within these groups, Almeida has discovered a supportive network where fellow students offer unwavering encouragement. Together, like a family at home might offer, Since en Tc honauticsnwr





BY ALEX KNISELY

Among the numerous activities at The University of Akron (UA), fraternity and sorority life stand out as a vibrant community fostering camaraderie, support, and personal and professional growth.

Led by passionate individuals such as coordinator Ben Collopy, staff within UA's Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life champion diversity within the Greek community, challenging stereotypes to ensure every student finds their place.

"I like to say that our community isn't a 'typical' Greek community," said Collopy. "We have chapter members from all over the country and across the globe; we have members with majors ranging from education all the way to chemical engineering; we have members of all

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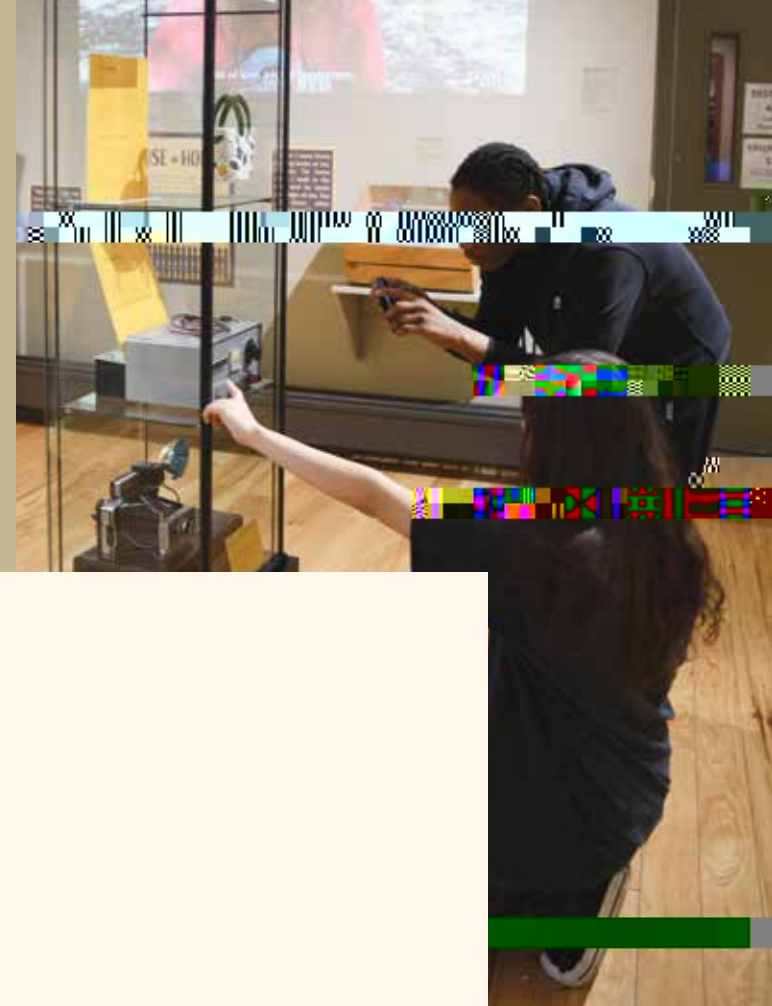
BY BREE SABIN





Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate student, Reagan Dudones tutors Titus Kirui, an international student from Kenya.

OF





BY JESSICA WHITEHILL

There's something that Hannah Kelly always notices when she walks into Robertson Dining Hall on the University of Akron (UA) campus around dinnertime. Very few students are sitting alone at tables. She doesn't see many diners wearing headphones or earbuds, and most aren't staring at their phones.

Instead, UA students in the dining hall, affectionately known as Rob's, are often sitting in groups. They're laughing, talking and catching each other up on their days. It's clear that the experience of communal dining helps foster a sense of home at UA and expands the social lives of students.

"Rob's is a lot less about the food and more about being surrounded by people," said Kelly, a junior from Canfield, Ohio, who is the president of the Residence Hall Council (RHC). "It's a community space that's not just about nourishment."

Dr. Melinda Grove, associate vice president for student affairs and chief housing officer, works closely with both students and Aramark, the company that manages the University's dining services at Rob's, Jean Hower Taber Student Union, the Polsky Building and other locations.

"We know from years of working with students that eating together is very effective as they adjust to being away from home and at a university for the first time," she said. "It's a huge component of community development and helping people feel like they belong."

Grove said there is plenty of research that connects student satisfaction and sense of belonging to on-campus living and communal dining. One of the reasons UA offers free meal plans to Resident Assistants, known as RAs, is so they can take students to Rob's or other dining spots to make sure they're eating, meeting new people and taking care of themselves.

The food is, of course, very important to students. Aramark develops menus that offer a wide range of comfort food, healthy choices and options for those who want specialized meals, such as gluten-free or vegetarian/vegan. Recent options at Rob's have included beef goulash, a kimchi fried rice bowl, butter chicken and a buffalo chicken taco.

"There's consistency, but the menus change enough so that I don't think we get bored," Kelly said.

Aramark also designs specialty menus to highlight the cuisine of a particular nation or ethnicity and offers holiday-themed menus. Grove said UA staff review the menus in advance.

For the past nine years, Dining Services has hosted Robsgiving. This event has turned SA(s) -1ng. . a n)-25.2 ()JTJO Tc.371 Td((theradion orr student) and opt homemrsvd

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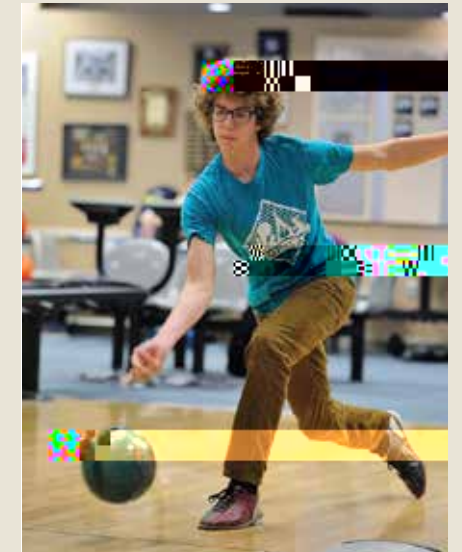
Inside the history of UA's bowling alley

BY BEAU BALIZET '25

The University of Akron (UA) has a variety of athletic facilities on campus where students can unwind and be around friends. From the basketball courts in the Student Recreation and Wellness Center to the Lee R. Jackson Practice Field, students are always able to find a place that feels like home.

But no other spot boasts such a rich history of achievements and generosity as the Edward G. Elias Bowling Alley in the Roo Lounge. The facility is not only a bowling alley, but a museum.

It all began with Edward G. "Eddie" Elias '58, an Akron native who became a sports agent and created the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA) in 1958 involving 33 professional bowlers. Before the PBA, no bowling organization ran tournament circuits. Elias' innovative idea led the PBA to become one of the longest-continuing sports series on network TV today, with some regarding him as the "Father of Bowling."

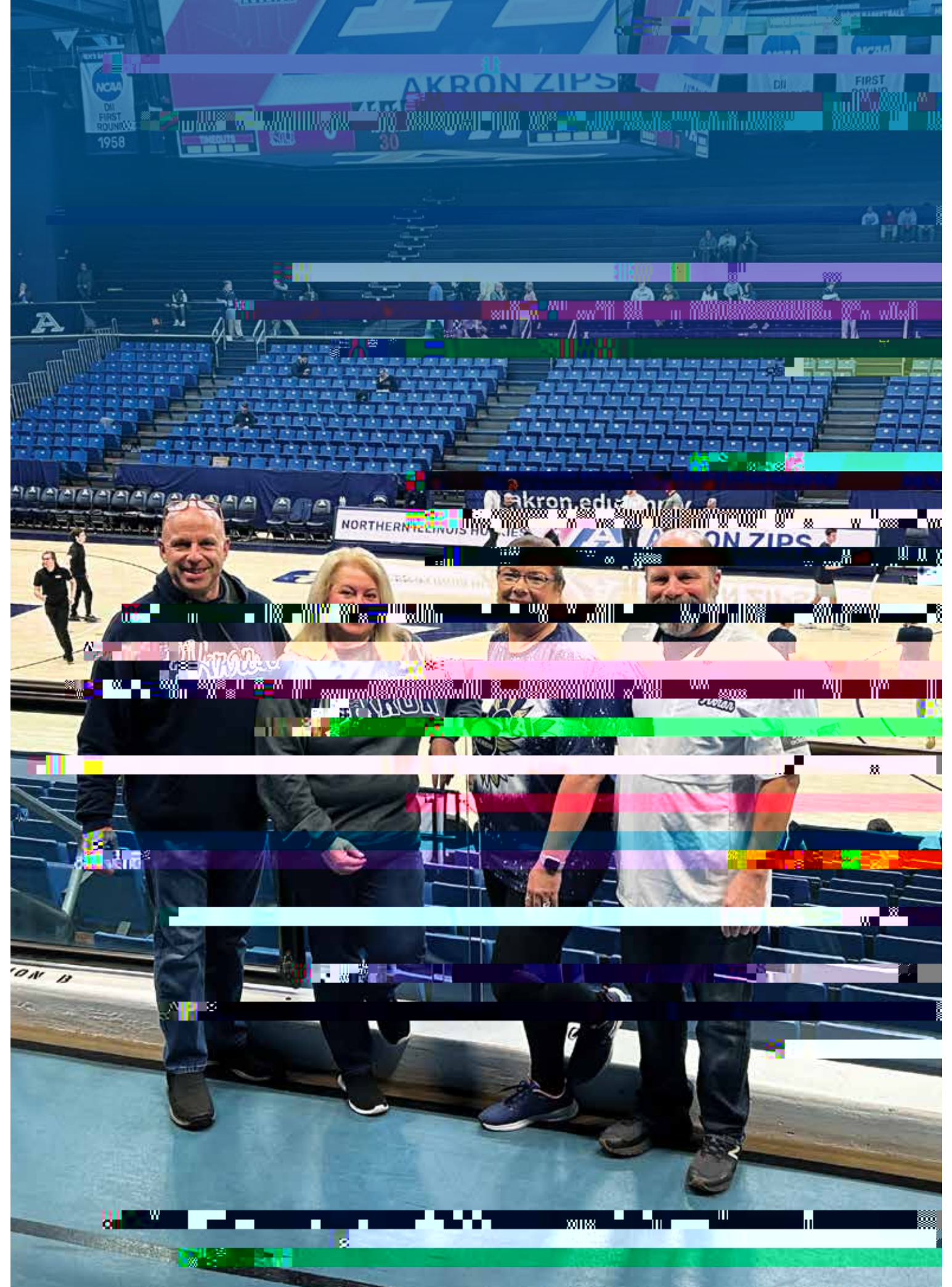


Upon Elias' death in 1998, his wife Peggy played a vital role in financing UA's bowling alley to bring the sport to UA students. Peggy also provided many photos and memorabilia of Elias during his career, which can be seen hanging throughout the bowling alley walls.

Peggy's deep commitment to helping UA students also led to the creation of the Edward G. Elias Bowling Tournament, an annual event hosted by the UA bowling alley that provided scholarships to both male and female winners. Each year the tournament, which ran until 2018, provided custom shirts, and each year's shirts are displayed throughout the bowling alley.

"We have so many donors who genuinely care about UA," Kim Cole, vice president of advancement and executive director of the University of Akron Foundation said proudly. "The opportunities students have received because of the Elias family are truly spectacular."

Next time you are bowling at the Edward G. Elias Bowling Alley, look to the walls to experience more than 50 years of UA bowling history. ■





**A NEW START,
BRINGS NEW ART**
*Akron's Coalition of Student
Sculptors*

**REAL EXPERIENCE MAKES
DREAMS REAL**
Investment Club

learning firsthand, industry-specific
careers. Finance is no different, as knowing

company findings affect our \$100k actively

BEYOND THE MAT
UA's Wrestling Club



Their hard work makes them no stranger to success. Seven members recently qualified

STEADY GROWTH
Geo-Challenge Design Team

competition is held in different states, such as North Carolina and California. The goal

levels, and first place in the Geo-Shirt competition, where teams design a T-shirt

FINDING OUR VOICE
AshBelt

student's first time. The fear of putting

The official AshBelt journal is published

Each year's journal offers a diverse array
of creative expressions, such as fiction,
flash fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry

of different creative literary works

GIVING BACK WITH GIVE
*GIVE (Global Initiative for
Volunteer Efforts)*

around the world. It also offers various

in our field."



BY BREE SABIN

Beginning the Legacy

Gerard Neugebauer '87, '91, is deeply rooted in Akron. Growing up in Firestone Park, and the sixth born of nine children, he was no stranger to the importance of education and community. All nine of the Neugebauer children attended UA, with eight of them obtaining degrees. Most of their spouses and children also became Zips.

However, Gerard's journey through UA began with a decision that shaped his life and his family's future.

With an engineering degree and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Finance, Gerard found success in the utility services and construction industry.

Gerard Neugebauer and wife Maria on homecoming court in 1984.

IOU 35 years of Akron's musical tradition



BY BREE SABIN

We're all familiar with the scenario: it's a Saturday morning, you hop into the car to tackle errands, tune

UA RECEIVES \$826,202 GRANT for mental health support ON CAMPUS

College students face a demanding academic schedule compounded by extracurricular activities and jobs, often straining their physical and mental well-being. A recent Health Mind Survey revealed that nearly 60% of responding UA students struggle with mental health disorders. Responding to these concerns, UA secured an \$826,202 grant from the Ohio Department of Higher Education to enhance mental health support on campus.

The grant will be utilized in a four-step comprehensive care model aimed at educating students about available resources, reducing stigmas around seeking help, partnering with mental health organizations, and training faculty and staff in supporting students' mental health needs. The funds will establish new mental health programs, including counseling services expansion, awareness campaigns, peer support initiatives



ELIZABETH BUCHEL

ELIZABETH BUCHEL AWARD RECIPIENTS



Marie Bevilacqua '71, '74

Raised in a family that prized education and hard work, Marie Bevilacqua's journey led her to become a dedicated educator and philanthropist alongside her husband, Frank '72, '74. Together, the couple established the Frank P. and Marie L. Bevilacqua Family Foundation, supporting various civic interests in Akron, including education and health care. Their strong ties to The University of Akron (UA) are evident through scholarships and donations, reflecting their commitment to giving back to the community. Bevilacqua's unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives drives her philanthropic efforts, ensuring that students with limited resources can pursue their dreams at UA.

Karen S. Steinger '82

Karen Steinger embodies the essence of intentional good deeds and community support instilled in her from a young age. Hailing from Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, Steinger's philanthropic endeavors in Houston, Texas, reflect her commitment to uplifting underserved individuals and families. Despite the geographical distance, her roots in Akron remain strong, evident through her generous contributions to UA. Alongside her husband Frank '81, she champions scholarships and initiatives aimed at reducing financial burdens and fostering academic success for students.



2024 UNIVERSITY OF AKRON HONORARY ALUMNUS AWARD RECIPIENT



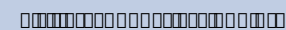
Sally D. Read

The 2024 University of Akron Honorary Alumnus Award recipient, also presented at the University of Akron Foundation Spring Meeting hosted by the Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee, is Sally Read, a warm and generous individual with a deep-rooted commitment to the community. Her dedication to helping others, particularly students at UA, alongside her husband Roger '63, '66, extends to various committees and philanthropic efforts. She serves UA in a variety of capacities. She has been a member of the University of Akron Foundation's Stewardship & Women in Philanthropy Committee since 2018 and a member of the Arts Advancement Council since 2022. The Read family's benevolence extends far beyond campus. They support a variety of organizations throughout Akron, including Julie Billiard Schools, Open M Ministry, Project GRAD, Children's Concert Society, Goodwill Industries of Akron, Leadership Akron, Akron Kiwanis for Kids, Rotary Club, Stewart's Caring Place and the Akron Symphony Orchestra. Read's legacy has left a significant impact on those she assists throughout the wider Akron community. ■

to compile missing data, uncovering stories of thriving businesses and cultural landmarks in the Akron area. Despite challenges such as urban development erasing physical remnants of this history, the project serves as a testament to Northeast Ohio's vibrant past and aims to amplify marginalized voices in historical narratives.

Through partnerships with various organizations and ongoing community engagement, Green Book Cleveland endeavors to promote awareness of African American history beyond conventional narratives. ■

Originating from the crucial role of "The Negro Motorist Green Book" in facilitating safe travel for Black motorists from 1936 to 1966, this project is documenting Green Book sites and previously unrecorded locations in the region. Professor of History Dr. Gregory Wilson is leading graduate students as they diligently comb through archival materials and historical sources





The

