

Class of 1996

Winter 2017 Class Agent Letter

Happy 2017, Augie classmates!

WHAT A CELEBRATION! Thanks so much to all of you who were able to make it back for our 20th class reunion during Viking Days 2016!

Our class is seriously a great group of people; your stories and strength inspire me. Every part of the weekend was fun: watching kiddos run around and make new friends as families got together, hearing laughter roll through campus and the halls of local hang-outs, sharing memories over meals and football games, etc. Maybe the best part of all was just taking time to sit down together and reconnect face to face, or to make new connections with people who will be “old friends” next time around. I hope you all felt welcome and also left for home with full hearts and plans to return again soon! I know distance and conflicts made it difficult for many to be there; please know that you were missed and are always welcome back “home” to campus whenever you are in Sioux Falls. I hope we will see you next time!

This has been a year of many changes for our family. After 2 ½ years we finally found just the right house here in Sioux Falls, remodeled it, and moved in. Yay! Now we are trying to figure out where we unpacked and placed things like blenders, coffee makers, check blanks, etc. ♪ I just finished my second book and am doing some teaching and speaking related to that. Our girls keep us running with lots of activities and crack us up a lot with their “kid wisdom.” We are thankful to be back in this wonderful community – great schools, great people, and at least for two months, great weather. Ha!

This year will bring one particularly important change to the Augustana campus. Current President Rob Oliver will be retiring in July after 25 years of serving the Augustana community in various capacities. A search is currently underway for the new president, whose name will be announced this spring. We wish President Oliver the best and are thankful for his leadership during his years at Augie!

Augie’s enrollment is up! This fall, enrollment was the highest it has been in 26 years!! The 1,937 full-time, part-time and graduate students represent 34 states and 38 countries – wow! And more good news – according to the Student Success Center, 98% of the class of 2015 graduates are employed in their major or chosen field. If you know of a prospective student, please refer them and remind them that 100% of Augustana students receive academic, talent, and/or need-based financial assistance.

Just in case you missed hearing about it, the Augustana men’s basketball team won the NCAA Division II National Championship last March. What a season!! The Augie choir performed with Barry Manilow last April at a concert in Sioux Falls and just returned from a tour in Germany and Italy. And many other outstanding athletes, musicians,

scholars and faculty are highlighted in the most recent Augustana magazine. Check out their stories!

If you know of a classmate who has not been receiving the Augustana magazine or email correspondence (such as class letters), please encourage them to update their contact information with the Augustana Alumni Office through the quick update form at www.augielink.com/update. It would be a good idea for everyone to check and make sure the office has your most recent address and email, particularly if you have moved in recent years. We want to be sure everyone stays connected! Also, remember you don't need to experience a major life event to send in an update. It's great to hear from you anytime; your classmates will be glad to know what you are up to! You can send updates to alumni@augie.edu or to me.

Finally, stay tuned for more information about the first ever Augustana Giving Day on March 2. This will be an opportunity for everyone to join in during a 24 hour period to "Give Like a Viking." The money raised will have a major impact over the next 365 days (or even a lifetime!) When you hear more about this special opportunity, please consider giving. Every gift matters, so please know that whether your contribution is small or large, it is very important and it does make a difference.

Happy 2017, classmates! Can't wait to see you again!

Cari Skogberg Eastman

On to our class news:

Dayna Groskreutz lives in Sioux Falls with her husband Dave and three daughters. She is a pulmonary / critical care physician at Avera McKennan Hospital.

Tereasa Payne is living in NYC with her husband, Simon Hutchings, and their corgi, Randal. She plays flutes/world flutes with Disney's "The Lion King" on Broadway. She also tours throughout the country performing with orchestras, artists, Broadway shows, and her "Tour of World Flutes" concert. Tereasa has recently published a children's book, "Faith's Friends Play the Flute" which teaches children about world flutes while also sharing a message of diversity and acceptance. It is available for purchase at: https://www.etsy.com/listing/502224879/childrens-book-faiths-friends-play-the?ref=shop_home_active_1

Kristen (Sonnichsen) Andrix and her husband Todd welcomed the arrival of son Soren Todd on June 3, 2016! Congratulations to the Andrix family!

Julie Voelker-Morris lives in Eugene, Oregon, with her husband Robert and kids Isaac and Elise. This is Julie's 14th year teaching at the University of Oregon. She teaches in the Arts & Administration program in the areas of community and performing arts management and also teaches for Comics & Cartoon Studies and First-Year Programs.

