

UO Alumni Newsletter

December 2023



Remember James “Jim” Coleman 9/17/41-10/28/23

Helen Coleman called me from Norwich, Connecticut, to tell me that her husband had died. Although I did not have Jim as a teacher, we became well acquainted over the past decade. He was a practitioner of an all-but-lost art form, the hand-written word in beautifully crafted prose.

In addition to his letters, we communicated by telephone. The initial contact was from me, asking Jim for permission to associate his name with a prize to incentivize the liberal arts. I am reminded of his humility and sincerity as he helped me figure out how best to establish the first Coleman Prize.

Specific memories flooded my emotions when Helen told me of his death. Rightly so, Jim had observed that the recognition of recipients is as significant as the money. With the help of Meredith Dodson, arts and humanities department chair and associate professor of writing, the Coleman Prize in Prose became a reality. Contributors to the Garfield Lake Review are eligible every year.

Jim Coleman was in his early 20s when he arrived to teach at Olivet. Soon after, he mentored students who created the Garfield Lake Review, the literary publication that distinguishes Olivet as valuing the written word. I like to think that Jim Coleman will be honored by those who knew him and that his legacy will become known to others.

A second Coleman Prize in Poetry has been established to recognize the winner of the Abbie M. Copps Poetry Competition. Jim Coleman had suggested reviving the Copps Competition in a way that is lasting. I am glad he lived to see that happen.

Throughout various eras and in times of transition, worthy institutions have become intentional about capturing and retaining their institutional memory. As the Olivet College we knew strives to realize its full potential as The University of Olivet, I trust that those who have gone before will be acknowledged.

The Coleman Prizes and the Stevens Award—which recognize excellent educators—are projects of The Bill Buchanan Fund. Contributions to their memory and in support of the liberal arts make it possible to increase the amount of money given to the recipients. You may contact [me](#) or the [Advancement Office](#) for information about giving to the Fund.

Jim Briney '69, Oro Valley, Arizona, (520) 219-0233, jbriney47@gmail.com



We want to see you in Kalamazoo!

Event Date: Sunday, January 28, 2024, 3:00 pm

Registration Closes: Thursday, January 18, 2024 (or when capacity is reached)

Join event champion Melissa Doubleday '96 for an afternoon of hockey and fun! Registration includes a ticket to the game, a \$10 concessions voucher, a free game of bowling at the Airway Fun Center, and a K-Wings knit cap. Family and friends are welcome! Register today!



Comets are Cruising both Coasts! February 2024

Join us in Florida as we cruise the coasts in February 2024. Our first event is the Daytona Dinner Cruise (Halifax Harbor Marina, 125 Basin St, Daytona Beach) on **Wednesday, February 14, 2024**, with a sailing time of 5:00 p.m. and a return time of 6:30 p.m. Registration includes a discounted ticket for the cruise, dinner, dessert, unlimited soft drinks, music, sightseeing, free parking, raffle prizes, and one drink ticket per person. A cash bar will also be available. Between cruises, we will be at the Hilton Ocala (3600 SW 36th Ave, Ocala) for our annual Walt '58 & Teri Parker alumni dinner on **Thursday, February 15, 2024**, at 6:00 p.m. Registration includes dinner and complimentary wine and soft drinks. Other beverages will be available for purchase at the cash bar. Our final event is the Naples Princess Cruise (550 Port-O-Call Way, Naples) on **Saturday, February 17, 2024**, with a departure time of 5:45 p.m. and a return time of 7:45 p.m. Registration includes a discounted ticket rate and a voucher for one appetizer per person. A cash bar will be available. Register for one or register for all! Invite a friend, and we will see you when we set sail in February!



Betsy Greensmith Dole Celebrates 92nd Birthday with Release of Book

Former Olivet Board Chair and Friend of Olivet is Powerful Contributor to Social Justice

Former board chair and friend of The University of Olivet, Betsy Greensmith Dole, is releasing her first book, "Using My Voice: A Journey of Progressive Christianity and Social Activism," in time for her 92nd birthday on November 17, 2023. Her memoir takes readers on a profound voyage through her transformative path toward self-discovery and empowerment.

This remarkable story traces Betsy's evolution from a shy Congregational minister's daughter into a powerful contributor to social justice and environmental causes throughout Michigan. The book delves deeply into the intricate and contentious realm of the abortion and LGBTQ rights debates, underlining the significance of personal stories in fostering compassion and understanding.

This memoir exemplifies how one woman's voice can drive positive change, emphasizing inclusivity, justice, and community support. Betsy's life journey reflects the evolving landscape of the Christian church, focusing on behaviors over beliefs, and highlights the profound impact of supportive, like-minded friends and family in shaping individual growth. It underscores the contributions of the unsung heroes who make our communities stronger. Betsy's life is a testament to the courage it takes to share one's own experience while actively listening to the stories of others.

Betsy served on The University's board of trustees from 1985-2005 and was the first woman to chair the board (1993-1997).

It's because of Betsy that students have free access to The Betsy Dole Women and Gender Resource Center, which serves as a safe space on campus that is open to all community members regardless of gender, sexuality, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnicity, ability, age, religion, or other aspects of identity. The Center offers events and services designed to help participants develop their full potential, improve communication skills on divisive topics, and better understand life experiences across gender, sexuality, and culturally diverse populations.

The Olivet family wishes Betsy a happy and blessed 92nd birthday!



Travel with Olivet Pride!

Planning a trip? Take Olivet with you and show your Olivet pride just like Saudia Santure '98 did on her recent trip to Paris. Have your pictures featured on our Facebook page and in the newsletter. Contact the alumni office at alumnirelations@uolivet.edu to participate.

Did you know that WOCR has a Facebook page and an Instagram account? Follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/wocr891> and on Insta at <https://www.instagram.com/wocr89.1/>.



Comet Commentary Episode 1 Available Now!

Use the link to listen to alumni stories about giving thanks!

<https://sites.libsyn.com/486954>

Be sure to tune in next month for our holiday episode featuring special music from the UO band and choir!



Council Comments from Alumni Council Chair Barron Evans '77

Happy Holidays Alumni!

Welcome to December.... 'Tis the Season' is upon us! I'm delighted to share my third update about the goings-on of your Alumni Council, kindly published by the Alumni Office.

Our last meeting for 2023 took place on November 14, when the Council enjoyed getting to know our new Director of Career Development, Dr. Kordilia Noble. Dr. Noble joined the university in September of this year, continuing an impressive 26 years of higher education service committed to student success. The Council hosted her in the context of one of our three priorities for 2023/24 around *Mentorship*. While her work goes far beyond that, our alumni body – with a varied and rich

portfolio of skills – can be a tremendous asset to her efforts. Mentorship can be in various capacities, e.g., professional counsel, personal development, and academic support. We concluded the session with a request by Dr. Noble to engage alumni in any number of activities she oversees; the Council committed its support to enable her success. Look for opportunities in upcoming Alumni Newsletters.

You can support multiple opportunities now – including Dr. Noble's – by registering on our alumni platform Comet2Comet. This will help us tailor relevant and meaningful opportunities in which you can engage and support students and alumni seeking guidance. As one of our 12,755 alumni, you can also engage in any of these opportunities:

- Attending/planning/hosting on & off-campus events, e.g., Homecoming experiences, local tours, venue/restaurant visits
- Supporting student activities, e.g., enrollment, student success programs, mock interviews, internships, student hosting
- Partnering with faculty/administration on projects, e.g., speaking to classes, podcasts, newsletter/web content
- Affinity group get-togethers (e.g., sports, Greek life, hobbies)
- Council or Ambassador participation
- Philanthropy

In closing, I'd be remiss not to underscore how the Council's priority around '**Increasing Engagement**' can be a present you give yourself while sharing the gift of connection with others. What better way to celebrate the holiday season than by reconnecting with old friends and giving them the means to find you? Or think about it as a New Year's resolution: now have a 1-stop source for continuing memory-building in 2024.

You're invited to contact the Alumni Office Director Lori Otto LOtto@uolivet.edu or myself evansbarron@gmail.com at any time to learn how to engage with The University of Olivet!

Alumni Events 2023/2024

December 8-18, 2023 - Alumni Learning Experience in Dubai

January 28, 2024 - K-Wings Hockey Game, Kalamazoo, MI

February 14, 2024- Cruising the Coast Dinner Cruise, Daytona, FL

February 15, 2024 - Walt Parker '58 Dinner, Ocala, FL

February 17, 2024 - Cruising the Coast Dinner Cruise, Naples, FL

March 9, 2024 - Meijer Gardens Butterfly Exhibit, Grand Rapids, MI

April 12, 2024 - Cocktail Reception, Chicago, IL

May 2024 - Cocktail Reception, Detroit Athletic Club, Detroit, MI

June 2024 – Cruising the Coast Sunset Cruise, Petoskey, MI

July 19, 2024 - Lansing Lugnuts Baseball Game, Lansing, MI