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Preserving the Words of a Truth Teller

By Thea Skokan ('22)

“Hey, I have an amazing friend I want you to meet. Her name is Carla. Can you bring your camera?”

That’s how **Kristine Hoover** approached **Clement Lye**, three years ago, in hopes of preserving the story of **Carla Peperzak**, a 101-year-old Holocaust survivor and a Jewish member of the Dutch resistance credited with risking her life to save the lives of countless others. What followed was a massive undertaking for the pair – a multi-year project, dozens of interviews and research culminating in a 90-minute documentary called “Carla the Rescuer.”

But that wasn’t always the intention.

Their first idea was an oral history, a collection of recordings meant to preserve the voices of those with firsthand experience of historic events. Hoover, professor and chair of the master of arts in organizational leadership program, didn’t know exactly how they would keep Peperzak’s story alive, she just knew they had to.

“Carla is a truth teller, and truth tellers from that era are becoming few and far between,” she says. “It’s important for us to know their history and for us to live our lives intentionally because of what we know.”

“I took every bit of film gear I had,” recalls Lye, director of production and emerging media in Instructional Design and Delivery, after Hoover enlisted his help. “Every light, every camera I had, and we went to Carla’s home and interviewed her for three days.”

It didn’t stop there. After hearing everything Peperzak had to say, Lye realized they were onto something much bigger than they originally thought. So, they kept going.

“After about three months of filming, we finally took a step back and looked at everything we had,” Lye describes the moment the pieces fell into place.

“I think we have a movie here.”

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Building A Legacy

Ken Sammons’ Monumental Impact on Campus

By Dale Goodwin ('86 M.A.T.)

Ken Sammons played a sterling game of chess, moving his pieces around the chessboard (campus) methodically and strategically, in an orderly fashion that always had the best interests of the University in mind, says his longtime administrative coordinator, Julie Ullrich.

Sammons retired on December 31, 2024. Most of what he did for 55 years on the job, a lot of which was overseeing Plant and Construction Services, was behind the scenes, quietly ensuring the 100 buildings and 150 acres of beautiful grounds were in tiptop shape for the students, faculty and staff who spent their days, months and years here.

With experience in stagecraft in the theater arts department at Shadle Park High School, and his education in engineering as a Gonzaga student, one of his first projects was helping to renovate Russell Theatre, now Magnuson Theatre in College Hall.

He oversaw the design and construction of, or major renovations to, more than three dozen buildings and fields on campus and shifted the credit to others. Equally important to Sammons was making sure resources were available to maintain and upgrade the structures, their systems and operations.

He undoubtedly put in more steps on Gonzaga’s campus than anyone in University history. As the campus expanded over his time here (1967-2024), so did his average daily step count. He’d pick up every piece of garbage he passed on daily walks, and trim shrubs or pull weeds along the way, often on weekends.

He knew every heating and cooling system, every water main and electrical vault, where every underground tunnel system led, and the kind of windows and doors in every Gonzaga building. Sammons and his stellar department guided significant impact on energy conservation for the last dozen years or more.

Ken Sammons, 1997



Historically, he was one of the campuses’ best sources of University history, his 55 years as an employee second only to former Vice President Fr. Art Dussault, S.J., 1926-1992.

“He knew all the secrets behind the lore of the Music Mansion, which he would never tell,” says Plant Services’ Lea Hart, who worked with Sammons for the last 11 years. “That man was a steel trap.”

He was the picture of calm and composure. He worked cordially answering every question posed to him by the Trustees and Regents. He was a source of wisdom and perspective to administration.

When the ice storm struck Spokane and Gonzaga’s campus in 1996, Sammons made sure generators were set up and operating effectively to keep students fed and warm. With the Kennedy Apartments more than 75% built in 2006, a fire burned the structure to its foundation. “Ken was the voice of calm during the inferno,” Ullrich recalls, “creating a plan to dust ourselves off and rebuild the entire structure in a year’s time.”

When the 2008 snowstorm tried to bury the city, Sammons and his crew coordinated snow load testing on roofs, and he called in favors with local landscaping companies for help with roof snow removal.

Continuing the Legacy

Tomson Spink ('96) is an engineer Sammons first met when Spink was a project manager for Garco Construction building Gonzaga’s McCarthy Athletic Center in 2002-2004. Following a family tragedy, Spink left general contracting to pursue a career in higher education projects, first working for Eastern Washington University. “But I always stayed in contact with Ken,” Spink recalls.

“When a management position opened here Ken graciously called me and the rest is history.”

Spink started at Gonzaga in December 2011. He replaced Sammons as assistant vice president of Plant Operations, Planning and Construction Services in November.

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Meet Nichole Bogarosh

The new director of the Center for Student Involvement

By Thea Skokan ('22)

If there's one thing I noticed while chatting with Nichole Bogarosh ('08), it's that she belongs at Gonzaga.

The new director of the Center for Student Involvement started in early December, leaving Whitworth after nearly 15 years. It's something of a homecoming for Bogarosh, who worked at Gonzaga as a graduate admissions officer early in her career, completing a master's in communications and leadership while she was here.

She left in 2009 to start her doctoral degree at the University of Oklahoma but says there was always a voice in her head that questioned if leaving Gonzaga was the right choice.

Flash forward to October 2024: "I was literally in the middle of the most chaotic time I could possibly be in," she recalls. Her students at Whitworth were approaching midterms and the non-profit she led on the side, Spark Central, was in the middle of a major transition. "It was 12-hour days, seven days a week. I was barely breathing."

Then, when she least expected it, Gonzaga University posted an opening.

"This would be a really good fit," Bogarosh recalls thinking when she saw the role in the Center for Student Involvement. It would mean stepping out of the faculty world, connecting with students in a hands-on way and getting to utilize some of the other skills she picked up over the years.

"I couldn't not apply for it."

Bogarosh sat down on a Sunday night, carving out time at 11 p.m., having spent the rest of the week with her foot on the gas. "I didn't think anything would come of it," she says. "I wasn't looking for a job, I was so exhausted, but somehow everything lined up."

The perfect validation after years of wondering if Gonzaga was the one that got away.

Now here less than two months, Bogarosh says she sees her role as an advisory one. The Center for Student Involvement serves all student-initiated clubs on campus, it hosts the Gonzaga Student Body Association and is behind student favorites like SpikeNites. As the director, Bogarosh is excited to have a hand in all of these, but really, she wants students to know she's here to walk alongside them.

"It's experiential learning," she says. "I show students the tools we have for them, and then I make it known I'm here for them as they figure out the rest themselves."

Outside work, Bogarosh is a self-described pop culture nerd. She has an extensive Funko Pop collection that she's acquired over the years, gifts from friends and students who knew her well. Currently in her Netflix queue – "Bodkin," a mystery thriller series about a group of podcasters who set out to investigate the disappearance of three strangers in a small Irish town.

Bogarosh is also a summer person, through and through. She's counting down the days until warm sunshine returns and she can swim and kayak around Spokane. That is – if she isn't walking her schnoodle, Jackson.

In the meantime, she's more than happy to be back at Gonzaga, a long overdue homecoming. Her door is open and she's ready to help the student body in any way possible.

"I hope as students get to know me, they see the kind of resource I can be."



Bogarosh is a self-described pop-culture nerd. Stop by her office, Hemmingson 304B, to see her Funko Pop collection.



A Promising Place to Work

For the second year in a row, Gonzaga University has been named among the colleges and universities selected as a “Most Promising Places to Work in Student Affairs” by the American College Personnel Association and the publication “Diverse: Issues in Higher Education.”

Institutions are selected for inclusion based on the result of survey research into colleges and universities focusing on staff diversity and practices, compensation and benefits, professional development, family friendliness and other workplace factors.

“It’s an honor to be named for a second year in a row,” says Joan Iva Fawcett, dean for social justice leadership and community empowerment. “This recognition affirms that we continue to do good work to prepare our staff and support our students around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) matters.”

The American College Personnel Association has been examining matters of this nature in higher education for decades. In fact, the association itself is nearly 100 years old. The “Most Promising” list was developed in partnership with “Diverse: Issues in Higher Education” to recognize and celebrate Student Affairs workplaces that are vibrant, diverse, supportive and committed to best practices.

Fawcett points to our current political climate as an added reason for the importance of the work they continue to do.

“Our sustained efforts and strategic planning are more critical now than ever before. While this accolade is reassuring, it is also a reminder that there is still a lot more work to be done to live out our mission, specifically our ‘commitment to dignity of the human person, social justice, diversity, intercultural competence, global engagement, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, and care for the planet.’”

Around Campus

Events, celebrations and lectures of note this month

Feb. 5-6, 7-8:30 p.m. Former Gonzaga President Fr. Robert Spitzer, S.J., returns to campus for a set of talks on integrating themes in faith and science, “Making Sense of the Old Testament in Light of Contemporary Science & the Moral Teaching of Jesus” | Cataldo Globe Room

Feb. 6-7, 7:30-9:30, 6-7 p.m. Gonzaga Theatre presents “I Wish Ma Could Vote: An Evening of Women’s Suffrage Plays,” in celebration of the 105th anniversary of the passing of the 19th amendment | Magnuson Theatre

Feb. 7-Mar. 7, 4-7 p.m. Check out the Regional Faculty Art Exhibition, featuring faculty art works from Gonzaga, Eastern Washington University, Whitworth University and more | The Gonzaga University Urban Arts Center

Feb. 10, 7 p.m. In celebration of Black History Month, Northwest Passage and The Black Lens present the 4th annual Black Voices Symposium, with the theme: Powered by Courage | Myrtle Woldson Performing Arts Center

Feb. 12, 10-11:15 a.m. Join an interactive workshop with Annmarie Caño and learn how to co-create a healthier academic environment; Leading Toward Liberation: Theory and Praxis for Justice and Health in Higher Ed | Hemmingson Ballroom

Feb. 12, 6 p.m. Check out the 5th annual Celebrate EveryBODY Screendance Film Festival, with proceeds benefitting the Dance for Parkinson’s program | Jundt Art Museum

Feb. 22, Gonzaga Day Celebrate the Spirit of the Gonzaga community with alumni and friends around the world through chapter events, game watches, volunteer opportunities and socials!

Feb. 25, 5-6:30 p.m. The 2025 Judge Justin L. Quackenbush Lecture Series features the distinguished Raul C. Pangalangan, a former judge at the International Criminal Court at The Hague | Barbieri Courtroom, Gonzaga Law School

Feb. 28 This year’s Leadership Symposium, titled “Inviting Leadership: Dialogue & Inclusion” is dedicated to exploring leadership themes and collaborating with students and scholars | Gonzaga University



Sammons

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In 2020, it was COVID-19 that paralyzed Gonzaga only for a brief time before the University created plans to reopen in fall 2020. Plant Services was ready to pack up student rooms, catalog every item, and either store content until campus reopened or ship belongings home to campus residents. “Working with limited crews, the department made sure the lights were kept on at this ghost town of a campus over the spring and summer months,” Ullrich says.

Campus Architect (1992-2018) Mac McCandless appreciated Sammons’ attention to campus aesthetics – reintroducing campus borders with stone walls, iron fences, granite or concrete balls atop original brick pedestals, and shrubs and trees strategically placed, new landscaping to enhance GU’s park-like setting and moving parking lots to the campus perimeter to mitigate pedestrian-car conflicts and noise.

Gonzaga is like a small city of 8,500 people, McCandless describes. “Cities boast a mayor and city council, and many directors. At Gonzaga, Sammons

has served as director of public works, streets and utilities, parks and planning and zoning,” all rolled into one.

“Ken cared for our campus as if it were his personal responsibility,” says Chief Strategy Officer Chuck Murphy, who served as Sammons’ supervisor for a good share of his time here.

“To him it was not just a job. It was both his vocation and avocation. He was a true servant leader in every way.”

“

“Ken was the voice of calm during the inferno,” Ullrich says, “creating a plan to dust ourselves off and rebuild the entire structure in a year’s time.”



Gonzaga Day 2025

A day to celebrate the spirit and community that make Gonzaga, Gonzaga! This year’s Gonzaga Day has a special twist that honors our 26th president, Thayne McCulloh, who started the all-day event back in 2013.

Here’s what you need to know

- Follow @zagalumni on Instagram for events and watch parties.
- Wear your favorite Zag swag, snap a selfie and tag @zagalumni.
- Reflect and prepare for Zags Give Day on March 6 – a day to give back to the community.
- Show your Gonzaga pride in any way you can!
- Keep an eye out for the number 26 incorporated in different ways throughout the day.



The Sapling Project

From her only window to the outside world, Anne Frank could see a majestic chestnut tree. Since 2009, the Anne Frank Center has worked alongside the Anne Frank House to preserve the original chestnut tree by germinating chestnuts and donating the saplings to organizations dedicated to honoring Anne Frank's memory.

On her 101st birthday, Peperzak learned that one of only 18 saplings will be planted at Peperzak Middle School in Spokane in June 2025. "It's very hard to surprise someone who has seen so much of the world," Hoover says. "But that moment deeply, deeply touched her."

Peperzak

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Carla the Rescuer

Peperzak was born in Amsterdam in 1923. Her mother was not Jewish, but her father was, and she embraced the faith from a young age, attending synagogue and Hebrew school alongside Margot Frank, the older sister of Anne Frank. In 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands, the same year Peperzak graduated from high school. By 1941, all Dutch Jews were required to register with the state, only to be issued identification papers marked with a "J." Somehow, Peperzak's father arranged for the "J" on her papers to be removed – a difference that would eventually prove vital in her resistance efforts.

Throughout the war, Peperzak risked her life securing hiding places for fellow Jews from Nazis, creating fake identification papers and ration cards and publishing an underground newspaper that documented Allied military activity.

In the end, Peperzak lost most of her extended family and countless others to the Holocaust, and for half a century after, it was simply too painful for her to talk about. That changed in 1992.

"She found, while it felt impossible to talk about, it was also impossible to forget, and not talking didn't make that pain go away," says Hoover. Peperzak began telling her story, first in a biography, then later at schools and events.

"She certainly doesn't do this because it's easy," Hoover continues, "she does it because it's her responsibility as a truth teller of history."

Documenting History

Hoover and Lye recognized their own responsibilities in taking on this project. To have someone's life story in their hands, especially one of this magnitude, meant a commitment to truth, transparency and purpose.

"This is Carla's life, this isn't ours," Hoover says. "We constantly went back to her and her family and asked, 'Are we getting this right? Are we on track?' We wanted to honor her message so we felt a tremendous responsibility to check in with her to see if we were telling her story the right way."

"We can never really understand what she went through," Lye agrees, recalling one of the most powerful moments he experienced while creating the film. Carla sat on a panel at a local conference, and someone asked, "What was it like to live through this?" To which she replied, "I still live this every day."

It's a moment included in the documentary, and one that hit Lye hard as he realized in real time what it meant for one person who has endured so much to continually go back to that place of pain. "I think about that a lot still," he says. "She goes there to talk to us all the time. She goes back to that place and gives us her heart."

"That's how we eventually settled on a 90-minute film," Hoover says, because Peperzak's vision was for as many people as possible to know her story. She credits Clement's genuine commitment, terrific talent and unyielding vision for bringing the story to the big screen. The plan now is for the documentary to play at schools, at seminars, local events and film festivals.

"Carla the Rescuer" recently premiered at the Spokane Jewish Film Festival with two sold-out showings. It will show at the Seattle Jewish Film Festival, March 22 - April 6.

The team is also working with a Pittsburgh-based company called Teen Screen to make the film free and accessible for educators across the country.

How to Win Against Hate

What is the message to be remembered in Peperzak's story? You'll have to watch "Carla the Rescuer" for an in-depth explanation, but Hoover says, "Fundamentally, it's a message to stand up to hate and an invitation for each of us to be more respectful, more tolerant and, overall, to be kind."

"Carla doesn't just warn us about what happened during the Holocaust," Lye says, "Hatred is out there, but she's trying to tell us how to win against hate through love and respect."

The past three years impacted both Hoover and Lye in many ways.

For Lye, it's been a wakeup call: "You live your life and think you don't affect other people. And then you meet somebody who stood up, put her life in danger and continues to do so, and she tells you that you can make a difference."

"I hope everyone has a chance to know someone like Carla," says Hoover, who counts herself lucky to have spent so much time with someone she says, "truly exudes warmth, care and a commitment to human dignity. She is one of the best examples I have ever known of someone who, decade after decade, continues to want to make the world a better place."

Hard Work & Recognition

Staff Assembly honored several employees in December for creativity, heart and dedication to the mission



Spark of Spirit Award

Danielle Teague, Office of the Provost (bottom left)
Beth Barsotti, Mission Engagement (top right)

Innovation Award

Grace McElligott and **Erin de Silva**, Marketing & Communications, for the creation of the Zagfluencers and their contributions to Gonzaga University's social media presence (center left)

Mission Award

Ana Chavez, School of Health Sciences (bottom right)
Clement Lye, Instructional Design & Delivery (top left)



Noteworthy

New Hires

Amy Hyde, marketing & administrative specialist, Institute for Informatics & Applied Technology; **Andrew Johnson**, assignments coordinator, Housing and Residence Life; **Eddie Johnson**, general maintenance technician, Plant; **Elizabeth Acker**, program asst III, Sponsored Research & Programs; **Gary Davis**, communications officer, Campus Public Safety & Security; **Jese Blomquist-Worley**, custodian, Plant; **Marilee Kinsella**, program asst III, College of Arts & Sciences; **Timothy Fitzgerald**, instructional technologist, Instructional Design & Delivery; **Trevor Heilman**, admission specialist, Graduate Enrollment Management; **Tyler Como**, groundskeeper, Plant; **Andre Abrams**, custodian, Plant; **Christine Burge**, asst director, Discrimination & Harassment Prevention; **Colin Stapleton**, study abroad applications coordinator, Center for Global Engagement; **Jason Wilson**, custodian, Plant; **Jonathan Rogers**, business manager, Center for Student Involvement; **Matthew Laramie**, program coordinator, SJLCE; **Mike Wright**, training and development manager, Human Resources; **Stuart Beezley**, outdoor program manager, Center for Student Involvement

Position Changes/Promotions

Jordan Bennie, crime prevention & training supervisor, Campus Public Safety & Security; **Margaret Martens**, admissions application specialist, Graduate Enrollment Management; **Scott Wittel**, lead communications officer, Campus Public Safety & Security; **Tomson Spink**, assistant vice president, Plant; **Michael Loroz**, accounting asst II, Controller's Office; **Ryan Malarkey**, admissions operations specialist I, Admissions; **Edin Jusic**, director, Plant; **Jason Allread**, custodial lead, Plant; **Jeffrey Amann**, manager, Plant; **Julie Ullrich**, construction project specialist, Plant; **Luis Delgado**, benefits & leave specialist II, Human Resources; **Spencer Alexander**, lead security officer, Campus Public Safety and Security; **Nichole Bogarosh**, director, Center for Student Involvement; **Veronica Puente Arroyo**, asst director, UMEC

Goodbyes

Abegail Cruz, enterprise web developer II, ITS; **Christopher Fairbanks**, custodian, Plant; **James Nelson**, communications officer, Campus Public Safety & Security; **Janet Snowden**, custodial shift supervisor, Plant; **Jaron Fuglie**, IT technician II, ITS; **Jeremy**

Rouse, asst director for Native student recruitment & initiatives, Tribal Relations; **Joan Kafer**, administrative asst, Chief Financial Officer; **Sarah Staudle**, compliance coordinator, Athletics; **Aaron Lewis**, head men's soccer coach, Athletics; **Jeff Cronk**, associate professor of chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences; **Jeffrey Hazen**, instructional support & scientific materials specialist, College of Arts and Sciences; **John Burke**, professor, Gonzaga in Florence; **Katie Wilson**, volleyball coach, Athletics; **Megan Cycyota**, asst volleyball coach, Athletics; **Nancy Worsham**, professor of psychology, College of Arts and Sciences; **Ryan Adams**, custodian specialist floor tech, Plant; **Sarah Glass**, asst

Anniversaries

35 Douglas Kries, professor of philosophy, Philosophy; **Vicki Yount**, law clinic paralegal, Clinical Law Program

30 Cheryl Mitchell, senior director of data, reporting and analytics, University Advancement; **Louisa Diana**, director of compliance, Financial Aid Office; **Pat Reese**, senior principal giving officer, University Advancement

20 Susan Lee, asst dean of student affairs, School of Law; **Robbie McMillian**, director of academic service, School of Law; **Katuska Kohut**, associate director, Study Abroad

15 John Wolfe, psychology lecturer, Psychology

10 Ivette Godwin, budget & personnel officer, School of Education & School of Leadership Studies; **Suzie Mize**, asst vice president for auxiliary enterprises, Chief Financial Officer; **Gregg Pratt**, maintenance supervisor, Plant; **Joshua Boche**, broadcast engineer and KAGU operations manager, Integrated Media

05 Karianna Freeland, student service CRM lead & onboarding specialist, Recruitment & Retention; **Amy Barton**, web specialist, Arts and Science Dean's Office; **Maggie Pacini**, financial aid counselor, Financial Aid Office; **Theresa Foster**, technical analyst, Financial Aid Office; **Ronzai Saurombe**, application administrator, ITS; **Elysa Reichert**, manager, Auxiliary Enterprises



Ethan Gruis ('20) and **Maddie Ulery ('20)** met on the first day of school in a classroom in Tilford, eight years ago. In January, the couple flew back to Spokane from Chicago to catch a Gonzaga men's basketball game. With a little help from GUEST Event Manager **Kalen Niblock ('21)** and photographer **Matt Replier ('20)**, Gruis proposed in the very same classroom.