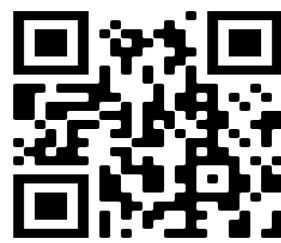


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Albion Alums Offer Memories and Advice

Bella Bakeman
Editor-in-Chief

Albion College was established in 1835, meaning there have been over 150 graduating classes to have walked this campus. Among them are Richard Smith '68, Kathryn Walsh '88 and Alexandra Yaw '14.

Though each of these alumni attended Albion College in different decades, they all have fond memories of their time here.

While attending Albion College, Smith was a member of the Sigma Nu fraternity, played basketball and worked as sports editor for the Pleiad. In his junior and senior years, he also worked as the "campus stringer" for the Battle Creek Enquirer, which was "the first paid journalism" he ever did.

Smith later went on to become the editor-in-chief of Newsweek, chairman of the board and C.E.O., "all at the same time," Smith said.

Years later, when Smith was getting ready to retire, he had a decision to make.

"While I was at Newsweek, a member of the board of the Washington Post company asked me to join the board of the Pinkerton Foundation," Smith said. "He was also the chairman of the board of the foundation."

He answered his colleague with a simple, "Yes, I think so, but I need to talk to my wife."

Now, he is President and CEO of The Pinkerton Foundation which Smith says focuses, "entirely on programs for at-risk and low-income young people in New York City with the goal of supporting the kinds of opportunities that middle-class and upper-middle-class young people often take for granted, but are life-changing if you are in diminished circumstances."

Smith said coming into the job of CEO of the foundation, "like most things in life," was chance.

"Just a bunch of Midwest kids living in Times Square in the late 80s!"

Much like Smith, Walsh's experience getting into her career had a lot to do with chance. Currently, Walsh works as the editor of Hour Detroit. On the path to this position, 30 years prior, Walsh was offered a job "pretty much right out of college" in 1988. She'd applied to work for the old Tiger's network, Pro-Am Sports System (PASS).

"I'd done an internship in New York for TV production and thought that was the way I wanted to go, so I accepted that job, but it



A collection of archived and yearbook photos from Albion College years 1966-2014. Included in the photos are Richard Smith '68, Kathryn Walsh '88 and Alexandra Yaw '14 (Photos courtesy of the Albion College Archives and Special Collections).

didn't start until September," Walsh said. "In the meantime, I'd already applied for jobs in New York, and I got this offer from a soap opera magazine to start right away. And I was like, 'Alright let me do this for the summer, see how it goes, if I like it I'll just tell PASS that something came up.'"

Well, something came up.

She moved to New York with some of her college friends and found that she "really loved" her job writing for the magazine. Said friends were ones she had met during an internship through the Great Lakes Colleges Association New York Arts Program. She said it was "just a bunch of Midwest kids living in Times Square in the late 80s!"

"It was really crazy and you know everybody was working in different arts. Broadway, off-broadway, working for George Plimpton at the Paris Review, TV shows, Saturday Night Live, sculptors, painters," Walsh said. "Everybody lived in this space and came back and talked about their experiences and it was really a great program."

When she wasn't busy working and living in New York City with her friends, she played softball, was a member of the Kappa Delta sorority, participated in the SOAR program (now known as Albion-O), worked for the Pleiad as features editor and as an RA in Seaton Hall.

When in the classroom, Walsh said two of her favorite professors were Judith Lockyer and Jim Diedrick, the latter of which was her advisor.

"I don't think I had a bad class there. Even the sciences, I wasn't crazy about, but I ended up really liking geology and I took an econ class just for the heck of it my senior year," Walsh said. "I really like that about Albion,

that you can just kind of explore things. You weren't just stuck in something because it was your major."

The flexibility that Walsh talked about is something that Yaw felt during her time here as well.

"I feel like I have a very typical Albion story," Yaw said. "I came in wanting to be a physician, so I came to Albion because obviously there's an incredible science program."

Later, Yaw took some psychology classes to get her modes and categories out of the way, while on her way to gaining a minor. Though she still planned to major in bio-chem, she eventually became a psychology major with a biology and chemistry minor. It wasn't until she did research with her professor, Tammy Jechura, that she found her calling.

"FURSCA changed my life. It was like, everything that I love is research. I love asking questions, I love reading literature, I love designing experiments, looking at data – it was so funny because it was like everything clicked," Yaw said. "It was like this career path that I'd never even thought of that is amazing – I love what I do. So, once I got bit by the research bug, grad school was the plan."

Yaw credits her ability to do research pre-graduate school as setting her on her career path.

"The interests that I came in with are still very much the same," Yaw said. "I think the work that I do now is much more aligned with how I approach problems – it's a much better fit for me I think."

When she wasn't spending time in the lab, she played softball, was a member of the Delta Gamma sorority, part of the Global Health

Brigades and was an RA and SRA at Wesley Hall and Whitehouse – among many other things.

"I was in roughly nine clubs and organizations and I was on the exec board for seven of them or something like that," Yaw said. "I don't know how I did it all."

To this day, Yaw continues to do it all. After receiving her doctorate in 2019, Yaw's official title is neuroendocrinologist, but she also works as a post-doctoral research assistant on her way to one day becoming faculty at Michigan State University.

Yaw isn't the only one who appreciates the rigor of academia.

One question Smith says he likes to ask people is: "Who is the most influential person in your life, outside of your immediate family?"

For Smith, part of that answer are two of his harshest professors. "The value of great teachers is that they push their students, that they're always challenging students by saying: You can do better," Smith said.

"Learn to cherish – more quickly than I did – the value of a rigorous, challenging professor, who is willing to say – you can do better. That's my advice."

"Albion is such a great place to try and fail because the support is all there."

When Smith thinks back on his time at Albion College, it is the toughest teachers he remembers, the ones who challenged him to be better. Walsh had a similar experience with her advisor, who encouraged her to join the Pleiad.

"He just kept saying 'I think you should do it, you don't have to be a news writer,'" Walsh said, adding that, at the time, she wanted to be a movie critic.

"They were like 'That's going to be a hard job to get' and I was like 'Well somebody's gotta do it! How do you get into that?'" Walsh said. "Then, I was features editor and I enjoyed it. I just did more of the fun stuff and I thought, 'Well I can do journalism if it's this kind of journalism.'"

Walsh says that it's important not to "be afraid to ask for help or advice," and to "really think about what you want to do."

To close, Yaw had a piece of advice for Albion students.

Yaw said that Albion is the perfect place to "try and fail because the support is all there."

"You can do all of the things you want to try," Yaw said.

Cultivating Success, Sustainability at Albion College's Student Farm



Student volunteers collect tomatoes from a row of vines. The produce harvested on Sept. 13 weighed over 100 lbs and included two different kinds of tomatoes, hot peppers, sweet peppers, carrots, onions, a few squash and one watermelon (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).



Thomas Wilch walks through the student farm holding a handful of freshly-picked sweet peppers. When he's not picking produce, Wilch wears the hats of professor and faculty advisor for the CSE (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).



Students wash, dry and package cherry tomatoes picked from the farm. After it's harvested, students divide the produce into individual packages that are delivered to the community garden, which is open to anyone in Albion (Photo by Katherine Simpkins).

See Student Farm on back.

Cultivating Success, Sustainability at Albion College's Student Farm



Ashlynn Reed, Palmyra senior, smiles in the student farm with her freshly harvested tomatoes. Reed, alongside a dedicated community of volunteers, devotes numerous hours to nurture both the farm's prosperity and the CSE program (Photo illustration by Katherine Simpkins).

Heidi Faramelli
Features Editor

Upon entering the Whitehouse Nature Center, follow the Betty Beese Ecology Trail, then turn onto the Dale Kennedy and Doug White Wren Trail. Continue East until a small red garage comes into view: There lies the Albion College Student Farm.

Earth and Environment Professor and Faculty Director of the Center for Sustainability and the Environment (CSE), Thomas Wilch, said he has worked intensely with the student farm for the past two years. Wilch said he suggests that people take a look at its mission statement to see what it is all about.

The student farm, according to Albion College's website, strives to "cultivate a student-organized, all-natural, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing produce garden for the benefit of students, faculty and

members of the Albion community of all ages."

Paige McDowell, Traverse City senior, is a student leader for the farm and works with CSE. McDowell said that in her first year at Albion, in 2020, there was some effort put into the student farm with students weeding the hoop house, but not much was done overall. However, she said that once the CSE got more involved in its care of the farm, there was a noticeable difference.

"There was a little bit of effort, but not really any initiative put into it until the internship came up," McDowell said. "Then it totally transformed."

Ashlynn Reed, a senior from Palmyra, works as a communications and outreach intern for CSE, with AmeriCorps and is a student leader for the farm. Reed, who works closely with McDowell, agreed that she has seen a drastic change in the productivity of the farm after the CSE got involved – especially with

the integration of the CSE Summer Americorps Sustainability Internship in the summer of 2020.

Reed said that during this internship, students undergo professional training, including learning how to properly write emails and speak professionally, along with experience working with the environment. Reed said student interns spend two to three hours daily at the student farm and community garden, where they harvest plants and prepare for the fall season.

"We spent a lot of time looking at sustainability initiatives at different colleges; we'll go to different universities and colleges and have tours of their facilities and learn what they're doing," Reed said. "We take that knowledge back to our campus and see if we can implement it in different places."

Reed said she finds the internship beneficial no matter how much experience students have gardening, adding that anyone is welcome to participate in the internship, including non-CSE members.

"It's very interesting for students who have never gardened – who don't have the way to do it or have not had the knowledge in the past," Reed said. "I grew a lot as a kid and I found that there was a lot that I didn't know."

McDowell said that once the internship was integrated, the farm looked better as a whole, adding that there were fewer weeds and the plants were more colorful and healthy. She said this year, the farm is doing even better, growing more plants than she remembers seeing in the past.

Albion junior Sam Helmbreck was a part of the CSE internship this past summer. He said that this year, the students at the farm have planted a variety of crops including pumpkins, tomatoes, zucchini, yellow squash, peppers, raspberries, lettuce, collards, kale and carrots.

"There's something about just having a tiny little seed grow into a giant plant that can feed plenty of people," said Helmbreck. "I think it's valuable."

Helmbreck added that there is a food security issue in Albion because Family Fare is the only grocery store in town.

"A lot of people in Albion won't have access to driving to Jackson and going to Meijer or something, so I think it's nice giving people fresh produce," Helmbreck said.

Reed said that the student farm donates its produce to many locations in town. Wilch said that this semester alone, the farm has already harvested around 1,700 pounds of produce.

"Either we take it to a stand outside of the community garden and we'll notify the community of Albion through Facebook," Reed said. "Or, we will take it to the Forks Senior Center; they are constantly in need of fresh produce."

Reed said that a third location for produce distribution is the South Michigan Food Bank's food drive, which takes place at Wesley Hall.

"There's something about just having a tiny little seed grow into a giant plant that can feed plenty of people."

Reed added that in the future, she wants the farm to continue to be in communication with members of the community and constantly adapt to the community's needs. She said she finds the sustainability aspect of the farm beneficial to the community of Albion.

"We're sustaining a project. It's something that can continue to happen over and over, which is so important," Reed said. "We need something sustainable in this space."

Opinion: Mi Buena Suerte (The Importance of Family)

Juan Rodriguez
Opinions Editor

For the first seven years of my life, I was an only child. My younger sibling, such a fantastic little gremlin they are, didn't come around until 2009. My mother worked night shifts at a meat processing plant while my dad did construction work out of town up until the early 2010s.

I was fortunate enough to grow up in an environment like my little corner of Dallas. Pleasant Grove, the neighborhood we lived in up until 2016, is a predominantly Latine neighborhood. To this day, I cannot measure the happiness I feel as I take the exit off of I-20 and onto St. Augustine Street.

I drive until I reach my grandparents' home; there's nothing like running into my Abuelo while he's outside tending to the gardens. He opens the gate for me so I don't have to get out of the car. As I park, our old dog, Sammy, runs up to greet me. Soon enough, I manage to get her off me long enough so that I can open the door and grab the mandado that my mom had tasked me with delivering.

My Abuela comes from the back door. She saw me step out of the car and rushed to greet me, her eldest grandson and her pride and joy – her words, not mine. She holds the back door open as I step into the kitchen and see my aunt enjoying a brief meal. She greets me and asks what I'm doing around these parts. I tell her "I finally managed to escape country living for an afternoon."

Off in the distance, I can hear the washer and dryer going, my uncle humming some song that I can't place at that moment. By the time he comes around to see what's going on, I already know he's got plans later that night. I ask him, "What's the big idea?" He says, "It's grown-up business." I just laugh and tell him "I get it." All the while, memories of my childhood paint a portrait of a comfortable existence.

Don't get me wrong, we had our challenges and hardships, me especially. I was a weird little kid. While I might not have been the most popular growing up, at least I had my family to fall back on.

If my mom was working, my grandparents were the default option to look after me, seeing as how they slept one room over from me. If my mom wasn't able to take me to school in the morning, someone in the household would drive me down to the school and still get there with ten minutes left before our teachers had to pick us up.

If no one was home, then the task of taking care of me fell to the aunt who lived ten minutes away. She would make sure I ate my dinner, got some rest and was ready for school the next day.

No matter what, I had a support system there to catch me whenever the need arose. It might not have been a village, but it was enough and infinitely better than anything the nuclear family could have offered me.

I lucked out, quite frankly. I was born into a family that made an effort to remain close-knit, that insisted on the importance of respecting and looking after one another.

Imagine my surprise when I realized that my sort of arrangement wasn't the norm. There's a noticeable stillness when you walk into a house with only two parents and a child. It deeply unsettled me for so long to even step foot in a home as quiet as a grave.



The author, Dallas senior, Juan G. Rodriguez's grandfather holds his newborn grandson in the hospital. When news broke of his birth, the entire family hurried to meet him and offer a helping hand to Rodriguez's aunt, the new mother (Photo courtesy of Guadalupe Garcia).

For so long I'd accepted that something felt off about certain households, but I could never find the words to describe it.

"Familia amada, la joya de mi vida. ¿Quién sería yo sin ellos?"

Even now, it's still a struggle to think that it's commonly accepted for different units of a family to cut contact with one another. It's not something that I can easily imagine, the notion of willingly severing yourself from your support system.

I can only imagine the fear that an immigrant feels in their loneliest hours. To be in a country where you are unwelcome, where your language marks you as an outsider; your documentation status makes you vulnerable.

I can see why a family like mine would make an effort to stick together as adamantly as we have.

There's safety in numbers; it's us versus the people who don't want us here in this country.

So, we cling to one another, we look after each other until someone gets their documents. Then, when they get a better job, it falls to them to help the others sort their documentation status out until we're all standing on terra firma and we have no reason to fear deportation and losing one another.

Familia amada, la joya de mi vida. ¿Quién sería yo sin ellos?

So I look after my mother and my younger sibling. I end my phone calls to my dad con un "te quiero mucho; te extraño papa." I hug my Abuelo and Abuela that much tighter before I leave. I joke with my tias y tios y primos as if I had only been gone for a minute and I have nowhere else to be.

Where else could I be rushing to? I'm already home.

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