

Going Back to School Four Decades Later

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GOING BACK TO SCHOOL FOUR DECADES LATER

Donna Naimoli graduated from high school in 1958 and first attended Dordt in the early 1980s, finishing her freshman year. Now 40 years later, she's back at Dordt taking more classes.

"I've always loved learning and don't mind studying," Naimoli says, "but I felt there was a lack in my life. I had little knowledge of the humanities, the roots of theology, psychology, philosophy, and history. All of these, I believe, are central to understanding our culture, our society, and the world around us."

Today Naimoli gets to study at Dordt with two of her grandchildren: grandson Avery Den Herder, a senior studying mechanical engineering, and granddaughter Ayda Den Herder, a freshman civil engineering major.

Last spring, Naimoli and Avery took the same core philosophy class, but from different professors. They not only were able to talk about the similarities and differences between their classes, but they certainly had more in-depth conversations about what they were learning than most students can have with their grandparents.

"My grandma's decision to go back to school has given us another thing to share," Avery says. "It adds another layer to our relationship that most people don't get the opportunity to have with their grandparents."

Naimoli's decision to go back to school, stemming from her ever-present desire to learn, is a mindset she's worked at instilling in her children and grandchildren. "At first I didn't understand why my grandmother would want to go back to college, but then I saw how excited she was to learn," Ayda says. "She has always been one of my role models, but seeing her want to continue to grow and learn at her age made me even more inspired."

Naimoli loves sharing what she's learning not only with her grandchildren but also with fellow students during class discussions.

"I am so impressed by the quality of the students in the classes I'm taking," she says. "They're bright, inquisitive, and conscientious of the cultural mandate to redeem and restore the world as followers of Christ. Our society will be strengthened as these students graduate and impact business, science, education, and other fields."

ANA TIMMER ('20)



The three students snapped a photo together on the first day of school.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

JAMIN VER VELDE ('99)



At the American State Bank Sports Complex construction site, Senior Morgan Stoltzfus modeled "Blueprint for Life," which features 16 blueprints of how to build a God-honoring life.

"SUITABLE TRUTH" ART PROJECT UNITES DISCIPLINES

In the B.J. Haan Auditorium, a group of six students and an artist sit in chairs around a large video camera on a tripod, listening to Instructor of Digital Media Mark Volkers give instructions.

"I'll say 'action,' but as you come down the aisle, walk slowly," he says. "So, you'll stand behind that white wall back there and then start walking. Sound good?"

They nod, stand, and walk toward the back of the auditorium, chatting together as they go. Meanwhile, Professor of Art David Platter makes some final arrangements of the mannequins—some wearing intricately decorated costumes—that line the back of the auditorium stage. Six digital media majors take to the stage and stand near Volkers and the camera. Volkers puts on a pair of headphones and makes some adjustments to the camera before shouting, "action!"

The camera rolls, and the students and artist begin to walk down the aisle.