



Setting the record straight

Professor Lake, a missing name and the journey to uncover Wabash's past

SAM BENEDICT '25
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"Who was the first African American student to be admitted to the College?" asked Associate Professor of English and Black Studies Tim Lake when he began his role as director of the Malcolm X Institute.

In the decade since he asked it, this question led Lake on a journey across America and back in time — to 1857 — to uncover the hidden truth of Wabash's first-admitted African American student: John R. Blackburn.

"I was told that we knew the first African American graduate, and that was John Evans, who graduated from the College in 1908," said Lake. "I asked again, 'Who was the first one to be admitted?'"

Until now, it had been rumored and assumed that Wabash did admit an African American student, but there hadn't been any concrete evidence to identify the student.

"In 1857, the College admitted an African American student, but because of the racial backlash from the Crawfordsville community, it kicked up

such a firestorm of racism and hostility that he wasn't allowed to stay and left the College," said Lake. "I was told that he's lost to history."

After more than a decade of research, Lake only recently (about two years ago) identified Blackburn as the student. His efforts will culminate on February 5, 2024, when he — joined by seventeen of Blackburn's living descendants — will present his research to campus at 7 p.m. in Salter Hall.

Lake spent years combing through the archives with former Wabash Archivist Beth Swift '06, and repeatedly hit dead end after dead end, but he never gave up hope that the student was hidden somewhere in the pages of those books.

"I came across a book they called the Triennial of the College, and it turns out that every 30 years the institution or other establishments would take an inventory of their past," said Lake. "In the back of the book were all of the students who didn't graduate."

After this discovery, Lake quickly began to research the students and found



COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING
Timothy Lake, Associate Professor of English and Black Studies, teaches a class in Center Hall on October 7, 2019.

the name he was looking for. Eventually, Lake was able to corroborate his findings by using the Howard Library at Howard University where he found a paper that referenced and proved Blackburn's admittance to Wabash.

After the elation from his initial discovery wore off, the question that came to mind was what to do next.

Lake immediately shared his findings with Swift and then made an appointment to talk with President Feller.

"I came to talk to him and I said 'We have to make this right,'" said Lake. "Part of that is to see if we can find any descendants. President Feller said 'Okay,' and he supported the research trip I made that summer to Virginia to try and trace [Blackburn's] history back."

However, after the initial research trip, Lake was unable to find any descendants of Blackburn.

"I came back to President Feller and I said, 'I think I've done everything that I can do,'" said Lake.

In one last attempt to find descendants of Blackburn, Lake contacted genealogy company Ancestry.com and, working together, they found multiple living descendants. The descendants agreed to have a conversation and last summer Lake traveled to see them. When he arrived, he found that Blackburn's granddaughter is still alive at 103 years old.

"It was a thrill and a joy," said Lake. "I've never met anybody who is 103. I don't think many people have. She was affable and loving. You could tell that she's the treasure of the family."

After explaining the research that he conducted and what he found, Lake

experienced a moment of clarity that rewarded all of his efforts.

"The moment of actually seeing these people was a 'history is alive' moment," said Lake. "I was speechless."

On Monday, February 5, these descendants will be on campus and learn what the Wabash of today looks like. Various events have been planned for the family that culminate in Lake's address to campus to showcase his findings. One of those events is a ceremony taking place with the MXI.

"We're going to make him [Blackburn] an honorary member, which is where we look for people that have impacted the Malcolm X Institute or helped in some type of way," said Jordan Thomas '24, chairman of the MXI.

The impact of Blackburn's descendants coming to campus can't be understated. Lake and others plan to roll out the proverbial red carpet and ensure that their experience is positive.

"I'm excited to give them the positive perspective of Wabash as a young black man," said Thomas. "Maybe I can paint the picture of what could have been for Blackburn."

"The moment of actually seeing these people was a 'history is alive' moment."

- Professor Lake

Following the research that Lake did, the path to finding living descendants of Blackburn and now the celebration of this discovery, Lake is left with

a familiar question: What now?

"We'll see," said Lake. "An object at rest tends to stay at rest until it's met with some kind of external force. We want to be purposeful in using the history. Other schools who have faced similar issues of having to come to terms with injustice have started some kind of scholarship program or created a center or institute in dedication to the individual. By doing this, it becomes a prominent part of the culture."

"I'm excited to give them the positive perspective of Wabash as a young black man."

- Jordan Thomas '24

"I think that it can be a domino effect, and hopefully it can open the doors for us to dig into the archives a little bit more and find other people like Blackburn," said Thomas. "I'm sure there's no way he was just the only one. I think being intentional when it comes to Black history as a whole can also attract more young African American males to come here. At the end of day, when transitioning into college, you want to know that you're valued and that you're going to be taken care of and that you're going to be comfortable with whatever environment you're in."

Following the research of Lake, Wabash is able to recognize the truth of its past — for better and worse. For the first time on February 5, John Blackburn's story will be told.

National Act guides the goals for student senate

HAI DEN DIEMER-MCKINNEY '26
OPINION EDITOR

As a new year begins, the student senate has discussed its set of goals to enhance the student experience at Wabash and foster an enthusiastic campus community for the spring semester.

Led by Student Body President Cole Bergman '24, Vice President Luis Rivera '25, Treasurer Liam Grennon '24 and Secretary Jake Weber '25, the Senate shared their ideas to address key student concerns and implement initiatives that will contribute to the overall well-being of the campus community.

"We feel that we have strategically implemented many goals coming into office," said Bergman. "We hope to continue our mission to remain transparent to the student body about our processes through updates, uphold the standards we've created in allocating the student activities budget and create standards that can help guide and lead future student senates."

Since the National Act lineup was announced two weeks ago, the senate wants to stay on top of all the logistics of the event to ensure the event is as enjoyable as possible.

"With the announcement out early, we've provided ourselves with time to finalize specifics like ticketing for the event and hope to create a larger and more memorable event for the student body," said Bergman.

Another challenge the senate must manage is how they allocate their money to all the different clubs on campus. The senate works with the Audit & Finance Committee (AFC) to prioritize budgeting and maintain equality for all the clubs to function properly.

"I hope that by navigating the multitude of budget requests we receive a bit earlier in the semester, the senate can tackle some more long-term objectives," said Grennon. "This semester, the AFC has explicitly communicated recommended deadlines for clubs' and committees' semester budgets, giving us more information sooner when considering budget requests and ultimately approving funding faster. This allows us to fund clubs and committees equitably and with consistent standards, which continues to be my aim diving into the final leg of my term."

Outside of the events themselves, the senate hopes to consistently value communication and coordination week in and week out.

"I think there are some places where we can correct typos, clarify and refine certain bylaws, but I also think there is a good amount of institutional knowledge that can be passed down to the next AFC," said Grennon. "Having consistent and open AFC meetings and publicizing budgets and AFC recommendations each week are two practices I hope the next treasurer and AFC implement."

"As a cabinet we've talked about going into this semester as being a better resource for senate committees," said Bergman. "We like to take a hands-off approach, allowing the chairs of the various committees to create their visions for activity planning at Wabash. While we are fully confident in our chairs, we want to work to create connections and communication channels that elevate our activities planning for the coming semester."

As the student senate approaches its agenda this semester, they encourage students to actively participate and provide feedback. The success of these plans and initiatives relies on the collaborative efforts of the student body, and the senate is eager to work with the Wabash community to achieve these goals and create a thriving campus environment.



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A rare photo of John R. Blackburn was discovered during Professor Lake's research.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott defies Supreme Court order

25 Republican governors sign statement offering Abbott support

JAMES WALLACE '26
NEWS EDITOR

In what seems to be the latest bout between state governments and the federal government, 25 state governors signed a statement supporting Texas Governor Greg Abbott in his quest to defy a Supreme Court order that was issued on January 22. While the southern border is quite the distance from Wabash itself, plenty of Wabash men currently pursuing their undergraduate along with alumni are affected by this legal conflict.

Jared Araiza '25, a native of Alamo, Texas, is no stranger to activity near our southern border.

"Immigration has always been present, especially after COVID," said Araiza. "Reynosa, a border town in Mexico, used to be nice and clean. But after COVID, it was filled with tents and trash. This is seen in many other border towns as well."

Illegal Immigration has been a political hot-topic for years now, with Republicans and Democrats taking on a binary view of the issue. Notably, the 25 governors who signed the statement supporting Abbott were all Republicans, includ-

ing Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb, with no Democrat governors opting to sign it. The only Republican governor to not sign the statement was Vermont Governor Phil Scott.

While the statement came after the Supreme Court issued a ruling relating to Texas's defenses on the border, it doesn't necessarily ban Texas from utilizing resources to defend its border. The statement only gave the federal government the power to remove any obstructions that prevented federal agents from performing their tasks. However, it sparks a debate for what type of obstructions are okay for Texas to utilize when protecting its border.

"There have been floating barriers that have sharp blades in the Rio Grande," said Araiza. "They have also put up barbed wire and electric fences."

The use of these dangerous obstacles has been in question, as it implies that all individuals crossing Texas' southern border are a danger to the state.

"I personally think that what Governor Abbott is doing is ridiculous," said Tyler Wade '12, who



COURTESY OF CBS
Immigrants listen to a U.S. Border Patrol Agent, separated by a wall of barbed wire.

lives in Dallas, Texas. "Those of us who have actually spent a lot of time at the border know that it is just like most other parts of our country. Sure, there are criminal elements present, but most of the

drugs come through legal ports of entry, not immigrant women and children seeking asylum."

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News around the world

Border c'ntd

ELIJAH WETZEL '27
STAFF WRITER

Taiwan
As the threat of China looms ever larger, Taiwanese military forces participated in a two-day practice run of what their response to a surprise Chinese attack would look like. The exercise was in response to the increasingly frequent Chinese intimidation tactics, in which jet-fighters and warships have been used in more scaled up military maneuvers, with Taiwan's defense ministry putting out a statement that seven warplanes and four ships belonging to China were picked up by radar around the island country in a 24-hour period just this week. Taiwan's practice run, which included troops deployed in the sea, air, and land, is a way the government can boost the national morale around their ability to fend off a Chinese attack should that day ever come. Despite their severe size and population disadvantage compared to China, Taiwan remains adamant in their desire to remain independent of China.



COURTESY OF AP

Taiwanese marines guard Zouying Navy Base on January 31, 2024

Argentina

The latest of Argentinian President Javier Milei's proposed economic reforms was struck down on January 30, as the South American nation's economy continues to suffer. The reform policy, which would have given employers an increased ability to fire workers, was met with a legal challenge in January from Argentina's largest union, the General Labor Confederation. Milei came to power in December after winning an election during which he ran on a laissez-faire economic platform, repeatedly placing the blame for Argentina's recent financial collapse on the shoulders of left-leaning politicians who implement elements of Peronism, a form of nationalist socialism that has dominated Argentinian politics for the last seven decades. Argentina's economy has continued its downward trend since 2018's economic crisis; inflation in 2023 alone finished over 200%. Milei wants to limit state spending by cutting government subsidies across the board, and recently vowed to not renew the contracts of more than 5,000 government workers. His policies have been met with widespread protests from Argentinians still experiencing food shortages and government layoffs in a country where over 50% of eligible workers hold public jobs.



COURTESY OF AP

Argentine President Javier Milei in Buenos Aires on January 26, 2024.

Northern Ireland

A deal that allows Northern Ireland to emerge from nearly two years of government dysfunction as a result of trade disputes with the United Kingdom was announced on Wednesday, January 31, with plans to sign the agreement Thursday. Issues arose after the UK pulled out of European trade agreements in 2020 following a 2016 referendum. Tariffs and regulations separated the countries of the European Union from Britain, but due to Northern Ireland's open border policy with Ireland, still an EU nation, mandated by the 1998 Good Friday accords, the same trade obstacles applied to EU nations applied to Northern Ireland. British unionists in Northern Ireland felt their position in the UK was severely threatened due to the trade barriers, and in February of 2022 walked out of the government. This halted most government activity because the Good Friday deal requires both Irish nationalists and British unionists to always have a share of power. This week's deal will put an end to the unionist protest by removing many of the trade barriers Northern Ireland viewed so unfavorably.



COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

British and Northern Ireland officials at a press conference at Hillsborough Castle on January 31, 2024.

Tunisia

President Kais Saied of Tunisia handed in an unprecedented request to the finance committee of Tunisian parliament that would allow the government to borrow funds from its central bank in order to combat debt and a severe economic downturn. The proposed measure would effectively downgrade the status of the Central Bank of Tunisia to a regular bank, opening up the opportunity for the bank to buy a proposed \$2.25 billion dollars worth of interest-free bonds. The chief concern of Saied's administration is a \$10 billion dollar deficit in the national budget that is a significant threat to the North African country which has gotten used to budget deficits and inflation. The primary concern with Saied's request, experts say, is the high-risk nature of a national bank essentially financing the budget of the government through artificial measures. More traditional lenders are concerned that the line between independent financial institutions and politics has become significantly blurred, and organizations like the International Monetary Fund have expressed reluctance to offer loans to Tunisia. The outcome of this financial situation will likely cause ripple effects throughout Tunisia. As the country approaches a presidential election later this year, Saied and his administration are no doubt feeling the pressure to expediently sort out this scare.



COURTESY OF AP

Tunisian President Kais Saied gives a speech in 2020.



COURTESY OF ROLLING STONE

Texas Governor Greg Abbott addresses the media at a press conference on June 8, 2023.

However, while Texas may be using methods that some deem to be inhumane to reinforce itself across the Rio Grande, some argue that the federal government is not free of blame.

"President Biden, like both President Trump and President Obama, shows very little knowledge of what is happening on the border," said Wade. "Family separation started under President Obama, and while the Biden Administration has backed off, they are still building newer and nicer immigration detention centers. But even nicer cages are still cages."

Some have called for Biden to focus more of his resources on the southern border, as it seems to be low in his list of priorities.

"I think immigration should have a higher priority," said Araiza. "One of the missions of the United States is to provide asylum for other people to come and experience freedom."

While both the ruling from the supreme court and the statement signed by 25 Republican governors are both monumental, they speak to the larger issue of border policy that will likely continue to be used as a political tool for politicians alike.

Basketball unveils new locker room

WILL DUNCAN '27
PHOTO EDITOR

This past weekend, the Little Giants basketball team unveiled their highly anticipated new locker room. The new setup came with personalized lockers, custom floor mats, surround sound bluetooth speakers and a giant, fluorescent, red Wabash W hanging from the ceiling.

The locker room was dedicated to Coach Ron Hendricks, who has been an avid part of the coaching staff since the '98-'99 season. Hendricks has been passing down wisdom to the players for over twenty years, using techniques he learned from his 18-year head coaching career in highschool ball. He led Southmont High to two county titles during his stint.

Both the players and the coaching staff were elated to see the finished product shown on January 27, 2024, hours before their win against Wittenburg.

"The basketball locker room is an exciting addition to the basketball program. My coaching staff and I try to use basketball to educate our student athletes in a very similar way that our faculty educates them in the classroom," said Head Coach Kyle Brumett. "The Ron Hendricks Basketball Locker Room will be treated as our lab space."

The refurbished locker room will be a place where memories and legacies will begin, and where greatness will continue to ensue.



Images of the newly refurbished basketball locker room and Head Coach Kyle Brumett (right) with Assistant Coach Ron Hendricks (left).



PHOTOS BY WILL DUNCAN '27







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Percy Jackson Review: Adaptation whiffs again

DEREK MCDONALD '27
STAFF WRITER

"Percy Jackson" is a series that is loved by many, including myself. I thoroughly enjoyed reading through the books the first time and was very excited to hear that Disney would be coming out with a new television series, particularly because I did not believe that the movies released in the early 2010s accurately reflected the book. Needless to say, my hopes were high for "Percy Jackson and The Olympians".

To my disappointment, this new series failed to live up to my expectations. While only four episodes in, I find the show to be very lackluster and I do not know if I will continue to watch it. The exciting and detailed scenes of action-packed fighting in the books have not been done justice so far.

I did appreciate the more accurate ages of the characters in the series in comparison to the novel, however I do not think that casting of Percy Jackson was done well. I can't help but to picture a comical youthful Ryan

Reynolds when I see Walker Scobell fill my screen. He is a good actor, but wasn't meant for this role. He depicts Percy in a manner that I believe Rick Riordan would not appreciate.

Overall the series so far is not horrible. It is especially better than the two box office flops from ten years ago, but I still believe that it could have been done better. I will probably end up finishing the series in the hopes that the quality will increase as the show goes on.



COURTESY OF DISNEY

**FINAL VERDICT:
2.5/5 WALLYS**



From the Ramsay Archives: MXI opens doors in 1970



Malcolm X Institute Opens For Students

There's a modest two-story white house sitting at 416 West Wabash Avenue. Over the door swings a black and white sign: The Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies. Some people think this is a black student dormitory. Other people think it's a Black Panther headquarters. It is neither.

It didn't break out of the ground over night. Back in the fall of '69, several students and a few faculty members saw the need for a black studies department. They didn't want another chemistry department, history department, or English department. This department, they felt, should include student participation. Along with student participation, they wanted money and power—just like a department. Right away, no department. Wabash spirit, however, drove them on as Vic Ransom drew up plans and worked on a preliminary budget. By the time the spring of '70 had rolled around, plans for the Institute had stabilized, a budget was approved, and the Board of Directors was designated, thus the Institute materialized.

'Post-Traumatic Sphinx Disorder'

Comic by Preston Parker '26



Wabash community flocks to 23rd annual Celebration of Student Research



PHOTO BY KYLE FOSTER '27

Mason Naaman '24 delves into his chemistry research for Camden Cooper '24. The Celebration is intended to showcase student research that goes above and beyond the scope of what is expected in the classroom.



PHOTO BY KYLE FOSTER '27

Owen Runge '24 presents his joint research in computer science. Students had the opportunity to present in a variety of media beyond posters, including interactive software, film and podcasts.

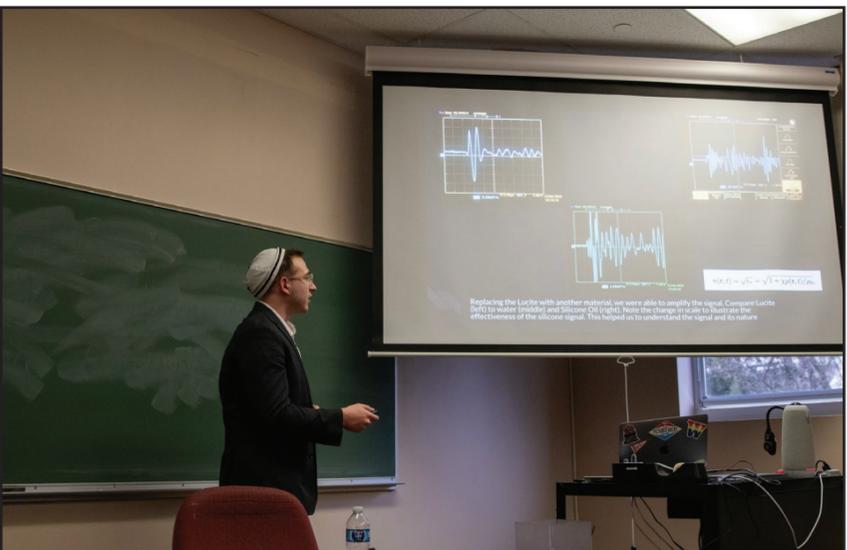


PHOTO BY KYLE FOSTER '27

James Szalkie '25 presents physics research in Detchon 111. The Celebration of Student Research offers an opportunity to bring highly dense and advanced research down to the level of a layperson outside of the department.



PHOTO BY KYLE FOSTER '27

Students and faculty mill about in Detchon International Hall around the central fair portion of the 23rd Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work on January 26, 2024.

Senior Spotlight: Jordan Thomas, intentional leader



COURTESY OF JORDAN THOMAS '24

Jordan Thomas '24 has worn many hats in his time at Wabash, most notably including that of chairman of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies.

ZACH GELEOTT '27
STAFF WRITER

It doesn't take long after stepping on Wabash's campus for the name Jordan Thomas '24 to get brought up in conversation. Thomas, the philosophy major and Black studies and business double-minor from Brownsburg, Indiana has exemplified what it means to get involved and make the most of the Wabash experience.

During his three-and-a-half years at the college, Thomas has adeptly managed multiple leadership roles both on and off campus, all while handling a double-minor workload. Undoubtedly, he has left a lasting impact on the college.

As chairman of the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies, Thomas has played a pivotal role in the organization's tremendous membership growth, now boasting over 75 members, making it the largest student organization on campus. Reflecting on this achievement, Thomas emphasizes the significance of the MXI's brotherhood.

"Brotherhood is the first word of our mission statement at the MXI," said Thomas. "At the end of the day, there's nothing like Wabash brotherhood, and being able to bring that to not only Wabash, but also the MXI is what it's all about."

During his time as a member and chairman, Thomas has worked alongside Dean Steven Jones '87, the director of the MXI. Jones, one of Thomas's many mentors at the college, has nothing but praise for him.

"Jordan's growth, not only in his leadership at the MXI but also as a student, is setting him up for a great deal of success post-Wabash," said Jones. "As Dean and Director, there's nothing more impressive than seeing someone who has made a dedicated decision to make the most of his undergraduate experience. And I would say that Jordan has done just that."

On top of his involvement with the MXI, Thomas is a volunteer coach on the track team, a member of the Wabash Real Estate Club and a Lead Innovation Con-

sultant for the CIBE. As a Lead Innovation Consultant, he leads a team of three fellow students in their engagement with Home Security + Protection, a company that works with homeowners to keep them safe and prevent burglaries.

Outside of Wabash, Thomas has found a way to balance his school life with employment. Having worked for Cutco as both a Sales Professional and a Branch Manager, he ventured off during the spring and summer of 2022 to go and start his own sales branch down in Bloomington.

"That took up a lot of time, on top of homework and everything else," explained Thomas.

Through performing such a delicate balancing act, Thomas quickly learned the importance of prioritization and saying no.

"That's when I really had to prioritize and say, 'hey boys, I can't play that game tonight, or I can't go out because I have my office to work on and I have to get homework done, and then I have a test to study for.' But when you get put in those situations, you get a chance to prove your discipline and work ethic that you've learned from your time as a Wabash student."

"As Dean and Director, there's nothing more impressive than seeing someone who has made a dedicated decision to make the most of his undergraduate experience."

- Dean Steven Jones '87

After Wabash, Thomas hopes to build upon his experiences with Cutco and either pursue a full-time job with them or work for a staffing and recruiting agency. Looking back on his time as a Little Giant, Thomas urges current students to get involved in everything that they can and make genuine connections along the way.

"You never know what you can do when you're involved and you're making all these connections. That's how you really get to know people and build your legacy here, not only with students but with staff as well."

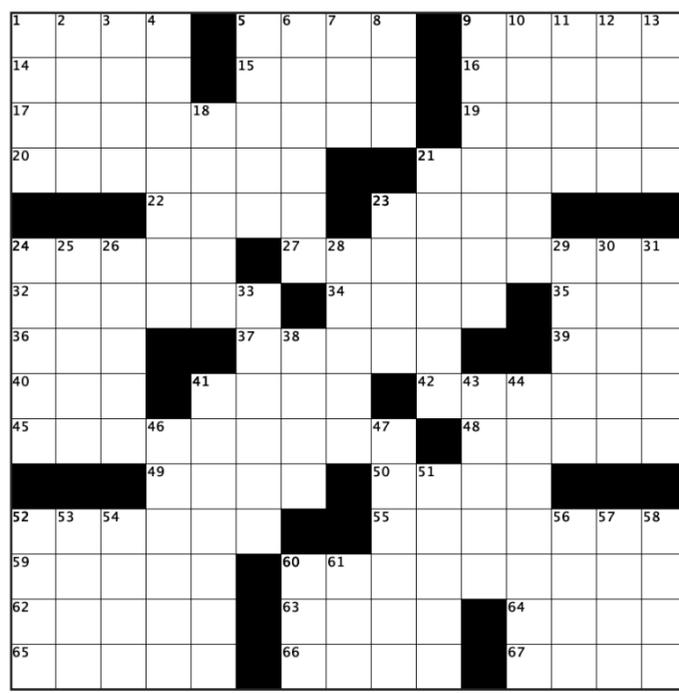
Looking to the future, Thomas encourages incoming Wabash students to approach their four years at such an extraordinary college with unwavering intention.

"I feel like once you're intentional with your actions, you can make a difference," said Thomas. "A company, club, organization - whatever it may be, they're all as good as their leader."

Thomas, through his exemplary journey, stands as a testament to the transformative impact of such intentional leadership.

'Link by link'

Crossword by Logan Weilbaker '25



Across

- 1. Well-___ (learned)
- 5. Unwanted mail
- 9. Limits
- 14. "Moreover"
- 15. "___, ___, ___, double ___" (line from "How the Grinch Stole Christmas")
- 16. Actress Mary Tyler
- 17. *Doordash, so to speak
- 19. Grassland
- 20. Red ___ (fish)
- 21. Sang with gusto
- 22. Animal's cover
- 23. 1000 times more than "giga"
- 24. Silky bedding material
- 27. *Carpenter's supports
- 32. Attackers in a "Star Wars" prequel
- 34. Echelon
- 35. Director DuVernay
- 36. Tree on the Connecticut quarter

- 37. YA audience
- 39. The "L" of U.N.L.V.
- 40. Rugby score
- 41. "Star Wars," e.g.
- 42. They hold an olive branch and arrows, in U.S. currency
- 45. *SWAT team device
- 48. Wimp
- 49. Miseries
- 50. "... lend me your ___"
- 52. Baby shaker
- 55. Zagreb's country
- 59. Like V, but not L
- 60. *Crew of cons... or what precedes the beginnings of 17-, 27- and 45-Across, collectively?
- 62. ___ man (spirit)
- 63. Noggin
- 64. Likable French city?
- 65. Isn't exactly moderate
- 66. Observes
- 67. "Woe!"

Down

- 1. Ewe's guys?
- 2. Panache
- 3. It's east of the Urals
- 4. Orca, technically
- 5. Rock out
- 6. San Diego baseballers
- 7. Lunched
- 8. Body of eau
- 9. Constantine or Palpatine
- 10. One's value?
- 11. Animal often discussed on ESPN
- 12. The "E" of HOMES
- 13. Messages button
- 18. State one's piece
- 21. Apt rhyme for "re quest"
- 23. One of a matching pair
- 24. Wooster College Fighting ___
- 25. Call to rise
- 26. Godzilla's stomping grounds
- 28. Mr. T's group
- 29. Beauty parlor
- 30. Chry of "Avengers"
- 31. Lippy
- 33. Hay loft locale
- 38. Freudian topics
- 41. Peddlers
- 43. Cook's cloth
- 44. Garfield's favorite food, in the comics
- 46. Pussycat
- 47. Turned into
- 51. One born on April 1
- 52. Cross-country travel
- 53. Trouble spots for teens
- 54. Salad fish
- 56. Follow closely
- 57. Ancient Cuzco inhabitant
- 58. Forever, seemingly
- 60. DJ's inventory
- 61. Weed-chopping tool



Scan for solution!

Student broadcasters call basketball live for Wabash Club of Indianapolis

LOGAN WEILBAKER '25
MANAGING EDITOR

Just how far will Wabash alumni go to avoid stepping foot in Green-castle?

As it turns out, as far as Half Liter BBQ in Indianapolis, where the Wabash Club of Indianapolis hosted a watch party on January 24 for the away game against DePauw.

Alumni around the country often meet up to watch the Little Giants play, but last week's event was a bit different — they brought their own commentators: Sean Bledsoe '26 and Noah McRoberts '25.

The idea started brewing two years ago, when — due to COVID restrictions — DePauw limited the number of Wabash fans allowed to attend the game.

"While a lot of Wabash people were watching that game [online], the announcers commented, 'Dang, you would think for how close they are, they would bring a bigger student section,'" said Bledsoe. "That kind of left a bitter taste in everyone's mouth. Yes, it's a rivalry, but you still want both fan bases to show out, right?"

As a result, members of the WCI decided to host their own event featuring student commentators. "Immediately once I saw the email, I texted Noah, and I'm like, 'Dude, that's sick. We should do it,'" said Bledsoe.

The move, McRoberts explained, gave remote Little Giants fans a more well-rounded listening experience of the basketball game. "If you host your own event, you generally have to listen to their broadcast, which is rather poor," he said, "and usually the DePauw broadcasts are pretty one-sided."

Under the leadership of Brent Harris H'03, Wabash's athletics communications director and the former statistician for the Indianapolis Colts, the broadcast team has taken Wabash Athletics to a whole new level. Even more impressively, the broadcast team relies on a squad of student-announcers who deliver first-rate commentary each and every game.

"What I love about these guys is how professional they are, especially for us not having a communications or journalism department," said Associate Director of Annual Giving Hugh Vandivier '91, who came up with the idea to bring Bledsoe and McRoberts to Indianapolis. "Alumni



COURTESY OF SEAN BLEDSOE '26

Sean Bledsoe '26 (left) and Noah McRoberts '25 (right) offer live commentary of the Wabash basketball game at DePauw on January 24, 2024 at Half Liter BBQ in Indianapolis.

and friends and fans of Wabash absolutely notice a difference."

"If you have not watched a live-stream event from an opponent's site, you will not appreciate how well Wabash executes their broadcasts — both audio and video," added Jim Dyer '83, a WCI board member.

As alumni and spouses — about 35 in all — started rolling in Wednesday night, the broadcast team began their set-up, complete with smart-TV hook-up and a two-foot-tall speaker.

"Brent Harris gave us equipment — actual sound equipment and headsets — but the input did not plug into the speaker," said McRoberts.

"So we used a karaoke mic," added Bledsoe. "Noah would be holding the mic, then I would lean over and literally put my head in his arm to talk into the microphone. You know, if we can operate on one microphone, that means we can operate on anything."

This might have been a problem for many announcers, but not for Bledsoe and McRoberts, who have been working as a pair for two years.

"I knew right from that first broadcast I'd be working well with Noah," said Bledsoe. "We just had a great dynamic together."

"It's overall very smooth, and we flow well," McRoberts said. "Part of that is that we're friends outside of the press box as well."

After overcoming a few technical glitches, they piped in DePauw's

broadcast, muted the audio and the duo got to work.

"[They] provided an excellent broadcast complete with player introductions, live stats, and, of course, plenty of color (and off-color) commentary on the game," Dyer said.

Bledsoe and McRoberts pride themselves on staying unbiased while they call games, and giving due credit to both sides: "It's just the rules of being a commentator," said Bledsoe.

However, this was no ordinary game.

"Noah and I knew going into it that this isn't an official broadcast. So we can probably throw a little more shade and talk a little more crap than what we're used to," said Bledsoe. "It's against DePauw. It's all Wabash fans. All bets are off."

In the upstairs loft packed with Wabash fans, a buffet full of barbecue, and of course, a loaded bar, the scene quickly became filled with typical raucous game-day energy, aided by the presence of the Wabash duo.

"Usually when you're hearing play-by-play, it's passive," said Vandivier. "But there was an interactive quality. Some mischievous soul (like myself) was slipping them notes and stuff."

"It was like having our own private skybox at the game, with food, beer and a great view of the game without having to deal with the Dannies," said Dyer.

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The purpose of *The Bachelor* is to serve the school audience, including but not limited to administrators, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, community members and most importantly, the students. Because this is a school paper, the content and character within will cater to the student body's interests, ideas, and issues. Further, this publication will serve as a medium and forum for student opinions and ideas.

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Letters (e-mails) to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They will only be published if they include name, phone, or e-mail, and are not longer than 800 words.

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A reflection on research



Matthew Jessup '24

Reply to this opinion at
mjessup24@wabash.edu

Reflecting on my journey from receiving to presenting my senior seminar research and independent research, I feel a profound sense of accomplishment and recognition. What made this experience profoundly rewarding was the platform to share and discuss my research. The discussions, the questions asked and answered and networking with alumni provided a diverse learning experience extending far beyond my research. This journey wasn't a typical class assignment; it was a deep dive into my passions and an opportunity to explore the applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

My poster presentation was over my senior seminar project, "Beyond Human: Evaluating Racial Bias in AI Language Models", which stands out from economics senior seminar projects, as I conducted a study and built my dataset.

It was exciting for me to incorporate what Professor Burnette taught us throughout the course and apply that to organizing a successful study. This project aligned with the senior seminar topic of labor market discrimination and allowed me to incorporate and advance my interests in AI by analyzing the different levels of racial prejudice between popular AI models.

My findings shed light on the different biases in AI language models and their potential to limit the impact of bias during the hiring process. The chance to present this research through a poster was exhilarating, allowing me to engage and speak about my findings with fellow students, faculty, and even some alumni.

My oral presentation was on an independent research project with Professor Dunaway, Trading on AI Insights: Evaluating Forex Predictions from Central Bank Statements. It was an opportunity to dive headfirst into my genuine interests in financial markets, unshackled by the typical constants of class projects.

This project is a labor of love, an undertaking that began over the summer and has blossomed into a comprehensive and groundbreaking study. Going into the summer, I wanted to explore ways to benefit from AI as I realized its disruptive potential. I incorporated knowledge obtained from the International Finance course taught by Professor Mikek, which introduced me to trading international currencies and was on my mind as the summer started.

To summarize its scope, GPT-4 conducts sentiment analysis on central bank press releases and outputs a trade recommendation; these documents are crucial in determining the value of a currency. I'm expanding my research by incorporating more currencies and replacing GPT-4 with a custom fine-tuned AI with a narrow focus specializing in forex market predictions.

While my masterpiece is still under construction, I presented my initial findings at the Celebration of Student Research. Going into the presentation, I was more nervous than I was for the poster presentation. However, as I started to speak, that nervousness quickly faded away. It was exciting, a fusion of my deepest interests, a showcase of my intelligence and creativity free from the restraints of a syllabus.

In embracing the pursuit of research, I've not only enhanced my academic interests but also connected deeply with my fellow students and professors. This journey has been much more than academic exploration; it's been a personal expedition, unlocking a new understanding of myself and the complex world of AI. Engaging with Professor Burnette and Professor Dunaway has been transformative, offering a unique and personalized aspect to my education and personal growth.

To the underclassmen at Wabash, please view my reflection as a beacon, illuminating the rich opportunities that pursuing research offers. Venture outside your comfort zone; allow your interests to steer you towards a personalized education. By conducting and sharing research, you're not only expanding your education but actively shaping your future and cultivating a profound understanding that exceeds what's possible in the classroom. Embrace this gift Wabash offers, a gift deeply rooted in our mission to think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively and live humanely.

HI-FIVES

FIVE THINGS WORTHY OF A HI-FIVE THIS WEEK

QUICKDRAW

Lo-Five to Indiana State Representative Jim Lucas for flashing a handgun at gun safety lobbyists in the Indianapolis statehouse this week. While it must have been terrifying for the lobbyists, at least he didn't pull something else out.

YAP GOD

Hi-Five to Ben Shapiro for making his rap debut. As impressed as we are at him trying new things, we'll start paying attention when he gets the Kanye cosign and officially squashes the beef.

'SKADOOSH'

Hi-Five to Jack Black for bringing us Kung Fu Panda 4. In this time of divisiveness and polarization, only one man can bring us together.

'I KNEW YOU WERE TROUBLE'

Lo-Five to Zay Flowers for costing the Ravens the AFC championship game with a last-minute, totally-avoidable taunting call. At least thanks to him, we can count on one last Taylor Swift Hi-Five next week.

'BUY-IN'FLATION

Lo-Five to Delt for charching \$30 at the door. Luckily I'm 5'6 so they let me in when I told them I was Brett Driscoll.

Sparking a change



Will Neubauer '25

Reply to this opinion at
wpneubau25@wabash.edu

The Sparks Center has its days that appeal to the whole student body like Chicken Tender Wednesday, Burger Monday, and of course, breakfast potato cubes (up until this semester). Most of the time, weekday meals are hit or miss. You can neutralize that however with the pizza station/sandwich station, or the other food option offered. On the weekends, however, the options are limited, and the food is not great.

Sparks does not cater to their students very well on the weekends. The dining hall does not open until 11:30 a.m. and is open for only an hour for students in the morning. The late opening hours are the worst part of this, as students should not have to plan their weekends around when the dining hall is open.

This small opening makes students all wait until the one-hour window, which easily clogs up the line and allows food to run out, which in turn leads to longer wait times on food. I have personally had to wait in line for about 15 minutes for food to be finished. This may seem like a small amount of time, but I think

many of us have found ourselves waiting in line for awhile just to find out the food is gone.

Along with the wait times, the food quality also drops on the weekends. It does appear Sparks is understaffed on most weekends, but students pay lots of money for a full-service dining hall. This is not fair to students who pay for 19 meals a week, only to have the Saturday lunch option be a hot dog or something worse.

Dinner on the weekends is also very inconsistent. If there are Wabash alumni on campus, the dining hall tends to be better. But on the weekends, when nothing is going on, the quality falls a little short. The presence of alumni on campus every so often should not determine the quality of the food at Sparks.

If Sparks were to open earlier, and maybe stay open longer on the weekends, students might gain more optimistic opinions on Sparks. They could offer three meals on the weekends (per day) instead of the morphed brunch meal. This would take some getting used to, and maybe this just happens on Saturdays, but many students have sporting events in the morning and being able to grab food from the dining hall could prove effective and helpful to many student athletes. Not only athletes, but students who like early mornings as well! The continuing engagement from students and those who work with Sparks will lead to more fruitful outcomes with the dining hall.

Wally's Wall: Thoughts on Zyn regulations

James Szalkie '25

I think we, as a society, are asking the wrong questions here. To Zyn or not to Zyn? That is not the question. We must reject modernity, with its microplastics and upper deckies, and embrace tradition: We must bring back the corn cob pipe. I want to feel like I'm drafting a constitution every time I strike a match on my house's front porch. There is such an elegance we have lost in the evolution of modern tobacco products. Packing a pipe used to be an event, a time-honored tradition. People don't even ask for nicotine anymore, they just hold out their hands, reaching for the nearest Hyde. I say we should be reaching through time and recovering this lost treasure.

Lucas Carpenter '26

This is a sad day for America. Zyns are not meth, Zyns are not heroin nor are they any substance that impacts the health or liberty of people other than the user. This is a prime example of a paternalistic governing body believing that they can determine how you should live your life better than you can. Everyone, Zyn users or not, should be upset, if not entirely engulfed with rage in light of this overbearing politician's narrow-mindedness. They took our beer in the 1920s, they took our mango Juul pods in the 2010s. Don't let them take these too.

Burkley McCarthy '24

They should set a price ceiling of \$1 to ensure affordability.

Derek Miller '24

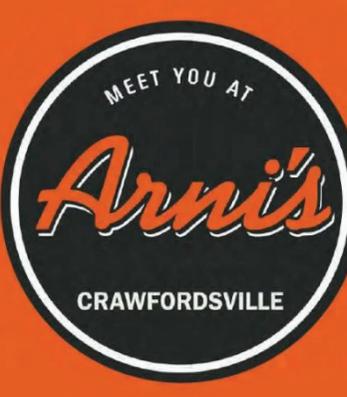
Switching the tobacco and nicotine law to 21 years of age just a little over four years ago obviously hasn't changed a thing. But, does this mean we should continue to federally regulate? No! To continue to regulate tobacco and nicotine products, especially zyns, would just make it harder on the aged people (who have a right to use this product) to continue doing so. The issue at hand is obviously underage use of these products and I agree that we should control/regulate that, but federally regulating and targeting the companies is not the route to go. Doing so isn't going to achieve anything besides making politicians feel like they are actually doing something. They have much bigger issues to get through at this time than people using zyns.

John Mills '27

Nicotine has been an aspect of American culture for nearly a century, and as much of an inhibitor the usage of nicotine can be, new products such as Zyns can save lives. If the alternative to cigarettes is a Zyn/vape, we can all agree that they can be useful. The U.S. can regulate products such as these by using fewer flavors targeting a younger audience such as unicorn blast and tropical smoothie.

Evan Furuness '26

I think that these nicotine products like Zyns can be useful for quitting vaping, which in my opinion is more harmful.



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NIL questions answered

ETHAN WALLACE '25
SPORTS EDITOR

When the announcement came in 2021 that the NCAA would no longer prohibit athletes from profiting on their name, image and likeness (NIL), few doubted the immediate impact that it would have on collegiate sports, especially at the Division I level. But now more than two and half years later, questions still circulate as to whether the NIL boom will trickle down to Division III.

While Division I has seen skyrocketing totals on NIL agreements for athletes, with many of the highest paid students bringing in enough money to rival and even surpass professional athletes, it seems Pandora's box has been opened already. But the DIII NIL landscape is still in its infancy with most participants hardly bringing in enough profit to justify the time demands of advertising. It still remains to be seen whether or not NIL will become a viable option for long-term income for students at Wabash and other small schools.

Below, Assistant Athletic Director Allison Manwell, who serves as the primary link between athletes and the College for NIL activity, answers questions about the realities of NIL at Wabash.

“What is NIL and how can our athletes engage in it?”

“Very simply, NIL gives college athletes the rights to their own name, image, and likeness as leverage for compensation in non-athletic activities. At its best and in its purest form, I think NIL gives student-athletes the rightful opportunity to earn money via their personal brand or status and platform. There is still a lot of ambiguity though.”

What limits are still placed on NIL activity?

“The main guidance from the NCAA tells us not to let NIL influence recruiting and not to let

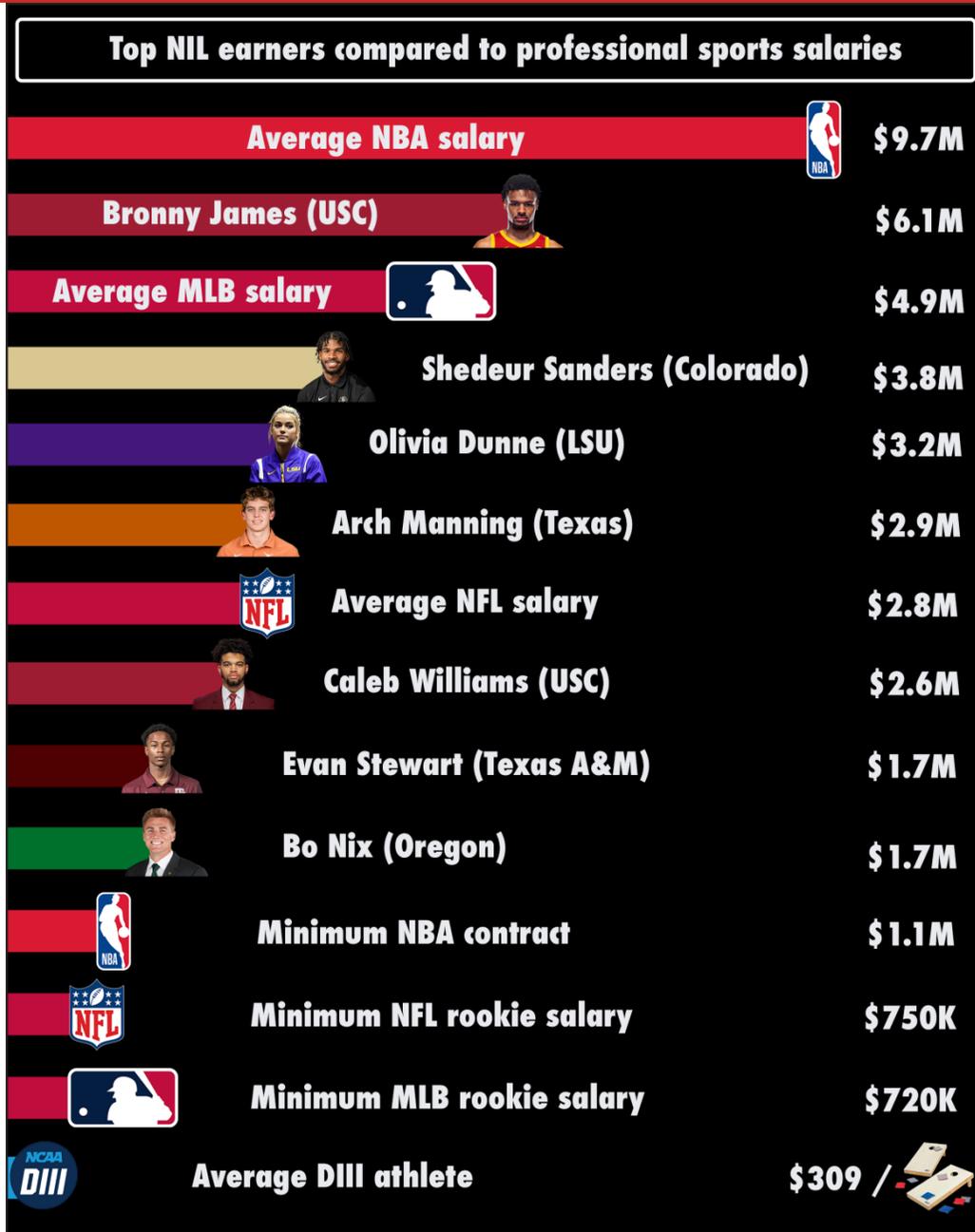
boosters pay athletes. I'm not going to pretend that I believe that never happens anywhere, and I do think we'll continue to see more violations and sanctions from the NCAA. But I think a misconception is that student-athletes are being paid simply for being athletes and all amateurism is going away from college sports, and that's not the whole picture.”

Do athletes at DIII schools have less of an opportunity to engage in NIL opportunities than other DI and DII schools?

“NIL at the DIII space is small scale and unpopular in the initial years. I haven't seen updated data on this, but Open-dorse awhile back shared that the average DIII athlete makes \$309 annually. At Wabash, it's not even close to that high of a number. Right now, at least one athlete on almost all of Wabash's teams has some degree of involvement in NIL activity. DIII is the largest NCAA division in terms of membership, but the profile and exposure of even our best teams and athletes just doesn't compare to what we readily see at DI.”

What is the College's role in assisting the student-athletes with NIL?

“Around 30 states have NIL laws. Indiana does not yet, but Wabash does have a policy that is always subject to change given the dynamic NIL landscape. We provide and explain the policy to student athletes each year in our preseason compliance meetings. The policy requires them to complete and turn into the athletic department a NIL disclosure form for each activity in which they engage. I simply assess the deal from a compliance perspective. I don't facilitate deals or give legal or financial advice.



GRAPHIC BY LOGAN WEILBAKER '25

What steps can a Wabash athlete take to begin profiting from their name, image and likeness?

“Social media is essential for someone wanting to get more involved in NIL activity. Our few student-athletes who have been involved in publicity with brands have made posts in ex-

change for items like cornhole boards or, less commonly, a commission. Local business partnerships have potential and are one of the more common DIII NIL activities. Wabash student-athletes have every right to seek out these opportunities.

I do think that athletes across divisions are realizing some im-

plications, like time demands or tax considerations, that make NIL more complex than it looks. Wabash men are super involved and busy as is, and athletics is seen as just a piece of their holistic college experience, so NIL might not always be deemed a pursuit worth their while.”

Track faces hurdles against DI opponents

NICK WANGLER '27
STAFF WRITER

Competing against Division I teams will always be a challenge, but always pays off when the post-season comes around. On January 26-27, the Little Giants experienced the first stage of this truth as they competed in the 2024 IUPUI Invitational against multiple Division I and Division II teams, as well as NAIA teams.

When competing against opponents at a higher NCAA level, Wabash runners get exposed to the techniques that top performers incorporate, develop their competitiveness and grit and either gain confidence by beating the best or leave with an outcome they expected.

“We have not had the start of the season that we wanted, but that's life.

Nothing worth it is meant to be easy, so we just keep grinding in all aspects of our program,” said Morgan.

During the 5,000-meter race, it quickly became evident that the competitive juices were flying high as Justin Santiago '25 ran a personal best with a time of 15:51.45. This is the first step for hitting the means for the 5k to contribute points to the team score for indoor conference.

“The conference means are a standard that you have to hit to advance into the conference meet,” said Haiden Deimer-McKinney '26. “So let's say that the means for the 5k at 15:30. If you run under that time, no matter how you rank in the conference, you will automatically get a bid into the conference meet.”

“That goal of hitting

means and scoring points for the team will continue to motivate me over the next two weeks”, said Santiago.

Although competing against stiffer competition can be overwhelming, the team needs to stay persistent with their mental approach. The preparation for meets like last week looks the same as any other week. Preparing for Division I teams versus Division III teams makes no difference.

“Our focus stays the same: on us. We focus on getting better physically and mentally each week on and off of the track, circle or runway,” said Head Track & Field Coach Clyde Morgan.

While the benefits to competing against difficult opponents is valuable, the

standings are still disappointing. However, the Little Giants still have three more opportunities to compete before the conference meet when they need to be at their best.

“We have not had the start of the season that we wanted, but that's life. Nothing worth it is meant to be easy, so we just keep grinding in all aspects of our program,” said Morgan.

The team will be back in action on February 3 when they compete at the Anderson University Invitational and with some improvements, the Little Giants will be top contenders for the indoor championship at the end of the season. Ending the season at the top of the conference standings is the ultimate goal for the team.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Ronnie Moore '27 clears the bar in the pole vault at the Robert H. Johnson “Some Little Giant” Open on January 13, 2024, on the Johnson Indoor Track at Knowing Field House.

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Volleyball triumphs 3-1 in home opener

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods unable to spoil excellent start for Little Giants

NATE JOVEN '26
STAFF WRITER

The Little Giants volleyball is off to a great start. A strong preparation in the preseason has catapulted Wabash in the right direction.

After starting the season off with a win against Rockford University, the Little Giants dominated against Concordia University Chicago with yet another 3-0 sweep on January 26. The first two sets were close, but in the third set the Little Giants cemented their victory with a commanding 25-13 win.

Throughout the match, the team outperformed their opponents across the board. With a percentage of .120, they out hit their opponents who hit for .000. On the other hand, the Cougars made 21 errors to Wabash's 18. Behind the serving line, the Little Giants out served their opponent with eight aces to Concordia's four.

On January 31, the Little Giants faced Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in their season home opener. Hot off their previous two victories, the Little Giants came into the match looking strong. Similarly to Wabash, the Pomeroy's from Saint Mary's added several strong freshman hitters and built upon the core squad it had retained from the previous season. Since the two teams' last meeting on Chadwick Court, in which the Pomeroy's walked away with the win, both Wabash and Saint Mary's have improved significantly. But as they stepped onto the court,



PHOTO BY DIEGO BANUELOS '27

Shad Wilson leaps for a kill in the Little Giants' 3-1 victory over Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on January 31 at Chadwick Court.

the question remained: which team improved more?

The first set saw a slow start for both teams. Early on, the Little Giants and the Pomeroy's kept it close going point for point. A string of serves from right-side hitter Patrick Volk '26 allowed Wabash to pull ahead of their opponent. Finding their groove, the Little Giants pulled away through the hitting efforts of Volk, Jackson Leeper '25, and Bawibawi Thang '27. Also at the net, Leeper, Will Beikes '25,

Ricky Sessions '24 and Shad Wilson '27 blocked hitting attempts to score the Little Giants another five points. With an ace served up by Wilson followed by two Saint Mary's errors, Wabash won the first set 25 to 20.

The second set again saw a slow start for the Little Giants. Wabash was unable to maintain control of the serve, allowing Saint Mary's to creep ahead. Following a Pomeroy service error, a series of kills by Leeper in the middle gave the Little Giants

their first lead of the set. However, the Pomeroy's continued to outscore the Little Giants. Wabash's seven service errors contributed heavily to their eventual loss of the second set of the match.

Starting the third set refreshed and with the serve, Wabash jumped ahead to a 5-1 lead. In contrast to the previous set, the Little Giants kept control of the serve, which allowed them to separate themselves from their opponent. A series

of kills from the Pomeroy's kept the game competitive. But Wabash's tall wall of blockers kept Saint Mary's from closing the gap. Leeper provided the final kill to end the set. Wabash won 25 to 21.

In the fourth set, the Pomeroy's responded fiercely advancing to a 4-1 lead over the Little Giants. Wabash played from behind from the beginning of the set until a service ace by Beikes granted the Little Giants a lead of 14 points to 13. The set stayed close as Wabash lost its lead four times before the set ended. Two service aces by Volk and Sessions and a matching pair of kills by Leeper and Thang propelled the Little Giants into the lead. A final Pomeroy service error granted the Wabash a set and match victory.

With this home victory, the Little Giants advance to 3-1 on the season.

"It feels great," said Wilson. "Tonight was a lot of fun. The energy here was amazing. It's been fun to adapt to a new position."

In his freshman season, Wilson has transitioned into filling the middle blocker position.

This game marks Head Volleyball Coach Ashaun Baker's first home victory as a coach for the Little Giants.

"We have seen hard work and dedication from day one," said Baker. "It feels good to see our training come to life on the court. We won three in a row. And we fully intend to win our next three."

Investigating the 'Chadwick Effect'



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

Members of the Sphinx Club celebrate during a Wabash basketball game.

ETHAN WALLACE '25
SPORTS EDITOR

The most common trope of sports is athletes and coaches thanking their home fans for supporting them after a win. But can the stat books justify the feeling of the home-crowd advantage? For some teams— not so much. But for Wabash— you better believe they can.

Crunching the numbers makes it hard to argue that Wabash has the strongest home crowd advantage in the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC). At 6-2 on their own court, the Little Giants are tied with Denison for the second best home record in the NCAC. Wittenberg is squarely in first with an 8-2 record when in Springfield, Ohio. But with 14 scheduled home games they will have four more chances to win at home than Wabash during the season, an unsurprising decision given their 3-5 road record. But so many variables play into the outcome of a game, regardless of location, that it's difficult to pin winning at home solely on the fans.

The one aspect of the game where the fans have the chance to make a real difference is at the free throw line. It is possibly the most mundane event in all of sports, but that doesn't stop the

free throw from being a wildly impactful part of the game. At the free throw line the players get quiet and the stands get loud. The battle is set between the focus of the athlete and the clamor of the crowd. But can fans really make a difference in the outcome of a freethrow? The numbers say they can.

"Obviously we know that there is an advantage when it gets loud at Chadwick," said Brett Driscoll '24. "You don't think that DIII sports get very loud very often, at least from my experience. Because we can watch the live streams at other schools, we can see the opposing fans. And rarely do they have student sections at all. And yet our students section sometimes takes up damn-near half the gym."

At Chadwick, NCAC opponents hit about 9.8% fewer free throws, compared to the league average of .693 free throw shooting. Just to show how monumental this difference is, one can compare it to the difference in FT% between the best and the worst in the conference. The best NCAC team is Oberlin, shooting a respectable .755 from the stripe. At the bottom of the conference is Kenyon who shoot a dismal .641 at the line.

The gap between the league av-

erage at Chadwick and the league average makes up for more than three quarters of the difference between the best and worst free throw shooting teams. If that doesn't sound important, it is.

All things added up, the six teams who have visited Wabash already this season have combined to shoot a near-blasphemous 59.5% free throw percentage. Compare this to NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal, who's free throw shooting was infamously bad that opposing teams chose to foul him rather than let him shoot from the field with a tactic called Hack-a-Shaq. Still, O'Neal was able to muster a 52.7% career free throw shooting percentage. And entire teams are averaging just above that when they get to Chadwick.

"Is this surprising?" said Mason Naaman '24. "Is the Pope Presbyterian? The only basketball players in the world who would be comfortable at the line in Chadwick are those who have Wabash across their chest. We, as fans, try to reflect the passion and energy our players/coaches are bringing to each game. The Little Giants are an easy team to rally for, no matter what sport. It's my pleasure to lose my voice every game."

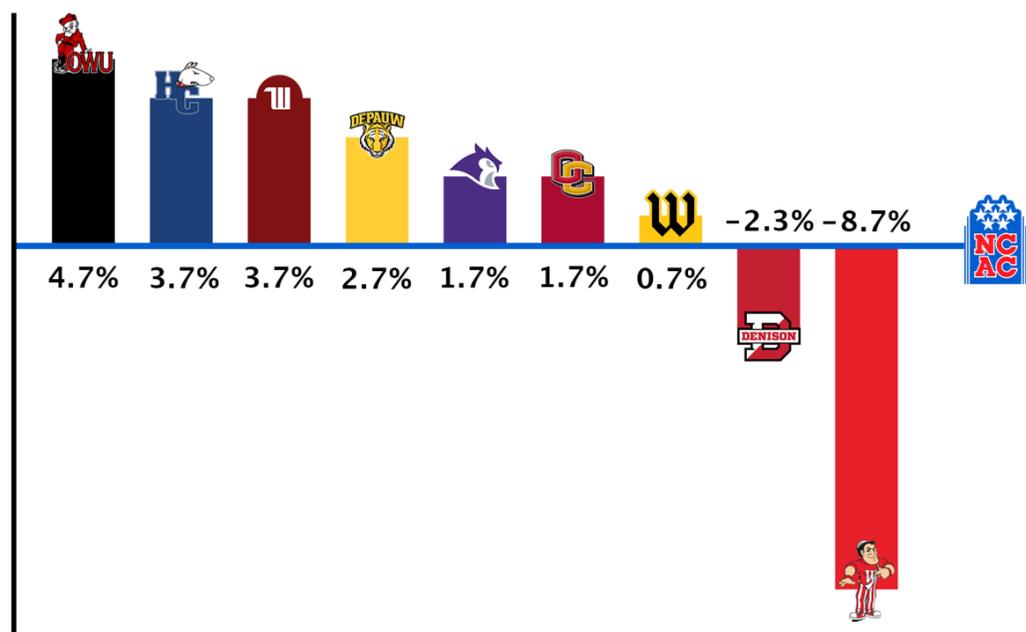
How do other teams' home courts stack up? They don't. Out of the eight other NCAC teams, only one of them see opponents shoot worse from the charity stripe. That's Denison, who's good for keeping opponents 2.3% below their average at their home Livingston Gymnasi-

um.

Other than them, everyone else's fans somehow give the visitors a boost in FT%. Worst amongst these are Wittenberg and Hiram, where opponents shoot +3.7% and -worst of all— Ohio Wesleyan, where fans get to watch teams knock down an extra 4.7% of the free throws.

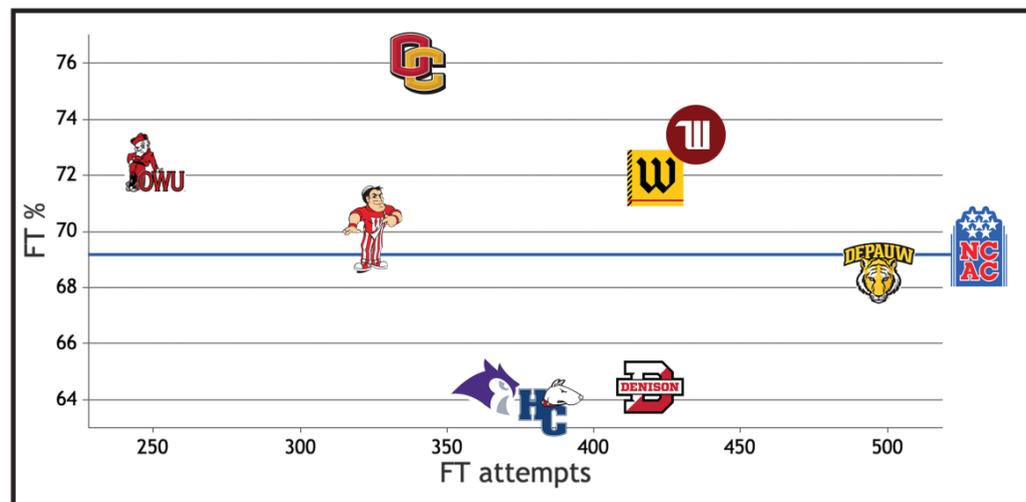
The numbers leave little room for doubt, there's something different about Chadwick Court. Whether it's the smell of burgers on the lawn, the hearty dose of Indiana basketball on the hardwood or the aptly named "Chadwick Crazies" in the stands, when teams find themselves on the line in Crawfordsville, they struggle to find anything more than the back of the rim.

Chadwick by the stats



GRAPHIC BY LOGAN WEILBAKER '25

The difference in free throw percentage of visiting teams at each venue of the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) . The blue line represents the NCAC average of 69.3%



GRAPHIC BY LOGAN WEILBAKER '25

The free throw completion percentages of all nine North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) teams plotted against their attempted free throws and compared to the NCAC average of 69.3%

McRoberts: NCAC basketball playoff picture



GRAPHIC BY LOGAN WEILBAKER '25

NOAH MCROBERTS '25 SPORTS WRITER

With most teams now having only four or five games left on the schedule, the conference is wide open in what has been one of the tightest NCAC runs in recent memory. This week I am forfeiting the rankings to attempt to paint you a picture of the state of the conference with the upcoming playoffs and future seasons in mind.

To begin, I'm going to grab the low-hanging fruit in the putrid orchard of Hiram that has produced a 2-18 overall record with an 0-11 conference performance. They've accumulated a -23.3 point, with a -13% deficit behind the arc, and, Yeah, it's tough to be a Terrier. If there is a silver lining to be found in the storm pouring down in the popo'dunk town in Ohio, it is there in youth. Thus, they have a greater than 0% chance to pick up a win next season if they can lift their heads out of their derrieres and chase the winds of coast. But they're pretty much toast, kaput, done this year.

On a less somber note, though not entirely absent from gloom and dismay, Kenyon has been freed from the bonds of the bottom of the barrel. They have practically inked the 8 seed slot to make the tournament for the first time since 2016 with a 3-8 conference record. They have been led by Stretch-Four Gefen Bar-Cohen, who has been a daily double-double candidate for two years straight with a relatively young supporting cast. As the likely eight seed, they will likely prove a minor threat to a home court advantaged one seed, but

they could throw a wrench in some ambitious teams looking for better seeding. Next season could prove somewhat fruitful if they continue recruiting well and make some general improvements.

One team that needs to make improvements now to stay alive is DePauw. However, you guys probably could've told them that, or at least Hugh Vandivier '91 would be willing to talk your ear off about it. After a strong run to start the New Year, the Tigers of Greencastle have lost three-straight games, granted two have been nailbiters visiting the likes of Wooster and Wittenberg. Though they played well in those matchups, they have ruled themselves out of the race for the top seed, which means they will have to head on the road for the conference tournament. With an excessively young team, the wheels could fall off in crunch time, but the future isn't looking too bad.

Once a team looking to the future, the freakin' Yeomen of Oberlin, with a team of guys from the four corners of planet earth, are in a place to make a legitimate run at the conference title. The team is as peculiar as their goofy squirrel mascot, being led by 5'8 Yuuki Okubo, the daring distributor of six assists per game to the likes of JJ Gray and Milun Micanovic, thieving 2.3 steals per game as well. If they don't put it all together this year, they return their 3 best players going into next season with some confidence.

My confidence was weak in the Battling Bishops of OWU to start the year, and they've had their work cut out proving themselves

to me. If they are to make it past the first round of the tournament, they will do it on the back of PG Henry Hinkle. The junior tallies an impressive 19.7 PPG with an astounding 93% shooting percentage from the charity stripe to add to all-around pristine shooting numbers. However, he is the only player on the roster to start in every conference contest, revealing the weakness of the squad. Thus, the odds of a championship this year are looking slim, but a return to the top of the conference in the next year or two isn't out of the picture if they can establish the paint and improve their defense.

With 10 regular players, they have an extremely deep and talented bench, which has aided them late in games on numerous occasions. Though they don't stand out as a team in any one statistic, they are extremely fundamental and are a serious threat now and for years to come.

A team that has been a threat for many years in D3 basketball until more recently, Wittenberg University has found themselves in the hunt for a #1 seed and a conference title. And that #1 seed would be beyond beneficial for a Tiger team that is undefeated in Springfield this season.

The Fighting Scots have a chip on their shoulders, having been runner-up in two-straight years after an extended run of success the previous 20 years. Wooster has compiled an impressive lineup this year. As their game changer, junior guard Jamir Billings is a double-digit scorer, second in the team in rebounds, second in the NCAC in assists, and the top on-ball defender in the conference with three steals per contest. With the addition of junior Ashton Price and 6'8, 250 lb., big man in Nick Everett, you have a team that could host its second tourney in a row. Even if they have to travel for the tournament, they will have another good shot to make the championship with the hopes of sealing the deal.

Now for the team you've been waiting for: the Little Giants of Indiana's Athens sit alone atop the conference with fate in their hands to close out the season. The year has been a bit of a roller coaster for a team that began ranked in the top-15 in the NCAA DIII polls, as they've struggled finding their identity, with players shifting in and out of the lineup all year. This is in no small part due to the 7'2 Noah Hupmann catapulting his upwards team and opponent shots downwards. The key will be closing out the season. Thus, if they host, the Little Giants can secure their third straight NCAA appearance, but a road trip will be tough if chemistry crumbles.

NCAC Men's and Women's Basketball Tiebreaker System

1. Head-to-Head competition.
2. Combined win-loss record with all teams above tied teams.
3. Record versus individual opponents examined in descending order of standings.
4. Coin toss.

Should three or more teams be tied, the same procedure shall be followed until one team proves a better or worse record than the others. The process shall then be repeated until the top team is identified. If three or more results are arrived at any, and no ties remain, then the tie shall be broken and the AQ awarded to the winning team.

After failing to defend their spot at the peak of the conference, the Big Red are in a tough spot in the run for first place. They take on the Little Giants on February 3 at 2 p.m. on their home turf before closing out the regular season versus the Tigers of Witt in Granville. However, they lost their all-conference postman in Ricky Radtke, a 63% FG shooter, to an unspecified injury versus OWU a week ago. That being said, with Radtke, they have proven themselves to be more than formidable this year.

They will be relying on all-conference candidate Trey Killens to propel them over their competition, and it has worked pretty well to this point. The electric guard averages 20.3 PPG and 2.9 APG with impressive defensive capabilities to boot. However, as a team they are weak in the paint. But if the Tigers can win out and get some help, they can host the conference and be heavy favorites in the tournament, but if things don't fall their way, they're likely a runner-up or second round exit.

BASKETBALL

WABASH: 68
WITTENBERG: 63

BASKETBALL

WABASH: 74
KENYON: 64

VOLLEYBALL

WABASH: 3
CHICAGO CONCORDIA: 0

VOLLEYBALL

WABASH: 3
SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS: 1

This week in sports

Standout individual performances drive team success as February begins

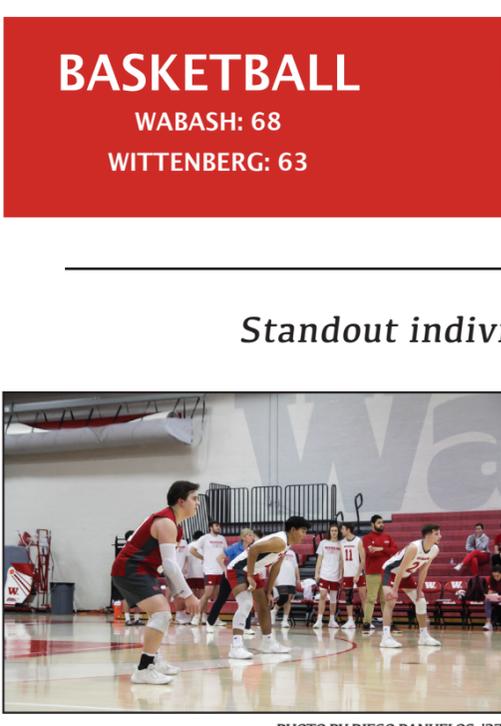


PHOTO BY DIEGO BANUELOS '27

Chris Board '27 sets up for action in the Little Giants' 3-1 victory over Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on January 31 at Chadwick Court.

SAM BENEDICT '25 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

This week in sports, the basketball team secures two significant conference wins, the track & field team has multiple standout performers in their IUPUI invitational and the volleyball team improves their record to 3-1. On February 3, both the track and field team and the basketball team will be back in action. The basketball team looks to continue their push for the conference crown, while track is midway through its own race to the conference title.

Track and Field

The track & field team excelled at the 2024 IUPUI Invitational held January 26-27. The event did not have any team scoring, but multiple individuals shined throughout the two day competition with 11 Wabash competitors finishing in the top 10. Jacob Sitzman '25 placed fourth in the 5,000 meter race and Joe Barnett '24 placed fifth. Will Neubauer '25 finished fifth in the

800-meter run and David Adensanya '27 placed fifth in the 600 meter dash.

The next event for the Wabash College track and field team is on February 3 and will take place at Anderson University as part of the Anderson University Track and Field Invitational.

Basketball

The basketball team beat Wittenberg 68-63 as the Chadwick Craziest ignited the arena. Noah Hupmann '25 repeated as the NCAC Men's Basketball Defensive Player of the Week after posting a season-high six blocks against DePauw and five more in the matchup against Wittenberg.

The important conference win on January 27 was followed by an impressive 74-64 beatdown of the Kenyon Owls on Wednesday January 1 at Kenyon. Avery Beaver '24 led the Little Giants with 18 points, tying his career high, and Amoni Jones '24 followed with 15. Looking ahead, the Little Giants will con-

tinue their conference stretch and take on Denison in Granville, Ohio on February 3. This pivotal matchup has significant implications for conference standings.

Volleyball

The Wabash College volleyball team improved its record to 2-1 following a dominant performance against Chicago Concordia University on Friday January 26 at Chicago Concordia University. Patrick Volk '26 led the team with 11 kills and Will Beikes '25 led the team with 21 assists.

The team continued its win streak on Wednesday, January 31 with an exciting home opener victory against Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. Led by Jackson Leeper '25 with 11 kills and Beikes who assembled a massive 37-assist night and eight digs, the team was able to pull away after the third set.

The three game stretch will conclude on February 2 at Chadwick Court against Lakeland College.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Nate Joven '26 prepares for the pole vault at the Robert H. Johnson "Some Little Giant" Open on January 13, 2024, on the Johnson Indoor Track at Knowing Field House.



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

Noah Hupmann '25 won NCAC Men's Defensive Athlete of the Week for the second-straight week after collecting a career-high six blocks against DePauw and five more in the Little Giants' win against Wittenberg on January 27 at Chadwick Court.