

Coaching in the Capital:  
Meet a Most Valuable Mentor P 4

Sharing a Gospel of Love  
and Carrying the Name of Christ P 10

Cultivating Confidence  
on the Shores of Tanzania P 18

# MARRIOTT

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



WINTER 2024





# MARRIOTT

## ALUMNI MAGAZINE

ISSUE Winter 2024

*marriott.byu.edu*

---

**PUBLISHER** Brigitte C. Madrian  
**MANAGING EDITOR** Andrew P. Cuthbert  
**EDITORS** Shannon Keeley  
Emily Edmonds  
**ART DIRECTOR** Jon G. Woidka  
**COPY EDITOR** Shirleen M. Saunders

**CONTRIBUTING WRITERS, EDITORS,  
DESIGNERS & PHOTOGRAPHERS** Stephanie Bentley  
Kacee Call  
Emmalee Collyer  
Melissa Een  
Robert G. Gardner  
Krista Hanby  
Todd Hollingshead  
Jake Holt  
McKayla Lindman  
Chadwick Little  
Lena Primosch  
Maggie Olsen  
Aubrey Zalewski

**MAGAZINE DESIGN** BYU Brand & Creative

---

**ALL COMMUNICATION SHOULD BE SENT TO**

*Marriott Alumni Magazine*

490 Tanner Building

Brigham Young University

Provo, UT 84602

**PHONE:** 801-422-7696

**EMAIL:** marriottmag@byu.edu

**MARRIOTT ALUMNI MAGAZINE IS PUBLISHED BY THE BYU MARRIOTT  
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AT BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY,  
PROVO, UTAH. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN MARRIOTT ALUMNI MAGAZINE  
ARE NOT NECESSARILY ENDORSED BY BYU OR THE  
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS.**

**COPYRIGHT 2024 BY BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY.  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.**

**FIND THIS AND PAST ISSUES OF MARRIOTT ALUMNI MAGAZINE ONLINE AT**

*marriottmag.byu.edu*

---

◀ **BYU'S ARMY ROTC CADETS PREPARED A TRIO OF BLACK HAWK HELICOPTERS  
TO TRANSPORT 83 STUDENTS FROM PROVO TO CAMP WILLIAMS AS PART OF A  
TWO-DAY TRAINING EXERCISE. BYU PRESIDENT C. SHANE REESE, BYU MARRIOTT  
DEAN BRIGITTE MADRIAN, AND OTHER UNIVERSITY LEADERS ACCOMPANIED  
THE CADETS ON THE 30-MINUTE FLIGHT. PHOTO BY NATE EDWARDS/BYU PHOTO.**



**OVERHEARD  
IN THE  
TANNER**

I feel like my family would like doing stuff with your family. • I'm allergic to waking up before 8 a.m. I break out in hives. • I thought I was good at pickleball until your parents beat us 11-0. • She's always in a Hillary Clinton suit. • Whenever I say I want to make cookies, my wife asks who they're for. If they're for someone else, she takes over making them because she says they're a representation of our household. • It tastes like grass. But I don't dislike grass. • I was not in a dating mode. I was just like, "I hate all of you." • The thing is, I forget everything all the time and get in huge trouble for it. • I've already had six pieces of toffee today, so why stop there? • My heart goes out to your jeans. • Titles are so hard. How am I supposed to condense my brilliance into 10 words or less? • It's about soccer, but there's so little soccer that it's totally bearable. • Where do you shop? *Trader Joe's and Walmart*. Ah, the two holy grails. • She was lying on the couch sick. And I was like, "Why are you being sick in a public place when you could be sick on your bed that is only touched by you?" • I had all this salami in my bag, and I didn't know it. • Being normal is a feat in and of itself. • That's why pineapples are my spirit animal; they're spiky on the outside. *You mean your spirit fruit?* Nope. Actual animals are terrifying. I'll stick with pineapples. • If you have to trick someone into dating you, pick someone else. • Do babies just not have necks when they're born? • If I stayed away from people every time I thought I was going to say something stupid, I'd never leave my house. • Don't lollygag! • St. Patrick's Day is my second-favorite holiday. • Now I've got watered-down water. • Binoculars are super useful, but people look really stupid when they use them. *I look stupid doing most things, so binoculars are just more of the same.* • I love playing laser tag with little children and absolutely destroying them. • Do you know any self-respecting business students who would wear a light-up sweater to school? • How does one do physical therapy on a tailbone? • He would drive two hours to drop things off at her house. Who has the time to be that creepy? • Do you think balding is more situational or genetic? • I learned so much about the female body yesterday. Holy cow! • I ran into this guy in the hallway who was absolutely obsessed with me a couple years ago, and he just ran away very quickly. • It's warm enough for me to bare my ankles.



4



16



18

# Contents

| WINTER 2024



10

## Features

4

### MAKING THE ASSIST

Accounting alum Mark Dickson has crafted a notable career, but he's also a superfan of mentoring and networking. Whether crunching numbers at his accounting and wealth management firms or volunteering in the Washington, DC, chapter of BYU Management Society, Dickson has developed a reputation for assisting others in their professional journeys.

10

### HOW WILL YOU CARRY HIS NAME?

Drawing upon her experiences in the professional and academic worlds, associate professor Abigail Allen shares how followers of Christ can represent His Church. Adapted from Allen's recent BYU devotional address.

18

### MINDSET MATTERS

The power of positive thinking isn't just a nice habit—it could also be a simple, low-cost way to fight poverty. When Shad Morris and Chad Carlos were recruited to help the Tanzanian government figure out why a tried-and-true entrepreneurship training program was falling flat, the two BYU Marriott professors initially thought it was a problem with complexity or applicability. They were surprised, however, to find that the answer was psychological. An additional half day of mindset training resulted in higher entrepreneurial actions, indicating that mindset really does matter.

## Plus ...

### 9 INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

*The New Frontier of Finance*

### 16 BY THE NUMBERS

*A Tanner Tribute*

### 24 SCHOOL NEWS

### 29 ALUMNI NEWS

*Cover photo illustration  
courtesy of Chad Carlos*

# MAKING THE ASSIST

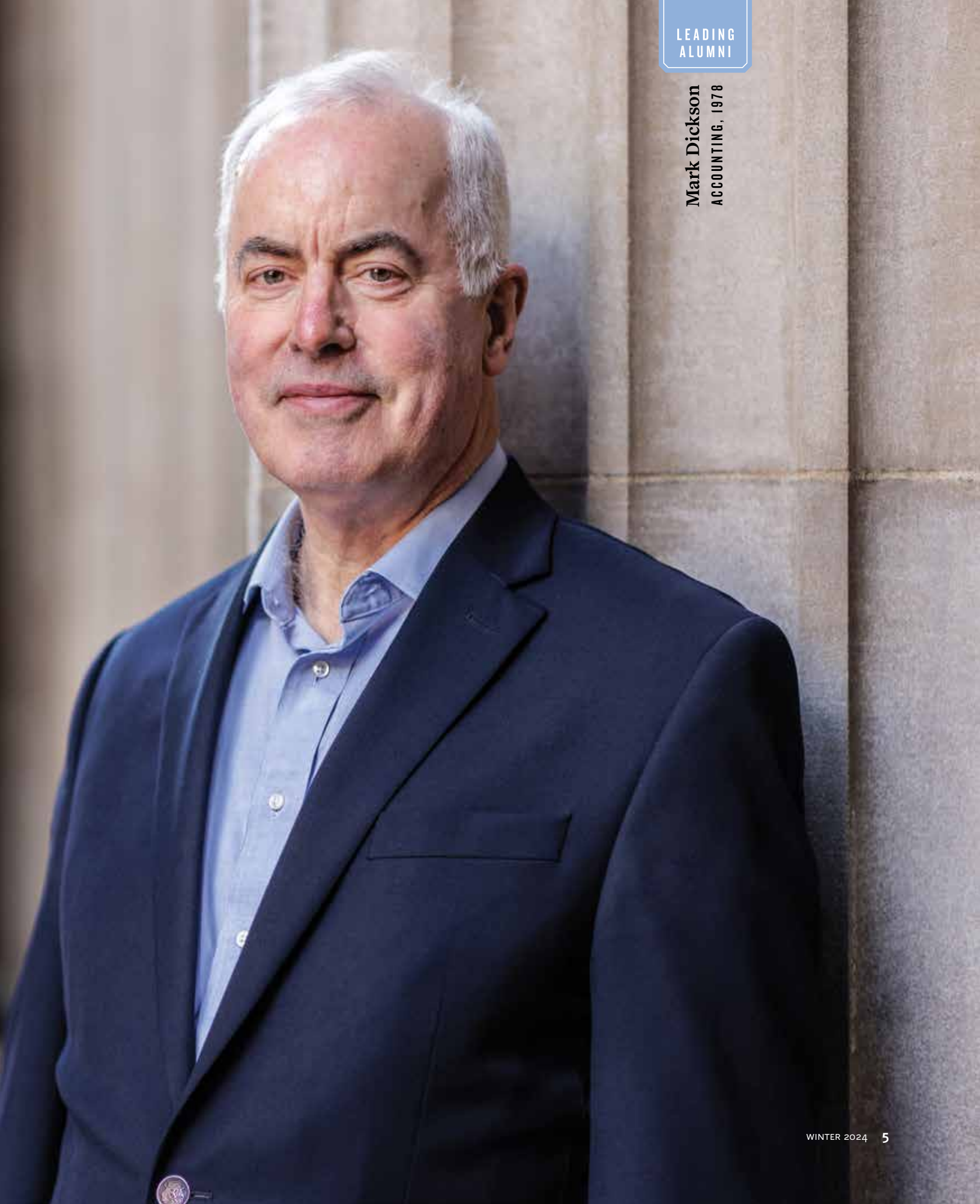
*Under brilliant lights, Mark Dickson spoke to a crowd hanging on his every word. He wasn't a politician, like you might expect from a native of the Washington, DC, area. Not an actor or a comedian either. Dickson was a 20-something college student refereeing a BYU Intramural Sports flag football game, and for him, the stakes had never been higher.*

BY CLARISSA McINTIRE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRADLEY SLADE



**Mark Dickson**  
ACCOUNTING, 1978



He'd just thrown a penalty flag and come face-to-face with players arguing the call, and he knew he needed to find a way to defuse the situation and resume gameplay. Thinking quickly, Dickson interrupted the protesting players with a simple phrase: "I love you too."

"It may have been annoying to hear," Dickson says, "but the players had a hard time getting into a big fight with me after that." The phrase became his go-to method for handling tense moments and unhappy players.

Little did the accounting student know that his time as a zebra would lead him to develop a skill that has become a key part of his career, volunteer work, and family relationships: the skill of mentoring. "I love you too" has remained Dickson's motto. As principal accountant and managing director at his accounting and wealth management firms, Dickson cheers on the people around him, managing things from the proverbial sidelines so others can go out and play their best game.

## ROOKIE YEARS

Before becoming a mentor, Dickson received his fair share of mentoring. Growing up in Arlington, Virginia, as the oldest of seven, Dickson had no family ties to BYU. Other young men and young women in his ward, however, returned home with BYU degrees, which inspired him to apply. "They came back having had great experiences, so from an early age, I had an interest in BYU," he says.

Once Dickson enrolled at BYU, a former companion from the Switzerland Geneva Mission encouraged him to try accounting. Dickson had an affinity for numbers and as a boy had enjoyed computing the

batting averages of the Washington Senators baseball team. "It turned out that accounting was a natural fit," he says.

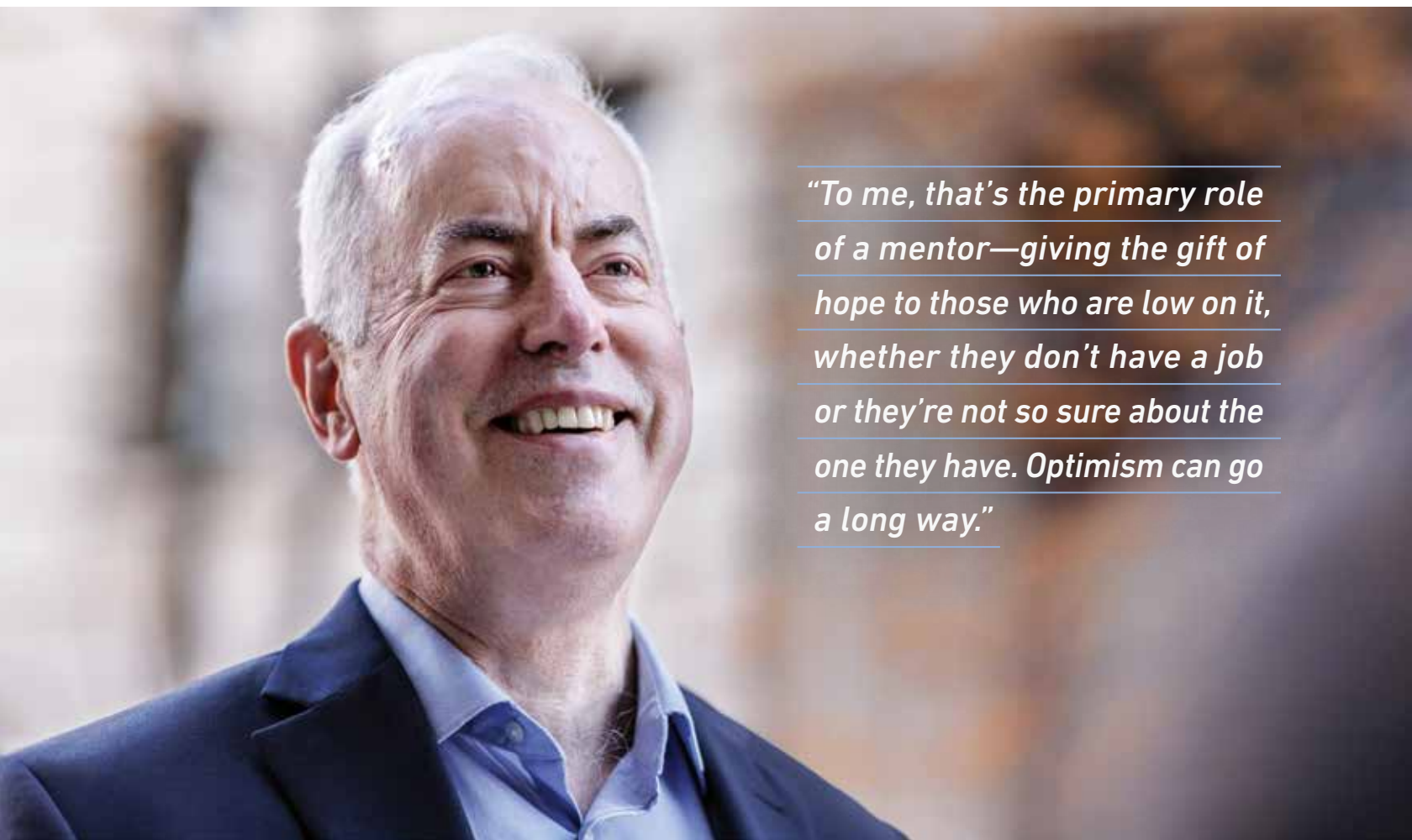
Dickson continued to be influenced by his connections on campus, including his business law professor H. Verlan Andersen, who later became a General Authority Seventy. Andersen, consistently clad in a suit and tie, would always incorporate a Book of Mormon verse into his lessons.

"I loved my time at BYU, and I didn't want to leave," Dickson recalls. He returned to DC after graduating in 1978, with mounting pressure to land his first job. The game changer came through Doug Banks, a partner at Deloitte who was also Dickson's former Young Men president. "Doug suggested I consider going to a local accounting firm where he'd worked before. He put in a good word for me there," Dickson says. "Thanks to him, I got my first job."

In his four and one-half years there, Dickson gained contacts and experience that helped him secure his second job as a senior tax accountant at Ernst & Young. One year later, Dickson went job hunting again. He had an enticing offer from a large company but was waiting to hear back from G. William Miller & Co., a smaller firm started by former United States secretary of the treasury William Miller.

Dickson was more interested in working at Miller's firm, but they needed another week to make an offer, and the first firm wanted to know his decision. "Isn't there any way I can have more time to decide?" Dickson asked the placement agent. "No, they need to know by Friday," came the response.

But Dickson says that as he prayed about the decision, "the thought came to mind, which I attribute to someone above, that the placement



*"To me, that's the primary role of a mentor—giving the gift of hope to those who are low on it, whether they don't have a job or they're not so sure about the one they have. Optimism can go a long way."*



agent was bluffing. The next time he called, I told him that if he needed to know by Friday, the answer was going to be no. And after a little back-and-forth, the agent said, ‘Well, they don’t really need to know by Friday.’”

Miller made an offer the next week, and Dickson accepted and proceeded to work for the firm for 19 years. “The prompting had been correct and had taken me in a direction I wouldn’t have gone,” Dickson says.

## SATURDAY MORNING SCRAMBLES

As Dickson’s career grew, so did his family. He met his wife, Melody, in a young single adult ward in northern Virginia in 1980. “I was smitten right away,” Dickson says. The two married in the Los Angeles California Temple, settled in McLean, Virginia, and eventually welcomed seven children.

It was important to Dickson to stay close with each of his children. So from the time that his oldest was about five years old, Dickson took one of his children out for breakfast every Saturday morning. “That became a tradition for more than 20 years,” he says. “It was a great way for us to talk when we may not have had a chance during the week.”

Dickson only had two rules for these outings: (1) there would be no lectures from him and no discussion of the child’s behavior, and (2) only positive, casual topics were allowed. Occasionally the conversation lagged, but Dickson had a play for moments just like that. “My favorite question was to ask them how one of their friends was doing,” he says. “That would always draw my children out and result in good conversations.”

Even with those Saturday morning breakfasts, work-life balance remained a challenge. Dickson credits his wife for her insight. “I found out years ago that Melody is a great advisor on how to manage



my time and make personal and professional decisions. It is always better for me to listen to her advice,” he says.

As their children grew up, many of them and their spouses graduated from BYU, including two from BYU Marriott: Dickson’s late son-in-law, Jarem Hallows, who earned a BA in accounting in 2009, and his second-oldest child, Devin. Devin earned a degree in management with a corporate finance emphasis in 2008 and an MBA in 2012. He currently works as a financial analyst for Boeing. As Dickson attended one of Devin’s graduation receptions in the Tanner Building, he watched his son socialize with his teachers, including Jim Engebretsen, a former BYU Marriott professor and current member of the National Advisory Council.

“I could tell that Jim knew Devin well,” Dickson says. It occurred to him that Engebretsen probably knew more about Devin’s student life than Dickson did. “That made me thankful that Devin had gone to BYU and had faculty mentors around him like Jim. I’m so grateful for our association with BYU and the impact it’s had on our lives.”

## FREE AGENT

In 2003, Dickson’s main client at Miller, TAG Financial Institutions Group, sold many of its holdings and decided it no longer needed full-time services, so Miller unexpectedly let Dickson go. Despite the shock, that career change became the catalyst for two powerful new professional ventures.

The first was starting his own accounting company, Mark Dickson CPA. After a few job interviews, Dickson realized that what he really wanted was to be his own boss. He began building his company in 2004—with TAG hiring him as a contractor—while also holding positions throughout the next





decade as managing director at Capitol Project Partners, director at Capital Management Group, and CFO at both Energy Technology Leasing and Vaud Advisors.

A second opportunity came to fruition in 2014, although it had been put into motion years earlier. While working with TAG, Dickson was offered a chance to earn the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation so he could participate on an in-house investment committee. After taking several classes, Dickson passed the three-part CFA test and now considers earning the CFA designation to be one of his greatest achievements.

His new skills became central to his work once again when several of his CPA clients expressed interest in getting help with their investments. In 2015, Dickson founded his wealth management firm, Tyndale Investments.

“Without the CFA designation, I would never have thought that would be realistic for me,” Dickson says. “But with the designation, my previous experience, and the opportunity to take over a friend’s investment advisement company, it became an amazing opportunity.”

Looking back, Dickson wishes he would have pursued these challenging experiences earlier in his career. “I wish I had been more ambitious, but I was scared, especially having seen other people fail in their efforts to start a business,” he says. “But if I had acted despite my fear, I may have had more opportunities like this.”

## TALENT SCOUT

While Dickson may feel that he missed a few chances for professional growth, he hasn’t missed an occasion to give others a leg up. He currently serves as a board member of Madison House Autism Foundation (an advocacy group for adults on the spectrum), and as treasurer for the DC Forensic Nurse Examiners (a nonprofit serving victims of sexual assault).

For more than 30 years, Dickson has also been a member of the BYU Management Society DC chapter. Once again, it was a trusted mentor who led Dickson to this new opportunity. “Back when I was in my thirties, my friend Brian Swinton invited me to participate in BYU Management Society as the chapter’s treasurer,” he says. “I thought I would make a few friends and give back to BYU, but it stuck with me and became much more than that. It helped me in my business and became a place where I developed good relationships.”

His role as treasurer turned to stints as vice president, president, and now chair for the past 10 years. The current chapter president, Lauren Alston Belnap, first met Dickson when he served in her ward’s bishopric. They later cotaught temple preparation classes. “In every interaction we had, he treated me as an equal,” Belnap says. “As smart and successful as Mark is, he remains curious and willing to learn from everyone. He’s a truly humble

man in this regard. Mark is also sincere and never hesitates to compliment others and lift them up. He wants others to thrive and reach their potential. He has certainly helped me in this regard, both as a mentor and as a friend.”

The most important part of mentorship for Dickson is giving hope. “It’s about expressing optimism for that person’s future,” he says. “In my own career there were times when I needed encouragement. To me, that’s the primary role of a mentor—giving the gift of hope to those who are low on it, whether they don’t have a job or they’re not so sure about the one they have. Optimism can go a long way.”

## CAREER COACH

Dickson’s approach to helping others comes back to his BYU days when he was the ref who loved everyone. “I try to be like Doug Banks: helping people with their job searches and connecting them with potential employers,” Dickson says. “Doug’s example of kindness and outreach definitely affects the thinking behind my actions today.”

In the October 2008 general conference, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf gave a talk titled “Lift Where You Stand”—and those remarks have resonated with Dickson for more than 15 years.

“President Uchtdorf tells a story about people trying to lift a piano, and one member of the group telling everyone to lift where they stood,” Dickson says. “That applies to everybody. If we just lift others from where we are, we’ll both support individuals and create great communities. Do what you can from where you are, and you’ll help more people than you can imagine.” **M**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Clarissa McIntire is a BYU grad, current PhD student at the University of Oklahoma, and self-described nerd. She’s all right at Scrabble but rubbish at flag football.*



# The New Frontier of Finance

**"MY DAUGHTER ASKED ME ONE DAY** how Bitcoin worked, and I was embarrassed that I couldn't explain it to her," says finance professor Todd Mitton. As he studied up on decentralized finance, Mitton developed enough expertise to explain it not only to his daughter but also to a classroom of students. In a newly created section of Finance 490R: Topics in Finance, Mitton now shares the basics and the beauties of this emerging, revolutionary field.

Mitton says that in traditional banking, financial transactions are often expensive, slow, or simply inaccessible. He gives the example of a typical credit card purchase, which carries a 3 percent fee paid jointly by the customer and the merchant. And although the purchase feels instantaneous, the transaction actually takes a day or two to post.

Aside from these inconveniences, many people can't even purchase on credit. Mitton points out, "There are about one and a half billion people who have no access to financial services because they live in countries where those services are just not available to them."

***"They're learning things that have the potential to lift up people in the poorest parts of the world. To me, that's the most exciting thing about decentralized finance."***

**—TODD MITTON**

These realities made an impression on Jeremy Remer when he took Mitton's class in 2023. Remer, a Colorado native and recent finance grad, realized that "a lot of people in developing countries don't have birth certificates, so they'll never be able to have access to a bank account or transfer large amounts of money easily."

In Mitton's course, students learn how decentralized finance addresses some of these challenges by shifting financial transactions from banks to blockchain networks—secure digital systems shared across a network of participants. This technology has the potential to make transactions instantaneous, low cost, and—most importantly—accessible to anyone with internet access.

"For someone in Venezuela or Zimbabwe who is suffering from rampant inflation or in places where assets are unstable, this is potentially a life-changing technology," Mitton explains. "It allows everyone to more fairly and freely participate in financial services."

Remer says that as the course deepened his knowledge of alternative finance platforms, it simultaneously

## INSIDE *the* CLASSROOM



Decentralized finance technology has the potential to make transactions instantaneous, low cost, and accessible to anyone with internet access.

prepared him for his post-graduation job in traditional banking. "The course really broke down what every entity needs to do to make the financial system function," he says. "It helped me better understand everything going on in the traditional finance world and broadened my perspective on how that world could be more efficient."

As Mitton now teaches the class for a second time, the content—like the field itself—continues to evolve. "We're exploring the frontier of financing," he says. "This is the newest stuff out there."

And while the cutting-edge factor is important, Mitton's deepest hope is that the course will equip students with more tools to transform the world. "They're learning things that have the potential to lift up people in the poorest parts of the world," Mitton says. "To me, that's the most exciting thing about decentralized finance."

**—SHANNON KEELEY**





# How Will You Carry His Name ?

## *“An Example of the Believers”*

(1 TIMOTHY 4:12)

As a young graduate, I went to work for an accounting firm. I was eager to demonstrate my worth, and I attempted to fulfill each task I was assigned with precision and efficiency. Beyond that, I often volunteered for extra assignments, and over time I built a reputation as an employee who would step up to whatever was asked of her.

Then came the request that gave me pause. An important reporting deadline was approaching, and our Fortune 500 client needed a physical inventory audit. The audit had to be done in person, it had to be done on a Sunday, and I was the person they wanted to do it.

I was fully committed to supporting my team. But I had also made a commitment to myself and to my God that I would avoid working on the Sabbath, except as strictly necessary. So I approached my manager and explained to her that I was a “Mormon” and that an important facet of my religious observance was keeping the Sabbath day holy. My manager smiled kindly and then firmly denied my request. She said, “I understand. I’ve worked with Mormons before, and I know that’s your preference. But at the end of the day, everyone just steps up and takes one for the team.”

Disappointed, I offered a silent prayer: “Father, give me the words to help her understand.”

As I concluded that prayer, my mind was immediately drawn to a former colleague who would arrive every Friday morning at 5 a.m. in order to leave by 3 p.m. because as an Orthodox Jew he was prohibited from driving on Shabbat, which began Friday at sundown.

The Spirit whispered to me, “That colleague’s faith is the key to helping your manager understand.”

I took a deep breath and tried again: “Oh, I’m so sorry. I think I misexplained. I’m actually an *Orthodox* Mormon.”

It was as if a light came on for my manager, and her entire demeanor and response were wholly changed. Now that she understood the depth of my conviction, she was happy to accommodate my request. Through the example of a believing Jewish colleague, the way had been paved for me to exercise my own devotion. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we are empowered each week with the sacred opportunity to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ—a designation that is far weightier than even the word *orthodox*.

In the words of President M. Russell Ballard, “The name the Savior has given to His Church tells us exactly who we are and what we believe.”<sup>1</sup> The question for you today then becomes, “How do we carry that name?”

## “I Will Shew Thee My Faith by My Works”

(JAMES 2:18)

Prior to coming to BYU, I spent several years on the faculty at Harvard Business School, where I had the opportunity to teach and interact with many amazing professionals. One night after a conference, I went out with several colleagues. As the evening progressed, someone noticed I wasn’t drinking—which prompted the usual inquiry: “Abigail, are you a Mormon?”

As I responded in the affirmative, a nearby colleague dropped his drink and exclaimed: “Really?! I would have never guessed.” He continued with dubious amazement, “But you’re not a *fully practicing* Mormon, right?”

At this point I was feeling a little bit humiliated and confused. What about me had screamed “not a member of the Church of Jesus Christ”? I dressed modestly, kept the Word of Wisdom, used clean language, and faithfully attended my worship services. Beyond that, I had been trying to express my discipleship in the way I lived, in the way I loved, and in the way I served. Where had I gone wrong?

Befuddled, I affirmed my devotion to my faith and invited my colleague to ask me any question he liked. I fully anticipated the usual litany of personal questions, but instead my colleague looked at me earnestly and asked, “Do you do genealogy?”

Defeated, I feebly and honestly had to admit, “Well . . . not very much.”

“The *name* the Savior has given to His Church tells us *exactly* who we are and what we believe.”

My colleague then informed me that he had once known a devout member who had explained the importance of genealogy in the context of eternal families and temples. While I attempted to save the moment by sharing my own convictions on these revealed truths, my colleague soon lost interest. My actions—or inactions, in this case—had spoken louder than my words. What this colleague had once supposed about members of the Church of Jesus Christ was weakened rather than strengthened by my example.

Again I would ask, how do we carry His name?

## “A City That Is Set on an Hill Cannot Be Hid”

(MATTHEW 5:14)

In both of these stories, my actions directly influenced what my colleagues came to know about me and what they had inferred by association about members of the Church. In a similar vein, their previous interactions with faithful members—both from our Church and from other religious denominations—had shaped their understanding of what to expect from a believer.

Because I lived outside of Utah for most of my professional career and graduated from a non-BYU school, I have at times been what you might call a “member incognito.” By contrast, as BYU alumni, you are immediately and visibly marked as members of the Church.

In a very literal sense, the Savior is describing each one of you in His instruction that we must be “the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill [which] cannot be hid.”<sup>2</sup>

You have been trusted by God the Eternal Father to take upon yourself the most sacred of all names: that of His Son, Jesus Christ. God has a work for you to do, and He invites you to “*always* remember [Jesus Christ], and *keep* his commandments.”<sup>3</sup>

When you renew those covenants each week, you recommit to conduct yourself—in words, in actions, and even in your most secret thoughts—in ways that will uplift His Church. In a very real way, you must choose whether your name—and, through your actions, the Lord’s name—will be interpreted for good or for evil. What a weighty but exciting responsibility.

How will you carry His name?



## “That They Might Know Thee”

(JOHN 17:3)

What do we want to be known for?

While there are many good things for which we might wish to be known, today I will focus on two messages that I believe are critical for us to convey to the world.

### The Gospel of Jesus Christ Is a Gospel of Love

In response to the pharisaical inquiry “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”<sup>4</sup> the Savior taught:

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*

*This is the first and great commandment.*

*And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*<sup>5</sup>

Although this answer is articulated as two separate commandments, President Thomas S. Monson has taught that the two are intertwined: “We cannot truly love God if we do not love our fellow travelers. . . . Likewise, we cannot fully love our fellowmen if we do not love God, the Father of us all.”<sup>6</sup>

As disciples of Jesus Christ, how must our daily interactions communicate this love for the Lord and for His children? Let me pose some primer questions for your internal reflection:

- Do I watch for individuals who may be struggling and proactively help bear their burdens?
- Am I slow to criticize and quick to forgive?
- Do I avoid contention, striving instead to love and understand those with whom I disagree?
- Do I seek to elevate and celebrate the divine in *all* those around me?

In his talk “Peacemakers Needed,” President Russell M. Nelson acknowledged with sadness the toxic contention, polarization, and evil speaking that have become all too characteristic of our civic dialogue, personal relationships, and online interactions.<sup>7</sup> He was pointed in his affirmation of the Savior’s declaration that “those who have ‘the spirit of contention’ are not of Him.”<sup>8</sup>

And then, with prophetic clarity, President Nelson provided this invitation, which has so deeply penetrated my soul:

*My dear brothers and sisters, how we treat each other really matters! . . . Today, I am asking us to interact with others in a higher, holier way. Please listen carefully. “If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy” that we can say about another person—whether to his face or behind her back—that should be **our** standard of communication.*<sup>9</sup>

Love is not about abstaining from the negative, choosing to hold your tongue, or walking away rather than engaging in conflict. Love is instead, like all of the Savior’s commands, a much higher and much holier law.

We are instructed by the Savior to “love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.”<sup>10</sup>

This difficult command can only be fulfilled as we learn to see one another through His vantage. Only when we *see* one another as He does can we start to *love* one another as He has loved us. To carry His name, we must carry His love.

### The Gospel of Jesus Christ Is a Gospel of Revelation

One of the most exciting and marvelous truths of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ is that God has not ceased to communicate with His children. As He ever did, He ever does, revealing principles of divine instruction essential to our day through His living prophets.





Through revelation we are taught of our unique relationship to the God of all heaven as the literal Father of our spirits.<sup>11</sup> Knowing our divine heritage and perceiving others in this light, we are better equipped to trust in His love, perceive our own potential, and view others as He sees them.

Through revelation we are taught that we are created in His image, that our bodies are like sacred temples, that we are endowed with godlike power to create life, and that we are destined to reunite with our spirit through resurrection. This knowledge provides the foundation for outward manifestations of our reverence for our physical bodies, including living the principles of modesty and chastity, wearing the temple garment, and keeping the Word of Wisdom.

Through revelation we obtain a deeper knowledge of the Savior as the Only Begotten of the Father who suffered not only for our sins but also for all the heartache, illness, and vexation we encounter. We learn that no transgression is beyond the reach of His infinite Atonement and no despair is beyond the healing of his infinite embrace.

Through personal revelation you can come to know the truthfulness of these revealed doctrines and feel the depth of His love for you.

Truly knowing these truths will help us keep the first great commandment and create in us an urgent desire to “love the Lord [our] God with all [our] heart, . . . soul, and . . . mind.” Loving Him must then motivate us to do as He asks: to “feed [His] sheep”<sup>12</sup> and “keep [His] commandments.”<sup>13</sup>

This is a beautiful circle of truth. The great commandment is to love God, and to love God you keep His commandments as they are revealed by the voice of His servants the prophets.<sup>14</sup> As you do, you will come to know Him and love Him more deeply—“one eternal round.”<sup>15</sup> It is a simple but profound framework.

How then does this framework manifest in the daily actions of a disciple of Jesus Christ?

**First**, disciples of Jesus Christ, motivated by their deep and abiding love for Him, seek to keep His commandments with exactness and integrity. I have often heard the phrase “the devil is in the details.” However, I think one might more accurately conclude that “the devotion is in the details” while “the devil is in the deviations.”

God does not give commandments that He does not want us to keep. Every time we choose to deviate from His inspired commands—justifying that we are the exception or that our deviations are somehow inconsequential—we are stepping away from rather than toward the Savior. “No man can serve two masters.”<sup>16</sup> Our actions must bear witness to whose side we are on.

**Second**, disciples of Jesus Christ trust in His timeline. We know that although much has been

revealed, “many great and important things”<sup>17</sup> are yet to be revealed as we are taught “line upon line.”<sup>18</sup>

This principle of revelation is crucial to our time. As students pursuing higher education, you are being trained to ask deep questions and to seek diligently for answers. Make no mistake, developing your intellectual capabilities is a godlike characteristic, and the Lord wants you to think deeply about issues of great importance.

However, as we pursue our questions, God expects us to have humility, to be willing to “be still and know that [He is] God,”<sup>19</sup> and, like Nephi, to rely on the fact that while we may “not know the meaning of all things,” the thing most worth knowing is that God “loveth his children.”<sup>20</sup>

Since coming to BYU, I have had the privilege of sitting in my office with many exemplary disciples of Jesus Christ who have trusted me enough to come with questions, concerns, or even doubts about principles of eternal significance. A frequent occurrence in these visits is for individuals to enter my door with some sort of apology: “I know

I should have more faith, but it is so hard” or “I have tried, but I am still struggling” or “I feel like an imposter.”

Please listen to me closely. Faith is not the absence of doubt; it is not the absence of concerns or questions. Indeed, faith cannot exist without doubt—or else we would have perfect knowledge. Faith is a choice. It is a desire to believe *in spite* of what we do not know or cannot yet understand.

These individuals who come to my office are true examples of the believers. They are choosing to stay at the table and trust that the metaphorical brussels sprouts truly are better than a steady diet of BYU mint brownies.

Don’t walk away. *Don’t* walk away. Choose to hope rather than despair when the answers or the solutions that you are earnestly seeking aren’t forthcoming. You are seen.

Faith is the manifestation of your deep and abiding love for God paired with a humility sufficient to believe that *His* knowledge of and love for us surpasses “*all* understanding”<sup>21</sup>—even that of brilliant BYU students and professors. Trust in the power of revelation to right all wrongs and make all things clear in His time.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must convey the conviction of a gospel centered in revelation and love not by shying away from the hard questions but by approaching those questions with a lens of faith.

How can our actions reflect this conviction to the world around us? Again, let me offer a few questions for personal reflection:

- Do I actively advocate for, support, and live with exactness the counsel of prophets, bearing witness through my words and actions?
- Do I exercise humility and patience in seeking to understand doctrine, policy, or historical accounts that do not presently resonate with my worldview, politics, or understanding?
- Do I seek diligently for personal revelation in my daily life and interactions?

“One of the most  
exciting and marvelous  
*truths* of the restored  
gospel of Jesus Christ is  
that God has not ceased  
to *communicate*  
with His children.”

- Do I call upon the Savior as part of my daily repentance?

To carry His name, we must trust and act upon His revealed commandments, exercising humility and patience in Him and His timeline.

Disciples of Jesus Christ are not perfect, nor do they expect others to be perfect; rather, they trust that only by and through Him is perfection possible.

## “The Way, the Truth, and the Life”

(JOHN 14:6)

Your choice to come to BYU proclaims to the world your personal commitment to continue to learn of, serve, and know your Savior. That choice will make you distinctive among your peers and provide opportunities for you to influence what people around you know of His gospel and His love. You are His ambassadors, and His light must be reflected through your actions.

How will you carry His name?

I testify, from a lifetime of learning, that being “an example of the believers” does not happen by accident. It requires deep and sometimes painful introspection to determine how to emulate the Savior and more boldly defend His work.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we must take upon us not only His name but also His revealed perspective and His love.

He is truly “the way, the truth, and the life,”<sup>22</sup> and this is His restored gospel. Of this I testify in the sacred name of Jesus Christ, amen. **M**

*Adapted from a BYU devotional Abigail M. Allen, associate professor of accounting, delivered on October 3, 2023.*

### Notes

1. M. Russell Ballard, “The Importance of a Name,” *Ensign*, November 2011.
2. Matthew 5:14.
3. Moroni 4:3; emphasis added. See also Doctrine and Covenants 20:77.
4. Matthew 22:36.
5. Matthew 22:37–39.
6. Thomas S. Monson, “Love—the Essence of the Gospel,” *Ensign*, May 2014.
7. See Russell M. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed,” *Liahona*, May 2023.
8. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed”; quoting 3 Nephi 11:29.
9. Nelson, “Peacemakers Needed”; emphasis in original; quoting Articles of Faith 1:13.
10. Matthew 5:44.
11. See Acts 17:27–29; see also Hebrews 12:9.
12. John 21:17.
13. John 14:15.
14. See Doctrine and Covenants 1:38; see also Amos 3:7.
15. Doctrine and Covenants 3:2.
16. Matthew 6:24.
17. Articles of Faith 1:9.
18. 2 Nephi 28:30; Isaiah 28:10, 13; Doctrine and Covenants 98:12, 128:21.
19. Doctrine and Covenants 101:16; see also Psalm 46:10.
20. 1 Nephi 11:17.
21. Doctrine and Covenants 76:114; emphasis added.
22. John 14:6.



# A Tanner Tribute

What was once the site of a baseball diamond now sits another gem: the N. Eldon Tanner Building. Now in its 40th year, the edifice is as busy and vibrant as ever, serving as home base to six graduate and nine undergraduate programs. Over the years, this campus icon has weathered storms and welcomed a steady stream of students, employees, and visitors—all while maintaining its classy, corporate vibe. Middle age never looked so good.



73

**THE PERCENTAGE OF ALL BUSINESS ALUMNI WHO HAVE TAKEN CLASSES IN THE TANNER BUILDING.**

For BYU Marriott students, the Tanner Building is like a second home. Before it was constructed, however, business classes were offered in a variety of locations on campus, including the Maeser Building, repurposed military barracks that were called the North Building, and the Jesse Knight Building.

Source: [marriott.byu.edu/magazine/lucky-number-seven](http://marriott.byu.edu/magazine/lucky-number-seven)

11,453

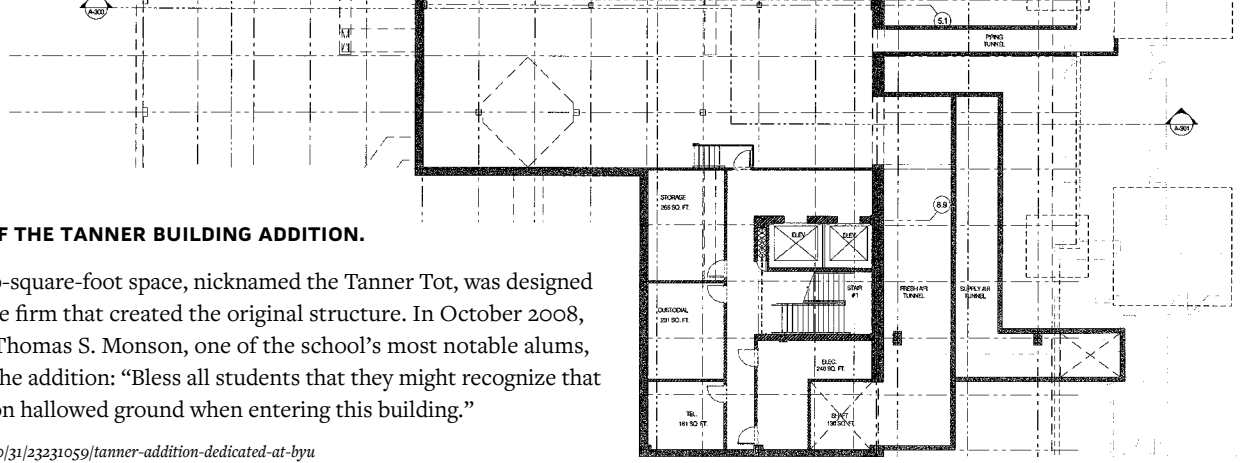
**THE NUMBER OF SANDWICHES SOLD AT THE BLUE LINE DELI DURING FALL SEMESTER 2023.**

While it might not have the same traffic as the Big Apple's blue line subway route, the

Blue Line Deli serves a lot of hungry students and staff each day. Pre-addition, the Tanner Building's main fare could be found at the Marketplace Café, which opened on the third-floor atrium in 1998 and served a small assortment of paninis, salads, and quesadillas. The Blue Line's menu is more expansive, offering soup, hot dogs, breakfast fare, and a variety of Mexican dishes in addition to sandwiches. You can snag an official BYU mint-brownie chocolate milk there too.



Source: [magazine.byu.edu/article/6-bites-of-byu](http://magazine.byu.edu/article/6-bites-of-byu)



15

## THE AGE OF THE TANNER BUILDING ADDITION.

The 76,000-square-foot space, nicknamed the Tanner Tot, was designed by the same firm that created the original structure. In October 2008, President Thomas S. Monson, one of the school's most notable alums, dedicated the addition: "Bless all students that they might recognize that they walk on hallowed ground when entering this building."

Source: [thechurchnews.com/2008/10/31/23231059/tanner-addition-dedicated-at-byu](http://thechurchnews.com/2008/10/31/23231059/tanner-addition-dedicated-at-byu)

14,200

## THE NUMBER OF SQUARE FEET OF DEDICATED STUDENT STUDY SPACE IN THE TANNER BUILDING.

Having nooks where students can study in small groups or on their own is a must for this bustling building. Through an easy online reservation system, students can snap up study space whenever the need for some synergy—or quiet time—arises.



1,311

## THE NUMBER OF EXTERIOR WINDOWS IN THE BUILDING.



This number was carefully calculated by two interns, so don't hate us if they counted differently than you would have. The point is that the Tanner Building has stunning mountain and valley views from hundreds of windows that also bathe the structure in natural light, and we don't take them for granite. (Pun very much intended.)

\$98,516,000

## THE COST OF THE TANNER BUILDING, ITS ADDITION, AND AN ASSOCIATED MAINTENANCE ENDOWMENT IN TODAY'S DOLLARS.

The Tanner Building wouldn't be what it is today without donations from thousands of generous alumni and friends, notably the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott family. It takes a pretty penny to build and care for an edifice such as this, and we're grateful for every cent.

Sources: [thechurchnews.com/2008/10/31/23231059/tanner-addition-dedicated-at-byu](http://thechurchnews.com/2008/10/31/23231059/tanner-addition-dedicated-at-byu) and [marriott.byu.edu/magazine/feature/n-eldon-tanner-building-addition](http://marriott.byu.edu/magazine/feature/n-eldon-tanner-building-addition)





# MINDSET

*In the quest to alleviate poverty,  
BYU researchers are discovering how a growth  
mindset matters as much as a skill set.*

By LISA ANN THOMSON

Photos courtesy of SHAD MORRIS and CHAD CARLOS

Tanzania's rural northern coastline is canopied with banana trees and coconut palms, and the coastal waters of the Indian Ocean are rich with fish and seaweed. Sandy tidal flats stretch between the sea and the mangroves, providing a resting place for wooden fishing boats until the next high tide. Coral reefs and seagrass beds fill the waters and complete an ecosystem vital to life on Africa's east coast.<sup>1</sup>





# MATTERS

Despite the tropical abundance, villagers struggle to stave off poverty. As in much of Africa, subsisting is a daily and often arduous task. The causes of and contributors to poverty are many, including lack of education, lack of economic and employment opportunities, and, as BYU Marriott researchers have recently learned, lack of confidence and hope.

International and local organizations have made significant efforts to address the

challenges of poverty. In particular, “the Tanzanian government has taken various initiatives to promote entrepreneurship,” says Elly Tumsifu, a senior lecturer in business administration at the University of Dar es Salaam, the country’s oldest and largest public university.

“Training programs are designed to provide aspiring entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge needed to successfully run

a business,” explains Tumsifu, who is also coordinator of the African Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Operations in Resource Management and Food Supply. The investment in these programs is robust and the goals are specific and lofty. The hope is to create employment opportunities, improve economic prosperity for both individuals and communities, and ultimately lift people out of poverty, Tumsifu says.



One Tanzanian government organization sought help from researchers—including two from BYU Marriott—to examine its programs and identify stumbling blocks as well as solutions. Shad Morris, the William F. Edwards Distinguished Fellow and professor of organizational behavior and human resources, and Chad Carlos, associate professor of entrepreneurship, led a research team that included Tumsifu as well as researchers from The Ohio State University and York University in Toronto, Canada. Their findings, recently published in the *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, contribute to a growing body of evidence that suggests the right mindset may have as much impact on success as the right resources.

## NECESSITY ENTREPRENEURS

In the developing world, entrepreneurship is less about unique opportunities and more about simple necessity. In Tanzania, “the industrial sector is still growing, leaving the majority of the population—especially youth—unemployed,” Tumsifu says.

Therefore, entrepreneurship is often the only way to earn an income in underdeveloped areas. “People have to find their own work and eke out an existence whatever way they can,” Morris says.

The Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF) aims to alleviate poverty specifically by helping young necessity entrepreneurs ages 18 to 35. Its programs provide free financial support and technical skills training in areas such as business planning, financial management, and marketing. But despite rigorous interventions, few participants in the program have been implementing the skills they learn—and TASAF wanted to figure out why.

“[TASAF] said, ‘We are spending millions of dollars on these programs, but we are not seeing the impact we are hoping for,’” Carlos relays. “People come, they develop new skills and abilities, but they don’t put them into practice.”

## INTERNAL MOTIVATION

For Morris, who has had a long-standing interest in poverty alleviation in emerging markets, the opportunity was a natural fit. He was first exposed to profound poverty on his mission in Bulgaria, where he served shortly after the fall of communism and “saw the fallout of a

collapsed economic system.” Morris recalls a moment in which he saw a couple walking down a street, the man dressed in a suit and the woman in a dress. He remembers thinking, “What a cute little couple.” Then he saw them stop and rummage through a garbage can.

That moment stayed with him, and when Morris returned home, he felt compelled to do something. He worked for Grameen Foundation USA, which seeks to alleviate poverty through microfinance, and also with USAID as a Fulbright Scholar. As a consultant for the World Bank, Morris analyzed the efficacy of poverty alleviation programs, and as a Cambridge Fellow, he focused on improving organizational performance. Now, as a professor of organizational behavior, he focuses on human capital and international business.

Morris joined the project after an invitation from a former colleague, and he invited Carlos to add his expertise in entrepreneurship. When Carlos was a child, his family traveled to the Philippines to visit his father’s homeland, where Carlos witnessed widespread poverty for the first time. “As a kid growing up in middle-class America, this was completely eye opening,” he says. “It really changed my view of the world.”

Carlos developed an internal motivation to address the enormous challenge of poverty. His career, however, took him in the opposite direction—to Silicon Valley, where he worked for KPMG with Google as his main client. While there he saw “how innovation and entrepreneurship can have massive impacts.” When he left Silicon Valley to pursue a PhD, Carlos welcomed the opportunity to put innovation and entrepreneurship to the test.

Morris and Carlos’s research was supported in part by BYU Marriott’s Melvin J. Ballard Center for Social Impact, which evaluates programs and interventions based

on their demonstrated ability to improve lives. “This means focusing not only on solving issues but also on demonstrating that the solutions we employ actually make people healthier, happier, safer, and more able to achieve their highest potential,” says Eva Witesman, director of the Ballard Center and professor of public management.

## THE AHA MOMENT

As they began the project, Morris and Carlos were fairly sure what problems they would find. The training TASAF provides is a well-established program called Start and Improve Your Business, which was developed by the International Labour Organization. It has been implemented globally in more than 100 countries.<sup>2</sup> But the researchers wrongly assumed either the training materials fell short in this setting or the entrepreneurs were not retaining what they had learned.

“Our initial hunch was it was just too complex or not appropriate for the circumstances,” Carlos says.

To explore their theory, the research team conducted extensive interviews with more than 100 participants to understand what was taught, what they had learned, and what they were implementing. To the surprise of the team, the materials were thorough, and the participants learned quite a lot. They could recite information from the training, including technical accounting and marketing concepts. They even acknowledged that the training was relevant to them and their businesses.

So what was the hang-up? The participants did not view implementation as possible in their circumstances.

Researchers repeatedly heard comments such as “This could help my business, but I am not as smart as my neighbor” or “This

*“We are spending millions of dollars on these programs, but we are not seeing the impact we are hoping for. People come, they develop new skills and abilities, but they don’t put them into practice.”*





▲ Top: An initial meeting with entrepreneurs helped Carlos and Morris understand the Tanzanians' experiences. Middle left: Morris with a local business owner (middle) and one of the growth-mindset trainers (right). Middle right: A market owner in her shop. Bottom: Morris, Carlos, and Elly Tumsifu (center, black-and-white shirt) with the growth-mindset trainers. Also pictured is Tumpe Lukango, far left, research director for TASAF.

could help my business, but I was born into a family who raises goats, and this is how we do it.”

At the same time, they found notable exceptions of entrepreneurs who had implemented the training. For instance, off the shores of the town of Mlingotini, there is an abundance of fish, but transporting the fish without spoilage has been an ongoing problem. There are not enough buyers locally, and

the fishing industry lacks the infrastructure to get the catch from the water to larger markets farther away.<sup>3</sup>

However, several entrepreneurs in the town had banded together and invested in a solar-powered freezer. With the freezer they created ice—out of whatever buckets and bottles they could scavenge. They then used the ice to transport fish, and with their increased revenue, they purchased additional

freezers. They later expanded their business to also sell ice, which positively impacted the fishing trade of their community.

As the team grappled to understand the difference between the few successful students of TASAF's programs and the majority who hesitated to implement their training, it struck them that the contrast was mindset more than skill set.

“The barrier was largely a lack of confidence—a belief system that they were born into a certain situation that could not be changed,” Carlos says.

## THE GROWTH MINDSET

“At this point we started turning to research on the psychology of poverty and how it affects people's ability to think long-term and believe in themselves,” Morris says. Most entrepreneurs they interviewed seemed fixed in their belief that they could not improve their businesses, but a few standout examples, like those in the fisheries, suggested some were able to shake those beliefs.

To better understand why that was, the team tapped into the work of Stanford psychologist Carol S. Dweck, who coined the terms “fixed mindset” and “growth mindset.” In her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, Dweck explains that beliefs about ourselves become our mindset and that “much of what may be preventing [us] from fulfilling [our] potential grows out of it.”<sup>4</sup>

But she also explains that mindsets can be changed. “You have a choice,” she writes. “Mindsets are just beliefs. They're powerful beliefs, but they're just something in your mind, and you can change your mind.”<sup>5</sup>

The function of a growth mindset directly counters the scarcity mindset that often plagues necessity entrepreneurs. People exposed to long-term and even short-term poverty develop a scarcity mindset because their cognitive bandwidth is overloaded with immediate concerns, leaving little mental space to explore or evaluate a broader set of alternative actions.

“The scarcity mindset dwindles our ability to plan long-term because we are just in survival mode,” Morris says.

Dweck's work has largely focused on education, although her concepts are now widely discussed in parenting, sports, and business. Studies have shown that even small



► From left: Entrepreneurs who received the growth-mindset training in their workspaces. Ice cubes and packaged soaps made by entrepreneurs. Morris visits a cinema owner who implemented the training by using increased signage to market the films being screened.

interventions can help people move from a fixed mindset of “I can’t do this” or “I am not smart enough” to a growth mindset that enables them to attempt to accomplish tasks and learn from the trial-and-error process.<sup>6</sup>

It became clear to Morris and Carlos that what these Tanzanian entrepreneurs faced was not a lack of knowledge or training or even financial resources—all of which were provided through TASAF. Rather it was a lack of confidence that their efforts would be successful.

## VALUE PROPOSITION

The team set out to see if their new assumptions were accurate.

Nothing about the standard weeklong training was changed, but the team devised a randomized control trial that included growth-mindset training to see if it would move the needle for implementation of the standard training.

According to their published findings, the hypothesis was that “entrepreneurs who receive growth-mindset training, coupled with technical training, will be more likely to experiment with new business activities than those who receive only regular technical training.”<sup>7</sup>

To test this, they divided entrepreneurs into two groups of about 100 participants each. After the standard weeklong training, the control group received a half day of review and the study group received a half day of growth-mindset training, which customized interventions similar to those done by Dweck in formal educational settings. The idea was to help the TASAF students develop a belief that through experimentation and even failure they could develop skills to be successful. The training explained what a growth mindset is and provided examples of entrepreneurs who exhibit it. Researchers then reinforced these concepts through games and activities.

Morris is not embarrassed to admit they were surprised by the results. “When we were overseeing the delivery, I was like, ‘I don’t know how this is going to work.’ It

feels a little like positive affirmations,” he says. “But then we started seeing the results.”

They first observed success within the training itself—participants were more willing to take risks and practice trial-and-error during the games. “This is when we knew we were on to something,” Morris says.

Researchers repeated this process three separate times, involving approximately 600 entrepreneurs altogether. Their published paper focuses on the third experiment group and includes a monthlong follow-up with study participants to document if they changed their entrepreneurial actions after receiving the growth-mindset training.

In that follow-up, researchers quantified that those who had received the growth-mindset training did indeed demonstrate one-third more “entrepreneurial actions” going forward than those who had received the standard training.<sup>8</sup> Such actions included one entrepreneur who tried selling two types of flashlights—solar powered and battery powered—to see which would sell better. Another expanded her chicken business from just raising and selling chickens to keeping some chickens as laying hens so she could also sell eggs. Other entrepreneurs expanded their marketing practices by increasing signage or offering referral bonuses.

“While the changes tended to be small, they were consistent with the types of business experimentations they learned about in the technical side of their traditional business training,” the researchers reported.<sup>9</sup>

Tumsifu points out, “Experimenting in small ways progressively encourages entrepreneurs to eventually try and engage in big things.”

Often people think about trying to solve problems with more money, more resources, more training, and more mentoring, Carlos says. “And we’re not saying that more money and resources and training is not important. But the implications of the study indicate that to fully achieve the potential of those resources, there’s an additional component that needs to consider psychological and social dimensions. It’s a simple, low-cost way to begin to attack the problem of poverty.”

## SMALL AND SIMPLE THINGS

These results directly echo results Dweck and fellow researchers have seen in other settings—that teaching the principles of a growth mindset, even in small increments, has a significant impact.

For example, in a study published in *Nature*, researchers examined growth-mindset interventions for lower-achieving secondary education students in the United States. They discovered that even a one-hour online growth-mindset intervention improved grades and increased enrollment in advanced courses and showed results similar to “rigorously evaluated adolescent interventions of any cost or duration.”<sup>10</sup>

Olga Stoddard, a BYU assistant professor of economics, was involved in a separate study that looked at implementing growth-mindset





*“That commitment to using our skills and tools for the benefit of the world, specifically in alleviating poverty, is at the heart of who we are as a business school and as a university.”*

principles to attract more diverse job applicants. In her research, she found that simply adding a note to a job advertisement explaining “that many of the critical skills for the position may be strengthened through experience at the company” has a significant impact on application probabilities among minorities and minority women in particular.<sup>11</sup>

“It’s important to note that our study does not discount the importance of more complex solutions,” Carlos says. “But one of the most important implications is that even the best training or resources in the world may not make a difference if the individual receiving them lacks the confidence to take action.”

He adds, “From a return-on-investment perspective, it is really inspiring to see how a simple intervention like this can act as a powerful catalyst in enabling individuals to unlock the power of the education and resources they receive.”

## GOSPEL IN ACTION

“One thing I love about this research is that it works toward a higher aim,” Witesman says. “Their work demonstrates how some

empowering principles can lift people who might otherwise struggle. That commitment to using our skills and tools for the benefit of the world, specifically in alleviating poverty, is at the heart of who we are as a business school and as a university.”

Witesman believes a growth mindset acknowledges that children of God are meant to learn, grow, and progress. “It’s fascinating that this research showed that business tools alone have less impact, but when paired with a core principle of the gospel, these tools take on new meaning and effectiveness,” she says.

The plan of salvation can be boiled down to growth, Carlos adds. “We are here to learn and grow. God knows we are going to fail, so He provides a way for us to overcome those failures and to learn and to get better to become the people He knows we can become.”

Morris says when you look at the growth mindset that way, it’s really not that innovative. “We have been teaching that in the gospel all along,” he notes. “But it’s nice when science comes along and backs you up.” **M**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lisa Ann Thomson has written for a variety of regional and national publications, including several BYU alumni publications. She lives in Salt Lake City with her husband and children, where she is conducting her own natural experiment of growth mindset with her three teenagers.

## NOTES

1. See Rosemary Peter Mramba and Kelvin Emmanuel Mkude, “Determinants of Fish Catch and Post-Harvest Fish Spoilage in Small-Scale Marine Fisheries in the Bagamoyo District, Tanzania,” *Heliyon* 8, no. 6 (June 2022): article e09574.
2. See Susanne van Lieshout and Pranati Mehtha, *Start and Improve Your Business Global Tracer Study, 2011–15: The Next 15 Million* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Labour Organization, 2017), 9.
3. See Mramba and Mkude.
4. Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2008), ix.
5. Dweck, 16.
6. See “Teacher Practices: How Praise and Feedback Impact Student Outcomes,” Mindset Works, [mindsetworks.com/Science/Teacher-Practices](http://mindsetworks.com/Science/Teacher-Practices).
7. Shad Morris, et al., “The Impact of Growth Mindset Training on Entrepreneurial Action Among Necessity Entrepreneurs: Evidence from a Randomized Control Trial,” *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal* 17, no. 3 (September 2023): 675.
8. See Morris, et al., 682.
9. Morris, et al., 680.
10. David S. Yeager, et al., “A National Experiment Reveals Where a Growth Mindset Improves Achievement,” *Nature* 573 (19 September 2019): 368; see also pages 364–69.
11. Jeffrey A. Flory, et al., “Leader Signals and ‘Growth Mindset’: A Natural Field Experiment in Attracting Minorities to High-Profile Positions,” *Management Science, Articles in Advance* (3 October 2023): 2.

Scan to view a short video on this research. ▶





# School News

## SOA Grads Earn CPA Exam's Highest Honor



The certified public accountant (CPA) exam is split into four sections, each of which takes four hours to complete. After hundreds of hours of studying, hopeful accounting graduates spend those 16 hours answering and rechecking questions. Only about half of the people who take the exam pass on their first try. Less than 1 percent of examinees earn a 95.5 percent in each section on their first try; if they do so, they qualify for the Elijah Watt Sells Award.

For the last 15 years, at least one student from the School of Accountancy (SOA) has earned this prestigious award, and BYU is the only university with such a consistent record of successful examinees. In the most recent exam cycle, two recent graduates, **Mitchell Behling** and **Ryan Quade**, received the Elijah Watt Sells Award.

Since each of the CPA exam's four sections covers a different aspect of accounting, students need a thorough understanding of each topic. "You have to know something about everything," says Quade, a MAcc/JD student from Riggs, Missouri. "There are always people who are good at tax or who are good at audit, but one of the great things about BYU Marriott's accounting education is that it helps you become well versed in everything."

Having graduated with his bachelor's degree and master's degree in accounting

in spring 2022, Behling also felt that BYU Marriott prepared him well for the exam. "The challenging part of the CPA exam is just summarizing it all at once. Pretty much every single concept that was on the test I'd gone through in a class in more detail than was on the exam," says Behling, a Gilbert, Arizona, native.

This comprehensive exploration of topics is by design, explains **Doug Prawitt**, SOA director and the LeRay McAllister/Deloitte Foundation Distinguished Professor. "We focus on helping our students gain deep conceptual understanding."

The SOA's accounting program is so effective that students don't need a CPA exam prep class to excel. "I definitely came in to the CPA exam very well prepared from BYU Marriott," Behling says.

Since 2008, 31 SOA graduates have won Elijah Watt Sells Awards. The student-centered approach of the program continues to benefit students in a variety of ways. "They believe in us; they believe in me," Quade says. "I look forward to paying that forward in the future."

## 2023 International Executive of the Year Award



BYU Marriott honored John E. Waldron with the 2023 International Executive of the Year Award. Waldron is

president and chief operating officer of Goldman Sachs, a member of the Goldman Sachs Management Committee, cochair of its Firmwide Enterprise Risk Committee, and chair of its Firmwide Reputational Risk Committee.

In addition to his roles at Goldman Sachs, Waldron sits on the executive committee of the Institute of International Finance (IFF) and on the international advisory council of the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC). He is also a member of the US-China Business Council, the international advisory panel

of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Waldron received the award during BYU Marriott's annual National Advisory Council conference held in October. BYU president C. Shane Reese and BYU Marriott dean **Brigitte Madrian** presented the award, and first counselor in the Church's presiding bishopric, Bishop W. Christopher Waddell, introduced Waldron as the keynote speaker.

Established 40 years ago, the International Executive of the Year Award is the most prestigious award given by BYU Marriott. It is designed to honor outstanding executives who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and high moral and ethical standards.

During his acceptance remarks, Waldron said that "BYU's positivity represents the very best of our next generation in America and in the world."

Current events can make it easy to become pessimistic, Waldron explained. But he shared reasons to be optimistic about the future, such as decreased extreme poverty rates, increased life expectancy and literacy rates, and consequential achievements in healthcare and technology.

"Leaders overcome negativity and divisions by responding and reacting to the world around us with equanimity and balance," he said.

Waldron saw examples of positive leadership in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. "I felt fear and uncertainty permeating our people as we sent everyone home," he recalled. "The people who inspired me most were my colleagues who led by example, transitioning to a sudden work-from-home situation without complaints and proceeding to juggle their work and family responsibilities."

To illustrate the importance of equanimity from leaders, Waldron shared his experience on September 11, 2001. "I remember the fear in the eyes of our people at Goldman Sachs as the World Trade Center buildings came down and



# Healthcare Leadership Collaborative Organizes Wasatch Cup Competition

Because healthcare organizations include employees ranging from nurses to administrators, everyone must work as a team to solve institutional issues, says **Britt Berrett**, teaching professor of management and managing director of the BYU Marriott Healthcare Leadership Collaborative. To help prepare students for such collaboration, BYU Marriott's Healthcare Leadership Collaborative organized the Wasatch Cup and invited students to pitch ideas to Salt Lake City's St. Mark's Hospital on ways to enhance its vision, mission, and values. Twelve

teams from across Utah and Idaho participated, with the majority of teams coming from BYU.

"With case studies, you can interact, compete, and learn from other schools," Berrett says. "Students can elevate their understanding and awareness of all the complexities of healthcare."

Teams of students prepared for two weeks before the competition. The students used their knowledge and experience to suggest actions that St. Mark's could take to enhance the hospital. The top three teams moved on to a final round in which the hospital's executive team, including the CEO, listened to the presentations. The teams that made the cut were the Improvement Partners from the University of Utah, DCPI from BYU, and the Nightingales from BYU.

The Nightingales, a team of three nursing students and one premed student, won first place. "It was encouraging to see so many healthcare leaders enthused by our patient-focused ideas to improve psychiatric care," says Alisa Morrell, a senior majoring in neuroscience from Kaysville, Utah, and a member of the Nightingales. "There are good people in healthcare who are committed to patients."

Although there are many challenges in the healthcare industry, Berrett believes aspiring professionals can be successful if they emulate Christ.

"Christ was loving, patient, and kind. He also took the least likely of candidates to serve with Him," he says. "We look at healthcare and see how complicated it is and think, 'We can't do this.' But the answer is 'Yes, you definitely can.'"



the plumes of smoke billowed through the downtown streets," he said. "I spent that day submerging my fears by trying to calm the people around me, walking around the building to offer a calming human connection to my colleagues amidst a chaotic and dehumanized day."

As he closed his remarks, Waldron noted that the world needs to strive for empathy, humility, and integrity. "We need to be more focused on human connection and acts of kindness," he said. "To get to that world, we need to engage with one another consistently, even when we disagree."

## FACULTY NEWS

### Faculty Recognized at 2023 University Conference

At the 2023 University Conference, BYU recognized a select group of faculty and staff for their efforts to advance research

and experiential learning as well as their exemplary contributions to the university. Among those honored were three BYU Marriott faculty members:

**Jeff Dyer, Eric Blum, and Isaac Smith.**

"We have many laudable faculty who have accomplished some wonderful things during the past year," says **Brigitte Madrian**, BYU Marriott dean.

Dyer, the Horace Beesley Professor of Strategy, was honored with a Karl G. Maeser Research and Creative Arts Award. This award celebrates faculty members who demonstrate exceptional distinction in research, creative arts, or performances.

Dyer's research has been published in the *Strategic Management Journal*, *Harvard*



Jeff Dyer



Eric Blum



Isaac Smith

*Business Review*, *Businessweek*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. He has written nine books, which collectively have more than 50,000 Google Scholar citations.

Blum, who teaches in the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics, received an Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award. This award highlights the contributions of adjunct faculty who have demonstrated outstanding teaching for at least a five-year period.

Blum has taught courses on management ethics and law philosophy at BYU Marriott for the past seven years. Aside

from teaching, Blum is chief legal officer of Roots Management Group. Starting as a corporate attorney and rising to several different senior executive roles, Blum has enjoyed a successful career in business for nearly two decades.

Smith, an associate professor of organizational behavior and human resources, was the recipient of an Early Career Scholarship Award. As the name suggests, this award is meant to encourage junior faculty in their promising careers.

While teaching at Cornell, Smith was recognized as one of 2016's Most Outstanding 40-Under-40 B-School Profs by *Poets&Quants*. His work has been published in academic and practitioner journals including *Psychological Science*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *MIT Sloan Management Review*.

### Banks Offer Black Entrepreneurs Inferior Loans

Nearly a decade ago, researchers from BYU, Utah State University (USU), and Rutgers published a disheartening study revealing how discrimination in bank loan services was tainting the American dream for minority entrepreneurs.

Unfortunately, not much has changed. A recently published paper from this core group of researchers finds that banks still offer Black customers inferior loan products and service, even when those customers have objectively stronger financial profiles and FICO scores than White customers.

"Even though a lot of time has passed and a lot of reckoning has taken place in society, we are still seeing the same discrimination patterns we've seen in the



past," says study coauthor **Glenn Christensen**, a BYU Marriott associate professor of marketing. "It hasn't changed, it hasn't ameliorated, and it's still a problem."

But there is a silver lining to the new *Journal of Marketing Research* paper: While the onus is unequivocally on the financial institutions to eliminate discrimination, the study identifies specific empowering approaches minority small-business owners can use to signal a level of sophistication that will help them secure business loans more regularly.

"Individuals may be totally oblivious that they are being treated differently,"

## Eight New BYU Marriott Faculty



Ben Beck



Laura Cutler



Henry J. Eyring



Richard Gardner



Hannah Judd

Eight professors joined BYU Marriott's faculty in 2023.

**Ben Beck** is a new assistant professor of marketing. He earned a BS in business administration from the University of Utah and went on to work for several Utah tech companies as a marketing manager and director. In 2017 he earned his MBA from BYU Marriott. He then attended Pennsylvania State University, completing a PhD in marketing in 2023. Beck studies how marketing tactics impact sales, how computers understand human language, and how firms can increase trust with consumers. His research also explores business as a force for good.

**Laura Cutler** joins the faculty as an assistant teaching professor of information systems. After graduating from BYU with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in information systems management, Cutler gained work experience with Sandia National Laboratories, EY, and Vertex42. Then she spent six years as a software engineer with Capital One in Dallas before moving to Seattle to work as a product manager with Redfin, where she oversaw the scheduling system for house tours that is used by real estate agents across the country.

After spending the past six years as president of BYU–Idaho, **Henry J. Eyring** joins the business school as a professor of management. Eyring's education began at BYU, where he earned a BS in geology in 1985 as well as an MBA/JD in 1989. He then spent ten years in management consulting at Monitor Group in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He also served as a board member of SkyWest Airlines. Eyring returned to Provo as director of BYU Marriott's MBA program from 1998 to 2002, leaving that position to preside over the Japan Tokyo North Mission. When his missionary service ended in 2006, he began a 17-year career at BYU–Idaho, serving as academic vice president, associate academic vice president for online learning and instructional technology, advancement vice president, and, ultimately, university president.

An associate professor of management, **Richard Gardner** earned a BS in management and an MPA from BYU Marriott and then earned a PhD in management from Texas A&M University. He spent eight years as an assistant professor and then an associate professor of management at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Gardner's research specialties include

says study coauthor Sterling Bone, a professor of marketing at USU's Huntsman School of Business. "We don't want to pass the burden to the consumer, but we find there are ways to turn off the bias."

One specific step small-business owners can take is to spend \$45 to register their company as an LLC, which potential lenders see as an outside indicator of sophistication. Bone adds that the study findings suggest minority business owners with high FICO scores should be sure to do that up front when seeking a loan.

"Everyone should tell their very best story," Christensen says. "The data backs that up: if minority loan seekers can manage the moment, the outcome will be more favorable."

The researchers, who analyzed three field studies for the article, call on

financial services executives to acknowledge they have work to do and to take action to preempt employee biases. The study's authors suggest firms develop policies to ensure loan product options are uniformly offered to all customers and require at least two employees to independently evaluate each loan application. Furthermore, firms can increase internal compliance with legal frameworks, deliberately design more inclusive products, and use self-service technology to reduce bias.

Finally, the study suggests policymakers step up in specific ways as well by creating standardized small-business lending forms, funding programs that provide technical assistance and education for minority-owned businesses, and increasing oversight and enforcement.

## STUDENT NEWS

### Guided Abroad

After returning home from a mission in Mongolia, **Mason Perry** cycled through several different majors before deciding to study information systems—even though he had never pictured himself pursuing a tech career. "I told myself since ninth grade when I took an intro to programming class that I would never do programming for my career," Perry says. "But then I took IS 201 and loved it."

Perry also decided to earn a minor in Arabic studies. After taking all the introductory courses and prerequisites, he felt that he needed to go on a study abroad to Jordan—a decision that helped him discover his career path. Because his father was a member of the US Foreign Service,



Lena Lizunova



Tanner Skousen



Trent Williams

business ethics, dysfunctional behaviors, and the imposter phenomenon in the workplace. His work has been published in top academic journals, including *Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *Harvard Business Review*.

**Hannah Judd** joins the School of Accountancy faculty as an assistant professor. Judd began her education at BYU Marriott, earning a BS in accounting and a MAcc, with minors in economics and music. Her early career took her to London to work for Deloitte UK as a tax intern and then back to Utah to work at Grant Thornton as a tax associate. Judd went on to earn her PhD from Texas A&M University, where she also taught introductory accounting. She received a Deloitte Doctoral Fellowship and continues to hold an active CPA license. Judd's research interests primarily focus on how taxes and business strategies intersect with financial reporting and capital markets.

After two years as a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Management, **Lena Lizunova** is now an assistant professor of strategy. Lizunova studied international relations and business at BYU, earning

her bachelor's degree in 2008. After completing a master of public policy degree at BYU, she worked with Project-Level Aid Database at BYU (now called AidData) and at an education technology startup in Shanghai. Lizunova pursued graduate work at HEC Paris, Tsinghua University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After earning an MBA, she earned a PhD in management from HEC Paris, where she also taught strategic management courses. Her research interests include human capital.

**Tanner Skousen** is a new assistant professor in the Department of Information Systems. Skousen holds a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in information systems management from BYU Marriott. During his schooling, he

worked as an account manager for Brevium, a healthcare technology company. He went on to the University of Georgia, earning his PhD in business administration with an emphasis in management information systems in 2023. Skousen's research interests include behavioral information systems, resilience, and online communities in the workplace and in healthcare.

**Trent Williams** is an associate professor for the entrepreneurship program. He earned a BA in English with a minor in philosophy from BYU and an MS in organizational behavior and strategy from Purdue University. He then spent time working in the industry as a senior consultant for Deloitte and then as a senior associate for PwC. Williams returned to school to complete a PhD in entrepreneurship and strategy from the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University. He went on to teach at Syracuse University's Whitman School of Management and then in Indiana University's MBA program. His research centers on value creation through organizational emergence, and he has published widely on resourcefulness, resilience, and decision-making.



# BYU Marriott Students Receive Paul Morris Marriott Scholarship



From left: Cameron Walker, Alayna Olson, and Edward Powley

Three BYU Marriott students received the Paul Morris Marriott Business Management Scholarship, given to those who demonstrate a strong work ethic and a dedication to service.

The scholarship was founded by Rebecca Marriott Champion in 2010 to honor her father, Paul Morris Marriott, who was a vice president at Hot Shoppes Inc. (which later became Marriott International) and who helped grow the In-Flite catering division of the company.

This year's recipients are **Alayna Olson**, from Oakley, Utah, who is earning a MAcc; **Edward Powley**, from Pacific Grove, California, who is earning a BS in marketing; and **Cameron Walker**, from Soda Springs, Idaho, who is earning a BS in strategic management.



Perry had grown up living in places such as Egypt, Peru, and Mexico. His experience in Jordan helped him realize that he liked the idea of living abroad again.

As Perry started his search for international opportunities that would allow him to use his skills in information systems and his fluency in four languages, he came across the Foreign Affairs Information Technology (FAIT) Fellowship. "I applied, knowing there were probably hundreds or thousands of applicants and that only 15 got accepted," Perry says. "I didn't expect anything, but when I was accepted, I felt a huge wave of relief because this is exactly what I want to do."

As a FAIT Fellow, Perry will be part of a two-year program funded by the US Department of State. He will receive academic funding as well as training for a career in the Foreign Service as an information technology specialist.

As part of the program, Perry will participate in two summer internships, one abroad and one in Washington, DC. Upon successful completion of the fellowship program and the Foreign Service entry requirements, Perry will commit to work for a minimum of five years in the Foreign Service as an information management specialist.

Perry credits BYU Marriott for helping him learn valuable lessons. "BYU Marriott has always emphasized integrity and emphasized being a good person," Perry says. "I really like to think that shone through in my application."

## Finding Family in ROTC



For **Alayna Grossnickle**, Utah's arid desert climate is a striking contrast to the lush landscape of her hometown

in Maryland. While living far from her family could make her feel homesick, she has found a family of support in an unexpected place: BYU's Army ROTC.

Grossnickle was still a relatively new member of the Church when she moved to Provo to attend BYU. "Everything here



was new to me, and I didn't know anyone when I started," she says.

Grossnickle's father frequently encouraged her to join ROTC, but the decision took some time. "Even while I was on a mission in Ecuador, I kept thinking about it," Grossnickle says. "I put off the idea for a while because I wasn't sure what the environment would be like." And as a woman, she was worried about being the only female in the program. "Joining the army seemed very off-brand for me," she recalls.

Ultimately, Grossnickle confronted her fears and enrolled in the Army ROTC. "At first, being in the ROTC was not comfortable at all. I felt like everyone else was so experienced." But Grossnickle quickly began working hard with her colleagues in the program. "The hard work reminded me of getting dirty and working on my family's farm," she says. "Growing up, I didn't enjoy working on the farm, but now, looking back, I'm grateful I did."

Also, to her relief, she discovered that she wasn't the only woman. "I've never felt unwelcome for any reason. As a woman I've been treated equally and with respect," she says.

Because of the encouraging environment in BYU's Army ROTC program, Grossnickle plans on commissioning in the US Army after graduation. "Everything the army stands for is what I want to stand for," she says. Serving in the US Army, Grossnickle will utilize the accounting degree that she'll soon earn from BYU Marriott. "I'd like to get into logistics, budgeting, analysis, and maybe military intelligence, where I'd focus on audit or fraud."

Being part of the ROTC has been an answer to Grossnickle's search for a fostering environment far from her home. "Family is so important to me. My family in Maryland has always supported me despite the distance," she says. "My ROTC family does the same."

# Alumni News

## MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

### First Management Society Conference in the Philippines

The Asia Area of the BYU Management Society, which includes chapters in the Philippines, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Cambodia, and Vietnam, held its annual conference November 23–25, 2023. More than 200 participants, including leaders from local chapters and the area board, gathered in-person in Manila, Philippines—while 3,200 joined

virtually—to cheer on each other’s business wins and explore the conference’s theme, “Leadership in a Changing World.”

More than 25 speakers presented on topics including risk management, social entrepreneurship, growth mindset, and diversity in the workplace. Six panelists contributed to a special session on personal branding. Attendees also enjoyed a musical performance by the Metro Manila Regional Choir, composed of 20 talented singers from all over the Philippines.

Elder Steven R. Bangerter, a general authority seventy and president of the

Church’s Philippines Area, attended and spoke at the conference. BYU–Pathway representatives who oversee the program in the Philippines also attended and helped provide prizes to participants.

In addition to addressing business topics, speakers at the conference explored the role of faith in business. “The main reason I attended the BYU Management Society conference was to learn about Christlike leadership and how to actually apply it in situations outside of church,” says Joel Chen, president of the BYU Management Society in Singapore.

## Creating Value Through Inspired Leadership

In a lecture hall filled with students and future leaders, MBA alum **Christopher Clason** explained how inspired leaders create value in their professional and personal lives. Awarded the BYU Homecoming 2023 Alumni Achievement Award representing BYU Marriott, Clason shared leadership attributes based on his professional career working in six industries, living in seven different cities, and managing teams in twenty-four countries.

Clason earned a BS in international relations and an MBA from BYU. He has held leadership responsibilities in companies such as Honeywell, Citigroup, and Chevron. Before retiring earlier this year, Clason served as senior vice president and chief human resources officer for Coterra Energy, where he led the merger integration process that formed the new energy company.

Talking to students pursuing a variety of degrees, Clason challenged them to “be purposeful in who you want to be.” He explained that building leadership capabilities is a critical part of each person’s development and success, no matter the industry or size of the workplace.

To Clason, the best leaders demonstrate optimism paired with courage. “When I say optimism, I’m not talking about the lack of reality,” he explained. “Optimism is not naive. Optimism is incredibly aware of whatever reality is being experienced. And it’s the ability to look beyond that and create momentum from a real set of challenges, whether they are personal, familial, social, or business-related.”

Clason also emphasized that leaders must balance hunger with humility. He described hunger as “passion” but warned that strong drive without humility is dangerous. “It quickly becomes arrogance,” Clason said. “But hunger with humility—this is listening. This is asking questions first. This is seeking to understand, and it’s knowing you’re as likely to be wrong at whatever it is as to be right.”

Leaders create value wherever they serve, Clason explained. “There’s a problem to fix everywhere you stand. Simply attach yourself to something

that needs you to help fix it,” he said. “We can’t all fix everything, but we can pick something specific, tangible, and nameable and be a part of making it better or eliminating it.”

For Clason, education is key to building good leaders. He experienced that during his undergraduate and graduate studies, and he sees that in the leaders around him.

“The world needs successful business leaders, and I would have a strong preference that they come from you—where most of you get up in the morning and ask your Heavenly Father for support during the day to make good decisions, to be good to people around you, and to create value,” Clason said. “I think if successful leaders are born in institutions, this is a great place for that to happen.”



“The BYU Management Society annual conference was a great success due to the generous contributions of various sponsors,” notes Anita Hummel, president of the Management Society’s Asia Area and an organizer of the event. These contributions helped fund a business plan competition. Winners came from the Philippines, Taiwan, Mongolia, and India, and their businesses spanned industries from fashion to food to consulting.

“The highlight of the competition was the allocation of more than \$15,000 in prizes to 11 teams across three categories, including a People’s Choice Award,” Hummel says. “The BYU Management Society Asia Area extends heartfelt gratitude to all sponsors for their vital support that made this conference a reality.”

Syron Robin Sotalbo, whose company Wok to Box won first place in the Initial Business category, summed up the impact of the conference: “BYU Asia is bringing change!”

Members in the BYU Asia Area look forward to next year’s conference, which will be held in Singapore.

in the construction of the company’s 263,000-square-foot global headquarters, which won seven Best of State Awards and regional awards for design and construction. In 2022, Harris retired and turned his attention to writing a book. He recently coauthored *Concepts of Managing: A Road Map for Avoiding Career Hazards* with two of his children, Jacqueline H. Harris and Casey B. Harris, both of whom are BYU alumni. He is already working on a companion book. Harris and his wife, LuAnn, live in Alpine, Utah.

## 1999



When **Allison Green Tovey** started her MAcc program, she wasn’t sure which type of accounting was in her future. “When it

came time to choose my emphasis in the program, I had great professors who helped me decide, and I was led to tax accounting,” she says. After graduating in 1999, Tovey worked for a handful of accounting firms, first in California and then in Utah. These firms include Deloitte; King and McCleary; Halverson & Company; and WSRP. In 2023 she branched out to form Allison Tovey CPA, LLC. Tovey enjoys being her own boss while she manages clientele, prepares tax returns, and provides tax planning services. While raising her four children in Cedar Hills, Utah, Tovey volunteered as a stage manager at a community theater, served with the youth, and played in a punk rock band with her husband, BYU Marriott IS alum, **Cameron Tovey**. Now the Toveys enjoy boating, surfing, and wakeboarding on Bear Lake with their friends and family and cooking up delicious meals in their cabin.

## 2003



**Korban Lee** earned a bachelor’s degree in international studies from BYU in 2001 and an MPA in 2003 and has been working

in city management ever since. While employed by the City of Sandy, Utah, Lee was part of a team that revitalized downtown, provided an infrastructure and a financing plan for Rio Tinto Stadium

(now America First Field), and developed Sandy’s Hale Centre Theatre. Now the chief administrative officer for the City of West Jordan, Lee oversees a \$200 million budget and infrastructure development for more than 100,000 residents. In his various roles, he has tackled projects that don’t fall neatly under city departments. “The MPA program, with its breadth of courses and focus on management, helped me be ready to take on challenges when the best way forward wasn’t clear,” he says. Lee and his wife, Jennifer, live with their six kids in Sandy, Utah. They enjoy climbing, canyoneering, participating in outdoor sports, and traveling.

## 2013



**Jessica Shepherd**

had a three-week-old son when she graduated from BYU Marriott in 2013 with a bachelor’s degree in recreation management and youth leadership with an emphasis in therapeutic recreation. After the birth of her second son, Shepherd took a part-time position with the Passages program at the Melisa Nellesen Center for Autism at Utah Valley University, where she taught social skills and self-determination to adults with autism. For the next nine years, Shepherd patterned the classes she taught after those in her program at BYU Marriott. “I used what I had learned about experiential learning to design activities with purpose,” she says. Shepherd is now taking a break from teaching to focus on parenting her six children, who are 10 and younger. She believes that “recreating with your own family is important for everyone, especially for those of us working in the therapeutic recreation field,” and she enjoys sharing her love of mountain biking, skiing, and the outdoors with her family.

## 2017



Instead of leading offenses for a football team, former BYU quarterback **Hunter Moore** now leads a team of healthcare professionals at Cottonwood Canyon Healthcare Center. Moore shifted to



## CLASS NOTES

### 1978



When **Ronald D. Harris** graduated from BYU Marriott with a master’s degree in organizational behavior in 1978, he didn’t

know that he would have a career in both business and books. Harris worked for Young Living Essential Oils in Lehi, Utah, for 18 years. During that time, he served as chief logistics officer and then as vice president of real estate, construction, and facilities. Harris’s leadership was integral



# A Perfect Fit



From his childhood in Côte d'Ivoire to his Church mission in Ghana and a year-long stint in China, **Stéphane Akoki** had seen a lot before he even started college. Yet this 2018 information systems alum discovered that coming to BYU Marriott widened his world—and his impact.

"I have loved computers my whole life, and I consider myself pretty technical," Akoki says. "But I discovered later in life that I also really enjoyed business." Akoki's interest in technology led him to China to study computer science, but the school he had planned to attend turned out to be a scam. Broke and stranded in a foreign country, Akoki learned to speak Mandarin, found work, and began strategizing his next move.

While attending a small branch of the Church in China, Akoki

learned about LDS Business College, which later became Ensign College. Once again he took a leap of faith and moved to a new country for his education. But this time it wasn't a scam—it was a pathway to his associate's degree and onward to BYU Marriott, where Akoki found a perfect fit for his interests in technology and business.

"My favorite aspect of BYU was the dedication of my professors," Akoki shares. "Professor Shane Reese, now President Reese, would often take walks with me to discuss statistics concepts I was struggling with." Attending professors' office hours at BYU Marriott was also a highlight. "We discussed not only grades and class concepts but also life, focusing on how to be our best selves both inside and outside the classroom," Akoki says.

Akoki appreciated the diversity he found at BYU Marriott. "There are different ways to interpret diversity," he explains. "At BYU, you get people from different backgrounds. They've served different missions and experienced different ways of life."

BYU Marriott also equipped Akoki with a diverse skill set that immediately proved valuable in his first job at Deloitte. When he took the initiative to make a flowchart as his team consulted a major client, his boss was impressed and surprised. "That was the theme of my first couple of months at Deloitte," Akoki recalls. "They kept asking, 'Where did you learn that?' They were quite surprised that I came out of school already knowing how to do such complex tasks. It's a testament to how incredibly well the program was designed."

After a few years at Deloitte, Akoki accepted a job at software company Lucid, where he continues to apply his degree in his role as a product manager. "In terms of what I learned in the business school and what I do in my career, it's a 90 percent match. Almost every single thing has been applicable, which is pretty incredible."

But Akoki understands that his education has a purpose beyond just advancing his own career. "The level of knowledge and education that I obtained at BYU puts me in a position where there's so much more I can do for my people," he explains. During the past several years, he has founded and grown Elevate Côte d'Ivoire, a nonprofit that aims to address poverty through creating sustainable jobs and providing access to quality education.

Just as Akoki had experienced so much before even starting college, his first five years out of school have been a whirlwind of professional and personal growth. Akoki is grateful for a degree that helps him create impact within his company and his home country.

"Looking back on the last five years, I am so glad that I completed the information systems program," Akoki says. "I'm using everything I've learned."

healthcare administration after spending four years at General Atomics Aeronautical Systems—a company that produces unmanned aerial systems. At General Atomics, Moore held positions as an engineering control account manager and then as a project manager. A 2017 graduate of BYU Marriott's experience design and management program, Moore has also brought his leadership skills to the local high school, where he coaches football and basketball. Moore and his favorite team—his wife, Aleigh, and their four kids—live in San Marcos, California. In addition to sports, Moore

enjoys listening to audiobooks, playing pickleball, and jumping on the trampoline with his kids.

2018



**Cambria Smith** comes from a State Farm family—her grandfather, grandmother, and father were all insurance agents. So when she graduated in 2018 from BYU Marriott with a degree in entrepreneurial management, she realized that she could utilize her education to start her own business,

even if the business wasn't selling anything new. For Smith, entrepreneurship is about solving problems and creating value. She worked for two years at a leading State Farm agency in Newport Beach, California. Then she headed back to Utah and opened her own agency, Cambria Smith Insurance Agency, which she says is her proudest accomplishment yet. As president of the agency, Smith has a mission to make insurance easy for people by helping them manage risks, recover from the unexpected, and realize their dreams. Smith and her husband, Rick, live in Springville, Utah.

## Giving When It Hurts

EMBA graduate **Tema Hunkin Laussen** had a lot to smile about in 2023. Her company, Tema Realty, brokered by Realtypath, closed \$20 million in residential real estate sales last year. But as much as she loved closing each deal, Laussen's real highlight of 2023 was opening doors for students through her family's charitable foundation. Giving has always been what makes Laussen glow.

"My dad often said, 'Education is the salvation of our people,'" Laussen explains. Born in Vailoatai Village in American Samoa, Laussen's father, Eni Fa'aua'a Hunkin Faleomavaega Jr., served 13 terms—a total of 26 years—as the delegate for American Samoa in the US House of Representatives. After his passing in 2017, his children took over the charitable foundation he had created to provide scholarships for Pacific Islander students and renamed it the Eni & Hina Faleomavaega Foundation.

But even before the foundation, Laussen's life revolved around giving. For 11 years, she held a full-time job at LDS Philanthropies—the Church's department for facilitating philanthropic donations.

"I learned so much about giving and stewardship at LDS Philanthropies," she reflects. "I believe that giving when it hurts—when you don't think you can afford it—is when the blessings really come."

Laussen's desire to help others motivated her to always stay current in real estate—a field she had worked in before she landed her job at Philanthropies. "The whole time I was working at LDS Philanthropies, I had my real estate license so I could help friends and family buy or sell homes," she explains. "I was only reactive—never proactive—about real estate."

One thing Laussen pursued proactively, though, was gaining more education. "I always knew I wanted a graduate degree. My father had two law degrees, and his siblings all had graduate degrees. I just felt like it was something I needed to do."

A friend pointed Laussen to BYU Marriott's EMBA program, which Laussen soon realized was a good fit for her career goals and her busy schedule. "In my mind, I was going to be at LDS Philanthropies for a long time, and a graduate degree would help me move up or into other areas of fundraising," she says.

What she didn't know was that her EMBA experience would turn her career upside down—in a good way. Shortly after Laussen finished her



degree in 2013, an EMBA classmate referred her to InsideSales to spearhead its corporate foundation. Instead of working with donors, Laussen now worked on the opposite side of philanthropy, directing the donations and initiatives of a major software company. She thrived in this new role until 2016, when the company announced mass layoffs.

As Laussen figured out what to do next, she leaned into the lessons she had learned in graduate school. "The EMBA program taught me that I can do hard things," she says with a smile. "I built the thick skin I needed to be a good real estate agent. I also learned how to problem-solve, and that's really what real estate is all about." Laussen's skills and confidence helped her turn her real estate side gig into the thriving business it is today.

Whether Laussen is selling homes or setting up scholarships, she's grateful for the example set by her father and by the donors she has worked with. She encourages fellow alumni to give of their time, treasure, talents, and testimony. "Give until it hurts," she says. "If everyone did that, just think how different things would be in this world."





P 10



**BYU MARRIOTT**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**