



**GALESBURG**  
**IS KNOX**

*“Breaking the bubble”*

**Seven profiles highlighting the Galesburg-Knox connection**

*by Matthew Wheaton*

# Table of Contents

Why “Galesburg is Knox”.....	1
Knox taught Davis ‘how to be a professional out in the real world’.....	4
Crouch took ‘a different approach’.....	6
‘Failure is not an option’ for Young.....	8
Thierry is a ‘positive force in the lives of lots of kids’.....	10
Burgland tries to ‘help the world be a better place’.....	12
Polite doing what he loves.....	14
Says touching lives one tooth at a time.....	16

Individual student research and creative projects are an important part of a Knox College education. This booklet is an example. The creator and author, Matt Wheaton, was graduated from Knox in June 2010. Matt has lived in Galesburg since boyhood. As you will see, Matt believes in the strong connection between Galesburg and Knox College.

Matt conceived the idea of this booklet—“Galesburg is Knox: Breaking the Bubble”—as the capstone project for his self-designed major in communications. He wrote the text, had 100 copies printed, and left them with several business offices in Galesburg. As soon as I read the copy that Matt gave to me, I decided that it should be shared with everyone in Knox County. Thanks to the generosity of Knox alumni Mary Jo ’62 and Bud ’63 Potter, it is being circulated with this edition of *Knox County Neighbors*.

On the following pages, you will see Matt’s view of how Galesburg and Knox are one community, not separate and apart. You may recognize some of the voices that you hear and the faces that you see because they are all a part of our community.

Focusing on individual stories, Matt captures what makes Galesburg and Knox College special—its people. Matt’s message is important to share with everyone in the Galesburg area. I am pleased that Knox can reprint “Galesburg is Knox” and share it with you, just as more than 1,000 Knox alumni are getting ready to return to this town they grew to love for Homecoming October 22-24. Homecoming is not just for alumni. I hope you will join us for the art show, athletic events, student comedy show, and so on. For details, visit [www.knox.edu/homecoming](http://www.knox.edu/homecoming).

As Matt writes, “We are one. We are Knox. We are Galesburg.”



Roger L. Taylor ’63  
President, Knox College

This magazine is a collection of stories by Galesburg resident and recent Knox College grad, Matthew Wheaton, for his Capstone Project. The project began in January 2010 and concluded in May 2010.

Designed by Matthew Wheaton using Adobe® InDesign® CS4  
Fonts Used: Disparador, Times New Roman, Minion Pro, Times, Helvetica, and Garamond  
*Galesburg is Knox* ©Matthew Wheaton  
All photographs ©Evan Temchin (evantemchin.com)

# Why “Galesburg is Knox”

In 1837, groups led by George Washington Gale founded Galesburg, Illinois and Knox College. For the past 173 years, Knox and the city of Galesburg have had close ties. However, over time, each community has distanced itself from the other. Knox students call this phenomenon “the Knox bubble.” Many individuals in the Knox community and in Galesburg do not see through the “bubble.” They don’t realize that Galesburg is Knox and Knox is Galesburg.

The Knox community reaches beyond the borders of the 90-acre campus and includes the Galesburg community. The interconnectedness between Knox and Galesburg helps each other thrive. Members of the Galesburg community attend functions at Knox and vice versa. Knox purchases everything they can in Galesburg. Knox grads own businesses in the ‘Burg and help stimulate Galesburg’s economy by purchasing products in Galesburg, employing Galesburg residents who also purchase goods here, and supporting Galesburg organizations by giving donations. Both communities flourish because of the other.

I’m hopeful that the stories contained in this magazine which are written by me, Matthew Wheaton, will allow individuals in both the Galesburg community and the Knox community to break through the “bubble.” I want members of both communities to realize that they are connected to each other at the hip. We all have wishes, hopes and dreams. Perhaps, those of you who read my stories will be motivated to walk down a similar path. It doesn’t matter where you came from, it is about where you are going, and Knox can give you the freedom to flourish. The people written about in the following pages come from different backgrounds like yourselves, but they have a common bond: Knox.

I know firsthand about the “bubble.” I’m 33 years old and graduated from Knox on June 5, 2010. I’ve lived in Galesburg since my family moved from the Lincoln Homes projects in Monmouth on Lincoln’s birthday, back when I was a sixth grader, to the Iowa Court projects here in Galesburg. When I moved to Galesburg, I knew nothing about Knox. The longer I was a resident of Galesburg the more I heard about those “weirdos” on the Knox campus. A friendship allowed me to learn that those who are a part of the Knox community were very similar to Galesburg’s residents and weren’t “weirdos.” Some of them were Galesburg residents.

One of my closest friends throughout junior high and high school lived on Cedar Street, a few blocks away from Knox. Occasionally, on weekends, I would stay all night with him, and we would always venture down to Knox to watch an athletic event or ride our bikes around campus. As we grew older, our friendship strayed, but my interest in Knox grew, and I kept meeting people who had ties to Knox. The individuals I met, and continue to meet, come from all walks of life, and I found out that no matter where they came from, I could relate to them in some way and that Knox changed their lives.

Those individuals who founded Knox and Galesburg were connected. Knox and Galesburg are one. I don’t know for sure, but I would bet that for the past 173 years there has always been someone from Galesburg attending classes or teaching at Knox. We are one. We are Knox. We are Galesburg. We have been given the freedom to flourish. Even those who are not from Galesburg and attend Knox are Galesburg, but often times that fact is unknown, because years ago a “bubble” was placed over the 90-acre campus. Let’s all break the bubble! I wrote the stories in the following pages in hopes of doing just that. We can all relate to each other. Please take some time to first read more about me and then read about Victor Davis, Carol Crouch, Nick Young, Pete Thierry, Mary Burgland, Brandon Polite, and Kandy Sayrs.

It was not always an easy journey for the people who are written about within these pages, and my journey was not easy either. I made my way to Knox via Carl Sandburg College. CSC helped me find my future and gave me an opportunity to succeed. Not only has Knox changed my life, but CSC has as well. I would not be where I am today without both institutions. I graduated Galesburg High School (GHS) in 1995, with a C average, if I recall correctly, and I didn't know what the future would bring for me.

When I graduated from GHS, I enrolled at CSC and pursued a degree in computer information systems (CIS). While I attended classes full-time, I worked full-time at Soangetaha Country Club as a bus person (a job I started as a GHS junior). I eventually got my degree at CSC, but I liked my job at Soangetaha, so I decided to keep doing what I was doing.

By the time I got my CIS degree, I was a cook and later became the *soús* chef. After about eight years, I had decided the food service industry was not for me, so I enrolled at CSC again, but this time I knew I was going for a bachelor's degree. The year was 2005. I enrolled for two classes at CSC and began my quest for a bachelor's degree that fall.

A lot of things were happening in my life when 2006 began, including the end of my job at Soangetaha. After two weeks of pounding the pavement, I landed a new position at Innkeeper's. During the two-week period that I was jobless, I interviewed with Robin DeMott, CSC's director of marketing and public relations, for a work-study job. I didn't get the position, but I got something better.

Robin offered me a talent grant for journalism, which meant free tuition, but there was a catch. I had to be a full-time student, and I needed two references. Dr. Norm Burdick and Mr. Wendel Hunigan, who were my professors the semester before, agreed to give me references. With Robin's help I found out about a creative writing class taught by Mr. Ron Hunt, who was nice enough to let me into the class, several weeks after it had started. My future was found.

I didn't really know if I could write when Robin offered me the talent grant, but I have found out that I can. I've even received an award from the Illinois Associated Press Editors Association for a story that appeared in the *Register-Mail*.

Robin believed in me, despite the fact that she didn't know if I could write either. I guess she saw how passionate I was about what I wanted to do in life, and Mr. Hunigan and Dr. Burdick must



Matthew Wheaton, 33, graduated from Knox College on June 5, 2010, and hopes you can relate to him and to those within.

have said nice things about me. I'll have to ask her.

When I met with Robin that first time, I told her that I was hoping to land a job working for an athletic team, whether it be at a college, university, or at the professional level, which is something I still want to do. I decided to pursue a job in athletics, because ever since I can remember I've had a love for most sports.

It took me three years at CSC to finally complete the general education classes that I needed to transfer to a four-year school. Robin offered me a job after I graduated from CSC, and I'm now the sports information/CSC-TV Channel 22 technician. I quit working at Innkeeper's in October of last year, and I was a sports editor for *The Knox Student* (Knox's newspaper) for the two years that I attended Knox.

I never thought that I could attend Knox. First off, I didn't think that I was smart enough, which was not true at all. I graduated from CSC with honors and was very successful academically during my second stint there. I also didn't think that a kid who grew up in the projects could ever afford Knox, but I found out that I was wrong. I didn't live in the projects the entire time I attended GHS, but my family has always been poor. Neither my mother nor my stepfather has a college degree.

When I worked at Soangetaha, Mary Burgland (who you will learn more about later) thought it was great that I was working towards a bachelor's degree and suggested I look at Knox, as did many others.

I chose to attend Knox for several reasons. The first was my family. I have a half-brother, Justin, and he has three children. I wanted to be there for my niece, Emma, and my nephews, Jonus and Jacob. If I went to a school not located in the 'Burg then I would have had to miss birthday parties and things like watching swimming lessons and attending t-ball games.

My brother and I are extremely close, as am I with his children. I also stayed around because of my parents. I wanted to be able to help them out if they needed me. My family always has and always will be the number one priority in my life.

My 91-year-old step-grandfather, John Jarvis,

has a college degree, has always supported me in all my endeavors and has always preached education, education, and education. So another reason I attended Knox was because of the academic environment.

I've met many people who are from different backgrounds and from Galesburg and the surrounding area. Knox challenged them and helped them achieve their dreams. I knew the institution could do the same for me. I learned a long time ago that it doesn't matter where you come from: It is about setting goals and accomplishing them.

Knox College doesn't discriminate against you if you are poor, nor are those who are on the campus "weirdos," as I used to think. We are all like those who have wandered the campus before us. We're just trying to live our dreams and carry out our hopes.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisers for *Galesburg is Knox*, David Amor and John Spittell, who both pushed me to have a worthwhile product, and provided guidance along the way.

Thank you, Harley Knosher, Victor Davis, Pete Thierry, Kandy Sayrs, Carol Crouch, Mary Burgland, Brandon Polite, Nick Young, Steve Hall, Chad Eisele, Magali Roy-Féquièrre, Karen Gourd, Andy Gibbons, John Haslem, Ben Wetherbee, Melissa Arney, Lance Factor, Craig Choma, and Linda Dybas, for taking the time out to let me interview you all.

Evan Temchin (evanemchin.com) took all of the wonderful photographs for *Galesburg is Knox*. Thanks, E.T., for taking the time out to do so. Without the images, this magazine wouldn't have been possible. Also, thanks for being a great friend.

I would like to thank Knox College for the award of a Richter Memorial Scholarship Grant, which paid for the first edition print of this magazine.

Thank you, Robin DeMott, for serving as a mentor, and giving me the wonderful opportunity that you did.

Special thanks go out to my family. I can't name each and every one of you, but I appreciate all the support you have given me over the years. I love you all.

Special thanks to Kiennan Crawford-Mackin. You are the first person I told about my idea for *Galesburg is Knox*, and you've supported me from Day One in all my endeavors. Thanks for making me a better person and being there for me the past two years. Words can't express how much that means to me. I'll always be there when you need me no matter what. You can always talk to me about anything. I've always respected you and know my actions haven't always projected that fact. I hope we'll be friends for eternity.



*Victor Davis, 46, grew up on Chicago's South Side and graduated from Knox in 1987 with a degree in computer science.*

## Knox taught Davis 'how to be a professional out in the real world'

*Chicago native has ties to both Knox and Monmouth*

The rivalry between Knox and Monmouth College's athletic teams dates back to 1888.

Alumni of both schools often make it to either Galesburg or Monmouth to watch an athletic event between the two institutions and cheer for their respective alma maters.

Victor Davis is one of them.

Over the years, Davis has attended a few games here and there between the two schools, but he does not participate in the rivalry.

"I just enjoy watching the kids play," he said. "I thought about getting a Monmouth cap and a Knox cap, cutting them in half and sewing them together so one side would say Knox and one Monmouth, but I decided against that."

Davis does not cheer for either Knox or Monmouth, because he has ties to both of them. He graduated from Knox in 1987 with a degree in computer science. He then started working at Monmouth College as a math tutor, and a computer processor and researcher for their admissions office. Today, he is in charge of all Monmouth College's administrative data systems.

Davis heard about Knox at a college fair at his high school, Wendell Phillips, Chicago's oldest predominately black high school. He made an overnight campus visit, sat in on a couple of classes and added Knox to his college list. Some of the other colleges he was considering were Michigan State University and the University of Illinois-Chicago.

The size of the institution drew him to Knox.

"At the University of Illinois-Chicago, I got a call saying there was an issue with my financial aid. I went down to the office. Half a day there and all I had to do was sign a

form,” said Davis, who grew up on Chicago’s South Side with two brothers and two sisters. “That is when I really started to look at Knox.”

Davis, 46, who stands about 6-foot, with short black hair and hints of gray and white, recalls that during his childhood, he spent his weekdays riding his bicycle along Lake Michigan and his weekends earning some cash. Unlike many of his friends, he didn’t play sports in high school.

But he played sports when he came to Knox and knew what he wanted to do for a living when he got there.

“I ran track and I was on the wrestling team my sophomore and junior year,” he said. “I stopped both to concentrate on my major my senior year. Several terms I had math, physics and computer science in the same term. I knew out of high school that I wanted to be a computer programmer, at the time that field was just taking off.”

While at Knox, Davis changed as a person, and he took what he learned on Knox’s 90-acre campus to Monmouth.

“Knox taught me how to be a professional out in the real world. It was really the faculty that changed me — the professionalism that they used in teaching their courses. I think that is the biggest thing that I gained,” Davis said. “A lot of them had an open door policy and if you had any questions they would answer them. That is the way I work now.

“I call the employees at the college my customers. No question is a dumb question. I spend as much time as they need answering their questions. That is the same approach the faculty members had. I would not have gotten that somewhere else I don’t think.”

When he began working at Monmouth, Davis got flak from fellow Knox alums.

“I got asked why I would go work at Monmouth and I would answer, ‘Two words; student loans,’” he said

with a chuckle. “I was actually surprised at all the people from Knox who were working at Monmouth when I got there.”

Davis left Monmouth after eight years of service and went to work back at his alma mater.

“At Monmouth, he was working on the system that we had put in. It was called the CARS system, at that time,” said Steve Hall, who shared an office with Davis for a few years, and is the senior associate director of Knox’s computer and telecommunications center.

“He applied, was a Knox alum, had experience on the system that we had. . . . Him coming in and working on the administrative system is what freed me to go off and work on building a college network — all of the Internet and network services that we have today,” Hall said. “He came in and really helped us get it off the ground. Getting someone who had been here was a tremendous help, plus his professional experience.”

Five years later, Davis was back at Monmouth.

“They had a position open as director of administrative systems, so it was just a career move,” Davis said. “If it weren’t for that, I would probably still be at Knox right now.”

On a regular basis, Davis uses a programming technique that he learned in class. Daily, he has to be patient.

“Patience. That is another thing I picked up from the faculty members at Knox,” he said. “Being in the computer industry, computers can really make you mad, and you have to have patience — step back to see what’s causing the problem.”

Both he and his wife Janet, a fellow Knox alum, have sometimes had to use patience when raising their son Victor, Jr., who once hid from his mom inside a rack of clothes, while shopping at Walmart, when he was about two-years-old.

Victor, Jr., a 2010 Galesburg High School grad, stands at about 6-foot-5, was a power forward on the Silver Streaks basketball team and was nominated for the McDonald’s All-American High School Basketball Game this past season.

His father has also played a few games of hoops.

“I played a little bit of basketball with him,” Hall said. “He wasn’t a great basketball player, but he was always the muscle. He was the guy that we put in who had five fouls to give. He always enjoyed that. We always played in the Bronze Turkey game, which is the faculty-staff game against Monmouth.”

Victor, Jr. is currently attending Illinois Wesleyan University and will be playing basketball for the Titans. His dad never pushed him to continue his education at Knox or Monmouth. He just gave advice.

“I just told him you have to stay focused,” Victor, Sr. said. “College is different than high school. You are either going to sink or swim . . . Don’t hesitate to ask questions.”

To Victor, Sr., Knox is like an extended family, and he receives questions from his family members when he calls them on the telephone, emails them, or talks to them in person.

“He was well liked by a lot of people,” Hall said. “Today, he can walk in any office on campus, and any of the old-timers around will walk up and throw an arm around him and ask him how he is doing. He comes over to a football game every now and again. Everybody knows him, and everybody loves him from the time he was a student to now.

“He has done quite well. He is a key part of the operation over there at Monmouth. He is very versatile, a very smart guy, and very well liked. If we could get him back, I would hire him instantly.”

# Crouch took a different approach

*Knox taught her about the person she is*

Carol Crouch was 50 years old when she started taking classes at Knox College, and it changed her life.

“Knox means freedom,” said Crouch, who graduated in 2004 with a teaching certificate in elementary education and her BA in educational studies. “I think it taught me about the person that I really am. Somebody that I felt was inside there but never knew about. I can’t think of any way that Knox didn’t change me. I became my own person when I went to Knox. Discovery at 50.”

Crouch was a special education teacher’s aide for 17 years in Galesburg schools when she decided in 1999 it was time for her to get her bachelor’s degree. She started by enrolling at Carl Sandburg College.

“At my age, it was a really big deal to quit my job and start classes at Sandburg,” said Crouch. “I had divorced my husband before I went to school. That’s what made it so hard. Income was a problem for four and a half years.”

When she transferred to Knox from CSC two years later, fitting in was also a problem at first.

“The students thought I was faculty. The faculty thought I was faculty. The staff thought I was faculty, and I was just a student,” Crouch said.

Knox’s TRIO Achievement Program had a hand in helping Crouch. TRIO is a federally funded program that helps low-income and first-generation college students adapt to the academic environment and achieve success.

“If it hadn’t been for them I don’t know if I’d have survived,”

Crouch said.

Karen Gourd, a former education studies professor at Knox, served as Crouch’s mentor.

“She raised questions, made critical points and listened to others,” Gourd recalled. “She was a non-traditional student who did not hold back when it came to doing non-traditional things in courses. Carol worked wonderfully with her peers, who were much younger, willing to jump in to do what needed to be done. ... Bright, kind and always present are the words I think best describe Carol as a student.”

Magali Roy-Féquièrè, chair of Knox’s gender and women’s studies, echoed Gourd.

“I loved having Carol in my classes, because she always added a different perspective to the discussions. She was so focused and so motivated and so diligent,” Roy-Féquièrè said. “She always brought something thoughtful to the class. It actually made my work easier in a way, because I didn’t have to always be thinking of another perspective. She brought that in. It was very helpful. The thing about Carol is that she was extremely interested in developing her critical thinking, critical writing abilities, to deepen that.”

Crouch developed and admits that Knox provided her with opportunities that she had never experienced.

“Knox offered me the opportunity to delve as much as I wanted without me feeling so phobic about it. You were there to go as far as you needed to go. It took away the boundaries,” she said. “Sometimes when you are learning about something new you feel like the instructors kind of set boundaries. Nobody ever put boundaries around me at Knox. They said go out and find everything out that you need to. I had

never felt that way before.”

No restrictions were put on Crouch, and she discovered she could be herself.

“I worked with teachers for 17 years and I thought I wanted to be like them and what I found out was I didn’t have to be like them. I could be my own teacher, even a better teacher, and have a better understanding of how things work,” she said. “I love how people learn and all the different ways that they learn. In learning how other people learn, you make a lot of discoveries, and the more discoveries you make, the more you want that world to be open to more people.”

Crouch took what she discovered and began substitute teaching once she graduated. The following school year, she became a reading specialist at Costa Catholic School. A year later, Crouch applied for a job working for Galesburg Community Unit School District 205, but instead landed at CSC, where she is the coordinator of academic support services.

“Carl Sandburg is very lucky to have her, because she likes to help people. She likes to help the students she works with achieve something. She is focused on helping. She clears the way for the students,” said Roy-Féquièrè, who has maintained a friendship with Crouch since she graduated. “She is thoughtful, intelligent, focused and generous, very generous. She has a great sense of humor.”



# 'Failure is not an option' for Young

*Galesburg native identifies with his students*

Nick Young knows what he wants to accomplish.

"I want to be successful in what I do. Failure is not an option for me," he said. "When it comes to teaching children or whether it is golfing on a Sunday, I have always had that internal drive. Where it comes from I don't know, but it is something that I am lucky to have and something that I try to share with my students."

Young, 29, graduated from Galesburg High School in 1999 and Knox College in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in environmental studies. Since 2007, he has taught science and social studies at Churchill Junior High School. He also serves as an assistant coach for both the football and girls' track teams.

"His commitment to the students is gigantic and sincere, and I think probably a little bit rare," said John Haslem, director of Knox's Center for Teaching and Learning, who has known Young for almost a decade and has spoken to several of his classes. "He can identify with the kids who come into the school, because he went there and knows what it was like when he was a kid. He is committed to seeing the kids have the best experience that they can have when they go through the junior high."

Young has always known he wanted to work with people and make a difference in their lives. When he graduated from Knox in 2003, he first sought to do this in health care. After a year and a half, he decided that being cramped

inside a 2005 silver Dodge Intrepid and traveling around Illinois between the boundaries that interstate 80, 74 and 57 set was not how he wanted to do it.

"After I graduated, I got a job as a medical representative selling pharmaceuticals for a small company out of Alabama," he said. "I sold a lot of cough and cold medicine, which I learned quickly wasn't the thing for me."

So, he sat in on a few middle school classes and did observations under Cindy Roach at Lombard Junior High, fell in love with teaching, and headed back to Knox to obtain a bachelor's degree in educational studies.

When Young arrived on Knox's 90-acre campus after his graduation from GHS, he admittedly needed to grow up, and needed some advice. Without Haslem's help, Young might not have seized the opportunity that the institution provided.

"Nick was a fine young man. He, early on, needed some guidance about how to approach his schoolwork here, how to conduct himself outside of the classroom," Haslem said. "We just had frank conversations about what it would take to be successful in the classroom and what kind of behavior that I expected of him. I spoke to him as an advisor, but also as a friend."

Andy Gibbons, defensive coordinator of the Knox football team and former head coach, has known Young since 1998, when he began recruiting him to play football at Knox, and has also played a role in helping him succeed.

"People don't know the impact Andy Gibbons makes on guys' lives," said Young, an offensive tackle on Knox's last winning foot-

ball team, in 2002 when Knox went 6-4. "It is not always about wins and losses."

Young has lived in Galesburg for most of his life, and is pleased to share his experiences with his pupils.

"The kids need direction and need guidance, and I'm happy to work with them and do that stuff," Young said. "You learn from your mistakes, and that is what I try to relay to my players and students. Any information that I can help them with, I give it to them. I am pretty honest — that is one of my biggest virtues. I am not afraid to speak my mind. Knox played a part in that. I have always been strong-minded. I always have believed in certain values and ways things should be done. I think I carry that over to my coaching and into my classroom and into my life."

Young had to work at being a leader in and out of the classroom, but he has enjoyed every minute. Why shouldn't he? He is doing what he loves.

"I know how to laugh and humor others and myself; that is a big part of my life. You only get one shot at it and you might as well enjoy it while you are doing it," he said. "I think over time being a leader is something that I have developed. I was pretty immature my early years at Knox, but to my credit, I was a quick learner."

When Young is not teaching or coaching, he is hitting the books. He is currently enrolled in a master's degree program at St. Ambrose University, and one day would like to become an assistant principal or dean. But he will cross that road when he comes to it.

"Ideally, I would like to lead as many people as possible," he said.



*Nick Young, 29, graduated from GHS in 1999 and Knox College in 2003 with a B.A. in environmental studies.*

“I want to make the biggest impact that I can on a large group of people.”

Young knows that Knox made him who he is today, and he is grateful.

“It prepared me for what was to come in my life. Knox really does,” he said. “There are perks along the way. I got to meet a lot of great people and if you are lucky, you get to stay in touch with those people.”

Young stays in contact with Haslem and Gibbons, as well as others. His mom, Penny Young, works at Knox as a billing and

collection coordinator. His grandparents, Carol and Dick Baldwin, both worked at the school for many years.

When Young and Gibbons talk, they discuss x’s and o’s. Occasionally, Young will meet with incoming recruits. Gibbons doesn’t hide the way he feels about Young.

“I love Nick,” he said. “I consider him a good friend. We’ve had plenty of conversations about teaching and coaching. Through the years, once you find guys who are in coaching, the relationship grows more. It is a common thing.”

Young has found the ideal situation for him to bond with people and give them the freedom to flourish. That’s what Knox did for him. He has hopes that those who have negative views of Knox experience what the school has to offer for themselves.

“Go to a play or a sporting event. Walk through campus,” he said. “I think Knox is a college that is producing leaders of tomorrow, and there are some strong young minds here.”

# Thierry is a 'positive force in the lives of lots of kids'

*Former Silver Streaks star's heart has always been at Knox College*

**K**nox College has always been home to Pete Thierry.

"Where third base is at the Knox baseball field is where our house used to sit. I was born and raised right there," he said. "I lived on Central Street."

Thierry, 74, a black man who stands about 5-foot-5, has short black hair tinged with gray and white, a black mustache and an ever-present pair of black Gucci glasses, has been attending Knox games for the past 57 years.

"It is just a school that I was born close to and it became a part of my life," he said. "I had a cousin, Binky Johnson, who played for Knox. He was from East Moline. I followed him all four years he played at Knox."

Thierry, a 1953 Galesburg High School graduate, is a former Silver Streaks basketball and baseball star. He also played football for one year, but he would not have if it were not for the Knox connection.

"I weighed 100 pounds and was the starting quarterback my sophomore year. Before the football season, Bill Heerde, who played for Knox and was from Knoxville, taught me how to throw a football. He was a quarterback," Thierry said. "I went to the old Galesburg High School, which is where the Public Safety Building is now, and I would cut across through Knox to go to school. I would always stop and watch them practice football."

Heerde is not the only Knox athlete Thierry has bonded with over the years. For three years, he played summer league softball with Knox's athletic director and head football coach, Chad Eisele, who graduated from Knox in 1993.

"Pete has been a long time supporter of Knox and someone I associate with Knox as far back as I remember," Eisele said. "When I was head football coach at Lake Forest, Pete always made a point to come see me before the [Knox] game. We stayed in contact. Pete is someone I always enjoyed having an opportunity to see. He truly cares about the student-athletes at Knox and someone I consider a great friend of Knox College."

Upon his graduation from GHS, Thierry attended Monmouth College and played halfback for former Fighting Scots football coach Bobby Woll.

"It is kind of funny, I went to Monmouth for a year. I was born and raised in Galesburg and was supposed to go to Knox, but I didn't," he said. "My heart is still here in Galesburg for Knox. Knox is still home to me."

Thierry only stayed in Monmouth for a year, because the summer after his freshman year, he got a job at Admiral, which later became Maytag.

"I was getting those big paychecks and I told myself I would sit out a year and go back but I never did," Thierry said. "I worked at Admiral/Maytag for 30-some odd years."

While working at Maytag, and to this day, Thierry attends Knox athletic events as well as Galesburg

High School, Monmouth College, Carl Sandburg College, Lombard Middle School and Churchill Junior High. He also is a regular at Galesburg American Legion baseball games and Junior Football League games.

"I think that Pete for all the time I have known him has been one of the most sincere supporters of Galesburg athletics in general," said Harley Knosher, a Knox coaching legend and former athletic director, who met Thierry when he first moved to Galesburg to coach at Knox. "He is a supporter of young people and a positive force in the lives of lots of kids. He admires them, and it makes kids feel good. It is always fun to see him, because he always has a smile on his face and the expectation that the teams are going to do well."

Thierry has gone to so many games over the years he has lost count.

"To put a number on it would be tough. It just depends on the schedule," said Thierry, who was inducted into the GHS Athletic Hall of Fame as a "Friend of GHS Athletics" in 2005. "It seems like when I go to games, I just form a bond, a friendship with the players and coaches. They more or less expect me to be there."

For the past decade, Thierry has had to miss games due to health issues. He has had eight surgeries on his left knee, which he is unable to bend anymore. In 2008, he had a total right hip replacement.

"The toughest part when I was laid up was the fact I could not go to any games and that really killed me," Thierry said. "I'm still recu-

perating from my hip replacement.”

Due to scheduling conflicts, Thierry cannot support all the teams that he would like so he has to prioritize. He first chooses to attend GHS games, then Knox games and then he goes from there.

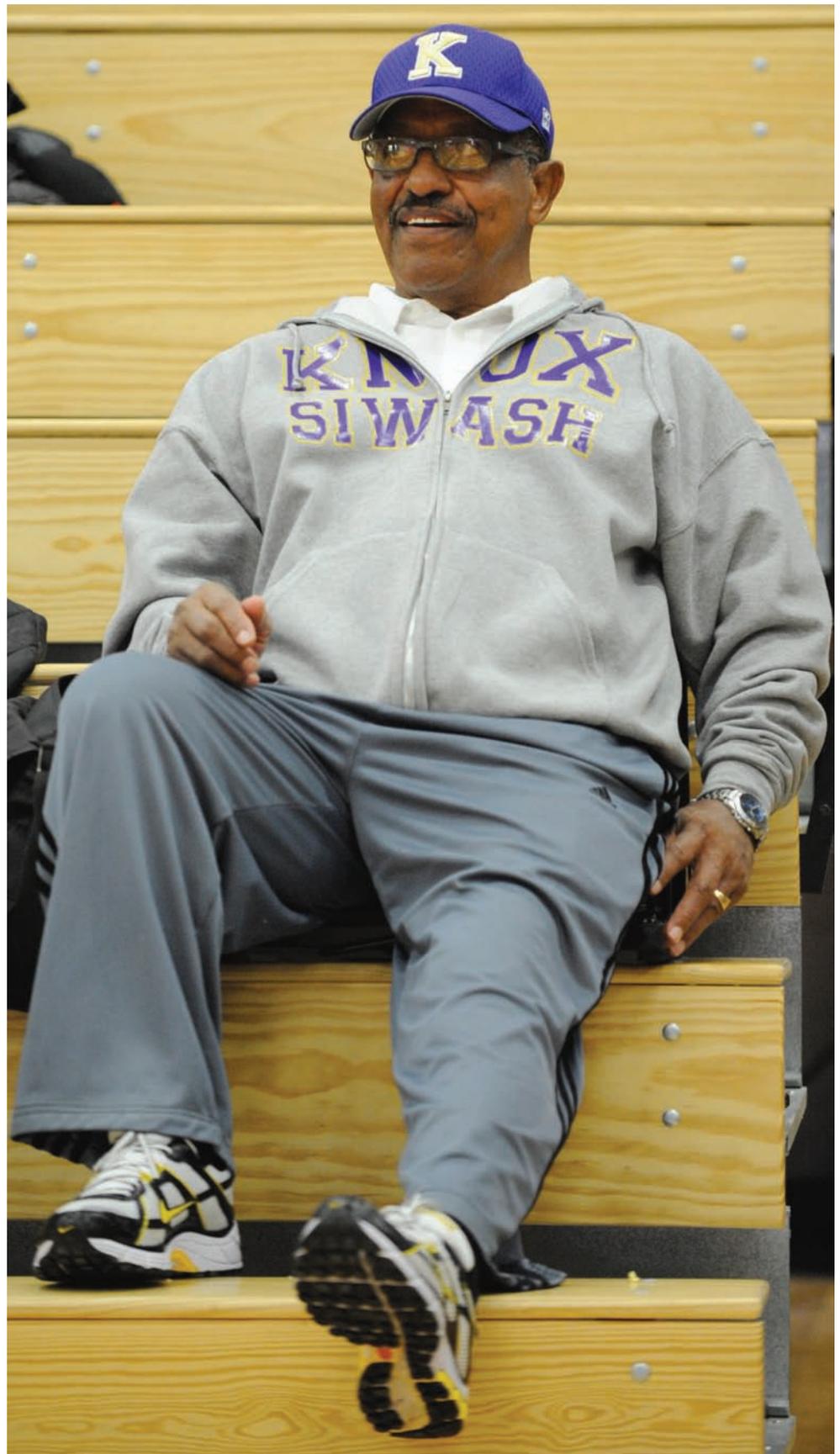
Not only does he attend games in the 'Burg, but he also sometimes travels to away games to watch the teams he supports. When he cannot go to games, he listens to them on the radio. Sometimes, he even attends practices.

“When I go to watch basketball practice at Knox, someone will bring me a chair,” he said.

Ben Wetherbee, a junior at Knox and a guard on the Prairie Fire men's basketball team, is appreciative of Thierry's support at practice and games.

“When I got here to campus I introduced myself and whenever he comes to a game I thank him for coming. He knew my dad when he was going here,” Wetherbee said. “He is at practice quite a lot. We try and make him feel as comfortable as possible. He sometimes finds his own chair, but it is just something that we do; just anything to show him how happy we are for the support he shows us even through the rough times that we have been having lately.

“He is a very loyal guy to our basketball program. Hopefully in the next few years, he will see us getting to where we want to go.”



*Pete Thierry, 74, once lived where third base is at Knox's Blodgett Field. Thierry never attended Knox College, but he has always felt connected to the institution.*

# Burgland tries to ‘help the world be a better place’

*Abingdon native can't be pigeon-holed*

Mary Burgland is not afraid to attempt new things.

“All liberal arts graduates are really that way,” said Burgland, who graduated from Knox College in 1968 with a degree in mathematics and a secondary education teaching certificate. “They are capable of doing lots of different things and thinking in lots of different ways. You can’t pigeon-hole a liberal arts graduate, because they have so many interests and they are not afraid to try new things. They are just not afraid to try.”

Burgland has tried her hand at teaching and coaching, among many other things. No matter what she has done, she has been passionate.

“That is how I fell out of the womb. I don’t think Knox imparted the drive in me,” said Burgland, who grew up in Abingdon, attended St. Joseph’s Academy and Corpus Christi High School in Galesburg and went to Knox thanks to an academic scholarship.

“What Knox imparted was a drive for excellence and to do the best I could do,” she said. “Everywhere I looked around me when I attended Knox, I saw role models, people that I wanted to imitate. I watched them excelling and I wanted to do the best I could at excelling.”

Burgland, the oldest of Sam and Tilly Mangieri’s 12 children, loves to help those she meets.

“The Knox education, in my

opinion, continued the education that I had at St. Joseph’s and at Corpus Christi, to reach beyond myself,” she said. “To go out there and help the world be a better place. Everything I do, I try to make whatever better for other people.”

Even while a student at Knox, Burgland influenced others’ lives.

“I was secretary of the senior class. I was vice president of the Pi Phi’s. I was the secretary to the history department, and during the time that I was at Knox I worked for four years for Dr. Stipp,” she said, referring to the late John Stipp, a longtime Knox professor of history. “In that time, he wrote a two-volume Western Civilization textbook that was one of the big sellers for John Wiley and Sons. I typed every single word of that in the 15 hours a week that I worked for Dr. Stipp.”

After graduation, Burgland moved to the Chicago area to teach at Evanston Township High School, which that year was named the best high school in the nation by the *Ladies Home Journal*.

Four years later, she moved back to Galesburg.

“I fell in love with George Burgland and he wanted to open a pharmacy. He wanted to come back to Galesburg and own his own drug store,” she said. “His parents, his grandparents, his great grandparents had all been in business on Main Street in Galesburg. There was 150 years of tradition that he wanted to continue.”

When Burgland came back to Galesburg, she taught at Galesburg High School for two years until

taking a hiatus to give birth to and take care of her children, Caroline and Richie.

In 1987, she started teaching again. She taught at Costa Catholic Academy, then Carl Sandburg College, before finally landing at Knox as a part-time mathematics instructor.

In 1990, Burgland walked down an unfamiliar path when she started working in Knox’s admission office, and after a few years, she landed in Knox’s alumni affairs office.

“Mary is a natural teacher,” said Melissa Arney, who worked with Burgland in the alumni affairs office. “She loves to teach; that comes through in practically everything she does. She is not teaching anymore but that is just a part of who she is. I’m sure she is doing some type of teaching, formal or informal, pretty much everyday.”

While working in alumni affairs, Burgland was asked to coach Knox’s women’s golf team, a program that her daughter helped start and a position she held from 2000 to 2004. While under Burgland’s reign, Knox won four straight Midwest Conference Championships.

“Mary brought an intensity to her coaching, like all the activities that she is involved with, which enhances the experiences of the people involved,” said Harley Knosher, a Knox coaching legend and former athletic director.

In her time at Knox, as a student, the institution changed Burgland.

“Knox made me more of a critical thinker,” she said. “Knox made me more liberal than I was growing



*Mary Burgland, an Abingdon native, enhances the lives of everyone that she encounters.*

up. When I say liberal, what it did was it opened up more pathways of thinking for me.”

Burgland has strong emotions about her alma mater.

“I really believe in what Knox is trying to do,” she said. “That is why I am so passionate about it.”

Not only is she passionate about Knox, but Burgland is also avid about the local community, and she helps out a number of organizations.

Presently, she is the president of the Galesburg Sunrise Rotary, director of the Chicago District Golf Association, and she volunteers for the Peoria Park District during the summer. She is also a lector and a

Eucharistic minister at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, and a member of the P.E.O. sisterhood, as well as the recording secretary for the Galesburg chapter of Pi Beta Phi.

In the past, she was the organizer of the grassroots effort to save the ornamental street light system in Galesburg in the mid-to-late-'80s. She also was on the start-up committee for Discovery Depot and on the original Orpheum Theatre saving committee.

Burgland does all that she does for one simple reason, because she likes to.

“I grew up with a set of parents who taught their children to be a part of the community and to give

back— to make a difference. I got locked into the running of organizations, because I participate in what these organizations do,” she said. “I feel an obligation to help these things continue by offering my help. It is not to get an award. It is to help them stay healthy. You can't keep organizations going unless you give them your time. Many people focus in one area, but I don't have a focus. I have the liberal arts mind. I like to do lots of stuff. I like to help the schools that taught me. I just like a variety of things.”



*Brandon Polite is passionate about his profession and his hometown. After a six-year absence, he is back in Galesburg.*

## Polite is doing what he loves

### *Knox grad enjoys being back in Galesburg*

**H**is father and grandparents both once worked at Maytag, but Brandon Polite went down a different road.

Polite, a Galesburg native, graduated from Galesburg High School in 1999, Knox College in 2003, and the University of Illinois-Urbana in 2005. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Illinois-Urbana, and a philosophy teacher at Knox.

His wife, Katie Koca Polite, whom he met while at Knox, lives in Champaign-Urbana and works at U of I as a curatorial assistant.

“She commutes here on the weekends so she has the car. I don’t have a

car,” he said. “I walk to campus. I’m basically just stuck to downtown. I don’t get to the other side of town at all ever, other than the weekends.”

Polite enjoys his walks to Knox’s 90-acre campus.

“I walk to campus every morning through downtown Galesburg. There are not that many people out on the street, but everyone that is out there says hello,” he said. “I tested this out once and walked around downtown Champaign and would say hello to someone and they would be offended by it. In Galesburg, they are offended if you don’t say hello — much more down to earth people, which I prefer. I hate pretentious people.”

Polite didn’t always plan on teaching philosophy. When he first arrived at Knox, he intended on becoming

an engineer. He struggled in a few classes, found philosophy and loved it.

Polite describes his passions with a cool detachment that is perhaps appropriate to his chosen profession.

“I don’t think a person can be a philosopher without being a teacher; it is part of what doing philosophy is,” he said. “That’s what pushed me into teaching rather than doing something else. Plus, I like it — that’s always helpful.”

As a grad student, Polite taught Intro to Logic and Intro to Philosophy. A Knox connection brought him back to his hometown after six years in Champaign-Urbana.

Lance Factor, who is the chair of Knox’s philosophy department and has worked at Knox since 1969, gave

Polite a call over the summer of 2007. During their conversation, Factor informed Polite that he was going on sabbatical for the next academic year to work on his recently released book, *Chapel in the Sky: Knox College's Old Main and Its Masonic Architect*, and asked Polite if he would come to Knox to teach.

"His experience there included teaching so there was evidence from his advisers and so forth that confirmed our department's sense of his promise as a teacher. All that has been fulfilled happily," Factor said.

Factor never gave Polite advice on how to teach his classes, but he has noticed that Polite is good at what he does, and has changed since he wandered around Knox's campus as a student.

"As a student, I think two words sum up Brandon: quietly extraordinary," Factor said. "He is not quiet

anymore and that's a joy ... As a teacher, his classes are enormously successful – very positive evaluations. He has a great teaching style. He is lively. He has elegant organization. He knows a lot of the teacher's tricks and ploys, which took me a lot longer to learn. He has a natural knack for asking the right questions and using the right amount of visual material. There is an aspect of performance of teaching at Knox, and he is spot on and understands that important fact of what teaching is."

Polite isn't quite sure of his future in the 'Burg or at Knox, because his contract is re-upped on a yearly basis, but he is glad that he is back.

"I had the opportunity for the job, but I was thinking about going out on the job market and what sort of place I'd want to teach at. The thought was I'd always want to teach at someplace like Knox," he said.

"Small liberal arts schools where you have close working relationships with students and you can actually watch students develop over the years — have lasting relationships with students. I always wanted to teach at a place like Knox, and you know there is no better place than Knox if you are looking for a place like it."

For Polite, there is no better place in the world he would rather teach than in Galesburg. Food and family also make Knox a good fit.

"I'm back where I was born. My family is definitely excited that I'm back. I'm definitely excited to be back. Now, I can eat at the Pizza House whenever I want," he said with a chuckle. "I've been eating there since I was like two years old. I go there. I go to The Landmark or Kastle Kremer in the summers or the Rib Shack during the weekends when my wife is here. It is places like that, and I still have family in town and around here. It is good to have them around. ... Not that I see them all that often, but it is good to be able to see them whenever."

Polite doesn't see his family very much, because he spends what little free time he has away from teaching working on his dissertation. Only time will tell if he stays near his relatives, but Polite knows Knox changed his life, and knows individuals in the Knox community are the same as those in Galesburg.

"We sort of speak of ourselves as a college that changes lives, which seems like this vague weird sort of platitude, but I think with Knox it is true. Knox is a college that changes lives. It certainly changed mine for the better," he said. "People at Knox don't think they are better than you. They just have a different set of interests and goals. They are not better goals. They are different. People at Knox don't think they are better."



Brandon Polite, a Galesburg native, didn't plan on becoming a teacher, but he is glad that he is molding the young minds of Knox College's students.

# Says touching lives one tooth at a time

*Galesburg's only female dentist is a natural caregiver*

**K**andy Says is proud of her reputation as the main children's dentist in Galesburg, and she thinks she knows the reason.

"They relate to females a little more," said Says, who earned her dentistry degree from the University of Illinois-Chicago in 1983. "I love kids. Growing up, my mom was a daycare provider so I grew up with a houseful of kids around me and as a teen helped her out with them. My practice, while it is for all ages, has many children."

Her quarterly "No Cavity Club," which is specifically for children under 12 years old, provides an incentive for Galesburg's youth to brush regularly and challenges them to do so.

"My daughters enjoy the 'No Cavity Club' wall because neither of them has gotten a cavity so far, which means that they get to have their pictures on the wall," said Craig Choma, an associate professor of theatre at Knox whose family has been patients of Says for 12 years. "My youngest daughter, Autumn, won a giant stuffed gorilla with two baby gorillas, because her name was drawn, a few months ago, from all of the children's names that had been put into the jar for having no cavities.

We think this sort of incentive has gone a long way towards getting our daughters to want to brush on a regular basis."

Says, who attended Silas Willard, Lincoln and Lombard schools, graduated from Galesburg High School in 1978 and Knox College in 1982. She attributes a good part of her spirit of dedication to Knox.

"Knox drives you to that perfection I think," Says



*Kandy Says, Galesburg's only female dentist for the past 21 years, examines the teeth of a patient.*

said. "I think it is important that you are challenged, and the courses that Knox offers challenge you and get you ready for those challenges you meet later on in life."

Linda Dybas, a biology professor at Knox, remembers her former pupil well and regularly hears about her.

"Kandy has great rapport with the kids from what I hear. She certainly has done a good job as a dental educator with the kids," Dybas said. "She is a lovely person. She has a great personality. I know a lot of people here at Knox who are traumatized by dentists, but love her. She is a really considerate warm person."

Saysr is a caregiver, which comes naturally.

"I'm that way in every part of my life not only work," she said. "I just try to nurture everybody that I can in my life. I'm always trying to look out for them and take them under my wing — see what I can do to make things better."

Saysr regards the children she sees as her own, because she has none herself.

"My decision was to go into dentistry with the option for flexible time for family, but my career path did take me away from that. ... I just found to give 110 percent in my career didn't allow me to give 110 percent to raising a family," she said. "I just didn't think it would be fair to a child to not have Mom present and active in their life. I chose to live vicariously through all my kids in my practice. I love watching their accomplishments and feel in some way I helped them as well with good dental health along the way, and perhaps a role model."

For the past 21 years, Saysr has been Galesburg's only female dentist, which was challenging at first. Overall, the experience has been a

positive one.

"It was a bit of a challenge, I would say, for the first five years, but after that people accepted me and realized that I wasn't going to go away," said Saysr, who opened her practice in 1989, at the age of 28. "Personally, I like being the only lady around. I think it's great."

At a young age, Saysr knew she wanted to improve the lives of others and was influenced to do so by watching a doctor on television.

"I knew I wanted to be in the medical profession since the time I was real little," she said. "I used to watch Dr. Ben Casey on T.V., my mother tells me when I was four or five years old."

Saysr also became engrossed in Knox when she was little.

"I always liked Knox College. As a child, I'd go down to campus. Back then they didn't have the College for Kids and all that stuff, but I always loved the campus," she said. "I knew it was an excellent school for pre-med, pre-dent. When you graduated from there you knew you had a good chance of getting into med or dental school."

After she graduated from dental school, Saysr was accepted into the pediatric dentistry program at UIC, but opted to hone her skills as an associate dentist in Edwardsville.

"I worked there for about two and a half years, kind of got the lay of the land," she said. "My skills sharpened up a little bit. I had the opportunity to buy the practice down there, but all my family and friends and everyone were back here in Galesburg."

Being home has worked well for Saysr.

"Having your family here is always important," she said. "It's a good community. I enjoyed the community growing up. I enjoy the small-town atmosphere. I enjoy

the way that Knox works with the community so there are things to do. You can still be involved with the college. I like attending the different performances they have."

Not only is she still involved with her alma mater, Saysr is also actively involved in Galesburg.

"I see myself as an active leader in my community. I love Galesburg. Growing up here, I have watched it go through good and bad times," she said. "I am involved in numerous community activities and clubs and have been on the board and president of many over the years. I stay active and involved with community activities. I sponsor and support the schools, sports and music programs. I am very active with the local humane society."

No matter where she is, Saysr will never forget Knox.

"It means a stepping stone to a career, which has formed my life. It brings back fond memories and good friendships," she said. "I remember when I graduated from Knox the feeling I got walking down that aisle, the teachers all lined up, and everyone of them knew you whether you took a course from them or not. ... I think that is one of the things I think about the most about Knox, that family, that close feeling. They care about you there. They care whether or not you graduate. They don't let you flounder."

Saysr has had her struggles along the way, but she took what she learned at Knox and put it to good use. She's nurturing everyone that she meets one tooth at a time. Galesburg's youth are her own.



For the past 173 years, Knox and the city of Galesburg have had close ties. Those individuals who founded Knox and Galesburg were connected, and were given the freedom to flourish.

Hopefully, the stories inside this magazine will help you see through “the Knox bubble,” and help you realize that Galesburg is Knox and Knox is Galesburg.

Please take some time and read about Victor Davis, Pete Thierry, Kandy Sayrs, Carol Crouch, Mary Burgland, Brandon Polite, Nick Young and myself, Matthew Wheaton. I’m hopeful that you will feel like you can relate to us all in some way.

Knox’s community reaches beyond the campus’ borders and includes the Galesburg community.

As Brandon Polite eloquently said, “People at Knox don’t think they are better than you. They just have a different set of interests and goals.”

There is no need to have a bubble over Knox College any longer. We’re all alike in some way. Shoot me an email, [mateowheaton@gmail.com](mailto:mateowheaton@gmail.com), or give me a call, (309) 368-4415, and I’ll give you a tour of Knox’s beautiful 90-acre campus.

