

# Westwind

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## Jesus Among Us



Team Brings Their  
Best Game to Tax  
Challenge

The Music Goes On

# Honoring Lives



## Nancy Cross

Class of 1966  
English

After a long illness, Nancy Cross, a 2011 Alumni of the Year, passed away on June 27. Nancy attended April's Homecoming Banquet, where the Alumni of the Year honor gave Nancy's friends and colleagues an opportunity to show her the difference she made in so many lives. A campus memorial service was held Sunday, July 10.

Nancy graduated in 1966 with a major in English and returned to the campus in 1981 to teach English. Her husband, Carlton, also joined the faculty as an engineering professor. During Nancy's 28-year teaching career, she also had several administrative roles, including four years as director of the writing center, six years as college writing coordinator, and eight years as department chair, until she retired in 2009.

Nancy's enthusiasm for teaching writing was matched by her initiative in creating new pro-

grams, including developing new courses in Writing Theory and Non-fiction Writing. She also put together several directed reading courses, including Holocaust Autobiography, the American Woman's Experience, and Nature Writing. Nancy helped develop the Writing Workshops for North Pacific Union teachers and also conducted the workshops at La Sierra University and Southwestern Adventist University. "Nothing could be more exciting than teaching writing. Nowhere does a teacher learn more from students than when reading of their life experiences," Nancy said. She continued her own studies in Writing Theory and presented her work at the Council on College Composition and Communication and the National Council of Teachers of English. She received the Burlington Northern Award for Teaching Excellence in 1994.

Nancy was recognized as a leader, a diplomat, and a wise counselor. As a leader, she was committed to resolving problems and worked by consensus. She spoke well, and often strongly, for the department and for issues important to the university. She was immensely pastoral to students and colleagues in ways that were both academic and diplomatic. She was an attentive listener and a wise and trustworthy counselor. She was flexible, willing to go wherever she was needed, and she excelled wherever she served.

Nancy is survived by her husband, Carlton, and their children, Jeffrey and Tara.



## Darold Bigger

Class of 1966  
Theology

During his lifetime, Darold Bigger has answered the call of duty and service in ways that few Walla Walla alumni will ever match. Through his professional work as a professor, pastor, and counselor, Darold has touched the lives of thousands. Then, well into his diverse career, Darold chose to answer the call of his country and serve in the United States military.

Darold first served as a Chaplain in the U.S. Naval Reserve until 1999 when he was appointed Deputy Chief of Navy Chaplains for Reserve Matters and Director of Religious Programs for the Navy, Marine, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine Reserve Forces.

During his service Darold traveled to 17 different countries, including Korea, Japan, Iraq, Bahrain, and United Arab Emirates. On Sept. 11, 2001, he was in a building close to where bombs destroyed sections of the

Pentagon facility in Washington, D.C. In the moments after the destruction, and then traveling to New York City just days after 9/11, Darold helped coordinate chaplain services.

To honor his outstanding record of military service, Darold has received the highest non-combat award given in the Navy, the Distinguished Service Medal. He retired from military service in 2004.

Darold's professional life began at Walla Walla University, where he graduated with a theology degree in 1966. During his time at Walla Walla he met his future wife, Barbara.

Darold began his ministry as a pastor at several Northwest churches, and in 1980 became pastor of the Walla Walla University Church. He served for 12 years before transitioning into higher education.

Darold and Barbara raised their family in College Place, including a foster daughter, Rosemary, and two daughters, Hilary and Shannon, who is now deceased. The murder of their daughter Shannon in 1996 was the impetus for the Bigger's ministry of helping others touched by grief. The couple presents seminars on the power of forgiveness.

Darold is currently a Walla Walla University professor in both the schools of theology and social work. He holds a doctoral degree in pastoral counseling and a master's degree in social work. Darold is a certified clinical social worker and a licensed marriage and family therapist.

# of Service Alumni of the Year



**Lori Ciccarelli**  
Class of 1981  
Mass Communications

From the moment Lori Ciccarelli stepped on the Walla Walla University campus, she was a standout. Communications professor Loren Dickinson says, “The outstanding thing about this gal is that she was a pack of energy and had a spirit about her that the rest of us didn’t quite comprehend.”

Today, the 1981 mass communications graduate exudes this unique energy and spirit in her career as a hospital communications professional and as a noted advocate for families affected by autism.

Lori grew into her advocacy role after her personal experience raising a child diagnosed at age three with autism spectrum disorder. After watching her son, J.J., struggle during his teenage years, Lori turned into a mom with a mission.

“I finally realized my son didn’t need a cure, he just needed tools for success and tools to function

responsibly in society. The hardest part about autism has been the intolerance of others; I want to help educate society,” Lori says. My mission is to provide resources and hope to those in need.”

To accomplish this, Lori created a documentary film called “JJ’s Journey, A Journey about Autism.” The film was released in 2008 and was a 2009 Autism Society of American Media Excellence Award Nominee. “JJ’s Journey” has also been featured on Oprah.com and NBC news. Lori and J.J., now a college student, often speak at conferences and workshops about autism around the nation. In addition to spreading her message of hope to mass audiences, Lori delights in helping individual families who call her for advice and encouragement

Lori has said that she can look back on her life and see how all the pieces fit perfectly together. Her record of educating and volunteerism began early in her career. Lori spent 11 years teaching elementary school, and among other volunteer posts, was PTA president for a junior high school.

Since 1998, Lori has worked as the Community Relations Director at Mammoth Hospital near her home in Mammoth Lakes, California. In 2010, Lori received the Excellence in Management Award for her leadership at the hospital. Currently, Lori is pursuing her master’s degree in Leadership and Organizations from the University of Denver.



**Rhona Kwiram**  
Class of 1991  
Business Administration

If a nonprofit organization needs a champion, it can find one in Rhona Kwiram. For more than 20 years she has set the highest of standards as a financial consultant specializing in nonprofit organizations.

Rhona, a 1991 business administration graduate, began her career at the accounting firm of Clark Nuber, where she is now a partner in the audit practice. It often takes 10 to 15 years to become partner, but Rhona reached this distinction in just eight years. When she first began at Clark Nuber, the company’s not-for-profit client list numbered only six organizations. Rhona has helped the Bellevue, Washington-based company increase their non-profit clients to more than 600.

Rhona’s role and reputation goes far beyond what might be expected of an auditor. Clients and colleagues describe Rhona as skilled,

kind, generous, and willing to serve. Clients often rely on her for strategic and operational advice. Her approach makes her a favorite of clients who find in her a sympathetic and knowledgeable resource.

“I love solving problems and helping not-for-profits come up with systems and strategies to accomplish their missions,” Rhona says. “My goal is to be the first resource that my clients turn to whenever a challenge or opportunity comes their way.”

Rhona has extended her expertise to volunteer positions on various boards and committees of nonprofit organizations. Currently she is treasurer of both the Bellevue Children’s Theatre and Out of the Gray, an organization dedicated to caring for caregivers. Rhona is also a member of Walla Walla University’s School of Business Advisory Board.

Rhona is active in her church, the Green Lake Seventh-day Adventist church. She is an accomplished pianist and vocalist, and has been a member of the church choir for 20 years. She has also served as the chair of the church’s Finance Committee for 16 years.

**See the honored alumni video at [wallawalla .edu/ alumni-of-the-year](http://wallawalla.edu/alumni-of-the-year).**