



# FOCUS

## The Opening!

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FACULTY RESEARCH PAYS    AU @ THE CHICAGO MARATHON    20 YEARS AND COUNTING



## An Evening to Remember

Its arrival came quickly for me. Not long ago there were cranes and trucks and dozers grinding about their business just a few yards from where I write. Too close for comfort, if you ask me. But those days faded with the early summer, and before long it was clear that this new building, so widely anticipated, would soon arrive.

Oddly enough, while it was under construction, I intentionally avoided setting foot in the building.

Although checking out the Howard Performing Arts Center while it was being built qualifies as a job perk for me, I didn't cash in. Initially, it was just coincidental: I simply missed the first couple opportunities to see the beginnings of the Howard Center's construction—the foundation laid, the soundproof walls going up, the first bathroom stall driven into place (see the back cover for a sneak peak at those luxurious stalls).

And then it became a streak.

In this case, I guess you could say a "streak" is when you do something for no real reason except momentum. I built up an early burst of momentum in those initial building stages, when the construction workers were literally building stages, and found myself deciding that I'd wait to see the Howard Center when it was good and ready to host me for an evening gala.

On October 18, all was in place. And the building did not disappoint.

From the open lobby to the contemporary and elegant auditorium, the Howard Center welcomed me and some 750 others, mostly awestruck, spectators to opening night. And clearly this night, she was the star.

If and when you get the opportunity to visit the Howard Center, I'd encourage you to try a balcony seat. The spacious (and grand) dimensions of the near-perfect acoustical design are most impressive from this vantage point. And here's where you'll experience the building's rich aura. I honestly sat gape-mouthed through much of the first half of the inaugural program,

simply bathed in the ambience. Andrews is and should be proud of our latest addition.

And on that night, opening night, it was easy to forget that more money needs to be raised to pay for the building, that programming must develop quickly to truly make the place a community destination, and that while the Howard Center satisfies an important need on campus, there are other buildings, not yet built, that will address equally vital functions.

The Howard Performing Arts Center is



L-R: Margit Waern, Eike Mueller, Ethel & Carsten Waern, Ivan & Brynja Davis

Photo by Sarah Spangler

*On October 18, all was in place.  
And the building did not disappoint.*

one great step forward. And we have celebrated its arrival. With this success, the university cannot rest on its laurels, or garlands, as the case may be. There are more buildings to build, more problems to solve, more students to equip.

Perhaps the musical rhythms emanating from the Howard Center will keep the university in step with the progress the building signals.

\* \* \*

In our cover story, Katie Shaw writes about the opening of the Howard Center and that magical weekend of music and

celebration. Sarah Spangler and Martin Lee provide the accompanying photos.

Of the many reasons Andrews has to be proud, the recent run on external grants awarded to AU professors and students to fund their research projects has got to be near the top of the list. Lynnette Struntz examines several of these fascinating projects, all of which speak to the quality and reputation of Andrews University as a research institution.

After a little over twenty years as senior pastor at Pioneer Memorial Church, Dwight Nelson reflects on his time at AU. He likens his experience as campus pastor to that of a marathon runner, with all the accompanying joy and pain.

Speaking of marathons, Brent Geraty takes a look at Andrews' faculty, staff and students who participated in the LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon this October. AU runners joined nearly 40,000 marathoners cheered on by over a million spectators as they ran through the streets and neighborhoods of downtown Chicago.

And if the idea of completing a marathon isn't challenging enough, Jairo Flores writes about finishing the Ironman Wisconsin Triathlon in this issue's Student Spotlight. Jairo swam 2.4 miles, cycled 112 miles, and then ran a full marathon (26.2 miles). Oh, to be young again!

Finally, thanks to those of you who have taken our online reader survey (available at [www.andrews.edu/PR/focus/](http://www.andrews.edu/PR/focus/)). If you haven't already shared your feedback with us, please take a few minutes to complete the survey. It's simple and easy and will be invaluable to us as we think about the future direction of *Focus*.

~ Ivan Davis is assistant professor of English and the editor of *Focus*.

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## EDITOR

Ivan Davis (MA '92)

## ASSISTANT EDITOR

Patricia Spangler

## INTERN AND EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Lynnette Aldridge Struntz

## CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Rebecca May (BA '77)

Katie Shaw (BA '00)

Brent Geraty (MA '91)

## WRITERS

Jairo Flores

Dwight K. Nelson

(MDiv '76, DMin '86)

Katie Shaw (BA '00)

Lynnette Aldridge Struntz

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

Erin Heldstab

Martin Lee

Sarah Spangler (BT '02)

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Editor's Office: (269) 471-3316

Email: [ivan@andrews.edu](mailto:ivan@andrews.edu)

Alumni Services Office: (269) 471-3591

Email: [alumni@andrews.edu](mailto:alumni@andrews.edu)

[www.andrews.edu](http://www.andrews.edu)

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**ON THE COVER:** Martin Lee, photographer, captured the expansive interior of the Howard Performing Arts Center during the Inaugural Weekend Open House on October 19, 2003. On stage is the St. Joseph High School Symphony String Orchestra, conducted by Steve Reed.

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