



The Jamail E. Johnson Drive street sign sits above the Indiana Avenue street sign to honor Jamail Johnson's act of heroism. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

## REMEMBERING JAMAIL JOHNSON: UNITED THROUGH LOVE

**AMANDA JOERNDT**

If Shirlene Hill could describe her son in one word, it's "love."  
"He was love. He gave love. He was just a young man that loved God's people. ... No matter where he was, no one was a stranger," she said. "He was one of the best brothers, friend, son. Wherever he went, he took love."



Bloody footprints marked the scene of the Feb. 6, 2011, shooting on Indiana Avenue near the YSU campus. Photo by **Joe Giesy/Jambar Archive**

Jamail Johnson was a Youngstown State University business management major when he was shot and killed at an off-campus fraternity party on Indiana Avenue while trying to protect his peers Feb. 6, 2011.

Eleven other victims were shot and wounded during the Omega Psi Phi fraternity party, with some listed in critical condition.

According to a Feb. 7, 2011, Jambar article, a fight broke out after a woman was pushed by a bystander and came back to the house 10 minutes later with a group of people, including some that were armed.

Hill said she was thankful to spend 25 years with her son, but "he did what God called him to do."

"God lent him to me for 25 wonderful years, and I just praise him," she said.

Exactly nine years later on Feb. 6, Johnson's legacy will live on in Youngstown with a dedication of his name on a street sign, Jamail E. Johnson Drive.

Moe Jiles, a Youngstown native and a lifelong friend of Johnson, said he wanted to name the street after Johnson to honor his name and legacy.

"We went out and knocked on some doors to get some signatures to see if they would be willing to change the sign," he said. "They weren't actually able to change the street name completely, but they were able to give us a commemorative sign, which I think is still great."

Jiles said he wanted to turn the negative situation into a positive remembrance.

"[Hill] hasn't been back on that street since it happened, and now it gives her a reason to revisit that site not just because of the tragic stuff that happened there but to see her son up there and have something to be proud of," he said.

Hill said she still receives positive comments about her son's character.

"The whole community, people still to this day come up to me and just tell me what kind of man he was," she said. "All of this is just overwhelming with the love and support."

Youngstown 1st Ward Councilman Julius Oliver said when Jiles contacted him about changing the street name, he immediately wanted to make it happen.

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# FEATURES



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# YSU ADVISING STRATEGIES DIFFER FROM COLLEGE TO COLLEGE

**BRIANNA GLEGHORN**

Advisement is one of the beginning steps incoming Youngstown State University students go through when preparing for higher education. But within each college comes different experiences; some may be positive where others experience challenges.

Allyson Carnahan, a junior business major, said she had a rough advising experience before switching to the Williamson College of Business Administration.

“When I came to YSU for the [freshman] orientation, I met with one of my previous advisers and everything was fine,” she said. “But when I came back in the fall, the adviser didn’t have my file. She didn’t know who I was, and she was kind of mean to me.”

Carnahan said after switching advisers, she later switched colleges. Now, she’s studying business and is happy with her current advising experience.

“I definitely plan to always see my adviser,” she said. “She’s helped me a lot with my personal life and work.”

Some colleges depend solely on academic advisers to guide students through registering for classes, internships and career advice.

Karen Henning, a senior academic adviser in the Beeghly College of Education, said her college relies on professional advisers instead of faculty advisers.

“We start off with the students that come in through orientation in the spring and summer, and we go through an advising component when we get them registered for their first year of classes,” she said.

According to Henning, there are only two full-time advisers to handle advising needs in the BCOE.

“We may not have enough people in advising,” she said. “It does get to a point where if somebody’s sick and out for a few weeks in this college, there really are only two full-time advisers.”

Henning said one of the full-time advisers is currently on maternity leave, leaving a part-time adviser to fill the position.

“It makes it a little bit tougher not just for us but really for the students because it can put a backlog, although it has not at this point,” she said.

In Henning’s opinion, academic advisers work best because advising is their main priority.

“We know the curriculums in and out; we know all of them and it can help with the students,” she said. “We know what the [general education requirements] are and that not every gen-ed fits for every major.”

Henning said while she values the advising system in the BCOE, it does bring difficulties when scheduling enough time for every student.

“It does make it a little tougher for the colleges that don’t have faculty advisement because that means every student that’s in the college is coming to the advisers,” she said.

The lack of advisers mixed with a large population of students is a campuswide issue, according to Henning.

“The biggest thing on the campus overall is the fact that we may not have enough people in advising,” she said. “You’ll go through a file with a student, and you want to go through things a little bit more, get to know them a little more also.”

Brien Smith, provost and vice president for academic affairs at YSU, said although advising across campus is similar in purpose, the content of what an adviser does may be different.

“I think the function of advising is similar,” he said. “As far as the work they do, advising students about classes, looking at transcripts from other institutions, advising them how to graduate on time.”

In Smith’s opinion, it’s difficult to see all advisers as the same because each college has its own needs.

“It wouldn’t be easy to take an adviser from [the Bitonte College of Health and Human Services] and move them over to [the College of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics],” he said.

Wim Steelant, dean of the STEM college, said STEM students see an academic adviser for their first year.

“Once you’re done with your first year, you get transferred to the department and then you’re advised by the faculty,” he said.

Denise Walters-Dobson, academic administrator in the STEM college, said faculty advisers can provide research opportunities, internship travel opportunities and information on courses.

“[They have] inside information that maybe the average student looking at the screen doesn’t know,” she said. “So I really think that the sequencing is a big deal here, and ask questions so they get that information they need.”

Although students are only required to see an adviser their



Karen Henning, a senior academic adviser, is one of two full-time advisers that handles student advising in the Beeghly College of Education. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

first year, she encourages them to make regular visits.

“I really think that students should have to see an adviser,” Walters-Dobson said. “We have mandatory advising for engineering. They have to see an adviser every single term because it’s such a lock step, and if you get out of lock step, your whole [schedule] could be off.”

Walters-Dobson said the advisers are there to be attentive to student needs.

“It’s always something different, always something new,” she said. “We just want to make it better for them and have them realize their goals.”

Claire Berardini, associate provost for the Division of Student Success, said advising is comparable to teaching because each adviser has different styles.

“Sometimes in one of the colleges where it may be shared between professional advisers and faculty advisers, a student’s experience in that college is going to be different because there’s more people advising.”

According to YSU’s website, advisers are provided as a resource to guide students through their degree but the responsibility to carry it out lies on the student.

## THE KITCHEN POST CLOSES

An iconic downtown restaurant has closed its doors to the Youngstown community. The Kitchen Post announced its closure on Wednesday, Feb. 12, through a Facebook post.

The American nouvelle cuisine restaurant previously operated their business in Struthers before moving to the Youngstown Erie Terminals at the corner of Commerce and Phelps streets in 2018.

Ross Fowler, the executive chef, shared his gratitude for the

business through a Facebook post.

“It has been a truly magical experience. The support I’ve received from my friends, family and staff who’ve ultimately become friends and family,” Fowler said.

The Kitchen Post was known for its crab toast, BBQ Brussels sprouts and a fried chicken sandwich along with its breakfast taco and chicken and waffles. Photo by **Tanner Mondok/Jambar Archive**





# YSU FRATERNITY MEMBERSHIP ON THE DECLINE

The Theta Chi fraternity house is located on Pennsylvania Avenue in Youngstown. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

## ABIGAIL CLOUTIER

Youngstown State University's sorority membership sits at 195 members versus 123 total fraternity members, resulting in a 60-40 ratio, according to the Office of Student Activities.

Though sororities continue to increase in membership, fraternities are struggling to obtain members.

Carrie Anderson, associate director of student activities and Greek life adviser, said a significant portion of students graduate at the same time, causing a fluctuation in numbers.

"I think something that affects us a lot is that more recently we've had a lot of larger classes of new members in the last couple years," she said. "So eventually, it's time for them to graduate, so you see a lot more men leaving the organization at the same time."

According to Anderson, sororities have more consistent membership because of different national standards.

"With sororities, how they're run nationally, they have parity," she said. "So they have to be around the same total number, so that one's not getting stronger than the other. But when it comes to the [Interfraternity Council], they don't regulate these sorts of things."

Fraternities ultimately compete for new members, resulting in some having more presence on campus. Anderson also said these factors require members to work harder at recruitment.

"I still see us in a growth period, but with our guys, they're starting to notice that they've got to work a little bit harder and

be a little bit more outgoing," she said.

Data from YSU's student activities office somewhat reflects those fluctuations in recruitment. The bid reports for every semester show the percent increases between the beginning and end of the semester but they do not acknowledge drops in membership between semesters.

For example, if a fraternity went from 34 to 37 members in spring 2019, it's shown as a 9% increase. But if in fall 2019 it starts the semester with 24 members and goes up to 30, it's shown as a 38% increase even though that fraternity had a net loss of seven members from the end of spring 2019 to the end of fall 2019.

Clay Miller, a sophomore integrated math education major and president of Sigma Tau Gamma, said recruitment can be a difficult time for many fraternities.

"We have a harder time recruiting because we have a larger population of people who commute," Miller said. "I personally believe at least some of the people who commute are in a situation where they maybe don't have quite enough money to spend on this kind of stuff."

According to a U.S. News & World Report article, 89% of enrolled students at YSU are commuter students, and as of 2018 nearly 20% of YSU students are nontraditional.

Miller said YSU students "wear a lot of hats."

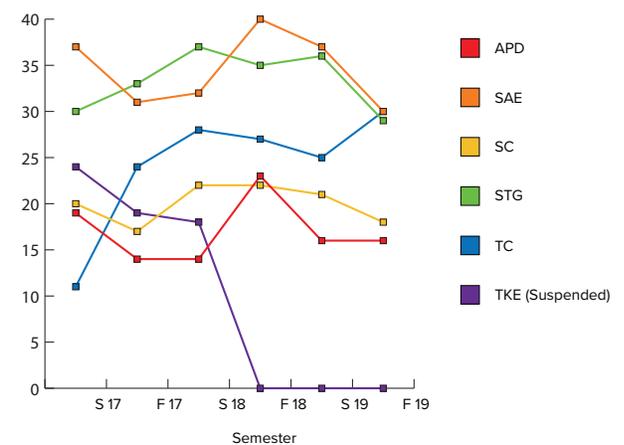
"There's a lot more responsibility that our students have here. They may not have enough time to get to be in a chapter, which is totally respectable," he said.

Beck Holko, a sophomore interpersonal communication major and president of Theta Chi, said stereotypes about Greek life participation is one reason for recruitment difficulties.

"I think the media portrays a lot of the bad things that happen. A lot of people don't realize that fraternities do a lot for you, and you're doing a lot for your community," Holko said.

Both Miller and Holko said they found a sense of community in Greek life at YSU.

MEMBERSHIP PER FRATERNITY



A breakdown of membership per fraternity per semester. Statistics provided by the **Office of Student Activities**



# GUINS HIT A BULL'S-EYE: MARKSMANSHIP COURSES OFFERED AT YSU

Julianna Titi aims at a target during YSU's marksmanship class on Wednesday. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

## KELCEY NORRIS

Youngstown State University students can learn the proper way of handling firearms safely and efficiently through a marksmanship course offered by the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Science.

The marksmanship course is instructed by YSU Police Chief Shawn Varso, who is a law enforcement firearms instructor.

"I'm used to teaching cadets, and [here] it's a different way of teaching. ... You can actually teach an entry-level person with no experience," he said. "You can get good skills and good habits into them early on."

Varso said students are taught primarily to use a weapon safely, which includes how to hold it and aim it away from bystanders.

"One of my goals in this class is to increase their proficiency in marksmanship," he said. "I want them to take away an interest tempered with safety. If you are going to be interested in firearms, take precautions."

Varso said the skills taught in the course will translate directly into the varying career paths students may take.

"With a lot of professions out there, you need to have some sort of grounding with firearms. Whether it be in education as a schoolteacher or in a business setting or in retail," he said. "If you ever have a student bring in a gun, how are you going to make sure you transport that gun safely somewhere?"

The students taking the course meet at the shooting range in the basement of Beeghly Center.

"I took the marksmanship class when I was a student ... in the early '90s," Varso said. "We're going back more than twenty

years now that the class has been in existence."

Students participating in the class range from beginners to experienced firearm users, and practice leads to improved skill throughout the course, according to Varso.

"Over the years I've found that since we keep their targets as they're going through the whole semester, there's a vast improvement on a person's accuracy," he said "I want them to improve in their concentration and relaxation."

Carrington Lisser, a fifth-year art education major, said taking the course has given her new confidence when operating firearms.

"I'd recommend everyone take this class because it gives you a better understanding of how guns work," Lisser said. "You learn the proper techniques and safety instructions with using guns. Plus, you get to have fun with it."

She said having an understanding of firearm safety is one of the first lessons she learned from the course.

"When you walk with the gun, always point it down to make sure that you're not pointing it at anyone else in case it goes off," Lisser said. "When you place it down, you always face it towards the target and away from everybody else."

Sara Michaliszyn, associate professor and chair of the Department of Kinesiology and Sport Science, said the course is usually a popular choice for students.

"Marksmanship does fill up quickly. ... It typically will have one or two on the waitlist," she said. "The student feedback from those who take it, love it."

The university offers 32 physical activity classes each semester

and according to Michaliszyn, more than 1,500 students enrolled in these courses in 2019. Yoga and boxing are the two most popular courses.

"People who allow time to engage in physical activity feel better, have better health, feel better mentally and get better grades," she said. "There is a ton of research demonstrating the positive effects of engaging in movement-based activities and health and wellness."

Michaliszyn said there are many benefits to taking these courses in the program.

"Teaching students how to be physically active or providing them ways to engage in physical activity can help students throughout the semester with anxiety, learning, improved focus and overall health," she said.



Austin Dalrymple aims at a target. Photo by **Kamron Meyers/The Jambar**

# YSU COMMUNITY PARTICIPATES IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION WORKSHOP

**TINA KALENITS**

A diversity and inclusion workshop brought Youngstown State University students and faculty together in Kilcawley Center's Chestnut Room to learn how to discuss diversity in a productive way.

The Rev. Jamie Washington, president and founder of the Washington Consulting Group, led the discussion that was aimed at creating a sense of diversity within a community, including race, gender equality and inclusion.

Washington has experience in higher-education spanning over 36 years, and he serves as the pastor of Unity Fellowship Church in Baltimore, Maryland. The Washington Consulting Group is one of the top 10 global diversity consultants in the world.

During the discussion, Washington said there are three ways of communicating in diverse environments. The first is through effective and open conversation with one another.

"What's important is folks are having real conversations. ... The outcome is using your practice, using your voice in the conversation," he said.

According to Washington, the second communication technique is self-reflection and engagement with others.

"Being able to talk about what one's perspective is in such that you hear yourself saying what you've not," he said. "It's just you spinning your mind."

Lastly, being able to build relationships, hear other perspectives and know how to have productive talks with one another are all key when talking about diversity.

"The responsibility of higher education is to prepare the next generation of leaders," he said. We exist in the marketplace to make sure that we have an educated society and a society that's advancing society."

Carol Bennett, assistant provost for diversity and inclusion at YSU, said alliance begins with a community that knows how to communicate.

"This is the foundation to lead to other talks. Whether the colleges want to do something separately or we have many workshops on what's microaggressions, what's implicit bias," she said. "I'm hoping that people get an understanding in a foundation."

The workshop consisted of small and large group discussions between students, faculty and members of the community with 30 in attendance.

"This is how to build an inclusive learning environment; Youngstown State University is a learning environment. ... But how do we work it that way?" Bennett said.

According to Bennett, as we work to create a more diverse community, others will follow.

"There are so many different people on campus, whether they're students, staff and faculty, so we can, as you say, have good end-product college graduates, college graduates that are doing what they want to do in career and life," she said.

Bennett said she wants to keep the momentum of diversity going within the campus community at YSU.

"The goal is to make campus aware that we are working toward ideas of diversity, equity, inclusion," she said.

Kate Easterday, a sophomore early childhood intervention specialist major, said the workshop helped her think about others' experiences in a different way.

"One thing that you don't often think about is the context of the conversation, who's around you, where they're coming from and where you're coming from. That definitely can impact a conversation," Easterday said.

According to Easterday, diversity is everywhere you turn in society.

"Everyone's different and everyone has their own background, and to overlook that is irresponsible," she said.



YSU students learned how to incorporate diversity and inclusion through productive conversation during a workshop held Saturday, Feb. 8. Photo by **Tina Kalenits/The Jambar**

## JAMAIL REMEMBRANCE

Continued from Page 1

"Something to separate him from other shooting victims because he's not the same from other people that got shot. ... This guy got killed trying to save lives, and [Jiles] didn't want that to be forgotten," Oliver said.

"It's a phenomenal thing for friends to remember friends," he said. "Just think if the city of Youngstown would start loving each other again. ... We wouldn't have any problems. We can love each other ... while we're alive."

Additionally, a Youngstown ordinance declared Feb. 6 as Jamail E. Johnson Day for the city.

"For a young African American man that risked his life as a hero and to receive his own day in Youngstown, Ohio, is an awesome thing," Oliver said. "I've never seen anything like that before."

Hill plans to make Jamail E. Johnson Day all about giving back to the street and creating a continuous cycle of beautification in the community.

"I want to be able to go back into the community and beautify and give back," she said. "One other thing that I want

to do is have a block party for children on that street. ... What we instill in our children today, that's what tomorrow is going to be about."

Hill said she will continue to keep praising God. "I forgive them. ... He's better than we are," she said.

Oliver said he remembers the tragic day vividly. "That day, particularly, I actually was going to go to that party, but I didn't," he said. "I remember seeing photos with blood in the snow, people crying, and it was just eye-opening to see that something could just happen at any moment."

Former YSU President Cynthia Anderson spoke to the media the day of the shooting and expressed her condolences to Johnson's family.

"I want to express my deepest sympathies to the family of the student that died in this tragic act of violence and to ask everyone throughout our Mahoning Valley community and beyond to keep them, their parents and all the other students involved in their thoughts and prayers," she said in a Jambar article.



Moe Jiles (left), Shirlene Hill (center) and Sidney Hill (right) hold Johnson's street sign in Hill's house. Photo by **Amanda Joerndt/The Jambar**

## GALS THAT BRUNCH: YOU CAN SIT WITH US

**ALYSSA WESTON**

Gals That Brunch Youngstown is bringing women together once a month to eat delicious food and, more importantly, to support each other and the community.

Gals That Brunch is a limited liability company with over 55 chapters. The Youngstown chapter began November 2019.

“Our mission is to create a positive, authentic and empowering atmosphere where women can connect with each other and find community within their city,” according to galsthatbrunch.com.

However, the Youngstown chapter is taking it a step further by using the monthly gathering as an opportunity to support local businesses and philanthropies.

Katy Haybarger and Jessica Irwin, the Gals That Brunch Youngstown leaders, met while working as nurses in the ICU. Together, they were inspired to start a social platform where people can connect.

“Gals That Brunch has a very simple mission: to connect with women over brunch. Jess and I have taken it just a step further, and we’ve added philanthropic aspects to every brunch. So, every month we give to someone in need or some kind of an organization within our community,” Haybarger said.

February’s Gals That Brunch Youngstown gathering was hosted at Homestead Kitchen & Cocktails in Columbiana. All tickets to the brunch included four courses with an alcoholic drink for each course, and proceeds benefited Trees for a Change in honor of the late nature-lover Kyle Bullen who died by suicide last year.

“If you look in literature, there’s so many metaphors with nature and humanity, especially within trees. We thought it was a beautiful way to spark a conversation on mental health and

suicide prevention,” Irwin said.

Gal’s That Brunch Youngstown events strive to exceed the expectations of a typical Sunday brunch with live piano and cello performances, a photo booth and speakers.

Speakers included Nicole Ranttila, a clinical psychologist, and Brandi Booth, a local musician who shared her struggle with mental illness through spoken-word poetry.

February’s event hosted local vendors including Lia Andreatta Massage, Glitter Galore at Tracey Ramun Art Creations, Radio Hoop and Fruit Collective.

In Irwin’s opinion, many don’t realize the wealth of people and resources in the Youngstown area.

“That includes small businesses, restaurants, the arts. It’s just a wealth of people here that we need to tap into more as a Youngstown community,” Irwin said.

Additionally, representatives from Full Spectrum Community Outreach, Help Network of Northeast Ohio and Trees for a Change were at the brunch to provide information to attendees.

“Our mission was to connect women into the back to the community but also in addition to that to create this awareness of all of these local resources that we have,” Haybarger said.

Vince Brancaccio, chief executive officer for Help Network of Northeast Ohio, attended to raise awareness of the 2-1-1 hotline and the resources provided by Help Network of Northeast Ohio for Ashtabula, Columbiana, Mahoning and Trumbull counties.

Help Network of Northeast Ohio takes 400 calls each day and 150,000 calls each year in addition to 750 in-person consultations.

“Five people die of suicide each day. In a week, we take anywhere from five to 10 suicide-related calls each day, covering our four counties. In addition, we take 25 to what we call crisis



Jessica Irwin (left) and Katy Haybarger (right) pose for a photo before the Feb. 9 Gals That Brunch event. Photo by Alyssa Weston/The Jambar

calls,” Brancaccio said.

Help Network of Northeast Ohio also takes 400 information referral calls each day, giving callers information on local resources including mental health, substance abuse, veterans, food, dispute resolution, victims’ assistance, utilities assistance, health, housing, special needs and seniors.

“People who are in crisis, if they can’t find help, they end up giving up hope. And when you give up hope, your next thought is ‘Do I really want to live?’” Brancaccio said. “So we take those 25 calls, and hopefully we can keep them, you know, prevent them from getting to a place where they want to die.”

Haybarger and Irwin encourage Youngstown State University students to get involved, so long as they are over the age of 21.

Next month’s event will take place March 15 at Nova Coffee Co. in Warren. Follow @galsthatbrunchyo on Instagram for ticket information.

## EASY VALENTINE’S DATES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

**J. HARVARD FELDHOUSE**

While Valentine’s Day is the time of the year when one can surprise their partner with a special moment together, a person doesn’t have to travel too far from campus to make it happen.

A few students gave ideas for couples looking for something fun to do together.

Megan Levan, a junior theatre studies major, recommended couples go to the YSU Department of Theatre and Dance’s annual Valentine’s Day Cabaret.

With the theme “A Kiss to Build a Dream On,” musical theatre students will sing songs about love from people’s favorite movies and productions or from popular culture.

Tickets are \$10 for students and \$25 for nonstudents. The cabaret will be held at the B&O Station on Mahoning Avenue from 6 to 9:30 p.m.

Levan also recommended couples get drinks or a bite to eat at one of the many restaurants downtown, such as V2 Wine Bar and Trattoria, The Mocha House or The Federal.

If couples want more than dinner for their date, No Funk No Justice, a Youngstown-based band, will have a Valentine’s Day-themed performance at Suzie’s Dogs and Drafts from 9 p.m. to midnight.

Alex Kluchar, a junior vocal performance major, recommended dates for the artsy and adventurous.

For artsy couples, Kluchar said the Butler Museum of American Art or the McDonough Museum of Art are perfect.

“You could probably spend a good hour, maybe three hours, going into the Butler and McDonough just looking at a photo,” Kluchar said. “Pick a photo and look at it for like five to 10 minutes. Just talk about what it could mean and if it could mean something different.”

The Butler and McDonough museums are open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday.

For the adventurous couples, Kluchar suggested exploring Maag Library or sky watching on top of the Wick Avenue parking deck.

“You can explore Maag. There are six floors. A lot of people usually aren’t in there,” Kluchar said. “Or sit on top of the Wick parking deck and just look at the sky because no one’s on the roof usually. It’s always open, and you don’t have to do anything”

Dora Anyanwu, junior biology pre-med major, suggested low-cost options such as the Ward Beecher Planetarium.

Every Friday night, the planetarium has a free show at 8 p.m. The theme for Feb. 14 is “One Day on Mars,” a new show that provides an immersive experience into Mars’ mysterious

conditions and explores the possibility of human settlement on the red planet.

Anyanwu said if the weather is fair, couples can go on a late-night walk around campus, or if the weather is poor, they can stay in for their date.

“Put on a movie, watch stuff and just order food,” Anyanwu said. “If you have Pete’s Points, get like Cocca’s [Pizza] or Jimmy John’s, things that deliver. Walk around campus and, you know, just talk, then maybe get something to eat afterwards.”

Tiffany Donadee, a senior psychology major, is a student that appreciates the thought behind spontaneously gifted flowers — something that doesn’t have to be expensive.

“My boyfriend, Matt, is in the military,” she said. “He sent me flowers during every holiday and milestone I had while he was away, and it always made me feel loved even while he was away.”

If none of these are appealing, know that ultimately, it’s the effort put into the date that matters more than the date itself. Show your partner that you love and care for them, and they’ll appreciate any date you decide to have.

“We’re all in college,” Anyanwu said. “Nobody has money all the time. Just do something fun.”



## THE PUBCADE BECOMES A SMASH FOR YOUNGSTOWN GAMERS

Two members of the Pubcade play a game of Super Smash Bros. at Westside Bowl on Monday evening. Photo by Kamron Meyers/The Jambar

### FRANCES CLAUSE

Four friends and a passion for video games, comic books and anime sparked an idea in August 2018, where people interested in these hobbies can meet weekly in Youngstown for gaming and more.

Malik Abdul calls this community the Pubcade, and his goal is to bring people together and give them more confidence in their interests.

"I grew up playing video games, and in today's world, online gaming is a huge thing," he said. "I just wanted to capture the essence [with the Pubcade] of when I was a kid where you actually had to go to your friend's house to play games and just enjoy time together."

The group's meetings began at O'Donold's Irish Pub & Grill in downtown Youngstown and have since expanded to Westside Bowl and Watchtower Game Lounge in Austintown.

"I just went down [to the locations] and asked if they were interested in doing a game night," Abdul said. "I felt like there was nothing like that in this city and could bring a lot of people around here."

The Pubcade community Facebook page has reached 189 members, and Abdul said he didn't expect the group to grow so quickly.

"It's a very humbling feeling," he said. "It's really cool that every single day, [the members] are talking to each other, whether it's on meme posts or even making polls and sharing videos."

So far, the group has partnered with Youngstown Smash

Ultimate, another gaming community that brings Super Smash Bros. tournament players from the area together.

Abdul said around 45 people attend these tournaments, coming to Youngstown from Cleveland and Pittsburgh as well.

But besides Super Smash Bros. tournaments, the Pubcade also started Tekken 7 and Mortal Kombat tournaments with a prize of bragging rights.

Julian Ford, a friend of Abdul's who has been a member since the group's inception, said gaming has been a gateway for him to meet others who share an interest in similar games.

"A lot of gamers and nongamers have made new friends by simply going and hanging out [with the Pubcade]," Ford said. "I just recommend anyone that likes video games and board games to come hang out and socialize with like-minded individuals."

In addition to gaming, members attended the recent Ohayocon, a three-day anime convention in Columbus.

Omar Khan, another Pubcade member, said this convention was his favorite experience and believes the group allows people to connect on special levels beyond gaming.

"I'm always learning new things, all the way from video games to anime and then to movies as well, and I'm extremely grateful for that," he said.

Khan believes the community has torn down the walls of rivalry between certain consoles like Xbox and PlayStation, welcoming consoles from the Nintendo 64 to the PlayStation 4.

"The fact that we can connect on such a nostalgic piece of video games really shows they are much more than just a game. It's literally a way of connecting people gradually," he said.

The next large event the Pubcade will host is its art show Feb. 17 at Westside Bowl.

"The art show is a good time a lot of people that perform music and have works of art have a chance to shine," Ford said. "Being a photographer, I really enjoy us having a venue for artists."

The Pubcade's weekly meeting schedule includes Westside Bowl at 8 p.m. Mondays, O'Donold's at 8 p.m. Wednesdays and Watchtower Game Lounge at 6 p.m. Thursdays.



Photo by Kamron Meyers/The Jambar



## FEDERAL FACE-OFF: BEHIND THE SCENES

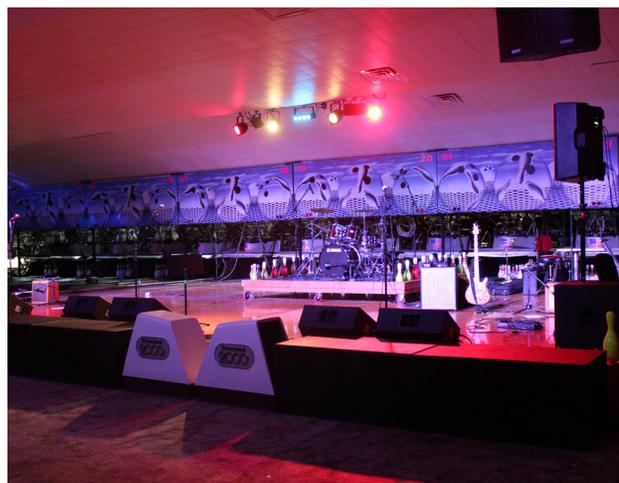
Brandon Hetherington, guitarist for Juliet, plays at the Federal Frenzy Face-Off on Feb. 7. Photo by **Abigail Cloutier/The Jambar**

### ABIGAIL CLOUTIER JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

Neon lights and music flooded Westside Bowl on Feb. 7, where students and community members gathered to vote for the next musician to headline Federal Frenzy in April.

The event featured five local musicians: Juliet, Fifth & Aurora, Nick Adduci, Very Good Friends and The Locals.

Fifth & Aurora secured a guaranteed spot in the April 25 frenzy.



The stage was set for the first act during Federal Face-Off. Photo by **Abigail Cloutier/The Jambar**

Juliet McCowin is a musician and full-time junior at Youngstown State University. McCowin, who majors in English and minors in music, was one of the only YSU students

competing at Federal Frenzy Face-Off.

Last year, McCowin tied with Black Wolf and the Thief to secure a spot in Federal Frenzy.

"This year, since I have a band with me, the preparation was a little extra work," McCowin said.

She said she wanted to work on her stage presence as part of the competition.

"I'm normally pretty confident with my vocals and my music, but trying to engage the audience is something that I need to work on," McCowin said. "But I always feel really encouraged and supported when my family and friends are there."

Though McCowin didn't win the face-off for the second year in a row, she still enjoyed participating in both years.

"The face-off last year was really fun. Not just performing, but I got to hear a lot of local bands that I hadn't heard before and listen to some that I was familiar with sing new songs," McCowin said.

Ashlee Cook, a senior communication studies major and hospitality lead for Penguin Productions, was in charge of planning the face-off this year.

"I did almost everything for it," Cook said. "I had people who helped me for certain things, like my activities team helped me create the jars for voting and my talent team helped me pick the talent, but I did a lot of the outreach. I also booked the backline and stuff like that."

Cook worked with all the teams as well as completed scheduling for the bands and staffing and made sure everything worked on a technical level for the bands.

"We had to reach out to production to make sure that sound needs were OK so there's no problems when running sound," she said. "We also had to reach out to owner Nate Offerdahl at Westside Bowl because he was the one hosting the event, so he had to be in the loop with everything as well."



Johnny Medina, guitarist and vocalist for The Locals. Photo by **Abigail Cloutier/The Jambar**

Every musician put extensive hours into preparing for the event, even though they realized they might not win. Shelby Olive, a teacher who moonlights as a musician, juggles rehearsals with her schedule.

"I've been doing lots of practices with my band. I've been practicing about once a week since we found out that we'd be doing this, reading through the setlist and running songs and trying new things," Olive said.

Though Olive later had to back out of performing at the face-off due to inclement weather, she stated she put in "too many hours to count" in preparing for the event.

"If I had to narrow it down to per week, I'd say about four per week. Some of it is just me practicing on my own and some of it with my band," she said.

# PART-TIME STUDENTS, FULL-TIME ROCK STARS: MUSICIANS OF YSU

**KELCEY NORRIS**  
**JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR**

The city of steel also serves as a foundation for student musicians to thrive. Juggling classes, employment, homework and social life can be difficult enough. But for many Youngstown State University students and recent graduates, other passions keep them busy. These young adults spend any free time they get on stage, doing what they love.

## NORTHERN WHALE

One band born in Youngstown is alternative indie pop band Northern Whale. Jake Capezzuto and Brandon Fisher, YSU alumni, formed the band while in middle school.



Photo courtesy of *Northern Whale*

“We were just friends hanging out, and the game Rock Band was really hot back in the day,” Capezzuto, the lead singer, said. “And we thought, ‘Why don’t we try and do this for real?’ We started picking up instruments here and there ... just getting better day by day.”

The band recently booked a concert opening for a well-known actor and singer at Point Park University.

“Recently we got offered to open up for Drake Bell this upcoming March, which is crazy,” Capezzuto said. “That was huge. ... This was definitely up there in terms of biggest accomplishments.”

Northern Whale has released two full-length albums as well as six singles. Fisher, the songwriter and guitarist, said the band is planning to release more singles in the upcoming year.

“I write most of our songs and recently someone covered one of our songs, which was so cool but really weird,” Fisher said. “I wrote something in my room that I thought no one would ever hear, and now someone who doesn’t know me is thinking about my lyrics.”

Capezzuto and Fisher have been creating music since 2008. Throughout the past 12 years, the two have come to appreciate each other’s skill sets.

“In the beginning, we were just in over our heads with everything,” Fisher said. “Now I think we all know what we’re good at. [Capezzuto] is good at all the administrative stuff that I’m terrible at, like emailing and booking stuff, ... and I write songs. We’re aware of what we’re good at.”

Creating music allowed the original band members to make friends with common interests and pursue their passions while still maintaining busy schedules.

“[Music] was this thing we were able to do where we could hang out, write music, practice. ... So it became a fun hobby for all of us,” Capezzuto said. “The more we did it, the better we wanted to get and the more serious we started to take it. ... We try really hard to make it as good as it can possibly be.”

## FIFTH & AURORA

Another group of passionate musicians from the Youngstown area calls themselves Fifth & Aurora. Their music and friendship originate directly from the city. They perform live at local stages consistently.

The band consists of lead singer and keyboardist Lou Rivera, bass guitarist Daniel Anderson, guitarist Dan “Dahnji” Hobel, guitarist James Greenawalt and drummer Ben Greenawalt.

According to James Greenawalt, a 2018 YSU graduate, the band’s music can be described as a hodgepodge of indie rock, rock alternative, pop and funk.

The members said they met through high school, college, church bands and sometimes, seemingly, through fate. Rivera, a 2019 graduate, said he found Hobel on a hill one day at YSU.

“It was like a scene out of a movie. He was sitting there [strumming] cross-legged with no shoes on ... just a beam of light on him, nothing else. I thought, if I don’t go over and meet him, I’m missing out,” Rivera said.



Lead singer and keyboardist Lou Rivera sings “Hold Me Closer,” supported by guitarist James Greenawalt. Photo by *Kelcey Norris/The Jambar*

Lead singer Rivera’s original lyrics are backed up by his bandmates’ head-banging rhythms. Ben Greenawalt said he feels that when Rivera sings a song, his lyrics are personal to him.

“It’s one man against the world,” he said. “But when the rest

of the band joins him, we lift him up and support him.”

To up-and-coming musicians, the band encourages both hard work and dedication to individual identity.

“I don’t think you should ever change your sound just because the guy to your left is doing something different,” Rivera said. “You should stay true to yourself; stay true to your music. Don’t go into it thinking you’re going to get famous. You should do this because you love it.”

## KRISTA RITZ

Krista Ritz, a sophomore journalism major, takes classes by day and lights up the stage by night. Ritz performs with three Youngstown-based music groups.

“I’ve been singing my whole life, but my favorite part is connecting with the audience,” she said. “Being a singer, you can connect to your audience on a different level rather than speaking to them directly, so I love that.”

Ritz said balancing her schedule between gigs, working two jobs and attending classes isn’t as bad as it seems. But she said detailed time management will help her reach her goals.



YSU sophomore journalism major Krista Ritz performs with No Funk No Justice at Los Gallos. Photo by *Kelcey Norris/The Jambar*

“I’m really optimistic about my future with music,” she said. “I want to try very hard with music and try with best of my ability to be successful in that. Out of everything, ... music is my first passion. That’s really what I want to do.”

Ritz’s connection with the audience was not love at first sight. As a self-proclaimed introvert, she said she had to overcome nervousness when she walked out on stage.

“The more you do something, the more comfortable you are with it,” she said. “The more you start to say, ‘I can do this. Forget about what anybody else says. This is what I want to do, and if I mess up, then I mess up and that’s okay.’”



## DANCE THEATRE OF HARLEM BRINGS DIVERSITY TO DEYOR

Da'Von Doane and Ingrid Silva pose in a 50th anniversary Dance Theatre of Harlem photo. Photo courtesy of **Rachel Neville**

### FRANCES CLAUSE

Dance Theatre of Harlem's last performance in Youngstown was in 1975, and the professional ballet company was back to perform classical and cutting-edge dances at the DeYor Performing Arts Center on Wednesday evening.

But Youngstown's connection to the Dance Theatre of Harlem doesn't end there. Arthur Mitchell, founder of DTH, discovered 16-year-old Stephanie Dabney at Ballet Western Reserve.

Dabney was the first African American ballerina to premiere in the title role of Igor Stravinsky's "The Firebird" in 1982. From there, this performance became DTH's signature work for the next two decades.

"As a young dancer, I often felt that success was not possible coming from such a small town like Youngstown, but it was very encouraging to see stories of success such as [Dabney's]," Dagmar Stahl said.

Stahl is a junior dance management major at Youngstown State University and was a student with Ballet Western Reserve for 11 years. She is now a dance instructor there and said she hopes to inspire her students' love of dance and art.

Dancers of DTH also hoped to inspire their audience through

their performances of Stanton Welch's "Orange," Claudia Schreier's "Passage," Robert Garland's "Return" and Christopher Wheeldon's "This Bitter Earth."

Ingrid Silva, who is in her seventh season with DTH, said the repertoire for the company's DeYor performance was very diverse.

"My favorite piece in this performance is 'Orange,'" she said. "It's a ballet that has sparked a challenge on me, and I love a good challenge; it has a mix of love, loss and happiness."

Silva performed in "Orange" and "Return" on DeYor's stage, and she said being onstage and inspiring others has been one of the best gifts in her life.

"I just strive to be the best as I can and not prove anything but only share. ... Share with the audience and invite them to stage so they can experience what art can do," she said.

Silva believes the life of a dancer has many ups and downs, challenges and injuries that dancers must have the right mindset and confidence in their career to conquer.

"Believe in yourself. It's really important that you always love what you do," she said. "Ballet is hard, and it won't get easy, but it's important that you trust your journey."

Another DTH dancer who has trusted his journey is Anthony

Santos, who auditioned for the school shortly after graduating from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 2017.

"Everyone who graduates at a conservatory, their biggest thing is usually moving to New York, and I already had that [advantage] because I'm from New York," he said. "I felt really lucky when I got the job, and I felt like it was the perfect time in the perfect place."

DTH celebrated over 50 years and performed for nearly 60,000 people across the U.S. just last year. Santos said he is honored to be a part of DTH and feels obligated to push himself farther.

"This is the only company in the world where there's so many different ethnicities in one place," he said. "Throughout history, black people weren't supposed to be doing ballet technically. But Arthur Mitchell showed the world differently."

Santos' advice for minorities going into dance is to not be afraid to fall and get back up.

"Always work, no matter how high of a level you reach," he said. "When you feel like you've become the best, there's always something to work on so continue to work."

# A DEGREE IN PATIENCE: ENJOY YOUR TIME IN COLLEGE

**MAC POMEROY**

I'm a sophomore, and I already can't wait to graduate. I mean, it isn't that I don't like my major or college or anything like that, but instead it's that I just want to move on to the next step. As I have mentioned in a previous article, looking forward to the future is great, but you need to live in the present.

This is going to include a ton of patience. For me, finding the patience to wait through school isn't hard. After all, I am a very long way from being completely done with school. However, for those like my sister and one of my best friends, graduation is a lot closer, and it is very hard to remain patient.

It's important to do your best and gather your patience. This enthusiasm toward finishing your education may at first provide fuel or motivation. However, if it continues or grows stronger, you risk losing motivation.

I'm sure many of us have heard of "senioritis" during high school, slang for the phenomenon that causes seniors to slack. It turns out this exists in college as well. And by focusing purely on

graduation and growing impatient, this becomes a real threat.

There are many things you can do to make sure that you remain focused and keep your patience and motivation. The first thing you can do is acknowledge the hard truth. Whether you are a senior about to graduate or a sophomore who just can't wait to be king, you have to do your work.

As I mentioned prior, lack of patience often leads to lack of motivation. This will cause you to simply not complete your tasks. No work, no credit. Your grades will drop, possibly preventing the graduation you were so worked up over.

Of course, the opposite is also true. Not only can a lack of patience cause you to lose motivation and stop working hard, it can also cause you to overwork.

When we enter college, we are expecting to be part of a certain class. In spring or fall exactly four years from when you began. Many times, we are told how it isn't uncommon for students to spend a few extra semesters getting their degree, but that doesn't always stop you from feeling anxious about it.

A diploma earned after 12 semesters is just as real as a diploma

earned after 15. You aren't a failure if you need to pace yourself and take extra time.

Every semester I have attended college, I have taken four classes, 12 credit hours. That is my pace. I am not any less successful because I don't do more than that. Nor are you if you find that you need to drop a class or two and extend the length you will be in school.

You aren't a failure if you need to take a semester off. You aren't a failure if you graduate later than your intended date.

If you fall on the opposite side of the fence, you also aren't doing yourself any favors by rushing and not taking your time with your class work or by not doing it at all.

Patience is a virtue that gets extra difficult in regard to your education. However, this is when it really means something. So, please, give yourself some time and credit. Graduation will come when it does. Just do your best and keep track of it all.

As for me, I guess two years in is a bit early to be worrying about these things.

## STUDENT LOAN DEBT IS CRIPPLING US

Student loan debt is crippling the United States and the education system, but it's directly influencing the day-to-day life of the borrower, who sometimes must use a significant portion of their paycheck to pay off student loans.

In 2004, student loan debt in the U.S. was \$260 billion, according to Debt.org.

The Pew Research Center said in an August 2019 article that Americans owed nearly \$1.5 trillion in student loans at the end of March 2019.

This is more than two times what borrowers owed a decade prior. Currently, over one-third of adults ages 18 to 29 have student loan debt. But, according to a Pew Research Center's analysis of the Federal Reserve Board's 2018 Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking, student loan debt is much less common for older age groups.

Twenty-two percent of 33- to 44-year-olds are in debt, while a mere 7% of people ages 45-59 said they had student loan debt.

Yes, these older age groups have had more time to pay off this debt, but the National Center for Education Statistics found that six out of 10 college seniors ages 18 to 24 took out loans in 2015-2016, which is up about 50% from the 1999-2000 academic year.

This is disheartening and shows deep flaws in the current education system. Some students can't afford education but are still told it is the only way to attain a "successful career."

Frankly, some with student loans don't even see the value in their degree after graduation.

The Pew Research Center also found that 36% of 25- to 39-year-olds with "at least a bachelor's degree and outstanding student loan debt say that the lifetime financial costs of their degree outweigh the benefits."

And they're more likely to be struggling financially than those who do not have student loan debt. Twenty-two percent of graduates ages 25 to 29 say they're having a hard time getting by financially, while 11% of people without loans say it's difficult.

Debt.org states the average cost of college tuition ranges from \$9,410 for an in-state university to over \$32,000 for private institutions.

On a positive note, Youngstown State University was ranked by College Consensus as the seventh most affordable university nationwide in September 2018.

YSU's student loan default rates have decreased significantly in the past six years, according to the YSU News Center on March 29, 2019.

In 2011, student loan default rates sat at 20.3% and have consistently decreased, with rates being at 11.8% in 2016.

University administrators attributed the drop of nearly 9 percentage points to "increased focus on student success, more scholarships and keeping costs low."

Although it's a great triumph of the university, college still needs to be more affordable, and student loans are something that voters must focus on for the 2020 election.

Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders is calling to eliminate student loan debt completely. According to CNN, this would have no eligibility limitations.

President Donald Trump is proposing eliminating a forgiveness program that exists for public workers. The current program cancels remaining student loans after payments have been made for 10 years.

So, please, think about this when you vote. Because this could mean the difference between no longer needing to worry about student loans crippling people's lives or people being punished more for attending college.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In reading your recent article on the partnership between Changwon National University and YSU, I was disappointed that there was not a single mention of the May 2017 goodwill choral tour of South Korea, led by Dr. Hae-Jong Lee of the Dana School of Music.

As a faculty participant and chaperone on that trip, I saw firsthand the power of music: how the friendship concert at that university, featuring collaborative performances among CNWU and YSU faculty and students, sparked delight and curiosity among the participants and energized their interest in learning about a culture very different from their own.

I also know that that trip was made possible only because of Dr. Lee's tenacity, tireless enthusiasm and detailed organizational skills — in fact, I have never in my life traveled on such a well-planned itinerary. If there are partnerships blooming between YSU and South Korean universities, it is in no small part due to Dr. Lee's efforts, and it would be a dreadful shame if YSU failed to acknowledge his foundational role in sparking these connections.

Steven Reale  
Associate Professor of Music Theory  
Dana School of Music

# YSU HALL OF FAME INDUCTION

## PRESTON BYERS

The Youngstown State University athletics department welcomed eight new members into the YSU Athletics Hall of Fame on Feb. 8 as a part of the class of 2019 induction ceremony.

All eight inductees were present at the ceremony, and they delivered speeches to a crowd of about 170, which included many of the inductees' friends, families and members of the YSU athletics department.

Ron Strollo, the executive director of intercollegiate athletics, who awarded the inductees with plaques, and the new YSU head football coach, Doug Phillips, who gave a brief speech near the beginning of the event.

One of the event's most notable absences was YSU President Jim Tressel, who recorded a speech that was shown during the ceremony. In his speech, Tressel mentioned one of the inductees, Pauline Saternow, who held various coaching and administrative positions over 26 years, some of which aligned with Tressel's time as head football coach.

In addition to Saternow, the inductees included Ruth Boscaljon (volleyball), Erich Diedrich (baseball), Phil Gaston (basketball), Yandeh Joh (track and field), Jason Perry (football), Brad Samsa (football) and Mychal Savage (football).

The three football inductees were teammates on the 2006

team that reached the Football Championship Subdivision playoff semifinals, where they lost to the eventual champions, Appalachian State University. That season, Perry was named second-team All-American by the Associated Press and first-team by the All-Gateway Football Conference.

For former student-athletes to be eligible for the Athletics Hall of Fame, they must be at least 10 years removed from their last season of competition and a varsity letter winner in at least two years at YSU. They must also have had "outstanding accomplishments," according to the membership and criteria and nomination process document.

Outstanding accomplishments include being named All-American, All-Conference, a conference specialty award winner, an NCAA statistical leader, YSU all-time statistical career leader or an Olympic qualifier.

Contributors, the category under which Saternow was inducted, includes former coaches, athletic department staff, friends and alumni. The requirements for these members are that they aren't currently employed by YSU and have "rendered extraordinary service and leadership to the YSU athletics department."

The inductees are selected by a committee of approximately 20 people, most of which are either former or current staff members in the athletics department.

The ceremony was sandwiched between a YSU basketball

home doubleheader, with the women's game against Northern Kentucky University at 1 p.m. preceding it and the men's game against Cleveland State University at 6 p.m. following it.



The YSU Sports Hall of Fame class of 2019. Photo courtesy of YSU Sports Information

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## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TOUGH IT OUT

Chelsea Olson tries to put the ball up past two Northern Kentucky defenders. Photo courtesy of **YSU Sports Information**

### CHRISTINA SAINOVICH

The men's basketball team showed out Saturday night in the Beeghly Center on Hall of Fame Day. The Penguins hosted Cleveland State University and completed a come-from-behind win at 67-55.

Sophomore Jelani Simmons stole the show with a career-high 23 points. Simmons came off the bench and went 4-8 from 3-point range and 7-8 from the free-throw line.

Penguins coach Jerrod Calhoun attributed Simmons' success to his effort over the last few weeks.

"Jelani [Simmons] has worked really hard the last couple weeks. ... I think he's really picked it up with extra workouts, getting in the gym, putting the time in," Calhoun said. "I think when you do that and you see the player have those results, there's nothing more rewarding," Calhoun said.

Junior Michael Akuchie had a double-double in Saturday's game. He said Calhoun has been pushing the team to go all out at each practice.

"Coach [Calhoun] has been really big on finishing in practice. Making sure we finish drill to drill. Make sure we're not jogging or walking to the next drill," Akuchie said.

Youngstown State University sits in third place in the Horizon League, with a 7-5 conference record. Calhoun said each game they play is as important as the last and the next.

"I always tell our guys there's three seasons," Calhoun said. "There's the preseason, where you get 13 opportunities. There's the season, where you get 18 opportunities to play your league

games. Then there's the postseason. You can't have one without the other."

The team will be on the road Thursday and Saturday at the University of Detroit Mercy and Oakland University, respectively.

The YSU women's basketball team is still fighting a long battle with injuries. On Saturday, it hosted Northern Kentucky University and fell 59-55.

Junior Chelsea Olson and redshirt junior Ny'Dajah Jackson continue to be team leaders. Olson led the Penguins in Saturday's loss with 20 points, and Jackson added 11.

Jackson said one of the team's main focuses over the last few weeks and moving forward is the mental aspect of the game.

"We have some mental lapses in the games. We just want to harp on that if we do these mental things right, then we win the game," Jackson said.

Penguins coach John Barnes said in order to move forward from recent losses, the team needs to fight through each game.

"We're playing the top teams in the league. We've got to get through this stretch," Barnes said.

YSU is currently eighth in the Horizon League with a 4-9 conference record. Over the last few weeks, the Penguins have faced off against the tougher opponents in the conference and have played seven of 13 games on the road.

Barnes said along with injuries, this has been part of the team's struggle.

"We're trying to tell the team that in this stretch we've played the No. 1, 2, 3, 4, maybe even 5 teams in this stretch," Barnes

said. "We had one game that we played a lower-level team, and we didn't play great, and they played really well."

The team will only play one game this week, which will be on Saturday against Cleveland State at home. There will be two more home games the following week before the Penguins will be on the road again.



Michael Akuchie leaps over a defender to put a shot up. Photo courtesy of **YSU Sports Information**



## GRIFFEY SR., UNDERWOOD HIGHLIGHT YSU BASEBALL FIRST PITCH BREAKFAST

Baseball legend Ken Griffey Sr. was one of the guest speakers at the First Pitch Breakfast. Griffey did a Q&A session with the attendees. Photo courtesy of YSU Sports Information

### NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

Youngstown State University baseball hosted its annual First Pitch Breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 8.

Attendees filled Waypoint 4180 Banquet & Conference Center to hear MLB All-Star and two-time World Series champion with the “Big Red Machine” Cincinnati Reds Ken Griffey Sr. and Cleveland Indians TV play-by-play announcer Matt Underwood speak.

Underwood, a Northeast Ohio native, spoke first. He shared how he got into sports broadcasting, some memorable moments and what current students wanting to break into the field can do to give themselves the best opportunity.

“Be patient, especially if you want to be on-air,” Underwood said. “Jobs usually aren’t waiting for you right when you come out of college, so you have to be patient. You have to put the work in to be ready when your opportunity comes. It’s just all about being ready and being prepared because you just never

know when opportunity is literally going to come around the corner and hit you in the face.”

On what he thought he could offer to the crowd, Underwood said he wants the younger people to see that if a small-town kid like him can be on television and work for MLB, anyone can. For the older crowd, Underwood hoped to share stories about the game and his experience.

When Griffey Sr. took to the podium, he engaged the room with a question and answer segment.

Many of the questions referenced his former teammates, such as Willie Stargell, Pete Rose and Johnny Bench, but most people wanted to know about his son, Ken Griffey Jr.

Griffey Sr. and Griffey Jr. were the first father and son to play together on the same team — the Seattle Mariners. Most notably from their time together, Griffey Sr. blasted a home run and Griffey Jr. followed suit with a home run of his own the very next at-bat.

Griffey Sr. shared some advice for the team as well.

“Just try to be consistent and believe in yourself,” he said. “You can go up and down quick in this game. You could be 0-4 one day and the next day you get three hits.”

In previous years, the event has seen former MLB pitcher Rollie Fingers, catcher Johnny Bench, infielder Carlos Baerga and first baseman Bill Buckner come to Youngstown and speak to supporters of YSU baseball.

The event also had a silent auction, a 50/50 raffle and a public auction. The auctions had an impressive amount of MLB and YSU memorabilia, ranging from autographed baseball bats, pictures and jerseys to YSU baseball merchandise.

The big-ticket items sold during the public auctions were jerseys autographed by Griffey Sr., Bo Jackson and George Brett. Also included were trips to Colorado and Costa Rica. The 50/50 raffle winner gave his \$980 winnings back to the program.

The baseball program made \$12,500 in auction items and raffle items alone and grossed \$33,000 overall.

## PENGUIN BASEBALL LOOKS TO TURN AROUND IN 2020

### MICHAEL WOLFGANG JAMBAR CONTRIBUTOR

The Youngstown State University baseball team opens the 2020 campaign Friday, Feb. 14, at 7:30 p.m. taking on the University of Houston.

The Penguins are hoping to improve upon their 13-41 record from last season. The team features 17 returning letter winners and 13 newcomers.

Coming off a 13-win season in 2019, Penguins coach Dan Bertolini is excited about the new opportunity in 2020.

“I just want us to play hard and to compete every single day,” Bertolini said. “We just got to stay focused on the day. If you look ahead, you can miss out on some opportunities today.”

Bertolini is entering his fourth season as the head coach of the YSU baseball program.

Junior outfielder Jeff Wehler is fresh off a season in which he

stole 30 bases and posted a .290 batting average. When it comes to personal goals for this season, Wehler said he wants to play the game he’s always played and help the team win this season.

“My bat path at the top of the strike zone was one of my weaknesses last year, and I’ve really worked on hitting at the top of the zone,” Wehler said.

Right-handed pitcher Bryce Warwick is a YSU freshman from Canton, Ohio. Warwick threw an eight-inning complete game shutout in a sectional tournament as a sophomore and was ranked the 60th overall prospect in the state by Prep Baseball Report. He also sported a 2.44 ERA, a 5-2 record and was named Honorable Mention All-Federal League and Pitcher of the Year for Perry High School as a freshman.

Warwick said he’s made some adjustments from playing high school baseball to playing in college.

“Definitely the competition,” he said. “In high school there

might have been a few guys here and there that could hit off of you, but everyone here are Division I prospects.”

Collegiate Baseball Newspaper highlighted Wehler, senior infielder Blaze Glenn and senior pitcher Collin Floyd as top players to watch in the Horizon League for 2020.

The Penguins begin the season by playing the first of their 13 regular season games on the road. Bertolini said it’s a good opportunity for the players to learn a little about themselves.

“It is a challenge playing on the road, but we know that going in and there’s no excuses,” Bertolini said.

YSU opens at Houston, then makes stops at the College of Charleston, Abilene Christian University, the University of Pittsburgh and North Carolina Central University before returning to Eastwood Field for the home opener against Bowling Green State University on March 10 at 5 p.m.



## PHILLIPS FILLS PENGUINS' COACHING ROLE

YSU's new football coach Doug Phillips speaks with the crowd at the YSU baseball First Pitch Breakfast. Photo courtesy of YSU Sports Information

**PRESTON BYERS**  
**BRIAN YAUGER**

Since former coach Bo Pelini darted to the bayou for a defensive coordinator position, Youngstown State University has been on the hunt for a head coach to lead its football program.

And once again, the university reached into the seemingly endless well of local talent to find its man.

As the conclusion to a search that just eclipsed National Signing Day, the Penguins hired a New Middletown native Doug Phillips, who most recently served as the running backs coach at the University of Cincinnati.

Phillips, arrived at his introductory press conference in a red suit jacket with the university's iconic block 'Y' logo pinned to his chest.

To say Phillips is excited to come home would be an understatement.

"There's probably not a job in America I want more," Phillips said. "I don't know if there's a job in America I would step away from what I had in Cincinnati. For me, this was the right place at the right time. [Cincinnati coach] Luke [Fickell] would always say, 'Make sure you're running to it and not running away from something.'"

Phillips' coaching journey, which began at YSU nearly 30 years ago when he was a graduate assistant on then-head coach Jim Tressel's staff, is a unique one. Unlike a more traditional route, which includes more internal promotions until the eventual ascension to head coach, Phillips took a few detours

along the way.

"The journey has been the destination," Phillips said at the press conference.

Despite only having two years of experience as a YSU graduate assistant, Phillips, a graduate of Springfield Local High School, was hired as Springfield's head coach in 1997. In four years, he led the Tigers to back-to-back state playoff appearances in 1999 and 2000.

After leaving Springfield, he took a job at nearby Salem High School, where he guided the Quakers to consecutive winning records for the first time in 30 years.

Upon leaving Springfield, Phillips reunited with Tressel, who had since moved to Ohio State University. After one season as a defensive quality control coach with the Buckeyes, Phillips moved to Bowling Green State University, where he spent two seasons.

After Bowling Green, Phillips put coaching on the back burner. Instead, he worked as a high school administrator for the better part of a decade. For many, being out of coaching for so long may have hindered their chances to ever become a head coach. But not for Phillips.

With just four seasons of coaching since returning to the sidelines, Phillips was named the eighth head coach in YSU football history. And while his return to the Valley is not the end of his journey, Phillips used the moment to reflect upon his unorthodox career path.

At his introductory press conference, Phillips, a self-described emotionally mute man, became visibly emotional when spoke

about how he would have liked for his parents, YSU supporters that "popped popcorn for home football games, basketball games" and who are both deceased, to see him now as the Penguins football coach.

Ron Strollo, YSU executive director of intercollegiate athletics, said Phillips was one of seven candidates to be interviewed. Phillips is estimated to make \$250,000 a year on a four- or five-season deal.

"We're very excited to have Doug Phillips as our football coach," Strollo said in a press release. "Doug has been a great representative of the Mahoning Valley and is a very well-respected coach among his peers. His background is perfect to be the leader of our program."

With the hiring of a new coach comes an adjustment period. Some players may decide to transfer, like defensive end Justus Reed, who entered the transfer portal after Pelini's departure, but Phillips is eager to win over the players who stick around.

"I hope the players I've coached in my past would say I love my football players," Phillips said. "I take care of them, and I want to see them succeed. I've got to earn that over the next six to eight months."

"Grit U" has found a new leader, and he's already embraced the blue-collar mentality that's so important to the city of Youngstown.

"Now, we have to get to work," Phillips said. "The Youngstown way is we have to go out and earn it. Nothing is given to us. We have to go take it. We have to own it."