

The Thielensian



Thiel College Mourns the Loss of First-Year Student Donel Wheeler II

By: Christina Newman

March 2, 2024: The Thiel College community mourns the death of first-year Donel Wheeler II after a motor vehicle accident on Saturday, March 2nd, 2024.

Wheeler was a first-year student studying psychology. Wheeler intended to work in youth psychology, primarily with youth who struggled with parents battling with addiction. Before starting college, Wheeler published two books documenting the struggles he faced. He published his first book at the age of 12. The books are titled *Wanted* and *Unwanted*. In an interview with Leigh Bursey from Invisible People, Wheeler said he was using the money from his books to save for college and donate to the homeless. Wheeler wanted his books to inspire adults and children who faced similar challenges, and to share his story about how he overcame.

An email was sent out the morning of March 2nd, informing the students about his death, and to offer grief counseling to students. On Monday, March 3rd President Susan Traverso

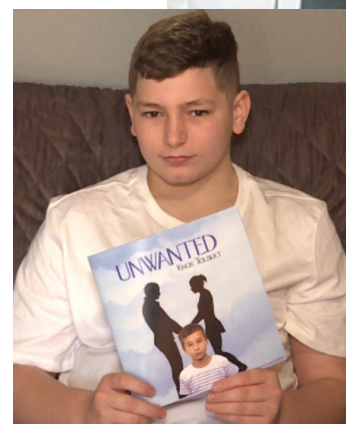
sent an email to the Thiel community reminding students, faculty, and staff to use the available resources as we all process this grief.

On Friday, March 8th, Thiel held a Service of Remembrance for Wheeler. Students and Faculty gathered in the Lutheran Heritage Room to pay tribute to him, and to share stories of their experiences and memories with him.

The service was opened by President Traverso, who spoke on the strength of Thiels community, and how the campus has come together to honor Wheeler and his memory. Following President Traverso, student Aidrianna Green read the poem 'When I'm Gone', written by Lyman Hancock. Following this, Coordinator for Campus Ministries Audra Franley opened the time for reflection, where students, faculty, and staff could reflect on their memories and experiences with Wheeler.

Many remembered him as someone who never failed to make you smile, and reflected on antics he would be a part of. Many faculty members highlighted that in their classes he would

always try to convince them to "end class early." Others remembered how he would disappear from their classes, and then reappear a short while later. Students also spoke, highlighting their friendship and memories of being around Wheeler, and the joy he brought everyone. After everyone spoke, Franley led a prayer to close the service and then invited students, faculty, and staff to light candles to honor the cherished memories with Wheeler.



Images of Donel Wheeler II.

Sports

Professional Women’s Hockey Takes on PPG

By: Hannah Stoughton

March 17th, 2024: The Professional Women’s Hockey League made their Pittsburgh, PA debut at PPG Arena on March 17th, 2024.

Teams Montreal and Toronto showcased their hockey talents in the home of the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday, March 17th. It is the first PWHL game hosted in Pittsburgh and honored past, present, and future female hockey players, including the Chatham Cougars and Pittsburgh Pennies. The Cougars were the first collegiate team to reach varsity status in Western Pennsylvania, opening doors for women across the state to join a collegiate team in 1996. The Pennies were Pittsburgh’s first women’s hockey team, founded in 1972. Summoning a crowd just under

9,000 people, women and girls from a variety of places came to display their support for Montreal and Toronto. For some, it was more than just supporting a team; it was a realization that their dreams could happen. Signs from little girls were shown on the new jumbotron, saying things like “PWHL: Pittsburgh Wants (Women’s) Hockey Leagues” and “Now I Can Dream Big Too.” Under the emergence of other female college athletes becoming prominent in media, focus on women’s sports has grown. Caitlin Clark, the Iowa Hawkeyes phenom, Paige Bueckers of the UConn Huskies, and other notable names have helped change the tide in wom-

en’s sports, making waves as people realize that women can play a sport just as excitingly and athletically as men.

Toronto and Montreal battled throughout the game, ending in a 2-1 victory for Toronto. This marks their 10th straight win as Kali Flanagan and Hannah Miller picked up goals for Toronto. Kristin O’Neill scored for Montreal. The next TWHL game is Wednesday, March 20th at 7p.m. E.T.

Toronto Celebrates Hannah Miller’s goal.



Games to Watch

Good Luck to Our Student Athletes on their Away Matches this week!

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Sports

Penguins Deal Guentzel at Deadline

By: Jacob Walsh

The NHL's trade deadline ended back on March 8th with the Pittsburgh Penguins involved in a few of the deadline deals. The trades of forward Jake Guentzel, defenseman Chad Ruhwedel, defenseman Ty Smith, and goalie Magnus Hellberg were all completed on that Friday.

Throughout the season, the Penguins' lack of success caused rumors to flurry on the future of forward Jake Guentzel. Guentzel was facing free agency at the conclusion of the 2023-24 season and without a new contract looking viable, General Manager Kyle Dubas dealt the forward.

Guentzel played his last game with the Penguins on February 14th after sustaining an upper-body injury in a 5-2 loss to the Florida Panthers. He was then put on long-term injury reserve until March 10th. However, when the trade deadline came around, Jake Guentzel was sent to the Carolina Hurricanes with news breaking the night before the trade was finalized.

PIT-CAR TRADE: Pittsburgh receives – Michael Bunting, prospects Vasily Ponomarev and Ville Koi-

vunen, the rights to Cruz Lucius, a conditional 2024 1st-round pick, and a conditional 2024 5th-round pick. Carolina receives – Jake Guentzel and Ty Smith.

PIT-NYR TRADE: Pittsburgh receives – a 2024 4th-round draft pick. New York receives – Chad Ruhwedel.

PIT-FLD TRADE: Pittsburgh receives – Ludovic Waeber and a conditional 2025 7th-round draft pick. Florida receives – Magnus Hellberg.

Jake Guentzel was drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins with the 77th pick in the 2013 NHL Draft. Guentzel was a rookie in the 2016-17 season and finished first in goals during that postseason, helping Pittsburgh capture their second consecutive championship. Jake Guentzel and Chad Ruhwedel were both members of the 2017 Penguins' Stanley Cup team. Since then, Guentzel has been a top offensive producer and a long-time fixture on the Penguins' first line with team captain Sidney Crosby.

Guentzel has registered five



Jake Guentzel

points in four games with Carolina so far while his replacement Michael Bunting has tallied three points in six games with Pittsburgh. After trading Guentzel, the Penguins went on a four-game skid, falling to WSH 6-0, BOS 5-1, EDM 4-0, and OTT 2-1. Even with the skid, the team currently trails only five points back for the Eastern Conference Wildcard in what has looked like a lackluster season so far.

Michael Bunting



Current Events

Mitch McConnell Announces Retirement from Senate

By: Colin Schroyer

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., announced on Feb. 28 that he will be stepping down from his position as Senate leader in November.

“One of life’s most underappreciated talents is to know when it’s time to move on to life’s next chapter,” McConnell said before the Senate. “So, I stand before you today... to say that this will be my last term as Republican leader of the Senate.”

McConnell, 82, a political titan in Congress, is one of the longest-serving Senate leaders in U.S. history. He has served since 1984, when he was 42, representing the state of Kentucky longer than any other state representative.

Over his over 40 years in the Senate, McConnell has established a noteworthy legacy. He endured the political shift within the Republican Party from Ronald Reagan-era conservatism and alliances to the more individualistic and boisterous ideologies of former President Trump.

He was regarded as an effective politician and an influential lawmaker, helping to introduce a \$1.5 trillion

tax package in 2017. His most notable action comes from his 2016 decision to bar President Barack Obama from filling a vacant Supreme Court seat, followed by his oversight of the induction of three new nominees — Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett. This trio led to the most right-leaning court in recent American history, which led to consequential Supreme Court decisions, such as the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*.

He plans to serve out the remainder of his Senate term, which ends in Jan. 2027, but not in the position of Senate Minority Leader.

As for who will succeed him in this position, many believe that the race will come down to the “three Johns.” These include Senate Minority Whip John Thune of South Dakota, the No. Republican Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming, and the former GOP Whip Senator John Cornyn of Texas. Many foresee the race for the position beginning immediately.

“I plan to support John,” teased JD Vance, the Republican Senator from Ohio.

Despite differences in political

views, which often led to conflict, McConnell and President Joe Biden have been longtime friends. Upon the announcement of his retirement, Biden shared some warm remarks. “During his many years of leadership, we could always speak with each other honestly and put the country ahead of ourselves,” Biden said. He added further comments, saying how proud he was to have been able to cooperate “in good faith even though we have many political disagreements.”

The Democratic Party holds a slight majority in the Senate, but McConnell’s retirement from his position as Minority Leader will invariably affect negotiations between parties and the White House.

His stint as the Republican Minority Leader will conclude with the end of his term in November, but he shall remain involved in politics until the end of his Senate term in 2027.



Current Events

Texas Mother Arrested for Unconventional Approach to Bullying

By: Carol Birdy

March 17th, 2024: In a shocking turn of events, a Texas mother found herself in handcuffs after taking drastic measures to address her son's bullying situation. The woman, whose name has been withheld by authorities, allegedly orchestrated a scheme where she provided her son with a beverage to give to his bully. The Bexar County Sheriff's Office said a 45-year-old woman was charged with injury to a child causing bodily injury.

The incident, which unfolded in a quiet suburban neighborhood in Texas, has stirred significant debate about the lengths parents should go to protect their children from bullying and whether such actions are justifiable. School officials have also weighed in on the matter, emphasizing their commitment to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

According to reports from local law enforcement, the mother reportedly

instructed her son to hand over a drink containing an undisclosed substance to his tormentor at school. The nature of the substance has not been disclosed by authorities, but it was confirmed that the bully experienced adverse effects after consuming the drink, prompting an investigation.

Authorities swiftly intervened upon learning of the incident, taking the mother into custody for her alleged role in the act. While her exact intentions remain unclear, authorities have stressed that resorting to such methods to address bullying is not only inappropriate but also unlawful. The incident has sparked a dialogue about the challenges parents face in navigating the complexities of bullying and the consequences of vigilante justice. Many have expressed sympathy for the mother, acknowledging the frustration and helplessness parents often feel when their children



Image from Bored Panda.

are subjected to bullying. However, the consensus remains that resorting to illegal means is not the solution.

As the legal proceedings unfold, the incident serves as a sobering reminder of the complexities surrounding the issue of bullying and the importance of addressing it through constructive and lawful means. While the mother's actions may have been driven by a desire to protect her child,

they have ultimately led to legal ramifications and heightened scrutiny of parental responses to bullying.