



# 2023 Graduates

*Thoughtful*  
*Driven*  
*Positive*  
*Adaptable*  
*Resilient*  
*Honest*  
*Disciplined*  
*Resolute*  
*Tenacious*  
*Introspective*  
*Appreciative*  
*Blessed*  
*Curious*  
*Grateful*  
*Family-oriented*  
*Outgoing*  
*Reliable*  
*Sarcastic*



# Blake Reynolds

**Majors: Accounting and Business Administration**

**First Destination Outcome: Tax Associate at KPMG at the Charlotte, NC office.**

**Words to describe you: Thoughtful, Disciplined, and Resolute**

*“College taught me a vital lesson about self-reliance. While others may offer me encouragement and guidance, I realized that to achieve my goals, I had to be the driving force. I believe that success in college and beyond requires internal motivation and the determination to make things happen. It’s a journey of self-discovery and personal responsibility.”*



# Blake Reynolds

What do you admire most about Jewell?

*One of the aspects I admire most about Jewell is its size. With fewer than 1,000 students, I was able to create meaningful connections with both peers and professors. This close-knit environment not only enhanced my academic experience but also made me feel genuinely connected to the college. Knowing the individuals involved in various events created a sense of familiarity and increased my overall engagement and investment in the campus community*

How has your Jewell experience impacted you and what you are doing now?

*My Jewell experience has been extremely impactful, particularly due to the valuable resources provided by the accounting and business programs, along with the excellent career development opportunities. Professors like Dr. McCullick emphasized the importance of internships and networking events like Jewell Cubed. Utilizing these resources, I participated in the career mentor program, which played a big role in securing the internship that has now set the trajectory for my current position.*

*Also, my experience as a student athlete instilled in me a valuable discipline, enhanced my time management skills, and ingrained a resilient mindset, which I believe will impact my future success.*

# Michelle DiStefano

**Majors: Communication and Psychological Science**

**First Destination Outcome: Events and Programs Coordinator for Burns & McDonnell**

**Words to Describe You: Thoughtful, Sarcastic, and Honest**

*“The best times I had at Jewell were ones shared with friends. Now that most of us have graduated and live in different cities/states, I realize how much of a privilege it was to live just down the hall or a building away from your best friends.”*



# Michelle DiStefano

How has your Jewell experience impacted you and what you are doing now?

*When I first came to Jewell, I was undecided and didn't even know a career in event planning existed. I was honestly pretty stuck and unsure of my future, which is not a great feeling when you're a type-A person such as myself. Luckily, with Jewell being a smaller college, I met and became close with a really great group of friends. Similarly, I got to know my professors really well. Both groups helped instill much needed confidence in myself. They made me feel comfortable speaking my mind in class, applying for many and all internship opportunities, and just overall pushed me to do better. This led to me eventually picking two majors that I was passionate about. Working in events really helped me combine these two fields as I'm required to facilitate vendor, client, and work relationships as well as boost overall company culture.*

What do you admire most about Jewell?

*I'll forever admire Jewell professors. I appreciated that all my professors tried really hard to get to know each student, facilitate actual conversations, and give each person the time to speak their truth and say their piece.*

# Dre'Shon Tolbert

**Majors: Music Education, Secondary Education**

**First Destination Outcome: Vocal Music Director for Kameron Middle School and High School**

**Words to describe you: Blessed, Curious, and Grateful**

*“The 1:1 time I had with professors was phenomenal. Those opportunities to sit down and learn and absorb the wisdom and knowledge from those individuals was priceless, and you just don't get that everywhere.”*



# Dre'Shon Tolbert

How has your Jewell experience impacted you and what you are doing now?

*From day one all the way through to the very end, the critical thinking is probably one of the most valuable lessons that I think most of us took with us. Basically, it taught me how to think, truly how to think, not only for myself, but how to think for a group of people that I'm affecting as a teacher. I have close to 200 students that I affect every day, and the way that I think and the way that I learn, myself, is heavily going to affect the perspectives that they are exposed to and the opportunities they are allowed to pursue. So I have to make sure, to the best of my ability, that I'm using these skills, of work ethic, of thinking, of community building and all things I learned in college.*

What are your favorite memories from Jewell?

*Traveling overseas. I got to travel overseas to Scotland, the UK, and Paris. We sang in so many cathedrals, and I got to talk to students that are not from the US and got to understand perspectives from teachers who have taught in the UK and the US. It was an amazing time. Also, the Missouri Music Educators Association (MMEA) Conference was life changing. It got me the job I got today. That is where I met all my colleagues now, all my colleagues that helped me find my job, find where I'd student teach, got me summer internships and more. It is mind blowing what you can learn at these conferences and who you can meet.*



# Geoffrey Wiese

**Major: Nursing**

**First Destination Outcome: Registered Nurse in a Neuroscience Unit at North Memorial Health Hospital in Robbinsdale, MN**

**Words to describe you: Family-Oriented, Adaptable, and Reliable**

*“Jewell’s commitment to teaching such an important skill of critical thought rather than just focusing on book knowledge has always been something that stood out to me. The ability to critically think will never be useless or a wasted skill. That Jewell recognizes this and then does something about it is inspiring.”*



# Geoffrey Wiese

What aspects of your Jewell experience prepared you most for life after college?

*The critical thinking skills and methods I learned at William Jewell for approaching my life and career have been the most impactful pieces for life after college. I spent 10 years active duty in the Navy before coming back to college, so in a way, I had already experienced “life” outside of school for many years. That said, there are certainly skills that I honed and sharpened at Jewell that have proven to be very impactful in my new career.*

What inspired you in college?

*My family was a big inspiration for me, especially my kids. My oldest is 8 years old and the opportunity to go back to school and show her that it's never too late was always a big motivator for me. To have her cheering me on throughout my time at Jewell and then finally on graduation day was the highlight of my time there.*

# Gabrielle Fournier

**Majors: Spanish and International Relations**

**First Destination Outcome: Conversation Auxiliary/ Language Assistant in Valencia, Spain with the North American Language and Culture Assistants Program (NALCAP)**

**Words to describe you: Tenacious, Introspective, and Appreciative**

*“William Jewell, and everything I experienced there, truly impacted me for the better and I believe I will do great things, and already am doing great things because of that institution.”*



# Gabrielle Fournier

What aspects of your Jewell experience prepared you most for life after college?

*Aspects of my Jewell experience that prepared me most for life after college was being a Resident Assistant, Cardinal Host, Swimmer, and skills I gained in the classroom. Being in RA and Cardinal Host roles allowed me to become a better communicator and grow in my style of leadership. Being a swimmer prepared me for so many life things, I couldn't even put into words where that begins and ends. And the skills I learned from my professors as a student, such as essay writing and expression through writing, reading comprehension, group activities, public speaking, etc. are all things that I practiced in my courses and prepared me for life after college. Also, not to mention I feel abundantly prepared for difficult circumstances, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and mentally due to my encompassing experience at Jewell.*

How are you using the critical thinking skills you gained at Jewell?

*I am currently using critical thinking skills that I gained at Jewell in my everyday life. Living in a new, and quite large city, where the language is not my native language, I think about things critically in order to succeed on a daily basis. Every day I use critical thinking when it comes to how I spend my money, where I put my time and energy throughout the day, what kinds of people I'm surrounding myself with, navigating the city, navigating a new job, and most importantly the mundane and minute actions that may not really seem important from one moment to the next, but certainly have an impact on who I grow to be and the goals I attain.*

# Kaci Behrens

**Major: Psychological Science**

**First Destination Outcome: Doctor of Occupational Therapy program at Des Moines University**

**Words to Describe You: Outgoing, Driven, Positive**

*“I love the community aspect of Jewell. Everyone at Jewell wants to better themselves and the people around them. I am so thankful for my time there and have always admired my classmates and the friendships I made.”*



# Kaci Behrens

What aspects of your Jewell experience prepared you most for life after college?

*Since I was involved in a lot (Volleyball, Delta Zeta, Cardinal Host, Career Mentor Program, etc.), I believe it helped me manage my time with the rigor of coursework graduate school has. I believe the variety of classes I took at Jewell helped prepare me for all aspects of graduate school, including researching, reading scientific literature, and understanding the kinesiology of the body.*

Share a favorite college memory.

*One of my favorite memories was using my Journey Grant to go to Costa Rica and volunteer with special needs kids with one of my best friends. I learned a lot about myself and the culture of Costa Rica during my trip and had an amazing time.*

# Olga Morales

**Majors: Public Relations and Theatre**

**First Destination Outcome: M.S. in Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas and Research Assistant for the University**

**Words to describe you: Outgoing, Reliable and Resilient**

*“Being the first person in my family to get a degree and creating a pathway for my siblings to follow is what inspired me in college. Not a lot of people can obtain a degree for multiple reasons, so I’m very grateful to be able to get an opportunity where I can continue my academic career.”*



# Olga Morales

How has your Jewell experience impacted you and what you are doing now?

*I'm a first-generation student and I didn't think about going to graduate school until having discussions within the communication department. They truly care about their students and try their best to give them opportunities. There are times where they can be tough but it's out of love and respect. They definitely pushed me to where I'm at now.*

What aspects of your Jewell experience prepared you most for life after college?

*I would say being part of a sorority prepared me a lot. Before I joined one, I was extremely introverted, however when I joined ZTA I was able to branch out and meet people through various walks of life and support a philanthropy. Now because I was able to connect with many great people in the Kansas City area, I can help undergraduates here at the University of Kansas to explore endless opportunities for themselves when it comes to research or scholarship opportunities.*