

The magazine of George Fox University | Spring 2014

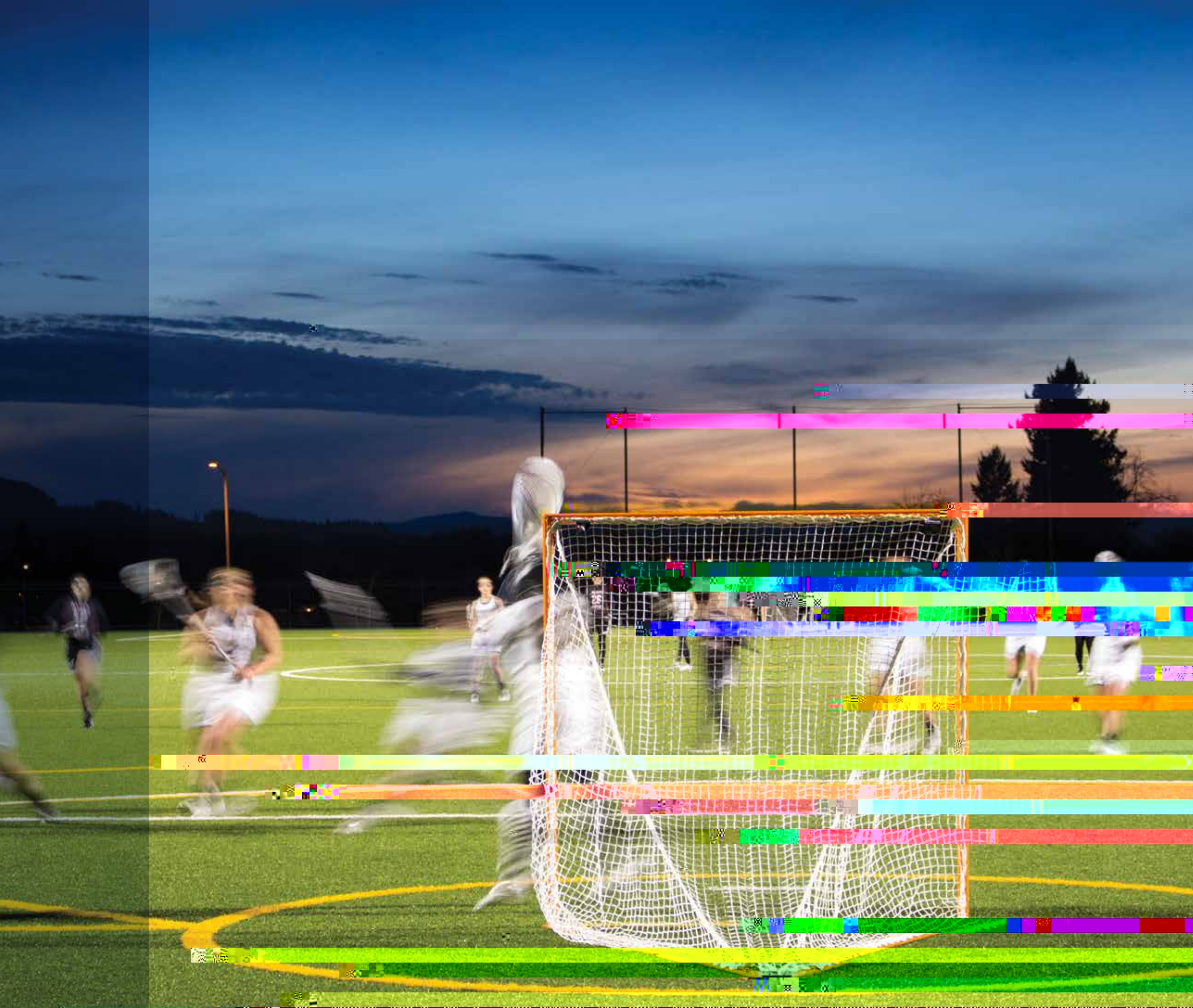
George Fox

JOURNAL

Against the Grain

*Alumna Lori Sobelson helps
Bob's Red Mill founder
Bob Moore buck the trend
of corporate greed*





MESSAGE *from the president*

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my job is getting to know our graduates. Recently one of our fine professors, Nate Peach, introduced me to a 2013 College of Business graduate, Ilishan Low.

One of our most impressive young alumni, Ilishan grew up outside the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur where his mother, Terry, and father, Chin Khuan, were both Christians and raised him in the church.

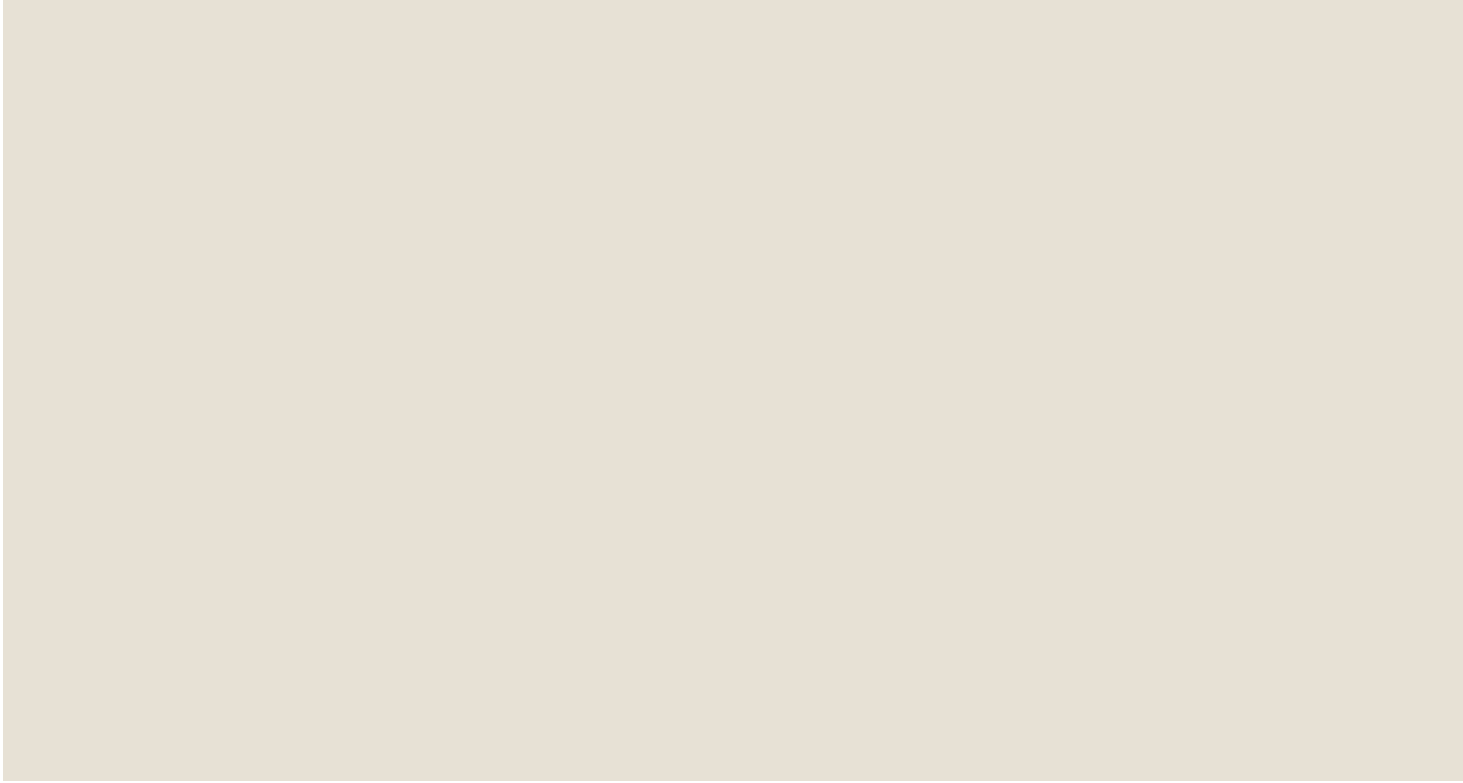
When I talk with graduates I always ask two questions: "How did you find George Fox University," and "What was transformative for you about the educational and spiritual experience?"

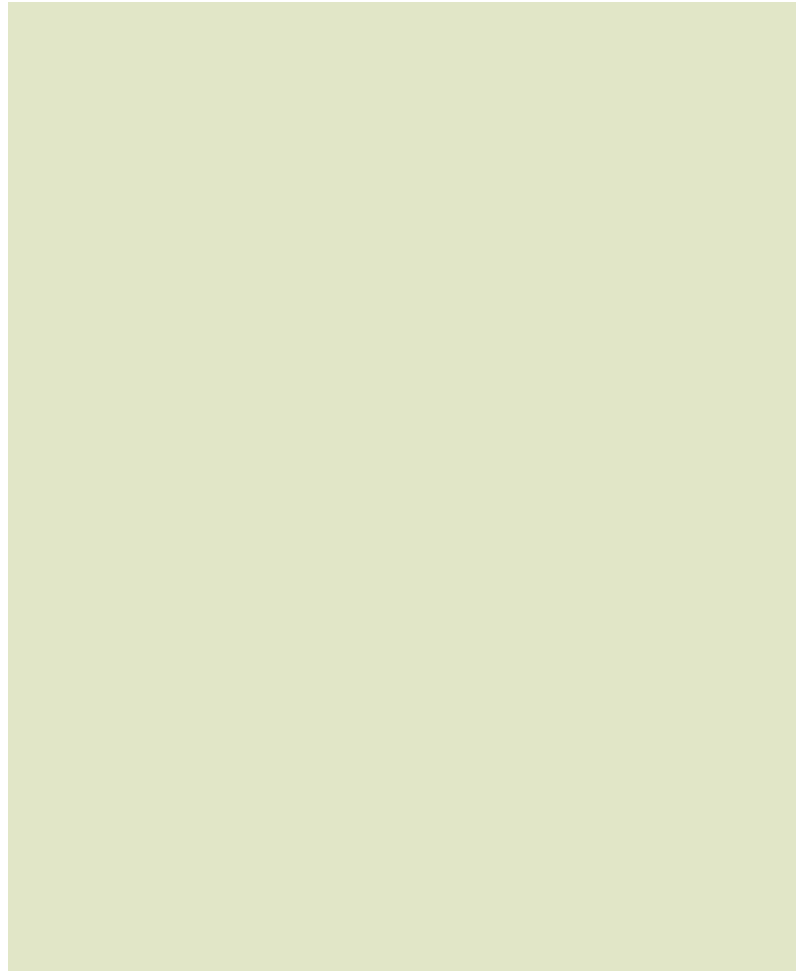
I was surprised to learn that Ilishan's family first discovered George Fox when his father browsed through *Forbes'* website and noticed that our university was identified as one of the best faith-based institutions in the U.S.; that made the family stop and take a look. Prior to that, Ilishan and his family had never heard of George Fox!

While Ilishan first heard about us online, what actually brought him here was the fact that we meet the two primary qualities he and his family were looking for in a college: excellent academic experience coupled with serious spiritual formation. He found them both at George Fox.

When I asked Ilishan what made the experience here special for him he immediately responded that it was the relationships formed. "It was a privilege to get to know faculty on a personal level," he said. "Professors take time to learn who you are and to understand your goals." For Ilishan, a finance major, that faculty member was Nate Peach. While at George Fox, Ilishan developed a special interest in doing research on the palm oil industry in Malaysia and its connection to genuine savings, and Nate worked with him on this research. His story is one that is often repeated here at George Fox: students and faculty in partnership with a goal of transforming the future.

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If you attended George Fox as an undergraduate student in the past 20 years, there's a good chance you took a class from history professor Kerry Irish. And if you did, there's an even better chance he left a lasting impression. Known for his engaging lectures and vivid storytelling – sometimes while in full costume – Irish brings history to life in a way that makes an enduring impact. Recently the *Journal* sat down with this popular professor to talk about his unique teaching style, his favorite moments in history and his two decades of service at George Fox.

What originally inspired you to teach history?

It was two gentlemen who were here at George Fox at the time I was a student, Ralph Beebe and Mark Weinert. They were Christian men and teaching history, and if it hadn't been for their example I'm not sure the idea would have taken hold that you could have a ministry and teach a subject other than Bible. It was their example that taught me that, and I've been thankful for that ever since.

How do you keep your students engaged?

Almost all American students value equality and freedom at some level – they understand those are basic American values. So to show them how those values developed, I think it almost immediately engages their attention. They see the relevance of the past to their present lives. ... But I'm not above flagrant dramatics in order to keep their attention. If you're

going to describe Washington at the Battle of Princeton when he leads a mounted charge against the British soldiers, sword in hand, it would be helpful to have a sword in hand to wave about at that point.

What about teaching gets you excited?

Every day when I walk into the classroom, that's my purpose for the day. There's nothing else I'm going to do on any day I'm teaching that's going to be more important than that class. That's my purpose.

If you could experience any moment in history, what would it be?

Pick any aspect of the ministry of Jesus Christ – I would want to see some of those events. ... The raising of Lazarus is my favorite biblical story – I'd like to have seen that. But it would have been great to simply walk the dusty roads of Judea on any given day with Jesus Christ.

Who is your favorite character in American history?

I think George Washington's influence on all of us is underappreciated.

Giving Ingrained

*Alumna Lori Sobelson helps
Bob's Red Mill founder Bob Moore
continue his legacy of generosity*

By Kimberly Felton

People like to joke around with Bob Moore. Of course they do. The founder of Bob's Red Mill has a laugh recognizable from any corner of his store or office.

In the days before the company grew to a multi-million dollar, international business, he knew all of his employees and their families, and he figured out pretty quickly how to get a good laugh.

Thirty-five years later, at 85, Moore is still running his business. When not at his desk, he strolls the aisles of his store, chatting with customers and employees alike. Every Friday, Bob and his assistant, Nancy Garner, sit at the twin baby grand pianos at the café and play – all afternoon. He still enjoys a good laugh, yet he's still the boss and everyone knows where to draw the line – everyone except Lori Sobelson. She draws her own line.

A unique connection

From loyal customer for the last 33 years to store manager to director of corporate outreach, Sobelson, a 1997 George Fox University graduate, now regulates and guards millions of dollars in charitable giving for Bob's Red Mill. She knows

The Simple Life

the products as well as the miller does himself – and knows how to get a rise out of him and take a hit herself.

“I would never do anything to be disrespectful,” Sobelson says, “or say anything that would make him, at least intentionally, make him uncomfortable –”

Sobelson doesn't complete her sentence before Moore talks over her. “I try my best to make you uncomfortable.”

Sobelson laughs. “That's true! I take that back.”

Moore lets loose with a belly-deep chuckle. Sobelson is like a daughter to this entrepreneur. They acknowledge it, like it, are proud of it.

“I say things to him no one else can,” she says. And she slaps his hand if he gets into her quinoa, which he did in front of an audience of several hundred at Oregon State University. “Don't lift the lid on cooking quinoa,” Sobelson had just instructed attendees of her cooking class. Moore disobeyed and was promptly reprimanded. For his part, Moore has been known to walk on stage with a cup of water, claiming that if he has to work with her, he needs his vodka.

“I think that's why it works,” Sobelson says. “We just have a great rapport.”

“I have a great respect for her,” Moore says. “She is who she is, I am who I am. She's done what she's done. And somehow or other the Lord's brought us together. ... I don't have near this relationship with another soul in the world that I have with her. It's unique.”

From George Fox to Bob's Red Mill

The first time Moore offered Sobelson a job, she declined.

“Well, it wasn't an official offer,” she says.

“She had too much education,” he says.

Truth was, Sobelson was at George Fox at the time and wanted to stay in school. That didn't stop her from popping in for lunch at Bob's Red Mill's deli – or helping Moore's wife, Charlee, serve coffee at the deli when the lines went out the door. She loved the mill, loved the product and loved helping out even without a paycheck.

Moore's job offer for Sobelson got serious after she earned her George Fox degree in management and organizational leadership. Previous professional experience had developed her leadership

and management skills, so this degree was a natural next step. “I learned a lot about myself during my time at Fox,” she says, “and the degree equipped me for the positions I've held since graduation.”

All of those positions post-graduation have been at Bob's Red Mill.

In 2003 Moore built the Whole Grain Store and Visitor Center in Milwaukie, Ore. He needed an assistant manager, someone good

not only with people but also in the kitchen, who could teach cooking classes at the store. Sobelson had more than a leadership degree to her name, and Moore knew it.

“You can see by her personality ...” Moore pauses. “After hours of talk, why, she convinced me she was the right person for the job.” Sobelson just laughs and says she tried too hard in the beginning, wanting badly to succeed and make Moore proud.

“But that's OK,” Moore says. “I'd certainly rather have to tell a person to try not quite so hard. ... If you have to tell somebody to try harder, you probably got the wrong person for the job. She's never been that person.”

During her eight years as assistant manager at the store, Sobelson developed a cooking school that was open to the public as well as employees. Moore and his wife often attended, and he could not keep quiet.

“He used to come to my classes and throw stuff out – see if he

could catch me off guard,” Sobelson says.

“Well, I don’t know where the kidding got started, but it was some time ago,” Moore says. “But it always seemed to bear fruit in front of people and wherever we were.”

Along the way, Sobelson stopped trying so hard and simply did the hard work that came naturally to her. Whatever Moore tossed to her, she caught and returned – with interest. But these weren’t just jokes; they were ideas and projects. First, attending trade shows with Moore, promoting products and offering seminars on healthy cooking. Then one day it was a new job.

“I’ve never seen her get caught in any situation she isn’t capable of handling,” Moore says. “She’s exemplary in every aspect of her offerings with me. I wonder sometimes if I didn’t expect that and you gave it, or whether you gave it and now I learned to expect it.”

“Probably both,” Sobelson says. “He’s so willing to push because he sees potential.”

The hard work of giving away money

Long known for his generosity, Moore made national news in 2009 when he gave his company to his employees through an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP). By 2011, Bob’s Red Mill charitable giving had grown to such proportions that it desperately needed dedicated oversight. To Moore, Sobelson was the obvious choice for the new position.

“He gave me a title and he said, ‘OK, this is what I need you to do: You figure it out, you create it, and then I’ll let you know if you’re doing it right or not,’” Sobelson says.

Creating positions is nothing new to Sobelson; she created the cooking school at Bob’s Red Mill and positions within other companies before that.

“I’m a pretty strong leader,” she says, “and take on –”

“She’s loud,” he interrupts.

“ – great responsibility,” she says, completing her sentence.

“She’s met all the challenges,” Moore agrees. “This one she’s in now, guarding over the community outreach for the company – and especially

speakers and think, 'Maybe I'll do short-term missions or I'll support missions.' But I always thought being a missionary was something somebody else did. I said, 'God, there's no way you can use me. I'm no spiritual giant, and I'm just not that great a guy.'"

It was during his second year of veterinary school at Washington State University that he felt the unmistakable call to go into the ministry – and specifically, to serve as a missionary. "God really hit me with Romans 12:1 – 'Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.' I was convicted by it, because if I was really on the altar as a living sacrifice I couldn't presuppose what God wanted me to do. I had to say, 'Your will be done, no matter what,' so I knelt by my bed and prayed, 'Lord I know you're smarter than this, I know you've got better people than this, but if you want me to go, OK.'"

Still, upon graduation in 1983, he wasn't completely sold on the idea – and he further questioned the calling when, upon applying for service-oriented jobs, he ran into dead ends. He applied to the Peace Corps and was told to get experience in the U.S. before working overseas. Mission organizations told him the same. "I thought, 'God is beginning to agree with me,'" he reasoned.

Perhaps finding work at home was meant to be after all. He was leaning that direction when, as he was leaving his WSU housing for the last time, he heard the phone ring. On the line was Christian Veterinary Mission with a proposal: "We want you to

go to Ethiopia."

Van Gorkom balked. "I thought you wanted someone with experience," he retorted. He was told it would only be a six-month commitment. "I figured, 'Six months? Why not? I can do the missions thing and then come home and get my career started.'"

If only God's plans were that convenient.

A 25-year odyssey

Van Gorkom accepted the offer – only the "six-month assignment" turned into a 25-year odyssey as a veterinarian and church planter in Ethiopia. Fifteen of those years were spent in the remote bush, where Fred and wife Vicki, a fellow vet from Oklahoma whom he met in the country, raised four children – Cori, Jesse, Jodi and Aaron – among nine tribes of nomadic people in southwestern Ethiopia. Vicki says Fred first told her he loved her "while we were doing a postmortem exam on a dead cow."

As veterinarians, the Van Gorkoms were revered. "To Ethiopians, a cow is their John Deere, their Mack Truck, their status symbol and their short- and long-term food source," Fred says. "Because we treated their animals, they respected us and were much more receptive to the gospel than they would have been if we were just there to preach."

The trust they gained as vets allowed the Van Gorkoms to begin planting churches.



1960–69

Nancy (Ross) Brown (G65) in May retired from Bon Appétit, George Fox University's food service provider, ending 20 years on campus. She now is concentrating on helping her husband, **Dave Brown (G65)**, as they operate Mustard Seed Farms in St. Paul, Ore., with 82 acres of certified organic vegetables marketed 10 months a year in Oregon and a community garden.

Loren Calkins (G67, DMin70), who retired from full-time ministry 11 years ago, is now in his eighth year in part-time ministry at Glamis North Hot Springs RV Park in Niland, Calif., where he pastors a seasonal church open November through March. He also enjoys riding his ATV, last year traveling more than 2,000 miles around the park area.

1980–89

Beth (Aldridge) Molzahn (G82) in October ended 18 years with George Fox University, the last 11 in graduate admissions, primarily serving MAT faculty and students. She began as an administrative assistant for the humanities department then served as executive assistant in academic affairs. She plans to work with her husband, Rob, in his real estate business in Newberg and also start a ministry helping those needing assistance with projects around the house.

Scott Young (G84) is in his 21st year as owner and president of Young Associates, a consulting firm specializing in brand development, corporate and marketing communications, and corporate/product identity development. Based in Winfield, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, he has done work for Spiegel, John Deere, *Sports Illustrated* and the American Medical Association.

Michael Ralls (G88) has been named Assistant Principal of the Year by the Oregon Association of Secondary School



ALUMNI CONNECTIONS



**Portland Trail Blazers
Game**

April 9 at 7 p.m.

Alumni, parents and friends of the university will gather at the Moda Center this

April to enjoy a Trail Blazer game against the Sacramento Kings. This is a great chance to take in an NBA basketball game at a discounted price while getting to know others in the George Fox community. Tickets are \$22 each. Visit alumni.georgefox.edu for more information and to purchase tickets.

**Spring Music
Concert**

April 25 at 7:30 p.m.

The spring concert will feature performances by the uni-



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