

## A COMPETITIVE RUNNER'S GUIDE TO IHOP AND LIFE By Kelly Laffey ('10)

**B**etween 2006 and 2010, if someone on the Wake Forest women's track and field or cross-country team looked at you with raised eyebrows and said "IHOP," it wasn't about breakfast. Unless it was free pancake day.

In that case, we runners would skip our post-practice Pit Sit, which began as early as 4:30 p.m. more times than I would like to admit, to secure our free short stack at the restaurant. But the IHOP question typically referred to our oft-run, seven-mile IHOP loop. The route hugged the outskirts of campus and featured a hard right at the all-day breakfast haven.

In many ways, my college experience — and by extension, the person I became during my four years there — was shaped on those IHOP runs and on loops across campus, through Reynolda Gardens and around Salem Lake. Logging mile after mile presented endless opportunities to catch up with teammates who quickly became close friends and confidantes. On long runs problems unraveled. Decisions were made. Competition thrived. Even in silence we felt the camaraderie as we motivated each other to push the pace, become better runners and go after our goals.

Flash-forward to this year. I'm five years removed from my competitive running days. But I find that my Wake Forest friends are still a team, running together and rooting each other on, even without the uniforms or organized meets. We stay in touch and await our reunions.

Last year my former teammates Caitlin Crawford ('11, MSA '12), Katelyn Wohlford ('11), Katy Swain ('12), Cristina Richard ('11), Molly Binder ('12) and I ventured to Iceland for a week. The trip felt like a never-ending long run, and it wasn't just because we spent the entire time in spandex and sneakers. Instead of motivating each other to win rac-

es while pounding the pavement on University Parkway, we were discussing how to make the most of our careers and our lives. All this while fording rivers formed by glacial runoff, hiking through valleys to hot springs known as special destinations for locals and mugging for photos of us pretending to be the walking Demon Deacon at BB&T Field, Icelandic-style.

My favorite memento from the trip is a notebook filled with pages outlining where each of us hopes to be in a decade, supplemented by commentary from the group. We wrote in it one night over dinner, our picture window framing a volcano that loomed in the distance. That notebook is tangible evidence of how grounding it is for me to be among fellow Deacs. Whereas we once inspired each other to achieve running goals, now we're a support system for our post-grad dreams.

Ten years ago, an Icelandic adventure with my college teammates was not something I could have dreamt of scripting. Even the mental high of running with good friends was a total unknown.

During first-year orientation in 2006 I emailed Coach Annie Bennett about walking onto the team. I was still recovering from a 2004 back operation for scoliosis and getting back into shape. Coach granted me an invitation to attend practice. Soon, I was running in a Wake uniform.

I had no way of knowing then that team membership is for life. I was signing on to be a Demon Deacon forever, and these intervening years have proven that it was truly the opportunity of a lifetime, with friendships for the long run.

*Kelly Laffey ('10), a political science major and journalism minor, is associate editor at Dan's Papers, a lifestyle magazine in Southampton, New York. Her focus is on sports, health and fitness. Contact her at [kmlaffey@gmail.com](mailto:kmlaffey@gmail.com).*



Kelly Laffey and her teammates made an Iceland trip that "felt like a never-ending long run." Lower photo: The group mugged for a photo "enhanced" with fake lava.

**Rebecca Kinlein Lindahl (JD)** is with Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP in Charlotte, NC. She was named one of Charlotte's 50 Most Influential Women.

**Erin Miller** is director of digital communications at NBC News in New York.

**Mary Ashton Phillips** received her PhD in clinical psychology from the University of Mississippi. She is a postdoctoral fellow at the Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center and on the faculty at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

**Rachel Sharrow** received her master's in library science from the University of Maryland, College Park. She is a reference librarian at the U.S. Senate Library in Washington, D.C.

**Zach Tysinger** and his wife, Arlo, were married in August 2014. They live in the Los Angeles area where Zach is the technical director of AMDA College & Conservatory for the Arts.

**Nate Witmer** worked with comedian Jon Stewart through "The Daily Show" Veteran Immersion Program after completing military service in Iraq. Now an associate segment producer in the field department, he says the program is a fantastic resource for veterans to explore the industry's technical, logistical and creative op-



Yi ('06)

portunities and gain practical resources to help them pursue future employment. Read more at [magazine.wfu.edu](http://magazine.wfu.edu) ([bit.ly/1GWFoOe](http://bit.ly/1GWFoOe)).

**John Yi** is an assistant professor of surgery at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC.

## 2007

**Ben Barron** is an expert on Cuba sanctions in the Office of Economic Sanctions Policy and Implementation at the U.S. State Department. He visited Cuba for the first time last March with a U.S. delegation that discussed telecommunications and Internet policy issues with Cuban officials. Read more at [magazine.wfu.edu](http://magazine.wfu.edu) ([bit.ly/1GjwarK](http://bit.ly/1GjwarK)).

**Patrick Kane (JD)** received the Citizen Lawyer Award from the N.C. Bar Association. He is a partner with Smith Moore Leatherwood LLP in Greensboro, NC.

**Logan Roach** has returned to Wake Forest as a law school development officer in University Advancement. He and his wife, Danielle, relocated from Durham, NC.

## 2008

**James Beshara** is CEO and cofounder of the crowdfunding platform Tilt.com. He received Wake Forest's Excellence in Entrepreneurship Award.

**Michael Lawrence (PhD)** works in radiation oncology at the UNC School of Medicine in Chapel Hill, NC.

**C. Justin Smith** is a business analyst for UNC Wilmington's Department of Architectural and Construction Services and is an organist and choir-master at Pearsall Memorial Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, NC. He received his master's from UNC Wilmington where he was valedictorian, named MPA Graduate of the Year and received the Distinguished Research and Service Award.

**Judith Haensel Whelan (LLM, JD '10)** is an associate with Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP in Charlotte, NC.

## 2009

**Brittney Bogues** is vice president of Always Believe, a nonprofit that supports at-risk youth in Charlotte, NC, that was founded by her fa-

*Your new and improved*

EMAIL ACCOUNT

and

ALUMNI DIRECTORY

As of right now, messages sent to your @alumni.wfu.edu address will automatically go to your new Gmail account. To access those messages or set them up to forward as they have in the past, you must visit:

[go.wfu.edu/email](http://go.wfu.edu/email)

Find your fellow Wake Foresters with in-depth search fields. Update your profile and privacy information with ease. It's mobile friendly. And it's still absolutely free! To check out the new directory, visit

[go.wfu.edu/wakenetwork](http://go.wfu.edu/wakenetwork)