

**Claudia Harris '21  
and Jester**

*Delaware, Ohio*

*B.S., Civil Engineering*

*University of Mount Union*

**CAMPUS  
JESTER**

Service dog in-training brought  
joy to the campus community

{BY MAGGIE O'DONNELL '20}



A new addition to Raider Nation in 2019-2020 was Jester, a one-year-old Labrador and Golden Retriever mix. Jester's trainer, and current Mount Union student, is Claudia Harris '21, a civil engineering major from Delaware, Ohio.

Jester and Harris were paired through an organization called Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), which specializes in providing highly-trained service dogs to people with disabilities. Harris received Jester when he was two-months old and will raise and train him until he is 18-months old.

Harris said she was first introduced to CCI when her mom started volunteering with the organization.

"I loved its mission, and I was inspired by how service dogs could increase a person's independence so much," said Harris.

When Harris decided to get involved with the organization, she knew the biggest hurdle would be getting approved to have the dog with her – both in her residence hall and in the classroom. The Office of Student Accessibility was supportive and accommodating with Harris after understanding her motivation and dedication.

She says that CCI has certain requirements like crate training, which alleviates many of the common worries and concerns regarding having a dog on campus. Harris explained that Jester is being trained to assist with practical tasks, including turning light switches on and off, opening doors, pulling wheelchairs, picking up items that are dropped, and providing unconditional love and acceptance.

"Every day started with Jester and me waking up at 6 a.m., going outside, and eating breakfast," said Harris, discussing how her days as a residential student revolved around Jester



**CANINE COMPANIONS**  
**FOR INDEPENDENCE®**

**"I loved their mission and I was inspired by how service dogs could increase a person's independence so much."**

**- Claudia Harris on Canine Companions for Independence**

prior to COVID-19. "We would go on an hour-long walk, and then Jester would usually take a nap while I would get homework done or go to class. Jester came to most of my classes but occasionally stayed in my room when I believed the environment would be too stressful for him or myself and I wouldn't be able to focus on him properly."

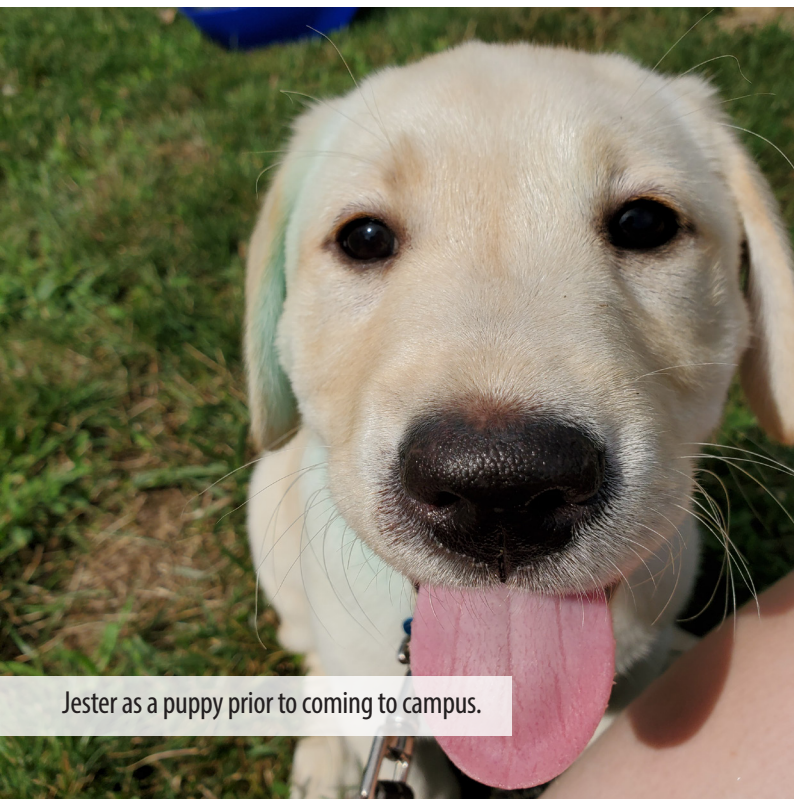
Not only is Harris involved in a rigorous major, but she is also a tutor and involved in Alpha Phi Omega, the service fraternity on campus. Harris says that Jester has helped her busy schedule by motivating her to get things done when the time allows.

"Before having Jester, I struggled to get things done when I didn't feel like doing them," Harris said. "I would avoid items on my to-do list because I knew I could find another time to do it. Jester rules my schedule now, so when I have the free time to do homework, volunteer, or work, I take advantage of it, because it may be the only time I get to do those things!"

While training a dog to be a pet is a challenging task alone, teaching a dog to be of service can be quite complicated – especially while being a college student. However, Jester and Harris make a great team and have been warmly welcomed by the Mount Union community.



**WANT MORE?** See the video of Claudia and Jester training on campus by visiting [youtu.be/kVn8T7dveLc](https://youtu.be/kVn8T7dveLc)



Jester as a puppy prior to coming to campus.

# SUPERSTARS in Scrubs

*Mount Union nursing alumni share their stories while on the frontlines of the novel coronavirus battle*

## 1. Allison Baird '19

Coronary ICU Nurse, Cleveland Clinic

“The professors are the reason why I’m the nurse I am today. I am always and forever grateful for the opportunities at Mount Union... I think the most significant way the pandemic has impacted my career is watching patients not being allowed to see their loved ones. In my unit, hard decisions are made every day about code status, goals of care are discussed, and hard decisions are made about the patients’ lives.”

## 2. Sabrina Ochoa '19

RN, Cleveland Clinic Akron General

“Mount Union nursing helped me get where I wanted to be and set me up in my career for life!... My unit has expanded its beds into another unit, which we now staff due to the high influx of cardiac patients during this time. We have been working very hard to keep high spirits and help one another out.”

## 3. Bryanna Aldrich '19

RN, Cleveland Clinic Hillcrest Hospital ICU

“Caring for COVID-19 patients has impacted the way we provide care for our patients. With a no-visitation policy in place at the hospital, it has made it more difficult for patients and families to cope with their diagnoses. It has become

even more important for us as nurses to be there for the patients, but also to keep family informed to provide them with a sense of security as well.”

## 4. Alex Wesely '19

RN, Duke University Hospital

“Mount Union taught me how to grow from challenges. Nursing school was extremely difficult, but it contributed immensely to my growth as a young professional... Since so many of our patients are immunocompromised, we don’t see any COVID-19 patients. Due to many of our surgeries being somewhat elective, our census has been low, which has led to me being canceled or floated to different units for one of my three shifts a week.”

## 5. Katie Vance '18

RN, Cleveland Clinic Main Campus

“The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted my workplace in many different ways. In my undergraduate academic career, material was covered regarding pandemics and what happens when public health emergencies occur. It has been crazy to observe what I learned in the classroom at Mount and see it applied in a real-life setting.”

## 6. Dana Lautenschlager '18

RN-MICU, Cleveland Clinic Hillcrest Hospital

“As usual, I was nervous to take the NCLEX exam, but I felt as though the Mount Union nursing program prepared me so well... COVID-19 has had a huge





impact on our unit. We have large numbers of coronavirus cases in our unit. All of us have been required to take classes on proning [moving patients onto their stomachs] although we're all rock stars at it now because it is something that has been used so much to help the lungs of some of the more advanced COVID cases."

**7. Sydney Moats '19**  
RN, Aultman Hospital

"The pandemic we are facing has brought many changes to the healthcare system, and new changes are happening daily, sometimes multiple revisions to policies within hours. The most obvious change that would be seen by the public is the use of masks through an entire 12-hour shift."

**8. Hadleigh (Rundell '17) Douglas,**  
Critical Care RN, Knox Community Hospital

"I am pleased to still keep in contact with most of the nursing professors years after graduation... The COVID-19 pandemic has increased workloads for many people in the hospital setting. My work, due to the pandemic has included surge planning in preparation for the hospital to accommodate higher-than-usual patient volumes."

**9. Jason Hadley '19**  
RN, Akron Children's Hospital

"The thing that I loved most about the nursing program at Mount is the relationships I made with classmates. We became a family during our four years... It has been hard to be apart from my family and friends, but I try to focus on what a blessing it is that my family is healthy during this time. My coworkers are always willing to lend a helping hand, and I go to work knowing I am part of an amazing team."

**10. Hailee Ellinwood '17**  
RN, UH Hospitals, Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital

"I feel that Mount Union helped shape me into who I am today. The nursing program was well designed and prepared me for the NCLEX... Pediatrics does not include a patient population that appears to be heavily affected by the coronavirus. In my unit, we have not been affected by the virus itself, but we have been affected due to low census and canceling elective surgical cases."

**11. Annie Zielasko '19**  
ICU RN, Akron City Hospital

"I loved being a part of nursing at Mount Union. I learned so much from the

simulations and labs... This pandemic has impacted our work greatly. Having to wear the proper personal protective equipment while providing patient care is essential. Our floor has become the ICU overflow to provide enough rooms for all of our COVID (+) or rule out COVID patient population. All of our employees are struggling, but we are overcoming the situation by working together as a team."

**12. Joshua Lock '18**  
RN, Akron Children's Hospital

"Throughout my journey through the nursing program at Mount Union, I most enjoyed the 'family' of which I was a part. I had great clinical experiences and fantastic clinical instructors to guide me... Working within a pediatric facility, I have received many, many hours of education, simulations, and literature not only on the pediatric patient but also on adult patients suffering from COVID-19. My favorite aspect of my job is going home after my shift knowing I impacted a child's life — being a small impact of comfort, or a life-changing impact during their illness."

