
SJR Column: Fortunate in the Opportunities, June 2020

Shortly after becoming Chancellor of the University of Illinois Springfield in 2011, I had lunch at a favorite Chinese restaurant near the UIS campus. When the traditional fortune cookie arrived, the slip of paper inside offered the following prophecy: “*You will be fortunate in the opportunities presented to you.*”

That slip of paper has been taped to the screen of my computer ever since – reminding me daily to pursue every opportunity (and embrace every responsibility)

that would best serve the interests of UIS and the public good of our community and our state.

As I compose this 90th UIS Perspectives column, the last before my retirement at the end of June, I find myself reflecting on the many ways that prophecy has been realized during the past nine years. Thanks in part to the many students, faculty, staff, community leaders, donors and alums who have contributed in so many ways, we can be proud of the opportunities we have made real ... together.

The addition of new academic programs such as Education, Data Analytics, Exercise Science, Biochemistry, Theatre, and a BSN in Nursing (in partnership with Memorial Health System and the University of Illinois Chicago) have made our young university more attractive for prospective students and produced more graduates who are contributing to their communities in meaningful ways.

The University of Illinois System's Distinguished Faculty Hiring Program has brought new and outstanding teacher/scholars, while more UIS faculty than ever have earned Full Professor rank – confirming their excellence and enabling them to contribute more fully to their academic disciplines and the reputation of the university. At the same time, many young professionals have chosen to advance their careers at UIS – faculty and staff who are “rising stars” both on campus and in the community.

The university's “*Leadership lived*” promise, launched in 2012, has been widely adopted and has encouraged new levels of engagement in public affairs as well as community volunteering, activism and campus life. I am especially proud of the Graduate Public Service Internship program that has expanded both here in the state capital and in Chicago – providing hands-on opportunities that prepare students for successful careers as public servants and leaders.

The opening of the Student Union on January 14, 2018, was a decisive moment for the university. This award-winning \$21 million building has become the heart of campus life and a valuable resource for the entire community. A sustainable building with a green roof, the Student Union project was successful thanks to determined student body leadership and the generous support of donors who understood what it would mean for the university and for the student experience.

Infrastructure, including campus beautification is so important. It is vital for student recruitment and retention but also because it creates campus pride and a positive environment for staff, faculty and visitors. I'm especially grateful for private support from the University of Illinois Chester Endowment that enabled us to commission “*The Young Lawyer*,” a sculpture of Abraham Lincoln that has become a campus landmark. The fund also helped create a beautiful and much-beloved Shakespeare Garden as well as supported the purchase of two prominent works of art for the Student Union.

The acquisition of Innovate Springfield, the downtown business and social innovation center, founded by the Community Foundation of the Land of Lincoln,

and the UIS Field Station on Lake Springfield, formerly the FOP lake club, are new assets that are creating valuable partnerships and providing new opportunities for students. (Maybe a crew team is next!)

Just a few months ago the opening of the Sangamon Experience (funded by an extraordinary \$3.8 million private gift) launched an exciting endeavor focused on the history of the Sangamon Valley – a perfect fit for UIS. Opening of the new Center for Lincoln Studies will follow in the coming year.

The increasing success of the university’s young Division II Athletics program is another opportunity being realized. Thanks to exceptional Athletics staff, talented student-athletes and timely donor support, Prairie Stars Baseball, Golf, Softball and Volleyball teams have earned first-time appearances in NCAA Regional and National Championships. The addition of the Cross Country/Track and Field program in 2014 instantly added talented students to our community with both men and women already achieving success in Great Lakes Valley Conference and NCAA competitions. Most important, UIS student athletes are campus leaders who excel in the classroom. In Spring, 2020 they achieved an overall grade point average of 3.52 – the highest in program history!

I have most certainly been “*fortunate in the opportunities presented*” and I am so very grateful for the many contributions, collaborations and friendships that have helped advance the university and so enriched my (and my husband’s) Illinois experience these past nine years. Though there are undoubtedly challenges ahead, knowing the many who remain committed to the mission and vision of UIS, I am confident the university will face those challenges head on and continue to progress.

Before I assume my new title as Chancellor Emeritus at the end of this month, I’ll tuck that slip of paper into my pocket – inspiration, perhaps, for new opportunities to come. But I’ll always appreciate my time as Chancellor of UIS.

I hope we’ll stay in touch!

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Board of Trustees Remarks, May 2020

Thursday, May 21, 2020

[via Zoom]

CHANCELLOR KOCH’S WELCOME

Chairman Edwards, members of the Board, President Killeen, colleagues and guests:

As you know, in **pre-COVID-19 times**, this May BOT meeting was scheduled to be held **on your UIS campus** and, just a few months ago, I expected to be saying to you today:

Welcome to the University of Illinois at Springfield!

Instead, we're meeting via Zoom – but I still appreciate the opportunity to offer some **brief remarks**.

First, I must tell you, if we **were** meeting today at UIS, you would see a campus-literally – in **full bloom!**

The **pink and white dogwood trees** are in glorious flower near the campus pond, the **bearded iris** are in beautiful bloom and the **false indigo** (a native to Illinois) are in full glory with yellow, blue, red and purple blossoms.

The **koi fish** we rescued from the Governor's mansion a couple of years ago have come out of hibernation to beg for Cheerios and, when I stopped by the new **Field Station at Lake Springfield** yesterday, it was obvious the **Canada goose population** has also blossomed this Spring.

If you looked out the windows of the Student Union today you would see a **huge crane hovering over the Health Sciences Building!** It's delivering **new chillers and air handling units** to the roof which will enable us to **modernize the heating and cooling systems – a much needed project**.

Reconstruction of the UIS Observatory (on top of Brookens Library) is visibly underway and will accommodate the increasing number of visitors who enjoy **evening Star Parties** with astronomy faculty.

Improvements also are underway at the **baseball complex** to enhance the game day experience for fans of the Prairie Stars.

I'm pleased to report today that we've continued to make **substantial progress** at UIS this past year **despite the challenges of COVID-19:**

- UIS was ranked by U.S. News last Fall as the **top regional public university in Illinois**.
- Thanks in part to several new academic programs, we also enrolled **the largest freshman class ever this year**.
- Our **second UI Distinguished Scholar, Graham Peck**, joined the faculty this past August and is already establishing his place as an important leader for the new **Center for Lincoln Studies** that will open in the coming Fall.
- We launched "**The Sangamon Experience**" in January – a new **research and exhibition project** with a focus on the history of the Sangamon Valley – the result of a **\$3.8 million gift** and an **ideal fit for our university**.

- UIS faculty and staff contributions to the **Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network** are growing – with **Innovate Springfield more than doubling** its economic development activities in downtown Springfield during the last 12 months.
- Our young **Division II Athletics program** continues to excel in many ways. **Taryn Christy**, a member of the Cross Country team for example, became the university's **first-in-history All American at the NCAA National Championships** last spring and continued to break records throughout this year.

Not to be outdone, UIS **Head Cross Country Coach, Tyler Pence**, competed in the U.S. Olympic marathon trials in February – quite a **role model!**

When it comes to Athletics, **I'm most proud of our students' performance in the classroom.** This Spring, UIS student-athletes achieved a **collective 3.52 department grade point average – a record-setting performance!**

- Finally, this has been another **successful fund-raising year.** With the leadership of **Vice Chancellor for Advancement Jeff Lorber**, we've raised more than **\$35.5 million of our \$40 million goal** for the **Reaching Stellar Campaign.**

We have created a place **where “people want to be involved”** and I'm very **grateful to all the donors and alums** who believe in UIS and its future.

And speaking of the future, **in the coming year UIS will celebrate its 50th anniversary** and I'm confident that, despite the challenges ahead, the university will continue to achieve its vision **to be a pathway of opportunity for students and a vibrant and important part of the University of Illinois System.**

There were **two factors** that convinced me nine years ago to accept the offer to become **Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.**

- The first was the **opportunity to serve, learn and grow as part of the leadership team of the University of Illinois**, one of the finest institutions of higher education in the country.
- The second was **the obvious potential of UIS** – a very young institution that clearly **could do more and be more – for students and for the public good** in Illinois and beyond.

I've never regretted my decision.

I sincerely thank all the members of the Board, past and present, who have supported me and supported UIS. **Thank you so much!**

I also want to thank **President Killeen** for his support, advice and encouragement – **I have greatly appreciated it.**

And I thank **all the members** of the UI community, especially my **talented colleagues at UIS, Dr. Wilson, Dr. Ghosh, and my fellow Chancellors, Dr. Jones and Dr. Amiridis**, with whom I've had the **great good fortune** to work.

My husband, Dennis, and I are really looking forward to the next stage of our lives, but **we'll always be supporters of the University of Illinois.**

Thank you, again.

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2020

Yesterday, May 9, 2020, was an important day for the University of Illinois Springfield. For the 1,179 students who earned their place in the 2020 commencement program, it was a bittersweet occasion – with virtual celebrations and social media activities replacing traditional face-to-face graduation events.

Regardless of the circumstances, university degrees have been officially conferred and there is no doubt that for each 2020 graduate, their University of Illinois degree will contribute to their success as well as to the public good of their community – wherever that community may be.

As Chancellor of UIS, I've found there is no greater satisfaction than observing the transformative experience a university education provides – especially for students who are the first in their family to achieve the dream of a college degree. Though missing that special “handshake moment” on the commencement stage, I've had the pleasure of reflecting this past week with several 2020 grads about their UIS experience and their plans for the future:

Kim Alexis Espejo, a Sacred Heart-Griffin High School graduate from Springfield, chose UIS primarily because she wanted to stay close to home and she knew the Medical Laboratory Sciences program was the best in central Illinois.

“Besides my coursework, participating in student organizations and working at the Performing Arts Center have been among the most positive experiences I've had at UIS,” says Kim Alexis. “As co-president of the Medical Lab Sciences Club, I developed leadership skills and became actively involved in my professional organization.”

“Amandailee Adams, one of my professors in MLS, and Shannon Smith, my manager at the Performing Arts Center, have been especially important supporters throughout my educational journey.”

Kim Alexis graduates with a major in Medical Laboratory Science and minors in Biology and Public Health. She has accepted a position as Clinical Laboratory Scientist/MT at OSF HealthCare in Peoria and plans to eventually earn a graduate degree and perhaps work for the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the future.

Bree Derhake, also an SH-G grad, had two priorities when she was deciding where to attend college – “great academics and a great softball program.”

“One of the most positive experiences of my college career has been being part of the UIS softball program – winning the GLVC Championship my sophomore year and competing in the NCAA Championship,” says Bree.

“I’ve also appreciated how UIS celebrates diversity in such a loving and welcoming way, which is so refreshing to have in Springfield.”

Reflecting on her time at UIS, Bree acknowledges the support of Coach Shannon Guthrie, Exercise Science Professor Angela Doehring, and Strength and Conditioning Coach Chris Lowe. The lone senior on the softball team and a three-time member of the GLVC All-Academic team, Bree graduates with honors with a degree in Exercise Science. She will begin study for a doctoral degree in Physical Therapy at Northern Illinois University in June.

Since its founding almost 50 years ago, graduate programs at UIS have offered important opportunities for advanced study and career development. Thirty-seven percent of UIS students this year were graduate students and Betty Haynes and Robert Elliott were among them.

Betty was raised on a farm outside Oakford and earned a degree in Agribusiness Management at the University of Missouri. “As a participant in the Graduate Public Service Internship (GPSI) program at UIS,” she reports, “I had the opportunity to study for my masters degree in Communications (with a tuition waiver) while at the same time I gained valuable experience working for the Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service.”

“Dr. Amie Kincaid, Associate Professor and Chair of the Communications Department, challenged me intellectually in the most fun and positive ways,” Betty continues, “while GPSI Director Sherrie Elzinga has gone above and beyond as a professional resource and mentor.”

Betty has already started her “dream job” as Director of Communications for the Illinois Beef Association – a position she says she would not have attained without her masters degree from UIS.

Robert Elliott, now Dr. Robert Elliott, is one of six candidates who completed their doctoral degree in Public Administration at UIS this spring. It has been a long passage. According to Robert, he was first admitted to the program in 1999; but a job transfer, military service including a deployment to Iraq, and other responsibilities caused him to defer his studies until his return to join a cohort of peers in 2015.

“Dr. Sean McCandless, my dissertation chair, skillfully guided me through the process and challenged me to reach further than I thought possible,” says Robert.

He cites the program’s focus on an analytical perspective and the shared experience with peers from diverse backgrounds and professional expertise as being among the program’s best assets.

By Robert’s count, the May 9, 2020 commencement date falls exactly 7,696 days after he received his first program acceptance letter. “My mother was an advocate for education even though she was pulled from school after 7th grade to help raise her siblings,” he reflects. “I just wish she could have been here to witness my achievement.”

Congratulations to the University of Illinois Springfield Class of 2020! We’re on our feet for you, applauding you, and sharing your joy in a milestone that will live in your memory forever.

You’ll always be a Prairie Stars – keep shining.

[You can enjoy a video salute to the UIS Class of 2020, including the conferring of degrees by UI System President, Tim Killeen at this link:

www.uis.edu/commencement/uis20]

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

End-of-year Message, May 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

As we approach the end of this Spring 2020 semester, I want to thank each of you again for your contributions to what has been an unprecedented year. As we brought

the Fall 2019 semester to a close in December – a semester that saw the campus welcoming the largest freshman class in university history, the introduction of our second University of Illinois Distinguished Scholar, historian Graham Peck, and the recognition of UIS by U.S. News and World Report as the top regional public university in Illinois – none of us imagined the COVID-19 global pandemic would have such an impact on the spring semester.

As you know, the pandemic created the necessity for students and faculty to finish classes via remote learning. It also led to postponement or cancelation of important events and traditions, including commencement, and has spurred planning for fall in ways that will require innovation, creativity, and renewed dedication to our mission.

Thankfully, we are not aware of any members of our university community who have been diagnosed with the virus to date. For any students, faculty or staff who must be on campus during this time, we are carefully following state health department and CDC guidelines as well as directives from the Illinois Governor's office to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

I've said it before and I must say it again: I could not be more proud of the UIS faculty, staff, students and university supporters who have stepped up in every way to deal with these difficult circumstances. By working together, you have enabled us to successfully complete the spring semester, though we certainly understand that some students, faculty and staff have experienced more challenges than others. Thank you, all.

I am especially thankful for the members of the [UIS COVID-19 Response Team](#) who have worked diligently since early February to guide decision-making and help safeguard the health and safety of members of our community while at the same time, they have helped ensure continued campus operations. I want to specifically recognize the contributions of Dr. Vickie Cook, Executive Director of Online, Professional and Engaged Learning, and Tulio Llosa, Associate Provost for Information Technology and CIO, and their talented teams for their work to assist students and faculty throughout the necessary transition to remote teaching and learning. We have also benefitted from weekly engagement with a UI system-wide team which has provided critical information and advice.

I encourage you to keep monitoring the [UIS COVID-19 website](#) for ongoing information and updates. We are navigating these challenges together and I am confident we will continue to do so.

As we close the semester, recognition is also due to campus leaders who have devoted time and talent throughout the year to ensure our university's continued success. Among them are leaders of the Campus Senate, the Student Government Association, the Academic Professionals Advisory Committee and the Civil Service Advisory Council. I also appreciate members of the administrative team who have gone above and beyond – particularly over these past few months. I am sincerely grateful for your leadership and service.

And of course, I cannot mention leadership without acknowledging with deep sadness the sudden loss of Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Clarice Ford. As you know, Dr. Ford passed away unexpectedly in mid-April after a brief illness. Her impact on the University will live on in the many students, faculty and staff she has guided and influenced. I count myself among them and will miss her friendship, her expertise, her indomitable spirit and her dedication to students. An appropriate celebration to honor Dr. Ford will take place on campus at a later time and more will be announced about a fund being created for students in her memory. An Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs will be named soon.

This year, as we do every year, we have celebrated the contributions of several exceptional members of our community.

Faculty honors awarded this year include:

- **Dr. Atul Agarwal** (Management Information Systems) Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching
- **Dr. Heather Bailey** (History)—Faculty Excellence Award
- **Dr. Donna Bussell** (English and Modern Languages) — Burks Oakley II Distinguished Award for Online Teaching
- **Dr. Donna Bussell** (English and Modern Languages) — Harry and Deborah Berman Sabbatical Award
- **Dr. Yanhui Guo** (Computer Science) — University Scholar
- **Dr. Tena Helton** (English and Modern Languages) — Spencer Award for Exemplary Service

Employee leadership awards this year include:

- **Kara McElwrath**, assistant director of client services for Information Technology Services — CAPE Award for Outstanding Performance by an Academic Professional
- **Patty Stoutamyer**, office support specialist for the Mathematical Sciences Department — CARE Award for Excellence in Civil Service
- **Jamie Weber**, office manager for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences — UIS Employee of the Year

Congratulations to all these talented members of our community who inspire us to live our university's mission, vision and values every day.

On this Saturday, May 9, it would have been my privilege to have a special “handshake moment” on stage at the Bank of Springfield Convention Center with each of the 1,179 new University of Illinois Springfield graduates who earned their place in the 2020 commencement program. Though a face-to-face commencement cannot be held at this time, our communications team has gotten creative to ensure our graduates' special day does not pass quietly.

I hope you'll all tune in at noon Saturday via UIS social media channels or visit the [virtual celebration website](#) to join in. The video salute has been described (by

someone who should know) as “simply spectacular”. There are some surprises in the works for our graduates as well. (If I told you what they are, it wouldn’t be a surprise!)

I hope you’ll enjoy the full page ad in the Sunday issue of The State Journal Register – an annual tradition that celebrates our graduates. My UIS Perspectives column in the SJ-R on that same day features interviews with four outstanding members of the Class of 2020.

For each of our graduates, Commencement is a moment that represents the culmination of years of determination, persistence and just plain hard work. No matter the path that brought each graduate to this moment, each will go into the world equipped to contribute to the public good and each has left their mark on this university.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020, and thank you to all who have contributed to our graduates’ success.

As we close this academic year, my ninth as your Chancellor, I remain so proud to be a part of this university and of the opportunity to work alongside such talented and dedicated students, faculty and staff.

Have a safe and happy summer!

With all best wishes,

Chancellor Koch

Announcement about Dr. Ford to Campus, April 2020

April 19, 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

It is with deep sadness I write to inform you that Dr. Clarice Ford, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, passed away Sunday, April 19, 2020, at Memorial Medical Center following a brief illness. Dr. Ford has been a profoundly important voice for students and an essential member of the UIS leadership team since 2008 – first serving as Executive Director of the Diversity Center and Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Services and, starting in 2014, as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Dr. Ford has been a leader who was dedicated to cultivating inclusive communities and ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has an opportunity to succeed. She has been the embodiment of “Leadership lived.” Her impact on the University of

Illinois Springfield will live on in the many students, faculty and staff she has guided and influenced.

Funeral arrangements are pending and we will have an appropriate celebration to honor Dr. Ford's many contributions to the University at a later time. In the meantime, I hope you will keep Dr. Ford's family, colleagues and students in your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Koch

– Students, I want to remind you the Counseling Center is available for anyone who needs assistance. You can contact the Center at: 217-206-7122.

SJR Column: Dealing with COVID-19, April 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic is presenting unprecedented challenges around the world. With the number of cases accelerating across Illinois and the U.S., higher education institutions, including the University of Illinois Springfield, are making proactive decisions almost daily – prioritizing the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors while at the same time continuing to deliver on the educational mission of the university.

How does a university prepare for such an exceptional situation? What assets are most important for successfully navigating such an emergency? How are priorities determined and decisions made? Today's UIS Perspectives provides a brief window into the UIS response.

As is the case with any emergency, the first critical asset is preparedness. Long before the first case of COVID-19 disease was reported in December 2019, UIS had a well-developed Emergency Response Plan. A public health epidemic is one of 15 primary hazards identified in the plan, which provides operational guidance and recognizes responsibilities and duties to be assumed in order to protect the health and safety of members of the university community and continue essential operations.

The Centers for Disease Control confirmed the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. on Jan. 21 (in Washington state). By early February, both the University of Illinois System and UIS had activated another critical asset...people – creating COVID-19 response teams that include decision-makers as well as communications and public health experts who have the knowledge and experience to help guide the ongoing response.

With the leadership of Associate Chancellor Kelsea Gurski, UIS quickly developed a communications plan and created a COVID-19 website – an important platform to deploy messages, provide trusted information and respond to questions and concerns.

As everyone now knows, the COVID-19 virus is highly contagious and is spread mainly between people who are in close contact with each other and via frequently touched surfaces. Social distancing is an essential strategy to limit spread of the disease.

Given the social distancing imperative, UIS made the decision in early March to migrate all courses from face-to-face instruction to remote teaching for the remainder of the Spring semester. At the same time, Director of Residence Life Brian Kelley advised residential students, with the exception of international students and students with extenuating circumstances, to move home for the remainder of the term. These actions were implemented with remarkable efficiency thanks to exceptional leadership at the unit level and outstanding cooperation by students, faculty and staff who understood the public health priority.

Provost Dennis Papini has been at the forefront of the transition to remote teaching and learning. “Perhaps the greatest assets UIS already had in place,” he says, “are a world-class faculty, many of whom are already well-versed in remote instruction, and a remarkable team of professional staff led by Vickie Cook in the Center for Online Learning, Research and Service (COLRS) and Tulio Llosa in Instructional Technology Services (ITS).”

“Every employee in COLRS and ITS has been available while working remotely to support both faculty and students virtually 24 hours a day seven days a week,” Papini adds.

UIS Theatre professor Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson refers to Kara McElwrath, Assistant Director of Client Services in ITS, as “Employee of the Millennium.” Collaborating via Zoom remote conferencing, McElwrath helped create a strategy for online instruction for an Acting class, and then met with Professor Thibodeaux-Thompson and her students for a synchronized audio/video session – providing step-by-step instructions on how to record and submit their eventual remote performances during the rest of the semester.

Essential services on campus have continued uninterrupted, with staff adapting to the temporary “new normal” and taking full advantage of digital technologies to stay connected to both colleagues and students.

For those remaining on campus, dining services continues with a “Grab and Go” menu. Student Health and Counseling Services are providing telehealth sessions as well as in-clinic appointments with staff practicing necessary social distancing. Recreational Services is offering activities online like group fitness classes, kickboxing, interactive games and stress management activities.

According to Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Clarice Ford, one asset that has served students well during this challenging time is trust. “We rely on the people we trust to get things done,” she says, “and during this uncertain time students have looked to those they trust – including Student Affairs staff – to guide them through.”

Like many others, I’ve been social distancing and working often from home – using Zoom, email and phone to continue work with colleagues. But as I turned off 11th Street a few days ago for my daily swing through campus, I heard the unmistakable sound of a bat against a ball – something I thought I wouldn’t hear for the rest of this year since spring sports have been suspended. Pulling into the baseball complex, I found two UIS student-athletes, members of the Prairie Stars baseball team, each in a separate batting cage, hitting balls.

“Online classes are going fine,” one of them told me in answer to my question. “We’re going to get through this and we’re going to be back next season – better than ever.”

The COVID-19 pandemic is most certainly presenting unprecedented challenges. But I’m proud to say we’re deploying our assets effectively and, to quote two resilient young members of the UIS community, “We’re going to get through this and we’re going to be back next season – better than ever.”

Susan Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Sangamon Experience, March 2020

Since its founding nearly 50 years ago, the University of Illinois Springfield has appreciated its unique location in the state capital of Illinois and the home of Abraham Lincoln — a location that provides incomparable opportunities for students to gain knowledge and develop skills that lead to leadership roles in a variety of professions, particularly in public service.

But the university’s location in the Sangamon River Country — named for the 246-mile waterway that stretches across the middle of Illinois — is so much more.

It’s the Pottawatomie, Kickapoo and other Native Americans who made their homes along the Sangamon River before the arrival of Europeans. It’s the first white settlers

to the region like Elijah Iles, who in 1821 built a log-framed store — the first commercial building in Springfield.

It's Eva Carroll Monroe, who in 1904 established the Lincoln Colored Home, a safe haven for orphaned black children who were not welcome at the "whites only" facility at the time. It's the Sangamo Electric Company, which led the country's development of anti-submarine shipboard sonar for the U.S. Navy during World War II and employed more than 3,000 Sangamon-area residents in its production facilities.

Because the Sangamon region is home to an untold number of stories of imagination, innovation, persistence, courage, survival and service, UIS recently launched the "Sangamon Experience."

Located on the first floor of the UIS Public Affairs Center, the project includes a 5,300-square-foot interpretive exhibition space open to the public – a space that is already telling previously untold stories of great interest and importance. The Sangamon Experience will also serve as the catalyst for ongoing collaborations with local and regional community partners and as a student-centered laboratory for innovative public history programs.

Just as important as its physical space will be its virtual space — featuring digitized documents, digital humanities projects and research findings that will be accessible across the region and around the world.

The Sangamon Experience is funded by an extraordinary \$3.8 million gift. Devin Hunter, a UIS professor who specializes in public history, has worked closely with the donor, along with Provost Dennis Papini, other faculty and a community advisory board to create the vision for the project. Sangamon Valley Collection staff from Lincoln Library, the public library in Springfield, served as part of the research and design team for the first exhibit unveiled at the grand opening on Jan. 30.

"Having real stories about a place – stories from local residents and their descendants – is valuable to grow understanding of the history and culture of the region," Hunter says.

"By creating a place where Sangamon stories can be unearthed and exhibited, and where faculty and students can do research and build around those stories, we hope more and more stories will come to the surface and be shared."

Katherine Harris, retired director of library services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, who is widely known for her portrayals of Harriet Tubman and other historical figures, is a member of the advisory board for the Sangamon Experience.

"I think the university and the community already have a good symbiotic relationship to grow off one another," Harris says. "The Sangamon Experience will expand that relationship and serve as a bridge across cultures to help us better

understand and appreciate contributions of the many different ethnic communities in the region whose stories have not been told.”

Nancy Chapin, a longtime supporter of the university who also serves on the Sangamon Experience advisory board, is a fifth-generation Sangamon resident.

“The Sangamon area has preserved an unusual amount of its past because of Abraham Lincoln, yet many stories have been little publicized because of the emphasis on Lincoln himself and not on the community from which he came,” she says. “Perhaps bringing those and other stories to the public will help us all better understand and appreciate our history.”

William Furry, UIS alum and executive director of the Illinois State History Society, spoke at the recent ribbon-cutting for the Sangamon Experience.

“Shared stories are the glue that holds a community together,” Furry says. “It is my hope the Sangamon Experience will be much more than an exhibit space. I hope it will be a gathering space where stories, dreams and memories are shared – a place that provides a lens for exploring the world we live in now and for seeing what it might be in the future.”

A new director/curator for the Sangamon Experience will soon be on board, and we continue to seek input from local historical, cultural and community organizations to help supply materials, ideas and research for upcoming programs and exhibitions. The project also welcomes inquiries about community digitization projects and other collaborations.

We are deeply grateful for the generous gift that has made the vision for the Sangamon Experience a reality. I invite you to stop by the PAC (just one floor down from Sangamon Auditorium) to enjoy the current and growing exhibition. I hope you’ll also explore uis.edu/sangamonexperience for more information about this exciting project that is sure to provide both students and our community incomparable opportunities for years to come.

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield

Retirement Announcement to Campus, January 2020

Dear Students, Faculty & Staff,

Serving as your Chancellor for the past nine years has been among the most enjoyable and fulfilling experiences of my 35 years in higher education. As a newcomer to the University of Illinois System in 2011, I stepped into my role as your Chancellor with great optimism – knowing I was taking the helm of a young

university with high aspirations – a university that cares deeply about its students and their success.

My husband, Dennis, and I have called UIS and Springfield, Illinois home for nearly a decade and I am proud of everything we have achieved together.

Though it's never easy to step away from something you love, it is time for us to begin devoting more time to our family and to pursuing new possibilities to grow and contribute. So, today, I am announcing my retirement, effective June 30, 2020.

This was a bittersweet decision. While Dennis and I are greatly looking forward to what lies ahead, I will miss serving as your chancellor. The past nine years have been exciting, challenging, inspiring and satisfying, and I will treasure my time at UIS always.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many talented students, faculty and staff. As the next five months unfold, I look forward to continuing our work together and to remaining a supporter of UIS for years to come.

With all best wishes,

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Mental Health, January 2020

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about 19.9 million students are attending a college or university in the U.S. this year, including students pursuing both undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of Illinois Springfield. Most people think of college as an exciting time of learning and growth – a time to become more independent and develop skills for a professional career.

But for many students, college is also a challenging life stage that can include significant mental health challenges.

In fact, a recent post on the Higher Education Today blog reported more than one in four students have expressed issues with anxiety, three out of 10 struggle with depression, and one in 20 have created a suicide plan in the past year.

Research published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reports 20 to 36 percent of college students exhibit “serious psychological distress” while only one-third receive treatment.

How campuses can best respond has become an important discussion across the country, including at the University of Illinois where a system-wide summit on the

topic is planned for later this year. I recently had an opportunity to discuss student mental health with staff and faculty who are among those at the forefront of this issue every day at UIS.

Dr. Bethany Bilyeu, a licensed clinical psychologist, is director of the UIS Counseling Center. The center provides outreach, counseling and psychological consultation to students as well as resources for faculty, staff and parents.

“Anxiety and depression are the most prominent mental health concerns we see at the Counseling Center,” Bilyeu says, “with many students showing symptoms of both conditions, which makes it more severe.”

“We also see more students who talk about trauma and abuse they have experienced,” she continues, “with the Counseling Center often providing the first opportunity for them to take independent action to address the impact of those experiences on their own mental health.”

According to Bilyeu, with the size of the freshman class continuing to grow, her first priority as director of the Counseling Center is to “get in front” of all incoming students, providing introductory sessions for both students and parents to ensure they understand the services offered. With professional staff available or on-call 24 hours each day, students can schedule an appointment or even drop by the center and be assured they will be seen.

Unlike many other campus counseling centers, there is no waiting list and no limit on the number of sessions available. With both individual and group counseling offered, students’ needs are constantly and reliably addressed.

Brian Kelley, director of Residence Life at UIS, is responsible not only for day-to-day operations of residence halls, townhouses and apartments on campus but also for programming that enhances student well-being.

“Even for students living in the same room, social isolation can be a problem that leads to anxiety, depression or other mental health concerns,” says Kelley.

“Residence Life staff are trained to engage with students and to recognize early warning signs so that we can intervene to help before those symptoms negatively affect students’ success.”

“Mental health has become more OK for students to talk about so more students are seeking care,” he says, “but Residence Life staff play a critical role in both prevention and referral – helping students develop healthy lifestyles, improve coping skills, recognize signs of trouble in themselves and others, and get help when help is needed.”

Dr. Frances Shen, associate professor of psychology, is a counseling psychologist who, in addition to teaching and research activities, directs a peer mentoring program for the Capital Scholars Honors program.

“Anxiety and depression among college students mirror an increase in those diagnoses in the general population,” Shen says, “while substance abuse and eating disorders, as well as financial challenges and the pressure to succeed also contribute to mental health concerns among the college-age population.”

“Some students are more at risk than others for mental health challenges,” she adds. “First-generation students, those from underrepresented minority groups, students from low-income families, students with disabilities and international students are among those who may be more at risk.” In addition to the Counseling Center, students from underrepresented groups also find support through the Necessary Steps Mentoring Program, the Office of Disability Services, the Diversity Center, the Office of Advising Services and affinity organizations that bring students together who share interests and/or backgrounds.

Bilyeu adds parents and family members can take proactive measures to help ensure their student’s positive mental health. Maintaining a positive relationship is Bilyeu’s No. 1 recommendation – whether it’s via text messages, phone conversations or periodic visits, most students benefit from maintaining contact with their families. Parents may also need to back off on expectations for perfection and, rather, encourage students to do their best, seek help early if needed, get involved with campus life and maintain their physical health – all choices that can ultimately help students maintain positive mental health.

Personalized attention is a defining feature of the UIS student experience. With staff and faculty like Bilyeu, Kelley, Shen and many others contributing their expertise and experience, supporting student mental health is an “all in” approach at UIS.

The goal is to see every student benefit from their college experience and, ultimately, walk across the commencement stage to receive their University of Illinois diploma.

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Graduate Education, December 2019

With the first day of January just a few days away, the time-honored tradition of making a New Year’s resolution may be on the minds of SJ-R readers. For the nearly

half of Americans who make a resolution each year, self-improvement- including the decision to enhance one's educational attainment- is among the most likely commitments.

For more and more adults who have a bachelor's degree, that commitment results in the pursuit of a graduate credential – a master's degree, doctoral degree or, perhaps, a graduate certificate.

According to a 2018 report published by The Hamilton Project, a program at the Brookings Institution that studies education and human capital development, “Americans with higher levels of education not only have higher wages but, for the most part, also have higher wage growth.” The graduate education experience can also build new skill sets and accelerate both professional networks and personal growth.

Today, the highest percentage ever of American adults (more than a third of the adult population) has at least a bachelor's degree and about 13.1 percent also have an advanced degree. The trend toward increasing educational attainment is evident at UIS where this year about 37% of our students are pursuing graduate work in one of more than 20 areas of study.

What are the benefits of earning a graduate credential? What are the opportunities at the University of Illinois Springfield to do so? I recently had an enlightening conversation with several graduate program leaders about who pursues a graduate degree and why it can be a valuable investment.

Among the most robust graduate programs at UIS are the master's and doctoral programs in Public Administration. According to Professor Adam Williams, who directs the MPA, the program is one of the top five such programs in the country – with applicants not only from Illinois but also from across the United States. “State and local government are our main areas of focus,” says Dr. Williams, “and we typically have about 200 students pursuing their degree either on campus or online.”

“Our location in the state capital provides unique access to a community of public affairs scholars and practitioners,” adds Williams,

“and the master's program as well as specialized certificates in areas such as labor relations, community planning, nonprofit management, public procurement and child advocacy are especially useful for working professionals who need to gain more knowledge for efficiency and effectiveness in their current jobs and to advance in their careers.”

The doctoral program in Public Administration (DPA) is designed to meet the needs of experienced practitioners in administrative and government positions as well as in the nonprofit community. Dr. Travis Bland serves as Director of the DPA program. “We're on a growth trajectory,” says Bland.

“Our program is mainly for mid-to-higher level professionals who are interested in social change and solving complex problems – individuals

who need a higher level of analytical skills in order to be successful in their current career and move that next step down the road.”

“We are talking about, studying and analyzing issues such as poverty, unemployment, budgeting, public finance, infrastructure, and higher education,” adds Bland. “With the expertise of our faculty and with the backgrounds our students bring, it’s a really neat learning environment.”

Som Bhattacharya, Dean of the College of Business and Management, is fond of saying he came to UIS from Florida almost a year ago for two reasons. He wanted to live where he could experience all four seasons and, more importantly for this discussion, he saw a “lot of potential in the College of Business and Management.”

Building on the college’s prestigious AACSB accreditation, the Dean has worked with business college faculty this year to re-imagine current graduate programs in Business Administration, Management Information Systems and Finance as well as to develop a graduate program in Human Resource Management.

“For students coming to our MBA program with professional experience,” says Dean Bhattacharya, “we no longer require the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) – which has ceased to be a good predictor of success in MBA programs. We are also creating graduate micro-credential programs in areas like data-analytics, cyber-security and negotiations to better serve local and regional employers.”

Dr. Christie Magoulias, Chair of the UIS Educational Leadership Department, brings years of experience in K-12 schools to her current leadership role. The department offers graduate degrees in Education and Educational Leadership as well as several endorsements and certificates that enable educators to expand their credentials and enhance opportunities for career advancement.

“With current shortages of highly-qualified K-12 teachers, principals, and superintendents in Illinois,” says Magoulias, “our programs must be timely and accessible for both on-ground and online students—many of whom are working full time.”

“Educational leadership is more than administration,” she adds, “and our graduate programs enable educators (and aspiring educators) to add to their qualifications at the same time they create a new path toward leadership in the K-12 schools.”

According to research on human behavior, a New Year’s resolution (with commitment behind it) can present a real opportunity for self-improvement. With so many options available at UIS, earning a graduate credential presents a prospect for self-improvement that is a valuable investment. The UIS website is a great place to start: <http://www.uis.edu/graduateeducation>.

And as Lincoln said, “Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Lincoln Academy, November 2019

Many Illinois residents are familiar with the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, a non-profit organization created more than 50 years ago to honor distinguished Illinoisans. Since its founding, the Academy has recognized over 300 sons and daughters of Illinois, including a number of Springfield citizens, with the prestigious “Order of Lincoln.”

An equally important recognition bestowed by the Academy is the Abraham Lincoln Civic Engagement award – presented each year to one outstanding graduating senior from each four-year college, university and community college in the state.

According to Julie Kellner, Executive Director of the Lincoln Academy and a UIS graduate, the Student Laureate award is “a way for the State of Illinois to recognize outstanding student achievement, civic engagement and leadership.”

“The students we recognize have worked so hard their entire lives,” says Julie. “The Student Laureate award is a way for the state to both thank these students for what they have achieved so far, while also encouraging them to consider Lincoln’s legacy as a role model for their own futures.”

As Chancellor of UIS and an Academic Trustee of the Lincoln Academy, it is my honor each year to select one UIS student for this prestigious recognition. I’m delighted to announce that, just yesterday in a ceremony at the Old State Capital in Springfield, UIS senior Melissa Van received the 2019 Student Laureate award, which includes presentation of the Lincoln Medal, a Certificate of Merit and a monetary award.

A member of the Capital Scholars Honors program at UIS, Melissa is from Lincoln, Illinois, and will be graduating this year with a major in business and minor in management.

“I am a first generation Vietnamese-American,” says Melissa. “My parents emigrated from Vietnam and have always been role models for me. They started from the bottom and worked hard to make a better life for me and my younger sisters. I didn’t realize how amazing this was then; but I do now.”

“I’m the oldest in my family and one of my primary goals has always been to earn my college degree,” she continues.

“Going to college, I wanted to be open to everything and, in addition to my studies, I’ve joined many groups and clubs like the Legacy Dance Team, the Community Garden Club and Students Allied for a Greener Earth. I’ve worked as a member of

the UIS Orientation Team and in the Survey Research Office, and volunteered with Habitat for Humanity. I also drive back to Lincoln each week to help my mom – working in her salon.”

When notified of their selection, each Student Laureate is asked to reflect briefly in writing about how Lincoln’s leadership and legacy might serve as an inspiration for them to pursue a life of leadership and service. Melissa wrote: “Growing up in Lincoln, Illinois, and then attending UIS in Lincoln’s hometown, I’ve been surrounded by Lincoln and his legacy since I was a child. It’s a legacy that has been guiding me toward becoming a leader myself.”

“UIS has given me many opportunities to show what I am made of, and I want to take my leadership skills and apply them after I graduate,” she continues. “There is so much I want to accomplish not just for myself, but for my community.”

Congratulations to Melissa and all the young sons and daughters of Illinois who were recognized yesterday as 2019 Lincoln Academy Student Laureates. You are the future of our state!

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Sangamon County Survey, October 2019

The University of Illinois Springfield recently released results of the 2019 Sangamon County Citizen Survey. The purpose of the study, funded by United Way of Central Illinois, the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln and UIS, was to evaluate residents’ assessment of the quality of life in Sangamon County and provide local leaders, organizations and citizens with insights that can guide future decisions and investments.

Results of the survey paint both a promising and a sobering picture of the community we call home – highlighting challenges and opportunities that, if addressed successfully, will enhance the well being of county residents for years to come.

According to the survey, 72% of respondents believe we have good or excellent K-12 education. Quality education is essential to getting and keeping a job with a livable wage and employee benefits that contribute to healthier families and, ultimately, a healthier community.

With the conviction that every child deserves a chance to succeed, United Way invests in partnerships with local organizations that address community-identified educational priorities. These include kindergarten readiness initiatives, programs to ensure children reach academic milestones and successfully transition to middle school, and support for progression to high school with skills that lead to timely graduation and a plan for success beyond.

Though more than 60% of survey respondents say Sangamon County is an excellent or good place to live and raise a family, they are not as positive about the local economy. Only 19% think Sangamon County has an excellent or good reputation for retaining existing businesses and only 21% believe the county has an excellent or good reputation for attracting new businesses. Eighty-nine percent say growing downtown Springfield is important to the economic development of the area – the highest percentage since the survey began in 2013.

It's clear citizens of Sangamon County are concerned about the business climate and value downtown Springfield as an economic driver. The Community Foundation had these concerns in mind when it launched Innovate Springfield five years ago to catalyze business and social innovation both downtown and throughout the region.

Now led by UIS with support from the Foundation, the City of Springfield and the Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation, Innovate Springfield has more than 60 members – a resounding success that is creating new opportunities for entrepreneurs and collaborating with a range of community partners to mobilize critical social initiatives.

Results of the Survey reinforce the compelling need for strategic investments in our community. Those investments include the continued expansion of Innovate Springfield – announced last year as the first regional hub of the University of Illinois's Discovery Partners Institute innovation network.

At the same time, social innovation programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership, an outgrowth of the Continuum of Learning initiative that is led by SIU School of Medicine's Center for Family Medicine, are critical to serving our most vulnerable residents.

Construction of a new UIS hub facility, supported in part by a recent capital appropriation for the DPI, has the potential to greatly expand business development and social innovation efforts across the county. At the same time it will bring additional vitality to the downtown area.

More than anything else, results of the 2019 Survey are a call to action. Collaborations that led to the launch of Innovate Springfield and the Continuum of Learning – including listening, planning and acting to improve the community – are successes we're eager to replicate.

As leaders of three organizations that are deeply invested in the success of our community, we understand the needs are great and the stakes are high. We encourage all leaders and citizens to use the Survey results as a springboard for collaboration that will ultimately enhance the quality of life for all residents of Sangamon County.

Results of the Survey are available at: <https://go.uis.edu/SangamonSurvey>. Dr. A.J. Simmons, Director of the UIS Institute for Legal, Legislative and Policy Studies is available upon request for presentations of the survey results to community groups (asimm2@uis.edu).

John Kelker is President of the United Way of Central Illinois, Susan Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield, John Stremsterfer is President and CEO of the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln.

SJR Column: Dilley Project, October 2019

The University of Illinois Springfield recently completed a campus-wide strategic planning process with the pledge to set goals and direct resources for the next decade to insure a premier educational experience for all students. One of four foundational elements of the plan, known as the Strategic Compass, is “experience engaged” – a commitment to magnify opportunities for students to engage with innovative real-world ideas and with transformative hands-on opportunities that will enhance their experience and better prepare them to reach their full potential as professionals and citizens.

Six UIS students had an opportunity to “experience engaged” in an especially powerful way this summer thanks to the leadership of Legal Studies Associate Professor Deborah Anthony. Anthony joined the UIS faculty in 2006, after completing a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, D.C. and practicing law specializing in family law, domestic violence and civil rights.

After spending a week volunteering on her own with the Dilley Pro Bono Project in Texas, Anthony realized the work could provide a unique opportunity for students. She invited Legal Studies colleague Anette Sikka, whose teaching and research deals primarily with immigration and international law, to join her and a unique experiential learning opportunity for UIS students came to life.

“I believe strongly in applied learning,” says Anthony. “There’s a lot to be said for getting information first-hand, from the original source.”

The Dilley Pro Bono Project serves immigrant mothers and children who are detained at the South Texas Family Residential Center in Dilley, Texas – about 75 miles from the U.S.-Mexican border. Women and children housed at the center are mostly from El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras and have presented themselves at the U.S. border seeking legal asylum. Volunteers assist with client intake and help prepare women for the initial phase of their asylum application.

Alex Phelps, a senior Political Science and Global Studies major from Washington, Illinois (and a founding member of the UIS Cross Country team) was one of the students who participated in the project.

“Volunteering with the Dilley Pro Bono Project allowed me to see the impact of the border situation first-hand,” says Alex, who speaks Spanish. “For over 12 hours each day I worked with clients at the detention center preparing them for their ‘credible fear interviews’ – the first step in the asylum process.”

“I was constantly encouraged by the strength, dignity and courage I observed,” he adds. “Just being present was a learning experience.”

Vanesa Salinas-Perea, a senior from Chicago majoring in Legal Studies and Education, is also president of the Organization of Latin American Students – a student organization that supports the interests of students from Hispanic/LatinX backgrounds. Vanesa participated in the project, like Alex, because she knew the hands-on experience would be valuable.

“I grew up with immigrant parents and I’ve always loved volunteering, trying new things and working with others,” says Vanesa.

“I didn’t know how difficult it is to seek asylum in the U.S. and we did our best during our time in Dilley to help prep women for the legal process.” Especially meaningful for Vanesa, who is also bilingual in Spanish and English, was working with a mother her own age with a young child – getting to know her and helping her be prepared for the next step in the asylum process.

With logistical arrangements made by Anthony, each member of the team worked with the project for a week of 15-hour days, conducting interviews with detainees throughout the day and working on their files in the evening to update each case.

Reflecting on the experience, Alex says: “My time in Dilley was particularly impactful because it forced me to reevaluate my education from a new perspective as I prepare for the next chapter after I graduate from UIS. I had to get comfortable being uncomfortable.”

Alex has since decided to apply for a Fulbright Scholarship to continue his studies abroad next year and is considering law school.

“My experience working with the Pro Bono Project solidified my commitment to become a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools where I was once a student,” says Vanesa. She will be student-teaching next semester and already has a grant to support her transition to the teaching profession at CPS.

“Looking back on the experience,” says Anthony, “I couldn’t be more impressed with the students. They were committed, dedicated, professional and caring. They did a tremendous job and they all made positive contributions. They did UIS proud!”

This fall UIS was ranked as the top regional public university in Illinois and the fourth best regional public university in the 12-state Midwest region. Rankings are calculated using several reliable indicators including the excellence of both faculty and students. The opportunities Professor Anthony and other faculty and staff at UIS provide for students to “experience engaged” certainly illustrate that excellence.

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

SJR Column: Star Parties, September 2019

Since the University of Illinois Springfield was created nearly 50 years ago, engagement with the community has been central to its mission. That commitment continues to provide countless ways for area residents from preschoolers to seniors to learn, grow and enjoy by engaging in a variety of events and activities across the university calendar.

One of the most popular outreach activities of the University today is also one of the oldest. Star Parties, where visitors are invited to the UIS Observatory to view celestial objects and learn about science and astronomy, were started in 1977 by Professor Charlie Schweighauser, one of the early members of the then-Sangamon State University faculty.

“Everyone is intrigued by the sun, moon, planets and stars,” says Dr. Schweighauser (now retired), “and I saw astronomy as a gateway for making good science available to the public.”

The UIS Astronomy program possesses some of the finest equipment in the state including a 14-inch Schmidt-Cassegrain telescope and four smaller telescopes

located on the observation deck atop Brookens Library. The Henry R. Barber Research Observatory, located 25 miles west of Springfield under dark skies, includes a 20-inch Cassegrain telescope.

Since the late 1970s, thousands of people of all ages have come to the UIS Observatory for Star Parties, as well as for special astronomical events like lunar and solar eclipses and comets. At a typical Star Party, visitors learn about galaxies as well as star and constellation identification. Staff and trained volunteers then assist guests in using the telescopes — enabling stargazers to observe objects of interest in the night sky.

It's not unusual for the program to host 50-100 participants on a clear night. There are even Star Parties for people with disabilities that feature the first telescope ever designed for wheelchair access.

Professor John Martin, who grew up in the Washington, D.C. area, has provided leadership for the Astronomy program since 2006. Dr. Martin developed a deep appreciation for astronomy (the oldest science) at a young age and earned his bachelor's degree in Astrophysics at the University of Virginia, which at one time owned the largest telescope in the world.

“Starting my freshman year at UVA,” says Dr. Martin, “I would hang out during public viewings at the UVA Observatory – taking measurements and having fun. They eventually asked me to help out, and I worked there for four years. That was my Friday nights!”

Martin went on to earn a Ph.D. in Astronomy-Physics from Case Western University, where he had additional opportunities to study astronomy and work in exceptional observatory facilities.

“The UIS Astronomy program continues to be a valuable part of the public affairs mission of the University,” says Dr. Martin. “It's human nature to be interested in the sky. Young people are especially impressionable, and astronomy can help kids look at science in a different and more exciting way – a way that can turn into something big later.”

Dr. Martin has made it a priority to collaborate with various organizations and groups to expand the engagement and impact of the UIS program. Those groups include K-12 schools, the Sangamon Astronomical Society, Springfield's Kidzeum of Health and Science, Lincoln Memorial Garden and Nature Center and Camp Compass for Kids (a free summer learning program for at-risk elementary students in District 186).

This summer, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission to the moon, the program worked with the Kidzeum to offer a special event featuring video footage of the Apollo 11 launch and landing, Neil Armstrong's historic moonwalk, and discussions about space travel and astronomy.

The program also co-hosted, with the Sangamon Astronomical Society, a series of Summer Star Parties at Lincoln Memorial Garden. The most recent event provided an opportunity for skywatchers to view the Perseids meteor shower – known for producing more fireball-type meteors than any other shower.

After more than 40 years of Star Parties, fundraising is now underway for much-needed renovations of the UIS Observatory including redesign and replacement of the original deck with composite material, improved accessibility for people of all abilities and re-imagining the telescope enclosure for more efficient use.

“It has been a joy helping kids look through our telescopes week after week, always with a fresh set of questions,” says Dr. Martin. “With these much-needed renovations, we’ll be able to satisfy the curiosity of stargazers young and old for the next 40 years and beyond.”

Fall is an ideal time for stargazing in the Midwest, and our 2019 Star Parties are scheduled at the UIS Observatory every Friday evening throughout September and October from 8 to 10 p.m., weather permitting. They are free and open to everyone. Star Party participants meet at the door marked “Observatory” on the southeast corner of the Library.

Sunday night Star Parties are also offered by request for anyone who finds the Friday night events inaccessible due to the four flights of stairs and short ladder climb to the roof where the Observatory is located.. Additional information about Star Parties and other related programs is available at uis.edu/astronomy/about/starparties or by phone at 217-206-8342.

I hope you’ll come join us soon for a night with the stars!

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2019

UIS Fall, 2019 Convocation

August 22, 2019, 2:30 PM

Student Union

Chancellor's Remarks:

Good afternoon, and welcome to the annual UIS Fall Convocation. Thank you so much for being here today.

We'll be meeting several new members of our community a little later in this program, but whether you are new to UIS or not-so-new, I'm delighted to welcome you all to this Convocation and the official start of the 2019-2020 academic year at the University of Illinois Springfield.

I'd like to take a moment to offer an especially warm welcome to some special guests who are with us today. [Please stand when I introduce you and I promise you a rousing round of applause after everyone has been named]:

- Former Provost and former Interim Chancellor Dr. Harry Berman and his wife, Deborah
- Josh Collins, Interim CEO of the Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation
- Jennifer Gill, Superintendent, Springfield School District 186
- Shawn Gregory, City of Springfield Ward 2 Alderman
- Karen Hasara, Former Mayor of the City of Springfield and former University of Illinois Trustee
- Chris Hembrough, President and CEO, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Jim Langfelder, Mayor of the City of Springfield and two-time UIS graduate
- Former Chancellor Naomi Lynn and her husband, Bob
- Andrew Procter, City of Springfield Ward 5 Alderman
- Chuck Redpath, City of Springfield Ward 1 Alderman
- Lisa Clemmons Stott—Executive Director of Downtown Springfield, Inc.
- Jo Barnard, President of the UIS Civil Service Advisory Committee
- Emily Boles, Chair of the Academic Professional Advisory Committee
- Rosie Dawoud, UIS Student Trustee
- Craig McFarland, Vice-Chair of the Academic Professional Advisory Committee
- Ben Paoletti, President of the Student Government Association
- Ann Strahle, Chair of the Campus Senate
- Holly Thompson, Vice Chair of the Campus Senate

Please join me in welcoming these special guests. [APPLAUSE]

Today marks my own 64th school year start:

hat includes kindergarten back in Madison, South Dakota (where my duck, Quacker walked me to school every day and where I was blessed to have an unforgettable teacher – Mrs. Roth), it includes fourth grade at St. Thomas Catholic School with Sister Paulette (where my report card – which I still have – confirms I earned a “C” in conduct that got me in a lot of trouble at home where there was absolutely no sympathy for “my side” of the story), Those 64 beginnings also include (like some of you here today) my first year as Assistant Professor (both memorable and terrifying) and now – my 34th school start in higher education and my 9th serving as your Chancellor. I’d love to hear some of your similar “school start” memories later during our reception today.

No matter how many times we participate in the beginning of the school year, this moment offers so much opportunity – a fresh, unwritten page in each of our own stories as members of this community. And, of course, today is also a fresh page in the UIS history book – the start of our 49th year as a university and our 24th as one of three Universities that comprise the world class University of Illinois. I’m confident that with our collective commitment – this will be our best year ever!

The stage is certainly set for success

- With new and growing academic programs that are attracting more students to campus. Thanks to the leadership of Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, Natalie Herring and the contributions of many others, we expect the Freshman class to be about 13% bigger than a year ago
- The Student Union opened just 18 months ago and has been a game changer – the heart of campus life every day. According to Director Ann Comerford, the Union has hosted more than 1800 meetings and events to date.
- More and more talented faculty and staff are joining the UIS community – again welcome to all our newcomers this fall. We look forward to the many contributions you will make to achieving our mission.
- Both the Performing Arts and Division II Athletics are growing dramatically (and strategically) here at UIS and are important for both the student experience and as part of our community engagement.

Lots of people don’t realize Sangamon Auditorium right here on our campus is the largest performing arts venue in Central Illinois. Thanks to the leadership of Director Bryan Rives, we’re offering another ambitious slate of the highest quality professional music, theater, dance and entertainment this year.

Renovation of the Studio Theatre (our smaller performance venue in the PAC), will be completed in a few weeks, thanks to a grant received from the UI System Arts and Humanities Initiative. It will provide a much-improved home for our own growing Theater program, as well as a performance space for both campus and community groups.

Our young Division II Athletics program continues to make history – winning three conference championships in the last two years and attracting talented student-athletes and athletics staff to campus.

- And speaking of setting the stage for success, I just learned a few days ago that we’ve now “closed the books” on fundraising for Fiscal Year 2019 and we made history! Private gift commitments to UIS hit an all time record high – \$8,472,704 in new business in Fiscal Year 2019!

Within that number are the many financial gifts made by the 51.2% percent of UIS faculty and staff who made a financial contribution to the University during the past year – thank you all so very much.

As you’ve heard me say many times before, the essential first step for success in fund-raising is “creating a place where people want to be involved.” Thanks to all of you, we’re doing exactly that and it shows in our advancement success!

- And finally, in the recent legislative session that concluded in May, a total of \$66.5 million was appropriated for building projects and improvements at UIS, including: \$5.5 million for the long-awaited (and much-needed) Public Safety Bldg., \$35 million for new Library and Learning Center, \$11 million for deferred maintenance, and \$15 million for the new UIS hub of the Illinois Innovation Network that will house Innovate Springfield and other related university activities.

We’re very grateful to Governor Pritzker for his leadership and to the many other political leaders and advocates who understand that a robust public higher education system in Illinois is a public good and essential for the future of our state.

To repeat – the stage is certainly set for successbut what’s ahead in 2019-2020? Plenty! If you wanted me to describe the coming year in one word, that word for me would be “fulfillment.”

Let me explain:

We’re now moving into the implementation stage of the new Strategic Compass.

[You all have bookmark reminders of that work at your seats and there are more detailed booklets available in the back that you can pick up today as you leave if you like.]

I’m so grateful for the visionary leadership Provost Dennis Papini has provided in helping to develop the Strategic Compass, a critically-important planning effort that involved campus-wide participation this past year. Our new mission, vision and

values have been approved by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees and are now translated into priorities and goals across the campus.

We will be implementing them with a deep commitment to fulfilling our overarching goal:

To provide a premier educational experience, both in and out of the classroom, for all students.

Our University's vision is to be a "pathway of opportunity, a catalyst for change, and a space of possibility and each of us will play an important role in the coming year to fulfill that vision.

I'd like to take a few minutes to provide a few examples (not an exhaustive list) of what fulfillment will look like this year:

First in the Academic Affairs Division, here are a few examples:

- A review of our undergraduate General Education curriculum in light of the new university mission, vision, and values of the University is an important priority and it will be conducted in the coming year by the General Education Review Committee. I'm grateful to Dr Tena Helton, who will chair the committee. We expect to see recommendations by the end of the academic year.
- As everyone knows, growing the visibility, reputation and enrollment of UIS continues to be critically important. This year will be our second to partner with EAB, a best-practices firm that is using research, technology, and data-enabled services to improve our recruitment, retention and graduation outcomes. We're already very encouraged by the early results of this partnership – as evidenced in the growth of our freshman class this year.

EAB has developed the NAVIGATE system, a mobile phone app, that better connects students to faculty, staff, and campus resources – all to improve retention and student success.

UIS launched NAVIGATE in June and all incoming freshmen have downloaded the app and received training on how to use it. The integration of NAVIGATE into advising processes will continue this fall.

- Conversations about Academic Reorganization will begin in earnest tomorrow at the Faculty Forum.

The Division of Academic Affairs initiated an administrative reorganization during the summer that has already resulted in changes that will enhance efficiency and better serve faculty and students.

Dr. Vickie Cook is now serving as Executive Director of Online, Professional, & Engaged Learning (OPEL). Among other activities, this unit will build our capability to deliver non-credit bearing programming to working professionals.

It will also better coordinate all UIS faculty development efforts – so important to continuous improvement in teaching and learning. We all know Dr. Cook and appreciate her expertise and commitment, and we're grateful for her broader leadership within this new organizational framework.

Also in conjunction with the implementation of NAVIGATE, the Center for Academic Success has been reorganized as the Center for Academic Success and Advising (CASA). Dr. Tarah Sweeting Trotter will serve as Director of CASA and will provide leadership for Advising as well as leading student academic success professionals.

In the Student Affairs Division, guided by the continuing leadership of Vice Chancellor Clarice Ford and her team, that fulfillment looks like implementation of the UIS Star Map – a new and innovative “Curricular Approach” to Student Affairs.

With the over-arching theme of “cultivating inclusive communities”, the Star Map will be focus efforts in Student Affairs on providing experiences that will enable students to:

- enhance self-awareness,
- develop meaningful connections,
- understand and value inclusion as being both socially aware and globally focused, and
- understand leadership as both taking action and creating legacy.

These are all essential elements to our Mission, Vision and Values. If you'd like more details about the Star Map, the Student Affairs Curriculum, there are brochures available at the back of the room today.

Fulfillment in Student Affairs will also be visible in the best practices brought to us by several new leaders that have joined the Student Affairs team during the past several months. That includes new directors of the Counseling Center, the Diversity Center, Residence Life, the Women's Center, and the Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement as well as program coordinators for Hispanic/Latinx Outreach and the Necessary Steps program.

We're especially pleased that, with the many improvements in campus housing made with the leadership of Brian Kelley, the number of students choosing to live on campus is increasing – that will enhance student success as well as student life.

The Cox Children's Center is also under the Student Affairs umbrella and is an important asset at UIS for both students and employees. Last year, with the leadership of Stacey Gilmore (and some outspoken advocates), preliminary plans for a much-needed new childcare center were developed and we're going to do everything possible in the coming year to fulfill that need.

In the Chancellor's Division, fulfillment looks like:

- First, continued collaboration at the UI System level where we continue take every possible advantage of the Strategic Framework, the system-wide plan developed a few years ago. Part of that work, of course, includes opportunities and contributions within the ongoing development of the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network.

It's been exactly a year since UIS acquired Innovate Springfield – announced as the first hub of the IIN and, as our regional economic development contributions continue to expand, we plan to move forward asap with a capital project to house that expanded hub and other related units.

- I suspect Chuck Coderko may be lying awake at night with visions of “fulfillment” dancing in his head. Besides providing a myriad of services to each of us every day and continuing to lead the amazing physical transformation of our campus, Chuck and his team will complete the UIS 2020 Master Plan this fall, critically important to guiding facilities planning in years to come. Chuck will also be working closely with me and others to move forward with those capital projects I mentioned earlier, as soon as the money starts to flow. (Maybe this will be the year we get a new road right outside this building.)
- I've already mentioned the success of our Advancement unit this past year. With the ongoing leadership of Dr. Jeff Lorber, we'll continue to prioritize the Reaching Stellar Campaign this year. We've raised over 78% of our \$40 million goal and, with about two years and ten months remaining in the campaign, we're well ahead of schedule.
- Athletics, also part of the Chancellor's Division, continues to forge ahead with implementation of their “Blueprint for Excellence” and their vision to be the premier Division II Athletics program in the Midwest.

We're delighted to be welcoming four new head coaches this year to the UIS community including Matt Brock and Casey Thousand in Men's and Women's Basketball, Ryan Copeland, Head Baseball Coach and Tyler Pence for Men's and Women's Cross Country and Track.

We'll also be welcoming a new Athletic Director later this year. The search for that important leadership position is well underway and, in the meantime, I'm grateful to Vice Chancellor, Dr. Clarice Ford, who is serving in the interim role until the new AD is named.

[I hope you'll bring friends and family to the Athletics Welcome Back Bar-b-que this Sunday afternoon.]

- And finally, I want to mention planning is underway for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of our university – a celebration that will take place throughout the 2020-21 academic year.

And, of course, in addition to the examples just provided, there are myriad activities that will occur every day this year that will contribute in so many essential ways to the fulfillment of our Mission and Vision.

Undergraduate and graduate students will be learning every day from faculty who are dedicated to their success, students will be advised and mentored, campus and community events will be presented, and donors will be asked to financially support the University,

Public safety will be ensured and enforced, research will be conducted, buildings will be cleaned and maintained, interns will be placed, food will be prepared and consumed, and students, faculty and staff will volunteer thousands of hours throughout the community.

Leaves will be swept, snow will be shoveled, visitors will be welcomed, audiences will be engaged, and every other activity necessary for a vibrant university community will occur.

As Provost Papini is now famous for saying: “There is a lot of good work to be done.” It’s going to be a busy year our best year ever!

In closing, let me remind you that, for nearly 50 years this University has prepared thousands of graduates to contribute, not only to their own success and the success of their families, but also to the public good of their communities across Illinois and beyond. With the continued momentum created by all of you, by all of us – we will build an even stronger UIS in the coming year.

Though there are certainly challenges ahead, with your contributions we will fulfill our vision to provide that pathway of opportunity, that catalyst for change, and that space of possibility for every student this year.

So I ask that you think for a moment about that “fresh page” in front of you – right now – at the start of the 2019-2020 school year. Ask yourself, in my role here at UIS:

- What will I do to pave that “pathway of opportunity” for every student I encounter?
- What will I do to create a “space of possibility” that might help keep a struggling student in school or help a student become more than they thought possible? (Sometimes a kind word is all it takes.)
- And when I get to the end of the year, what is going to be written on my page?

I want to assure you I’ll do my very best this year, as your Chancellor, to enable your success.

Thanks so much for your attention. Please take care of yourself and have a great year!

SJR Column: Employees Outside Interests, August 2019

Each of the more than a thousand faculty and staff at the University of Illinois Springfield contributes in myriad ways to providing pathways of opportunity for students that prepare them for success. But as musical artist Dolly Parton once said: “You should never get so busy making a living that you forget to make a life.” As Chancellor of UIS, I’ve found it fascinating to discover the many ways valued employees “make a life” outside their work. This UIS Perspectives column provides a glimpse into some of their stories.

The performing arts is a passion for many UIS employees including Linda Schneider and Steve Marvel. Linda, whose day job is office administrator in Academic Affairs, has been involved in community theatre for many years – combining her acting talent with her love of history. Linda has portrayed many historical figures including Nellie Grant Jones (daughter of Ulysses S. Grant) for the annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society. “My most memorable experience thus far,” says Linda, “was portraying Mary Lincoln for an appearance on Conan O’Brien’s late night talk show.” Linda’s next “gig” will be playing Susan Lawrence Dana at an upcoming event for the local Dana Thomas House Foundation.

It’s not unusual for Steve Marvel to be stopped by students, faculty or staff on campus with a request to pose for a selfie probably not because he is a building services supervisor. In his off hours, Steve is rocking out as keyboardist and vocalist with “Off the Wall,” one of the most popular pop/rock bands in Central Illinois. Steve studied classical music beginning at age four – eventually earning a college degree in music. “I’ve played in bands since I was fourteen,” says Steve, “and what I enjoy most about making music is being able to entertain people of all ages.”

Not many can claim to have a national champion in the family – but Doug Brackney, administrative aide in the UIS Career Development Center, has several! Doug has been showing champion Persian cats for more than 20 years. His silver Persian named Romeo is not only a national champion but has also been “spokes-cat” for Royal Canine Persian cat food – landing him and his human companions an all-expense paid trip to New York City that included a limousine, a stay in a posh Madison Avenue hotel and a photo shoot with international fashion photographer Platan.

“We enjoy presenting our cats as well as the travel, the friends, and the excitement that competition brings,” says Doug. “I sometimes think my own resume is pale in comparison to our beloved cats.”

The avocations of other UIS employees also extend beyond the borders of Illinois. That is certainly the case for Alan Freedman and Julie Close. Alan is an assistant professor in the Exercise Science and Athletic Training programs. In addition to teaching students in these rapidly growing programs, Alan serves as an athletic trainer for USA Fencing, the national governing body for the sport of fencing. “I’m part of a multidisciplinary health care team at national and regional fencing competitions,” says Alan, “providing care that ensures the health and well-being of competing athletes.”

“I’ve appreciated the opportunity to work with highly skilled health care providers in this unique setting,” adds Alan, “an experience that enables me to pass on new skills and techniques to my students.” Alan also conducts research on the epidemiology of fencing injuries to identify trends and ultimately improve safety for fencing athletes.

When not working in Facilities and Services, Julie Close volunteers as a member of the Critical Response Childcare Team of Children’s Disaster Services, an organization that provides support for traumatized children in the midst of natural or human-caused disasters. Julie was deployed in October, 2017, to Las Vegas following the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history – a tragedy that resulted in the deaths of 58 people and the injury of hundreds more.

“Establishing a steady routine as soon as possible after a traumatic experience is so important for children,” says Julie, “and in the busyness after a disaster, they are sometimes pushed aside and their needs ignored.” CDS volunteers are trained to engage with traumatized children in therapeutic play activities that relieve stress, provide a listening ear, and calm fears. “Though we make due with cots and go without our usual pampered existence for a while,” she adds, “I do it for the opportunity to give back and help people.”

Julie also notes knowledge gained at UIS over almost 30 years – how facilities operate, networking with service providers, etc. – has been extremely useful in her work as a CDS volunteer. She anticipates answering the call for CDS volunteers more often when she retires.

It is a privilege to work with so many talented and dedicated faculty and staff every day at UIS. With their many contributions both on campus and off, they’re not just making a living. They’re making a difference ... and making a life.

Susan J. Koch is Chancellor at the University of Illinois Springfield.

SJR Column: KickStart for New Students, June 2019

You might think summer would be a quiet time on the University of Illinois Springfield campus, but the June-July calendar is teeming with activity including summer classes, youth camps, and a variety of projects needing completion before students return in August for the start of fall semester.

One of the pivotal summer activities has to do with new beginnings. For hundreds of first-year students accepted for the fall 2019 semester, that new beginning starts with summer orientation – a series of two-day “KickStart” events for new students as well as for their parents, family members and guardians.

According to Natalie Herring, Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, orientation, whether for freshmen or transfer students, is the crucial start to setting students up for success.

“Orientation is a big part of the overall admissions process,” says Herring.

“Though the first important lesson is to remind students they’re adults, orientation also introduces students to the people who are going to be their own ‘board of directors’— the folks who will help them succeed and achieve their goals.”

Higher education research has shown both academic and social integration are important to ensure students maximize their college experience. No one knows that better than Lisa McGuire, Director of New Student Orientation and Parent Relations, and mastermind behind the UIS KickStart program.

“For students coming directly from high school, among the biggest adjustments are acclimating to more rigorous academic expectations and time management,” says McGuire.

“Orientation provides opportunities to discuss these and other challenges as well as to become familiar with the tools and resources students can access to enhance their success.”

Orientation staff utilize a variety of experiences during KickStart including interactive, small-group discussions led by members of the “O Team” – a diverse group of trained student-leaders who make the experience more authentic and who ensure individual questions and concerns are addressed from the students’ perspective. Academic advisers work individually with each student to familiarize them with online course registration, explore majors and career choices and register for fall classes.

“Orientation provides the opportunity for us to build a relationship with the student,” says Tarah Sweeting-Trotter, Senior Director of Advising and Learning Support Services.

“It bridges the gap between high school and college so that students leave the experience more confident — knowing when they come back in August, the friendships they’ve started and relationships with staff and faculty will be there for them.”

The social aspect of this new beginning is also important, and the Campus Opportunities Fair introduces a variety of organizations and resources, including the Diversity Center, which provides multicultural programming, and Disability Services, which offers support for students with special needs.

With more than 80 student organizations, thriving campus recreation programs and a new Student Union serving as the hub for campus life, there are countless ways for students to broaden their social involvement, develop leadership skills and participate in volunteer activities. The “Downtown Springfield Adventure,” a highlight of orientation, introduces students and family members to businesses, restaurants and historic sites in the Springfield community.

The goal is to provide each student a sense of belonging both on campus and in the community – especially important to ensuring a smooth transition and, ultimately, persistence through the challenges every student faces during their college years.

Campus safety and security is a topic of significant interest during orientation for both students and family members. Women in college are at the age of highest risk for sexual assault and, though reported incidents at UIS are few, sexual assault prevention and reporting is seriously addressed during orientation and again during Launch Week in August.

Every University of Illinois student and employee is required to complete a Sexual Misconduct Awareness and Prevention Training each year. The UIS Campus Police department is staffed with officers who have full law enforcement authority and who work around the clock to ensure a safe and secure environment for all members of the campus community.

While students are learning about campus life, parents, family members and guardians have their own schedule of sessions and activities during orientation and meet up periodically with their student to check in. Popular sessions for parents and family members include a presentation by staff from the Health and Counseling Centers as well as a discussion about how family members can best support their student.

A session titled, “What Parents Want to Know,” features current students and parents, while a discussion titled, “What Faculty Members Want Parents to Know,”

is led by faculty. Spanish language interpreters are provided throughout orientation for parents and family members who may need translation services.

It turns out a key factor in students graduating from college is their experience during the very beginning. KickStart helps ensure that beginning at UIS is both reassuring and enjoyable.

We can't wait to see the hundreds of new faces taking advantage of all UIS has to offer this fall!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: UIS Alum Matthew Wallace, May 2019

A central commitment of the University of Illinois Springfield is to prepare leaders who are capable of transforming their local and global communities. UIS graduates fulfill that expectation in myriad ways and across a variety of professions. The infinite possibilities our graduates represent were, as always, front and center as I shook their hands at recent commencement ceremonies.

But another event on campus this May provided an exceptional example of the fulfillment of that commitment. That event was a special ceremony where UIS alum Matthew Wallace was honored with the University of Illinois Alumni Humanitarian Award. The award recognizes University of Illinois graduates who have made significant contributions to the welfare of humanity and whose outstanding leadership and service has enriched the lives of others.

Matthew is a 2006 graduate – a member of the Capital Scholars Honors Program who earned a degree in Political Studies and then a masters degree from the prestigious Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky.

Matthew and his wife, Heather, who met while attending UIS, live in Myanmar (formerly Burma), where he helped found and serves as Managing Director of Opportunities NOW (www.ONOW.org), an entrepreneurship development program that seeks to reduce poverty by providing young people with financial literacy, entrepreneurship training, mentoring and access to financial capital to support sustainable small businesses.

Myanmar is one of the poorest nations in Southeast Asia – a country of more than 50 million people, 45 percent of whom are younger than 25. A former province of British India, Myanmar's more recent history includes a brutal dictatorship, ethnic

strife and living standards that have suffered greatly from both political and economic struggles.

How does a small town boy from Trilla, Illinois end up leading a successful business innovation program in Myanmar? “When I came to UIS I planned to study Illinois politics,” says Matthew, “but through my classes on political economy, globalization and comparative politics, I became increasingly drawn to the international field.”

“The multi-disciplinary nature of the Cap Scholars Honors Program gave us the tools to understand the power systems around us,” he continues, “and we were encouraged to shape those systems in ways that would benefit others.”

Matthew especially appreciated the teaching and mentoring of professors Bob Sipe and Hugh Harris, who challenged students to understand the underlying motivations for many decisions made by those in power. A first flight ever to Moscow for a summer internship sealed the deal for Matthew’s global perspective.

“Mae Noll, my supervisor when I was a Resident Assistant in Lincoln Hall,” Matthew adds, “was also important to my development. She consistently trusted me and encouraged me in campus leadership and was a great model of service for me.”

Matthew and Heather moved to Myanmar 11 years ago and Opportunities NOW was launched in 2012 with the goal to deliver financially sustainable positive change in the lives of young people. Since then, the enterprise has trained more than 700 youth and helped more than 400 launch their own businesses.

“Our entrepreneurs earn more money and create jobs that weren’t there before,” Matthew explains, “but the main benefit is empowering young women to develop agency in their own lives – the ability to make decisions that can positively influence the direction of their lives and the lives of others around them.”

The ONOW culture is also about providing young people a place to discover and test out their own creativity. ONOW even has a design lab where young staff help participants build chatbots, code mobile apps and design animations – having fun at the same time they’re developing valuable technical skills so necessary for their future.

Chuck Schrage, Associate Vice Chancellor for Alumni Relations at UIS, has this to say about the 2019 University of Illinois Alumni Humanitarian Award recipient: “Matt’s leadership and service to improve the lives of others, as well as the support anchored by his wife, Heather, is the epitome of the University of Illinois Alumni Humanitarian Award.”

Matthew says the award serves as recognition for the entire team at Opportunities NOW – talented professionals who spend every week “advancing entrepreneurship and financial inclusion for underserved women.”

Opportunities NOW is making a positive difference in Myanmar and we’re so proud UIS has helped make it possible for Matthew Wallace to be that difference.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

Prepared Remarks for BOT, May 2019

University of Illinois Board of Trustees Meeting
May 16, 2019
UIS Student Union

CHANCELLOR’S WELCOME

Chairman Edwards, members of the Board of Trustees, President Killeen, colleagues and guests:

Welcome to the University of Illinois at Springfield! We are pleased to host this May 2019 University of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting.

Just a year ago, I welcomed the Board of Trustees for the first time to the UIS Student Union. Since the building’s opening about 16 months ago, it has become the heart of campus life at UIS and a new and valuable asset for the campus and for the Springfield community. In addition to being the hub of activity every day, the STU (as students call it) has hosted more than 1,500 events since the ribbon-cutting. The building has also won two major design awards, and we’re especially proud the Student Union is a sustainable building, a charge that was led by students.

I hope you’ve noticed, too, the latest addition of beautiful artwork to the building. Just a few weeks ago we received the piece hanging above the fireplace on the mezzanine level. The work, by prominent American artist Sanford Biggers, is titled, “A Convenient Fiction.” Biggers began working with antique quilts several years ago — drawn to them because of their association with African-American culture and the Underground Railroad. (It so happens Springfield was an important stop in the Underground Railroad in the mid-1800s for fugitive slaves fleeing North.) If you look closely at the work, you’ll see it’s constructed, in part, using antique quilts.

This morning, three aluminum sculptures, titled “Obstruction, Reflection, Translation,” by another prominent American artist, Lisa Williamson, are being

installed on the berm just outside this building – another inspirational contribution to the campus environment. (Lisa, by the way, grew up in Urbana.)

Like the iconic Lincoln sculpture and the Shakespeare Garden here at UIS, these artworks are gifts from the John H. Chester Endowment of the University of Illinois — designated for the acquisition of works of art to beautify the three UI campuses.

I'm pleased to report today that we've continued to make substantial progress at UIS this year. New leadership for enrollment management and a partnership with EAB Consulting is maximizing best practices in recruitment and having a positive impact on the No. 1 priority of this young campus – growth in visibility, reputation, enrollment and impact.

Following an increase in the size of the freshman class last fall, we currently see increases for the coming year across the freshman funnel — from inquiries to confirmations. The numbers of black, Latino and multicultural students are at the highest levels in eight years while the mean ACT score of the freshman class continues to rise.

An important achievement this year, which followed on completion of the UI System-wide Strategic Framework, is the new UIS Strategic Compass. This has been an intensive university-wide effort involving faculty, staff, students and alums that charts the course for fresh thinking, new efficiencies and new collaborations; at the same time, it will be more responsive to the dynamic environment that is higher education today. You have a summary of the Strategic Compass at each of your seats today. A new Master Plan is also underway to ensure campus infrastructure on this beautiful 750-acre campus will best support the University's goals and priorities.

Recruiting and retaining talented faculty and staff remains both a high priority and a continuous process. In the ASAC meeting yesterday, you heard from Director of Field Stations Dr. Tom Rothfus and Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Anne-Marie Hanson, both relative newcomers, who have been helping develop and implement plans this year for the Field Station at Lake Springfield – a great new educational resource just a few minutes from campus that complements our field station at Emiquon on the Illinois River. Bryan Rives, whom you met last night at the Performing Arts Center, is another talented recent addition.

You've also met, at a previous meeting, UI Distinguished Professor of Public Administration Dr. Ken Kriz, who is finishing his first year at UIS and who just coauthored an important IGPA report on personal income tax structures in Illinois – a study requested by Illinois Sen. Andy Manar to help inform important conversations about revenue generation for our state.

I'm also pleased to let you know we've recently hired our next UI Distinguished Professor – Dr. Graham Peck. Dr. Peck is a historian whose expertise focuses on the careers and leadership of Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. He will

join us this summer and will be assisting with the launch of the new Center for Lincoln Studies next year.

And speaking of leadership, I'm pleased to introduce today Dr. Somnath Bhattacharya, the new Dean of the College of Business and Management at UIS. Dr. Bhattacharya brings to UIS more than 25 years of successful experience, and I'm particularly pleased that his expertise in developing entrepreneurial and interdisciplinary programs will be an asset as we continue to grow Innovate Springfield, our downtown hub of the Illinois Innovation Network. We're in the midst of planning a capital project to house that expansion.

The "Reaching Stellar" capital campaign continues to go very well. At campaign launch in October 2017, we announced an ambitious \$40 million goal (a big goal for such a young university) and, as of today, we have surpassed the \$30 million mark — well ahead of projections. We have created a place here at UIS where people want to be involved, and we're so grateful to the many alumni and friends who believe in us and who increasingly support the university with their financial gifts. The campaign, of course, will continue to be a top priority for me and our entire team in the coming year.

Our young Division II Athletics program continues to make history! Sophomore golfer Jennifer Queller is playing her third round today in the NCAA Division II National Championship in Florida – the first woman golfer in program history to advance to the national championship. Our new Track and Field program brought home two titles from the GLVC championships a few weeks ago – Blake Jones and Taryn Christy (both freshmen) won conference titles in the 10,000-meter race.

Women's Softball, the 2018 conference champions, competed in the championship game of the NCAA Regional Tournament last weekend, and Prairie Stars Baseball is the No. 2 seed in the NCAA Midwest Regional. UIS is hosting the NCAA Regional starting tonight here in Springfield – game time, 7 p.m.

As proud as I am of these students' athletic achievements, I'm even more impressed by their performance in the classroom. This year, the average GPA for UIS student-athletes is 3.3, and Women's Tennis owns the top team GPA with an average of 3.7.

I had the pleasure of enjoying a very special moment with about 750 UIS graduates on stage at two commencement ceremonies this past Saturday – a moment when we make eye contact, shake hands, smile at each other and have that all important hand off of the well-earned diploma – well, at least the cover; the diploma actually follows by mail.

This year, our graduates included the first from new programs in Public Policy, Data Analytics and Exercise Science. We also hooded eight recipients of the Doctorate in Public Administration, this young university's first doctoral program. As some heard last evening, we also had the pleasure of presenting an Honorary

Doctorate of Humane Letters to Karen Hasara, former Mayor of Springfield, former state legislator, and an eight-year member of this Board of Trustees.

We have a special tradition at UIS of having a student commencement speaker, and this year it was Jeff Nevins, a nontraditional-aged student who earned a bachelor's degree in Communications – which he had started in 1995. Like a lot of students, life had gotten in the way; but Jeff eventually came back, attended classes while working full time, and is now a proud UIS graduate!

Some of the most touching Commencement moments at UIS actually happen before the official ceremony. Thanks to the leadership of many, we have several special cultural celebrations – Black graduation, Hispanic-Latinx graduation, Lavender graduation for LBGTQIA+ students, and a special ceremony to celebrate international students. Each of these pre-commencement events provides an opportunity for students to celebrate their achievements in a more personal way surrounded by friends, family and supporters. I've learned over the years these cultural celebrations are very important for under-represented students, and I'm honored to be part of each of them.

One of my favorite events every year is the Online Graduation Brunch the morning of Commencement. Participants come from all over the country (and sometimes from abroad), and it never fails that attendees at this special event include graduates who are making their first real (not virtual) visit to the campus, meeting their faculty face-to-face for the first time, and experiencing the physical campus – it's wonderful.

And for the past two years we've had a special mini-commencement for student-athletes who missed Commencement because they were competing in post-season championship play. This year that event (Pomp and Circumstance and all) was held on Monday for 15 softball and baseball players. I hope we'll have a reason to do that every year!

Finally, I hope you'll take a moment to notice the full-page newspaper ad on display in the Student Union lobby today. We place the ad in the local State Journal-Register every year the day after Commencement to recognize and celebrate our graduates.

Part of the vision of UIS is to provide a “pathway to opportunity” for students. You can be confident we have fulfilled that promise for the 2019 graduates of the University of Illinois Springfield.

As the University of Illinois Springfield continues to advance, I sincerely appreciate the support and encouragement of the Board of Trustees as well as that of President Killeen and other members of the UI leadership team. Of course, I also appreciate every day the contributions of the many dedicated faculty and staff who make this a university where students are always the first priority.

Thank you and, again, welcome to UIS.

End-of-year Message, May 2019

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

As we approach the end of the Spring, 2019 semester, I want to thank each of you for your contributions to what has been an exciting and productive academic year here at UIS. We have so much to be proud of and none of it would be possible without our vibrant and engaged campus community.

Special recognition is due to campus leaders who have devoted time and talent to ensure our university's success—among them are Campus Senate Chair **Professor Ranjan Karri**, Academic Professional Advisory Committee Chair **Emily Boles**, Civil Service Advisory Council President **Jo Barnard**, Student Government Association President **Rosie Dawoud**, and Student Trustee **Shaina Humphrey**. I'm also grateful for the leadership of Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost **Dennis Papini**, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs **Clarice Ford**, Vice Chancellor for Advancement **Jeff Lorber**, and other members of the leadership team for their many contributions this year. Each of these individuals fully embodies “**Leadership lived**” and I extend my sincere gratitude for their leadership and service.

This year, as we do every year, we have celebrated the contributions of several exceptional members of our community.

Faculty honors awarded this year included:

- **Dr. Richard Gilman-Opalsky** (Political Science) — University Scholar
- **Dr. Layne Morsch** (Chemistry) — Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching
- **Dr. Xiaoqing Li** (Management Information Systems) — Spencer Award for Exemplary Service
- **Dr. Kim Wiley** (Public Administration) — Burks Oakley II Distinguished Award for Online Teaching
- **Dr. Jennifer Manthei** (Sociology/Anthropology) — Harry and Deborah Berman Sabbatical Award

Employee leadership awards this year included:

- **Lisa Whelpley**, Director of Annual Giving and Major Gift Development — CAPE Award for Outstanding Performance by an Academic Professional
- **Brian Beckerman**, Superintendent of Grounds — CARE Award for Excellence in Civil Service
- **Jay Swenson**, Assistant Director of Competitive Sports and Facilities — UIS Employee of the Year

- **Angela Try**, Public Relations Specialist – Good as Gold Star Staff Award for community volunteerism

Outstanding SGA student leaders earning well-deserved recognition this year included:

- **Eric Loera** – Outstanding Committee Person of the Year
- **Selena Meints** – Outstanding Student Senator
- **Luigi Cabantog** – Community Ally Award

Congratulations to these talented individuals who inspire us to live our university's mission, vision and values every day.

Though certainly not an exhaustive list, here are some additional highlights from this past year:

- **Freshmen enrollment** grew by nearly 14 percent, according to the Fall 2018 census. We are delighted to see an increasing number of first-year students choosing UIS for their undergraduate education. Plenty of work remains to ensure we continue this momentum for first-year students as well as continue to build transfer, graduate and online programs. Under the direction of Associate Provost for Enrollment Management **Natalie Herring**, the new Enrollment Management unit has spent the past year addressing opportunities for streamlining and enhancing recruitment efforts and their work is producing positive results.
- **Online learning** continues to be a popular path for completing a degree or a certificate program at UIS and this year, more than 1,600 students enrolled in an online program. UIS online students reside in nearly every state and almost a dozen foreign countries. In just a few days, I'm looking forward to meeting many of those online students when they come to Springfield to participate in commencement activities.
- In August, we welcomed **Innovate Springfield** to the UIS family. Based in downtown Springfield, Innovate Springfield is a business incubator and social innovation hub that supports local entrepreneurs and social innovators. In joining UIS, Innovate Springfield became the first hub of the new **Illinois Discovery Partners Institute/Illinois Innovation Network (DPI/IIN)**, which will amplify its efforts to bring new businesses and high-impact social programs to central Illinois. Funding for a much-expanded downtown facility is under consideration and a working group of UIS faculty and staff has spent the past year planning for the proposed facility and activities that will best serve students, faculty and community. My thanks go to the many UIS faculty members who are contributing to laying the groundwork with other UI faculty for this important statewide initiative. If you'd like to learn more about UIS and the IIN, I hope you'll join us for a presentation and discussion led by **Bruce Sommer**, UIS Director of Economic Development and Innovation, at the Springfield Citizens Club at 8:00 a.m., Friday, May 10, at the Hoogland Center for the Arts.

- Thanks to leadership provided by the Strategic Compass Steering Committee, the University's new **mission, vision and values statements** have been completed and are now being used to develop plans that will guide strategic decision-making during the next several years. Our [mission, vision and values](#) are a direct reflection of who we are and where we want to go together to provide a pathway to opportunity for students as well as for all members of our community.
- The new **Student Union** has been open for about 16 months and it is exceeding expectations in every way. As predicted, it has become a point of pride and the social heart of campus for students, faculty, staff and visitors. The facility has hosted more than 1,500 events since the ribbon-cutting in January of last year. It has also won two architectural design awards: the Excellence in Design Award from the American Institute of Architects and the Facility Design Award of Excellence from the Association of College Unions International. Thanks to a substantial award from the Chester Fund of the University of Illinois, two major works of art have also been acquired for the Student Union. **Sanford Bigger's** "A Convenient Fiction" now hangs above the fireplace on the mezzanine level. In a few weeks, "Obstruction, Reflection, Transition", a work by sculptor **Lisa Williamson**, will be installed on the berm next to the plaza. These works by two prominent American artists will further enhance the Student Union as well as contribute to the reputation of the University.
- Ongoing efforts to ensure our facilities meet the growing needs of students, faculty and staff are evident in many campus locations. One example is the newly renovated second-floor of **Brookens Library** which is benefiting all who patronize the space. Remodeled classrooms and laboratories for new programs in **Exercise Science, Athletic Training and Nursing** (in cooperation with UIC) are also in use. The **UIS Field Station at Lake Springfield** (just a few minutes' walk from campus) has been transformed and is providing new opportunities for teaching, research and recreation in and on the lake. I recommend you stop by to enjoy the tranquil surroundings and beautiful view.

The new concession area for the performing arts in the **PAC** represents the first phase of a makeover for an area of campus that is bringing more entertainment and educational opportunities to members of our community and to residents of the region. The performing arts at UIS will benefit, as well, this summer when the **Studio Theater** is renovated – thanks to a University of Illinois Arts and Humanities grant secured by Performing Arts Services Director **Bryan Rives** and Director of Theatre **Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson**.

- The UIS **Division II Athletics** program had another stellar year. Women's Volleyball brought home the Prairie Stars third GLVC championship of 2018, and many individual student athletes have received conference honors for both academic and athletic achievement. Just a few days ago, UIS Athletics celebrated "A Night of Stars" to recognize student athlete achievements for the past year. I hope you'll join me in congratulating seniors **Sam Clarke (Tennis)** and **Alyssa Hassler (Volleyball)** who were

named **Men's and Women's 2019 Athletes of the Year**. As proud of I am of our students when it comes to their athletic performance, I'm even more impressed by their performance in the classroom. This year, the average student-athlete GPA is 3.3 and **Women's Tennis** won the top team GPA award with an average of 3.7.

- The UIS **"Reaching Stellar"** fundraising campaign has been going exceptionally well this year. At campaign launch in October, 2017, we announced an ambitious **\$40 million goal**. As of today, we have surpassed the **\$30 million mark** so we're well ahead of schedule. Thanks to the dedication of many, we have created a place here at UIS where people want to be involved and we're so grateful for the many alumni and friends who believe in us and support the University with their gifts. One such friend is **UIS Professor Emeritus Dr. Larry Shiner**, who was honored with the prestigious University of Illinois **William Winter Award** at last month's Celebration of Philanthropy.

Graduation celebrations have already begun and I was honored to attend **Black Graduation** and **Hispanic/LatinX Graduation** last weekend – both inspiring celebrations that honored the cultural heritage and the personal stories of our diverse student body. During this finals week, additional celebrations will take place including **Lavender Graduation** and the **International Congratulatory Ceremony** on Friday.

This Saturday, it will be my privilege to shake the hand of **more than 700 new University of Illinois graduates** as they walk across the Bank of Springfield Convention Center stage at two Commencement ceremonies. A special addition to Commencement this year is the conferring of an **Honorary Degree**, the **Doctorate of Humane Letters**, on UIS alumna, community leader and former University of Illinois Trustee **Karen Hasara**.

For each of our graduates, Commencement is a moment that represents the culmination of years of determination, persistence and just plain hard work. No matter the path that brought each graduate to this moment, each will go into the world equipped to contribute to our society and each has left their mark on this University. **Thank you to all who have contributed to these graduates' success.**

As we close this academic year, my eighth as your Chancellor, I remain so proud to be a part of this University and the opportunity to work alongside such talented and dedicated staff, faculty and students.

Have a safe and happy summer!

With all best wishes,

Chancellor Koch

Prepared Remarks for Lincoln Pilgrimage Event, April 2019

Chancellor Susan J. Koch

Keynote Address:

Good Afternoon!

I am delighted to be with you today on this 2019 Lincoln Pilgrimage weekend! Congratulations to all who have participated in the Abraham Lincoln Council's 74th Pilgrimage – walking the same route Lincoln took from New Salem to study law in Springfield. That's a long, long walk and I admire your courage and determination.

I am especially pleased to be joining you this year, in 2019, the year Scouts BSA has opened its membership to young girls!

Though scouting was not available for me or for my own three daughters, I have six granddaughters and I am anticipating that someday in the future, I may be attending a granddaughter's Eagle Scout ceremony. That would be cool!

As Chancellor of the University of Illinois Springfield, right here in Lincoln's home town, I am surrounded by Abraham Lincoln's influence, ideas and impact – it's what I love most about this place. University of Illinois students on my campus are inspired by Lincoln's presence every day when they walk past "The Young Lawyer", a spectacular sculpture of Lincoln by world-renowned artist George Lundeen. [I'm told touching Abe's outstretched hand or putting a flower in his lapel brings good luck. I put a yellow rose in his lapel yesterday to help our baseball team win their game today they're playing right now and we'll see how that works out!]

UIS Lincoln scholar Professor Michael Burlingame is said to know more about Lincoln than any other living person and he shares those lessons on character and leadership every day with his students and with all who appreciate his many books.

The launch of the new Center for Lincoln Studies at UIS next year will further expand Lincoln's impact – because a greater knowledge of Lincoln, his wisdom, his leadership and his legacy will enhance students' and others' understanding of themselves and enable them to be better leaders in their professions and their communities, here and around the world. I think we can all agree today's world needs more leaders like Lincoln.

For this year's Lincoln Pilgrimage, I'm told the theme is one of the twelve elements of the Scout Law: "A Scout is Trustworthy." The Scouts did not exist, of course,

when Lincoln was young in the early 1800s – growing up a poor farm boy in Kentucky; but I’ve been thinking about what Lincoln had to say about trustworthiness – things like character, honesty, kindness, courage and dependability.

What would he say today if he could join us? What would Lincoln say?

Well fortunately for all of us, Lincoln wrote thousands of letters (some of which are still being discovered today) and, of course, he gave many, many speeches throughout his career.

Here are a few words from President Lincoln about the theme of “trustworthiness.”
About trust, Lincoln said:

“If you forfeit the confidence of your fellow citizens, you can never regain their respect and esteem. It is true you that you may fool all of the people some of the time; you can even fool some of the people all of the time; but you can’t fool all of the people all of the time.”

About character, Lincoln said:

“Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow. The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”

Character is the real thing.

About kindness, Lincoln said:

“Kindness is the only service that will stand the storm of life and not wash out. It will wear well and will be remembered long after the prism of politeness or the complexion of courtesy has faded away.”

About determination Lincoln said:

“I do the very best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end.”

... and he also said about determination:

“You have to do your own growing no matter how tall your grandfather was.”

About courage, Lincoln said:

“Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other.”

And one of my favorite Lincoln quotes:

“When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.” (That means even when things get hard, don’t give up!)

I can attest that, from my own experience through many years as a teacher and leader in higher education, Lincoln’s words ring true. Learning how he led, how he faced the overwhelming challenges of his childhood including the death of his mother at a young age, his poverty, his lack of schooling, and the challenges of his presidency during the Civil War; and how he worked together with those who agreed with him and those who did not has provided both inspiration and aspiration for me and so many others. It can do that for you, too.

But something else you should know about Lincoln is that he was not always serious. In fact, from his days as a storekeeper in New Salem, as a young lawyer in Illinois and later as a politician, he was known for his good humor and was quite famous as a jokester and storyteller.

There is a story, a true story, that illustrates Lincoln’s sense of humor:

All through the Civil War, Lincoln made many trips to the battlefronts to consult with his generals and to offer encouragement to the troops. Early in 1865, when it seemed like the Confederacy would fall soon, he stayed on a boat on the James River near General Grant’s headquarters.

The captain of the boat wanted President Lincoln, who was six feet four inches tall, to sleep in his bed; but President Lincoln insisted on using a smaller space where the berth was four inches shorter than he was.

The next day while Lincoln was off the boat consulting with General Grant, the captain had carpenters quickly lengthen and widen the bed without Lincoln’s knowledge.

The following morning, Lincoln greeted the captain with a straight face and said: “A miracle happened last night! I shrank six inches in height!”

I’ll close today by returning to the Scout Law:

“A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.”

Though Abraham Lincoln was not a Scout, I am confident he lived each day in the spirit of the Scout Law. I hope your experience this weekend has inspired you live that same life.

And for those here today who imagine college in their future, I hope you’ll come visit us at UIS to explore the opportunities available at the University of Illinois at Springfield. You can take a selfie while you’re there with Mr. Lincoln, shake his hand – and maybe receive some good luck in return.

Thank you so much for your attention and have a great day!

SJR Column: Commencement, April 2019

Today's UIS Perspectives column appears with finals week fast approaching, students completing end-of-semester assignments and, by last count, 1,273 students eligible to participate in the 48th University of Illinois Springfield commencement ceremonies in a few weeks.

This will be my eighth UIS commencement and, like every faculty and staff member, I'm proud of our graduates – each of whom has worked with great determination to earn their University of Illinois degree. There is no greater satisfaction for me, as Chancellor, than meeting students the fall of their first semester, observing the transformative experience that UIS provides and ultimately sharing with them that special “handshake moment” on the commencement stage.

This year, Tiffany Wentworth and I will share one of those moments – with her entire family, including her beloved grandmother, proudly witnessing her achievement. A soon-to-be graduate of the Capital Scholars Honors Program and a member of the Prairie Stars volleyball team, Tiffany has had a memorable four years at UIS.

“When I visited campus, Coach Salinas told me I could be an impact player,” says Tiffany. “Now, a few years later, my teammates have become my family away from home and winning the conference championship this year was the ‘cherry on top’ for me.”

“The small community at UIS has a nice feel,” she continues, “and I’ve especially appreciated Elise LoBue, who taught several of my Honors classes. Professor Marcel Yoder in Psychology also helped me figure out how to balance academics, athletics and the social aspects of school.”

Tiffany is graduating with honors as one of the first students to complete the new Exercise Science major. She has been accepted to the prestigious University of Kansas Physical Therapy and Rehabilitative Science program where she will pursue her doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Eric Myers has followed a less traditional path. After earning bachelors and masters degrees in business and working in the health care sector, Eric realized he really wanted to be a teacher.

“I did some research, and the UIS teacher certification program appealed to me,” says Eric, “in part, because it offers an online option that would enable me to continue working and remain close to my family.”

Eric is completing his student teaching this spring at Richwoods High School in Peoria and has already accepted a teaching position for next fall at Morton High School in Morton, Illinois. “I’m so excited about this new direction,” says Eric. “I learned to ‘think outside the box’ from UIS professors like Jennifer Martin, and my new employer is looking for exactly that.”

According to a recent report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, professional positions that require a masters degree continue to grow at a significant rate. Professionals with this advanced degree often benefit from higher salaries and more opportunities for career advancement.

Madhuri Podipireddy, a graduate student from southern India, is well aware of those benefits.

“My research on top graduate schools for technology-related degrees led me to the Management Information Systems program at UIS,” she says.

While enrolled in the MIS program, Madhuri has served as president of the Indian Student Organization and participated in the Graduate Public Service Internship Program as a business analyst for the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology. “The GPSI program has been very important for me,” she says. “It taught me what I need to excel in and what I need to do.”

“I have never done a graduation walk and I’m so excited to participate in Commencement,” she adds. “UIS has been a great platform to help give me my skills and I look forward to what my future holds.”

Eight 2019 Commencement participants will be graduating with the doctorate in Public Administration. One of them is Sophia Gehlhausen-Anderson. Sophia earned undergraduate and masters degrees in plant biology at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and, in 2000, moved to Honduras where she spent 14 years immersed in the culture – teaching school and working in international development.

After moving back to Illinois in 2014 with her husband and two children, Sophia became Coordinator for Programs and Outreach for Hispanic and Latino students at UIS. She is now Assistant Director for Academic Affairs at the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

“My mom has always been a huge inspiration to me,” says Sophia. “She is from Finland and she always loved to study – earning four masters degrees.”

“Balancing work with family and my studies has been the biggest challenge”
Sophia continues.

“I really appreciated the cohort model in the doctoral program. Members of my class got to know each other well and, with guidance from wonderful faculty, we all learned from everybody. I learned so much.”

Sophia has already purchased her cap, gown and doctoral hood and looks forward to sharing the upcoming commencement celebration with her husband and two sons – now 12 and 9. You can bet her mother will be there, too!

The vision statement for the University of Illinois Springfield declares UIS will provide a “pathway to opportunity”. I’m confident we have fulfilled that promise for Tiffany, Eric, Madhuri, Sophia and all the others who will participate in the 2019 commencement ceremonies.

Congratulations, graduates. I’ll see you on stage!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Innovate Springfield, March 2019

Since its first graduates completed their degrees in 1971, the University of Illinois Springfield has been a launchpad for professional and personal success for thousands of alums – many of whom identify their UIS experience as central to their own well-being and social mobility.

But UIS and the entire University of Illinois system is also a *public good* – one that is increasingly indispensable across the entire state and beyond. The role of the UI system in promoting the *public good* is described in the new *Strategic Framework*, which includes a pledge to increase the system’s power as an “engine for statewide and regional economic development.”

What does this commitment mean for UIS, for Springfield and for Central Illinois?
Plenty!

As some SJ-R readers will recall, UIS recently acquired Innovate Springfield, the downtown business incubator founded by the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln. Thanks in part to financial investments by the Foundation, the City of Springfield, and the Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation (as well as matching funds from the UI System), Innovate Springfield is becoming a

catalyst for economic development in the region – a place where ideas and start-ups can ignite and expand.

According to Executive Director Katie Davison, the new alignment with UIS is already producing impressive results. “Since becoming part of UIS, Innovate Springfield has grown to serve 64 members today, including 14 UIS students,” says Davison.”

We’re providing members with access to legal and financial consulting, workshops and mentors, as well as a creative environment that is nurturing both new business success and innovation.”

“We have more activity and energy in the space every day,” she continues, “and we’re becoming a bridge between the University and the business community that provides clients with better access to the intellectual capital the University has to offer.”

In joining UIS, Innovate Springfield has also been announced as a hub of the UI’s Illinois Innovation Network (IIN)– a system of interconnected university-community-industry-based hubs throughout the state. The Network will be anchored by the Discovery Partners Institute (DPI) in Chicago that will coordinate efforts and initiatives statewide.

The Illinois General Assembly appropriated funding to help launch the DPI/IIN last spring. UIS is expected to receive part of that funding and conceptual planning and design is now underway for a downtown Innovation Center that will include an expanded Innovate Springfield and other related activities.

Bruce Sommer, the University’s new Director of Economic Development and Innovation, is part of the intellectual capital being invested in this exciting project. A Springfield native who grew up in successful local businesses including Harper Oil Company, Bruce left Illinois after college and spent several years on the East coast as a venture capitalist and angel investor.

“When I came back to Springfield, I simply didn’t see the entrepreneurial culture I was used to on the East Coast,” says Sommer.

“Innovate Springfield and the Springfield hub will provide that culture and will enable us to start new companies, which in turn can attract a wealth of talent and opportunity.”

In addition to teaching entrepreneurship classes on campus and at Innovate Springfield, Sommer is fostering the development of local university-business partnerships to create the capacity for Springfield to be a vital and sustainable hub in the statewide network.

Keenan Dungey is another essential asset for the project. A graduate of the University of Michigan and professor in the UIS Department of Chemistry, Dr. Dungey leads Research and Institutional Effectiveness for the University.

“Thirty UIS faculty are already engaged in system-wide DPI working groups focused on key themes including: Computing and Data, Environment and Water, Health and Wellness, and Food and Agriculture,” says Dungey.

“The intellectual capital this project is harnessing is tremendous,” he continues, “and it is providing new ways for us to intentionally reach outward and consider how faculty, students and programs can be stronger assets for our local community and across the state.”

The Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, including a vibrant hub in Illinois’ capital city, is a bold idea – an idea that, if supported, will leverage the collective capacity of the University of Illinois and its partners to collaborate, innovate and build the Illinois economy in a way that has never been done.

Eric Berglund, an expert in regional economic development who is President and CEO of Springfield’s Land of Lincoln Economic Development Corporation, may summarize the project best when he says:

“Adding the resources of the DPI/IIN to the activities of Innovate Springfield is incredibly powerful. Innovation is the driver of economic development and now is the time to expand our thinking about what is possible for a more prosperous future”

... and that’s a public good we need for Springfield and for Central Illinois!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Lincoln, February 2019

February commonly brings predictions of spring’s arrival provided by a groundhog named Phil or handfuls of candy conversation hearts to celebrate Valentine’s Day. Here in Springfield, Illinois, however, February’s center stage goes to our own hometown hero – Abraham Lincoln. With Mr. Lincoln’s 210th birthday only two days away – my thoughts, too, are with the 16th President.

Fortunately, resources for contemplating Lincoln are close at hand here at the University of Illinois Springfield. The study of Abraham Lincoln – his leadership and his legacy – is a unique point of pride for the University that continues to grow

and contribute to the education of tomorrow's leaders as well as to the Springfield community.

Though UIS faculty in many areas of study engage in teaching and research about Lincoln, Professor Michael Burlingame, who occupies the Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies, is most prominent. The author of many critically acclaimed Lincoln books including a biography titled *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, Burlingame believes learning about Lincoln "... deepens students' understanding of what it means to be an American."

Devin Hunter, who joined the UIS faculty after working at the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and earning a Ph.D. in Public History from Loyola University, agrees. "Studying Lincoln's life," says Hunter, "enables better understanding of how others navigate challenges – some of which are similar to what we see today."

Professors Burlingame and Hunter take full advantage of their location in Lincoln's hometown where resources for teaching and research about Lincoln and his time abound.

"I have a 75-step commute from my residence to do my research at the Lincoln Presidential Library," says Burlingame, "which has a fabulous collection of primary source materials, books and journals."

"Next to the Library of Congress," he continues, "it's the premier place to do Lincoln research." (Burlingame's current project is focused on Lincoln's many interactions with African Americans throughout his lifetime.)

Hunter, who is currently teaching a course titled "Monuments, Museums and Memory," could not agree more with his colleague's assessment.

"To have local, state, and federal sites all within a small radius is uncommon," he says, "and it creates an opportunity for faculty and students to have unparalleled access to a variety of important historical sites and information."

Local resources also create opportunities for hands-on learning and community engagement. One of Dr. Hunter's classes recently served as an advisory panel for Springfield's African American History Museum. His students also help conduct a local "History Harvest" – inviting Illinois residents to bring historical items to a site where they are digitized and become part of an online exhibit.

Many UIS graduates who studied Lincoln at UIS have gone on to successful careers in a variety of leadership roles. Claire Jerry is one of them. Claire earned a Master's degree in Public History from UIS and then a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas. She is now at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. where she is the Lead Curator in Political History at the National Museum of American History.

“My experiences at UIS were absolutely essential to my career as a museum professional,” says Jerry. “Professor William Siles’ insistence that I pursue increasingly challenging opportunities gave me the confidence to do more than I had ever thought possible and Dr. Cecilia Cornell not only insisted I do my best work, but that I strive for more.

“I would not be where I am today,” she concludes, “without the education I received at UIS.”

UIS has also played an important role in the career of UIS alum Timothy Townsend – a historian at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield who helps present the Lincoln story to visitors from around the world.

“The way the UIS program integrates traditional academic history with public history was just what I needed to further develop my career with the National Park Service,” says Tim.

“I especially appreciated the way Professor Cullom Davis presented the profession of history with a wise and practical real-world approach that inspired me then – and still does today.”

Lincoln Studies at UIS will take another important step forward in the coming year with the formal launch of the *Center for Lincoln Studies* – a priority of the current *Reaching Stellar* fundraising campaign. With planning underway for collaboration with the ALPLM, the Abraham Lincoln Association and other Lincoln-oriented organizations, the Center will provide new opportunities for learning about Lincoln and the impact of his contributions. The Center also aspires to advance research in Lincoln Studies and help prepare the next generation of Lincoln scholars.

A few months ago, UIS hosted the Illinois Symphony Orchestra’s Illinois Bicentennial Celebration Concert, which included a performance of Aaron Copeland’s beloved *Lincoln Portrait*. I had the privilege of narrating the performance with words Copeland drew from Lincoln’s speeches and letters. The narration begins with the formidable first words of Lincoln’s 1862 State of the Union Address: “Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history.”

As we mark Lincoln’s birthday this week here in Springfield, those words are as true today as they were in 1862. I’m so pleased the growing Lincoln Studies agenda at the University of Illinois Springfield will enable us to further embrace, rather than escape, history.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Lincoln!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

Welcome Message – Spring 2019

January 14, 2019

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

Welcome to the 2019 spring semester at the University of Illinois Springfield! I hope you're looking forward, as I am, to many opportunities ahead during the coming semester.

It's hard to believe a year ago today we were celebrating the opening of the new Student Union. I hope you'll find an opportunity to visit the Stu today to enjoy one of many activities planned to celebrate the One-Year Anniversary. In just a year's time, the UIS Student Union has become the center of campus life and has hosted more than 600 events including ice skating on the patio, movie nights, craft sessions, smores-making at the fire pits, the new Tuesday Noon concert series and more. Here's to many future years of memories and milestone moments at the Stu!

With hundreds of course offerings being launched this week, both on campus and online, UIS faculty will again be providing exceptional learning opportunities. I encourage students, both undergraduate and graduate, to invest your efforts deeply in your education as you learn and prepare for your future. The mission of the U of I System "to transform lives and serve society" is very much alive at UIS thanks to our student-centered approach to teaching and learning.

In addition to course offerings, the Spring 2019 semester offers many other possibilities for leadership, learning, civic engagement, and fun! Whether it's cheering on our basketball teams in TRAC, seeing a Broadway show in Sangamon Auditorium, attending a UIS theatre or music production, joining a student organization or putting together a team for Springfest, there's plenty of opportunity to stretch into new experiences this semester. I highly encourage you to take advantage of UIS campus life to its fullest.

An early, and very fulfilling, opportunity to get involved this semester is the upcoming MLK Day of Service, an opportunity to continue Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy of serving others. This year's service project on Monday, Jan. 21, centers on food distribution to the Springfield community. More information, including registration instructions, is on [UIS Connection](#). I can't think of a better way to honor the memory of one of our country's greatest leaders.

UIS is a place where leadership is lived, every day. In that spirit, I hope you will lead the way in offering an especially warm welcome this week to students who are new arrivals to our campus this semester. Our university has a reputation for providing a welcoming and supportive environment thanks to the efforts of

students, faculty and staff. A smile, a friendly “hello,” or a helping hand can go a long way toward making someone feel welcome and part of our community.

Whether you are with us here on campus or joining us as an online student, I’m so glad each of you is part of the University of Illinois Springfield.

Again, welcome and best wishes for a productive and enjoyable semester.

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Career Development Center, January 2019

As the new year begins, college students across the country will soon return to their studies following the winter break. More than 20,000 of those students will begin their final semester at the University of Illinois, including about 1,500 whose hands I’ll proudly shake on the UIS commencement stage in May.

According to the Pew Research Center, a college degree is worth more today than ever before in terms of employment prospects, higher salaries and job satisfaction; but managing the transition from college to career can be intimidating. Fortunately for UIS students, that’s exactly where Kathy Battee-Freeman, Director of the UIS Career Development Center, can help.

With a background including degrees in Human Resources, Career Counseling and Applied Psychology and with more than 18 years of Career Development experience, Kathy and her team provide essential resources for students, faculty and employers to ensure the college-to-career transition has a positive outcome for all.

“Our first goal is to serve as a partner with students to develop tailored, realistic career strategies and obtainable goals,” says Kathy.

“Starting with Freshman Orientation, we work with students throughout their educational experience – providing individualized counseling to help clarify goals and aspirations, connecting students to resources both on and off campus, and helping them develop skills such as resume writing, using digital job search tools like LinkedIn, interviewing and presenting themselves professionally – all so important for a successful transition from college to career.”

Jodi Weiss, CEO of *EverythingSmart* (a career strategy organization), advises students to plot their career roadmap throughout the college experience. For this reason, Kathy and Career Center staff also partner with UIS faculty to integrate

career readiness components across the curriculum – elements tailored to specific programs and majors.

Professor Hilary Anne Frost, Director of the Global Studies program at UIS, is one such faculty partner. Dr. Frost begins her Freshman Seminar by engaging students in a self-assessment to determine what kinds of careers might be a good match for their interests. She then takes her students on a “field trip” to the Career Development Center where they learn about services offered, interpret results of their assessment, and explore opportunities and networks that will lead toward career goals during their college experience.

“The UIS Career Development Center is key to a successful college experience,” says Dr. Frost. “It provides a strategic bridge between the theoretical ideas of the classroom and the working world.”

“Over many years collaborating with the Center, I’ve learned what employers in my field are seeking from new college graduates (e.g., language skills, international experience and intercultural communication skills),” she adds. “I’ve developed my courses accordingly to ensure students build those skills. This ultimately enables students to truly put their education to work.”

A third strategic partner is the employer and the Center maintains relationships with employers, large and small, throughout Springfield and beyond. Organizations such as the State of Illinois, Horace Mann, State Farm, ADM, Springfield District #186, Memorial Health Systems, Sikich and many others depend upon UIS for a steady pipeline of qualified employees.

“Employers are looking for great employees and the Career Development Center serves as a liaison between talented students and those employers,” says Kathy.

“It’s important we have ongoing relationships with them so that we can not only respond to a specific need, but also provide a continuous source of qualified interns and employees.”

The CDC offers a variety of services for employers including the online “CareerConnect” (where internships and career opportunities can be advertised), scheduling and on-campus interviewing, and consultation services for developing internship programs and other career services.

A special opportunity will occur next month when the UIS Career Connections Expo is held in The Recreation and Athletic Center (TRAC). This annual event, scheduled for February 14th, draws more than a hundred employers and several hundred job-seekers.

Co-sponsored by UIS and Lincoln Land Community College, this year’s Expo will start with a “Coffee and Conversation” for participating employers and UIS faculty and staff. Employers can [find more information and register for the Expo](#).

I'm looking forward to stopping by to welcome participants and maybe snag a Valentine cookie!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Donor Giving, December 2018

One of my favorite quotes is strategically posted just below my computer screen where I can read it each day when I get to work. The author, Andrew Heiskell, was chairman of Time Inc. and a renowned philanthropist who raised millions of dollars for the New York Public Library. Heiskell asserted the best strategy for successful fundraising is to first “create a place where people want to be involved.” UIS is creating just such a place at One University Plaza on the south side of Springfield – a place where people *increasingly* want to be involved.

Momentum is evident across the young UIS campus with growing academic programs like Business, Computer Science, Biology, Theatre, Exercise Science, Music, and Nursing. Community engagement is growing via the UIS Performing Arts Center, NPR Illinois public radio and other initiatives. An increasingly successful NCAA Division II athletics program features student athletes who achieve academic excellence at the same time they're winning championships and new facilities include a stunning Student Union, opened this year, that recently won the 2018 Excellence in Design Award from the American Institute of Architects.

The best proof of Heiskell's assertion may be the progress of the current UIS capital campaign. The largest philanthropic effort in the University's history, “Reaching Stellar” has already raised over \$25.2 million – 63 percent of its \$40 million goal.

Priorities for the campaign include: increasing scholarship support, enhancing academic excellence, establishing a new Center for Lincoln Studies, bolstering the “public good” UIS provides through its outreach programs, and enhancing facilities and technology.

According to Dr. Jeff Lorber, UIS Vice Chancellor for Advancement, “the success to date of the Reaching Stellar campaign has been achieved in large part because of the increasing engagement of alumni and community friends in the life of the University.”

Anne and Ray Capetrain are among those valued friends. “We believe in UIS's mission to provide a quality, cost-effective college education to the community,” says Anne.

“Scholarships are an important priority for us because students need more support than ever to realize their academic goals without accumulating debt that negatively impacts their future choices.”

“The Student Union was an attractive project, too,” she continues, “because we believe it will draw more students to the university – which will contribute to the diversity of the campus as well as our community.” (The Capestrains, along with other family members, have named a conference room in the Student Union in honor of their parents, Robert and Dorothy Tracy.)

Longtime educator, community leader and philanthropist Mary Loken is another “Reaching Stellar” contributor who believes deeply in the value of UIS in the community.

“A vibrant UIS is essential for the growth and enrichment of Springfield, and I applaud each exciting priority in the campaign,” says Mary.

“Scholarships are especially important to me and I’m proud the Loken Family Scholarship has provided numerous area individuals with the opportunity to earn their college degrees at UIS and become teachers.”

Mark and Julie Staley are contributing to the “Reaching Stellar” campaign in many important ways, including by providing financial support for scholarships, the Student Union and athletic facilities. Julie also serves on the campaign planning committee.

“Investing in UIS means investing in the future of this community,” says Julie.

“We’re always honored to support scholarships and bring more ways for students to get the help they need to pay for college.”

“The proposed Center for Lincoln Studies is also incredibly important,” she adds. “Lincoln changed the world forever, and it is the duty and honor of UIS to keep his legacy alive – nowhere else would such a center be so important.”

As I conclude this column, I’m reflecting on a new favorite quote now posted next to Heiskell’s. It’s from Dennis Sedlak, an early SSU/UIS alum who created a scholarship at UIS for students (like he once was) who need financial help to accomplish their aspiration to earn a college degree.

Speaking at the annual UIS Scholarship Luncheon a few weeks ago, Sedlak expressed the personal satisfaction he’s gained from meeting his scholarship recipients.

“Whenever we give, whatever we give,” he said, “it always comes back.”

I’m so grateful to the many UIS supporters who, like donors mentioned in this column, are expressing their confidence in the future of UIS with their generous financial support and who – like Dennis Sedlak – appreciate seeing their gifts “come back.”

If you’d like to be involved and make a contribution, you can learn more about UIS and the [“Reaching Stellar”](#) campaign ... or just give me a call. I’ll buy lunch!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

Prepared Remarks for Fall Campus Update, November 2018

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
October 7, 2018

Good Afternoon and welcome to this Fall, 2018 Campus Forum!

As many of you know, this gathering is one of several ways for me and other members of the UIS leadership team to share information with members of the campus community. It’s a way for you to stay informed about important issues affecting our campus; but it’s also a way for you to provide input, advice, and helpful constructive criticism that we very much need in order to deliver on the assurance of excellence that is the collective promise we make to our students and that is a responsibility we all share.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BEING HERE TODAY.

If you attended the annual Convocation event in August, you will remember we did something different from previous Convocations. I temporarily conceded the time I typically use at Convocation to provide what some would call a “State of the University” address in favor of a presentation by one of our COHRE consultants, Dr. Patrick McCarthy, who presented the results of our year-long “Strategic Compass” planning process (more on that later).

At that event, I promised you that you would not be “off the hook” for the Chancellor’s remarks – so I’m going to start with those remarks today.

As we did at the Spring, 2018 Forum last April, I’ll then turn the microphone over to Dr. Jerry Joseph for an important Budget Update.

Professor Rick Funderburg, Chair of the Campus Planning and Budgeting Committee, will also join in with some comments about the ongoing work of the CPBC following Jerry's presentation.

And then finally, and equally important, we'll have time for you to provide input, share your thoughts and ask questions during a Q and A session. Several members of the campus leadership team are here today to respond to questions as necessary.

We're shooting for this Forum to last about an hour; but as always, I'm happy to stay longer to visit with anyone individually after the session.

So, again, thank you for taking the time to attend this Forum today and let's begin:

In the spirit of a "State of the University" address, let me start with a few somewhat global remarks:

Obviously, given this is the day after the 2018 elections, I would be remiss if I did not start there. At the state level as you all know, we have a new Governor, J.B. Pritzker. The Governor-elect Pritzker is a longtime Illinoisian who has been an advocate for education and for economic development for many years. You won't be surprised to hear that the UI leadership team has already established a relationship with our new Governor and his team and we're confident that relationship will serve the UI System and our students well in the coming years.

You may also be interested to know that our new Lieutenant Governor, Juliana Stratton, is a UI graduate and a UIC employee who has headed UIC's Center for Public Safety and Justice for several years.

Of course, with a new Governor there will be many changes in state government in the coming months, including likely leadership changes at most units of state government. Joan Sestak, UIS's Director of Community and Government Relations, and others will be working in the coming weeks to position UIS as strategically as possible as the transition continues. It certainly helps that we have loyal UIS alums in a variety of positions throughout state government.

In the meantime, the UI leadership team will be asking the Board of Trustees next week to approve a budget proposal that includes a 16.5% increase in state funding for the UI System. That may sound like a lot; but I want to remind you we're still recovering from a budget crisis that last 2 years and 6 days! This year's request, if approved by the BOT and then by the legislature next Spring, will still be slightly below 2015 funding levels.

The plan is for much of the increase to go toward salary improvements, undergraduate scholarships and capital improvement projects at all three campuses – all very, very important to UIS.

Speaking of the BOT, the new Governor will have an opportunity to name 3 new members of the Board of Trustees as early as January, 2019. We currently have a

strong Board and I am grateful for our Board members continuing support of UIS and for their confidence in the momentum we have created the last several years; but that having been said, I continue to be concerned that since Karen Hasara's retirement from the BOT almost 2 years ago, we do not have a direct representative on the Board who is from Springfield or who is a UIS graduate.

Though Chancellor's do not have a role in the selection of UI Board members, who are appointed at the discretion of the Governor, I want to assure you I will be doing everything possible to advocate for at least one of the three new BOT members to be either a UIS alum or a Springfield resident.

In terms of system-level issues, I hope you are continuing to follow developments related to the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network. This is another great example of the advantage we share as one of the three Universities in the UI System.

You already know we acquired Innovate Springfield, the downtown business incubator, as of August 1, and that we announced in mid-August that iSPI will be the heart of the first Hub of the Illinois Innovation Network. This is a tremendous opportunity for UIS and for Sangamon County and we're doing everything possible to take full advantage.

We are working closely with DPI leadership and anticipate a multi-million-dollar allocation for a capital project in downtown Springfield; at the same time as the project unfolds, faculty, staff and students will have new opportunities in Chicago for learning, experience, and research at DPI headquarters.

I'm grateful for the leadership of Provost Papini, Associate Provost, Keenan Dungey, David Racine (Executive Director of the Center for State Policy and Leadership), COBM Professor Ranjan Karri, Katie Davison, Director of Innovate Springfield, Chuck Coderko (Associate Chancellor for Facilities and Services) and others for their leadership in the early stages of this project.

Our new Director of Economic Development and Innovation, Bruce Sommer, who is a founder of Innovate Springfield and a faculty member in the College of Business Administration, will also be a key leader in this effort that has the potential to provide such important new opportunities for UIS students and faculty at the same time it will positively impact the economy of Sangamon County.

At the campus level for the DPI/IIN project, we have two goals to be accomplished in the coming months:

1. to identify and secure property for the capital project in the downtown area and,
2. to develop the preliminary program plan for the downtown location.

There will be lots more news to come and I encourage you to talk further with the folks I just mentioned if you would like to know more or you would like to be involved.

Finally, from the UI System level, I want to mention one more initiative. After discussion with the three Chancellors last summer, President Killeen announced in July the “Presidential Initiative to Celebrate the Impact of the Arts and Humanities.” This new funding opportunity is aimed at highlighting and celebrating the public good that flows from the arts and humanities and it will provide up to \$1 million per year for two years to strengthen the arts and humanities at the three UI campuses.

I’m so pleased to tell you today that UIS faculty are involved with 11 of the proposals that have been submitted. Some of those 11 proposals are specific to UIS while others are collaborations with colleagues at UIC or UIUC.

Obviously, they won’t all be funded this year, but some will and I am confident this new initiative will, in fact, strengthen the arts and humanities at UIS – something that is personally near and dear to my heart! My sincere thanks to all faculty who have contributed to this initiative thus far.

Now here’s where we are at the moment when I need to face the reality of my time constraint today. You didn’t come to this Forum to listen to the Chancellor talk for a couple of hours!

That being the case, I’m going to do two more things before I hand the microphone off to Jerry: I’ll simply name several recent highlights of our collective efforts during this past year to illustrate the momentum we have built together. Then I’ll call out briefly the principle challenge that, I believe, lies ahead:

First, our recent points of pride (apologies in advance that I won’t be able to name them all):

- UIS was notified several weeks ago of its successful institutional reaccreditation by the Higher Learning Commission.
- The Strategic Compass planning initiative begun last fall has yielded real results in the draft Mission, Vision and Values statements that have been discussed by several campus groups and are near final review. Once approved, these statements will guide our decision-making for the next several years.
- The \$40 million UIS Reaching Stellar Campaign has reached 57.66% of goal as of today, with over \$23 million raised so far. Goals for the campaign include Scholarships, Academic Excellence, the forthcoming Center for Lincoln Studies, the Public Good (ie. UIS Performing Arts Center, NPR Illinois, Illinois Innocence Project) and Facilities and Technology. In addition to several significant gifts received, I’m especially heartened that UIS faculty/staff giving this year stands at a robust 50% and that we have a steady flow of faculty and staff who have been creating their own scholarship

funds to help make the aspiration of a college degree from UIS more accessible to students.

- Thanks to a high level of collaboration and good will all around, the transition of Admissions, Financial Aid and the Registrar operations from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs under the leadership of new Associate Provost for Enrollment Management Natalie Herring, has gone very well. At the same time our new collaboration with the enrollment consulting firm EAB to implement best practices in recruitment and retention is moving forward successfully.
- And speaking of enrollment, though our total headcount this fall was down as expected by 381 students due to the loss of international students being seen across the country since the last Presidential election (and Jerry is going to talk about what that means in terms of our budget this year), it is absolutely a point of pride that our freshman class enrollment is up 14% as compared to last year! My sincere thanks to all who contributed to building the freshman class this past year.
- Thanks to the leadership of many, the commitment of our students, and the generosity of our donors, we completed and successfully opened this new Student Union about 10 months ago and its so interesting our freshmen seem to think its always been here. Just last week the Student Union was honored with the Excellence in Design Award by the American Institute of Architects – the organization’s highest award for building design. This recognition is a tribute not only to the wonderful architectural team of Dewberry Architects and Workshop Architects, but also to the large group of UIS students, faculty and staff who contributed extensively throughout the design process. And I also want to mention that the Art Acquisition Committee for the Student Union has completed their work, recommending how best to spend the \$250,000 private gift we have received for art for the Student Union. They selected a beautiful outdoor sculpture by artist Lisa Williamson that will be installed on the berm outside of the Student Leadership Center and a wonderful quilt and textile piece by Sanford Biggers that will be installed above the upstairs fireplace. Chuck Coderko has promised me these works by two American prominent artists will be installed early in the Spring semester for all to appreciate.
- Have I mentioned our UIS Prairie Stars? Just last weekend the UIS Women’s Volleyball won a share of the GLVC Conference Championship, closing a record breaking season with 15 conference wins and 3 losses. I’m really proud of these young women who excel both in the classroom and on the volleyball court. And by the way, this is the third GLVC conference championships for the Division II Prairie Stars in 2018 – pretty amazing.
- You’re aware we acquired the former FOP lake club on Lake Springfield this past year and, under the direction of Chuck Coderko and his team, Phase One of renovations for the new UIS Field Station at Lake Springfield will be completed within the next week or so. Faculty are already using the property for classes and research. The Field Station is a multi-use facility that will be available not only for classes, but also for meetings, events and recreation (no swimming!) Please do stop by the property just off West Lakeshore drive and take a look. Dr. Tom Rothfus, now Director of Field Stations (plural) can

tell you more about its possibilities. There will be an Open House at the Field Station in the Spring.

- We're also pleased with progress made in other facilities areas, including the newly renovated second floor of the Library, new academic spaces for Exercise Science, Athletic Training and Nursing, and the just opened bookstore on first floor in the PAC. And I want to remind you, you've all been invited to attend one of two Campus Master Plan kick-off events later this week. These events on Thursday and Friday will set the stage for a year-long discussion for the development, renovation and repurposing of University facilities, spaces and grounds for the next 10 years and beyond. Your voices in this discussion are very important and I hope you will participate.
- I hope you've also noticed the rebranding of our performing arts operations as the UIS Performing Arts Center. With the leadership of Bryan Rives, our campus and community outreach for the performing arts has taken a giant step forward. Now that the Sangamon Auditorium lobby doesn't need to double as a banquet hall, you're going to see more improvements to that space that will greatly enhance the performing arts experience for patrons of both Sangamon Auditorium and the Studio Theatre. The aerial spotlights on top of the PAC building are creating increased excitement for performing arts events and the increasing number and variety of performances is bringing more visitors to our campus to enjoy the arts.

So what about the challenges that lay ahead:

I'll simply say that, broadly speaking, maintaining our momentum in all areas, despite various limitations, will be the real challenge.

If Jim Collins (researcher and author of *Good to Great*) were here today, he would be the first to say we've got that flywheel going! We've "created a place where people want to be involved" (that's the reason our fundraising is increasingly successful).

But going from being good to being great, says Collins' extensive research, "comes about by a cumulative process, step by step, action by action, decision by decision," and ultimately adds up to success.

There is no single "miracle moment".

Our challenge now is to continue to get the right people on the bus and the right people in the right seats to help us take the right actions and make the right decisions.

That will ensure we maintain momentum on behalf of our students, our campus and our community into the future.

You've heard me say repeatedly over the years that the number one priority for UIS must be growth in visibility, reputation and enrollment.

Visibility means prospective students (and their parents) are aware of UIS and know it is a great choice for a high quality, personalized college experience, whether its for an 18-year-old high school grad or a 40-year-old part-time graduate student.

Reputation means it is consistently shown and widely known that UIS faculty and staff demonstrate excellence through their dedication and through the implementation of best practices in teaching, scholarship and service to our students in all areas of campus life – in curricular and extra-curricular areas as well as in customer service. (We’ve seen that demonstrated again and again this past year with prominent examples being Richard Gilman-Opalsky, the 2018 University Scholar; James Koepe, Academic Professional CAPE Award winner; and Krystal Wilson, winner of the Civil Service CARE Award.)

The University’s reputation also comes to life in our alums as they move on after graduation and into their professions and their communities – making a difference in the world.

And enrollment means an increasing number of qualified undergraduate and graduate students, both on campus and online, choosing UIS to pursue an increasing number of educational opportunities.

So when I think about “the State of the University”, we’ve made great progress in all those areas, but we’re still young and we need to continue to work together to maintain our momentum.

I’ll close these remarks by reminding all of us, as I did just over a year ago, that the work we do, educating future citizens of our state and our nation, has never been more important. In fact, it’s critical not only to their individual futures, it is a public good that is critical for our state and for the future of our democracy.

Thank you for what you do every day to educate those future citizens and leaders and to make this University better than it was the day before, the week before, the month before, the year before.

With that, I’ll turn the Forum over to one of those right people who is, thank goodness, in exactly the right seat today – Jerry Joseph, Associate Provost for Budget and Administrative Planning and CFO of the University.

SJR Column: Students Becoming Leaders, October 2018

The University of Illinois Springfield is known for *Leadership lived* – a reputation that reflects the University’s roots in the home of Abraham Lincoln – an

educational community where talented faculty and staff help learners become leaders in a broad range of endeavors.

As Chancellor, I have the privilege of getting to know many UIS students each year, observing first hand this learner-to-leader transformation that ultimately results in college graduates who contribute to their professions and their communities – human capital that serves the public good for Illinois and beyond.

I recently spent time with three UIS students, all seniors, each of whom has their own *Leadership lived* story:

Will Newton didn't know what to expect a few years ago when he left Chicago to attend UIS and major in Political Science.

“It was rough at the beginning and I don't think I was ready to live independently at first,” says Will, “but now as a Student Ambassador working in Admissions, I'm helping other students like me make a successful transition to college.”

“Thanks to my supervisor, Jill Briggs, who's been with me in both good times and bad,” he continues, “my skills have matured and I've learned to be accountable.” Will also cites valuable leadership lessons learned as a member of the University's award-winning Model United Nations team that participates in National Model UN each year at the headquarters in New York.

Will recently started working as a communications intern for the Illinois Senate Republican staff. He plans to become a college admissions counselor after graduation and may eventually go into public service.

Like many Chicagoland students, Will traveled about 200 miles to attend UIS, but Maria Espinosa followed a much different – and more lengthy – path. Maria is from Ibagué, a city about 2,600 miles southeast of Springfield in the heart of Colombia, South America.

A top performer on the UIS Women's Golf Team, Maria graduated from high school at 16 and declined numerous Division I offers in favor of the then up-and-coming UIS Division II Women's Golf program where she knew she could pursue ambitious goals in both academic studies and athletics.

“In December, 2014, Coach (Frank) Marsaglia flew from Illinois to Florida to watch me in a tournament for just one day,” says Maria. “He met my dad and was the only coach who came to meet me in person.”

“When I was new and Coach asked me what my favorite flavor of Gatorade was, it was a little thing that really mattered to me,” Maria continues.

“UIS – my teammates, coaches and faculty – have become my second family,”

In addition to competing on the Prairie Stars Women's Golf Team, Maria is completing a rigorous Biology major with a minor in Public Health. She worked with a UIS research team last summer in Ghana, West Africa, and is now applying to graduate schools with aspirations to earn a graduate degree and do medical research in microbiology and immunology.

Molly Looby is a proud Southeast High School graduate from Springfield – a double major in Communications and Political Science who transferred to UIS after spending her freshman year at Eastern Illinois University. In addition to full-time studies, Molly works part-time at the campus Women's Center where she helps organize events. She is also President this year of the College Democrats, a student organization on campus.

“Every moment here at UIS, in and out of classes, has been a moment of development for me,” says Molly.

“From professors who are so passionate and professional, to rising up as a leader in student organizations – it's been powerful.”

Molly plans to pursue a masters degree in Public Administration at UIS after completing her undergraduate degree. Having already completed two summer internships at the Illinois AFL-CIO, she is looking forward to a career working in labor relations.

Almost every day, I walk past “The Young Lawyer,” a beautiful Lincoln sculpture that was a gift to the UIS campus a few years ago. Sometimes I take a moment to add a flower to Abe's lapel – a new tradition that emerged shortly after the sculpture's installation. On the edge of the sculpture plaza is a stone with the following Lincoln quote:

“You cannot fail if you resolutely determine that you will not.”

The quote always makes me think of the many resolutely determined UIS students I've known over the years, learners who have become leaders while earning their University of Illinois degree at UIS. I'm proud of each one of them and grateful for the contributions they are making every day as alums and citizens. That's *Leadership lived*.

[[View more stories of UIS students who represent *Leadership lived*](#)]

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

**SJR Column: Skills for Success,
September 2018**

Thousands of Illinois residents headed off to college this fall — most not at all certain how best to navigate these pivotal years. A recent op-ed piece in the New York Times by longtime reporter and columnist Frank Bruni offered wise advice to new collegians about how to best shape a college life that yields success and satisfaction beyond the higher education experience.

The suggestion that most caught my eye in Bruni's piece was that students should insist on acquiring specific skills while in college — skills that “transcend any particular career.” Such skills, he argues, include communication, clear writing and cogent speaking, as well as storytelling, the ability to explain an idea with “shape and logic” – the art of persuasion.

I had an opportunity to explore Bruni's premise recently with three faculty who live these convictions every day at the University of Illinois Springfield. Elizabeth Ribarsky, from the Communication department, teaches and studies interpersonal communication. Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson, a professional actor and director, teaches in the Theatre program and is directing the campus theatre production *Silent Sky* this term. Stephanie Hedge, Assistant Professor of English, teaches rhetoric and composition, does research on writing in digital spaces and directs the University's first-year writing program.

“During the first week of the semester,” Stephanie says, “I taught a session on ‘Critical Reading and Writing’ where I explained to my students that good communication skills will empower them to affect change in the world.”

“Well-expressed language,” she continues, “whether oral or written, whether used in a class assignment, blogging online or messaging on your phone, is powerful! It's about having your ideas read, understood and respected.”

According to Missy, one thing she finds so interesting and challenging in today's age of electronic devices is getting people to make eye contact. “In Theatre classes like ‘Voice and Movement,’ we do weird stuff,” she says. “For instance, I ask students to simply stand and look closely at a partner – observing their eyebrows, making their partner smile. It gets pretty quiet, but it helps illustrate the value of paying attention and the importance of non-verbal communication.”

“I encourage all students regardless of major to take an acting class during college,” Missy continues. “You'll walk out of the class a little taller, stronger and more comfortable with yourself.”

In Elizabeth's “Oral Communication” class, she explains that the class is a requirement for first-years because it's where they develop confidence to share their ideas.

“Communicating well – speaking, listening, being able to understand and make an argument — is the number one reason people get hired,” she says.

“Communication is not a soft skill. It’s intrinsically linked to effectiveness in your job and your profession.”

A report in the Washington Post a few months ago summarized Mr. Bruni’s and my UIS colleagues’ convictions: Even in high-tech environments like Google, the story explains, evidence shows the top characteristics of success include skills like communicating and listening well, possessing insights into others, and being able to make connections across complex ideas.

I’m proud to say that with the support of faculty mentors like Elizabeth, Missy and Stephanie, UIS students are acquiring those skills on the way to becoming productive citizens and University of Illinois Springfield alums!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

Welcome Message – Fall 2018

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff,

Welcome to the start of the 2018-2019 academic year at the University of Illinois Springfield! For those of you returning to UIS—welcome back. If you are new to the campus this fall, a hearty and warm welcome to you as well. My wish for you is a productive and enjoyable year.

We have lots of welcome activities going on this week and I hope you'll attend the Chancellor's Welcome Picnic tomorrow—Tuesday, August 28. It's being held, for the first time ever, on the plaza at the new Student Union and all students, faculty and staff (and families) are invited.

Please join us from 4:30-7:30 p.m. for some great food, music, conversation, games, children's activities....and a few surprises!

I hope to see you at the picnic tomorrow!

Chancellor Koch


SJR Column: Campus Renovations, August 2018

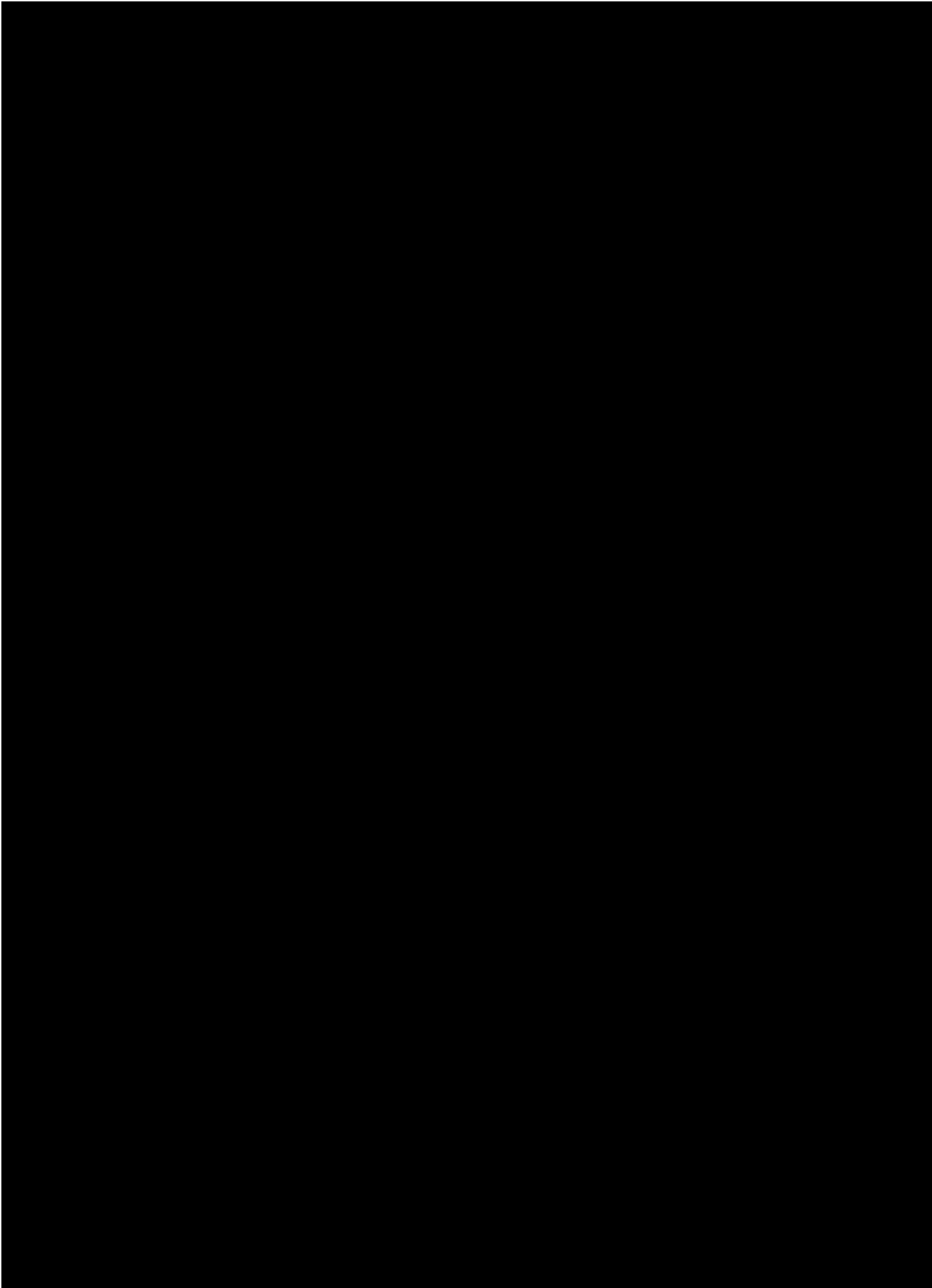
Though summertime at the University of Illinois Springfield entails a variety of both educational and recreational pursuits, the end of the academic year and the arrival of warmer weather also presents opportunities for campus improvements that will enhance the college experience for students as well as improve the environment for faculty, staff and visitors.

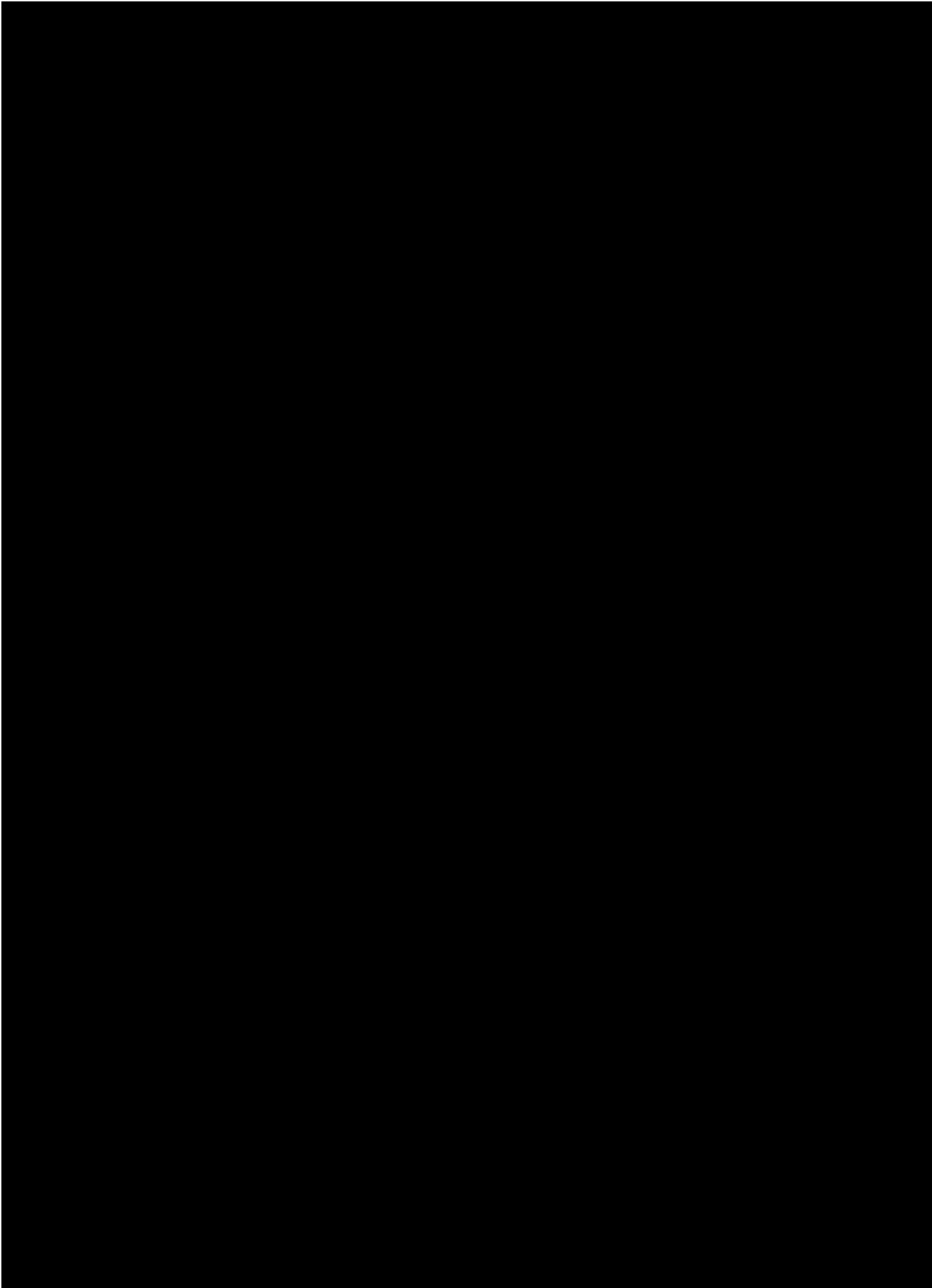
For students, research shows a functional and beautiful campus can be a deciding factor in their college choice and UIS students often tell me they “fell in love” with the campus itself when they made their first visit. With a property consisting of about 750 acres and, with recent additions including the Lincoln sculpture, a Shakespeare Garden and the new Student Union, the UIS campus is, indeed, both welcoming and beautiful.

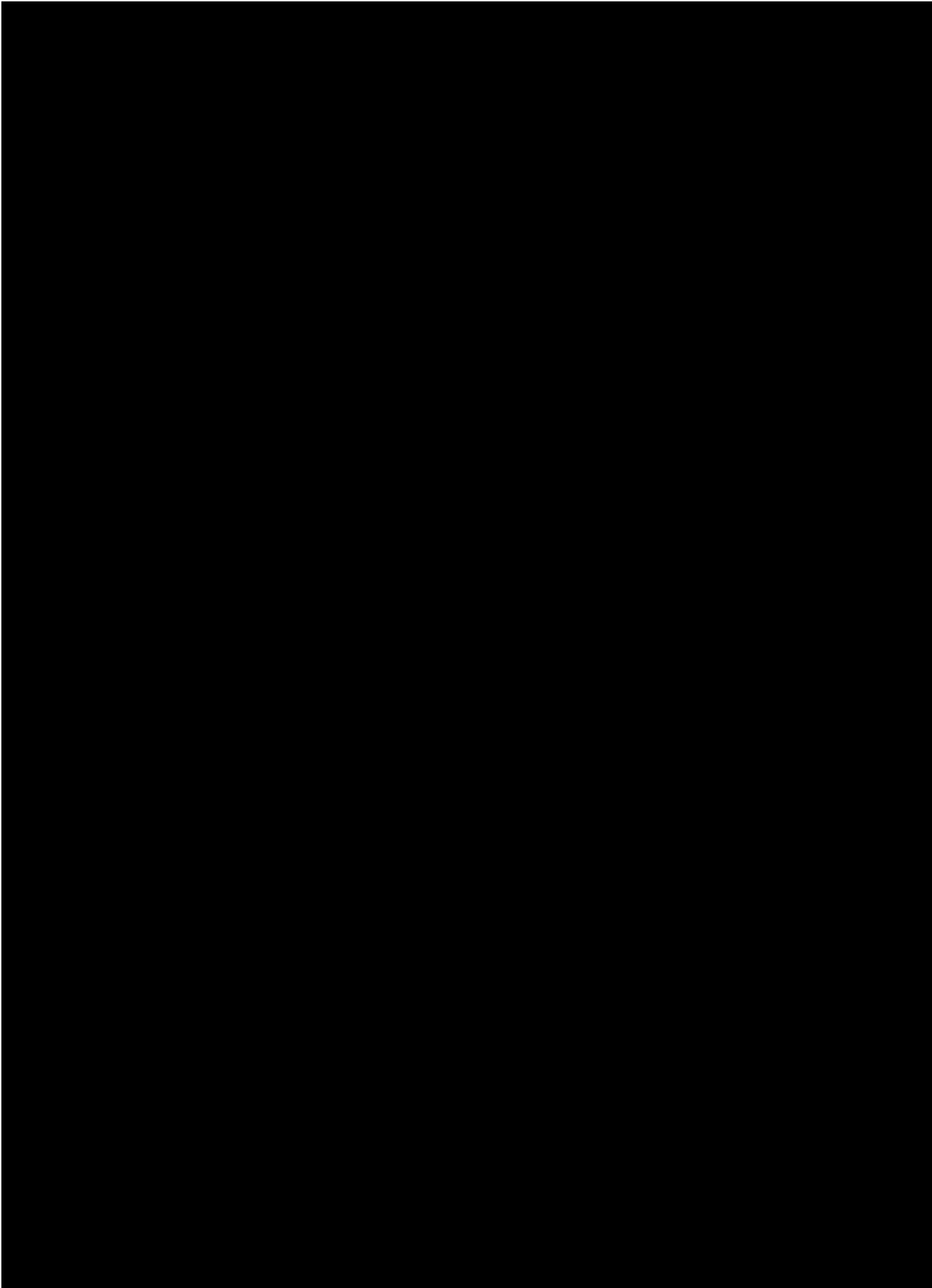
Chuck Coderko, Associate Chancellor for Facilities and Services, can attest better than anyone that Summer 2018 has been particularly busy! “The biggest transformation underway this summer,” says Chuck, “is the main floor of Brookens Library – a project that started in mid-May and will be completed in early October.”

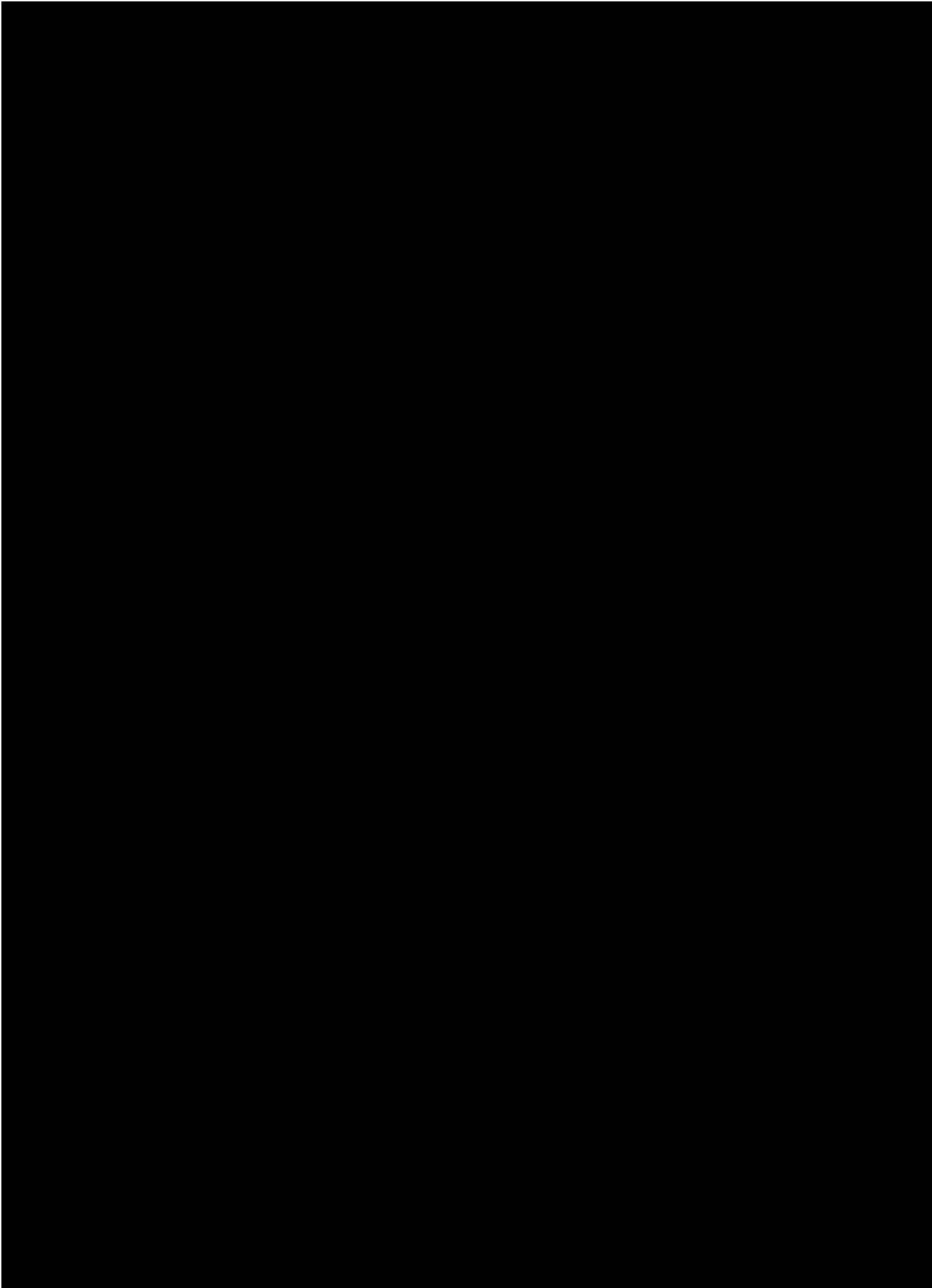
University libraries are no longer the quiet repositories of books they were when Brookens opened its doors about 40 years ago. Library Dean Pattie Piotrowski and her team have worked closely with Facilities and Services to design a contemporary space that provides a more active “learning commons” and that fosters collaboration using both physical and digital materials.

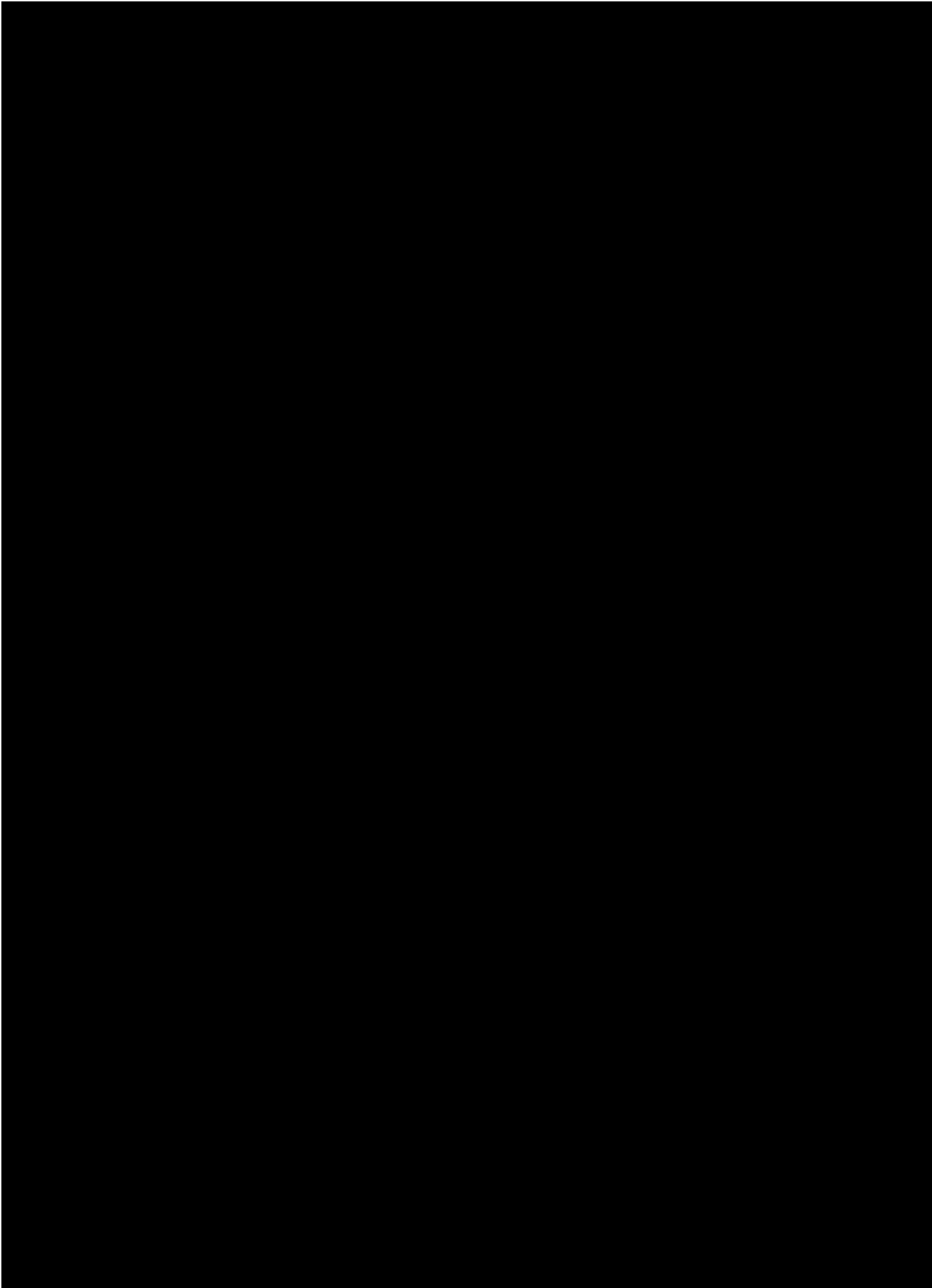


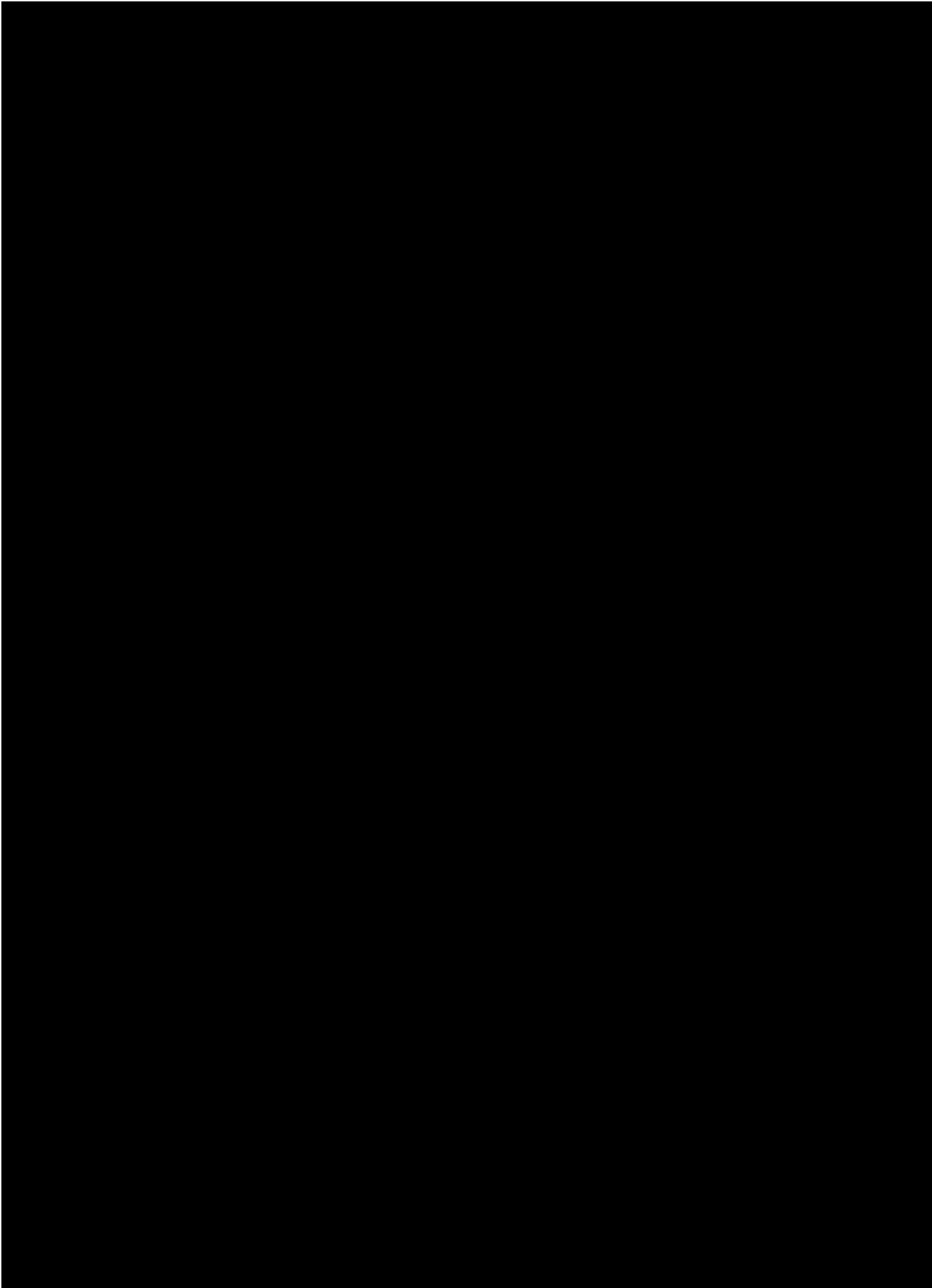


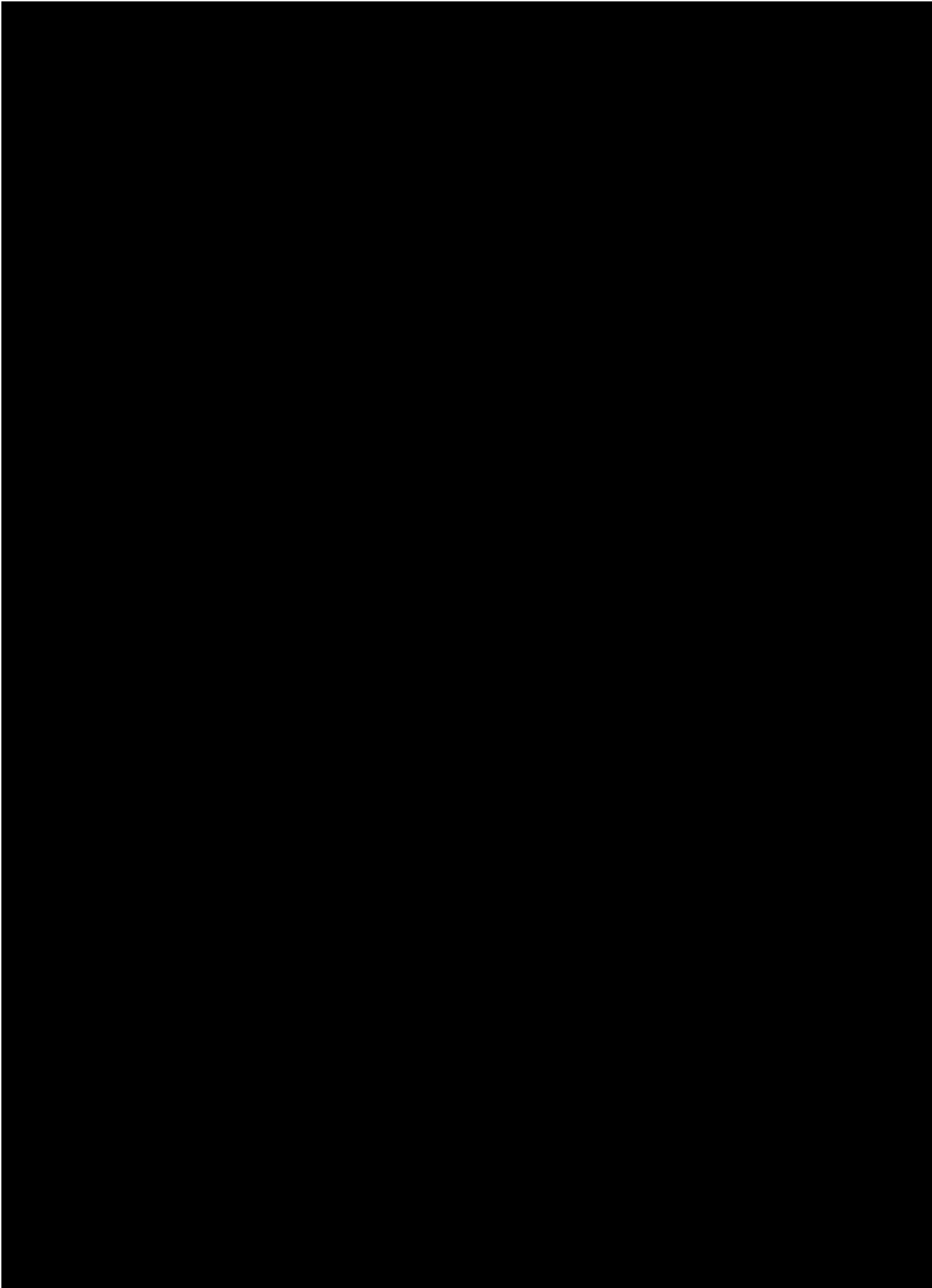


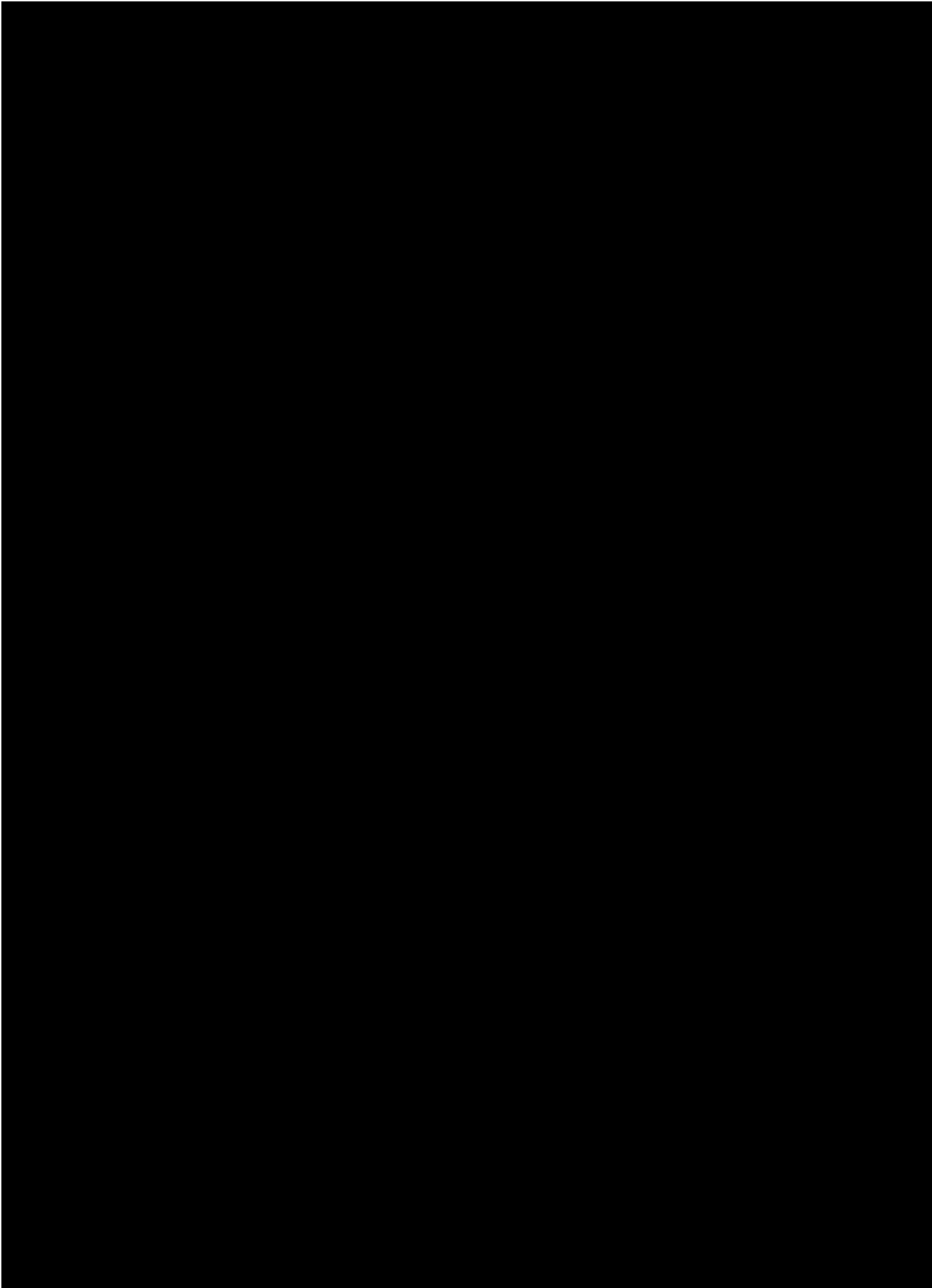


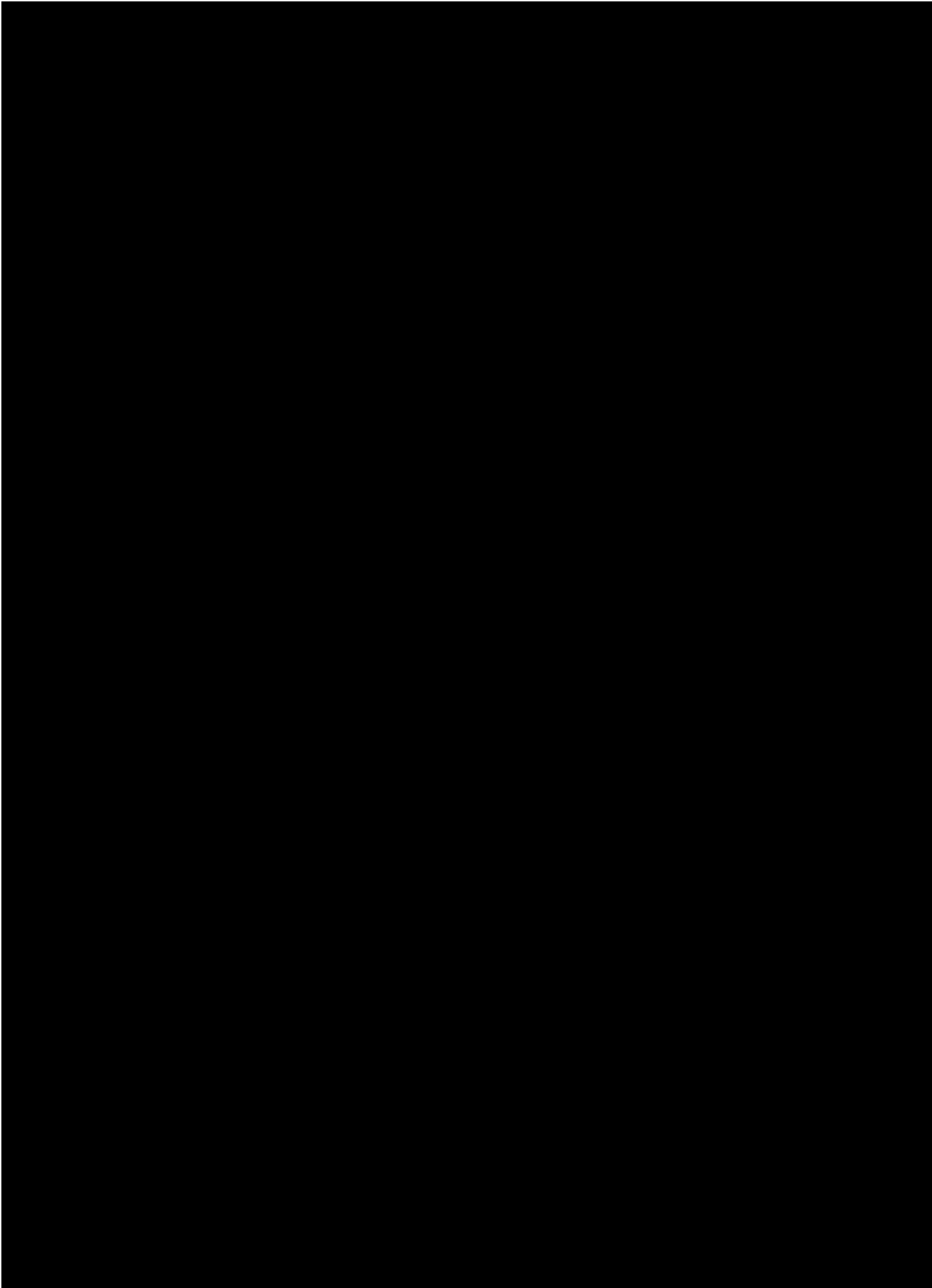


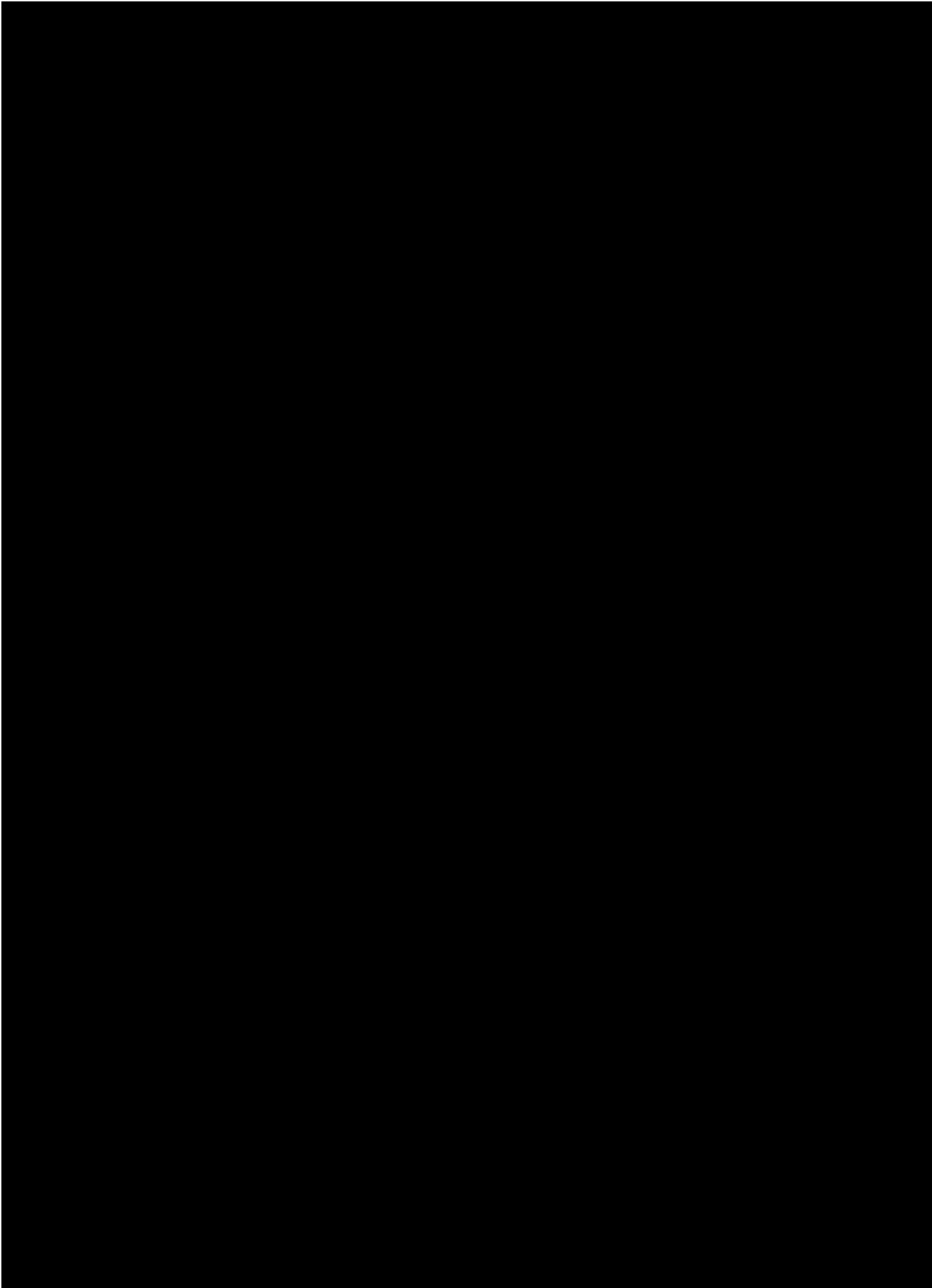


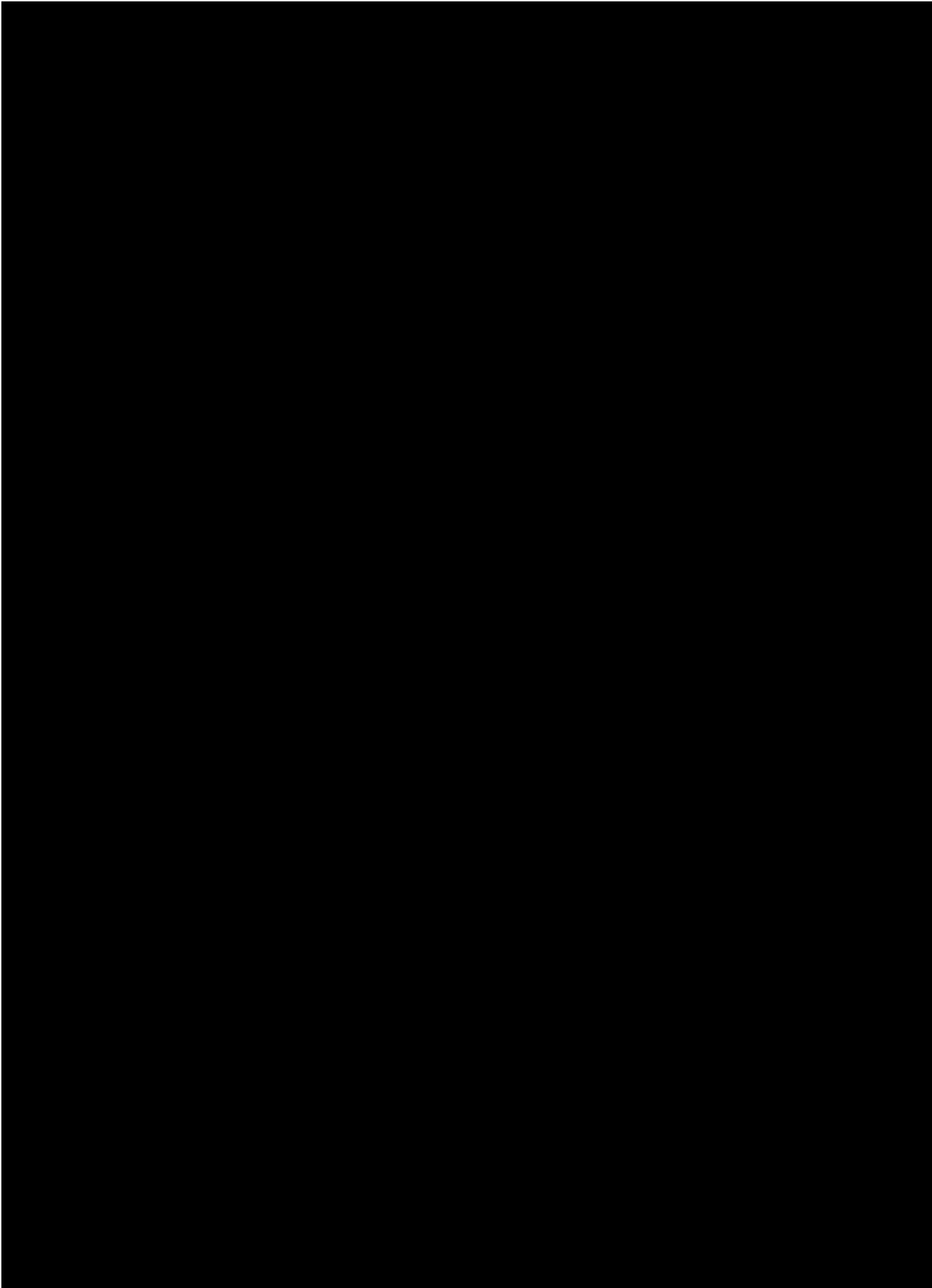


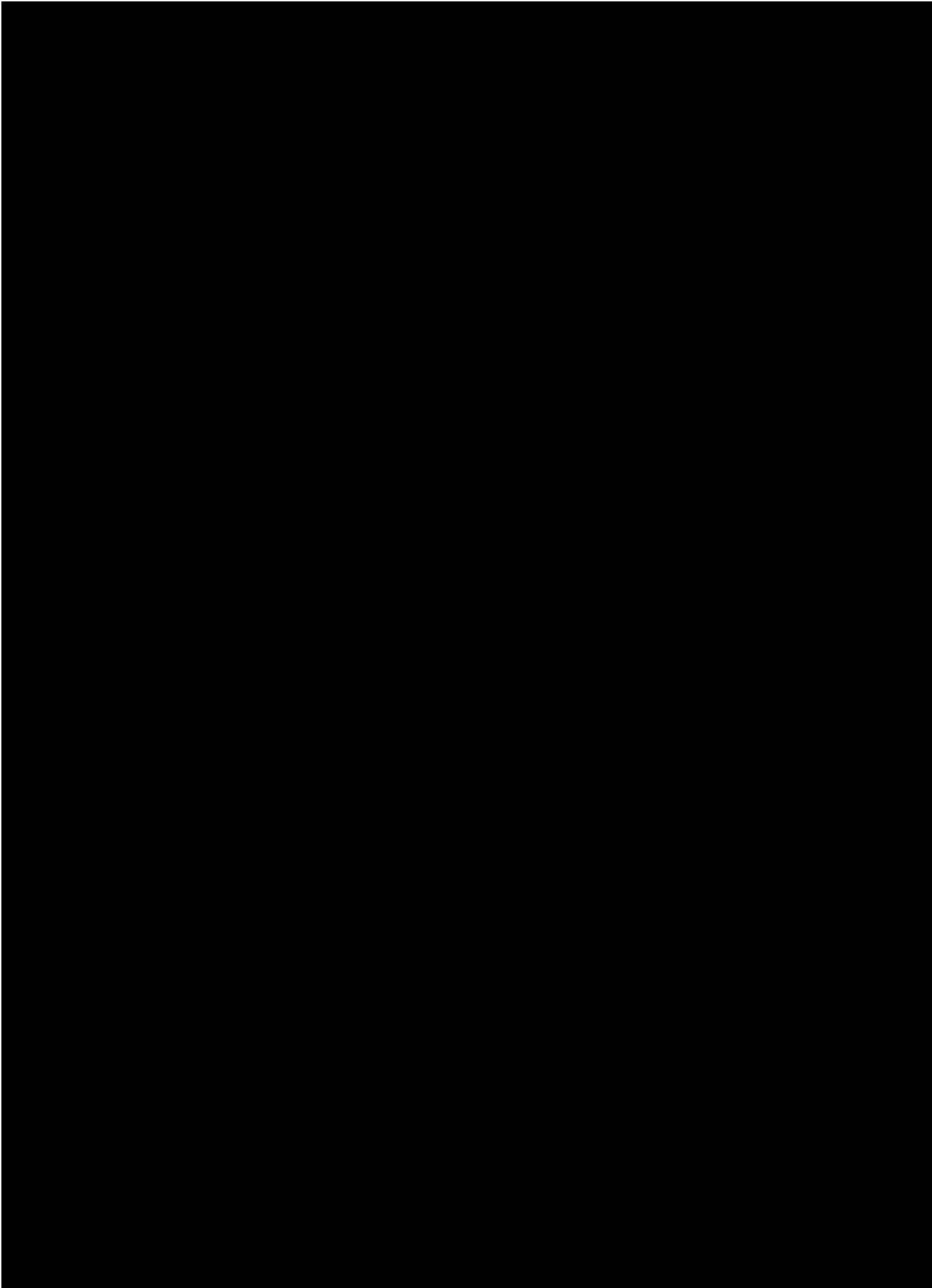


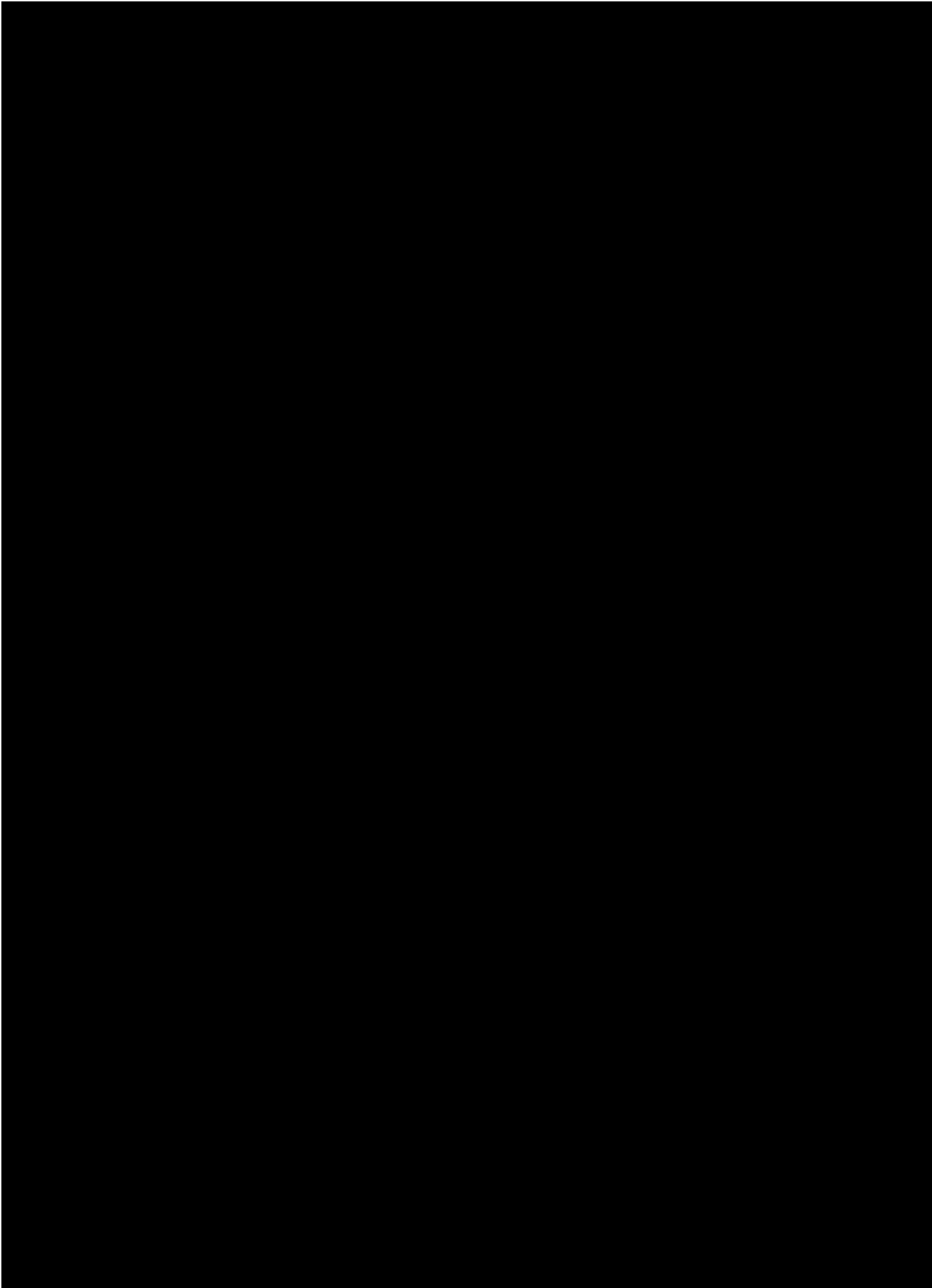


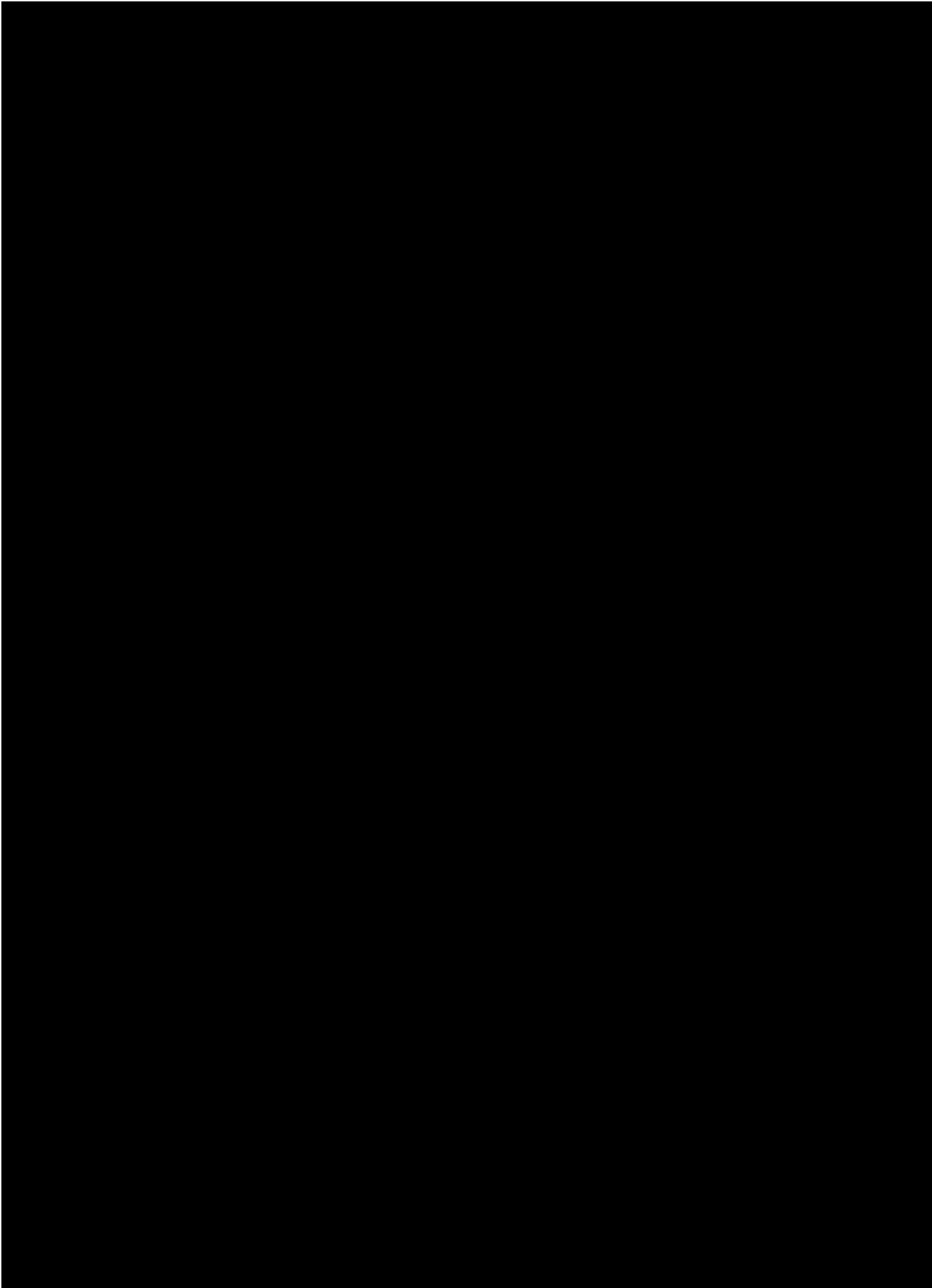


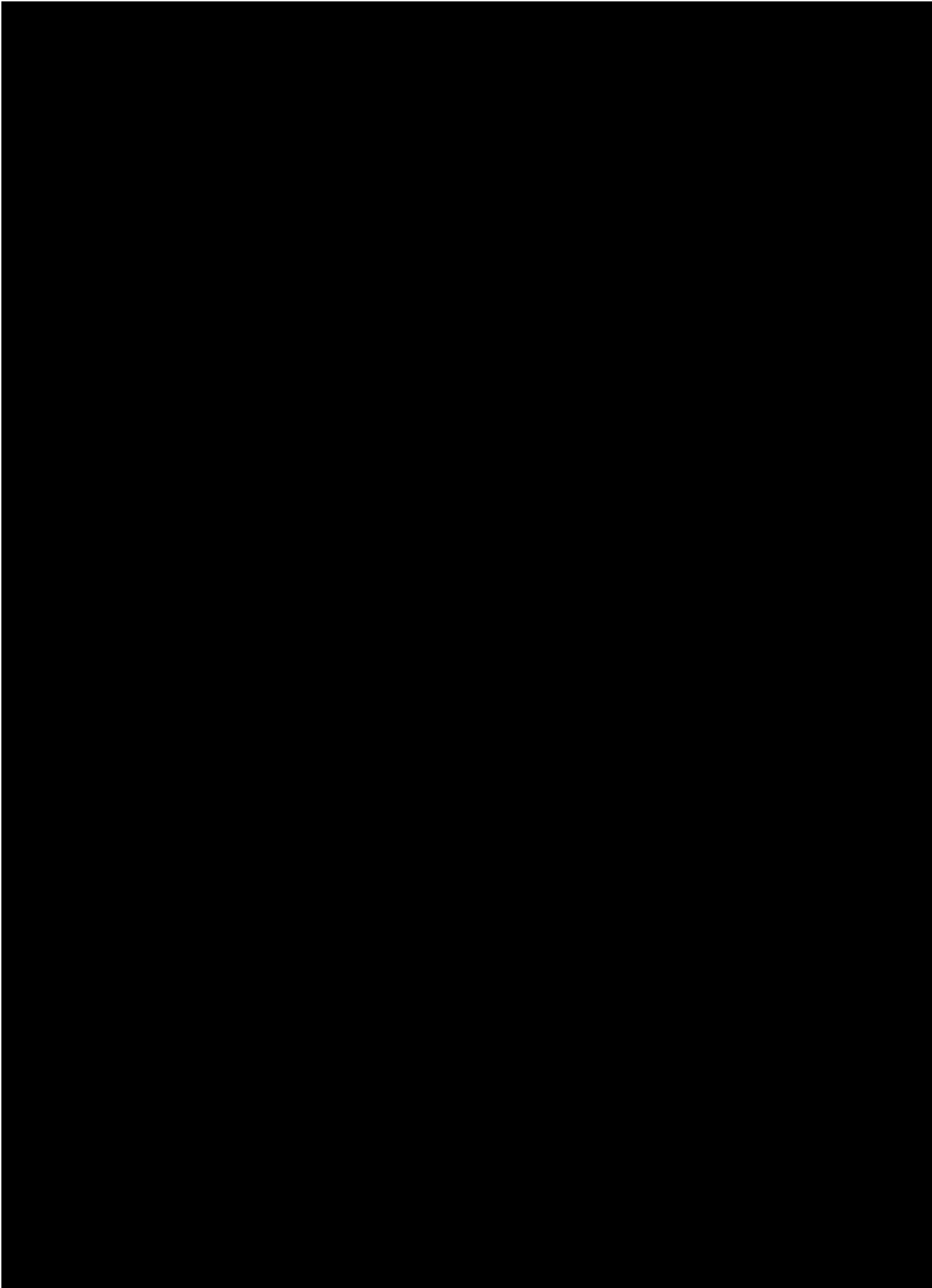


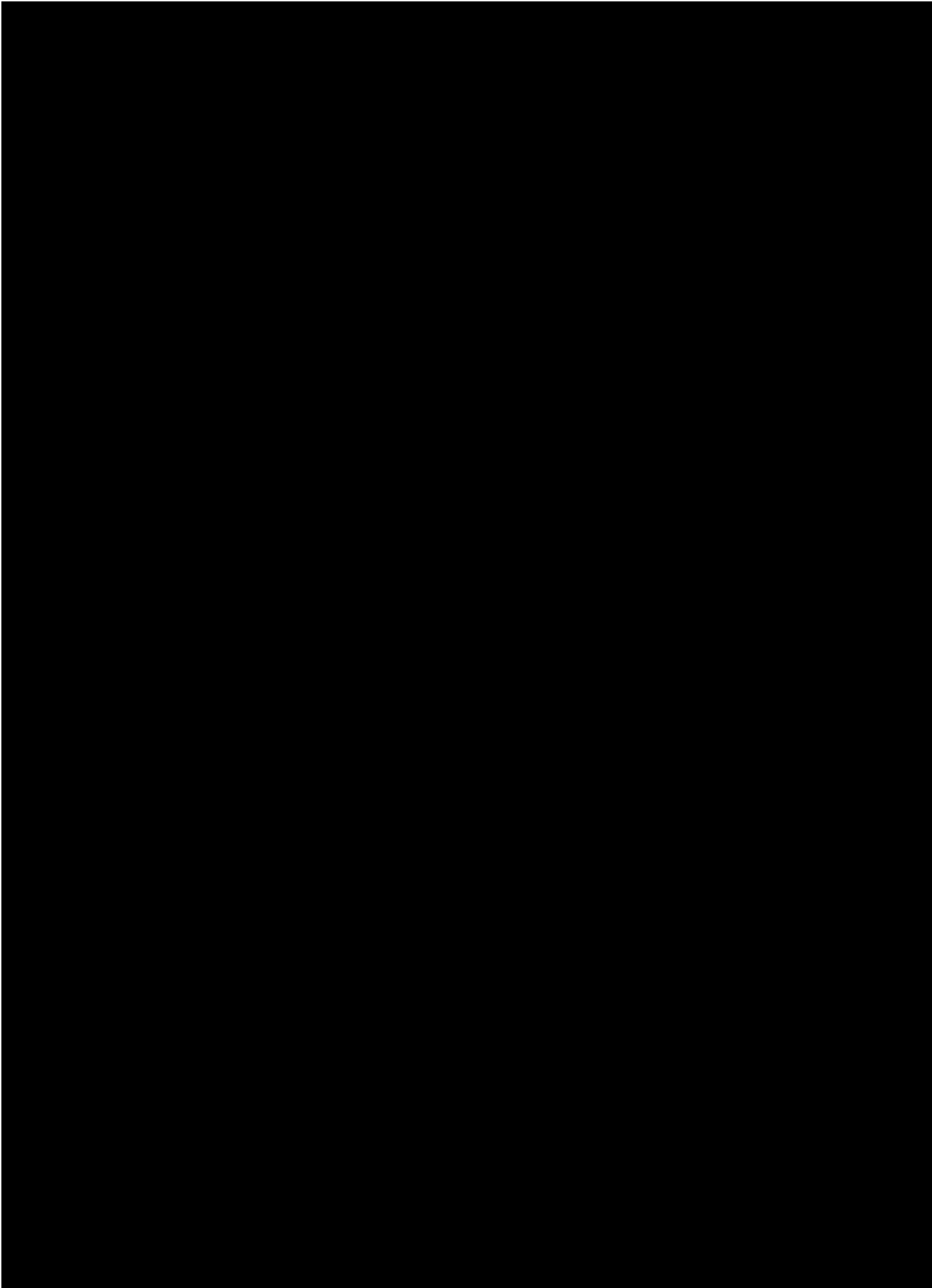


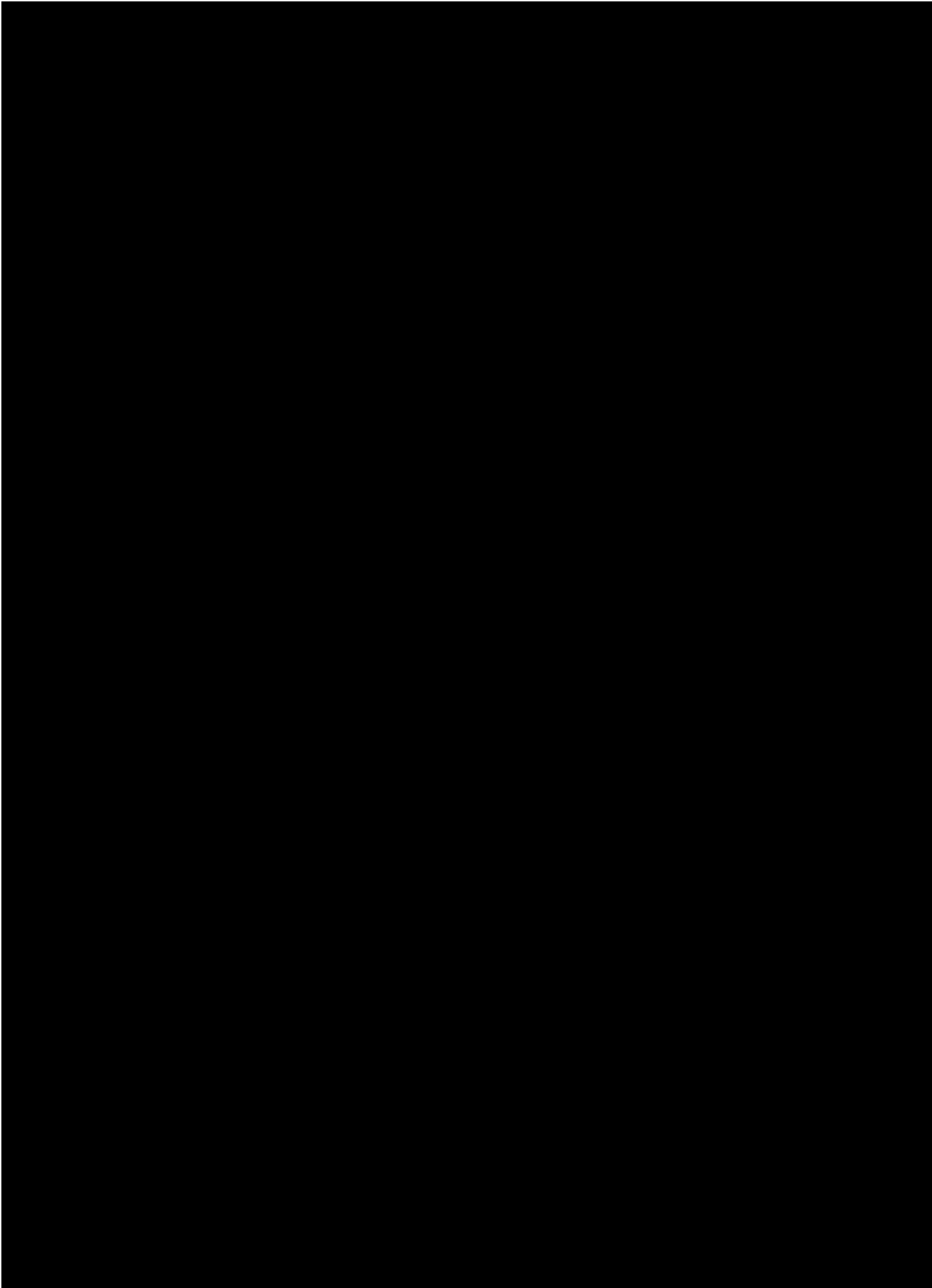


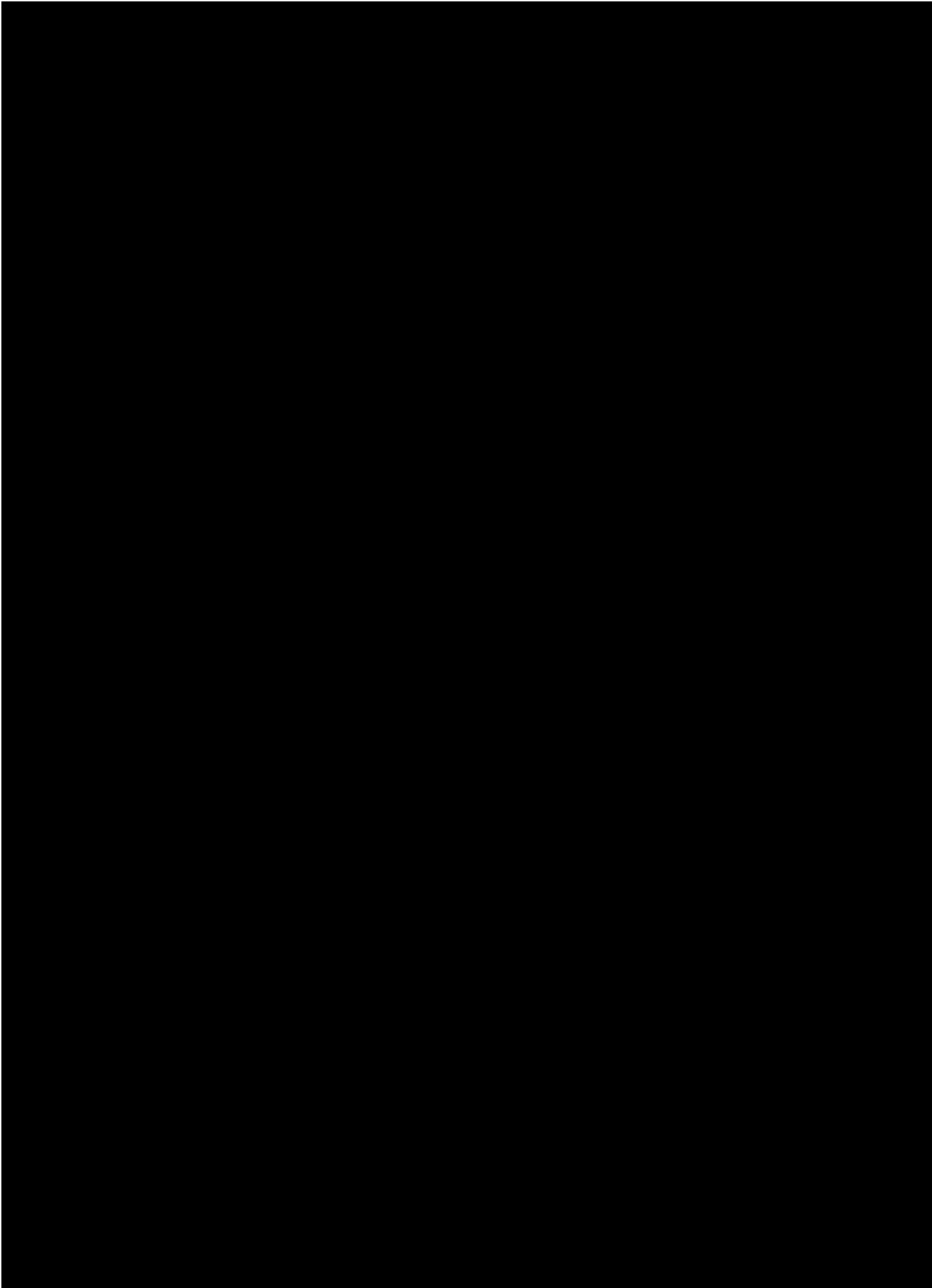


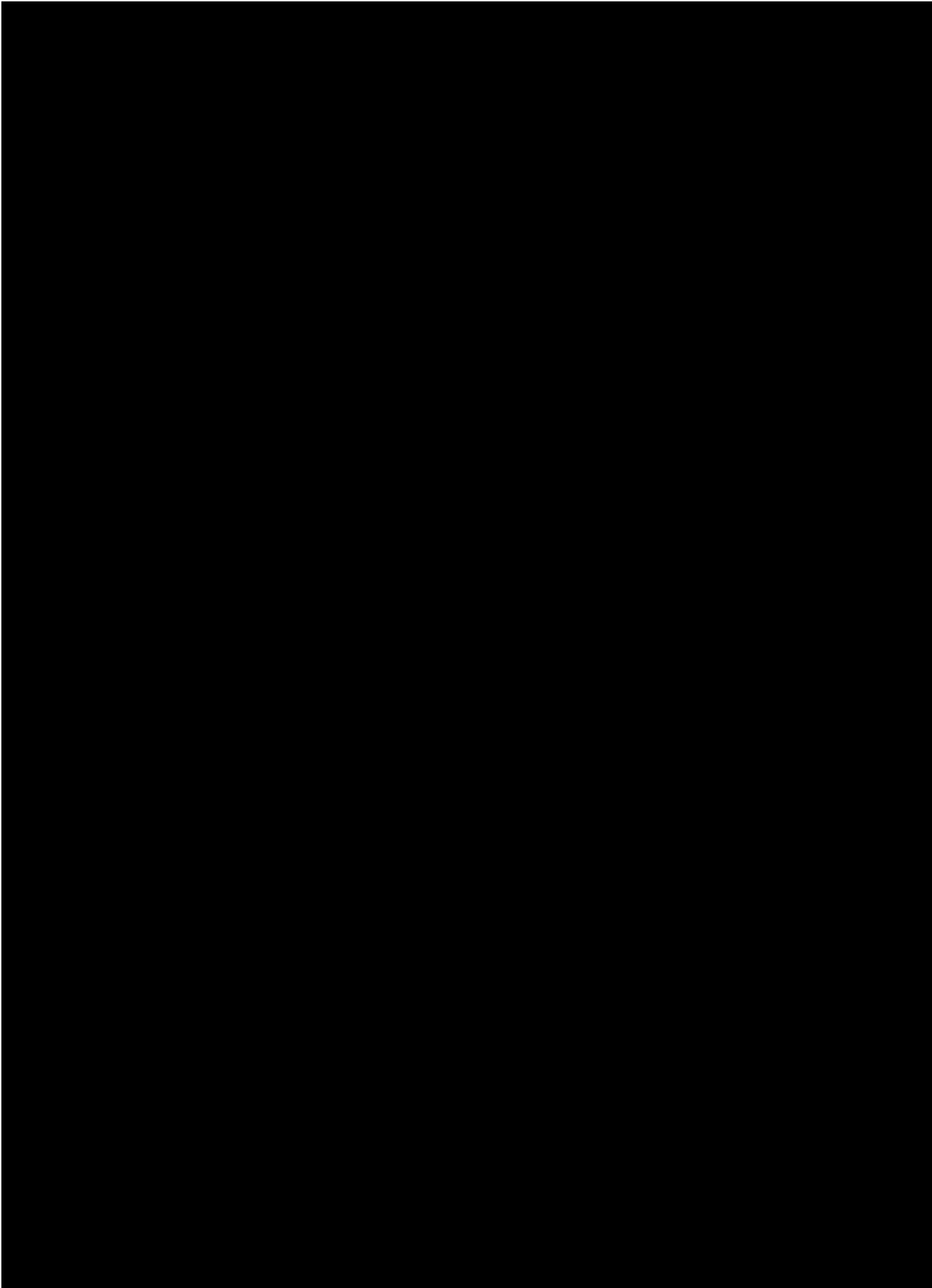


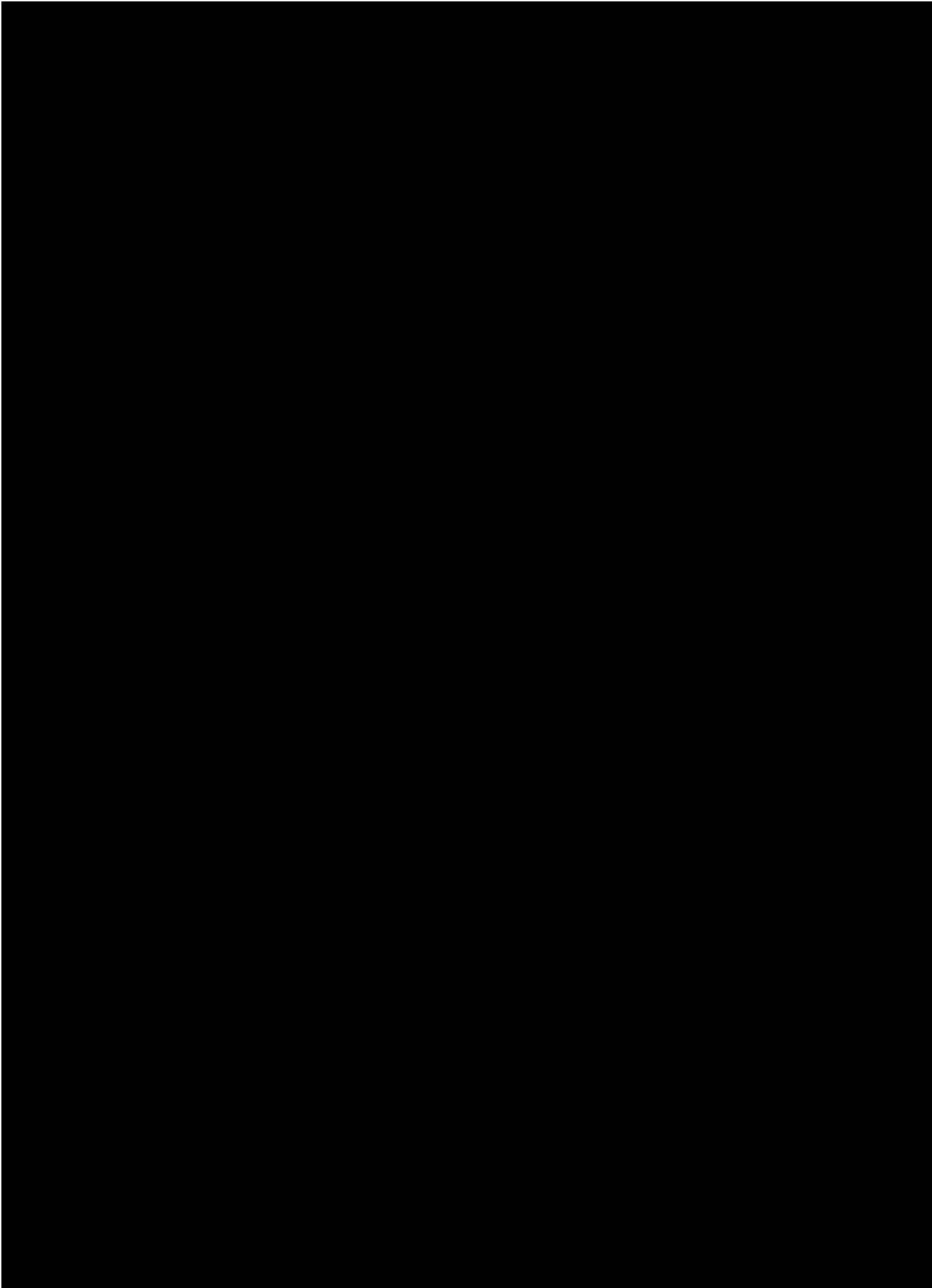


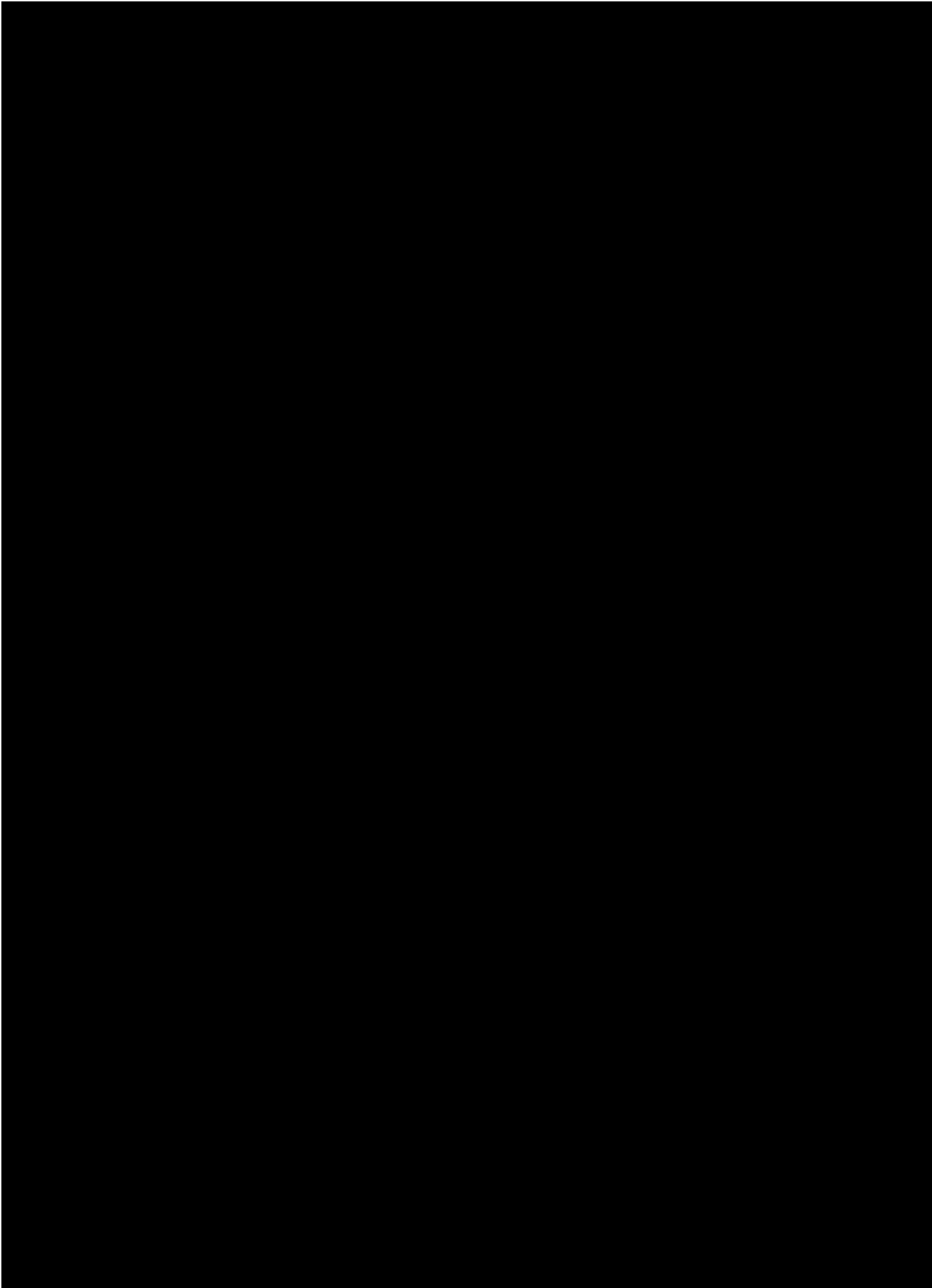


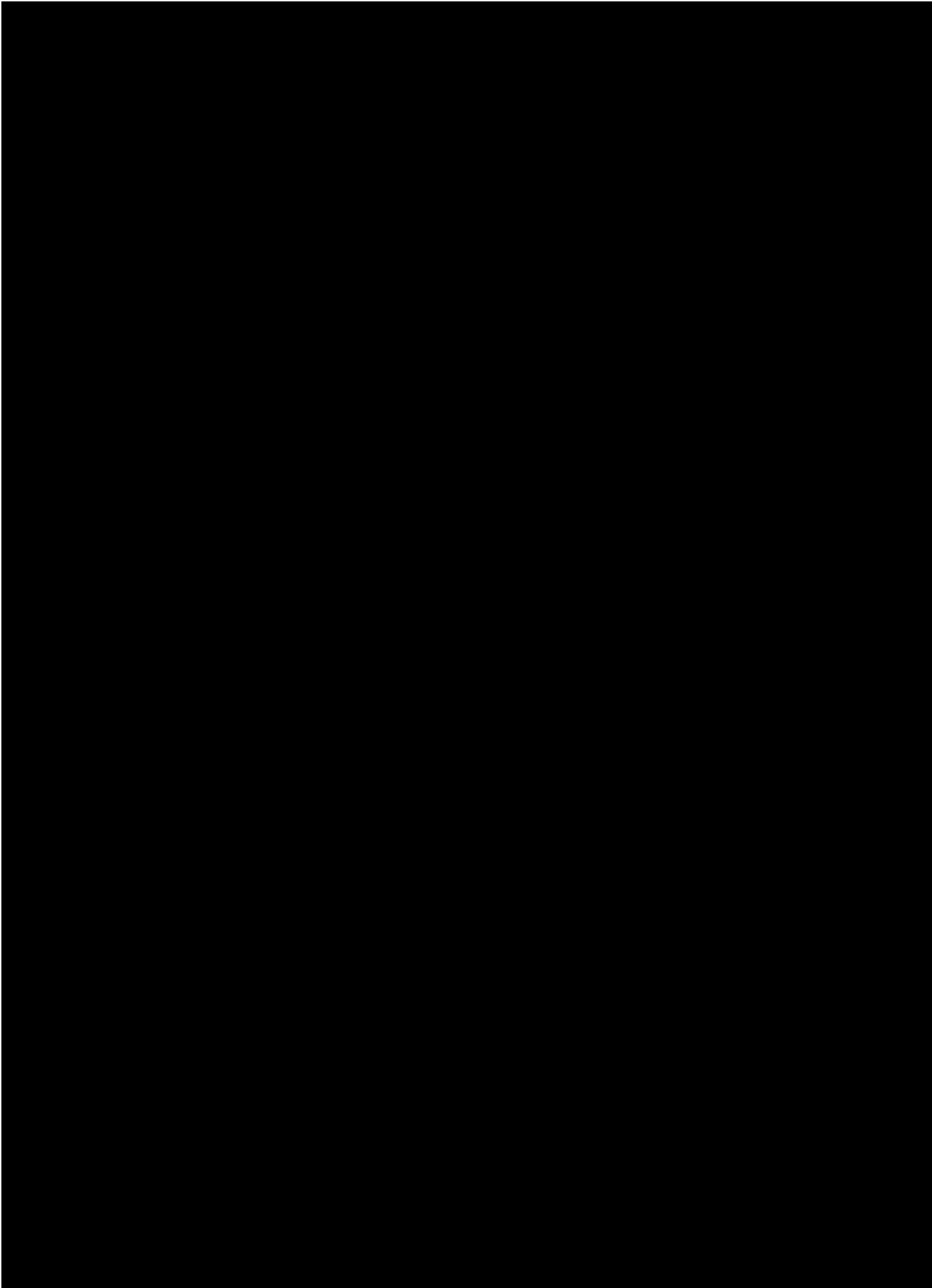


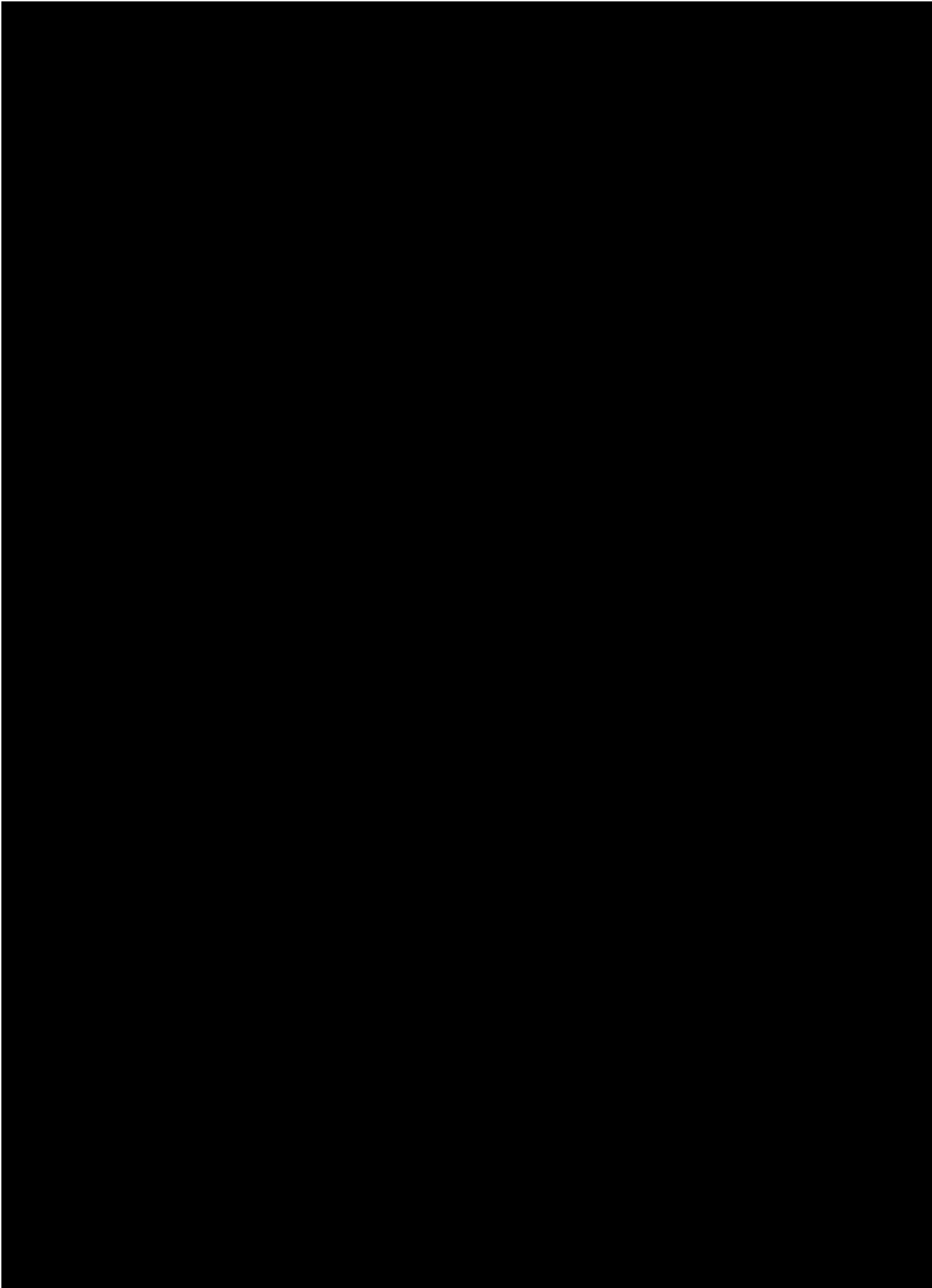


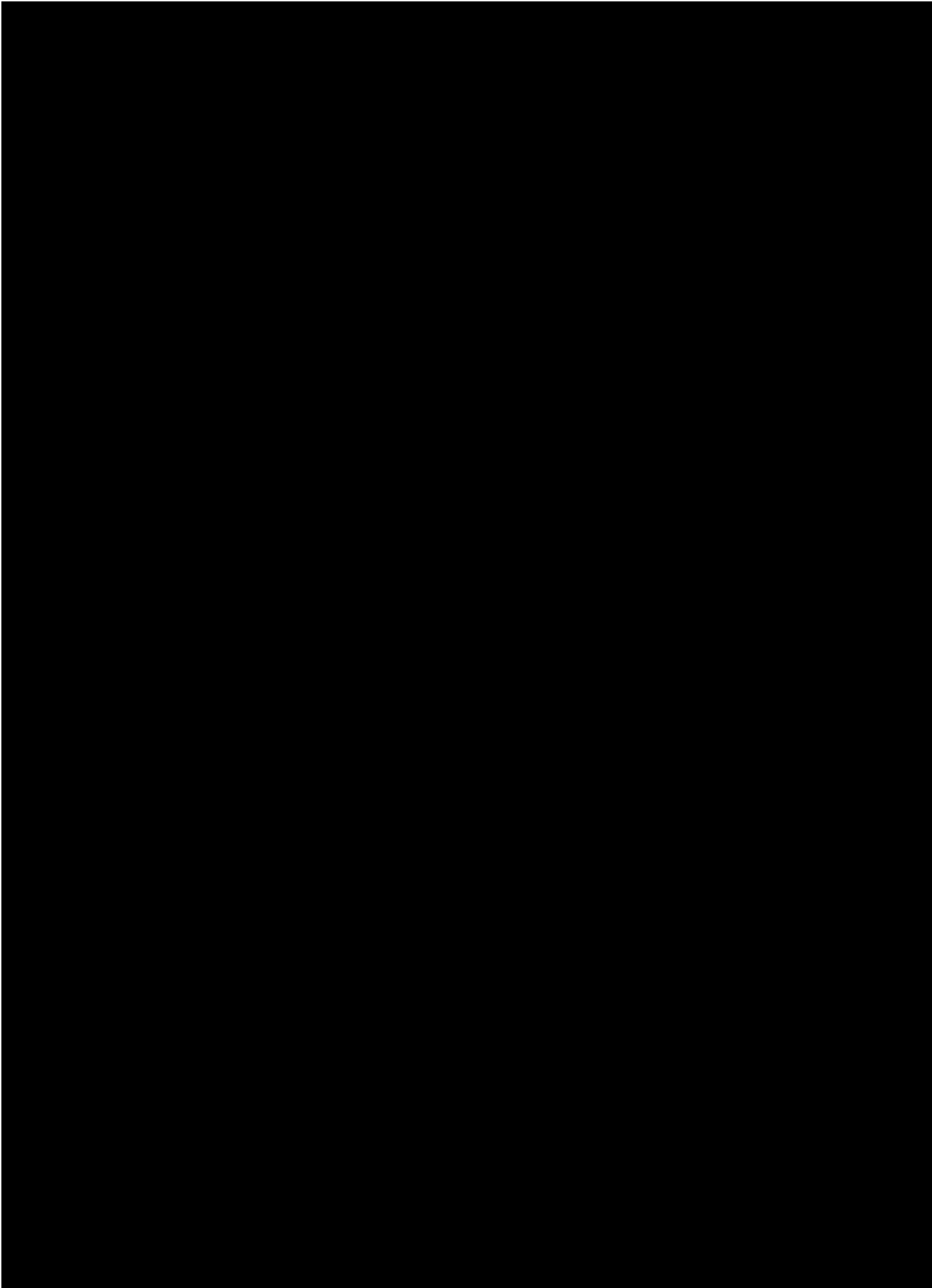


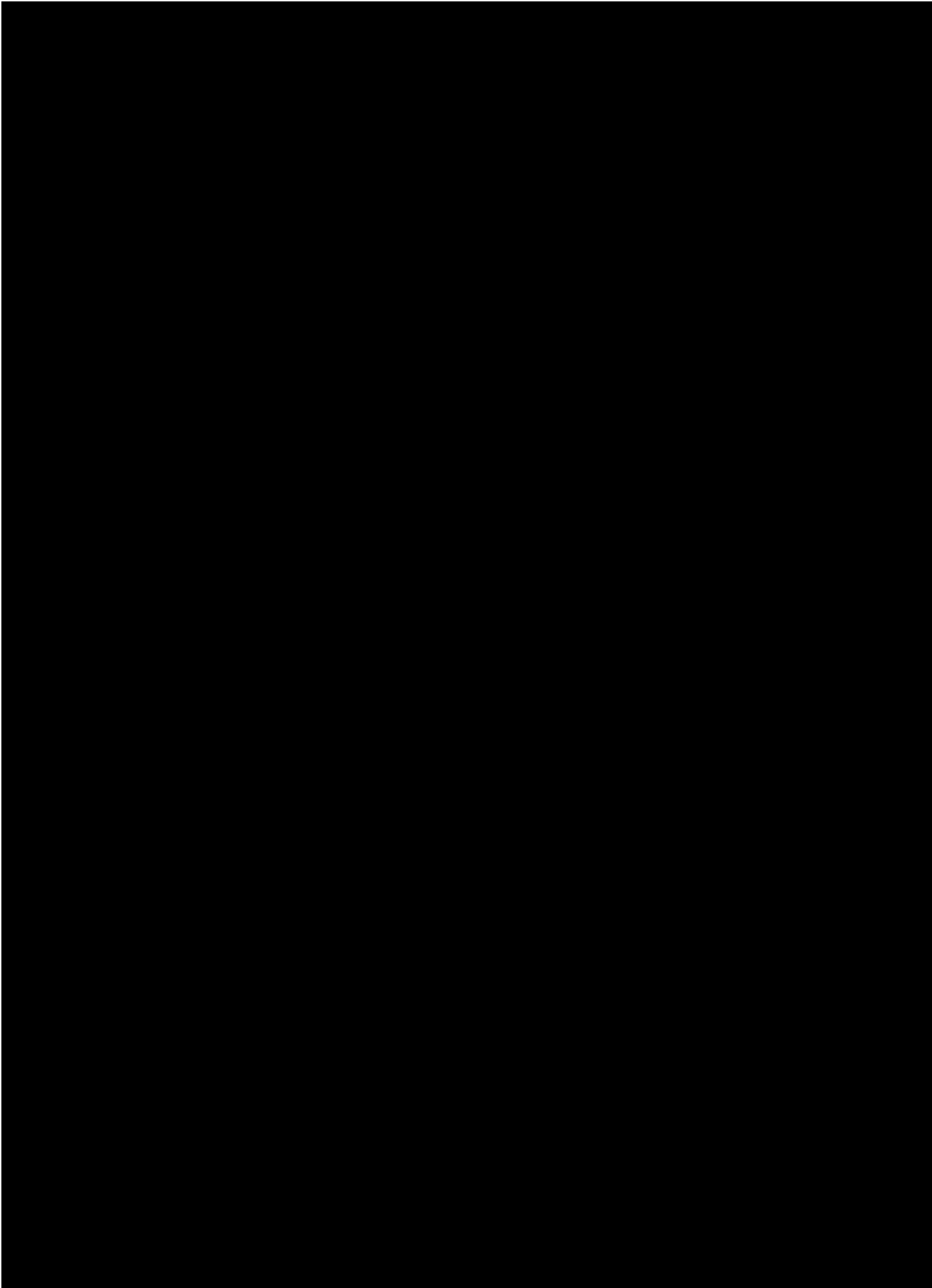


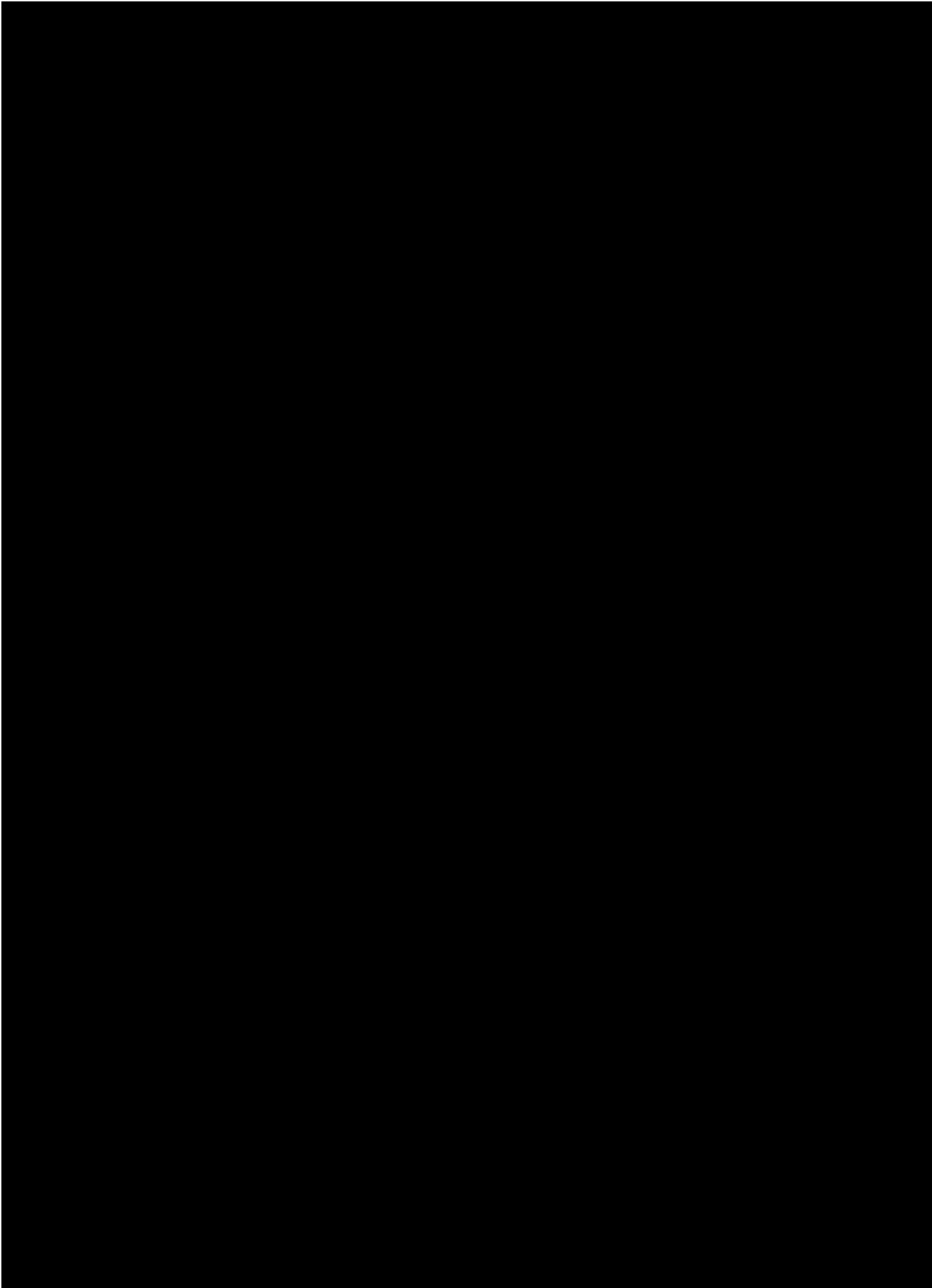


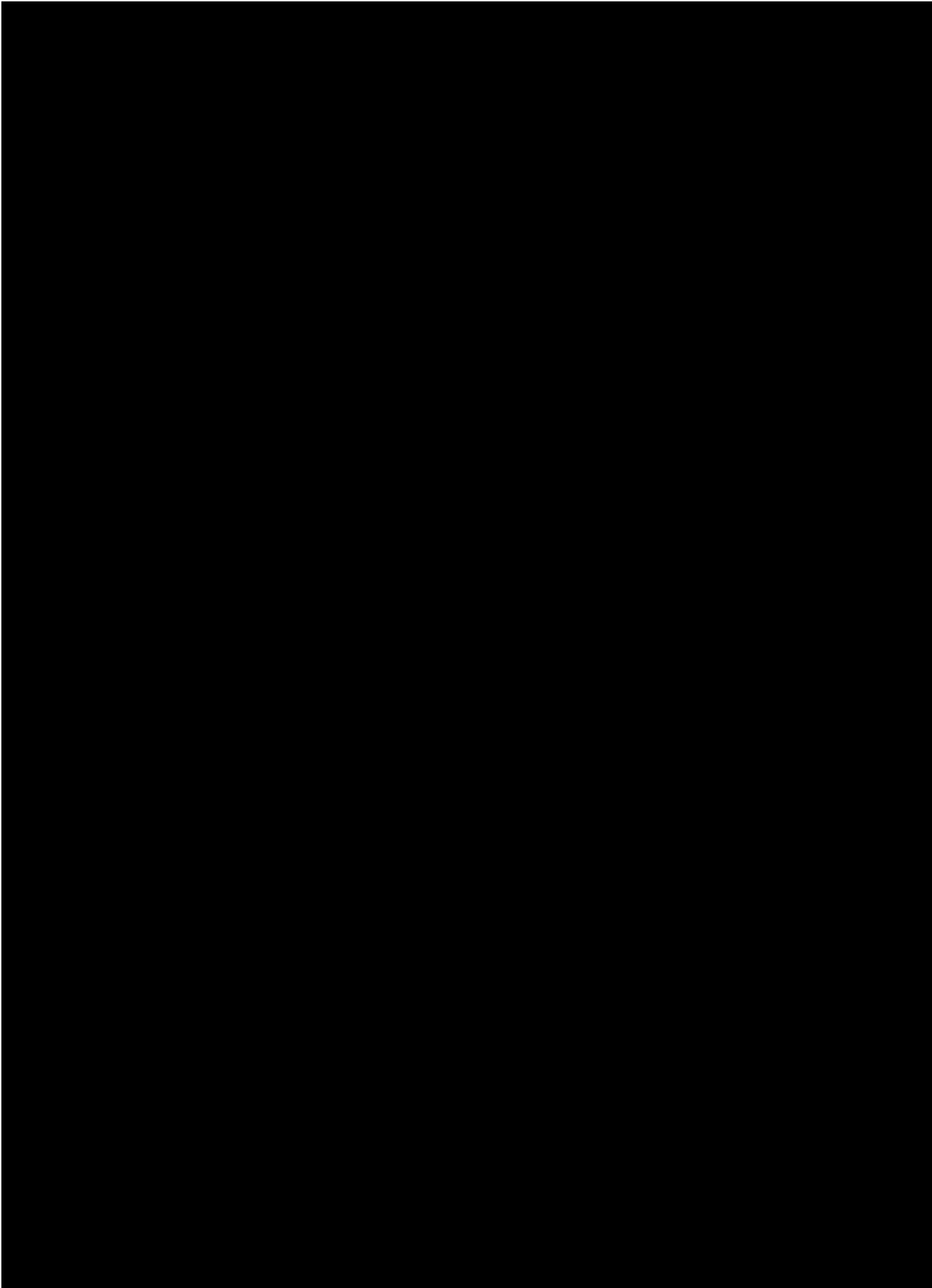


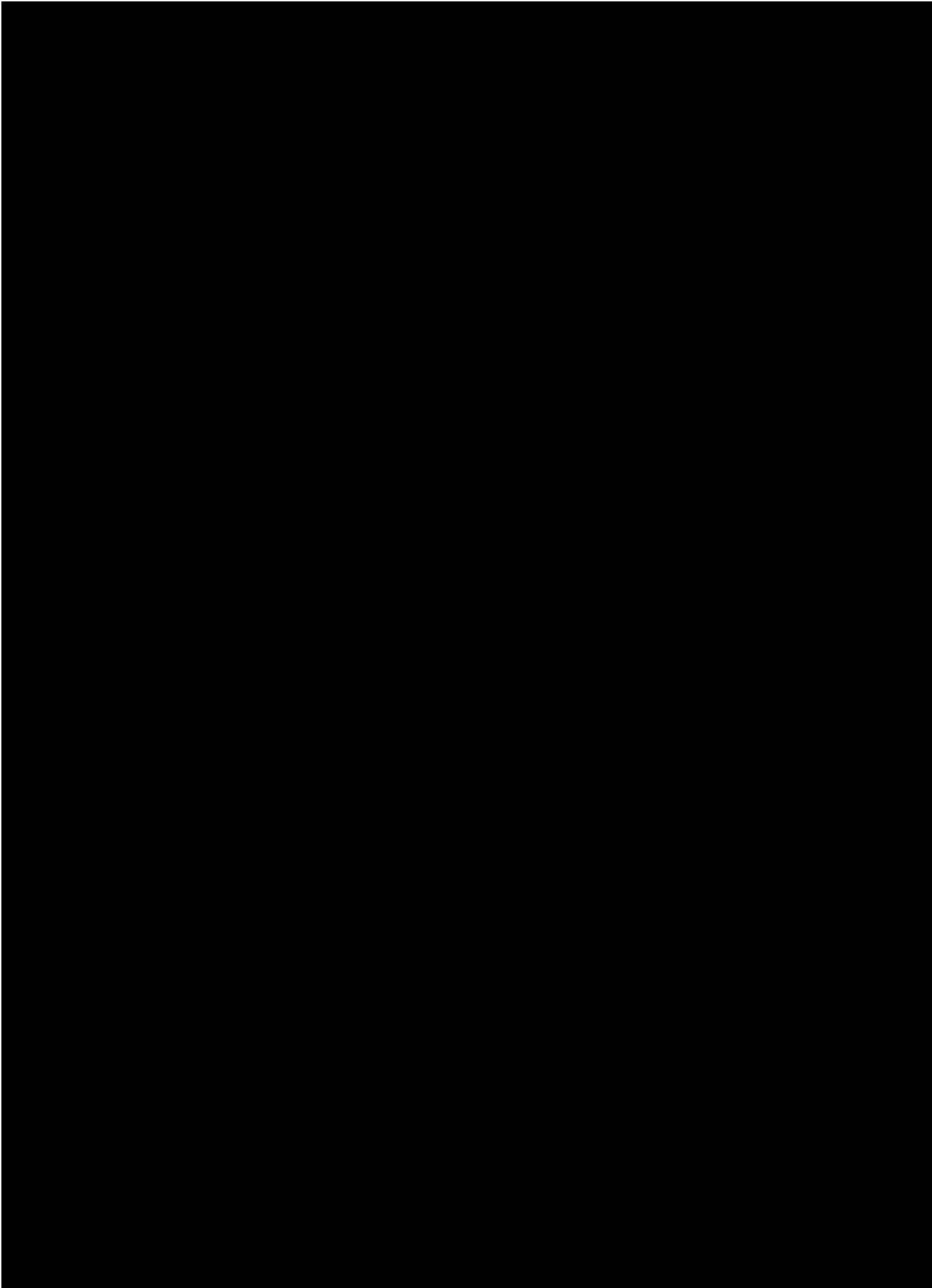


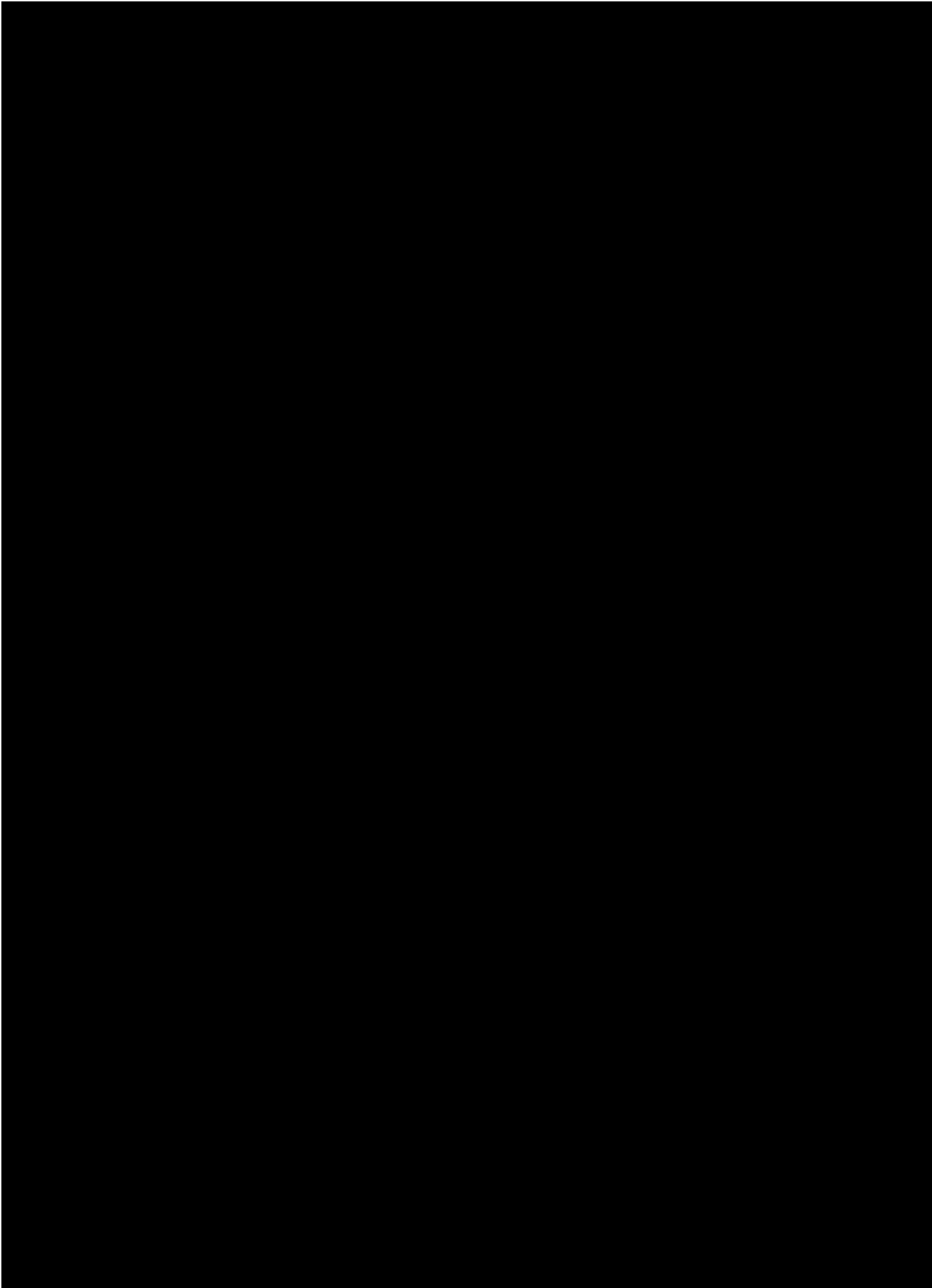


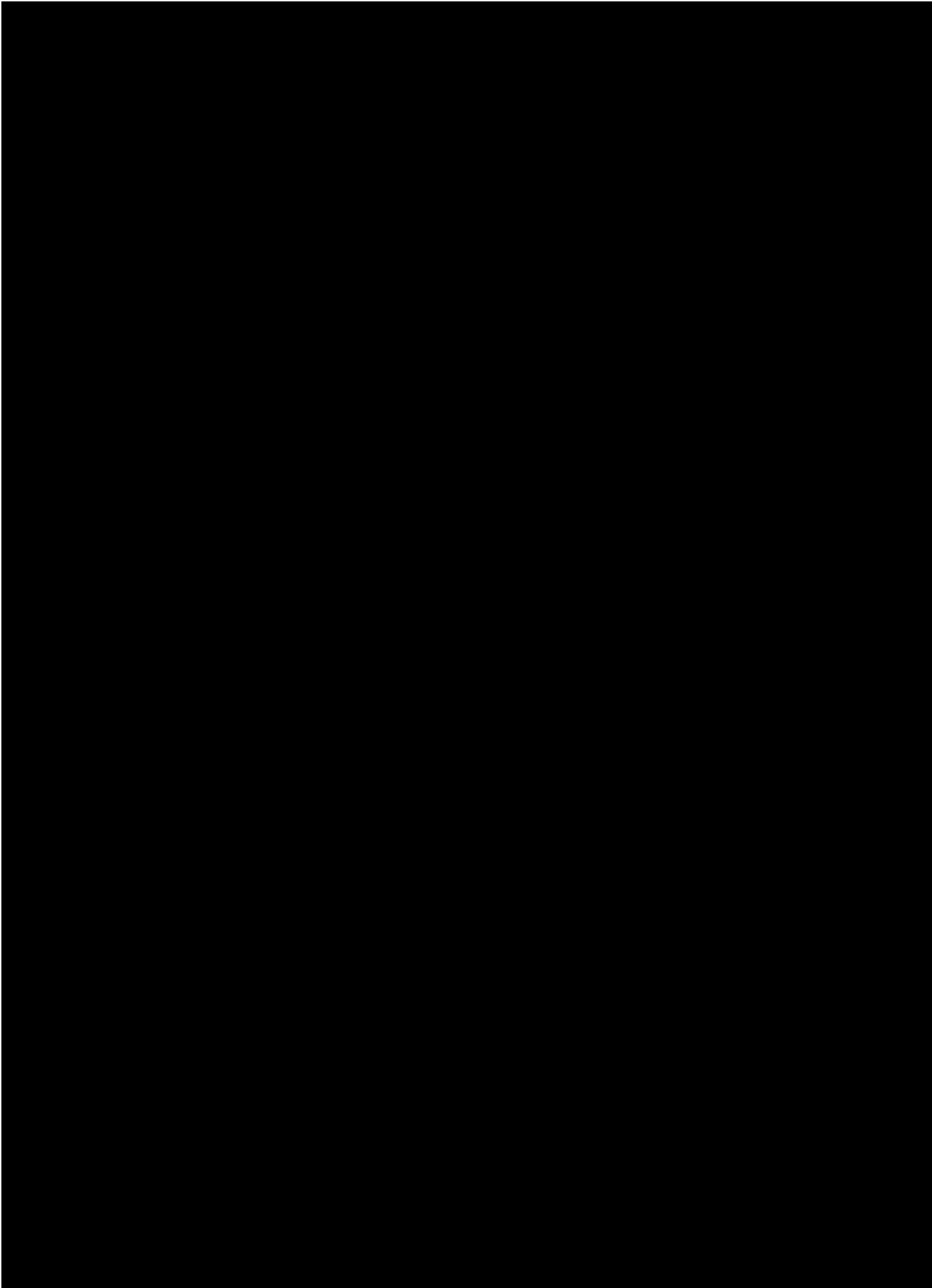


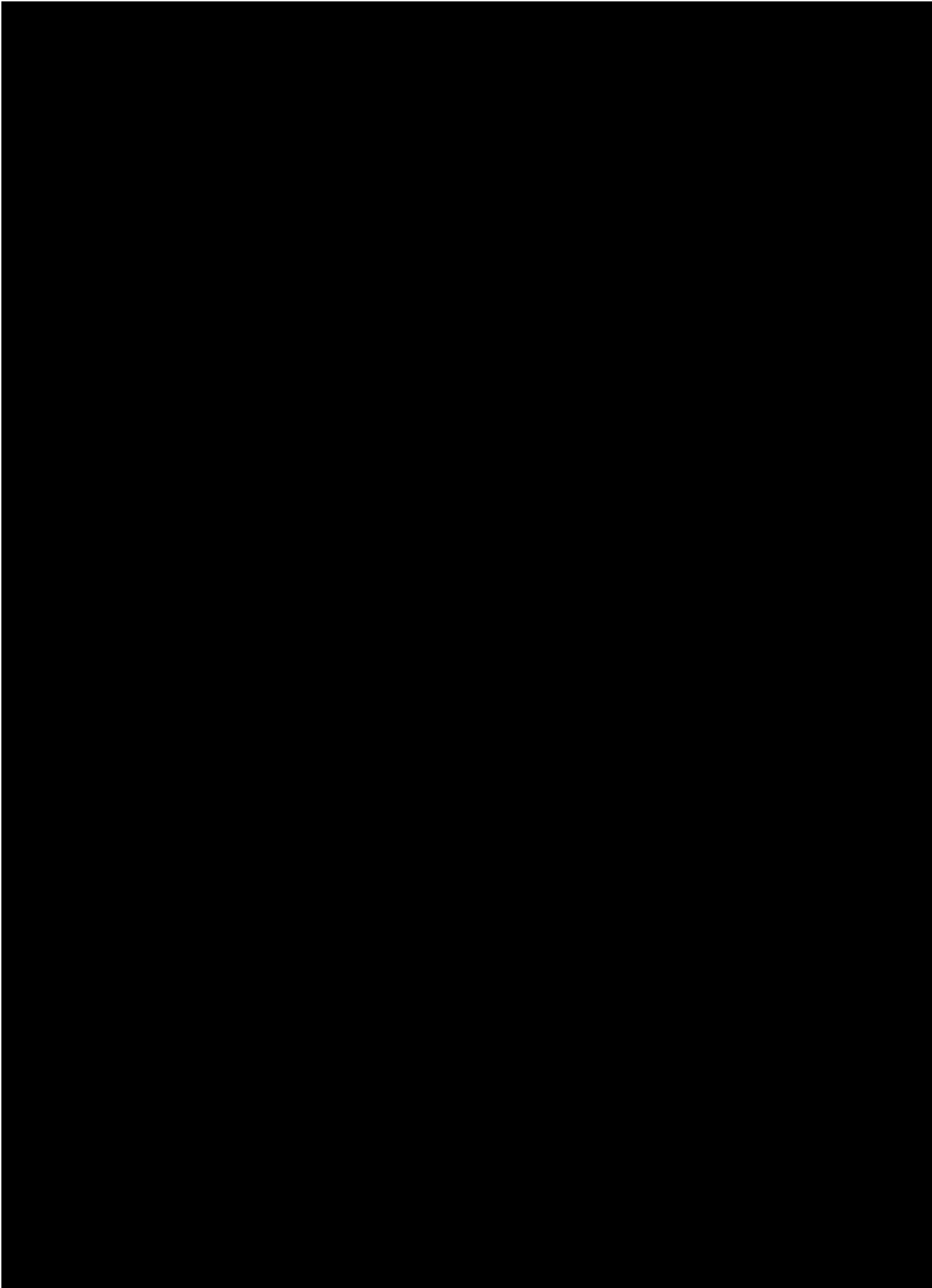


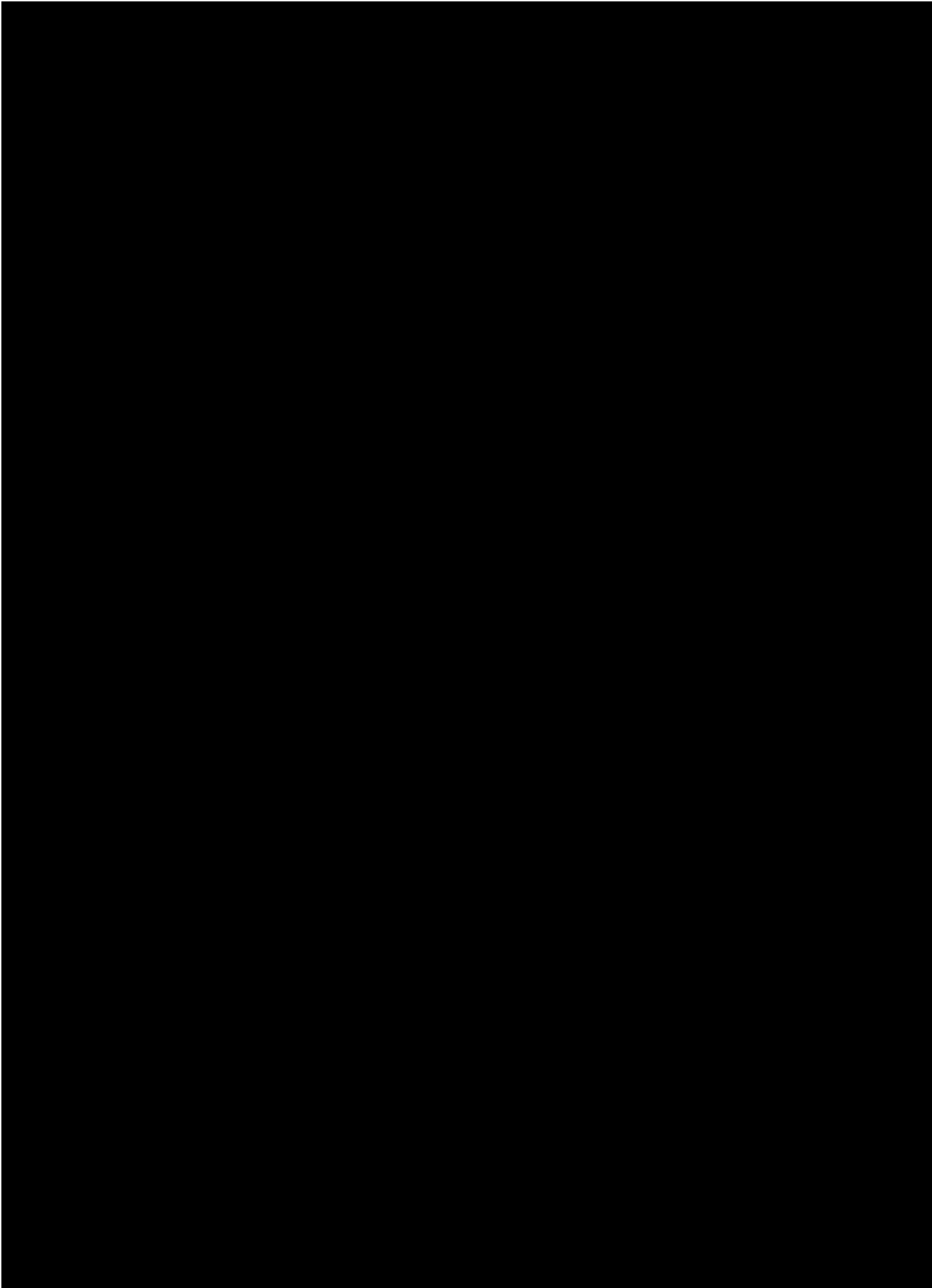


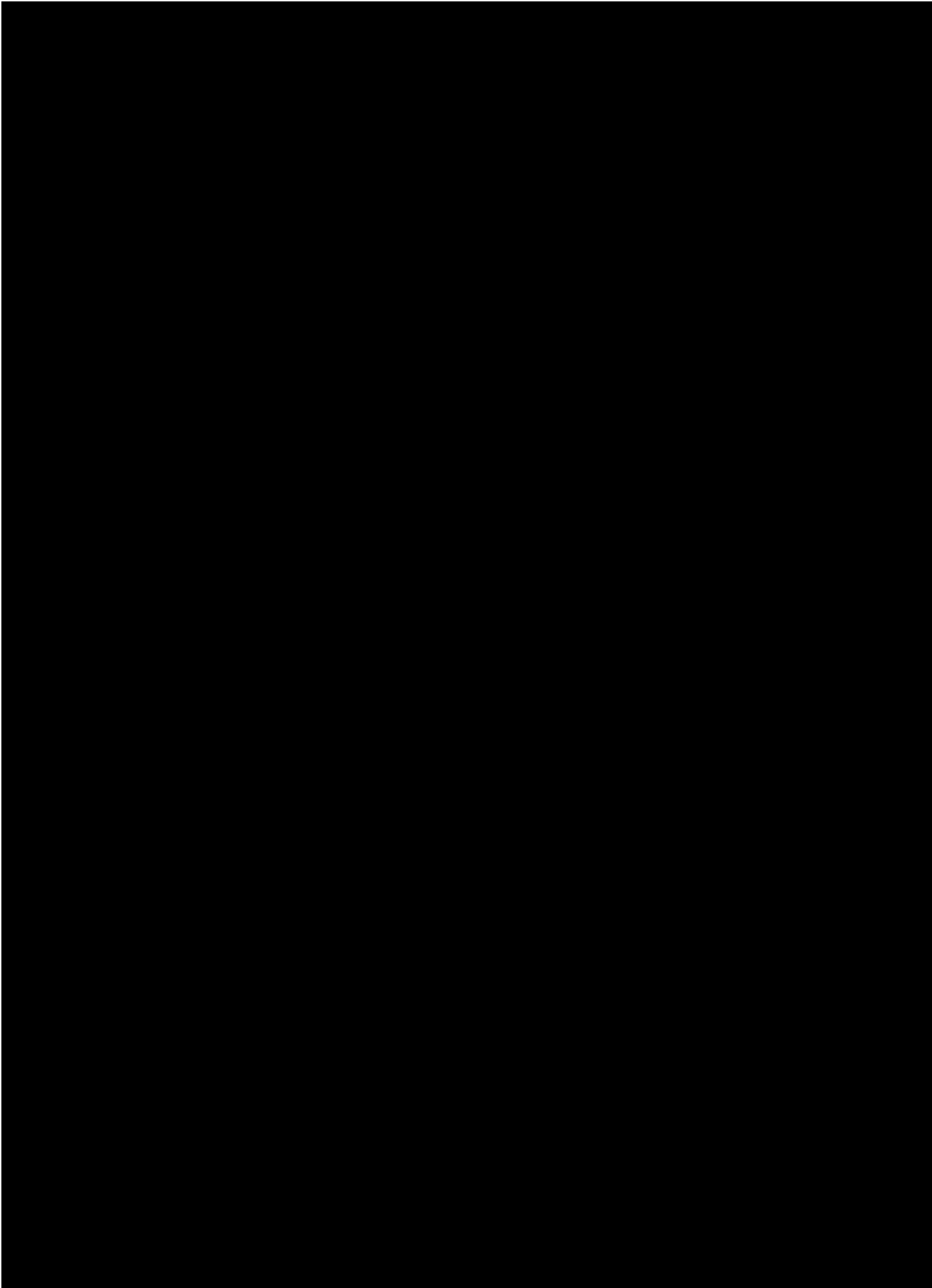


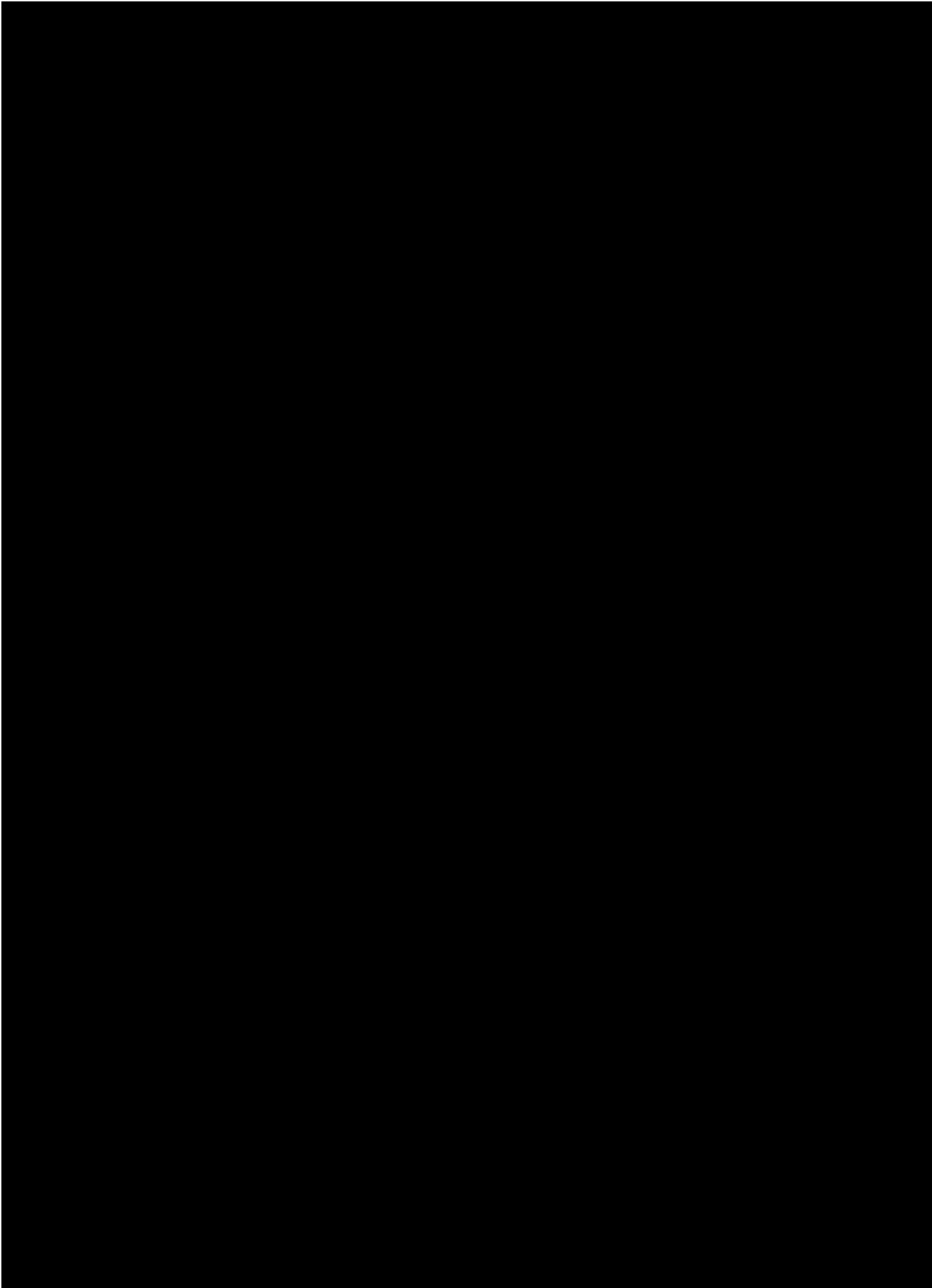


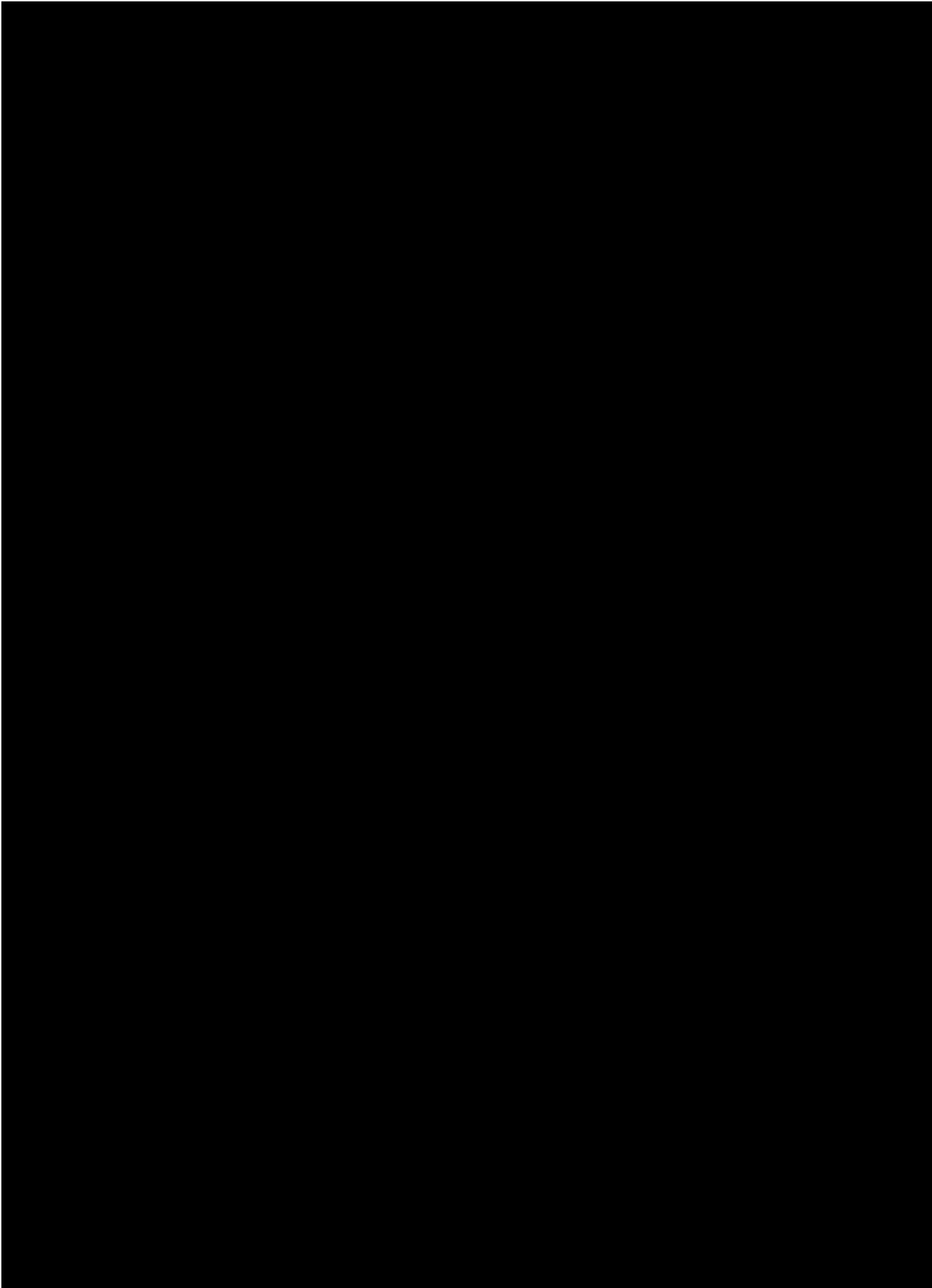


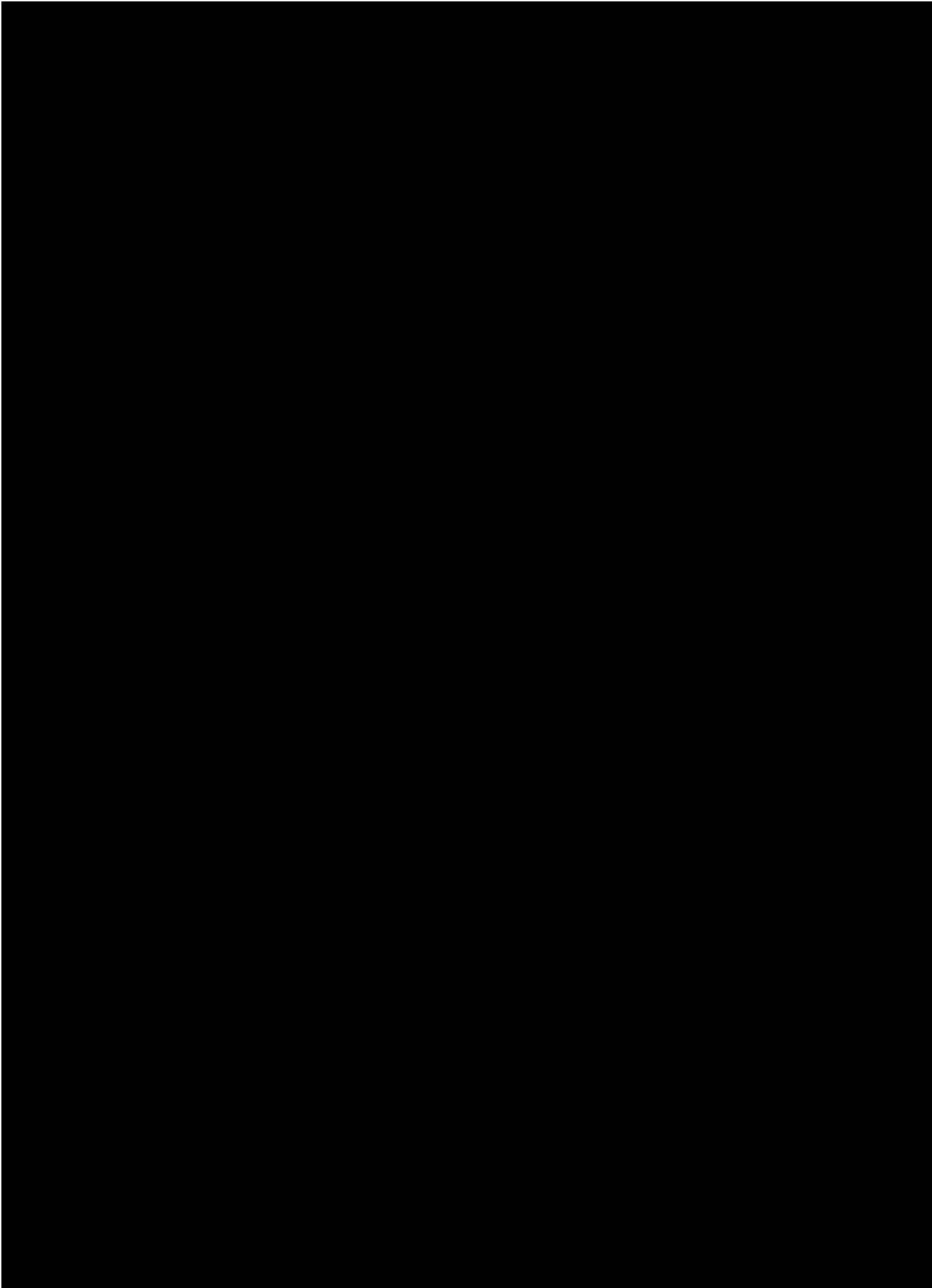


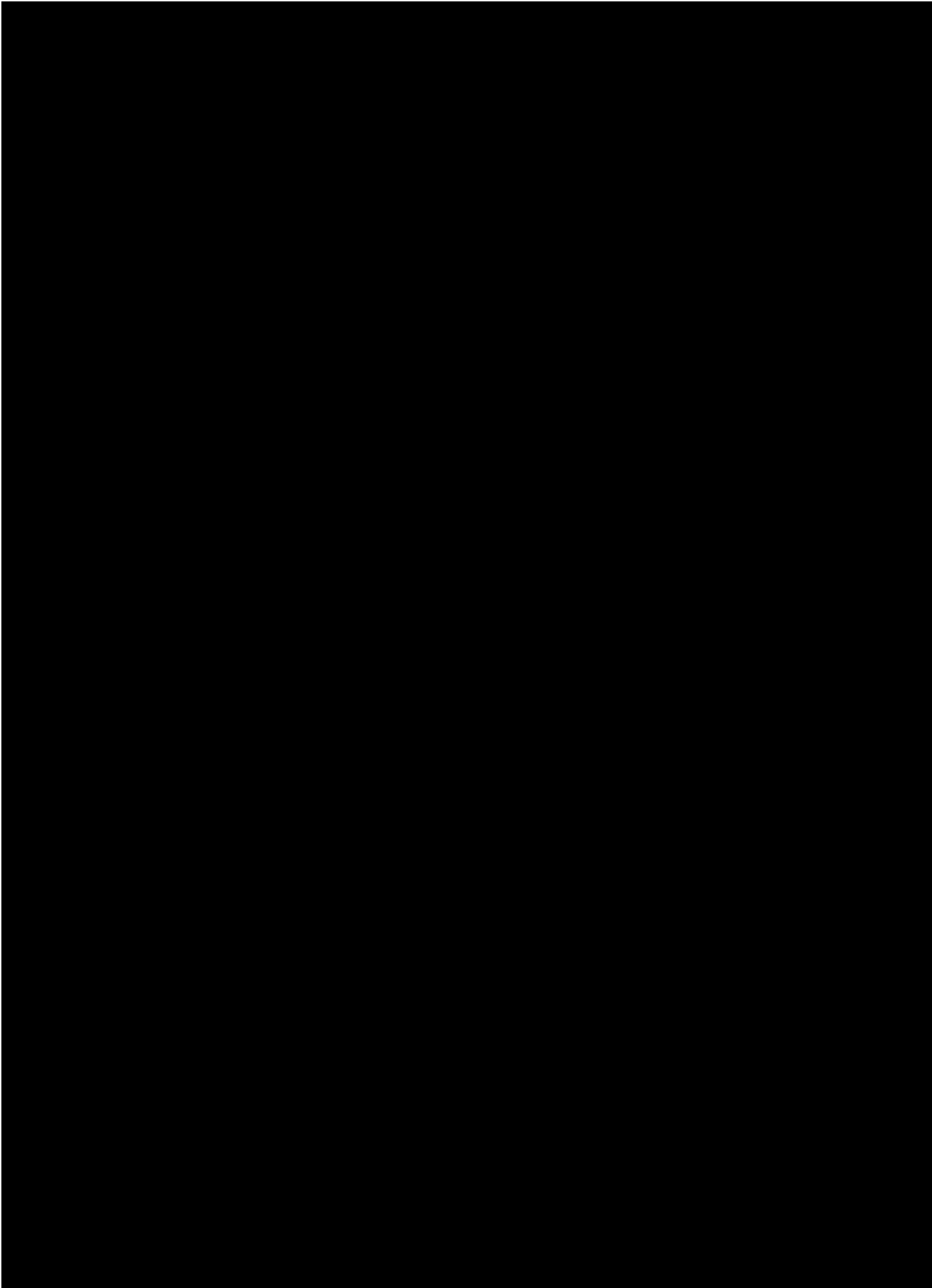


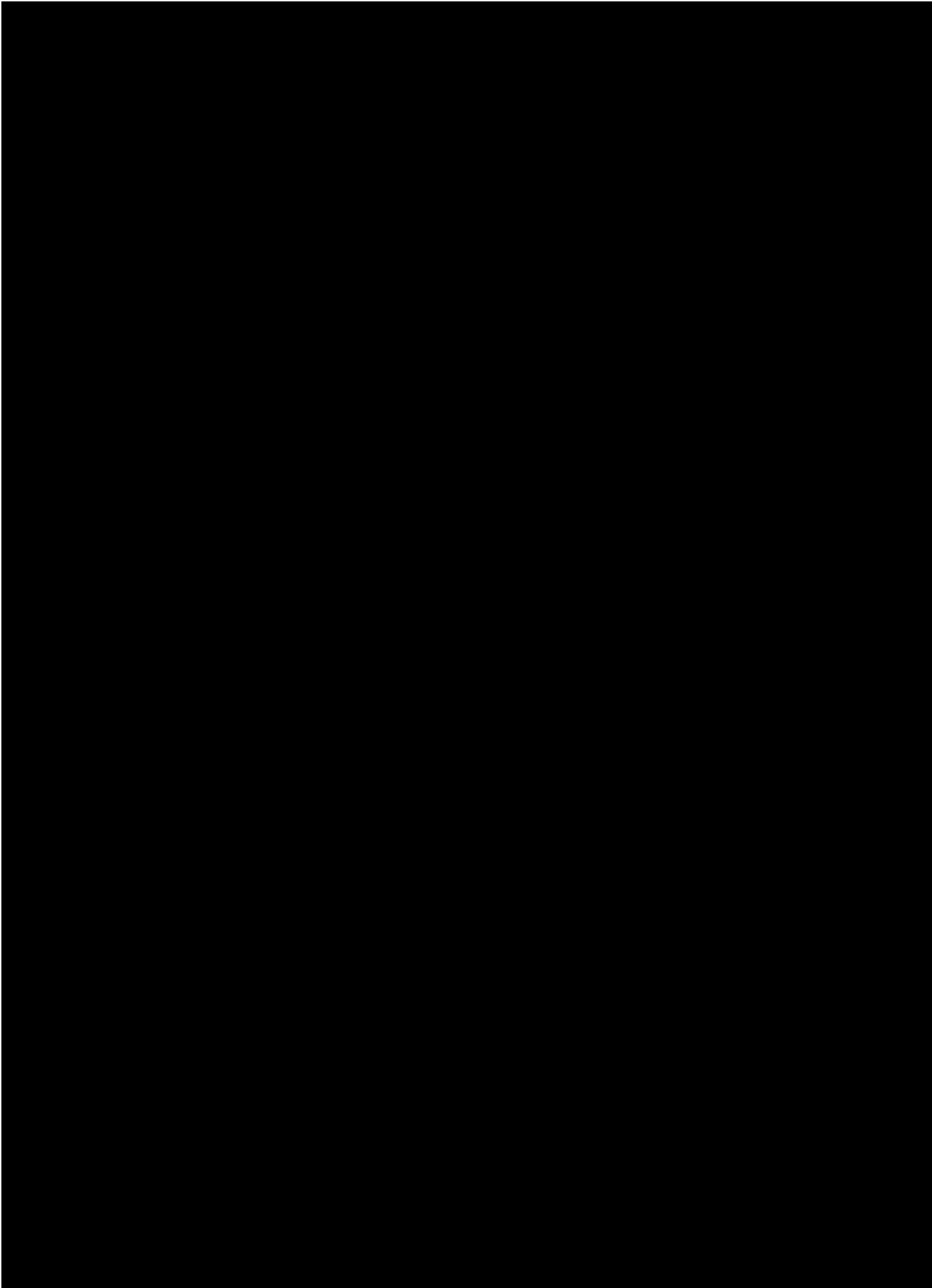


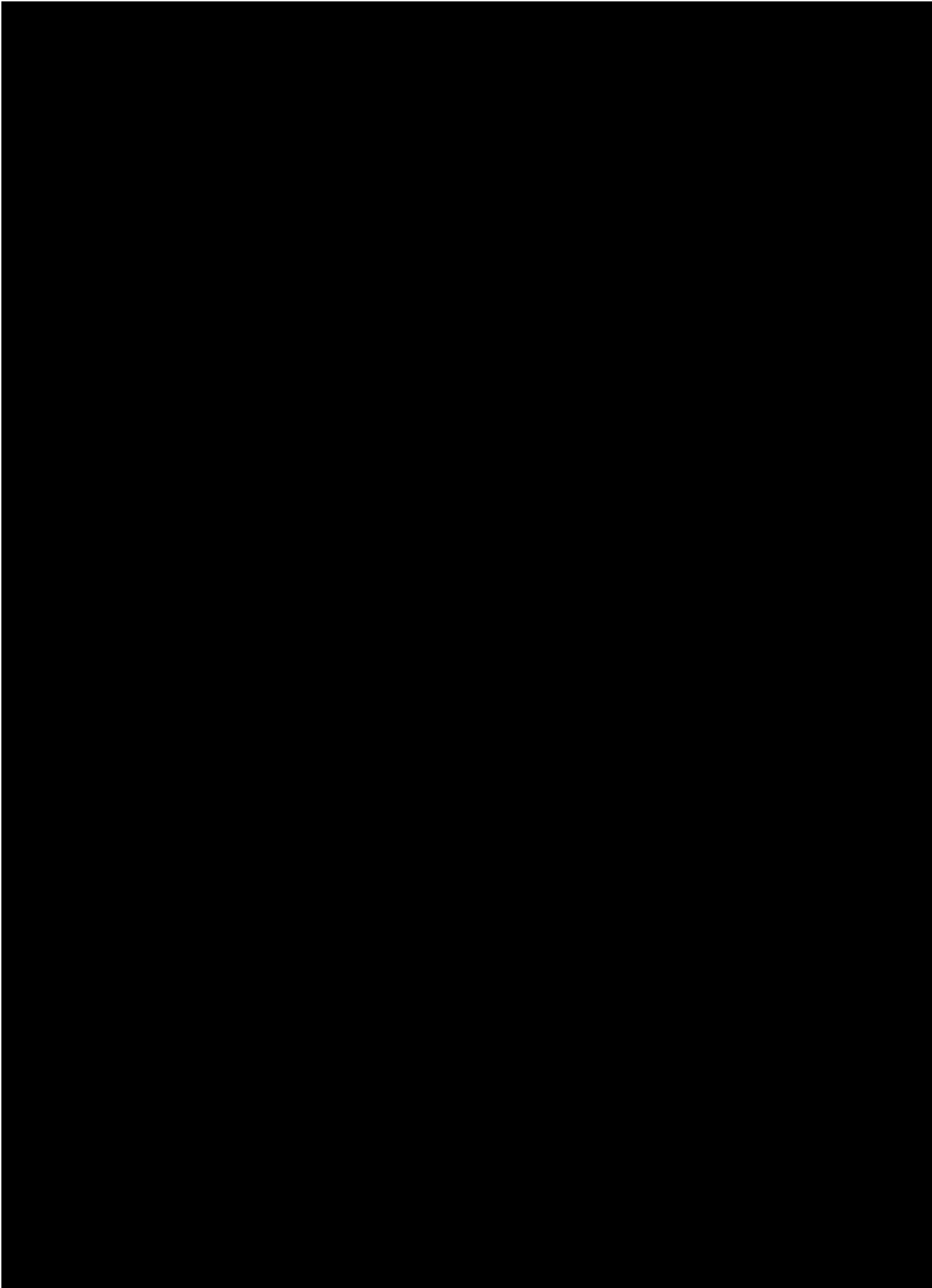


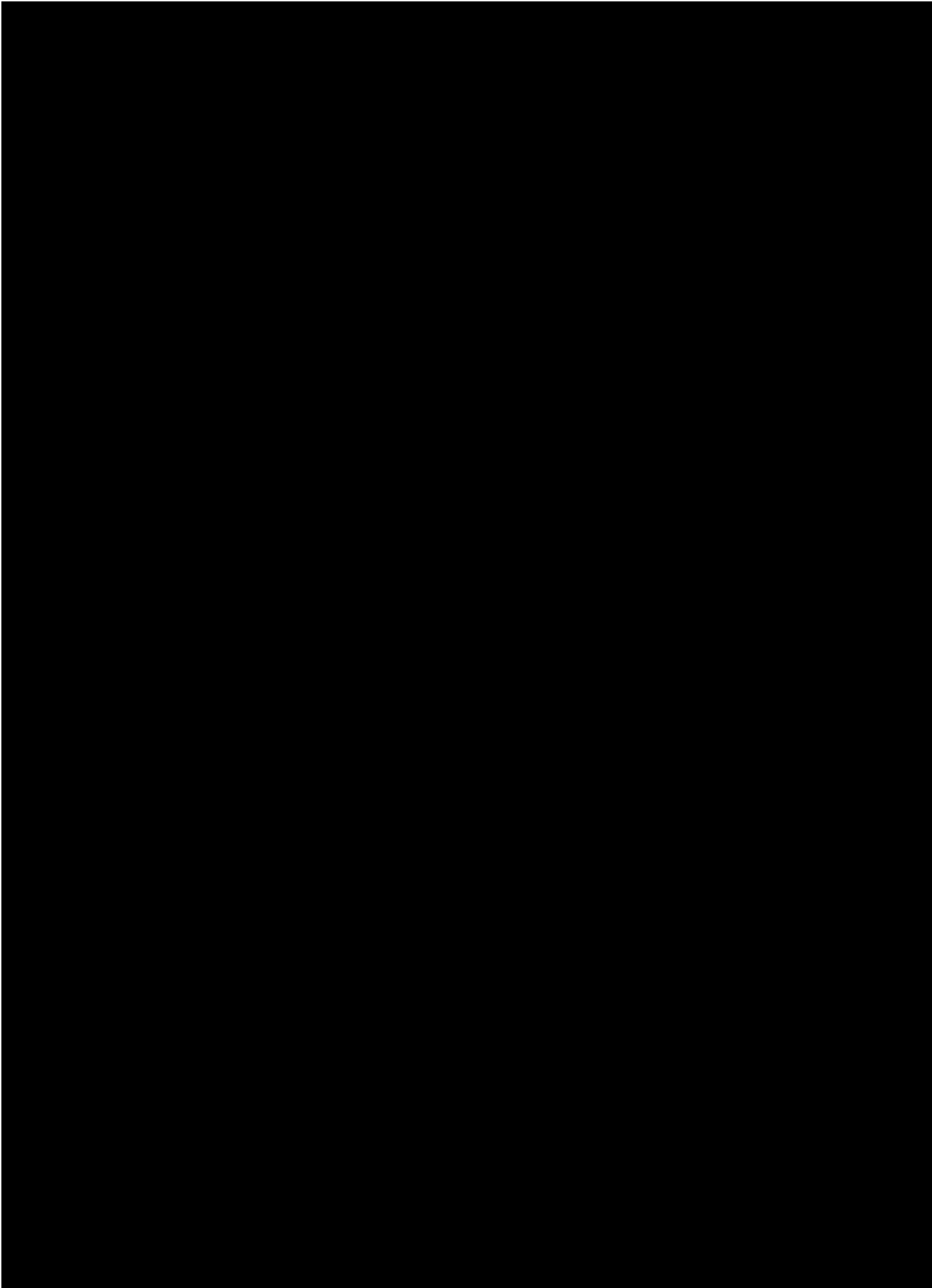


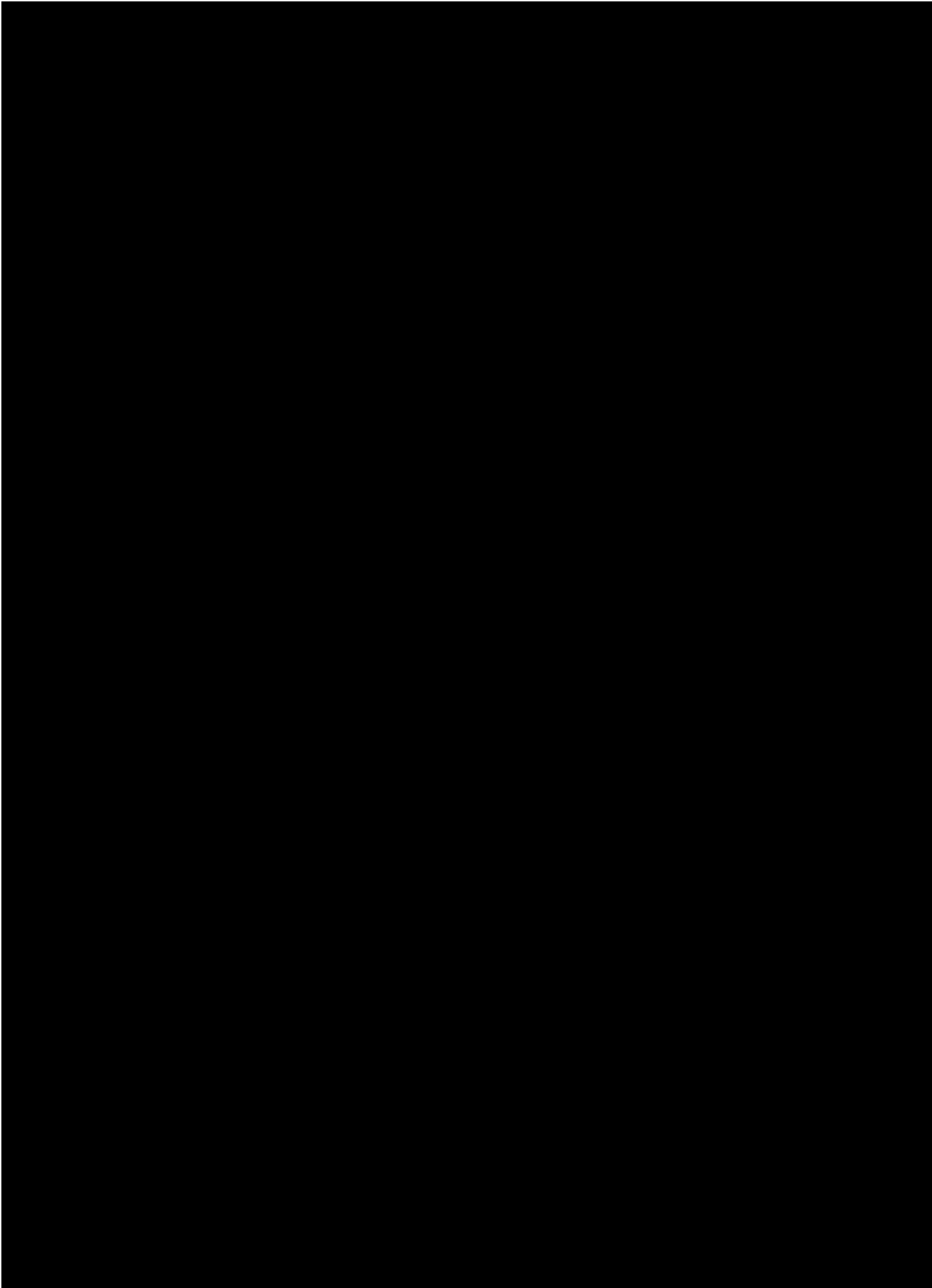


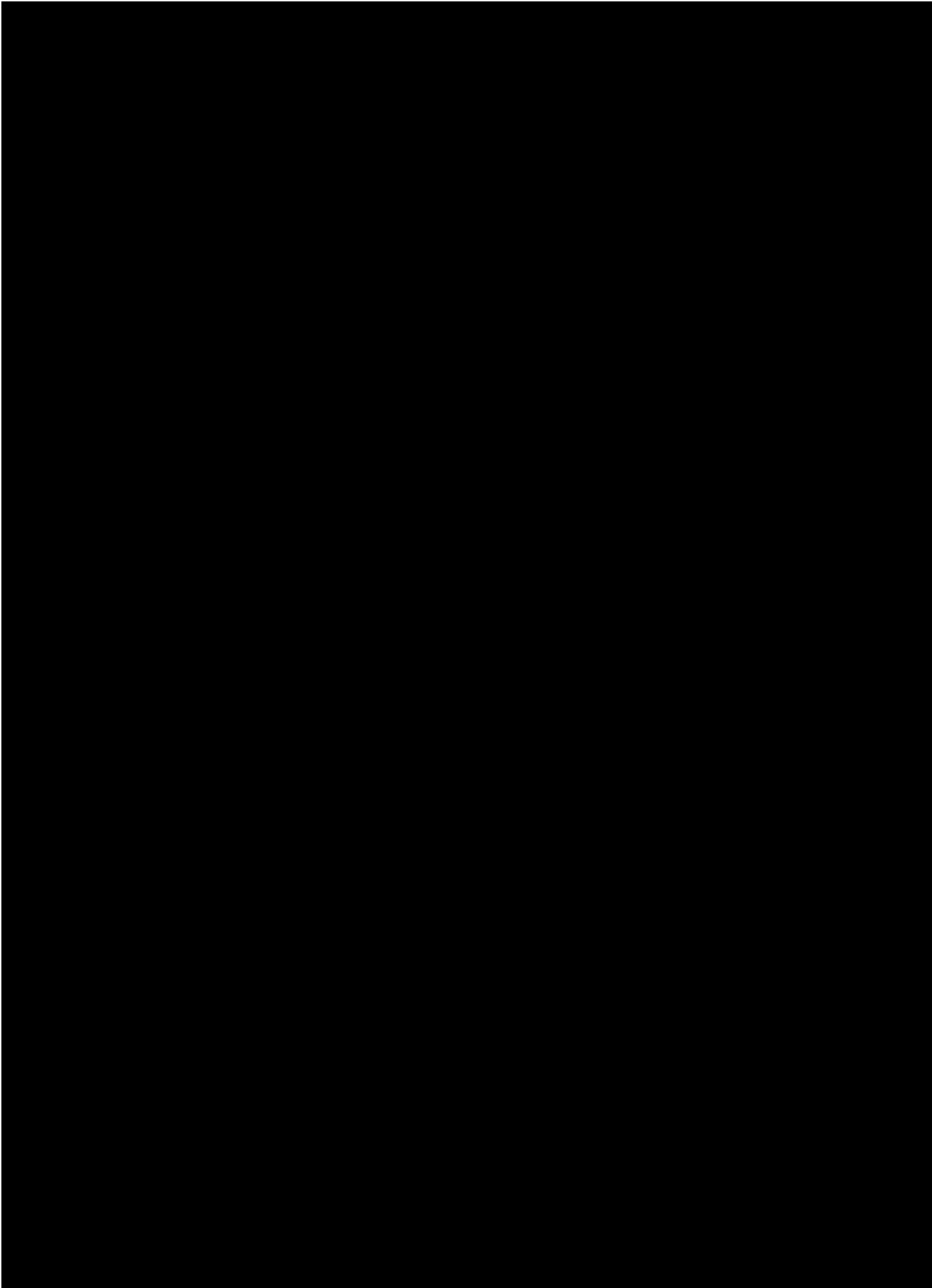


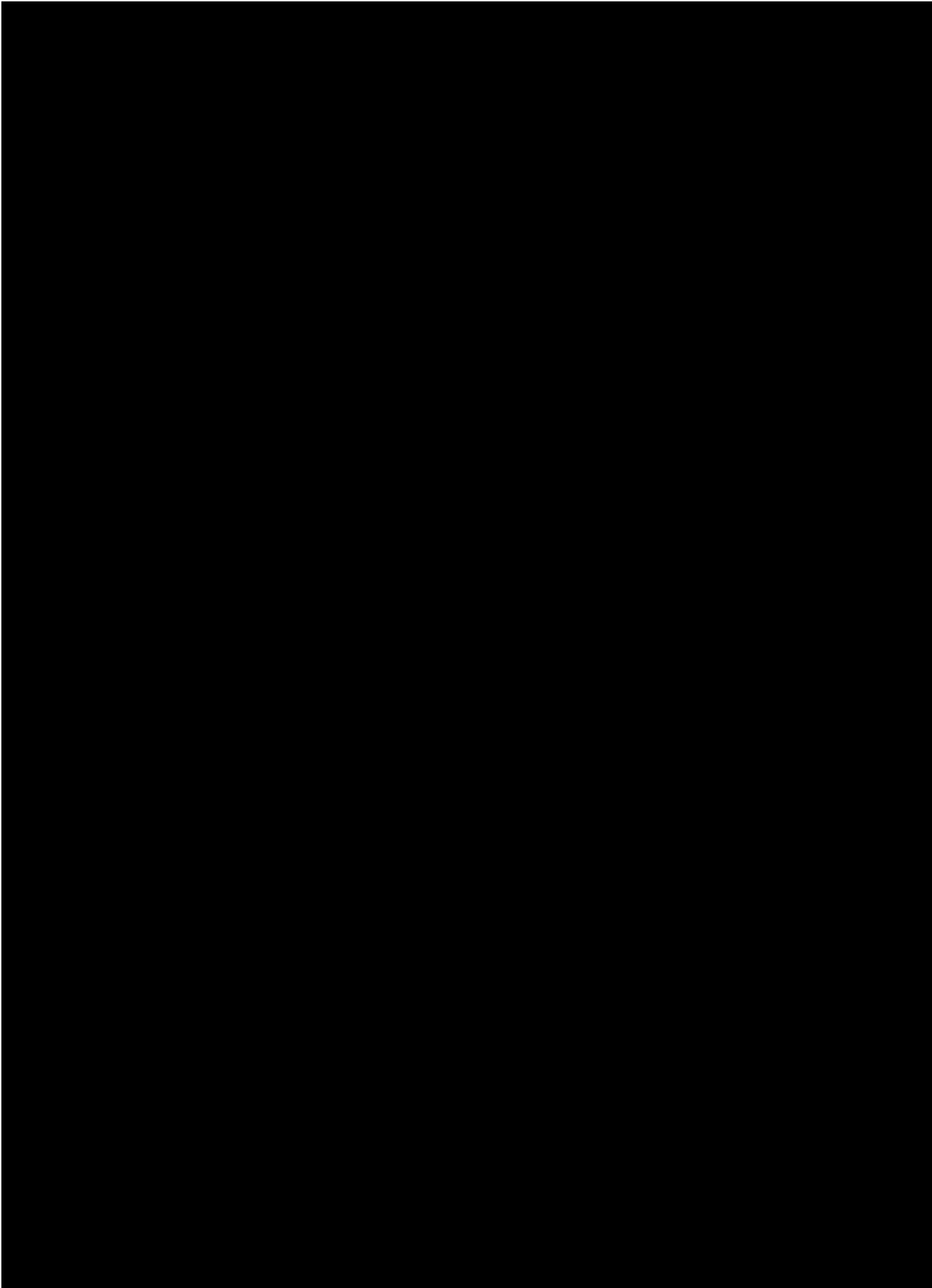


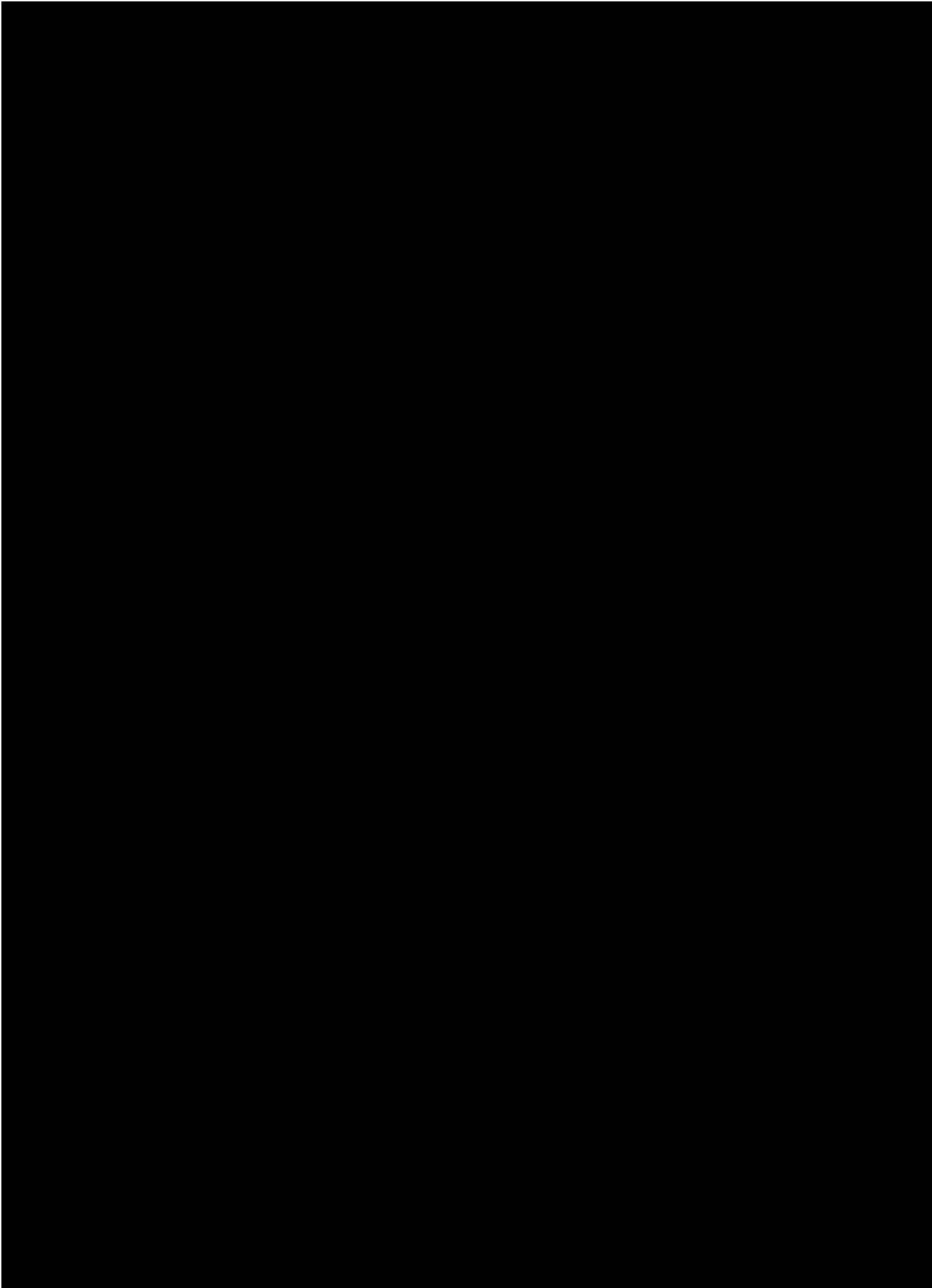


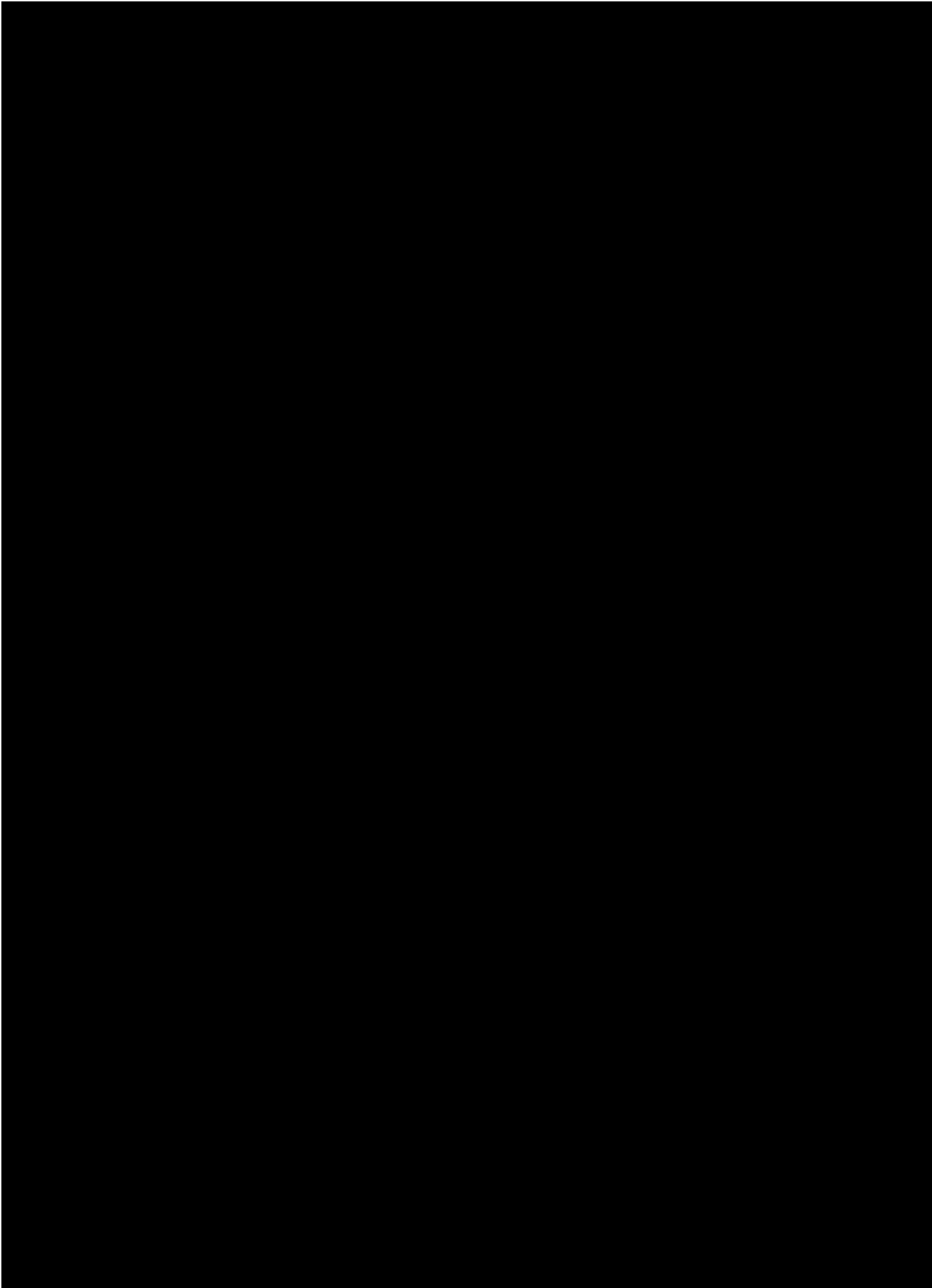


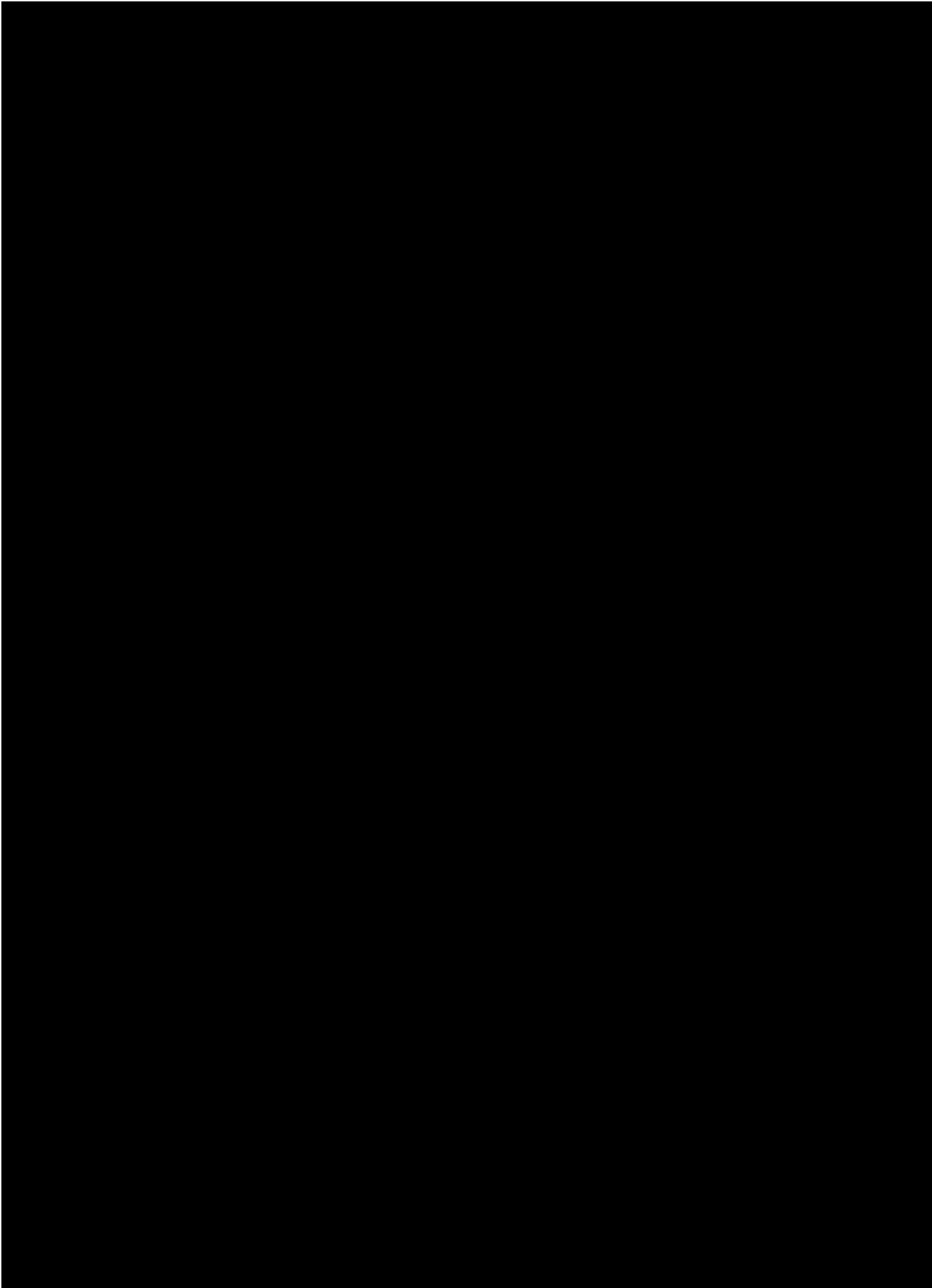


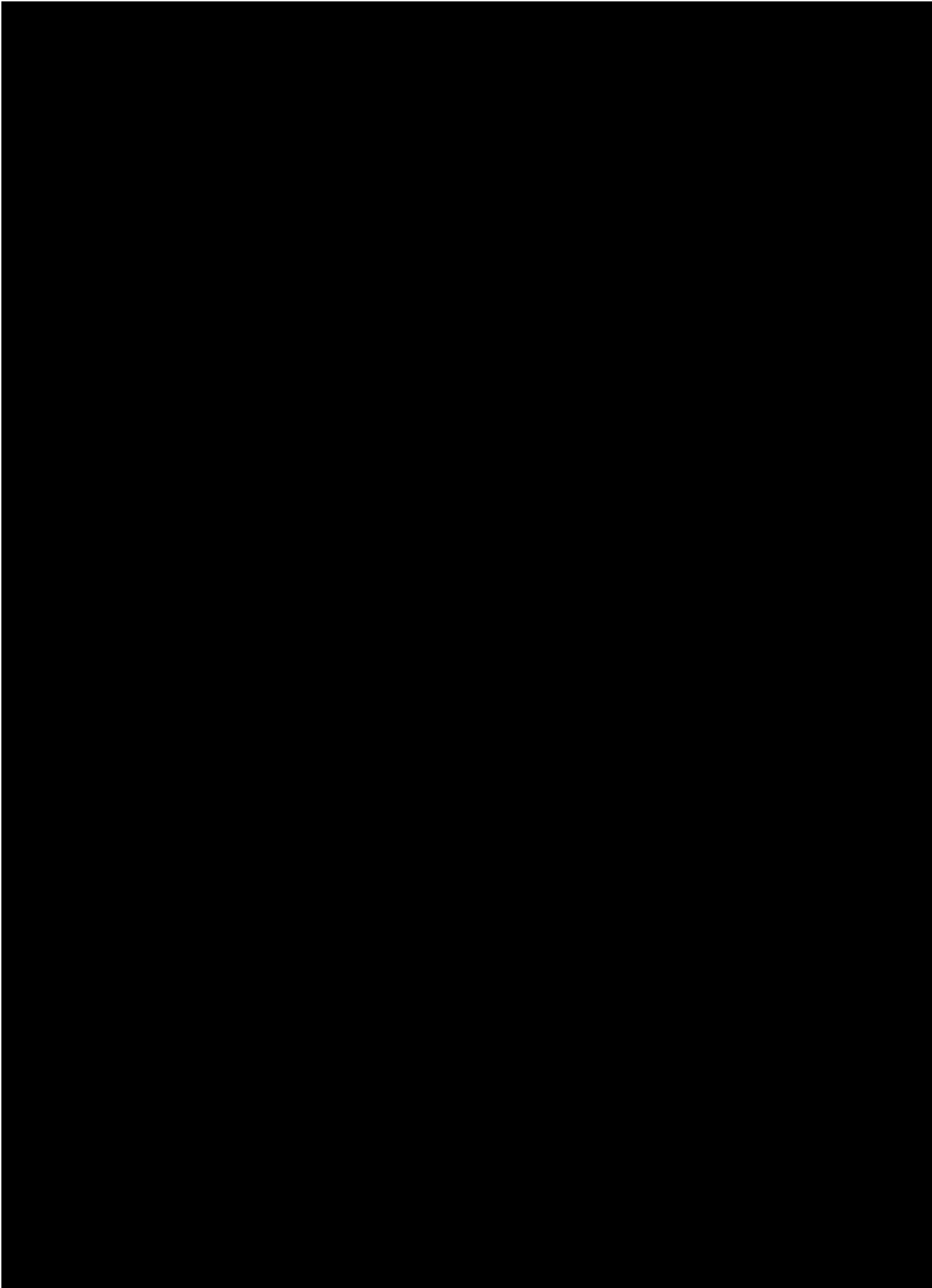












The renovation includes a more open layout, state-of-the-art LED lighting, modern and durable flooring, mobile furniture, and collaborative spaces that encourage group interaction and active learning. The project also adds a high-tech classroom for library instruction and workshops.

“We’re especially pleased that, with the library project, we’ve been able to use locally-sourced, sustainable materials,” says Director of Construction Keith Stewart. “We’ve made a deliberate effort to work with local vendors and we expect to see great results.”

The second-oldest building on campus, the Public Affairs Center (circa 1980), has also been undergoing major improvements this summer including a new roof, completion of a stair rail safety project and various enhancements and safety improvements to Sangamon Auditorium, which launches its 2018-19 season September 16 with a performance by acclaimed comedian Jay Leno. We’re especially grateful to longtime UIS supporters Carol and Clark Esarey who provided funding for much-needed renovations of the “star” dressing rooms backstage.

When students, faculty and staff come back to campus, they’ll also see renovations to support growing academic programs in Exercise Science, Athletic Training and Nursing (offered in partnership with the UIC College of Nursing). The newly acquired UIS Field Station at Lake Springfield, formerly the FOP lake club, is also undergoing transformation. Just a short walk from campus, the facility will enable easily accessible opportunities for education, research, recreation and community outreach on and near the lake. Director of Field Stations Dr. Tom Rothfus tells me several classes are already scheduled to use the new lakeshore location this fall.

Superintendent of Grounds Brian Beckerman and his talented team spend the summer months maintaining and improving the entire landscape which includes nearly 500 tree and shrub varieties, about 375 distinct flowers and ornamental grasses, and acres of lawn and sports fields for recreation, youth sports and intercollegiate athletics.

“We’ve adopted a more sustainable philosophy in recent years,” says Brian, “using native grasses and other materials that have natural beauty and require less mowing and maintenance.

We’ve been pleased to work with the university’s new Green Fee Committee and others,” he continues, “on projects like the green roof on the Student Union (expected to achieve LEED Gold recognition later this year) and the campus community garden.”

Thanks to the leadership of Biology professor Amy McEuen and student volunteers, a butterfly garden has been created near the Cox Children’s Center. With plantings of diverse native species like cone flowers, butterfly weed, giant blue sage, coreopsis, and milk weed, the garden is attracting a multitude of bees and butterflies and has been recognized as an official Monarch Butterfly Way Station.

“Members of the Facilities and Services team have a tremendous sense of pride and ownership in their work at UIS,” says Chuck.

“If it touches the ground, it’s ours,” he continues, “and we want to make it better, safer and more enjoyable for students, faculty, staff and visitors.”
I hope you’ll feel welcome to come by and take a walk or a drive through the UIS campus any time –

we'd love to see you!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Summer Programs, July 2018

Summer on a university campus often means a slower pace; but as I walk the UIS campus this summer 2018, I see (and hear) activity everywhere! Though many students are off to summer jobs, study abroad or professional internships, others stay on to take summer classes – accelerating progress toward graduation.

The June – August calendar is also packed with camp participants engaged in a variety of activities, new students and their parents attending orientation sessions, and an unusual number of construction projects on the fast-track for completion before the fall semester begins.

“Hello, I’m Mackenzie – for the NPR Illinois PodCamp.” That’s an example of a new voice on campus this summer! PodCamp is a summer enrichment program for area middle-schoolers sponsored for the first time a few weeks ago by NPR Illinois – the UIS public radio station. According to Communications Professor Ann Strahle, a former television news reporter/director who designed the program, PodCamp was a major hit with the area’s “digital native” crowd.

During the camp, 11 to 14-year-old podcampers learned interview and broadcast writing skills as well as the basics of what makes a good news story. They then used their smart phones as a news gathering devices– interviewing community leaders and creating mini-podcasts using audio-editing technology and technical expertise provided by NPR Illinois.

On the last day of camp, students and their parents participated in a roundtable discussion with NPR Illinois journalists and heard the campers’ own podcast episodes. (Readers of this column can [enjoy the podcasts, too.](#))

“Given the positive response from our first participants,” says Professor Strahle, “we certainly plan to offer PodCamp again next summer – maybe even expanding to both audio and video production.”

With the increasing success of Prairie Stars Athletics, youth sports camps will bring hundreds of young student-athletes to the UIS campus this summer. At a recent Girl’s Basketball Team Camp, Head Women’s Coach Mark Kost and his staff hosted 26 high school teams for an intensive 60 games of basketball.

“Team camp helps high school coaches provide their players an opportunity to gain experience as a team and enhance their basketball skills,” says Coach Kost. “At the same time, students gain valuable exposure to a college environment.”

“It’s part of our mission to engage in community outreach and be a resource for youth sports programs in this area,” says Head Baseball Coach Chris Ramirez. (Coach Ramirez was recently named 2018 National Division II Baseball Coach of the Year following a record-setting season and the program’s first-ever appearance in the NCAA national championships.) “Camps enable us to work hands-on with

young players,” adds Ramirez, “improving their fundamentals and making lasting connections with our campus and with their parents.” ([View a listing of 2018 sports camps.](#))

An orientation leader since her own undergraduate years at the University of North Carolina, Lisa McGuire has been Director of New Student Orientation and Parent Relations at UIS for almost five years. McGuire is the mastermind behind orientation programs provided each summer for new students and their parents.

“Our two-day Kick Start program is the foundation of our orientation program,” she says. “Parents are our partners in this college transition process and through the program we strive to provide them the same comprehensive understanding of campus that we provide new students.”

The new Student Union (opened just a few months ago) provides an ideal location to welcome new students and parents and information sessions address such topics as campus safety, health and counseling services, academic resources, financial aid and even career planning and how to gain employment experience through a campus job.

One of the most engaging sessions this summer is titled “Mindset and Metacognition,” a presentation by Chemistry Professor Layne Morsch that focuses on what science teaches us about the keys to effective learning and college success.

McGuire’s staff includes 23 students who stay on campus for the summer and serve as orientation leaders – providing new students with their perspective on academic success, student activities, residence life, engagement opportunities with the Springfield community, and many other aspects of the student experience at UIS. They even take students and their parents on a “Springfield Adventure” to showcase what downtown Springfield has to offer.

“College is the best time and place for students to explore,” McGuire says, “and we encourage them to spread their wings and try new things at the same time they pursue their valuable UI credential.”

Part Two of this column will appear in the SJR in August, when I’ll provide an update on those exciting construction projects mentioned at the outset of this piece. In the meantime, I hope you’ll feel welcome to come by and take a walk through the beautiful UIS campus grounds any time this summer – we’re open!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Online Learning, June 2018

During the past few weeks, the University of Illinois held commencement exercises for more than 20,000 graduates and, whether walking across a stage in Urbana-Champaign, Chicago or Springfield, each student in their own unique way represents a celebration of effort and achievement. Among the 1,500 who completed their college experience at UIS, one group is especially intriguing. It’s the several hundred members of the 2018 graduating class who completed their undergraduate or graduate degree entirely online.

Elizabeth Andersen from Urbana, Illinois, who graduated Summa Cum Laude (with highest

distinction) with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, is a great example. "As an adult with a job, a family, and a mortgage, a traditional college experience was going to be nearly impossible for me," she says.

"The online opportunity at UIS gave me the option to work fulltime while finishing school; at the same time, it provided an affordable but high quality education."

Affordability, accessibility and quality – those three characteristics have been at the heart of online education at UIS since the first online class was offered in 1997 – long before most other universities were even considering opportunities offered by the emerging digital knowledge revolution. Since then, UIS has moved to the forefront of universities engaged in online learning – offering 26 degrees and many certificates entirely online and providing access to a high-quality, affordable university education for thousands of students who, for a variety of reasons, cannot follow a more traditional path to the opportunities for success that a college degree provides.

According to Ray Schroeder, Associate Vice Chancellor for Online Learning, online students were enrolled at UIS this Spring semester from more than 70% of Illinois counties, 47 U.S. states (exceptions were Rhode Island, South Dakota and Vermont), and 11 foreign countries. In addition, more than 70% of students in face-to-face programs also took at least one online course.

Rebekah Grosboll is one of several online coordinators who works closely with students like Elizabeth throughout their college experience. "I communicate with students every week," says Rebekah, "helping them access resources, sequence their courses and balance sometimes conflicting obligations."

"My goal is to create success stories," she adds, "helping students make their professional goals a reality."

In addition to providing online coordinators who support students in each program, the Center for Online Learning, Research, and Service (COLRS) serves as a hub for the study and application of online teaching methods, research, and best practices. COLRS staff and associated faculty provide exceptional leadership in the online arena that, along with outstanding technical support and resources for both faculty and students, helps ensure the highest quality across online programs.

According to Dr. Vickie Cook, Executive Director of the Center, "UIS online programs are most distinctive because faculty teach using methods that connect them to their students and connect students with each other, utilizing a robust curriculum that enables learning to occur."

COLRS has won many national awards for its leadership and contributions in online learning. The Center also houses the Illinois Online Network (ION), a statewide initiative whose mission is to provide professional development in best practices for online teaching and learning to faculty in public and private institutions across Illinois and beyond.

Dr. Layne Morsch, a faculty member in the Department of Chemistry who, like many UIS faculty, teaches both face-to-face and online, was recognized by the Center this year with the Oakley Award for Excellence in Online Teaching. According to Dr. Morsch: "The characteristics of outstanding learning experiences are the same regardless of mode of delivery."

"Engaging students with relevant questions, challenging them to think critically and

helping students learn how to apply what they are learning to what they will be asked to do in their future career,” he continues, “are as vital in the online experience as much as in the on-campus classroom.”

Online learning isn’t the wave of the future; it’s already here and it is providing affordable, accessible, high quality educational opportunities at the University of Illinois Springfield. Online students, like 2018 graduate Elizabeth Andersen, are earning their degrees with gifted UIS professors who are leading the way as new digital technologies and best practices continue to emerge, ultimately setting the stage for the positive contributions UIS online graduates, like their on-campus peers, will make to their professions and to their communities.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

Prepared Remarks for BOT, May 2018

University of Illinois Board of Trustees Meeting
May 17, 2018
UIS Student Union

CHANCELLOR’S WELCOME

Chairman Koritz, members of the Board of Trustees, President Killeen, colleagues and guests:

Welcome to the University of Illinois at Springfield!

We are honored to serve as your hosts for this May University of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting.

Of course, I’m especially pleased to welcome you to this beautiful Student Union. It was about two years ago, on May 4, 2016, that we broke ground on this project and, as you can see, it has become a reality and is exceeding our expectations in every way.

We’re especially proud that this newest addition to the campus is a sustainable building, a charge that was led by students. There are 196,000 plants on the Student Union roof, contributing greatly to ~~energy~~ ~~intentionally~~ ~~sourced~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Midwest~~ ~~water~~ ~~treatment~~ ~~plant~~ ~~at~~ ~~majority~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~building~~ ~~is~~ ~~made~~ ~~with~~ ~~in~~ ~~500~~ miles of Springfield. We anticipate achieving LEED GOLD designation later this year.

I’ll take these few minutes to provide a brief update regarding the University; but I hope time will also allow you to simply take a walk during your time on this beautiful campus today – visit the Lincoln sculpture, the Colonnade, maybe have a brief chat with The Bard in the Shakespeare Garden and just get a sense of what a terrific environment our faculty and staff provide on this University of Illinois campus – where, as the UI mission states, we are “transforming lives and serving society” every day.

You’ve heard me say that we are intently focused at this young UI campus on three strategic priorities:

GROWTH in visibility, reputation and enrollment,

TALENT – the recruitment and retention of highly-talented leadership, faculty and staff, and

FACILITIES – providing the FACILITIES needed to provide a comprehensive, high-quality student living and learning experience.

Thanks to the contributions of many, I'm pleased to report today that we've continued to make excellent progress this year – despite the ongoing challenges our state faces.

This past Saturday, I had the privilege of shaking the hands of nearly 1,000 new University of Illinois Springfield graduates as they walked across the commencement stage. Four of our last five graduating classes have been the largest in institutional history and among this year's graduates were students heading off to medical school, law school, and the Peace Corps as well as graduates moving on to their first professional employment – each one an economic engine for their employer and their community.

At the same time, the first Nursing students completed their BSN degrees this month – a partnership we created three years ago with the UIC College of Nursing to help meet the high demand for BSN-credentialed nurses here in Sangamon County.

It was a spectacular day and I was delighted that President Killeen and Trustee McMillan were able to share it with us!

I'm pleased to say our expanded marketing and recruitment efforts are having a positive impact, with the number of freshman, transfer and graduate applications all increasing for fall, 2018.

We anticipate the new system-level statewide media campaign, “Altogether Extraordinary,” will also enhance awareness of UIS as part of the University of Illinois System and a terrific choice for Illinois students.

Expanded educational offerings that you have approved—programs including Exercise Science, Information System Security and Data Analytics—are all attracting new students to the campus.

Our second priority is TALENT, and the recruitment and retention of highly-TALENTed leadership, faculty and staff is a continuous process as you know.

Our new Provost, Dr. Dennis Papini, has completed an outstanding first year at UIS as has Dr. Robert Smith, the new Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration.

Several leadership searches were also successfully completed this year including one that brought us a talented new Director of the Student Union, Ann Comerford, who you met last night.

In the ASAC meeting yesterday, you heard from Professor Ben Walsh, Associate Professor of Management, an outstanding teacher and scholar in the College of Business.

And speaking of talent, I want to make you aware of this exemplary example of faculty excellence. The December, 2017 special issue of *Hydrobiologia*, the *International Journal of Aquatic Sciences*, was produced entirely by UIS faculty and their students in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy. It features ongoing ecological research led by Biologist Michael Lemke and others that is taking place at Emiquon, a large-scale flood plain restoration project in the Illinois River Valley near Havana,

Illinois where UIS has a field station.

I think what I'm most proud of is that the articles in the journal feature the research of not only UIS faculty, but also of many undergraduate and graduate students who had the opportunity to participate in important projects and co-author along with their professors. It's a great example of the unique opportunities students have at UIS to work closely with faculty and get real hands-on learning experiences.

Our third strategic priority is FACILITIES and, in addition to the new Student Union, important renovations have been completed or are underway this summer to provide new learning spaces for Exercise Science, Athletic Training and the new BSN program, as well as Brookens Library.

And there's another facility addition to the campus that means we can say for the first time: "UIS is on the lake!" We've been fortunate to acquire this year a former lake club on nearby Lake Springfield just a few minutes' walk from campus. This new resource—including more than 400 feet of lakeshore—has been named the UIS Field Station at Lake Springfield and, with the leadership of Dr. Tom Rothfus, Director of Emiquon, it will serve as a multipurpose educational, research and recreational facility.

Faculty in Environmental Science and Biology are already using the Field Station and several classes are scheduled to use the facility in the fall. Some limited renovations will be completed this summer and I've been told there may even be a Bass Fishing team in our future!

In October, UIS launched its most ambitious fundraising campaign in our history. With a goal of \$40 million, "Reaching Stellar" campaign priorities include scholarships, academic excellence, and a new Center for Lincoln Studies that will greatly enhance our collaboration with the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and other Lincoln-related organizations in Illinois and beyond.

With the leadership of Dr. Jeff Lorber and his team, the campaign has been going very well and we have raised to date over \$20.5 million – about 54% of our goal. This campaign, of course, is a top priority for me in the coming year. The campaign continues through 2022.

A little less than a year ago, our young Division II Athletics program, led by new AD Jim Sarra, ~~finalized a new strategic plan – the Big Experience for UIS athletes. The plan details the program's~~ pursuit of championships, and community outreach.

I did not realize at that time they would move so quickly!

As I am speaking to you today, both the Prairie Stars Baseball and Softball teams have won their Great Lakes Valley Conference Championships – in the toughest Division II conference in the nation!

Head softball coach Shannon Guthrie and head baseball coach Chris Ramirez have been named GLVC Coach of the Year and both teams are hosting the NCAA Division II regional playoffs right here in Springfield today. (The baseball team is the #1 seed.)

These talented student-athletes have been making history this year at UIS and placing the University on the national stage in a very positive way. I could not be more proud of them. By the end of the weekend, we may be headed to the College World Series.

(By the way, I'm really hoping this meeting ends on time today because game time is 1:30.)

As the University of Illinois at Springfield continues to grow and serve students, our community and our state, I sincerely appreciate the support and encouragement of this Board of Trustees and the advice and support of President Killeen and other members of the UI leadership team.

Thank you and again, welcome to the campus.

End-of-year Message, May 2018

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

As the Spring, 2018 semester comes to a close, I am so proud of the many milestones and achievements we've created together at UIS this year. It's in that spirit that I extend my sincere gratitude to all in our community who have not only pursued and achieved their personal goals, but who have also contributed in so many ways to the mission and vision of our University. Thank you.

Special recognition is due for campus leaders who have devoted their time and talent to ensure our university's success — Campus Senate Chair **Professor Ranjan Karri**, APAC Chair **Clayton Bellot**, CSAC co-chairs **Jo Barnard** and **Jeff Sudduth** and SGA President **Garrett Nimmo**. These individuals are true servant leaders, giving of themselves to help our campus community thrive, and I offer my sincere appreciation.

Over the past several weeks, we have celebrated the contributions of several exceptional members of our community.

Faculty honors awarded this year:

- **Dr. Benjamin Walsh** (Management) — University Scholar
- **Dr. Holly Kent** (History) — Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching
- **Dr. Ranjan Karri** (Management) — Spencer Award for Exemplary Service
- **Dr. Lan Dong** (English and Modern Languages) — Award for Faculty Excellence
- **Dr. Layne Morsch** (Chemistry) — Burks Oakley II Distinguished Award for Online Teaching
- **Dr. Yona Stamatis** (Music) — inaugural Harry and Deborah Berman Sabbatical Award

Staff leadership awards including:

- **James Koeppe**, Director of Campus Recreation — CAPE Award for Outstanding Performance by an Academic Professional
- **Krystal Wilson**, Catering Supervisor — CARE Award for Excellence in Civil Service
- **Jason Gibson**, Building Service Supervisor — UIS Employee of the Year

Outstanding student leaders and organizations have also earned recognition this year including:

- **Hannah Warden**, Good As Gold Award for outstanding volunteerism
- **Rosie Dawoud**, SGA Outstanding Committee Person of the Year
- **University Bible Fellowship**, Student Organization of the Year

Congratulations to these talented individuals who embody “Leadership lived” and who inspire us to contribute to the best of our abilities every day to the mission of our University.

Of course, one of our most exciting moments this academic year was the January opening of the new **Student Union** (now known as “**THE STU**”). Cutting the ribbon on this remarkable facility will forever be a highlight in the history of the UIS campus. The Student Union not only changed the physical footprint of the campus, but more importantly it is transforming campus life.

I think I’m most proud that, during the design phase, students led the way for this project to be a **sustainable building**. There are 196,000 plants on the green roof, contributing to energy savings and enhanced storm water management. More than 20% of the building is constructed with recycled materials, and a majority of the building materials were regionally sourced – extracted, harvested, recovered and manufactured within 500 miles of Springfield. We anticipate achieving LEED Gold certification from the U.S. Green Building Council in the coming year.

I remain so grateful to the many individuals who made this vision a reality. In this spring semester alone, the Student Union has served more than 50,000 visitors and hosted more than 200 programs and meetings. I am so pleased to see how this facility is helping our students more easily form those crucial connections that make campus life meaningful – and fun!

And there’s another addition to our campus that lets us say for the first time: “UIS is on the lake!” We’ve been fortunate to acquire this year a former lake club on nearby Lake Springfield just a few ~~400 feet~~ ^{400 feet} of lake shore campus. ~~This system has been named the UIS Field Station building~~ ^{This system has been named the UIS Field Station building} **Springfield**. With the leadership of **Dr. Tom Rothfus**, Director of Emiquon, the Field Station will serve as a multipurpose educational, research and recreational facility. Plans for facility improvements are now underway, but faculty in Environmental Science and Biology are already using the Field Station, and several classes are scheduled there for Fall, 2018. I’ve even heard there may be a collegiate bass fishing team in our future.

Speaking of milestones, it’s been so enjoyable to watch our student-athletes achieve a historically successful year. Both men’s and women’s Soccer earned first-time berths in their conference tournaments, as did women’s Volleyball. Women’s Tennis qualified for the conference tourney for the second season in a row, while the new Cross Country and Track programs continued to grow. Men’s Golf won two major tournaments this Spring, and Women’s Golf qualified again for the NCAA Super Regional Tournament this week. UIS Baseball is ranked No.4 in the nation in Division II and is competing in the Great Lakes Valley Conference tournament as the No. 1 seed this week. Women’s Softball, whose coach Shannon Guthrie was named GLVC Softball Coach of the Year last week, is also nationally ranked and will host the NCAA Midwest Division Softball Championship this week as the No. 2 seed. The women play Saginaw Valley State at 1:30 PM Thursday on their home field at Land of Lincoln Softball Complex.

What a thrill it has been to cheer on all of our student-athletes who have proven their talents both on

the field and in the classroom. My sincere congratulations to them and all the coaches, faculty and staff who have supported their success this year.

Though certainly not an exhaustive list, here are some additional highlights from this past year:

- Growth in visibility, reputation and enrollment has been a high priority for several years, and current marketing and recruitment efforts are paying off with the number of freshman, transfer and graduate applications all having increased for Fall 2018. As of this week, 52 more new, first-year students had committed to UIS than at this same time last year.
- The Division of Academic Affairs has successfully filled the new Associate Provost for Enrollment Management position. **Natalie Herring** will assume the role June 15 and provide leadership in developing and executing strategic enrollment planning as well as leadership for the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid and the Registrar. Enrollment Management will be transitioned from the Division of Student Affairs to the Division of Academic Affairs on July 1.
- **Talent acquisition and retention efforts for faculty and staff** are going well, with several new tenure-track hires coming on board and several important searches moving forward in Student Affairs. We were delighted to celebrate last week with eight faculty who have earned tenure and promotion to associate professor rank and one who has been promoted to full professor.
- Last fall, we initiated a planning process to develop a **Strategic Compass** which will help us reaffirm and revitalize our mission, vision, values and goals to guide us over the next several years. With further discussion and consultation, we will finalize the new Strategic Compass next Fall.
- Fifteen employees took part in the inaugural **Rising Stars** program, a campus orientation program intended to build a stronger sense of community for new employees. Participants met monthly over an eight-month period to learn about the history of our University and about key campus resources and initiatives. Teambuilding and service opportunities were also woven into the program to create a rich, meaningful experience for participants during their first year of UIS employment.
- With the leadership of professor **Stephen Johnson**, UIS offered its **first on-campus dual credit class** for high school students this year. Eighteen seniors from Sacred Heart-Griffin High School participated in the pilot course, General, Organic and Biochemistry. We hope to build upon this innovative recruitment tool in the future.
- In October, UIS launched its most ambitious fundraising campaign in our history. “**Reaching Stellar**” seeks to raise \$40 million to benefit students, faculty and the University. Already, more than \$20.5 million of our goal has been realized, making this one of our best fundraising years ever. The campaign continues through 2022.
- UIS students collected a **record-breaking 28,946 pounds of food** for the Central Illinois Food Bank on Halloween night, nearly doubling the amount collected in 2017.
- **Dr. Adriana Crocker**, UIS professor of political science, was named a University of Illinois **Presidential Fellow**, the first UIS faculty member to earn the distinction. President Killeen began the Presidential Fellowship as a way to stimulate and facilitate projects by faculty members across the System to help realize institutional goals. As a Presidential Fellow, Dr. Crocker will work with faculty across the System to promote international student exchanges and research partnerships.
- The **Illinois Innocence Project at UIS** was awarded federal grant funds totaling \$641,000 this year. This important project works to free individuals who have been incarcerated for crimes they did not commit while, at the same time, it provides unparalleled experiential learning

- opportunities for UIS students. The project was successful this year in achieving its 11th exoneration when Bill Amor was released from prison on February 21 after 22 years in prison.
- In January, the UIS Campus Senate and later the Illinois Board of Higher Education approved a proposal to establish the **UIS Center for Lincoln Studies**. The Center is a key priority for the Reaching Stellar campaign and will be a national hub for all things Lincoln.
 - UIS Athletics completed its new strategic plan last Fall, the “**BLUEprint for Excellence**,” with a commitment to center the student-athlete experience on academic achievement, the pursuit of championships and community outreach.
 - Our annual **faculty and staff fundraising campaign**, which runs through June 30, is seeing great results, with 44-percent participation of university employees thus far. This level of generosity is very much appreciated.
 - UIS students won the Outstanding Delegation Award during the international **Model United Nations** simulation in New York City in March. This is the second year in a row that UIS students have won the award. Three UIS students also were honored with individual awards.
 - **Dr. Clarice Ford**, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, was recently named one of five Security Bank Women of Influence for 2018. The honor recognizes local women for their professional achievements and contributions to the Springfield community.

This Saturday, I will proudly shake the hands of nearly 1,000 new University of Illinois graduates as they walk across the Bank of Springfield Convention Center stage. Each has left their mark on this campus through their ideas, their leadership, their commitment to excellence and so much more. I like to think these graduates are leaving UIS better than they found it, all to the benefit of those who remain and who have yet to come. Thank you for contributing to these students’ success and to the success of our university.

As we close another academic year, my seventh as your Chancellor, I continue to be inspired by and thankful for the great work performed across our campus by talented and dedicated staff, faculty and students. I remain so proud to share with you this opportunity to make our university stronger and more vibrant than ever and to achieve our University’s mission to transform lives and serve society.

Have a safe and happy summer!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2018

This May UIS Perspectives column makes its appearance at the start of the 2018 college commencement season. An estimated 2 million college degrees will be awarded across the U.S. during the next few weeks and I could not be more proud of the nearly 1,000 University of Illinois at Springfield graduates who will be sharing the Bank of Springfield Convention Center stage with me on May 12th.

Among the many smiling grads whose hands I’ll be shaking is Rochester, Illinois native Krissy Finley. Krissy is majoring in Accountancy and is also a top competitor on the Prairie Stars Cross

Country and Track teams.

“I chose UIS because of the opportunity to compete with the new Cross Country program,” says Krissy, “but I’ve also been grateful for professors who really care about me and who want me to learn and retain knowledge.”

Krissy completed an internship at Horace Mann this year and won’t have much down time after completing her degree. She is already working part-time for Horace Mann’s Planning and Expense Team and has accepted a fulltime accounting position there that starts after graduation. She plans to start her master’s degree next fall.

Tonda Chasteen, a Biology major from Lewistown, Illinois, became interested in UIS when she attended a high school science program near her hometown – at the UIS Therkildsen Field Station at Emiquon Nature Preserve. “The Necessary Steps Mentoring Program for first generation students helped me make a successful transition from high school to college,” says Tonda, “and doing research with Professor Layne Morsch in Chemistry was also a huge opportunity.”

Tonda presented her research with Dr. Morsch at the American Chemical Society conference in San Francisco last year and is completing her student teaching this Spring at Havana High School with science teacher Craig Bals.

“Commencement will be important for me and my family,” says Tonda, “because I will be the first in my family to get a four-year degree.”

Tonda will return to Havana High School next fall as a fulltime science teacher.

Soon-to-be grads Vincent Joseph and Munashe Ariwamwari will have at least one thing in common as they walk across the stage at commencement. They’ll both have family members in the audience and cheering via webcast from around the world! Vincent is a Computer Science graduate student from Mumbai, India. Munashe is an Honors student in Political Science whose family emigrated to Illinois from Zimbabwe.

“After working a few years at Accenture in India, I considered studying in Germany or Canada; but I’m very glad I came to the U.S.,” says Vincent.

“The Computer Science program here is amazing and I’ve had opportunities to be a Student Government Association representative as well as do a GPSI internship in the Illinois Auditor General’s Office.”

Munashe chose UIS for the strong Honors program – a UI degree in a more personalized environment.

“The Political Science department does a good job of providing opportunities like Model United Nations, the Illinois Innocence Project and Mock Trial,” says Munashe, “and the scholarships provided in the CAP Honors program helped pay for college.”

Munashe was awarded the prestigious “Best Delegate Award” during the International Model UN simulation in New York City last month and is completing an internship in Illinois Senator Tammy Duckworth’s Springfield office. His next step is to decide which of six law school offers to accept. After law school, he plans to pursue a career in international law.

Vincent already knows where he'll be after commencement. Graduating with Honors from UIS, he will continue the professional practice he started with his GPSI internship – assuming a fulltime auditor position in the Illinois Auditor General's Office.

Commencement is most certainly a special rite of passage for graduates and their families; but it's also meaningful for faculty who have invested deeply in the success of their students. Ben Walsh, Associate Professor of Management, and Adriana Crocker, Professor of Political Science, are among the many UIS faculty who'll be participating in commencement ceremonies next weekend.

“Seeing commencement as a faculty member fills me with immense pride,” says Dr. Walsh. “I love it when families cheer for their graduate,” he adds. “It is so impactful, rewarding and significant.”

“As faculty, we try to provide students with what they need for the real world,” says Dr. Crocker, “including other perspectives and frames of reference – not just Illinois.”

“I tell my students commencement is not the end,” she reflects, “It's the beginning.”

The mission of the University of Illinois is to “transform lives and serve society.” Thanks to the work of outstanding faculty and staff – people like Ben Walsh and Adriana Crocker – I am supremely confident that Krissy, Tonda, Munashe and Vincent have, indeed, been transformed by their UIS experience. ~~University of Illinois campus, they'll serve the society in their own way as graduates and all use the world for many years to come.~~

Congratulations, graduates – we're proud of you!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: UIS Baseball and Softball, April 2018

Spring's arrival at the University of Illinois Springfield brings a collective sense of anticipation – trees and flowers coming to life across a beautiful campus, the countdown steadily ticking toward commencement, and (this year for the first time) Starbucks aficionados of all sorts enjoying their favorite beverage on the outdoor plaza at the new Student Union.

On this first day of April, 2018, there may be nowhere on campus where that sense of anticipation is more evident (or more intense) than at the “TRAC – The Recreation and Athletics Center”. TRAC is home to the Prairie Stars, one of about 300 NCAA Division II intercollegiate athletic programs. The program provides more than 250 UIS student-athletes the opportunity to compete at a high level of scholarship athletics at the same time they can earn a University of Illinois degree and contribute in a variety of ways to campus and community life.

At the helm of the Prairie Stars is Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Jim Sarra who, along with talented coaches and staff, has implemented a “BLUEprint for excellence” to advance the young

Prairie Stars program. Their mission is to center the student-athlete experience on academic achievement, competitive excellence, and community engagement.

Shannon Guthrie, head softball coach for the Prairie Stars, can tell you all about excellence! A standout student-athlete at Chatham-Glenwood High School, Guthrie was a star pitcher for Illinois State University where she was named Female Athlete of the Year. She went on to play professionally for the Akron Racers before launching her collegiate coaching career.

“I am a competitive coach and I am here to win championships,” says Shannon, who is in her 4th year leading the Prairie Stars. “That mindset,” she adds, “builds a great and exciting team culture.”

Senior pitcher Ali Haesele couldn't agree more. Ali was an all-conference competitor at Olympia High School in Minier, Illinois and then played two years for Illinois Central College before being recruited to join the up-and-coming Prairie Stars.

“I'm always working toward something,” she says. “Our team has a championship mindset and knowing I have teammates that have my back and I have theirs – you can't replace that.”

The team has its sights set on winning the Great Lakes Valley Conference Championship this year and playing in the NCAA regionals. As of this writing at mid-season, they're ranked second in conference standings and continue to concentrate, as Coach Guthrie says, on “winning each day.” The softball team has also earned the highest team academic grade point average of all 15 Prairie Stars teams for the past two semesters, with a 3.687 gpa (on a 4.0 scale) last term.

Chris Ramirez is a big fan of UIS softball but he doesn't have much time to attend games. That's because he's busy as head coach of the Prairie Stars baseball program– another team that knows a thing or two about excellence.

At Fort Madison High School in Iowa, Ramirez was a two-time first-team All Stater and MVP of the conference his senior year. He was a closer on the mound and outfielder at Kirkwood Community College and then completed his collegiate career at High Point University in North Carolina.

Last year, his 4th leading the Prairie Stars, Ramirez's team achieved a record 33-win season, had one of the best offenses in the conference, and a record seven players earning All-GLVC selection

“I want our team to play hard, play fast and play for each other,” says Coach Ramirez.

“Our mission is to compete with the top programs in Division II baseball,” he adds, “and every time we take the field we plan on winning.”

Senior first baseman Michael Rothmund, who topped all NCAA Division II hitters in the country last season with 24 home runs, was part of Coach Ramirez's first recruiting class four years ago. Mike started playing t-ball at age four with his older brother and was a 4-year standout at Willowbrook High School in Villa Park, Illinois. He is “all in” with Coach Ramirez's approach.

“In my four years as a Prairie Star, I've learned you need to be smart on and off the field,” says Mike.

“You never take a day off, you put in extra work to improve, and you care more about the

guys on your left and right than you care for yourself.”

Rothmund is proud of what he’s done in the classroom, too, earning a place on the Athletics Academic Honor Roll six of eight semesters. “I feel like I’ve really grown up since I’ve been here,” he concludes.

Just a few days ago, the UIS baseball team climbed into the national rankings for the first time in program history. “We have 13 seniors and it will actually be good if they can’t walk across the stage at commencement,” says Coach Ramirez. “That means we’re playing in the post season!”

Athletic Director Jim Sarra may sum it up best when he says, “Athletics at its roots supports the educational mission of the University, adding to the overall college experience for everyone that gets involved at the same time it strengthens our visibility and reputation.”

You can check out competition schedules, follow progress of UIS teams and learn how you can support the Prairie Stars at: www.UISPrairieStars.com. You can also follow the Stars on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. And please consider this your personal invitation to join me on campus for an upcoming Prairie Stars athletic contest. You may enjoy it as much as I do!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Teaching Fellows Program, February 2018

A few weeks ago, a headline in the Chronicle of Higher Education, a widely respected weekly publication for college and university personnel, caught my eye. “What Makes a Good Teacher?” the headline read. The writer, himself a well-known author and professor of English, went on to describe key characteristics of teachers who (though not necessarily liked best) had the greatest impact on their students’ learning.

The list included several familiar observations about effective teachers: “They are professional without being aloof. They have a good sense of humor. They are demanding without being unkind. They seem to enjoy what they do. They are tremendously creative.”

The author closes the piece by acknowledging that some professors seem to be “born teachers” because they possess the above traits in abundance; but every professor can work to develop and enhance their own teaching expertise.

That’s exactly what the Teaching Fellows Program at UIS is all about! The program is the brain-child of Dr. Layne Morsch, a professor in the UIS Chemistry Department. Himself a distinguished teacher, Dr. Morsch was selected a few years ago by Apple (the world’s largest information technology company) as an Apple Distinguished Educator. ADEs are an elite group of professors and K-12 teachers from across the world who are pioneers using Apple technology to transform and improve teaching and learning.

With the support and encouragement of UIS Vice Chancellor and Provost Dennis Papini, Dr. Morsch

has developed a professional development program that brings faculty together from across campus throughout the year to discuss educational psychology and research-based teaching practices, to experiment in their own courses and to share and learn with colleagues.

“When you do your doctorate, it’s not focused on teaching. It’s about the research,” says Dr. Morsch.

“The Teaching Fellows Program creates opportunities for faculty to engage together with high impact practices that can transform their teaching and improve student learning.”

One of this year’s Teaching Fellows is Dr. Tiffany Nielson, an Assistant Professor in the Human Development Counseling program. Tiffany, an Idaho native, completed her Ph.D. at Idaho State University and joined the UIS faculty three years ago. “I chose UIS because it is a teaching-focused university,” she says. “The Teaching Fellows Program has been a unique opportunity and perfect way to jump start my career.”

Dr. Nielson recently taught her students about fixed vs. growth mindset, a concept the Teaching Fellows had studied and discussed in a recent session.

“A fixed mindset means you believe your intelligence is set and cannot be changed while a growth mindset means you believe that, with effort and action, you have the capacity to grow,” says Dr. Nielson.

She was delighted when a struggling student told her she had been thinking about how adopting a growth mindset could help her to be more successful.

Dr. Carol Jessup, Associate Professor in Accountancy, is another faculty member who has embraced the Teaching Fellows Program. Carol is a Springfield native who earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from UIS before pursuing an accounting career and then completing her Ph.D. at St. Louis University and joining the faculty at her alma mater.

“To be part of the Teaching Fellows Program and get this exposure to effective teaching and learning strategies is exciting,” says Carol.

“I love the great books we’ve been reading and discussing.”

“The first thing that blew my mind was ‘interrupted forgetting’ (from *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*),” she continues. The concept explains that students learn and remember best not through cramming or dogged repetition but rather by spacing out study or practice in installments and allowing time to elapse between study sessions. “The takeaway for her students?” says Dr. Jessup: “It’s better if you study a little bit every day.”

The Teaching Fellows Program’s impact on student success at UIS might best be illustrated by Dr. Morsch who reflects: “Two of my students in the last week have told me the medical schools they’ve gotten admission into. That’s what I’m most excited to hear about – where my students are going and what they’ll be doing. Our graduates do amazing things!”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: GPSI Program, January 2018

A special commitment to education in public affairs has been central to the mission and vision of the University of Illinois at Springfield since 1970 when Robert Spencer, founding president of Sangamon State University (now UIS), first defined the “professional and vocational objectives” of Illinois’s new state capital university.

Though a member of the UIS community for just a short time, Sherrie Elzinga, Director of the Graduate Public Service Internship program, knows more about that public affairs commitment than most. Before assuming the GPSI Director role in August, 2017, Sherrie worked for more than 26 years at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency where, as Chief of Staff, she often observed and mentored students serving GPSI internships.

“It’s imperative that we prepare the next generation of competent public servants and this ‘learn-the-ropes experience’ does exactly that,” says Sherrie. “To have the opportunity now as Director to lead and grow the program is really my dream job!”

About 200 UIS graduate students are part of the GPSI program each year, working 20 hours per week in a state agency internship while at the same time engaging in fulltime graduate studies at UIS. The program is a partnership between the University and more than 20 state offices and agencies, with the agency providing financial support for a tuition waiver and a stipend and the GPSI program providing supervision and coordination. Since the program began over 40 years ago, more than 3,500 students have successfully completed the 2-3 year experience, earning a masters degree at the same time they are gaining valuable professional experience and contributing to the mission and success of the agency. The majority of those graduates have gone on to successful careers in public service at local, state and national levels – many in the same agencies where they interned.

Marleigh Andrews-Conrad is one of hundreds of such success stories. After growing up in Springfield and earning an undergraduate degree from St. Louis University, Marleigh was accepted in the Masters in Public Health and Masters in Human Services dual degree program at UIS and served as a GPSI intern at the Illinois Department of Public Health.

“My GPSI internship was incredibly multifaceted, focusing on a variety of factors that can affect the successful implementation of HIV prevention and care in Illinois,” she reports.

“Having the opportunity to consistently practice a variety of ‘real world’ scenarios with the support and encouragement of my GPSI mentor, Janet Nuss, was both motivating and valuable,” she adds.

Marleigh was honored by the GPSI program in Spring, 2017 as recipient of the Brian T. Milbrandt Memorial Intern Award for Excellence. Shortly after completing her internship and masters degree, Marleigh accepted a position at IDPH working for the Ryan White program, which ensures people living with HIV have access to services that promote health maintenance. “As a young professional,” says Marleigh, “I will always be grateful for my beginnings in public service as a GPSI intern. The experience allowed me to begin a career that aligns with my professional and personal goals and values.”

Scott McFarland (from the Quad Cities area) and Jarrod Hill (also from Springfield) have similar success stories. Scott served as a GPSI intern at Serve Illinois, a state agency whose mission is to

support and enhance volunteerism and community service. Jarrod interned at the Bureau of Labor Relations in Illinois' Department of Central Management Services. Both now have successful careers in those same organizations – Scott as Executive Director of Serve Illinois and Jarrod as a Labor Relations Representative for the BLR.

“The GPSI experience has contributed immensely to my professional success,” says Jarrod.

“The ability to apply what I was learning in the classroom in real time on the job proved invaluable,” he continues. “I am still drawing off the knowledge I gained through the GPSI program today.”

Scott adds: “The most valuable aspect of the GPSI program was the ability to integrate myself into a team. Among all my experiences that led to where I am now, the GPSI program was the most influential.”

Since completing his GPSI experience, Scott has remained involved with students following in his footsteps – supervising and mentoring 10 GPSI interns in the Serve Illinois organization.

As Director Elzinga knows from her years overseeing interns at the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the internship supervisor plays a key role in the success of the program. Neelu Lowder, a civil engineer who manages the Site Remediation and State Response Action programs at the IEPA, has supervised many GPSI interns since beginning her work at the agency in 1994. In 2017, Neelu received the GPSI Award for Exemplary Leadership in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the program as a supervisor and mentor.

“While the financial aspects of the program are a tangible asset, the real-world experience, professional contacts, and knowledge that GPSI interns gain is immeasurable,” says Neelu.

“The interns we’ve been fortunate enough to work with have been exemplary – bringing a valuable ‘tech savvy’ aspect to the job and making contributions that are varied and diverse.”

Nearly 50 years after defining that commitment to education in public affairs, I think President Spencer would be delighted to see how his vision has come to life in the UIS GPSI program.

(For more information, [visit the GPSI program website](#).)

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield

SJR Column: Educational Leadership Program, December 2017

What makes successful K-12 schools tick? A recent study cited by Education Pioneers, a nationwide school improvement project funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, concluded school leadership is a critical factor. Along with excellent teachers, outstanding principals and superintendents have significant impact on how well students learn in school.

That impact is the reason that, in addition to preparing highly-qualified K-12 teachers, UIS offers graduate programs in Educational Leadership that prepare principals, superintendents and other school personnel for leadership roles in schools throughout Central Illinois and beyond.

Scott Day, a faculty member at UIS for 20 years (and winner of the 2017 Faculty Excellence Award), leads the Educational Leadership program. “What attracts students to our program,” says Scott, “is top-notch faculty with extensive experience working as principals and superintendents.”

“Our graduates always say how well prepared they feel for the job based on the program’s course projects and the extensive internship requirement,” he continues.

“The professional preparation is about as realistic as you can get – and that is the key to our (and our graduates’) success.”

Hanfu Mi, Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, agrees: “Faculty who teach in the Educational Leadership program have not only had careers as successful principals and superintendents, they also remain connected to people and issues of importance in K-12 in Illinois – engaging in research, service and other professional activities that keep them informed of exactly what is going on in the schools across the state.”

“Dr. Day is a good example of that connectivity,” Dean Mi continues. “He currently serves on the Executive Board of the Illinois Principals Association and spends significant time each semester in the schools, mentoring current graduate students (most of whom are also fulltime teachers) and advising alums who continue to stay connected to the faculty long after they complete the program.”

Jennifer Gill, Superintendent of Springfield Public School District #186, is one of those alums. Jennifer was born and raised in Springfield, where she graduated from Springfield High School and later taught at Wanless Elementary School, one of 23 elementary schools in the district. “I chose the University of Illinois at Springfield for my Masters Degree in Educational Administration due to strong recommendations from educators in my community,” says Jennifer.

“I quickly realized the opportunity to learn from professors who were practitioners as well as those who were grounded in educational research was the blend of support for which I was looking.”

Dr. Gill later returned to UIS for her Superintendent’s licensure and the Chief School Business Endorsement, working with a cohort of fellow educators with whom she maintains valuable professional relationships today.

Superintendent Gill is not the only UIS Educational Leadership alum in District #186. In fact, more than 60% of the principals employed in the Springfield Public Schools today are proud graduates of the program. Another alum is Lyn Williams, who became principal of Southeast High School this fall after serving 11 years in other roles in the district, most recently as Assistant Principal at Lanphier High School.

“Finding a graduate program that provided me with research-based instruction and real-life relevance was my priority when choosing both a principalship program and a superintendency program,” says Lyn.

“The expertise of my instructors at UIS allows for class time to be spent problem-solving

around real-world case studies and the discussion is filled with dynamic analysis and insight that is second to none.”

“Proximity to where I live was also important,” he continues, “as I needed a program that would allow me to balance work, family and education. Expressing appreciation for ongoing support and guidance provided by UIS Educational Leadership faculty via phone, email, office and even school visits.

K-12 schools in Illinois today face a variety of challenges including uncertain funding, poverty and other student risk factors, teacher training and retention, changing student attitudes and behaviors, state and federal mandates, school safety and security, and other issues that affect student success. Now more than ever, schools need skilled leaders who can create the conditions that enable teachers to help their students learn and achieve and that prepare them for success in college and in the workforce. Schools also need leaders who understand their school is embedded in the community and who can successfully engage families and communities to work together to meet the needs of all students.

Developing and supporting those educational leaders for the benefit of current and future generations is what the UIS Educational Leadership program is all about.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois at Springfield.

SJR Column: Reaching Stellar, November 2017

Thanks to the talent and dedication of faculty and staff and the generosity of our many supporters, the University of Illinois Springfield has created positive momentum that is evident today everywhere you look – the largest graduating class in history last spring, new and expanded majors whose graduates are contributing to the regional economy, exceptional performing arts programs that enhance the cultural life of the community, and a beautiful campus on the south side of Springfield where a new Student Union will open in January.

The contributions of members of our academic community will undoubtedly continue to add value to the campus; but just a few weeks ago, we also launched an exciting new initiative that will take UIS toward even greater excellence and greater impact for our community, our state and beyond. It’s “Reaching Stellar,” a \$40 million campaign that is part of the most ambitious fundraising effort in University of Illinois history.

Dr. Jeff Lorber, Vice Chancellor for Advancement, is leading the campaign which has already raised more than \$18 million. “A comprehensive campaign like ‘Reaching Stellar,’” says Jeff, “enables the campus to develop strategic priorities that, with donor support, will help ensure the future success and expanded impact of the university.

At the same time, when donors contribute to specific projects that interest them, the vitality and quality of life of the entire community is enhanced.”

And speaking of leadership, the “Reaching Stellar” campaign committee is co-chaired by two exceptional community leaders – Arthur “Hy” Bunn, President and CEO of Bunn-O-Matic

Corporation, one of Springfield's most important corporate citizens, and Saul Morse, of counsel at Brown, Hay and Stephens, the oldest and one of the most highly respected law firms in Illinois.

"UIS is providing the educated citizens and skilled leaders for the future of our community at the same time it improves the culture of our area," says Saul.

"I'm proud to know that, through my involvement with the campaign, I'm assisting in building one of the true gems in the area and the state."

"I was honored to be asked to co-chair the 'Reaching Stellar' campaign," adds Hy. "I believe strongly in the leadership and mission of UIS. The campaign is critical to the long-term success of the university and the quality of its value proposition."

A planning process involving faculty and staff as well as alumni and members of the Springfield community has identified key priorities for the campaign. Increasing scholarships and enhancing academic excellence are two of those priorities. Scholarship support is essential for growing enrollment at the campus, since affordability is the deciding factor in many students' college choice. More importantly, scholarships make a University of Illinois degree from UIS possible for talented and deserving students who could not otherwise afford college.

As most Springfield residents know, UIS contributes to the community and the Central Illinois region in a variety of ways including NPR Illinois public radio, the Sangamon Auditorium performing arts center, the Illinois Innocence Project, student volunteer programs and other ongoing initiatives. These activities and others represent a campaign priority for "The Public Good" and provide an opportunity for donors to make a positive difference in the community as well as the university.

Building and renovating needed facilities for our growing campus is another important priority. The Student Union, for example, has been financed entirely by private gifts and a student fee approved by the student body. Thanks to generous donors, we've already surpassed the \$6 million mark; but we welcome additional gifts that will help achieve the \$8 million Student Union goal as well as provide support for other needed facilities.

One of the most exciting priorities for the campaign is the new Center for Lincoln Studies. Building on existing assets including an exceptional History Department, the Naomi B. Lynn Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies (currently held by renowned Lincoln scholar Dr. Michael Burlingame) and the Center for State Policy and Leadership's Lincoln Legacy Lecture Series, the Center will take advantage of its location here in Lincoln's hometown and will add to the growing collaboration between the university and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

In a recent op/ed piece in this newspaper, the SJR editor noted UIS is "the perfect place" for the national base for scholarship, teaching and public history about Lincoln's life, leadership and legacy.

We're excited to see the many ways the Center for Lincoln Studies will enhance understanding of the life and times of the 16th President and we look forward to the significant contributions it will make to the overall excellence and impact of the university.

With the support and loyalty of both old and new friends and with contributions large and small, I'm confident the "Reaching Stellar" campaign will accelerate the positive momentum of UIS and enable

Additional information and opportunities to make that fall available are located at [Division of Student Services website](#). You can also just give me a call ... I'll buy lunch!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: International Festival, October 2017

The Fall, 2017 calendar at UIS is, more than ever, brimming with inviting events for students, faculty, staff and campus visitors. Myriad entertainment options at Sangamon Auditorium, guest speakers examining a wide variety of timely issues, and a full slate of Division II Athletics contests provide almost daily opportunities for engagement, learning, and enjoyment.

In addition to all of the above, a very special event will occur on November 3rd when TRAC (The Recreation and Athletic Center) will be transformed into a global festival grounds. It's the 40th anniversary of the UIS International Festival – the longest running student-led event in the history of the campus!

The story of the festival starts with Gerlinde Coates, who served as the University's first Director of the Office of International Student Services. In 1977, Coates was employed in the campus Learning Center helping international students improve their English. She proposed an international potluck as a way to acquaint the campus and the Springfield community with the "beautiful cultural assets" that international students represent.

... and the rest, as they say, is history! That potluck in 1977, attended by a small number of enthusiastic guests, has grown to become a major campus/community celebration – much loved by hundreds of participants who come to enjoy international food-tasting, cultural exhibits, demonstrations, and artistic performances from around the world. At the same time, the number of international student attending UIS has increased – with more than 600 students from 42 countries enrolled this fall.

Erika Suzuki, program coordinator in International Student Services at UIS, is leading the Festival Planning Committee.

“With our increasingly interconnected world, developing a better understanding of different cultures has never been more important than it is today,” says Erika.

“We're especially excited about this year's festival theme – ‘Anniversaries’ – and we're looking forward to what our community partners, exhibitors and performers will do to feature the theme.” Erika also reports that international alumni have received special invitations for this year's celebration and she is hopeful some will return to campus to enjoy the celebration and see how the campus has grown since they graduated.

One of this year's performers at the festival will be Yu (Christina) Shao, a senior accounting major from Beipiano, China. Christina started playing the guzheng, a traditional Chinese plucked-string

instrument, when she was five years old and has become an accomplished musician. She is active as a Camerata Music Scholar at UIS and this year, in addition to performing, is also helping to organize the festival. “I’ve enjoyed performing at the festival every year,” she says.

“International students love to share their food, traditions and ideas with festival participants and it’s great to see so many people involved.”

Maricela Arce is a graduate student of Mexican heritage who is on the Festival Planning Committee and served as MC during past festivals.

“At the first International Festival I attended, it was exciting to see the immense interest from the campus and the community,” says Maricela.

“I’m enjoying organizing student volunteers for this year’s festival and will be making sure that everything runs smoothly.”

Hilary Frost, UIS faculty member and chair of the Global Studies Program, is also a member of the Festival Planning Committee.

“It’s important that we create opportunities to recognize and celebrate diversity,” says Dr. Frost.

“The International Festival is a terrific opportunity to see worlds and cultures come together and share through languages, foods, arts, performances and personal stories. The Festival is a signature event that amplifies the many international studies courses across the entire curriculum at UIS.”

The International Festival is free and welcomes guests of all ages! Festival activities begin at 5:00 pm and conclude at 8:00 pm on Friday, November 3rd in TRAC. Please consider this your personal invitation!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Chancellor’s SJR Welcome to New Campus Leaders

UIS is proud to introduce its newest leaders and your newest neighbors. We are exceedingly fortunate to be able to attract this level of talent, a group that epitomizes our promise of Leadership lived.

– Chancellor Susan J. Koch

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS | SPRINGFIELD

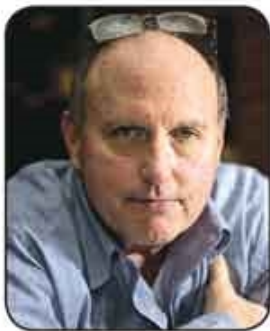


UIS is proud to introduce its newest leaders and your newest neighbors. We are exceedingly fortunate to be to attract this level of talent, a group that epitomizes promise of Leadership lived.

— Chancellor Susan J. I.



Welcome to the U of I family and your new city, one that strongly supports its institutions of higher learning.



Michael Davis
Instructor, Computer Science



Jordan Hyde
Instructor, Psychology



Ahmad Juma'h
Associate Professor, Accountancy



Youngjin Kang
Lecturer, Human Services



Hasan K.
Lecturer, Man
Information





Yuan Li
Assistant Professor, Management
Information Systems



Stephanie Martinez
Instructor, English & Modern
Languages



Maria Panteva
Assistant Professor, Chemistry



Edrisa Sanyang
Assistant Professor, Public Health



Andrea Sc
Assistant Profess
Modern Lan



Yih Sung
Assistant Professor,
Mathematical Sciences



Mohammed Uddin
Assistant Professor, Accountancy



Jennifer Whalen
Instructor, English & Modern
Languages



Dennis Papini
Vice Chancellor for Academic
Affairs & Provost



Robert S
Dean, College of P
Administra



Bryan Rives
Director, Sangamon Auditorium



Sherrie Elzinga
Director, Office of Graduate
Intern Programs



Ann Comerford
Executive Director,
UIS Student Union



Katherine Battee-Freeman
Director, Career
Development Center



Keith Ste
Director of Co



LEADERSHIP **lived**

SJR Column: Brazil Project, September 2017

Summer always seems to be filled with possibilities and most of us remember coming back to school from summer break to be greeted with a familiar question: “What did you do over the summer?” But not many would be able to provide a response that includes having been “up close and personal” with

alligators, toucans and coatimundi or visiting Iguazu Falls, one of the seven natural wonders of the world.

These unusual encounters were part of many new experiences shared by a group of U.S. and Brazilian university students and faculty who spent several weeks this summer as part of an international research collaboration between University of Illinois at Springfield and UEM – the Universidade Estadual de Maringa, a university in southern Brazil. Thanks in part to an external grant, Dr. Keenan Dungey, a chemistry professor at UIS, and Dr. Luiz Felipe Machado Velho, a biologist from UEM, worked together to create a course focused on the study of the aquatic ecology of the Illinois River in Illinois and the Rio Parana in Brazil – both parts of large and important river systems in the Americas.

The course included opportunities for students to spend time doing research together while learning some of the cutting-edge science behind restoration and conservation on both river systems. The experience also helped students develop understanding of the cultural differences and similarities between the U.S. and Brazil that result in different and sometimes similar approaches to the environment.

UIS has been connected with scientists from the UEM since Dr. Mike Lemke, Professor of Biology and founder of the UIS Emiquon Field Station on the Illinois River near Havana, first traveled to Brazil several years ago.

“We’re honored to work with our colleagues from UEM,” says Dr. Lemke. “Felipe’s work complements mine, helping me to bridge ecological links from nutrients to bacteria to protozoa. The value of floodplain aquatic ecology is what is at stake here.”

“The idea of the course was to do similar things on the floodplains in both countries,” says Dr. Dungey.

“For me it was fascinating,” he continues, “to be in Brazil and be surrounded by great science; to see the UIS students and watch them form relationships and teams with the Brazilian students and experience a different culture.”

For Shelby Green, a senior from Chicago who is majoring in Environmental Studies, the course was her first time being abroad.

“Experiencing the people, embracing the culture, and developing a better understanding of the science was just mind-blowing,” Shelby reports.

“I’m a first generation student and it was challenging being so far from home for the first time; but going to Brazil showed me there is so much more to learn.”

Shyleen Frost, who graduated this spring from UIS with a major in Biology, is no stranger to international travel. She has traveled in Europe and conducted water research with Dr. Dungey in the Gambia, West Africa, last year. “It was just amazing to learn so many cool new sampling techniques for all these different types of organisms and compare them to those found in the U.S.,” says Shyleen about her Brazil experience.

“It showed the importance of collaboration to me and what you can do together. I’m going forward into grad school and now I know my research collaborators could be from anywhere in the world!”

“In the next ten years, I think focusing on some of these critical conservation issues will be the thing that this collaboration can bring to bear,” reflects Dr. Lemke. “The Brazilians are losing their rivers to hydroelectric plants and we can learn from that. At the same time, the UIS Emiquon Field Station is located in one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the country and has much to offer our international partners.”

“Working with our UEM colleagues, who have been studying the Parana River floodplain for more than 30 years, was a good experience for our UIS students,” says Dr. Dungey. “Students will present the results of our research on each campus and at an international conference.”

Dungey hopes the future collaboration of UIS and UEM can go beyond biology and chemistry. “In addition to its relevance for scientific study, river floodplain restoration is also a public affairs and an education issue,” he states. “There are a lot more opportunities for collaboration.”

And, in case you were wondering, the coatimundi is South America’s version of a raccoon.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message – Fall 2017

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the start of the 2017-18 academic year at the University of Illinois Springfield! For those of you returning to UIS – welcome back. If you are new to the campus this fall, a hearty and warm welcome to you as well. My wish for you is a productive and enjoyable year.

Our entire academic community is looking forward this year to the opening of the new Student Union – just 130 days from today! We’ve had tremendous involvement from students, faculty and staff who worked directly with Dewberry and Workshop Architects to design a truly inspiring, functional and ~~valuing~~ ~~inspiring~~ ~~and~~ ~~take~~ ~~look~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~vide~~ ~~and~~ ~~conference~~ ~~to~~ ~~UIS~~ ~~students~~ ~~party~~ ~~at~~ this amazing new building that will be the hearthstone of campus life.

We have lots of welcome activities going on this week and I hope you’ll attend the Chancellor’s Welcome Picnic tomorrow – Tuesday, August 29. All students, faculty and staff (along with family members) are invited!

Please join us near the colonnade from 4:30 – 6:00 for food, beverages, music, conversation, and (for students) drawings for some great prizes.

I hope to see you at the picnic tomorrow!

Chancellor Koch

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2017

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 24, 2017

Good Afternoon and welcome to this Fall, 2017 Convocation!

Thanks so much for being here today!

As you know, convocation is, in part, a time for us to meet new colleagues at UIS; but it's also a time to get together and get reacquainted with long-time colleagues after summer breaks and to look ahead to the new academic year.

So whether you're new or not-so-new, welcome to the 2017-18 academic year at the University of Illinois at Springfield!

I'd like to offer an especially warm welcome to some special guests who are with us today: (please stand when I introduce you and I promise a rousing round of applause after everyone has been named):

- Juan Huerte, representing Jim Langfelder, Mayor of the City of Springfield;
- Dr. Jennifer Gill, UIS alum and Superintendent of Springfield Public School District 186;
- Katie Davison, Executive Director of Innovate Springfield;
- Dr. Candace Mueller, Associate Director for External Relations for the Illinois Board of Higher Education;
- Karen Hasara, another prominent alum, former Mayor of Springfield and former member of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees;
- Dr. Naomi Lynn, Chancellor Emeritus of UIS and her husband, Bob.
- Former UIS Interim Chancellor, longtime Provost and Faculty Emeritus, Dr. Harry Berman and his wife, Deborah;
- Dr. Lynn Pardie, former Provost and Faculty Emeritus at UIS.
- Professor Betsy Goulet, Vice Chair of the Campus Senate;
- Clayton Bellot, Chair of the Academic Professional Advisory Committee;
- Jo Barnard, Chair of the Civil Service Advisory Council;
- Edwin Robles, University of Illinois Student Trustee;

- Garret Nimmo, President of the UIS Student Government Association;
- And last but not least, a personal guest and great UIS supporter, my husband, Dennis Koch.

[Please join me in welcoming these special guests: APPLAUSE.]

Speaking of special attendees today, I also want to offer a warm welcome to faculty and staff who are new to UIS this year.

We'll hear more about the new folks later in this Convocation.

As most of you know, I am not new.

I'm now in my seventh year serving as your Chancellor and here we are at another convocation looking ahead to a year that will include among other exciting moments, the opening of our new Student Union

... and by the way, that opening is just 134 days from today!

As almost everyone here knows, in the time that has passed since I began my tenure as Chancellor at UIS, we've been extraordinarily committed to three strategic priorities:

- growth in visibility, reputation and enrollment;
- the recruitment and retention of talented faculty and staff, and
- providing the outstanding facilities that our students, faculty and staff need and deserve.

GROWTH – TALENT – FACILITIES

I'm not going to spend much time looking back today except to say, I am deeply grateful to all of you who have helped in so many ways to advance those priorities.

It has been a remarkable team effort!

GROWTH:

Since 2011, we've created steady growth in student enrollment at UIS (and at all three UI campuses) despite the state budget crisis and despite the trend going severely in the other direction at other public institutions across the state!

Positioning ourselves for strategic growth at this very young campus continues to be an essential priority and requires a long-term, sustained strategic effort.

Earlier this week I listened to several enthusiastic members of the Student Orientation Team introducing themselves at a session for new students and parents – introductions included a student who said she is majoring in Exercise Science, another studying Sport Management, and another majoring in Nursing –

None of those academic programs existed three years ago at UIS ...

Thanks to the dedicated work of faculty and staff, we've added 12 new academic programs in the last five years.

(I'm really looking forward to meeting a Theatre major for the first time in the next few days Eric, Missy, Dathan – I hope you can help me on that one.)

There is no doubt the University of Illinois brand provides us a unique advantage in recruitment across the state and beyond!

The UI brand plus...

- the high-quality personalized experience that our talented faculty and staff provide for our students,
- the robust financial aid we offer;
- the flexibility of exceptional online learning opportunities;
- and the continued addition of innovative new majors, programs, internship opportunities, and student life activities that are relevant to students and that will enhance the student experience will continue to be a winning combination in the future.

Along with new programs, we must continue to recruit top-notch talent – faculty, staff and administrative leaders -to our campus.

Several people mentioned to me last year after convocation that they were amazed to hear me state the number of new employees who had joined our academic community since July 1, 2011 – so let me update those numbers for you.

The number of UIS employees who have joined our academic community since July 1, 2011 and who have been with us for six years or less as of Monday of this week is 637, including:

- 244 faculty,
- 188 Academic Professionals and
- 205 Civil Service employees.

That's more than half of our total employees.

Of course we continue to greatly appreciate the many contributions of longtime employees at UIS; but at the same time the talent and expertise those 637 newer arrivals have brought to us is substantial!

Regardless of the length of your tenure at UIS, we're all on the same ship and hopefully we're all rowing in the same direction.

To all of you who serve with such dedication on search committees each year to recruit the talent we need, thank you so very much.

And of course when it comes to facilities, the new Student Union is most certainly central to campus improvements this year.

I'm delighted to report to you today the Student Union is about 85% complete and it is exceeding expectations in so many ways.

- We've had tremendous involvement from students, faculty and staff who worked directly with Dewberry and Workshop Architects and others to design a truly inspiring, functional and welcoming building. (It is also a sustainable green building and we expect to earn the LEAD

Gold designation.)

- I want to thank Geoff Evans and the members of our culinary team who offered their expertise and experience working closely with the architects and designers for many months to design the kitchen areas, serverly and dining facilities for the new Student Union. They are functional, innovative and beautiful spaces thanks to you!
- Another group led by Mike Miller, Department Chair in Art, Music and Theatre, is at work with an art consultant selecting the artist who will be commissioned to produce a significant work of art for the Student Union. That addition is made possible by a \$250,000 private gift we successfully sought this past year.
- Dr. Ford and her team have successfully recruited an outstanding new Director for the UIS Student Union. Ann, I so enjoyed meeting with you this week and I already appreciate the leadership, expertise and enthusiasm that you bring to your new assignment.
- And I want to give a special shout out to Chuck Coderko, former Director of Construction and now Associate Chancellor for Facilities and Services, who has been working so closely on a daily basis with Dewberry Architects and Williams Brothers Construction Company to ensure the project stays on budget and on schedule. Thank you, Chuck! You are doing an outstanding job!
- I also want to report that fund-raising for the Student Union continues to progress very well. Thanks to the generosity of Jeff Langfelder, Vice-Chancellor for Advancement and \$6 million and and moving steadily toward our \$8 million goal. I am very confident we'll get there!

And by the way, speaking of generous donors, Dr. Lorber mentioned to me just a few days ago that our own faculty/staff campaign this past year resulted in a 50.5% participation rate! That means over half of our employees made a contribution to the University this past year – that's a very high participation rate and the highest its ever been at UIS.

For those who participated in the UIS faculty/staff campaign this past year, thank you so much.

.... And, by the way, there is still time for you to participate as a donor in the Student Union campaign.

Of course, even in lean times, we're making needed facility improvements and enhancements that align with our strategic goals and I'll just mention three others in addition to the Student Union today:

- I'll be doing a walk-through tomorrow of the newly renovated academic spaces in one of our original campus buildings for the new Exercise Science, Athletic Training and Nursing programs – projects that have been completed this summer in time for the opening of classes next week;
- The purchase of the former FOP Lake Club on Lake Springfield continues to progress. I appeared before the City's Planning and Zoning Commission last week and, thanks in part to the strong support of Mayor Langfelder, the group voted unanimously to approve our request for a variance. The request now moves on to the September City Council meeting. If all goes well, we anticipate completing the purchase and taking possession by the end of September.

The lakeshore property includes about 3 acres and 440 feet of lakeshore, a 3,000 square foot building and a dock system. It will be known as the UIS Field Station at Lake Springfield – a multi-use facility providing direct access to the lake for educational use for Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Studies faculty and other academic programs. It will also be available for use by our Recreation programs.

Best of all, the new field station is only a few minutes walk from campus.

And finally I want to mention in terms of facilities that, thanks to successful private fundraising by Athletics, our baseball program saw the addition of new artificial turf to its facility this summer. The turf greatly increases the safety of the facility for our student/athletes, allows us to host more home competitions, and also enables the program to do more outreach to high school teams and other programs.

As long as I am mentioning our Division II Athletics program, I should also mention the Prairie Stars had an all-time high 113 student athletes earning GLVC Conference Academic All Conference Honors this past Spring. My congratulations to those student/athletes who did so well in the classroom and to all who encourage and support them!

So let's spend a few minutes looking ahead to the coming year and beyond:

The big news, of course, is that on July 6th we got a budget (including full support for the Monetary Assistance Program – MAP) after more than 2 years of stalemate in state government!

(I never thought I would be celebrating a 10% budget cut, which is what we got, but a 10% cut is a lot better than a 100% cut!)

I want to publicly recognize State Representative Sara Wojcicki Jimenez, a UIS alum, for her support to end the budget crisis. In addition to Sara, area legislators including Senator Andy Manar and Representative Sue Scherer acted in the best interests of Illinois higher education (and our students) to end the impasse.

There is no doubt damage from the budget stalemate has been done and it will take time for us to recover; but I'm proud we managed through it effectively without losing our forward momentum. The new FY 2018 budget gives us a clear picture, for the first time in more than two years, of the portion of our budget that comes from state support. This is a welcome relief as we begin the academic year.

Lots of people think the most important activity happening on our campus this year is the completion and opening of the new Student Union; but Associate Vice Chancellor Cecilia Cornell and retired Provost Lynn Pardie could tell you there is actually something far more important that will occur this year and I want to remind you of it in case you aren't aware.

We are now moving into the final months of the reaffirmation of the University's institutional accreditation by the Higher Learning Commission. This exceedingly important work has been going on for many months and has involved the entire campus. The reaffirmation process requires us to demonstrate compliance with reaccreditation standards and our ongoing efforts at continuous improvement. Later this fall we will conclude our Assurance Argument and complete our Evidence File, the central pieces of our application. We will then host external peer reviewers representing the HLC for a campus visit on February 19-20.

Much remains to be done and you'll be asked to attend a campus forum this Fall so that you will be more informed about the roles faculty, staff and students will play in the accreditation visit. My sincere thanks to Cecilia, Cathy Gunn, and the many others who have been supporting this very important effort.

Another event coming this year that has been in the planning stages for many months is the University of Illinois Comprehensive Capital Campaign. UIS will be launching its campaign (within that system-wide effort), with a special campus celebration on October 10. With two prominent UIS supporters chairing our campaign, Hy Bunn, President and CEO of Bunn-O-Matic Corporation and Saul Morse, from Brown, Hay and Stephens law firm, the UIS Campaign will raise funds to provide funding for vital campus priorities including scholarships, faculty support and facilities.

There is one more additional issue I want to mention today as we look ahead to the coming academic year:

Let me start by pointing out that we are poised at a unique and interesting confluence of circumstances at UIS – right now.

What do I mean?

- We've succeeded in having budget funding not withdrawn by the legislature, a long national search.
- The UI Strategic Framework was approved by our Board of Trustees a little over a year ago and provides numerous opportunities for innovation and strategic advancement for our campus;
- At the same time the Framework was completed, our own updated UIS Strategic Plan, which has guided decision-making for the past four years, is now past its “expiration date”;
- After almost two years of negotiations (and good faith bargaining by both faculty and administration), we settled our first faculty union contract this past May. As we move forward now to implement this four-year contract, I am confident we have set the stage for an enhanced partnership between faculty and administration that will serve both faculty and students well.
- And finally, thanks to the efforts of many in this room, we have created positive momentum at UIS – represented by the new Student Union, new academic programs, new opportunities in student life, and I would be remiss if I did not mention, an absolutely beautiful campus environment.

At the same time all those circumstances present themselves, we know these will continue to be challenging times in higher education in our state and across the country.

We all know Illinois's budget problems have not been solved, paying for college continues to be a major challenge for current students and prospective students, and the outflow of qualified high school graduates from Illinois to other states for college continues.

At the national level, political events and associated uncertainties have had a negative impact on international student enrollments across the U.S., leading to a decline in both enrollment and its associated tuition revenue for UIS this past year and this coming year.

Internally here at UIS, some members of our community question who we are as an institution, what we can best aspire to be within the framework of the University of Illinois System, how we can best establish long term fiscal viability and how we can best be relevant in the Springfield community, across our state and beyond.

Those are exceedingly healthy questions for us to be asking and I'm hoping we can address those questions and many others this year.

So: we are currently in the process of engaging a consultant who will help guide a planning process throughout the coming year – a process that will provide opportunities for every member of our community (along with alums and local participants) to express their views about the future of UIS.

Dr. Papini mentioned in his earlier remarks that the process of creating a shared plan is powerful. I'm confident this activity in the coming year will be powerful and important And that it will lead to a consensus and a strategic direction that will guide our university forward for the next several years.

This effort will only be successful if we have wide participation from as many members of our community as possible and my request to you today is that you fully participate in that process.

The process will benefit from your wisdom and experience.

In closing (and on a more personal note) you all received a message from me last week reflecting on the current political climate in our country in the wake of the recent violence that took place in Charlottesville, Virginia. I have received many messages, most of which expressed sincere support and appreciation for that message.

I am grateful for your feedback and I want to take this opportunity to say again we must stand together as a united academic community to reject hatred in any form, to embrace our mission as an educational institution, and to live up to our promise of "Leadership Lived" in everything that we do.

The work we do, educating future citizens of our state and our nation, has never been more important. In fact, it's critical to the future of our democracy.

Thank you for what you do every day to educate those future citizens and leaders and to make this University better than it was the day before, the week before, the month before, the year before.

Let's make this academic year the best year we've ever had at UIS.

Thank you.

Condemnation of Hatred and Bigotry Message, August 2017

Dear Members of the UIS Community,

As we continue preparations during the next few days to welcome our students, faculty and staff for the 2017-18 academic year, what should be happy anticipation has been sobered by horrific violence that took place last weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia on and near the University of Virginia campus – violence in the name of hatred and bigotry. You have already received a statement responding to these events from President Killeen and the three University of Illinois chancellors. As your Chancellor, I stand firmly behind those sentiments; but with this message, I write to add a brief personal thought specific to our UIS community.

Distinct from any other campus in the country, UIS resides in the hometown of Abraham Lincoln –

whose spirit (as poet Vachel Lindsay famously said) is still "... among us as in times before". We take pride in our beautiful Lincoln sculpture, which serves as a daily reminder of an American president who led the country through its greatest moral and political crisis – preserving the Union and putting an end to slavery. The UIS reputation for "Leadership lived" is another reminder of Lincoln's leadership – as well as of the commitment we make to our students to prepare **them** for a life of leadership and impact.

As Lincoln did more than 150 years ago, we must reject the ideas and ideals being espoused by Neo-Nazis, white supremacists and others whose violent words and actions pose a profound threat to a civil society and to the future of our democracy. We must stand together as a united academic community to lead as Lincoln did, rejecting hatred in any form and embracing instead our institution's vision "... to enrich individual lives and make a difference in the world."

As we launch the academic year during the next few weeks, I hope you will join me in this commitment.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Community Garden, August 2017

Renowned British horticulturalist and writer Gertrude Jekyll, who created more than 400 gardens in the United Kingdom, Europe and America during her career, once said, "A garden is a grand teacher."

I like to think Megan Styles, an Environmental Anthropologist at the University of Illinois at Springfield, may have been inspired by Jekyll's words when she led an initiative at UIS to establish a now-thriving addition to the campus – the UIS Community Garden. Located near the historic Strawbridge Shepherd House, the garden was dedicated during Earth Week in April, 2016 and has since become an important instructional facility as well as an engaging intersection for volunteers from the campus and the community. More than 200 volunteers have worked in the garden since its opening and it has already produced over 300 pounds of fresh produce.

"The UIS Community Garden has been student driven," explains Dr. Styles. Students in Styles' "Introduction to Sustainability" class designed the garden as a class project; studying various sustainable garden designs, creating a comprehensive plan and budget, and determining the organizational approach that would best support a community garden project over time.

The garden features raised beds which helps control weeds and handle drainage. Wooden compost containers and an in-ground vermiculture compost bin provide a steady supply of organic material that promotes soil microbes and plant growth.

For environmental and educational reasons, no chemical herbicides or pesticides are used. Instead, sustainable practices such as physical removal of insects and the application of pest-control substances from an organic-approved list, help control common garden pests.

“Talented members of the UIS grounds crew have been great partners for us,” says Dr. Styles. “They fenced the 1,250 square-foot garden to protect it from deer and other wildlife and, this year, added a greenhouse that will substantially lengthen our growing season.”

The garden includes many typical vegetables like tomatoes, cucumbers, peas and broccoli; but thanks to heirloom seed donations from Springfield’s own Suttill’s Gardens and the Seed Savers Exchange in Decorah, Iowa, more unusual varieties like sweet chocolate peppers, Pingtong Long eggplant, fuzzy purple cauliflower and Red Russian kale are also thriving.

City Water, Light and Power donated bee balm, butterfly bushes and milkweed varieties to help attract pollinators to the garden and support the monarch butterfly and other beneficial varieties. A number of diminutive gnomes (mysterious contributions from an unknown donor) have taken up residence throughout the garden – adding an element of whimsy, charm and, of course, good luck.

Daniel Rodriguez, a sophomore Biology major from Joliet, Illinois, is keeping a watchful eye on his sunberry bush, a new addition to the garden this year. “As Project Coordinator, I’m out here Monday through Friday working in the garden,” says Daniel.

“I love interacting with volunteers every week and I’ve learned a lot, not only about the plants themselves, but also about pests that come into the garden and organic approaches to controlling them.”

Springfield resident Alana Reynolds is one of several regulars at the garden who often brings her daughters to pitch in at the Wednesday evening work sessions. “The UIS Community Garden is a place to learn and share practical knowledge,” reports Alana. “Any Springfield resident who visits the garden is sure to leave with some sense of worth – whether it be an armload of fresh veggies, a new friend, or a skill that has been learned.”

Looking toward the future, Dr. Styles would like to work with faculty colleagues to build more connections between the garden and the student experience at UIS – offering additional coursework and research opportunities.

“The garden is first and foremost an educational space,” she says, “and we’ll make it even more educational and more sustainable as we continue to develop.”

You can follow activities at the [UIS Community Garden via Facebook](#) or, better yet, join us for a garden work session any Wednesday evening between 5:00 and 7:00 PM. Volunteers are always welcome and I can almost guarantee you won’t go home empty handed!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Letter to the Editor, July 2017

Over the past few days, Illinois state legislators came together to end a historic and deeply damaging budget impasse. All of public higher education, including the University of Illinois at Springfield,

breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Though funding in the coming year represents a 10% reduction from the UI's Fiscal Year 2015 appropriation, this budget will enable UIS to continue to deliver on its promise of an exceptional, personalized university experience for students. In addition, continuation of the Monetary Award Program will provide financial aid that makes college possible for more than 700 students at UIS. Just as importantly, this state appropriation will enable UIS to continue its forward trajectory – graduating students who will contribute to their professions and their communities.

I am deeply grateful to the Illinois legislators who voted to support ending the impasse. On behalf of the entire UIS community, my sincere thanks to State Representatives Sue Scherer and Sara Wojcicki Jimenez, along with Senator Andy Manar – our area legislators who voted to support the bill. We know this is a step in the right direction to restore long-term stability for higher education in our state.

UIS is a vital resource in Sangamon County, with a total economic impact each year of about \$176.8 million. With continued support from the state, the University will remain a vital resource for many years to come.

My sincere thanks, again, to the legislators who understand that supporting higher education is essential for the future of our state.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Cox Children's Center, July 2017

Every week in the United States, an estimated 15 million children younger than age five spend significant time in childcare while their parents work or attend school. Finding high-quality and affordable childcare is an ongoing challenge for working parents. At the same time, childcare often presents a barrier to attending college for the approximately one in four college students who have dependent children.

Since 1970, when the first classes were held at the new campus, the University of Illinois at Springfield has offered full-time on-campus child care at the Cox Children's Center – a resource much valued by UIS students, faculty, staff, alumni and community clients who utilize the Center.

According to Stacey Gilmore, Director of the Center since 2003, the primary mission of Cox Children's Center is “to provide high quality early education and care in a safe, secure nurturing environment.” The Center also serves as a laboratory and practicum site for UIS students with professional aspirations for careers in early childhood education.

Enrollment at Cox each year is typically 50-55 children starting as young as six weeks old. A program for school-aged children increases enrollment to about 70 children during the summer months.

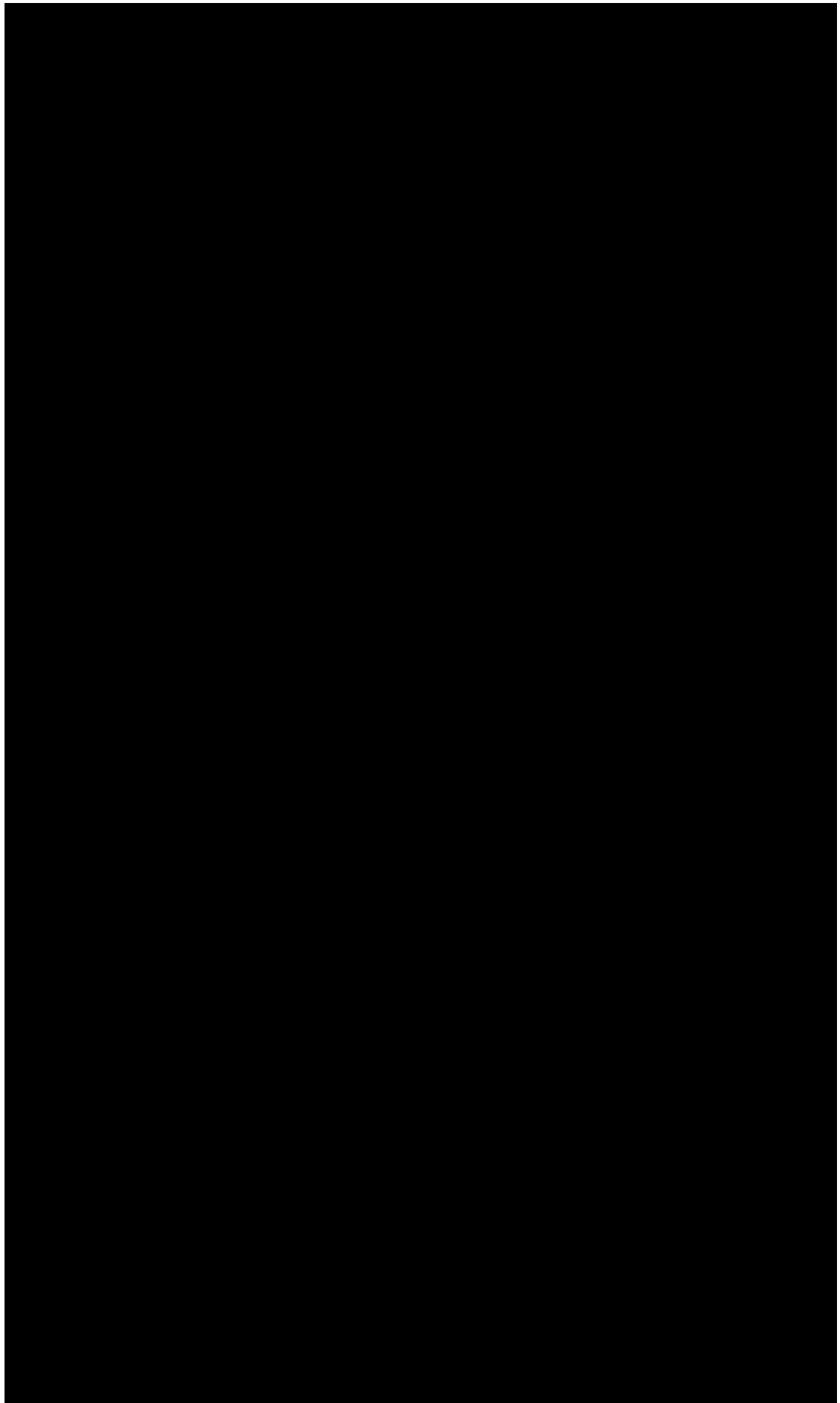
On any given day, the Cox Center, located in a building near the middle of campus, is a lively and engaging environment! “My staff is skilled and their credentials are top-notch,” remarks Director Gilmore.

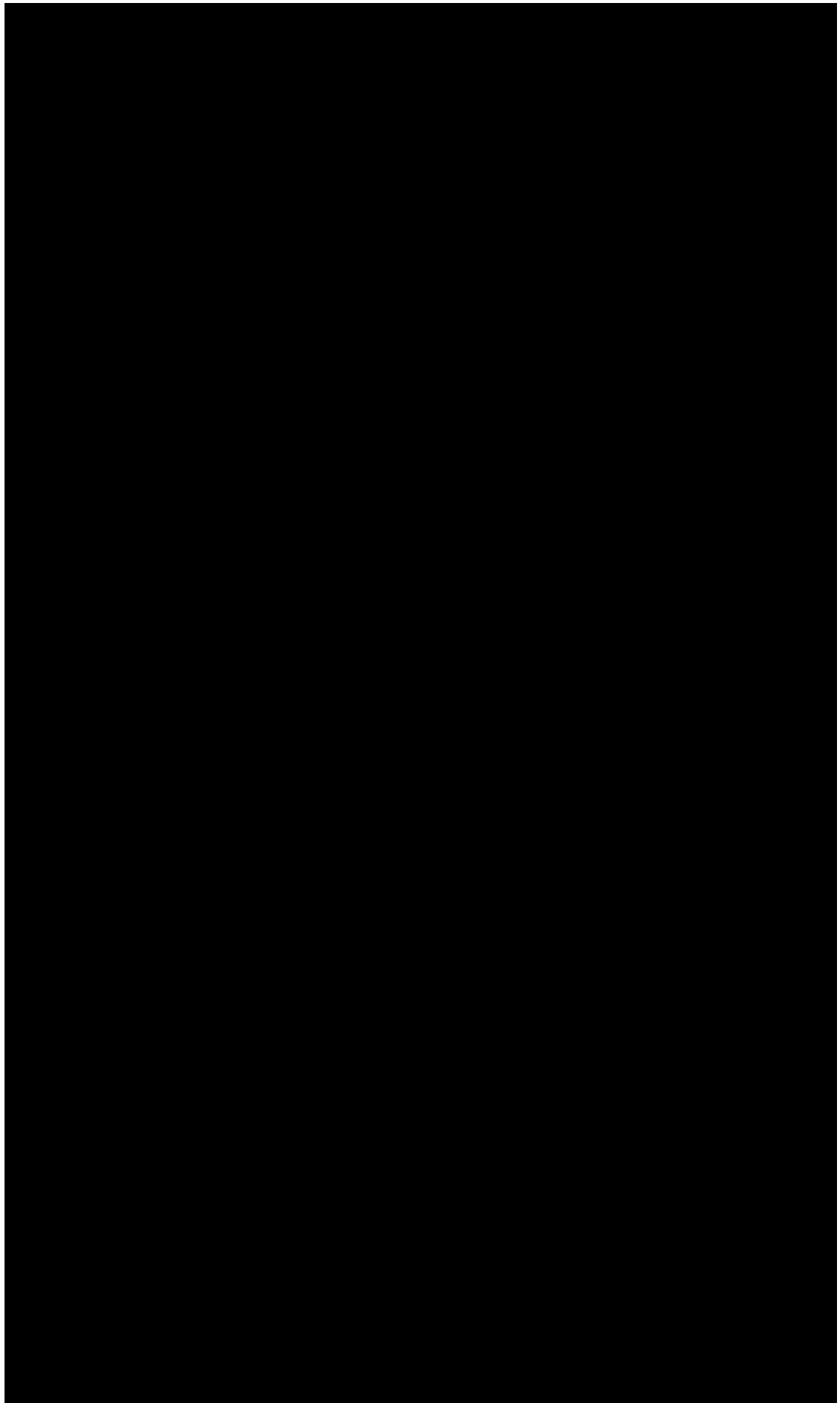
With 14 dedicated fulltime staff and another 14 part-timers, staff turnover is limited and the child-to-teacher ratio is lower than most daycare centers, with a 1:4 ratio for infants and toddlers and 1:6 for preschoolers.

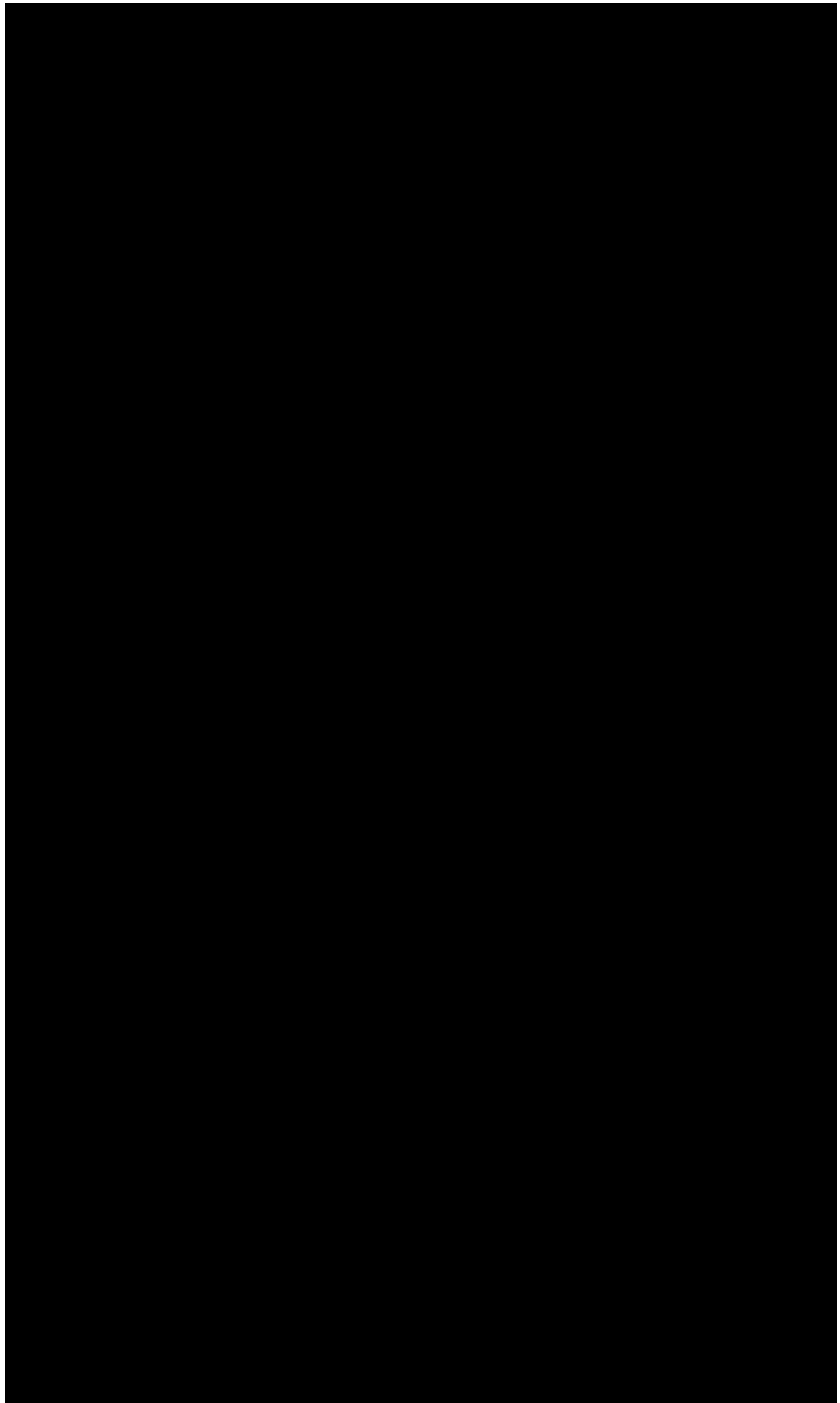
The Center is proud to be accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), considered the mark of high quality for early childhood programs. It is the only daycare within 50 miles of Springfield that is accredited for infant care. The Center has also received the Gold Circle Quality Designation, the highest rating possible, from ExcelRate Illinois, the state's new quality rating and improvement system for early learning providers.

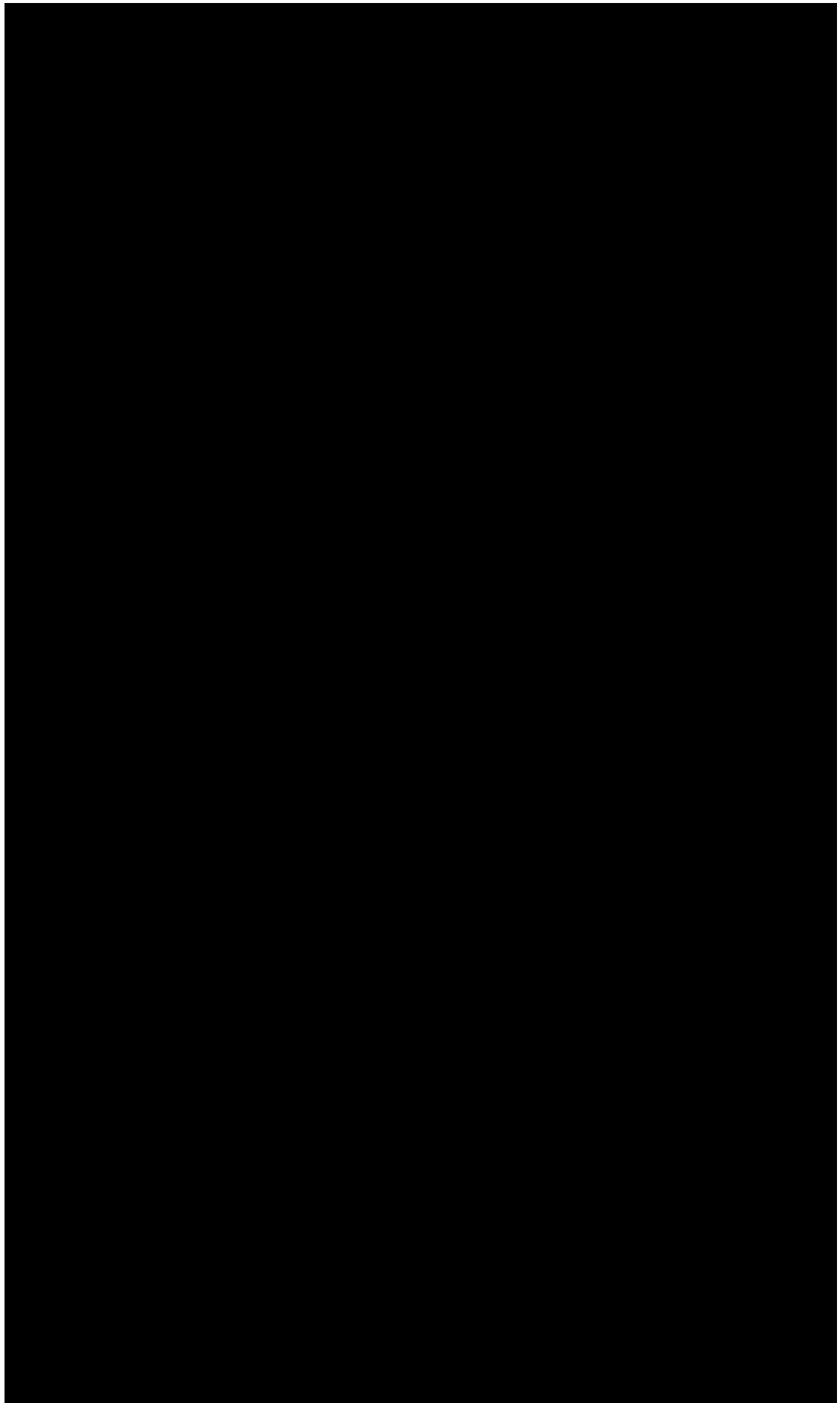
You might say graduate student Dan Bitner is doubly appreciative of the UIS Cox Children's Center – his twins are 2½ years old and have been enrolled at the Center since they were 8 months old. “Every teacher the twins have had at Cox has been caring and nurturing,” he says.

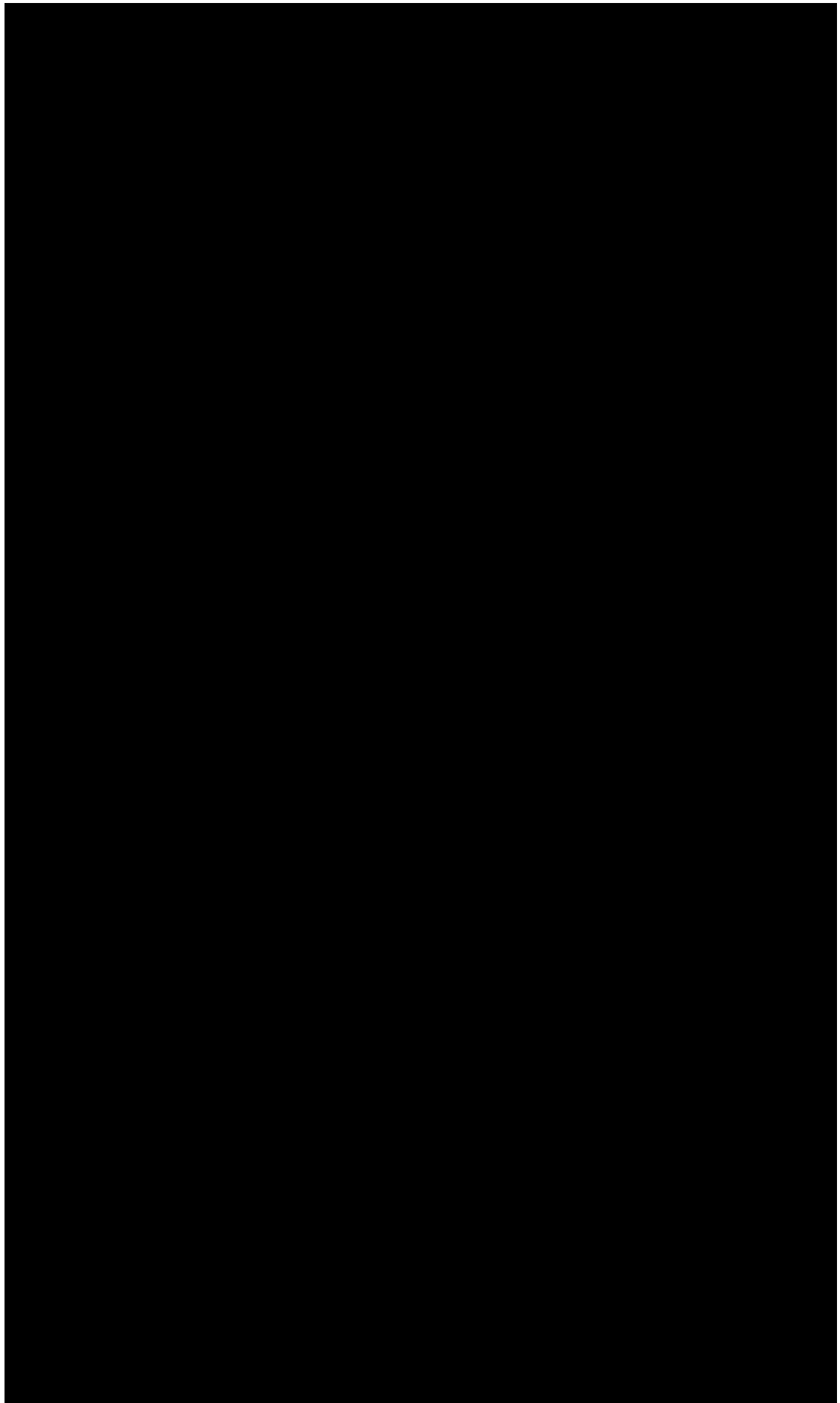
“The thing I like best is how much they have developed from a learning perspective; Cox is really a school where the children are

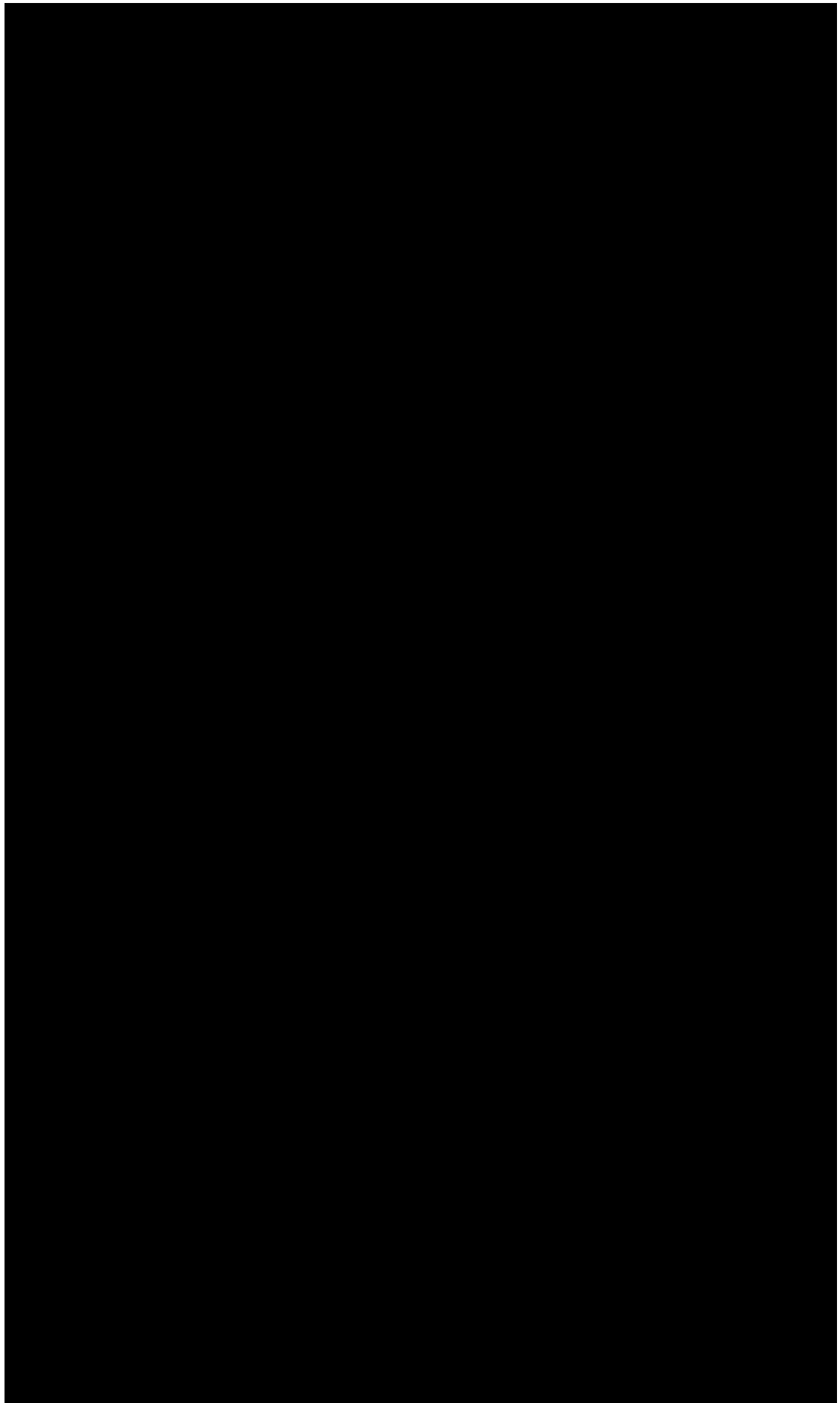


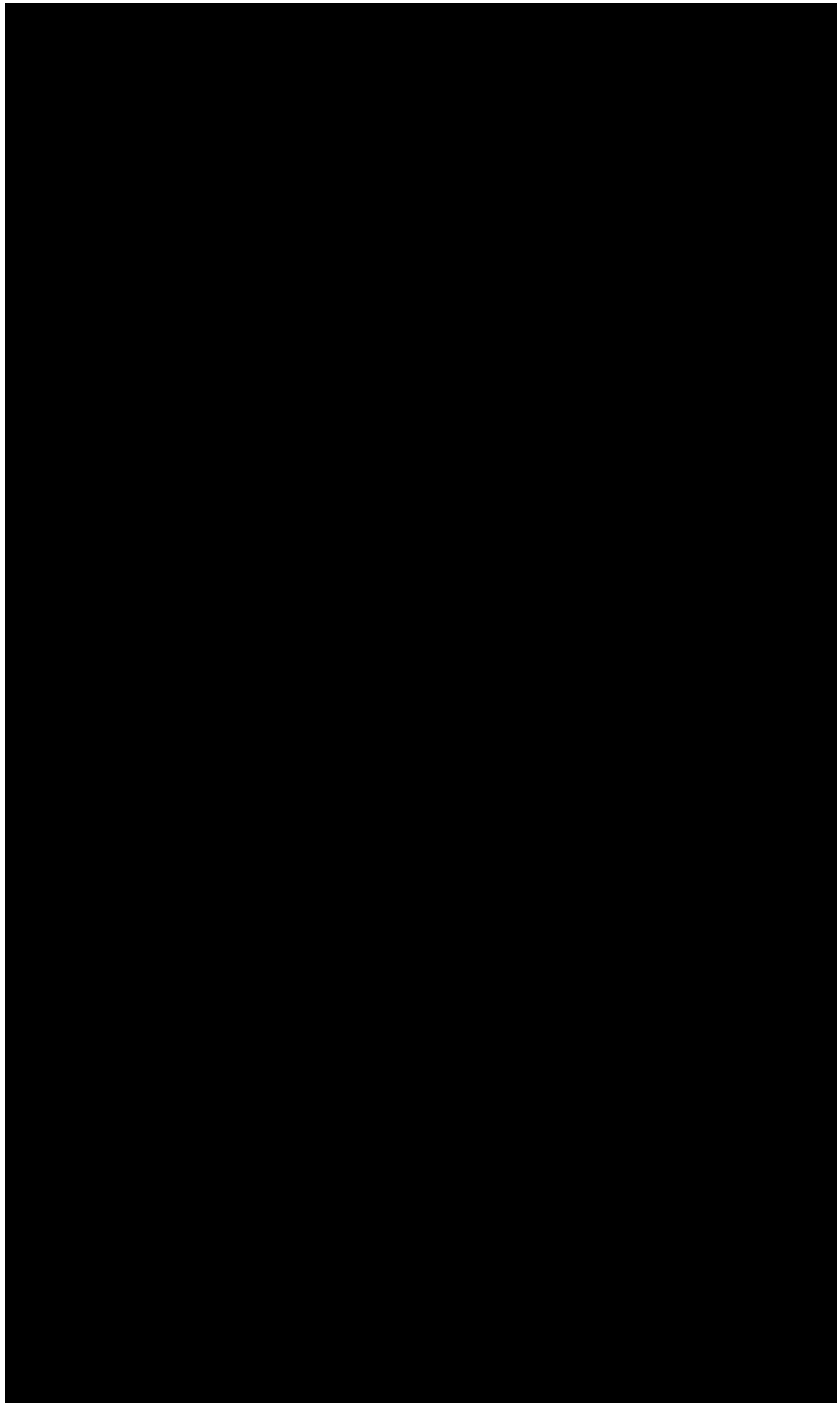


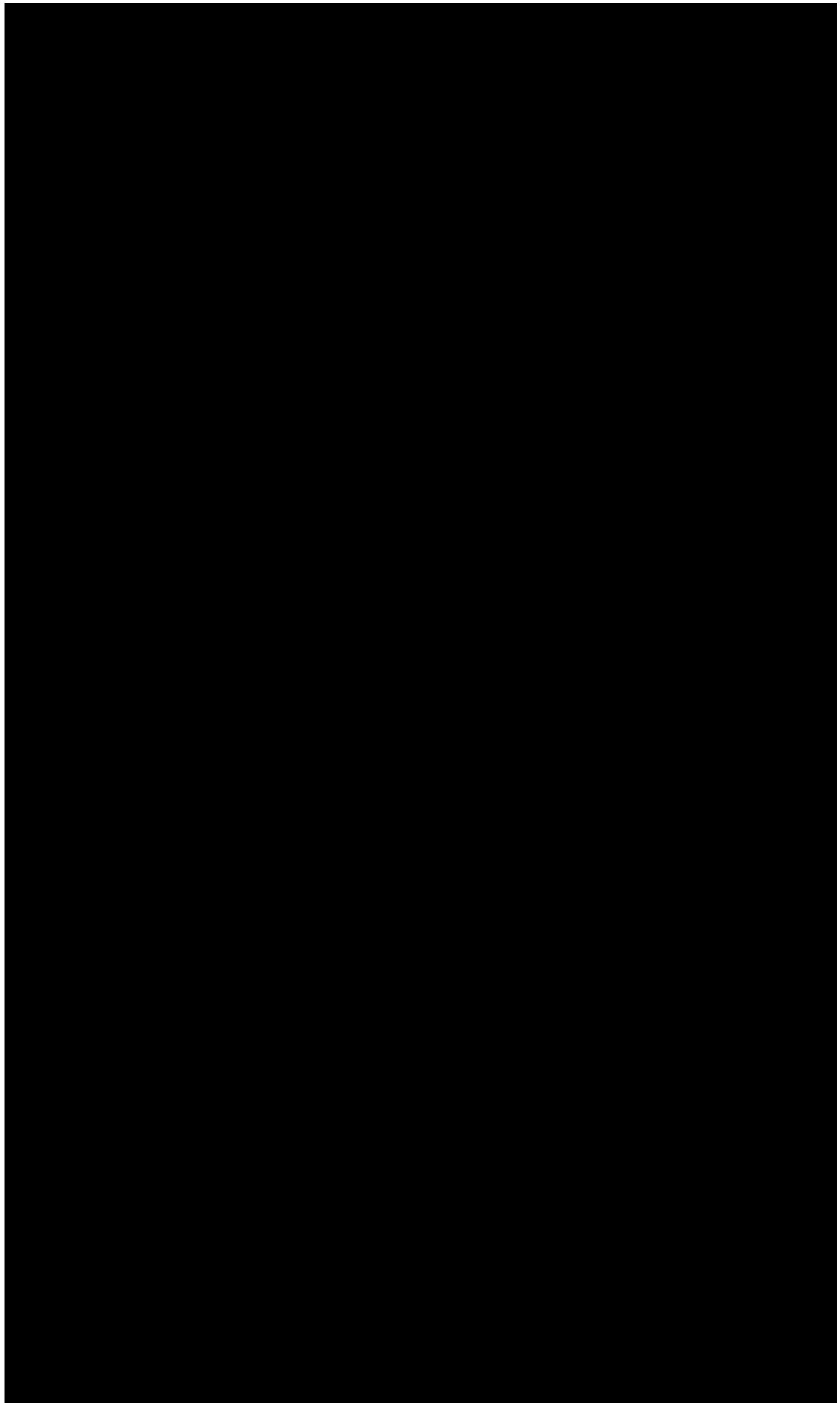


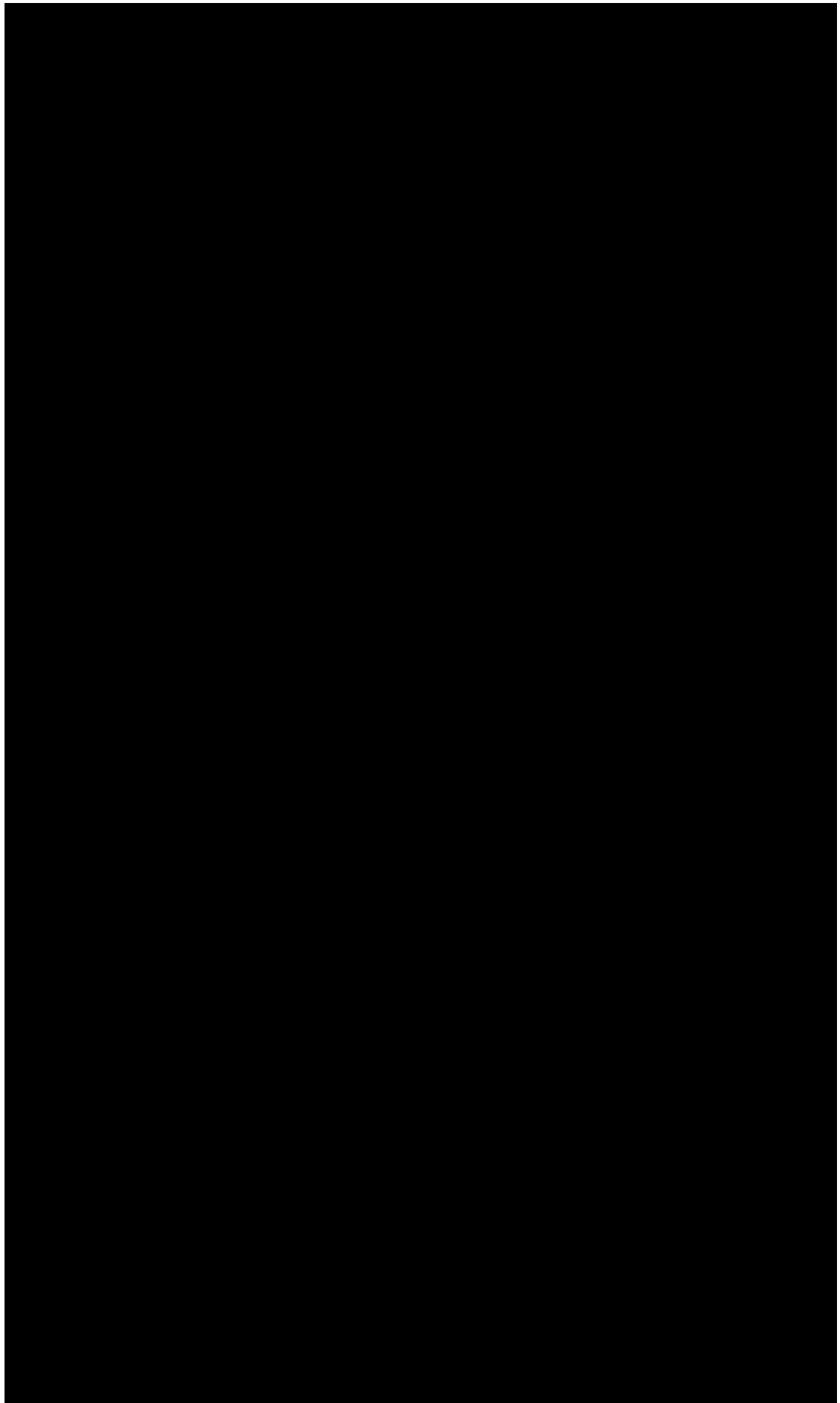


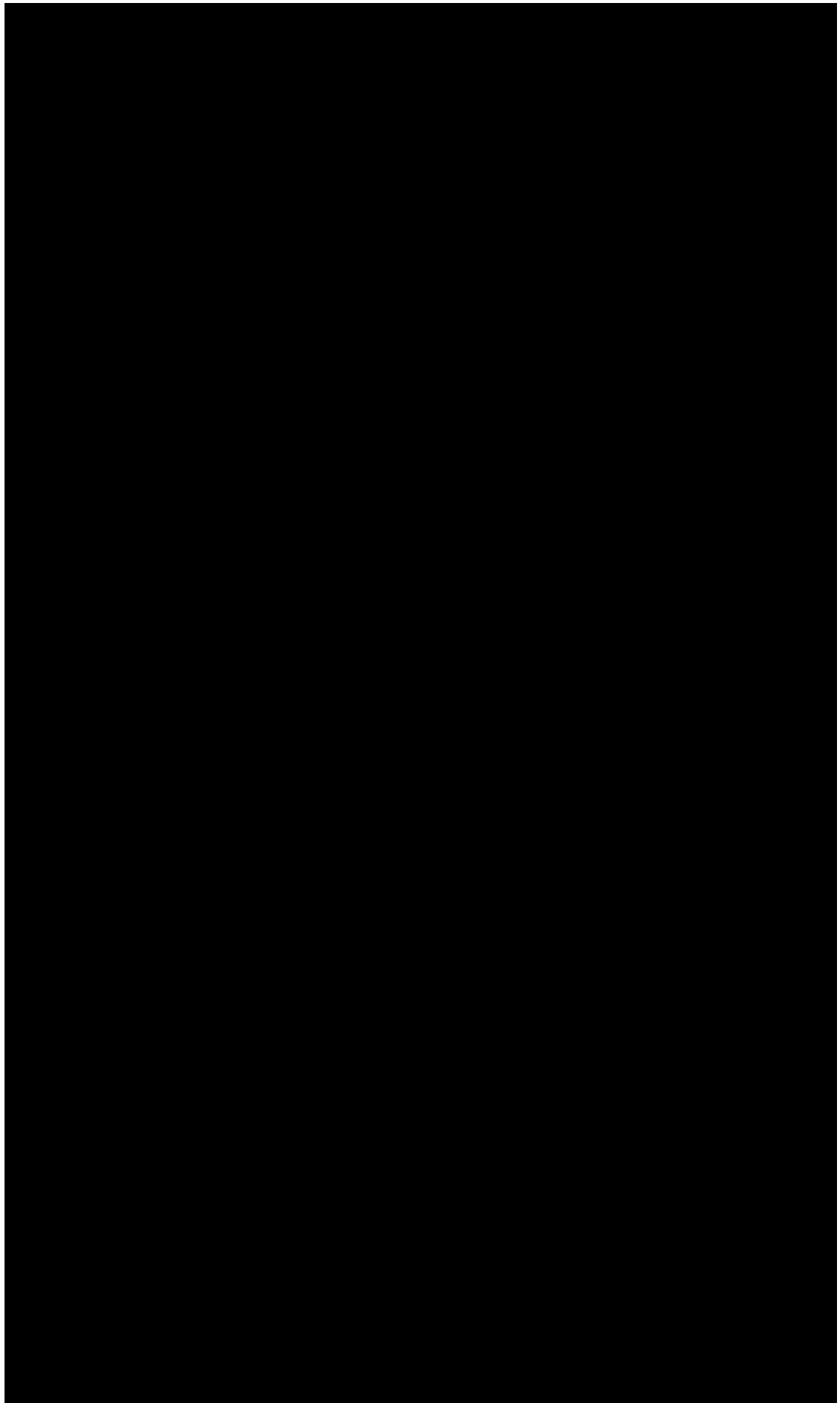


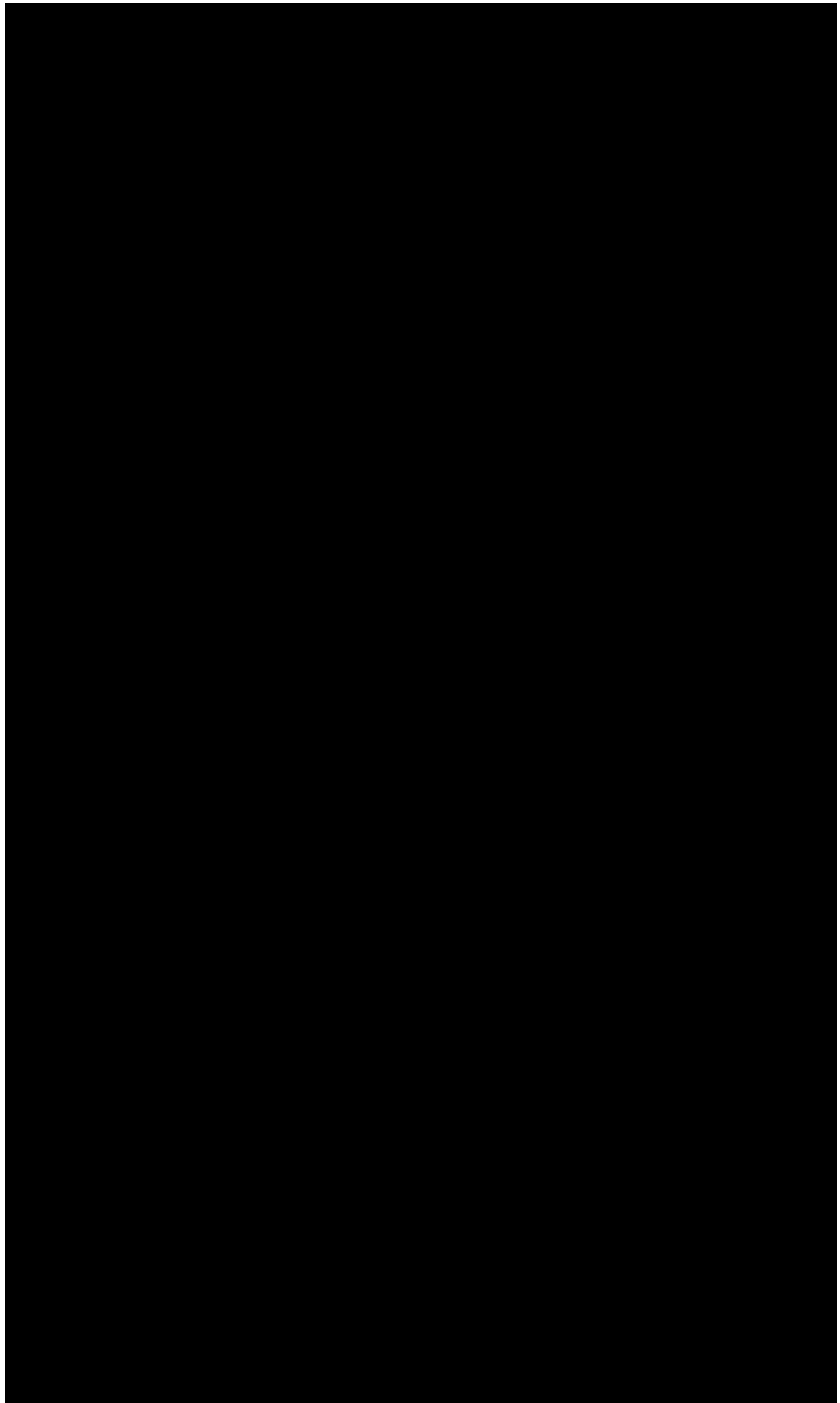


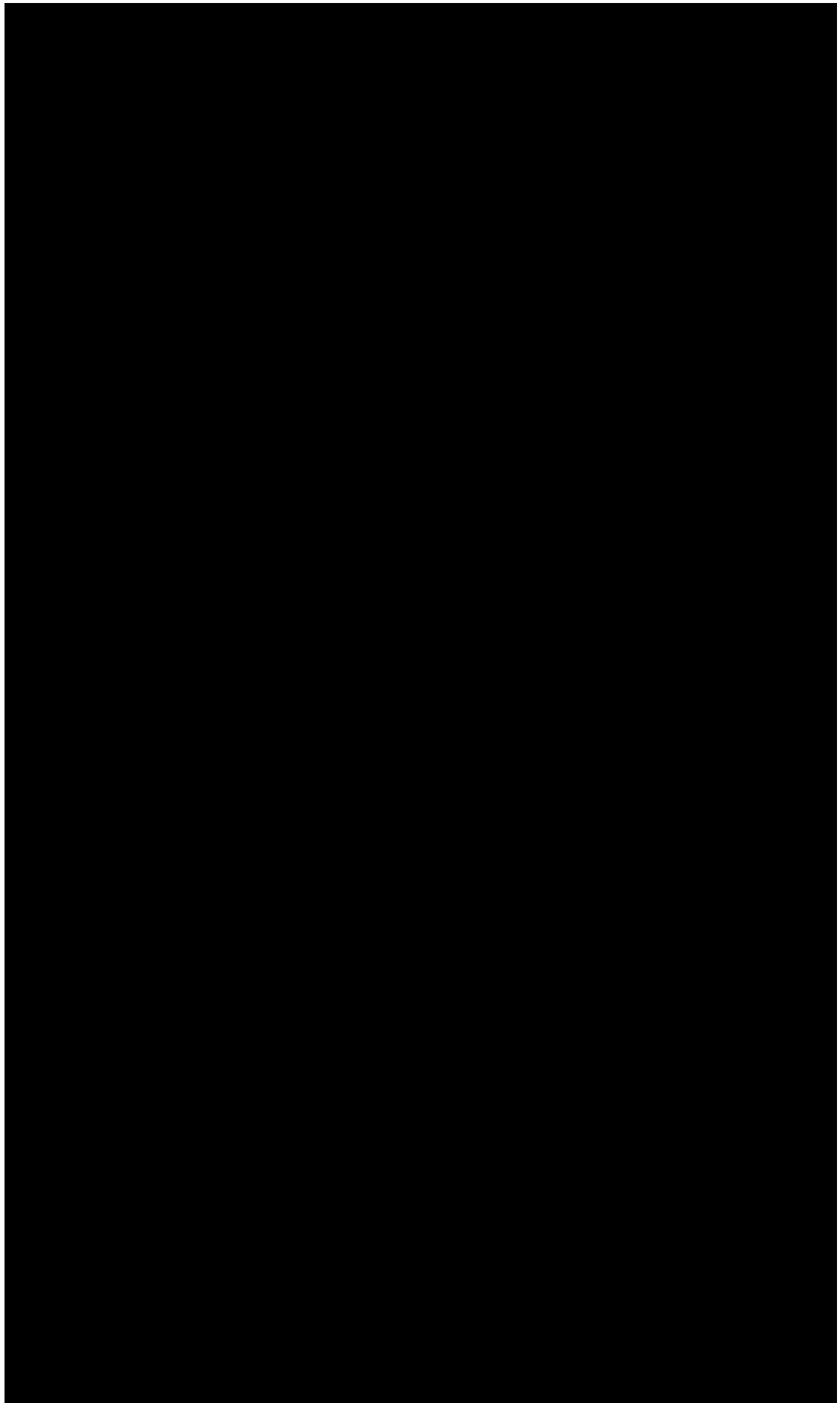


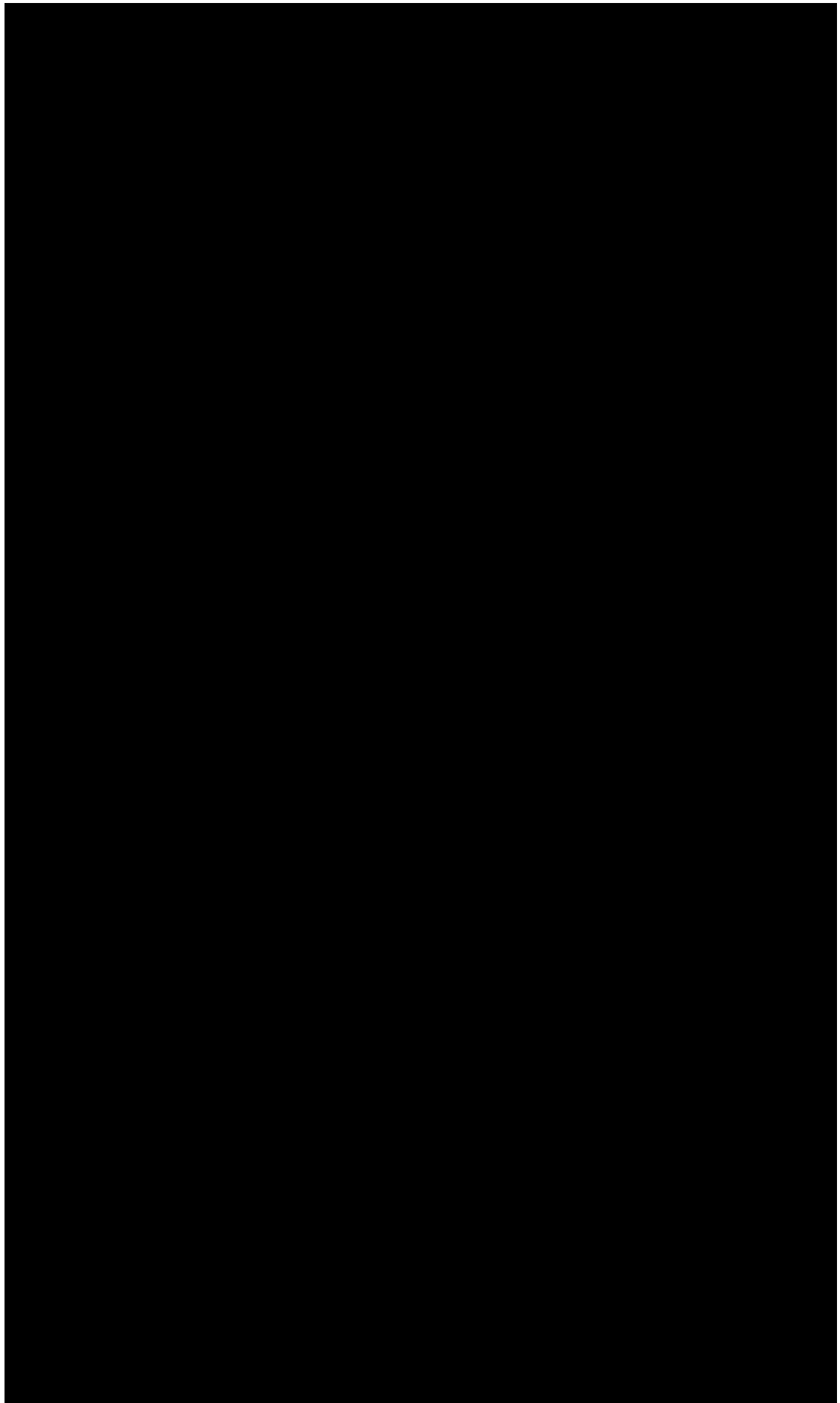


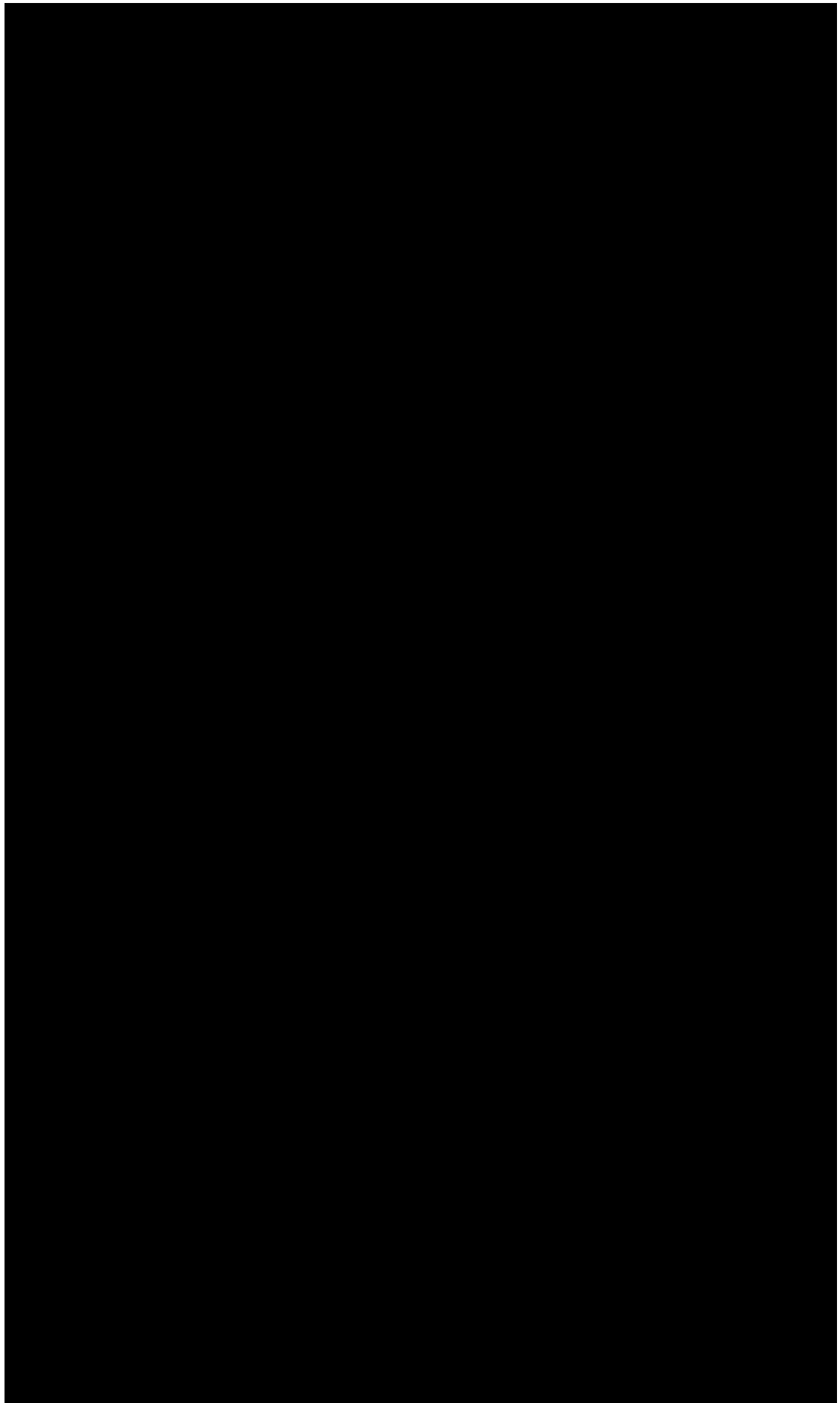


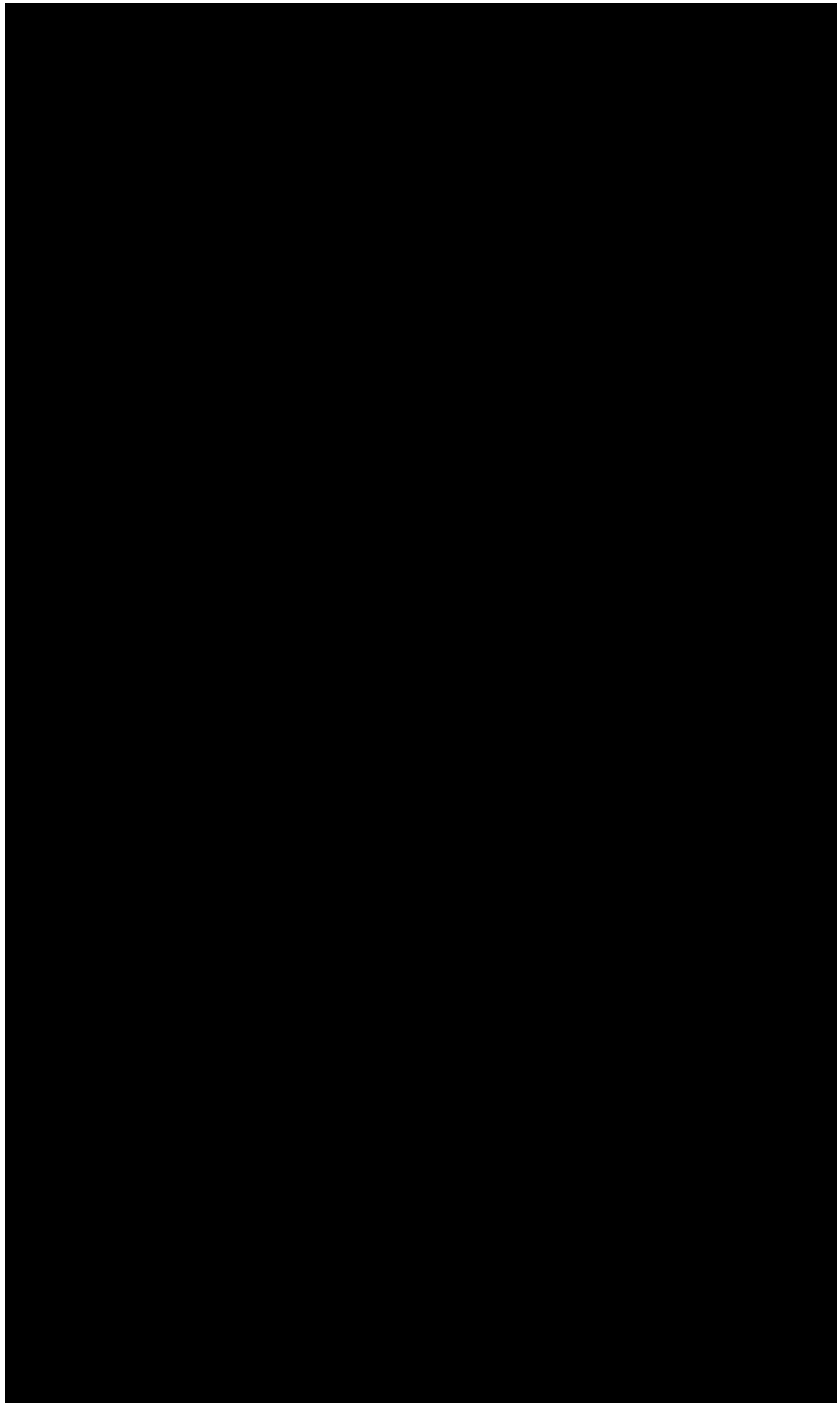


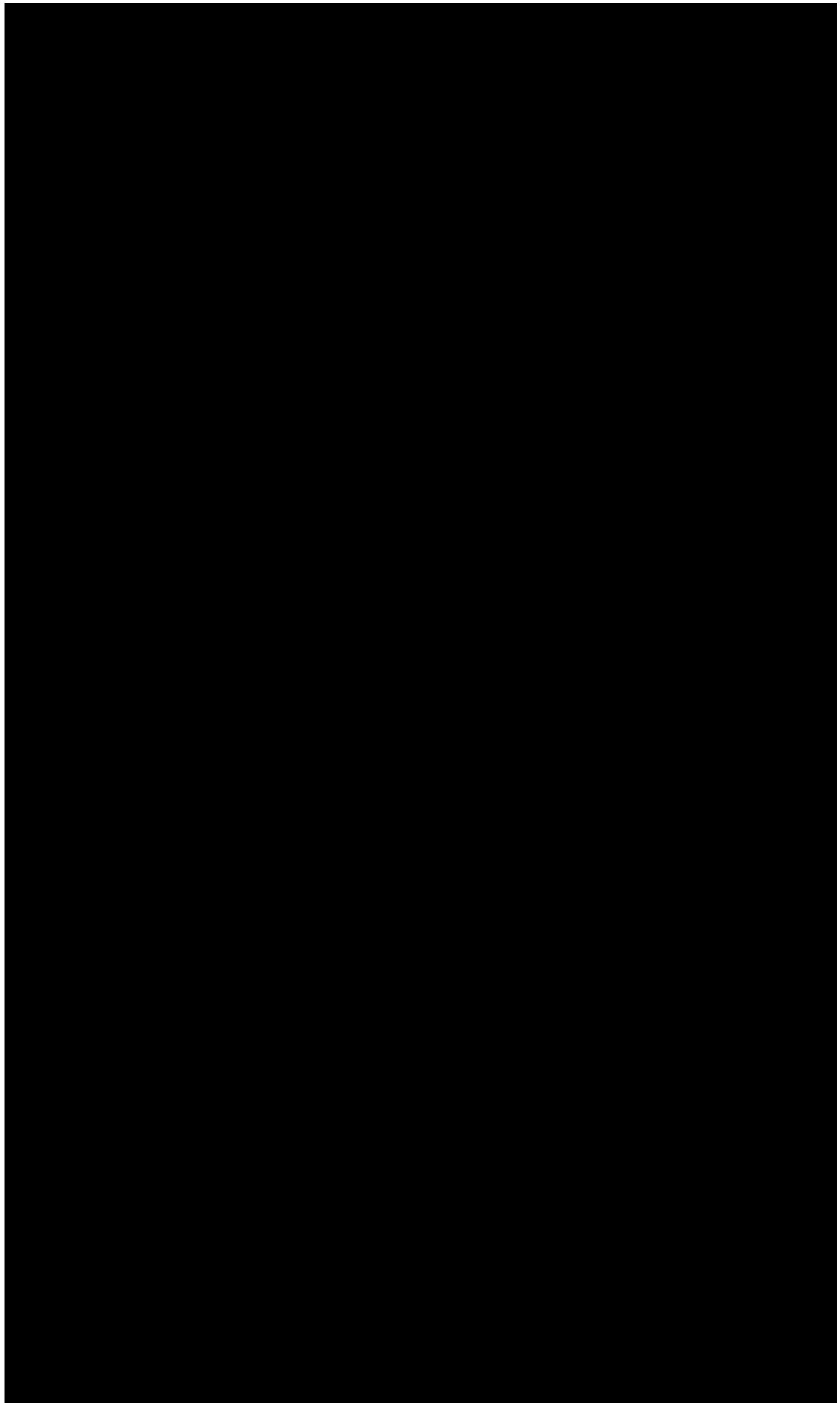


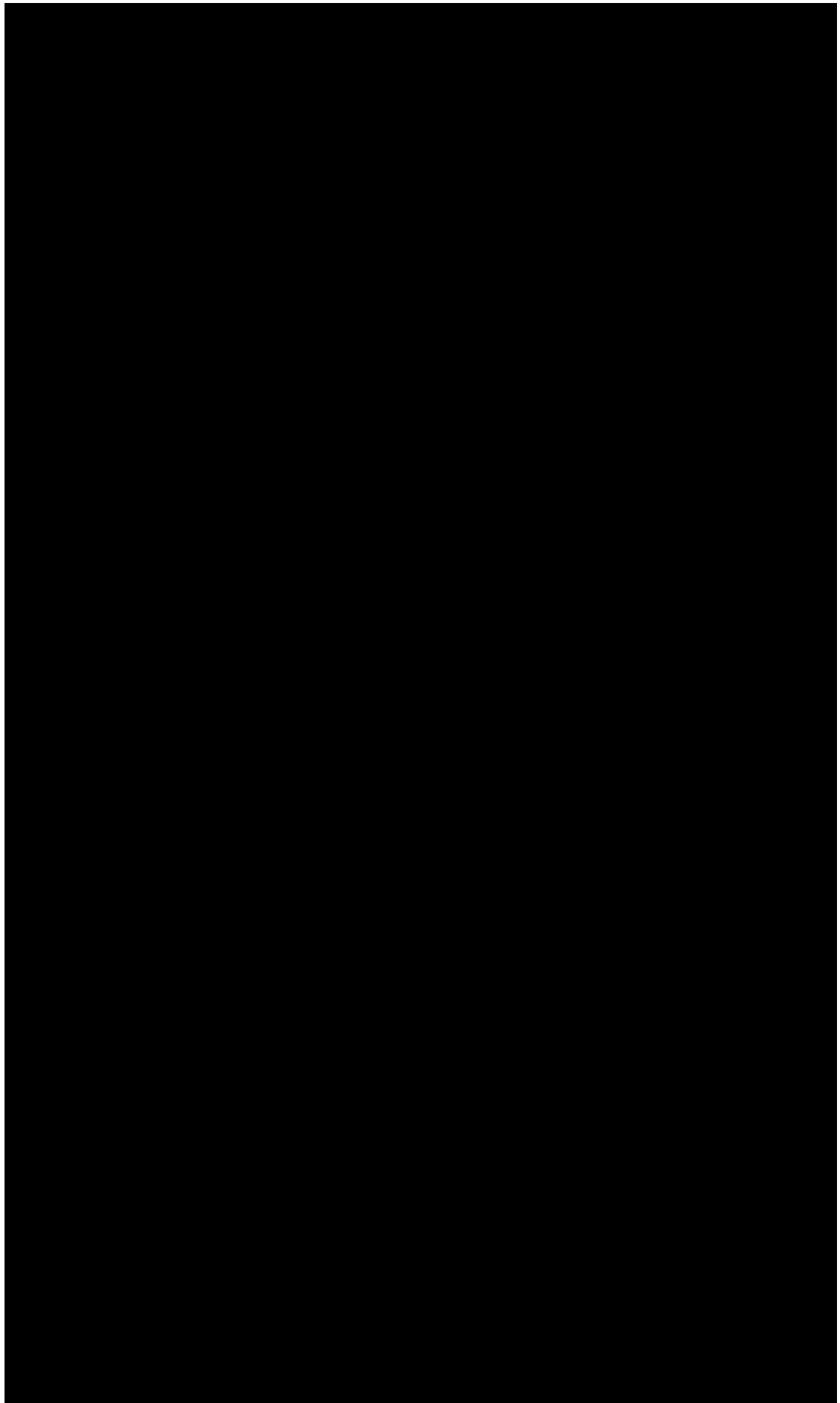


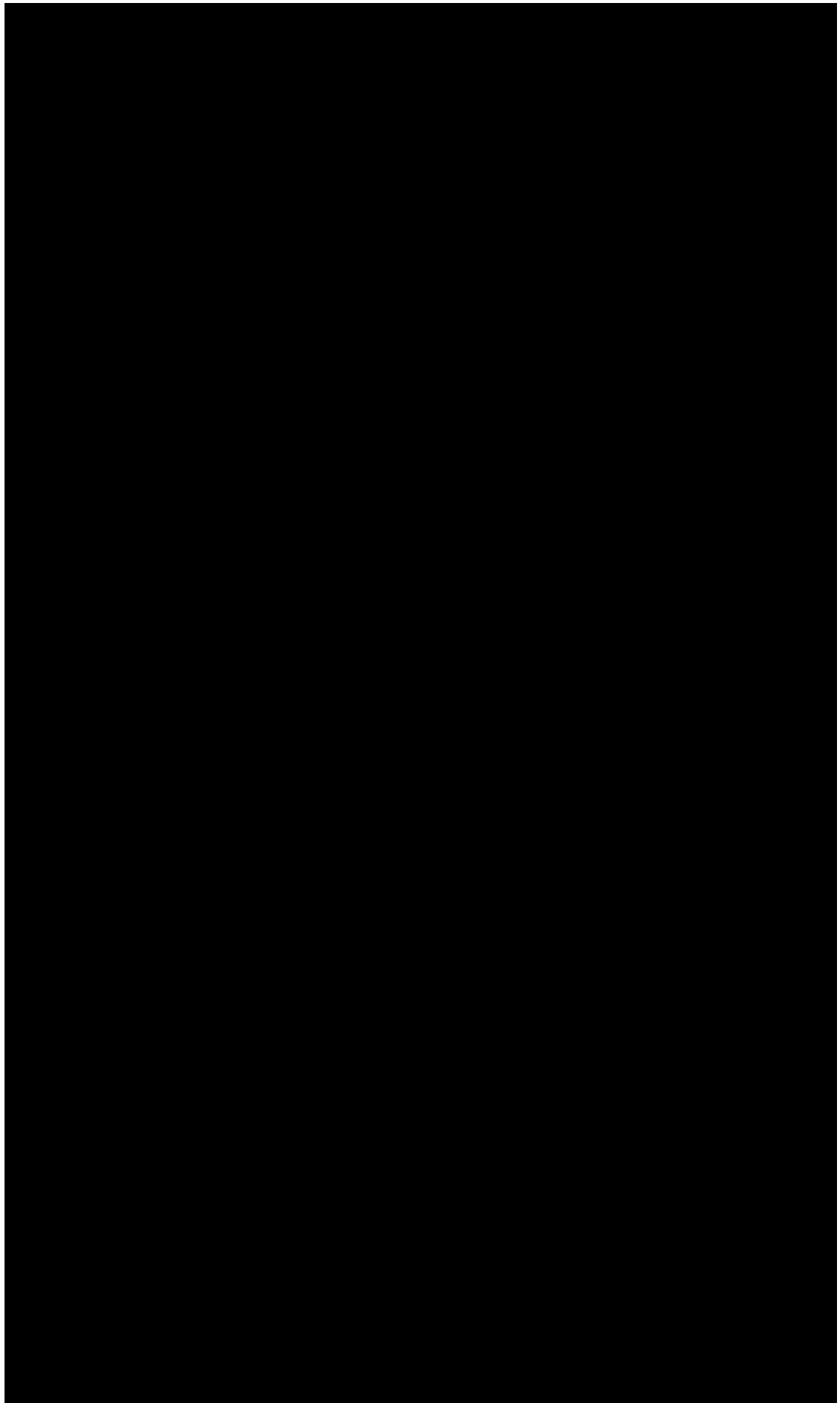


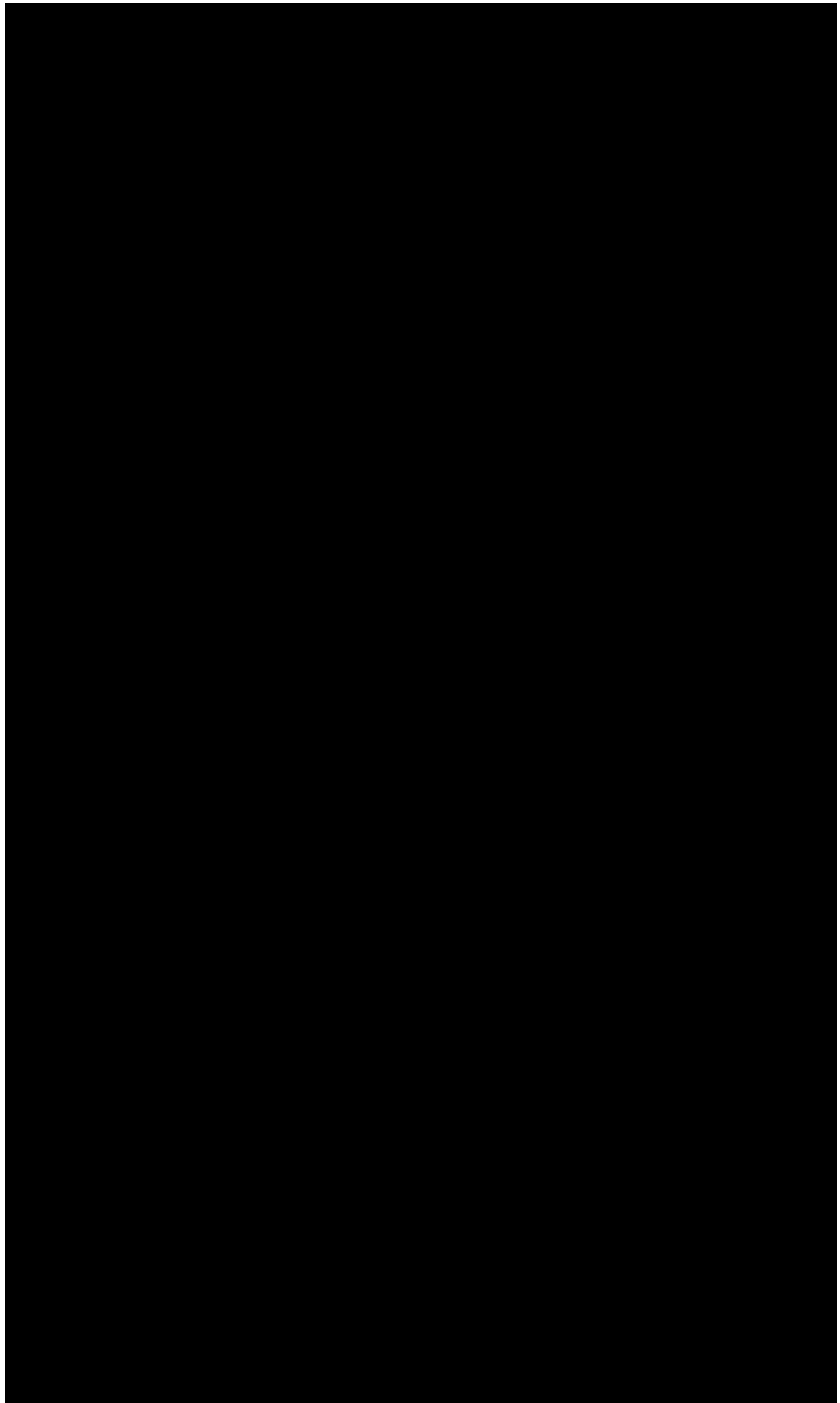


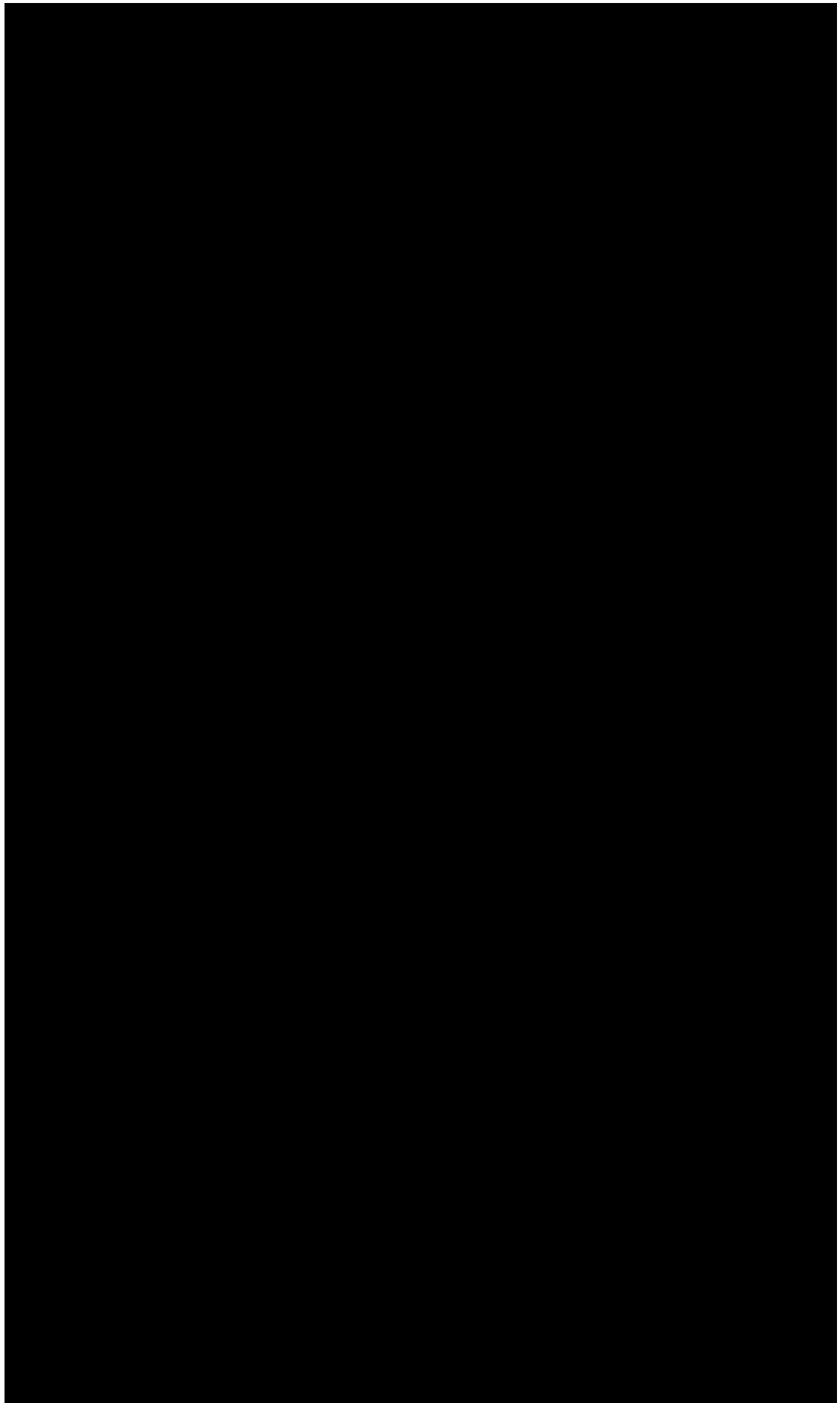


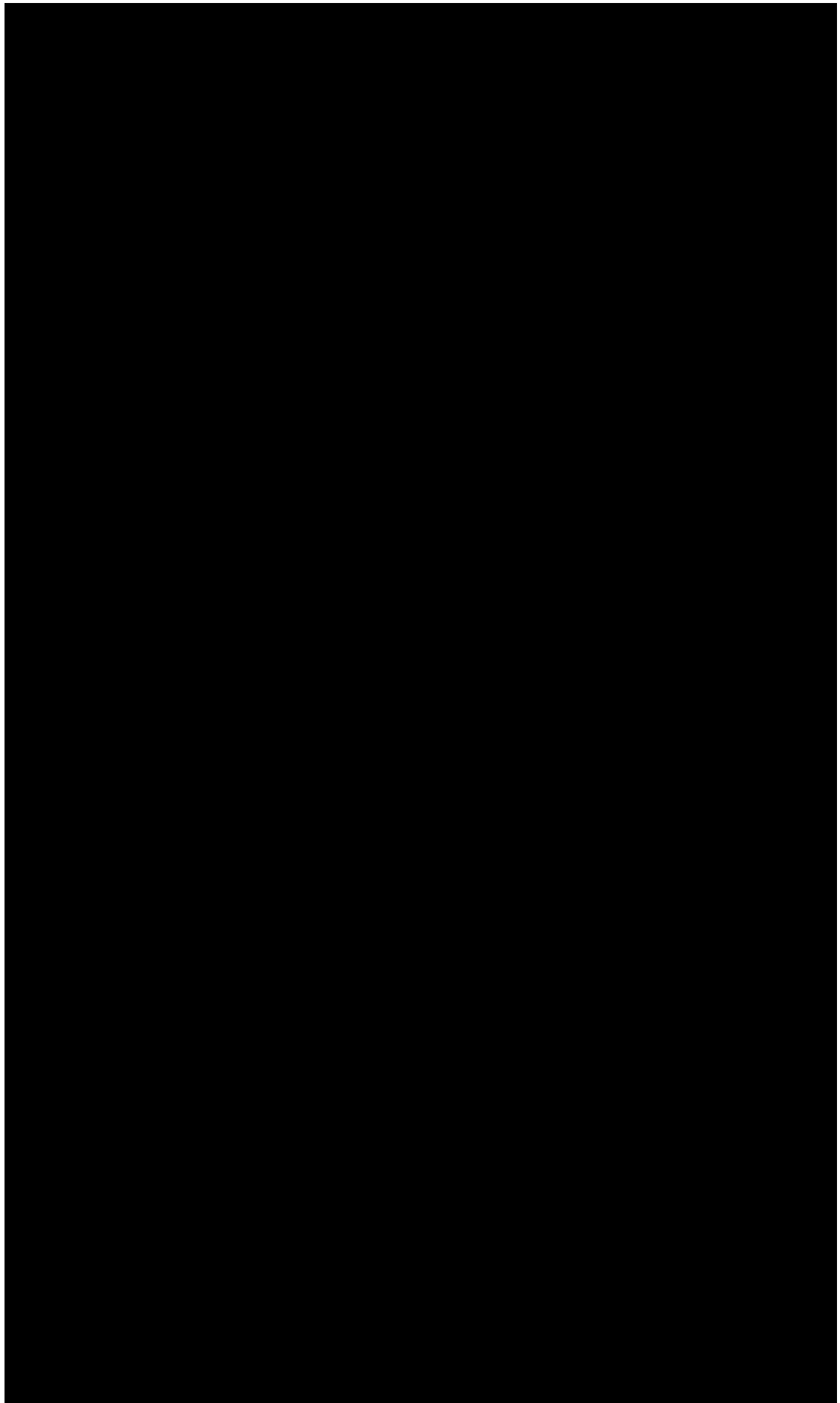


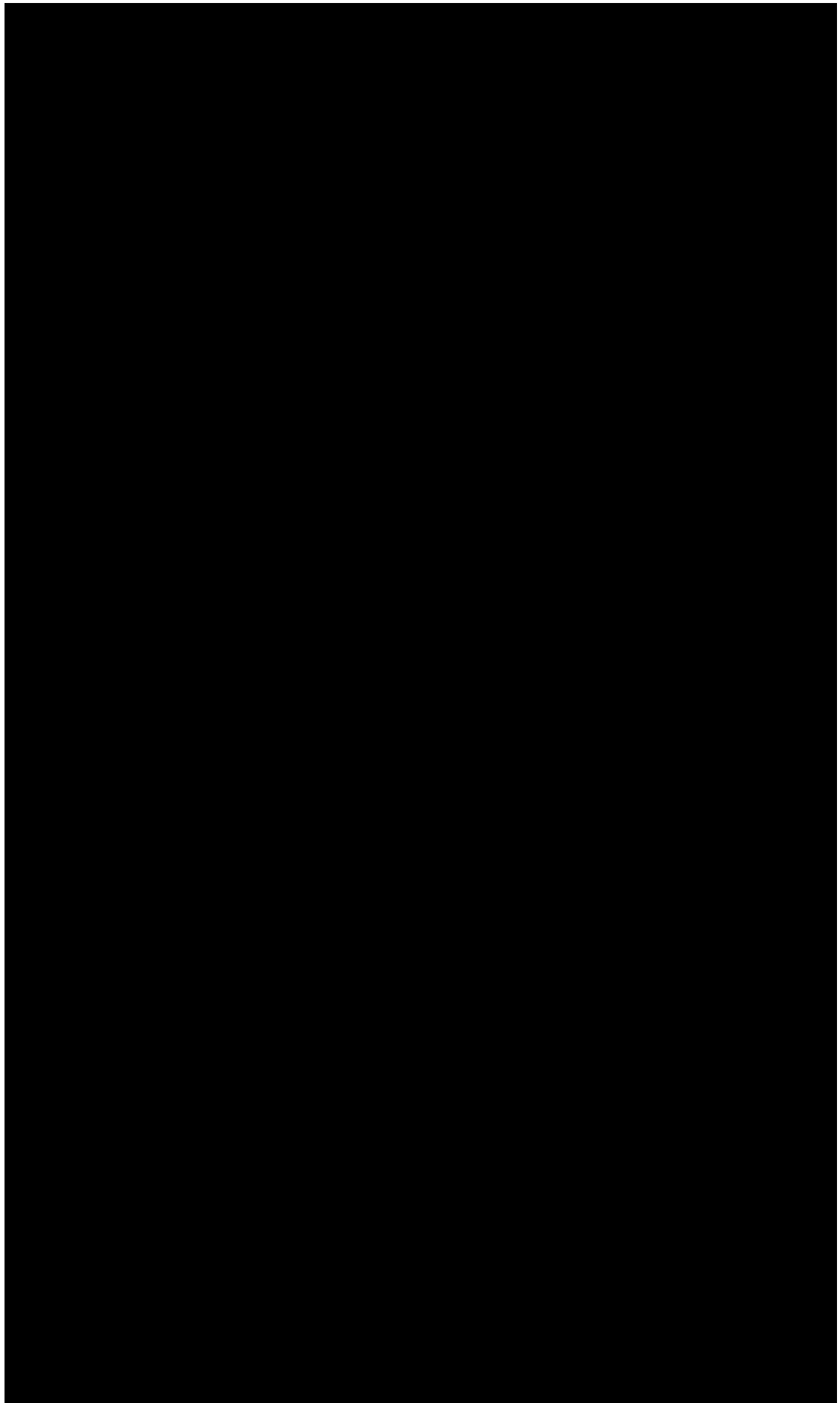


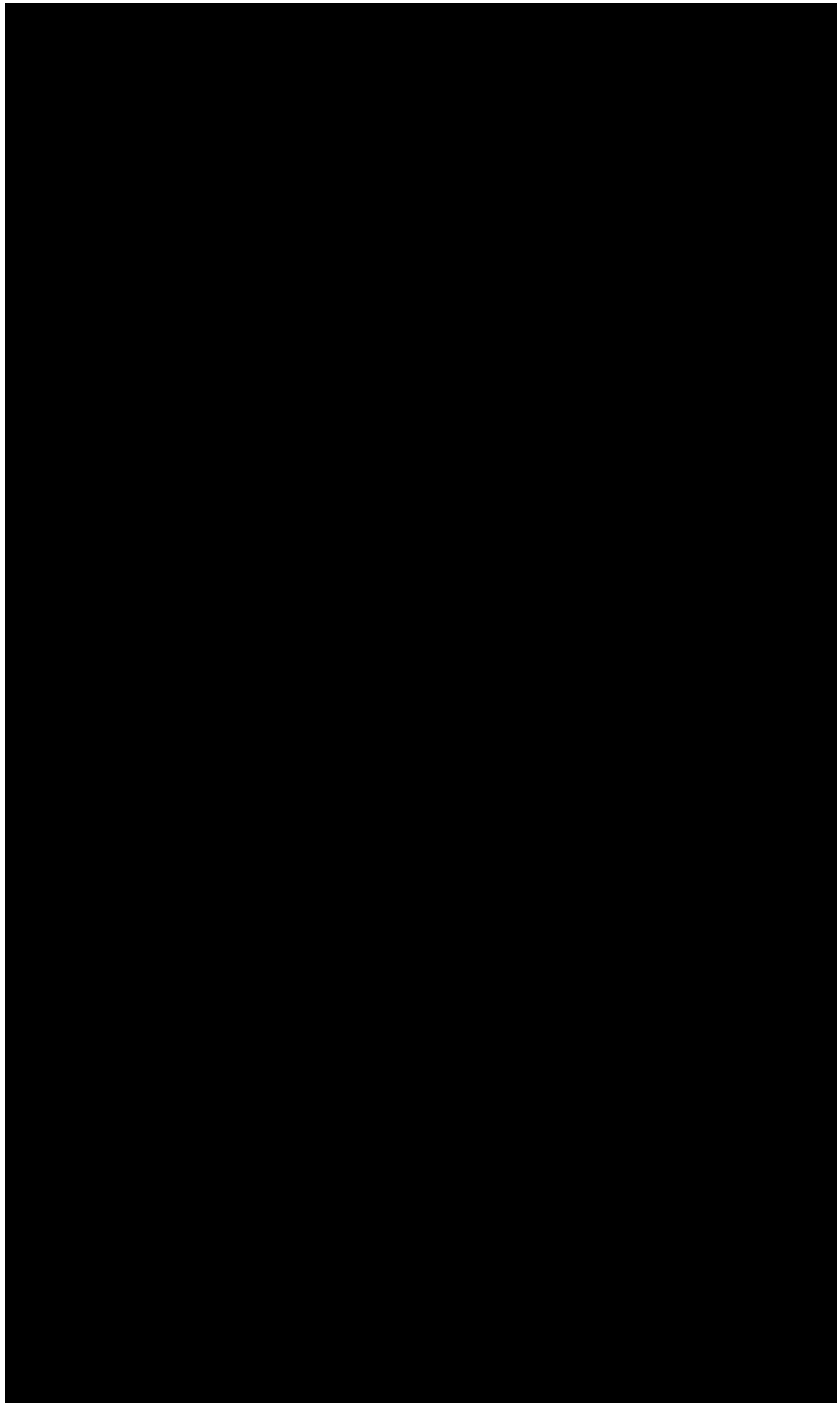


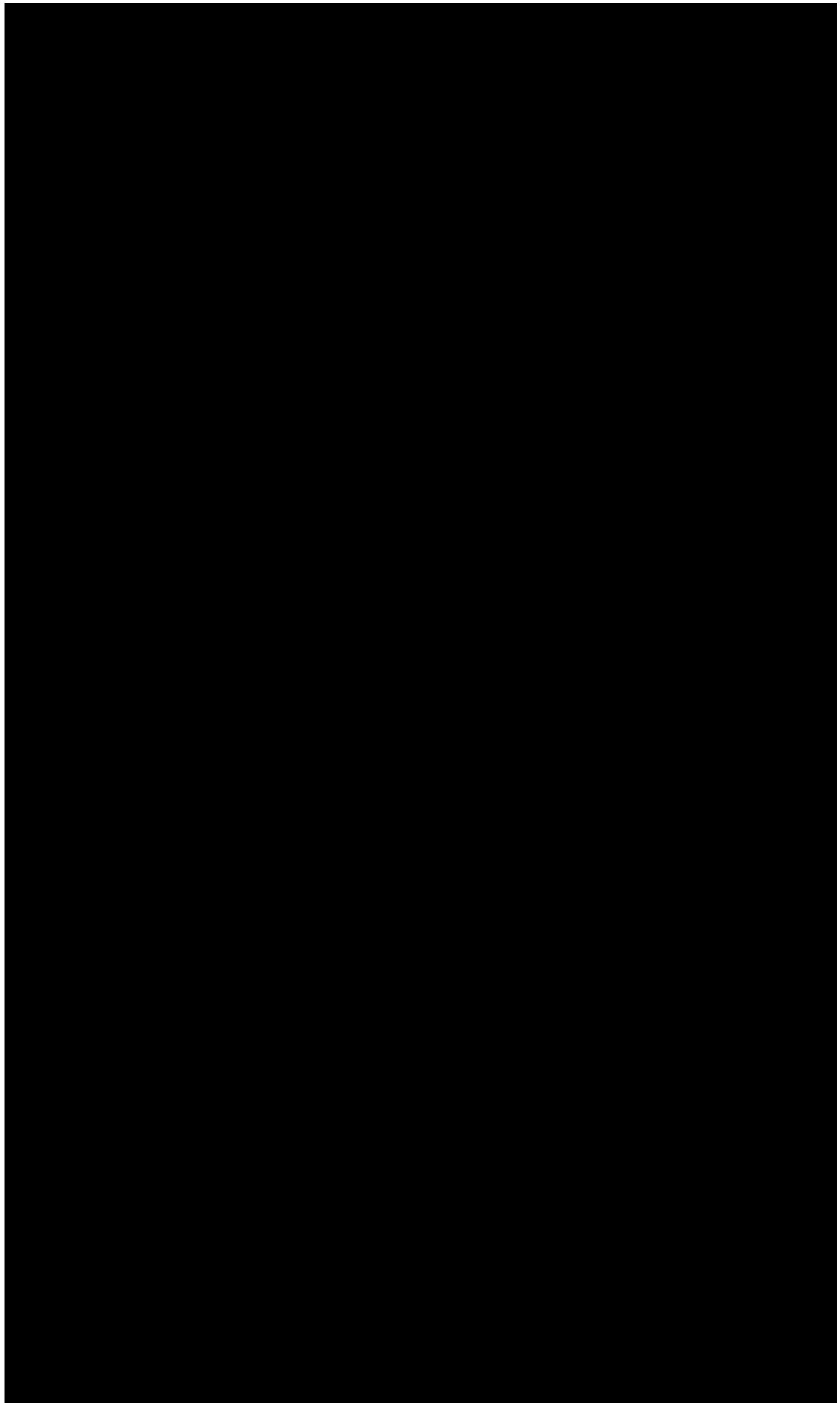


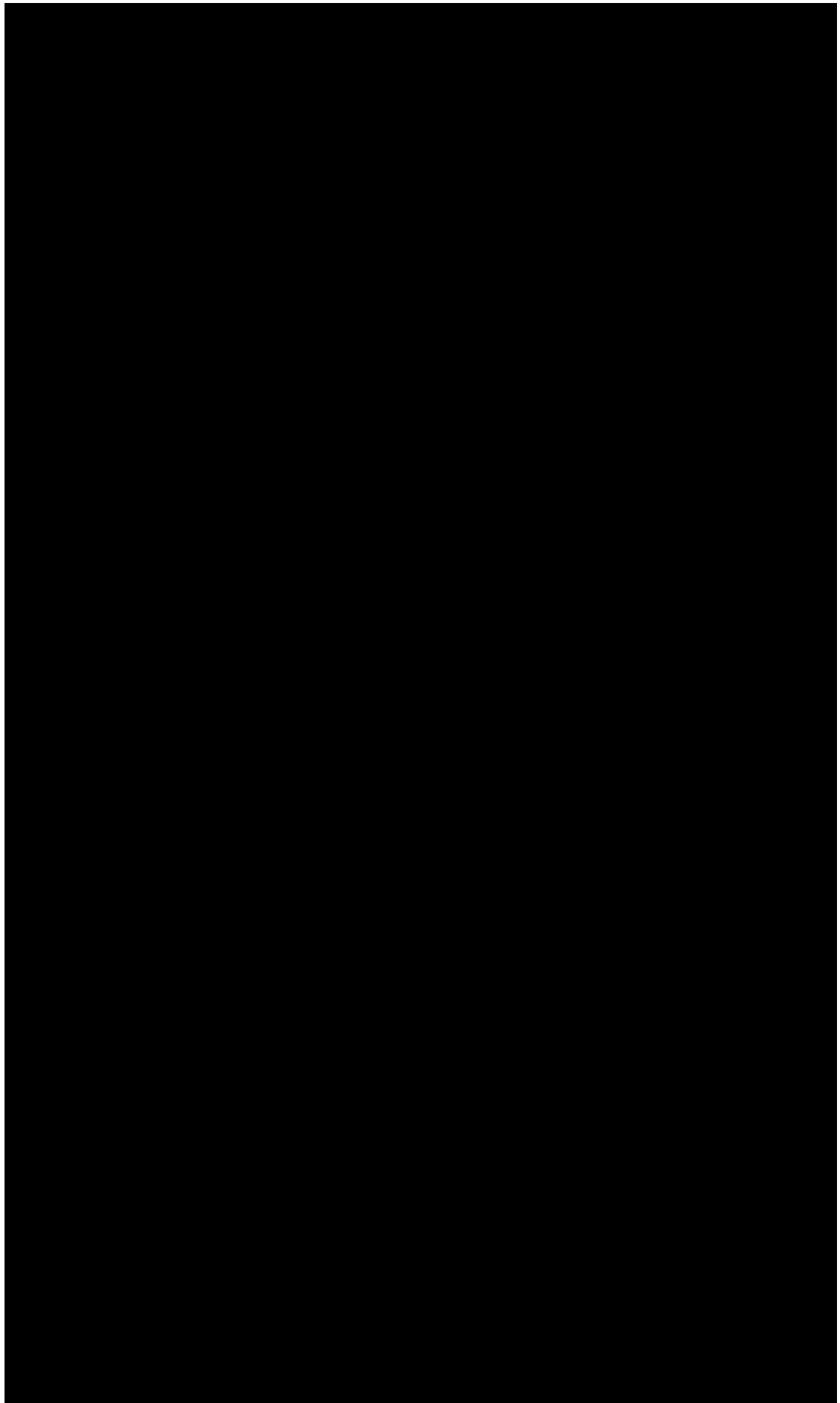


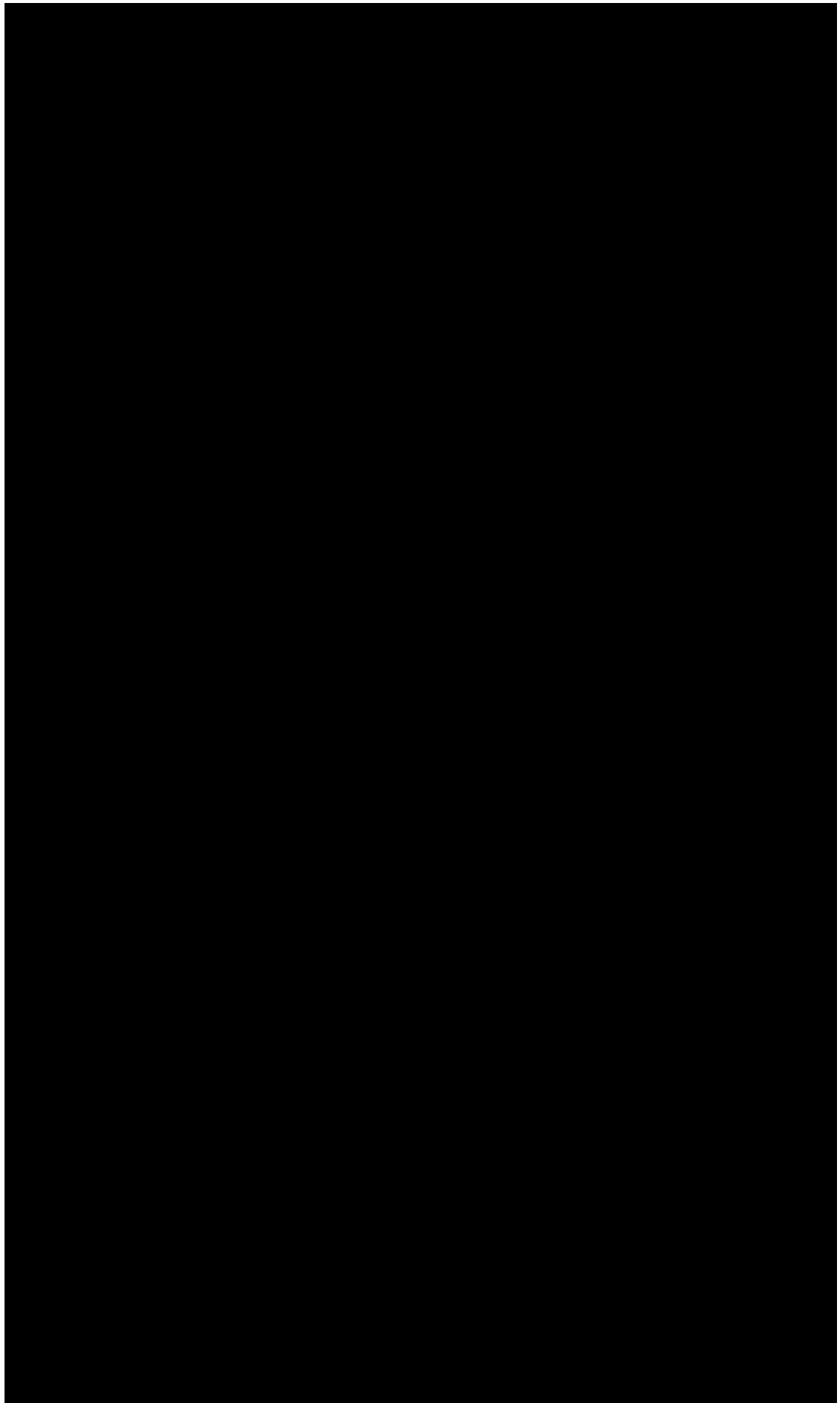


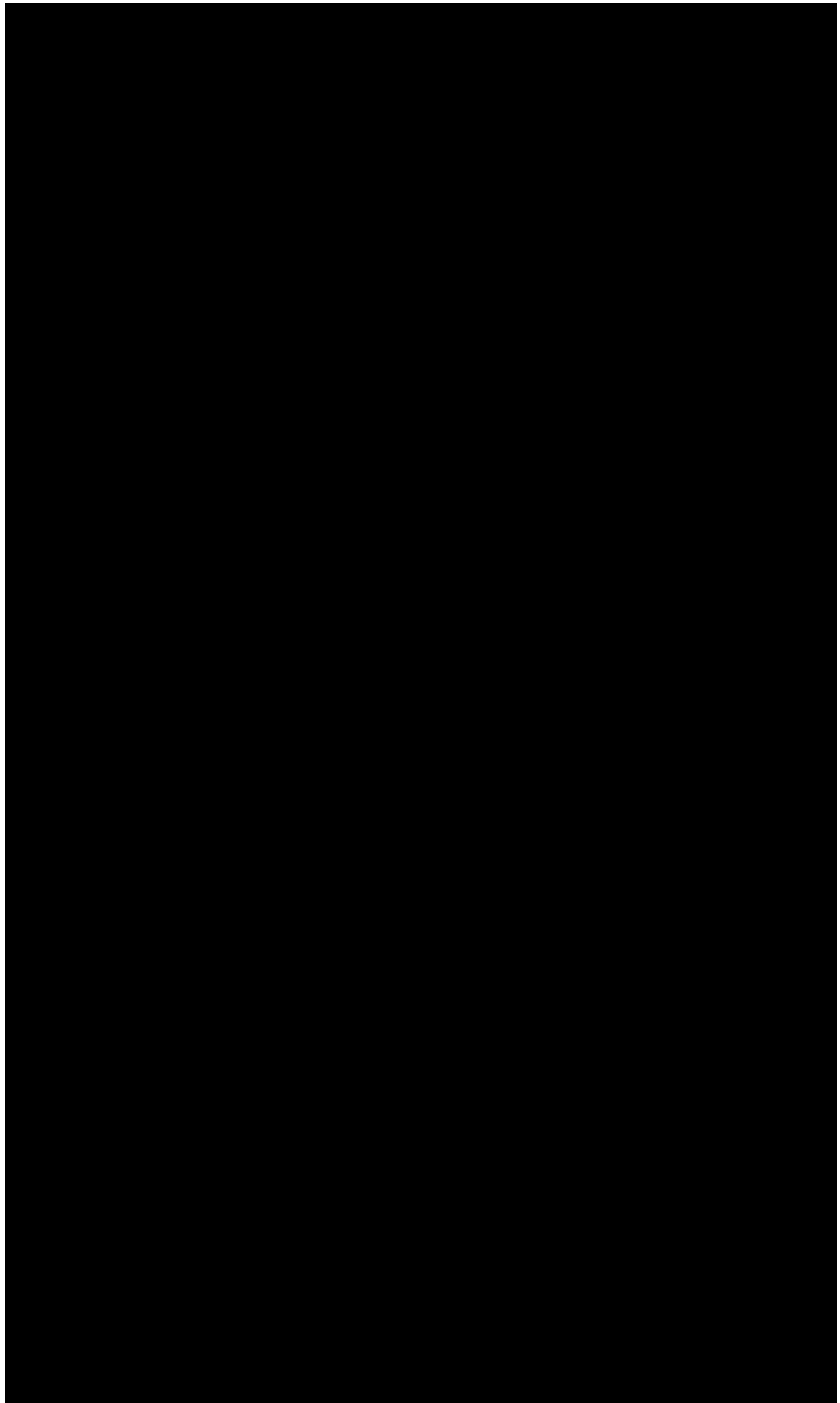


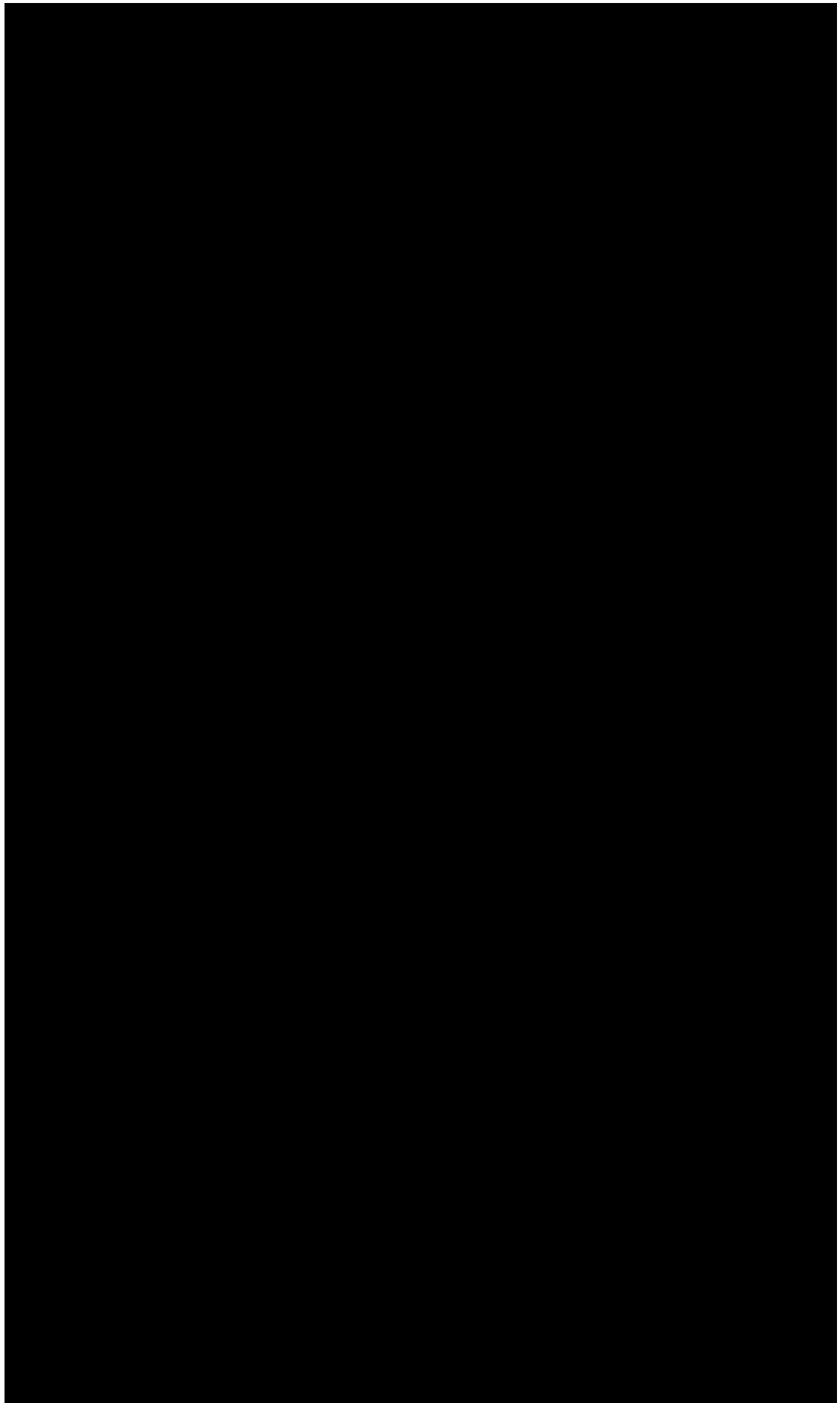


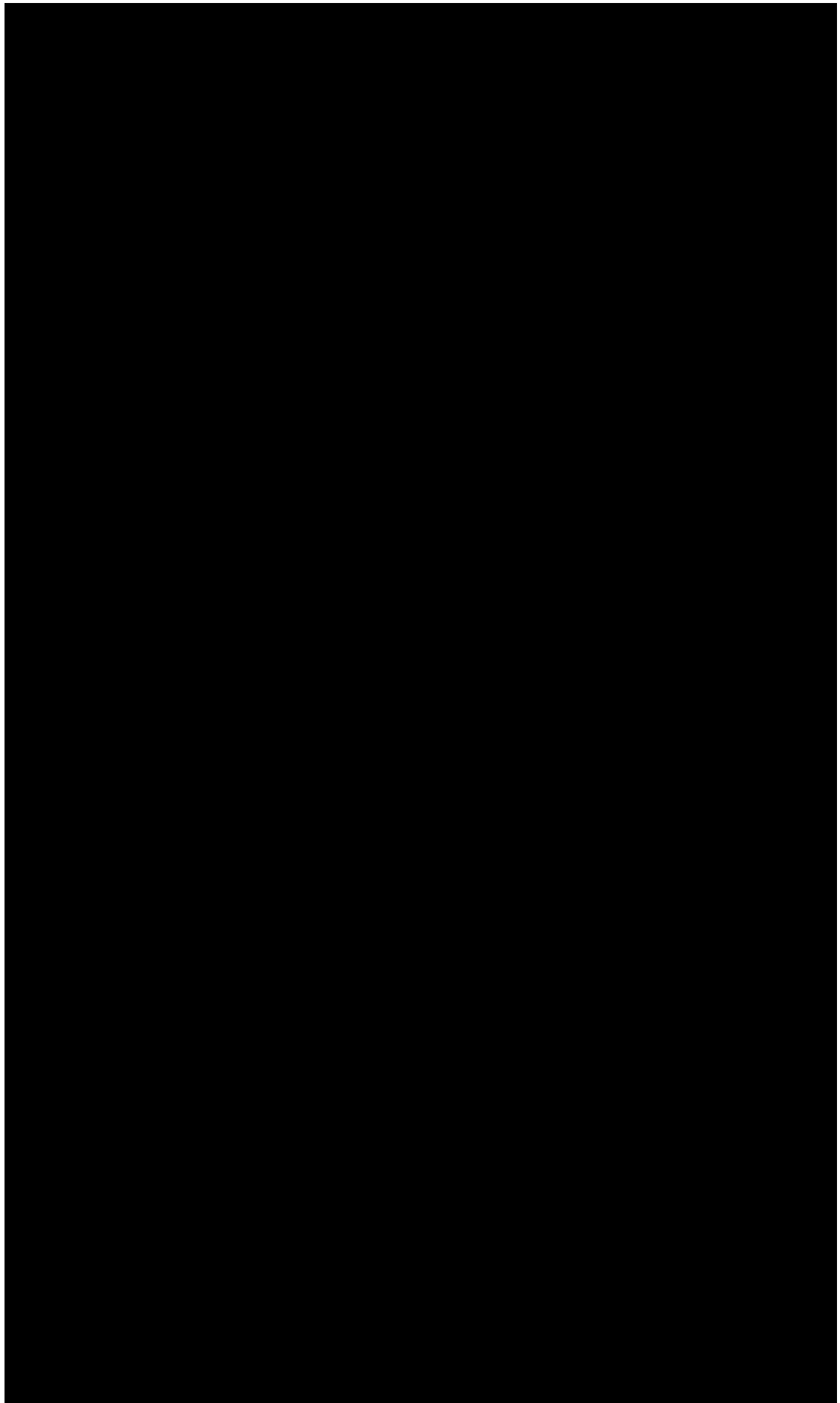


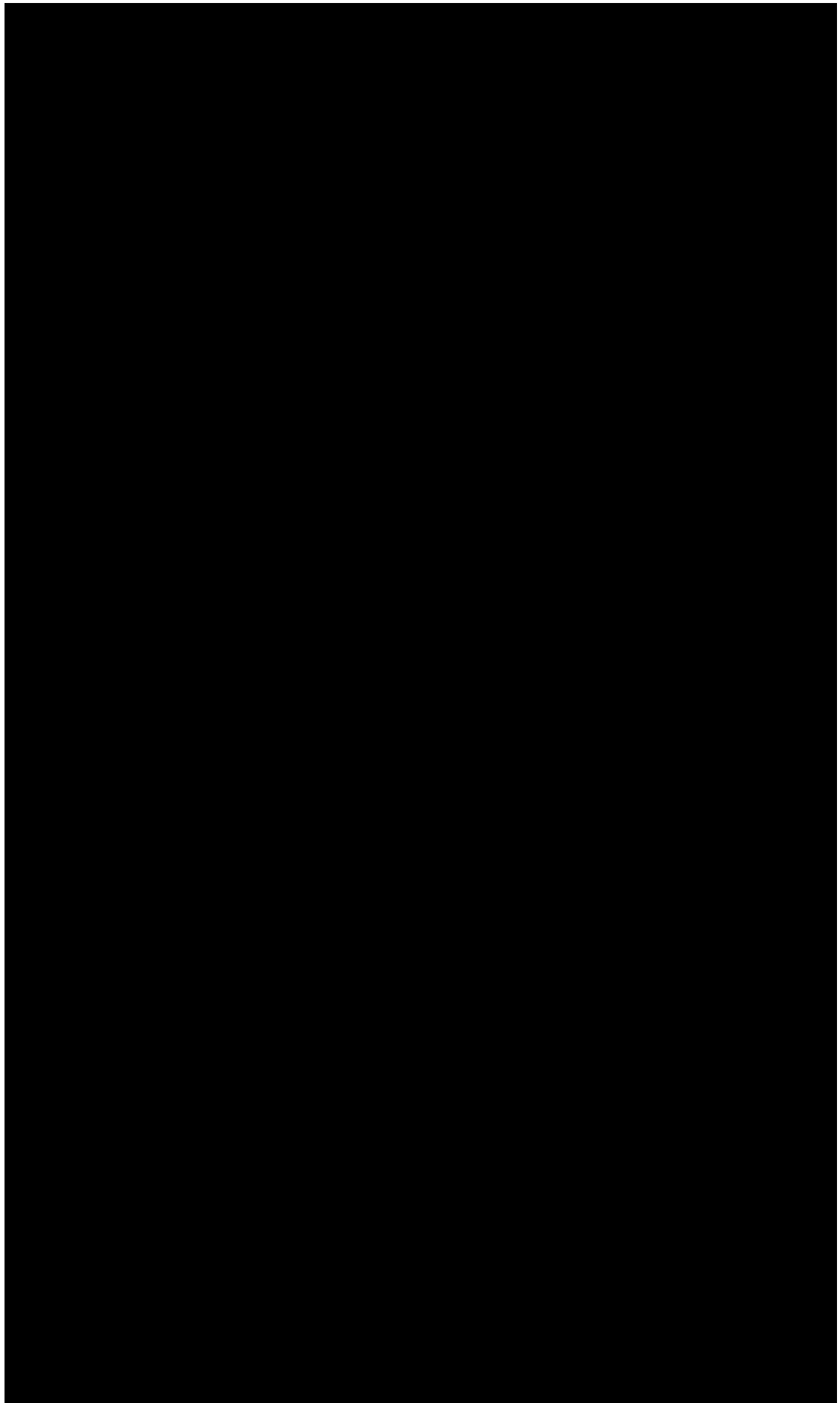


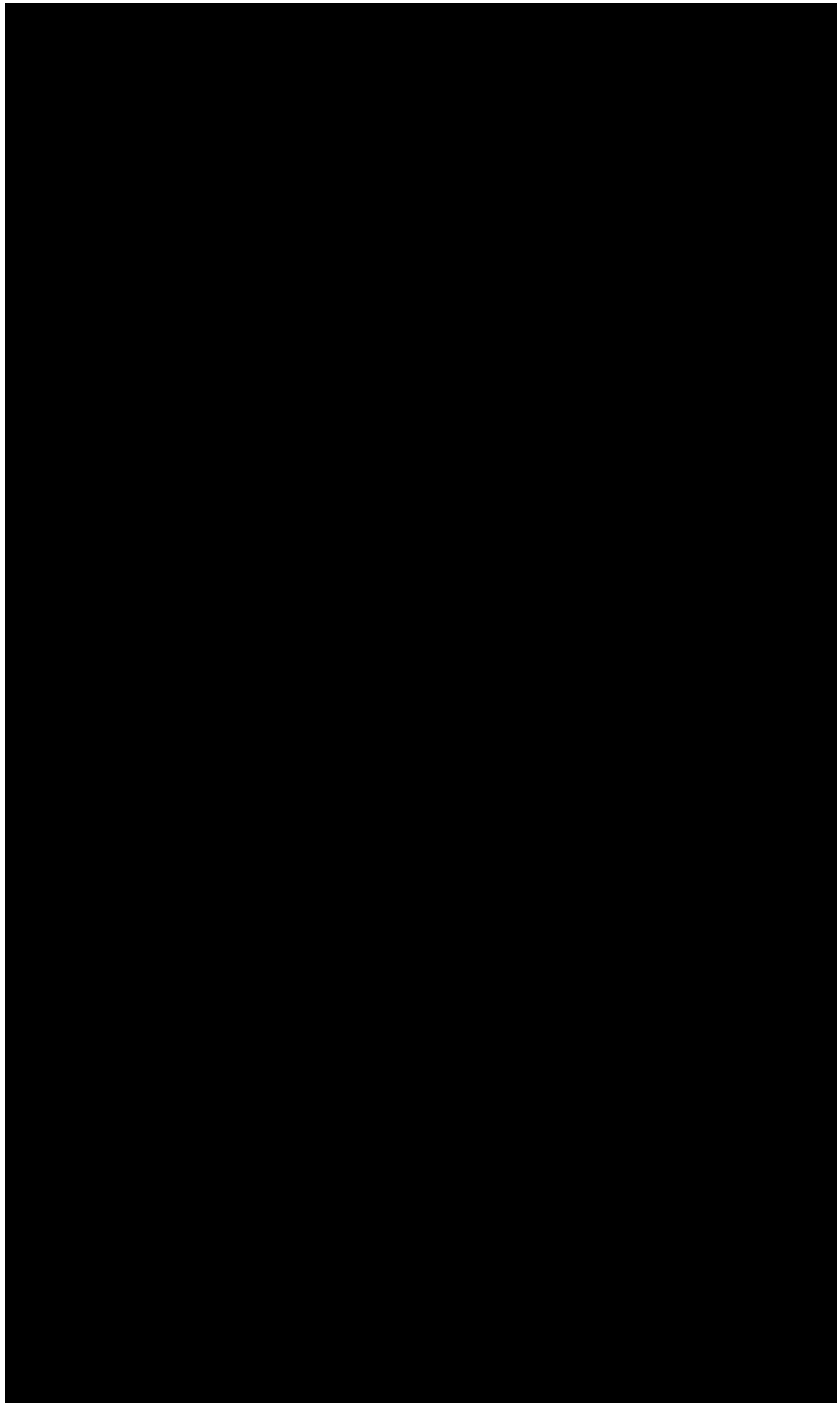


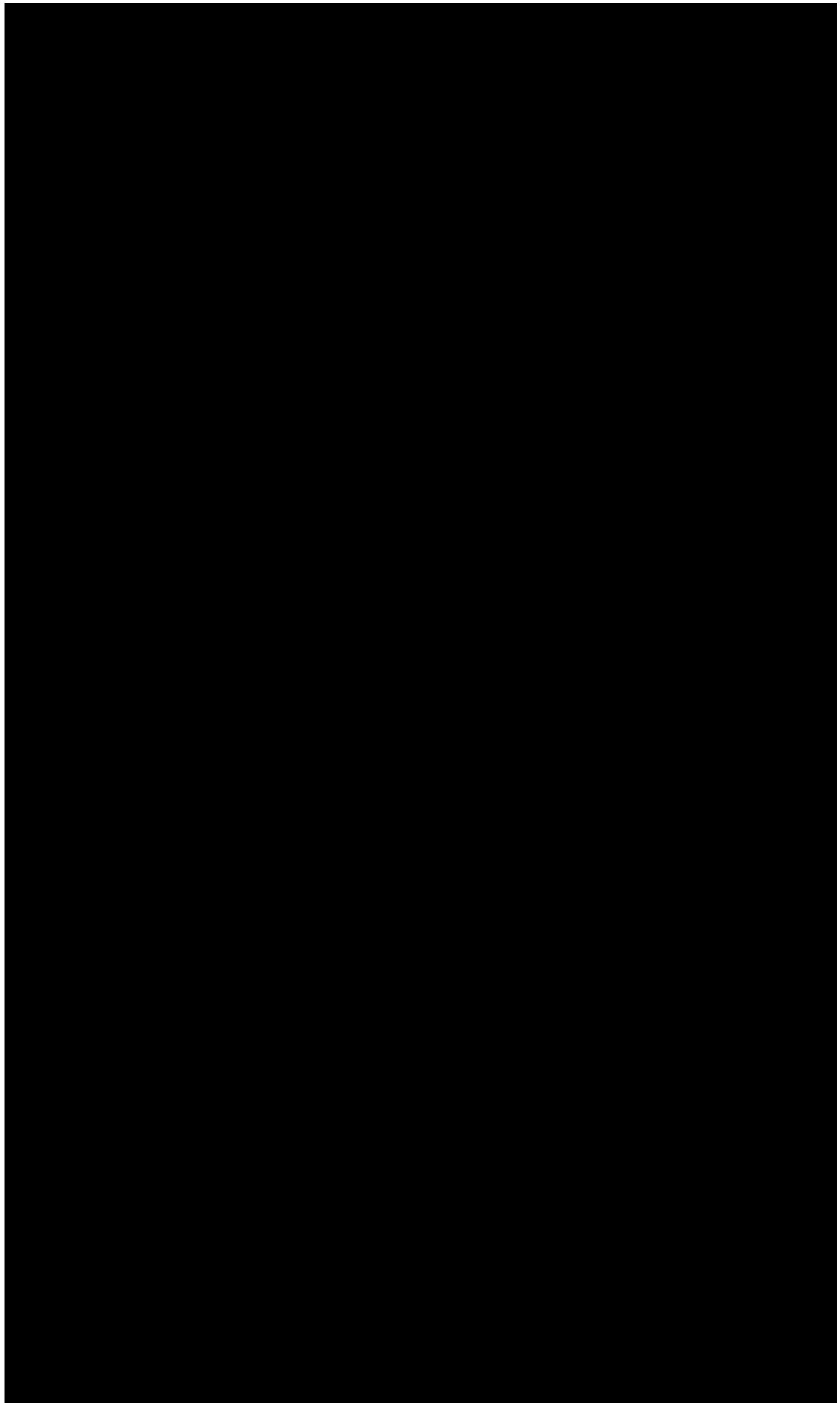


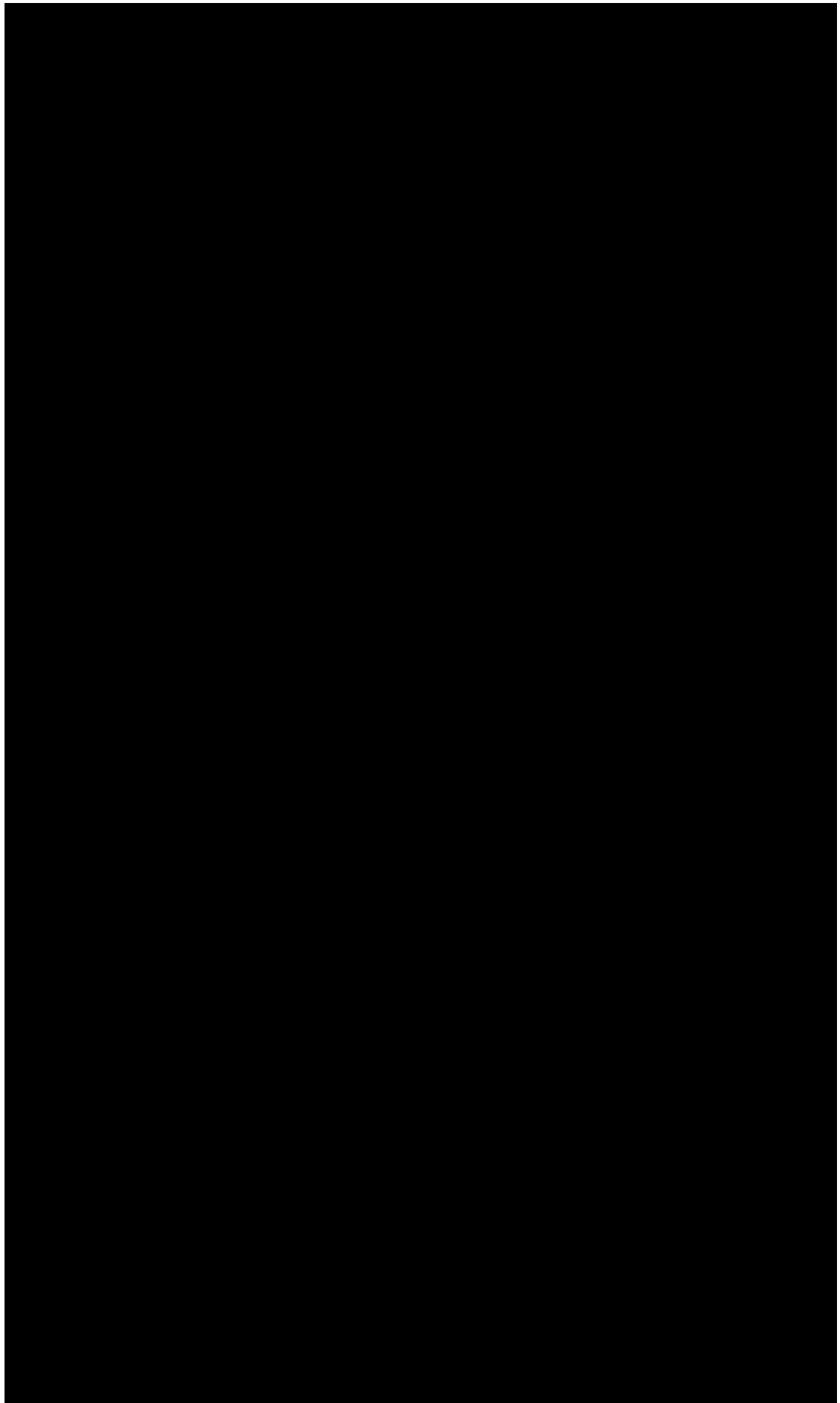


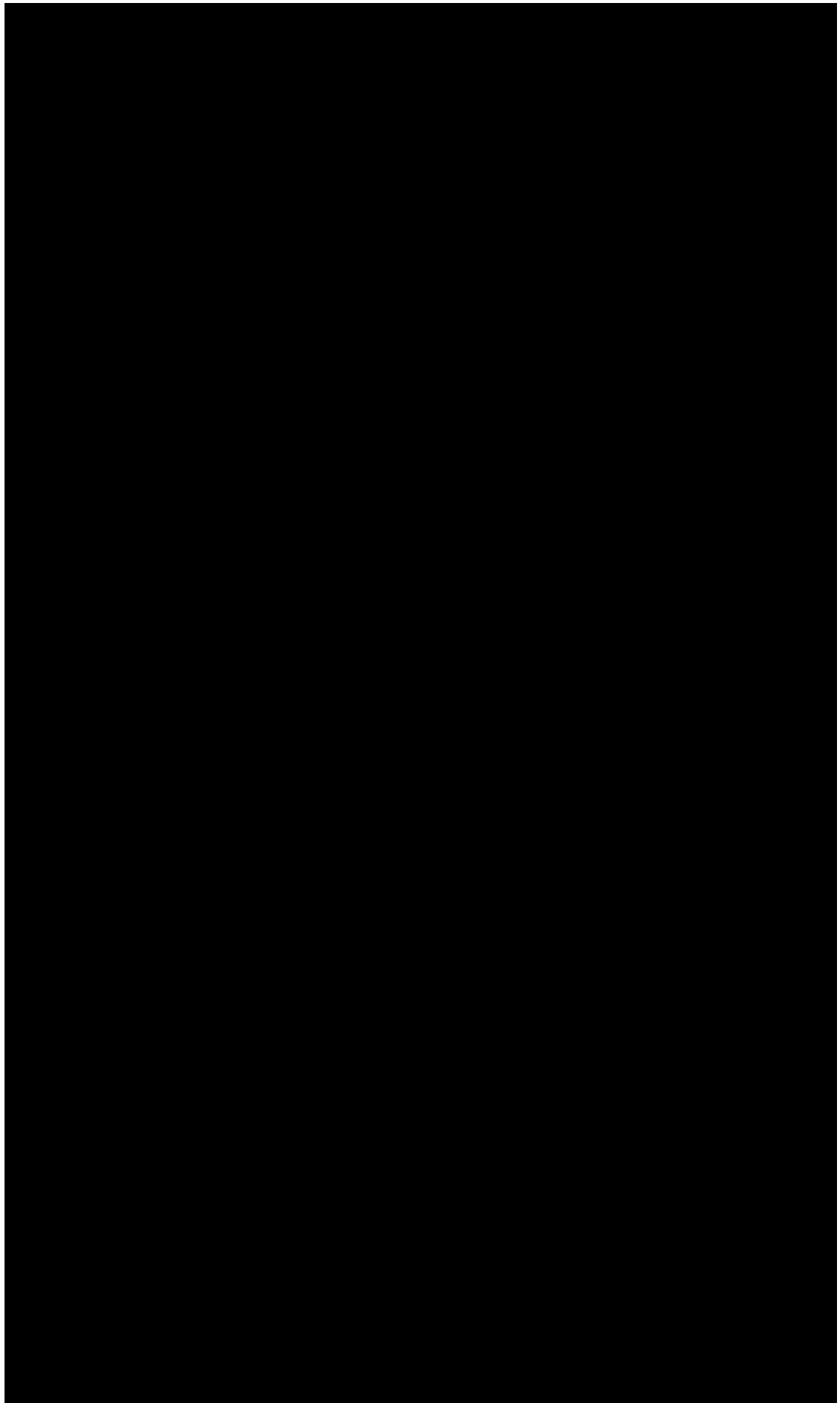


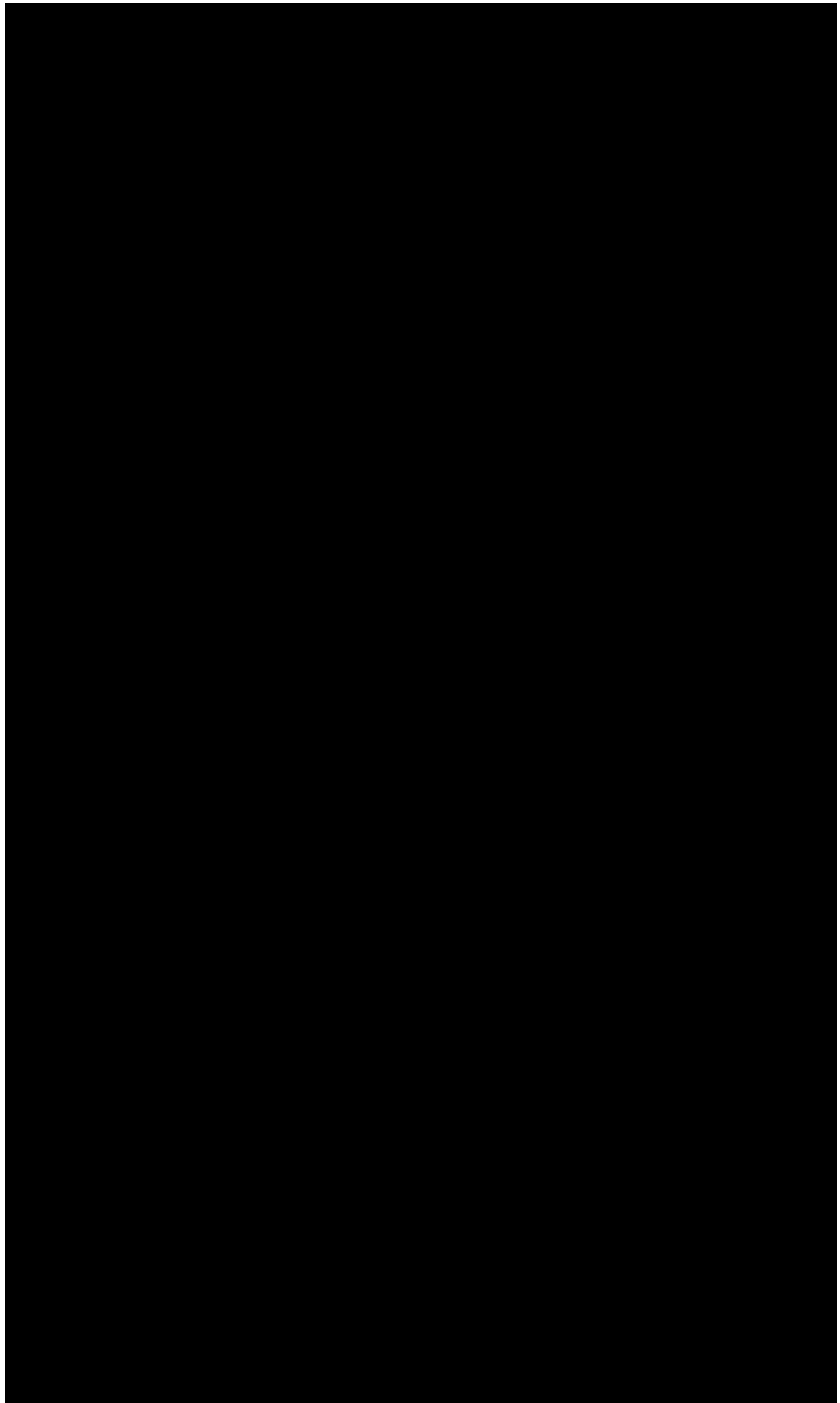


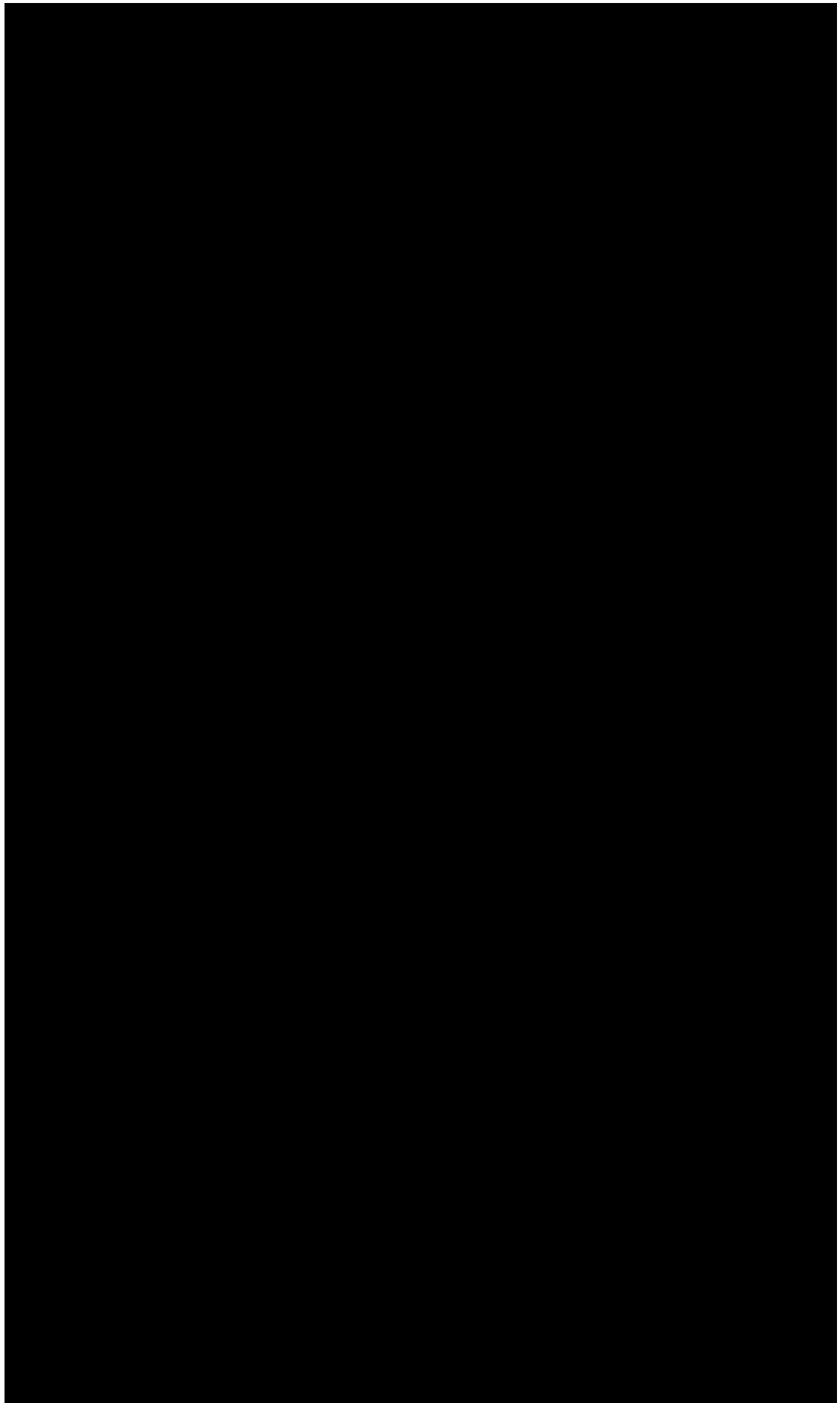


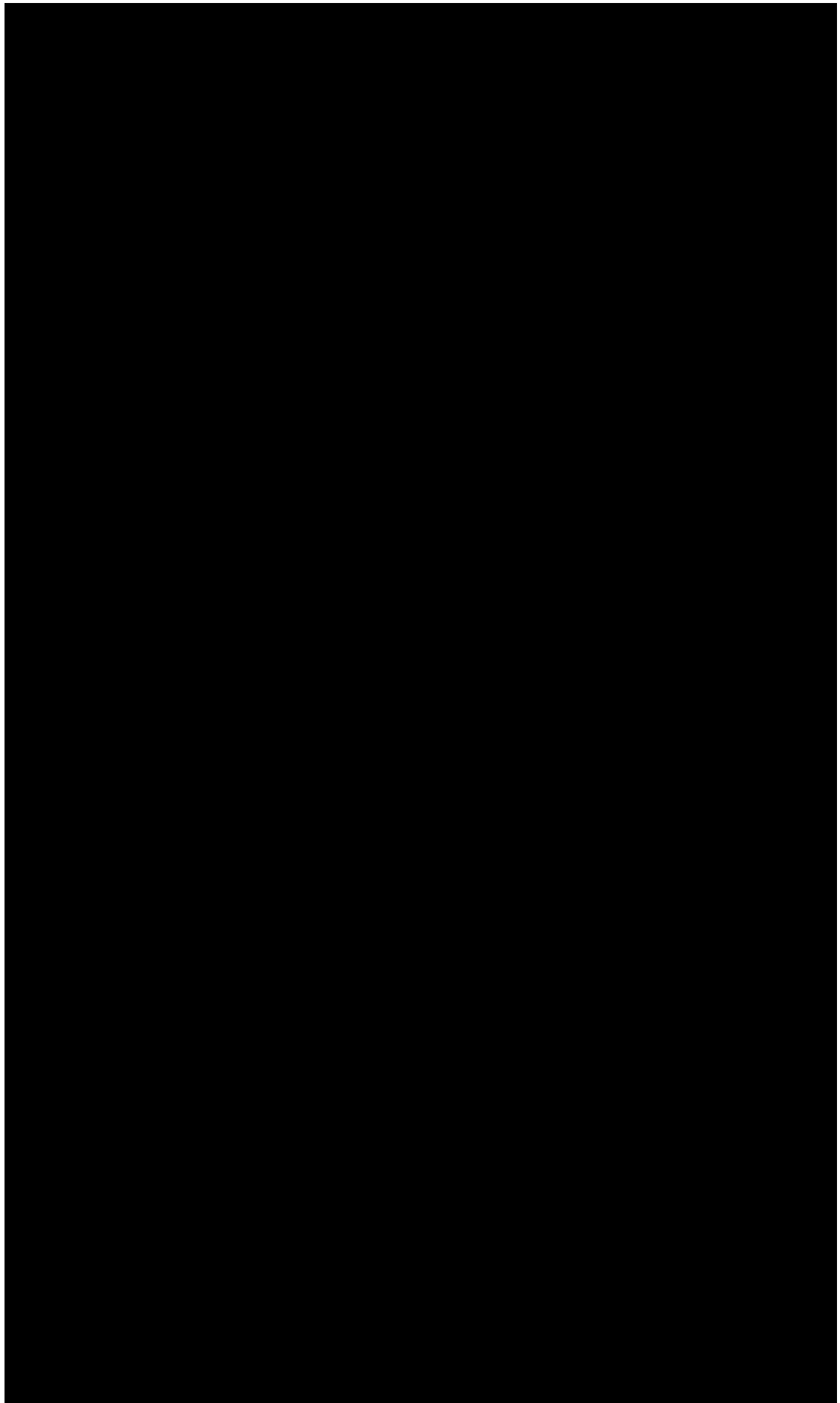


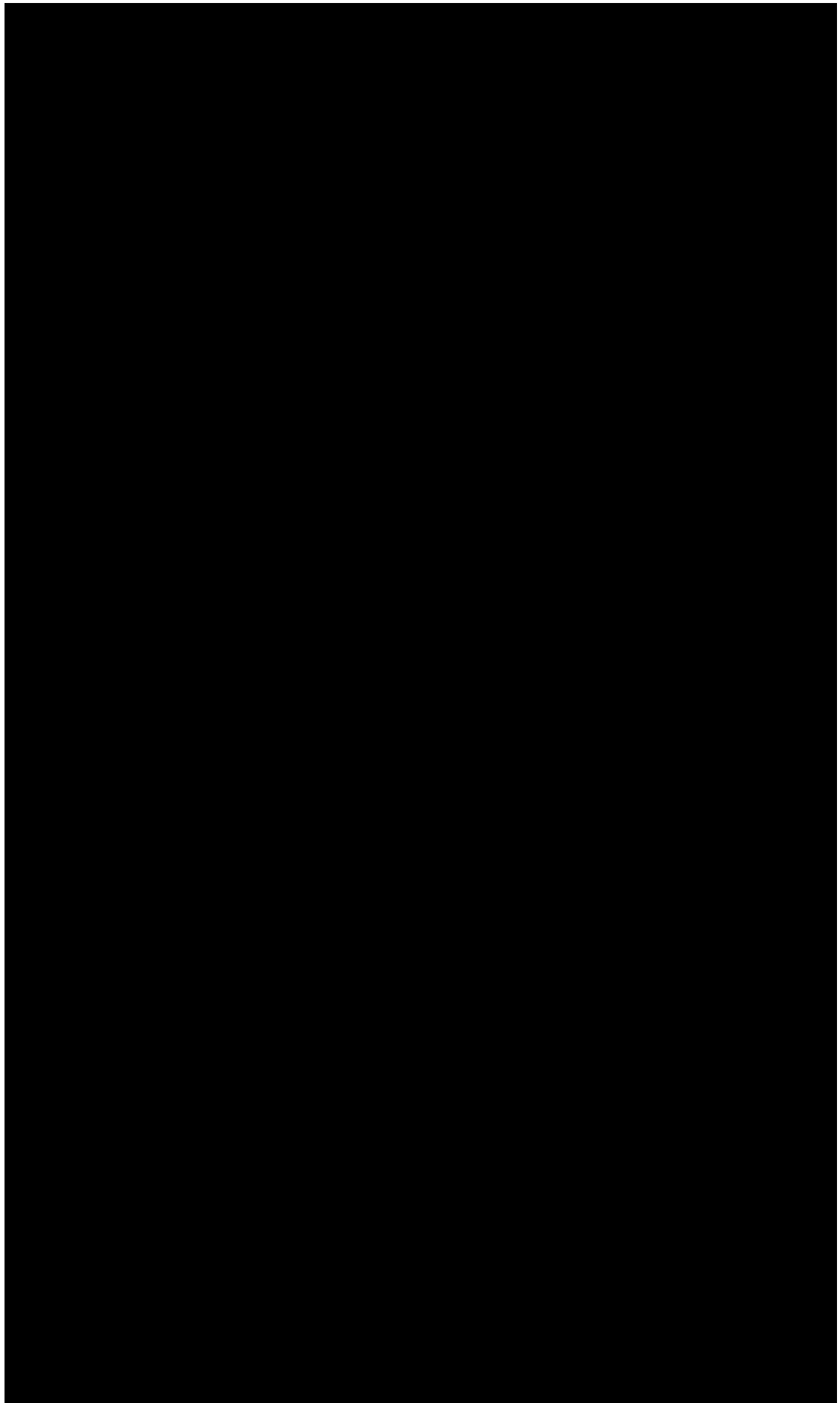


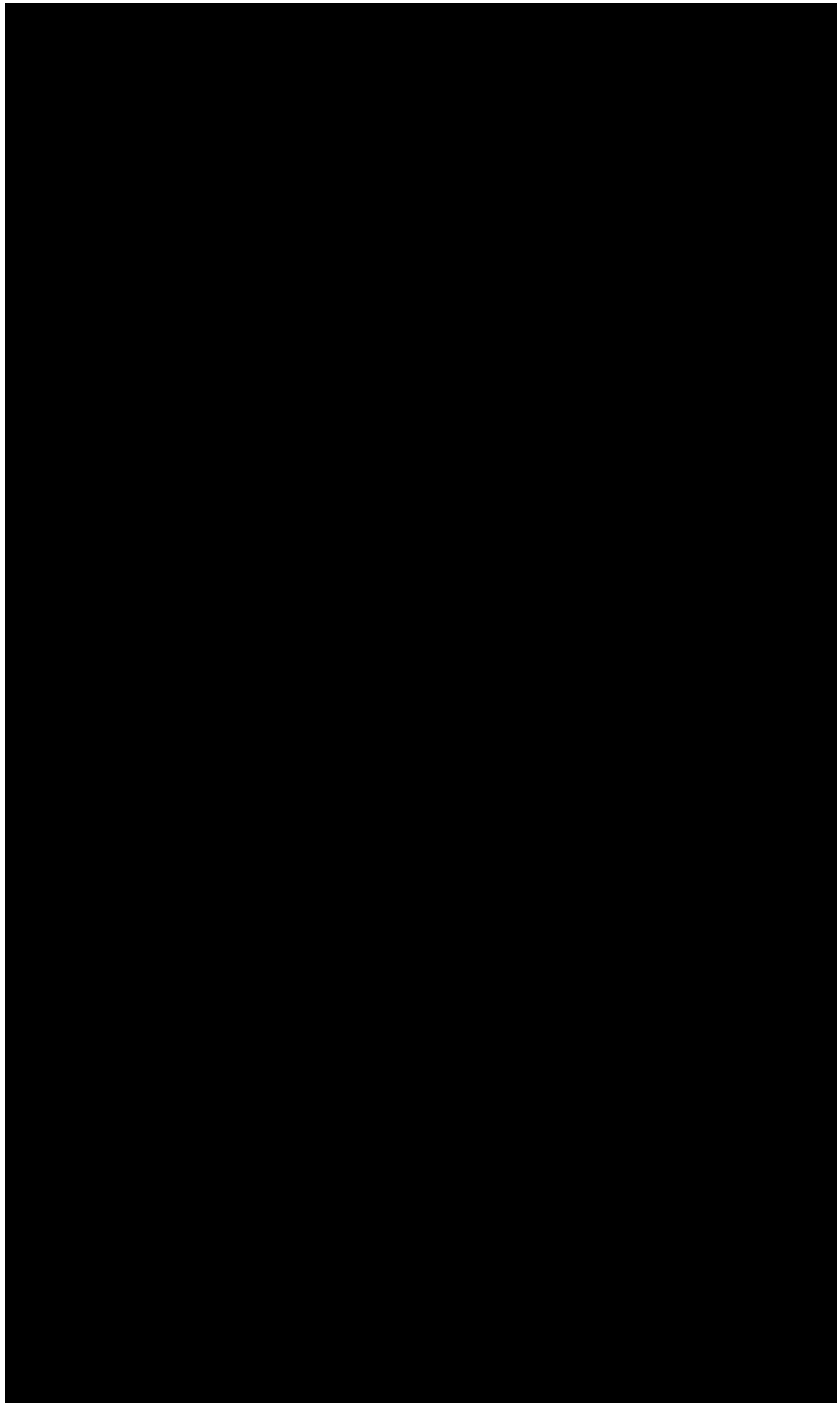


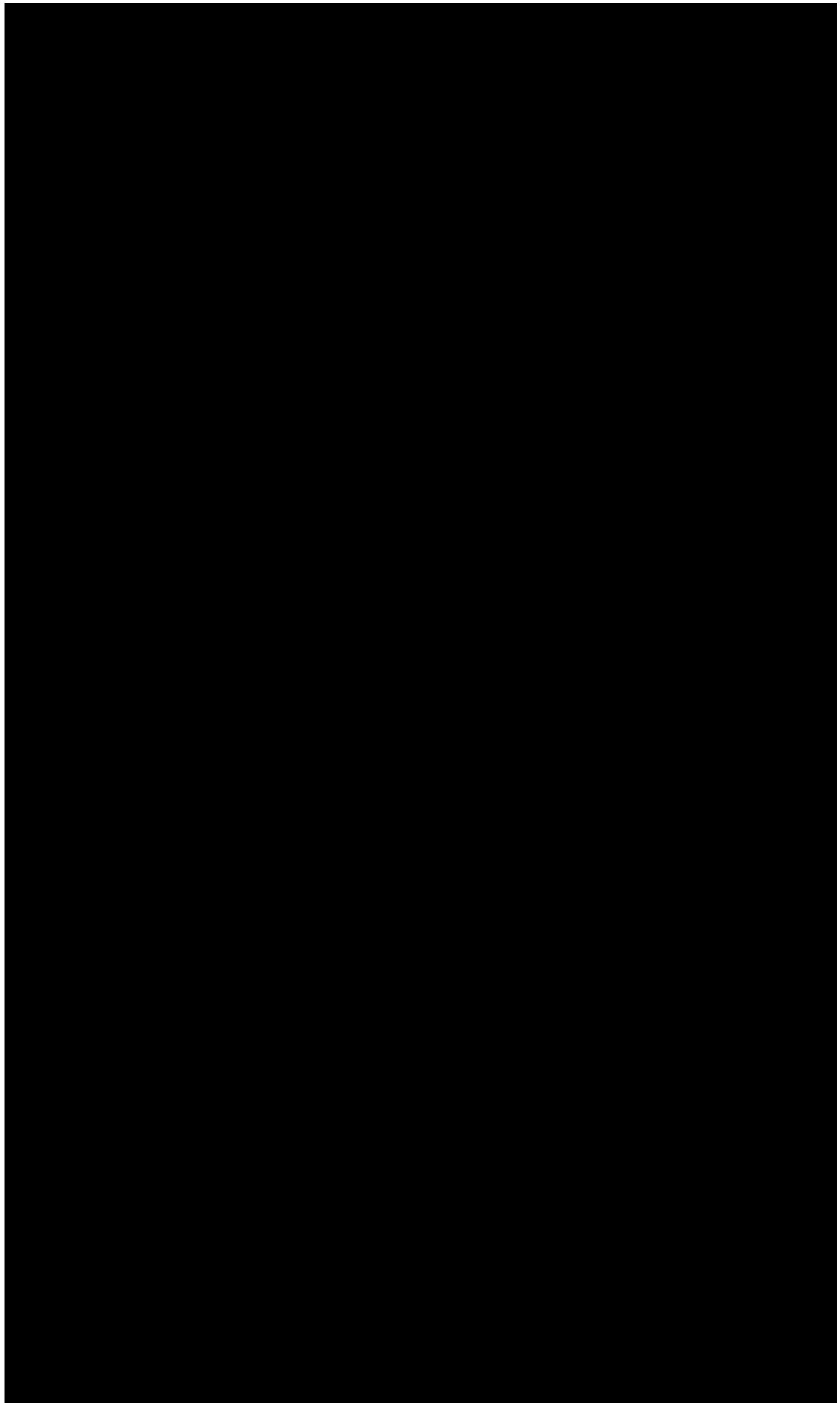


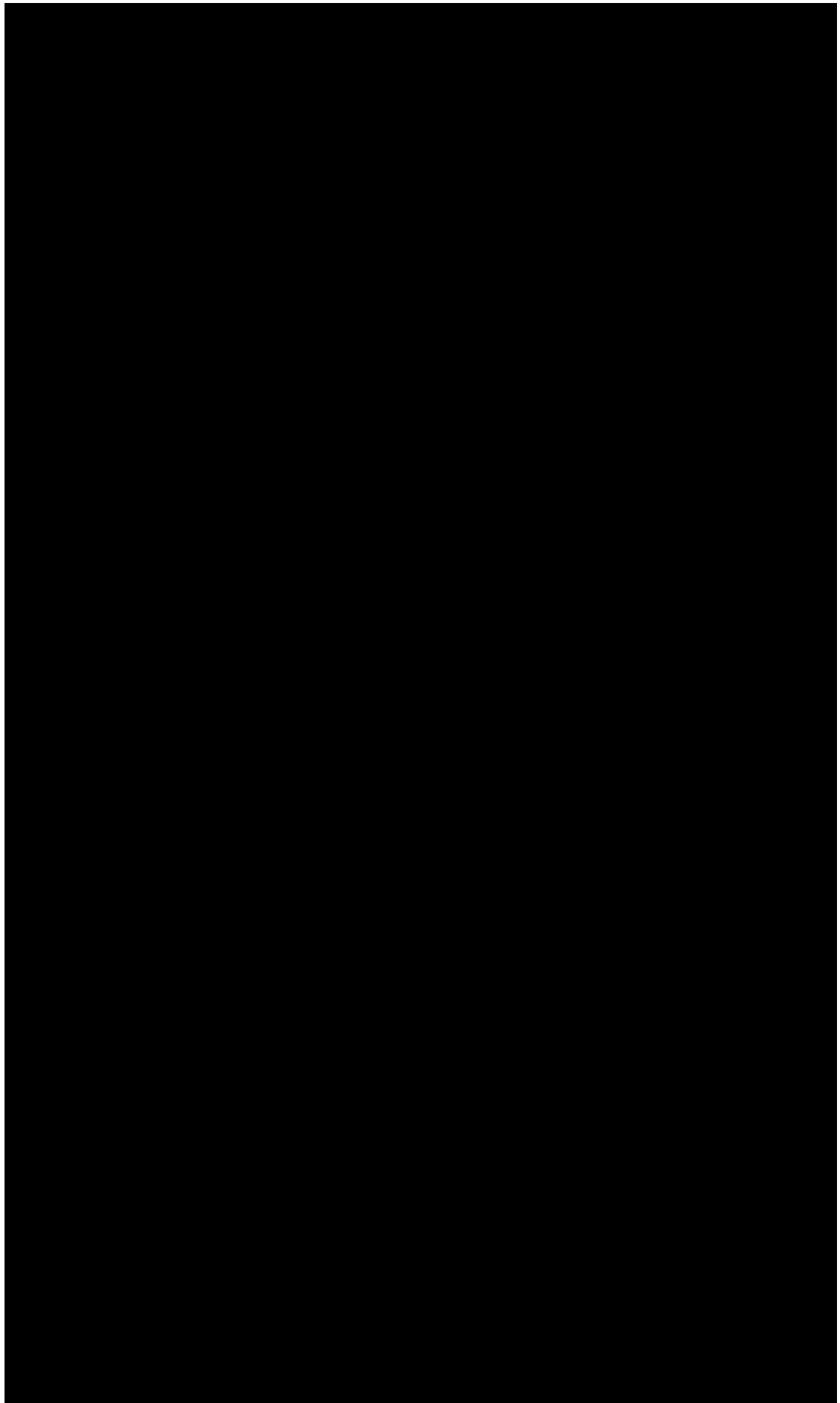


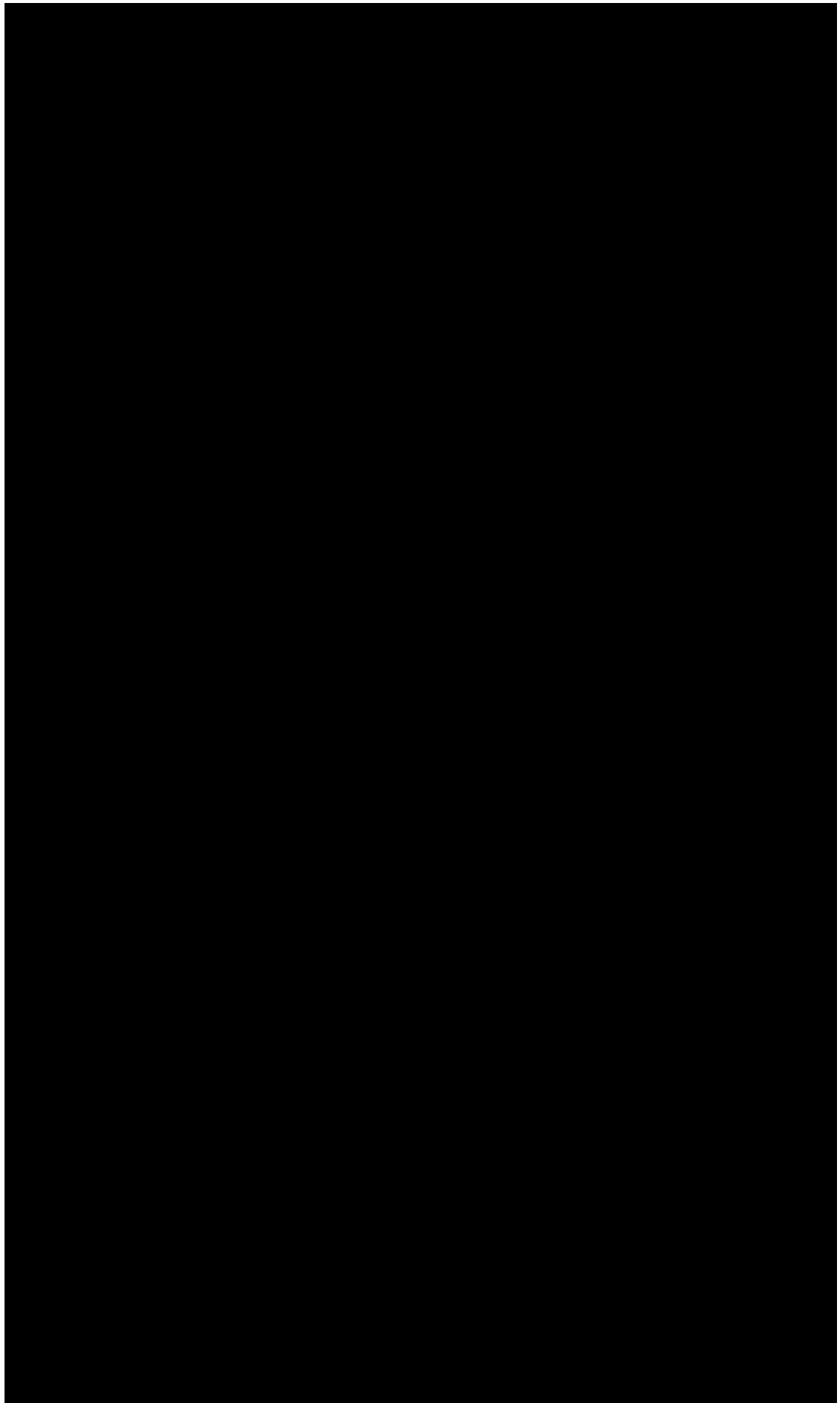


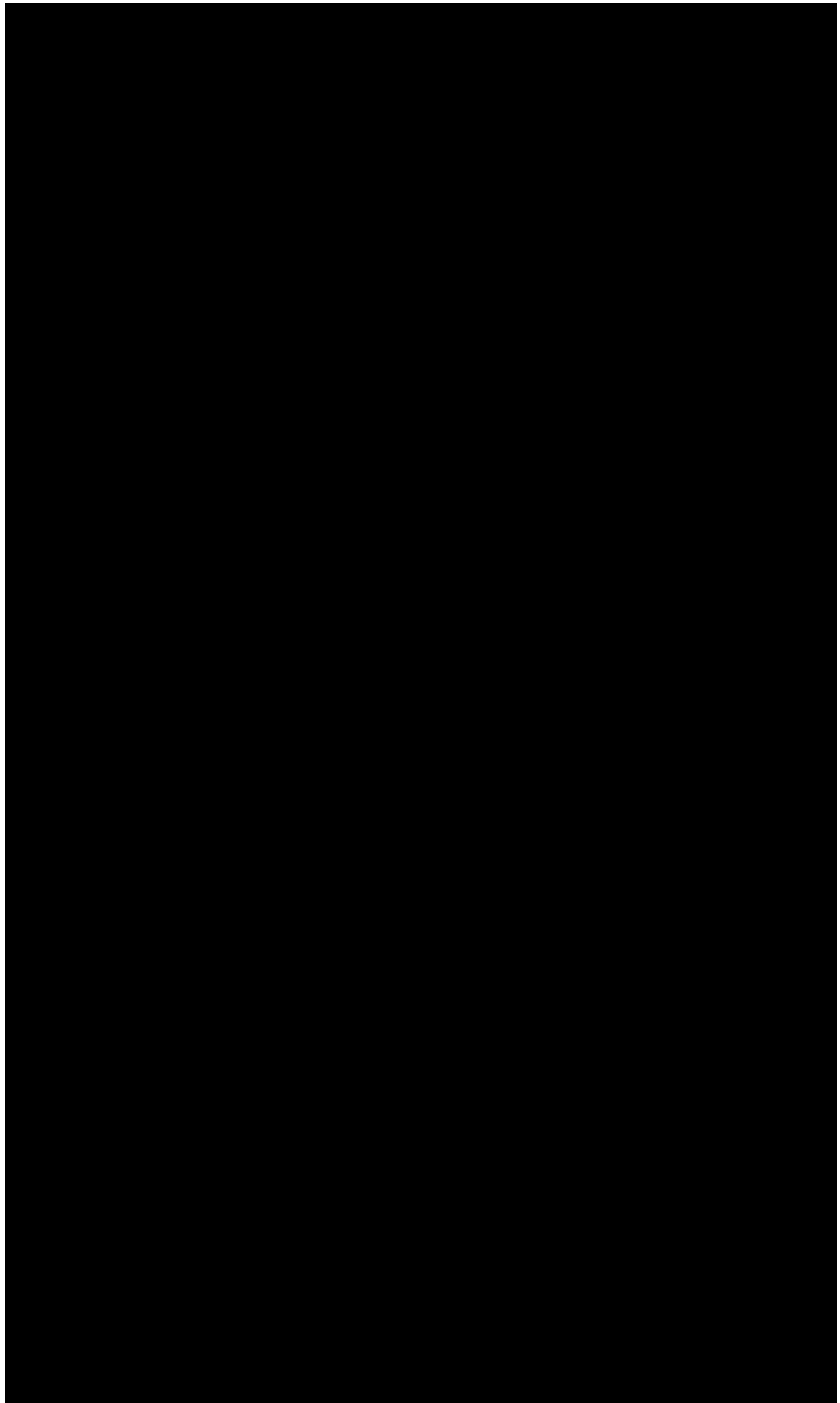


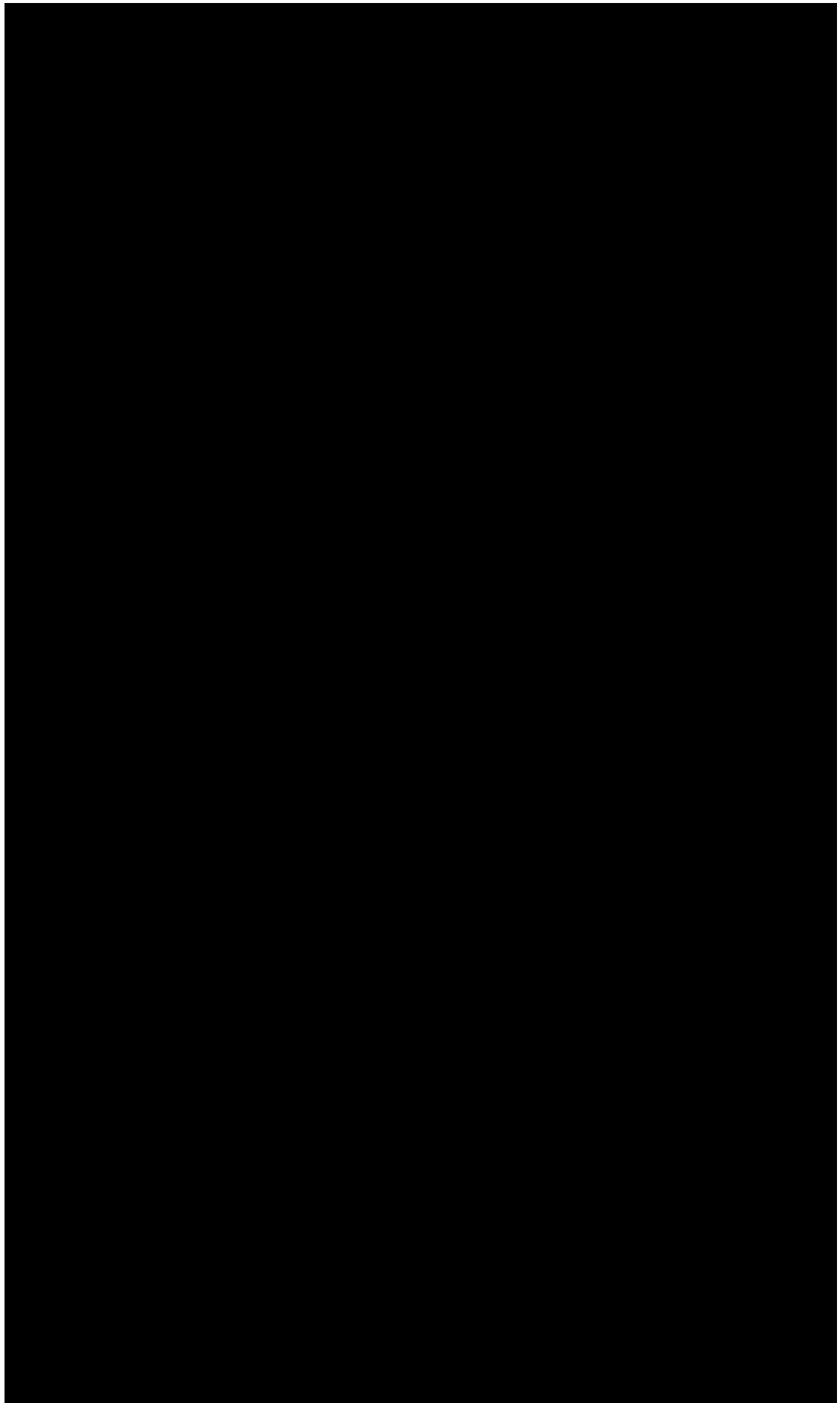


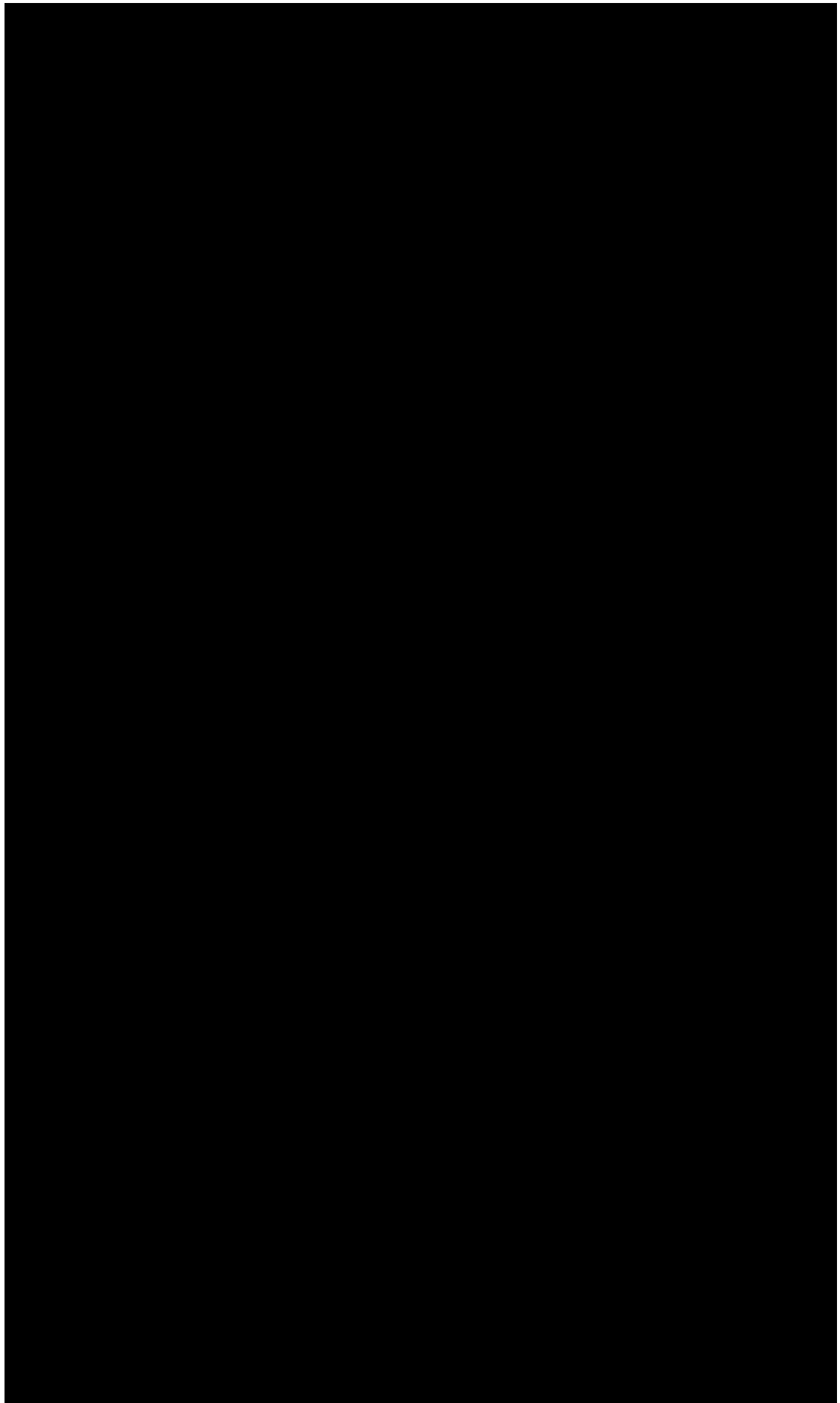


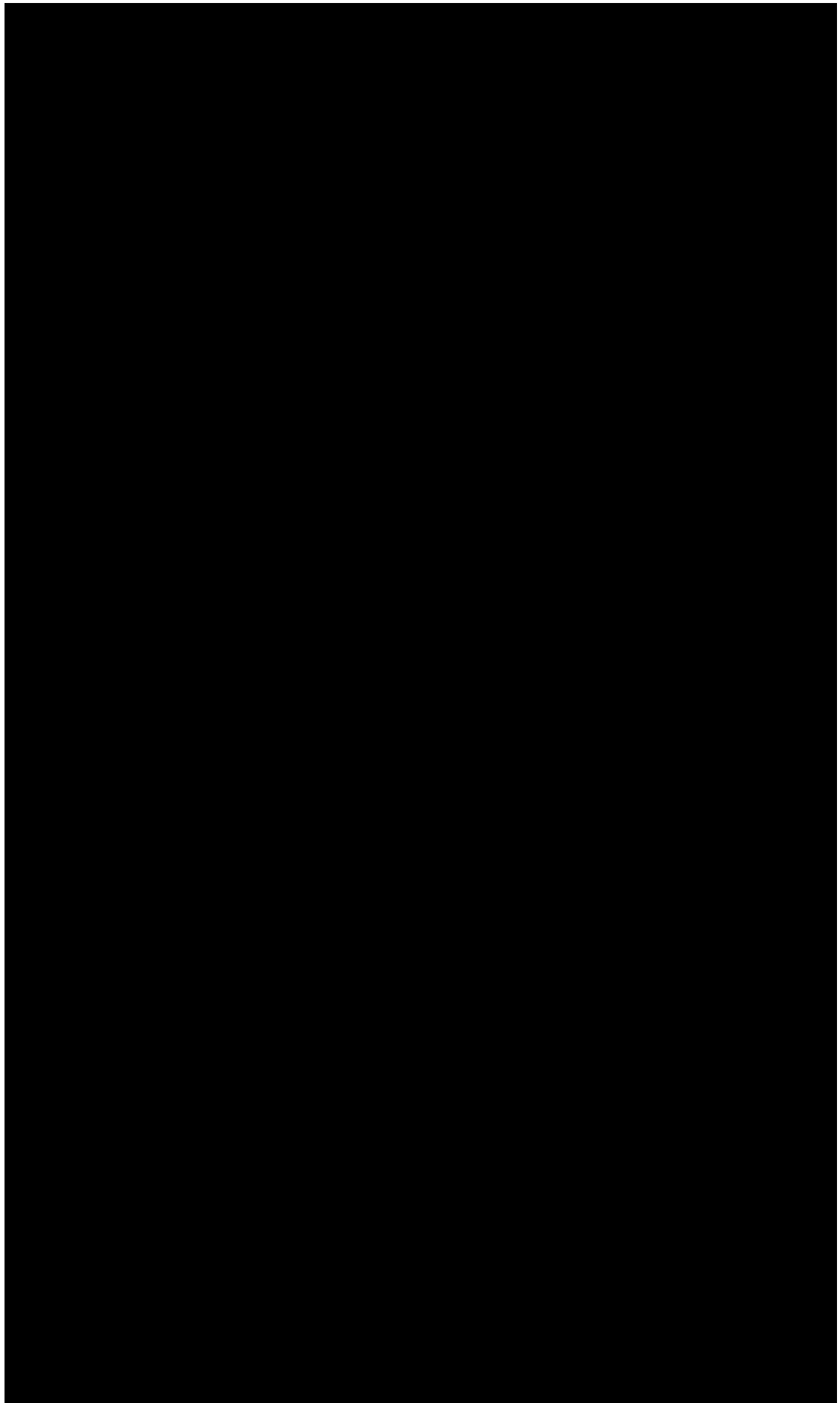


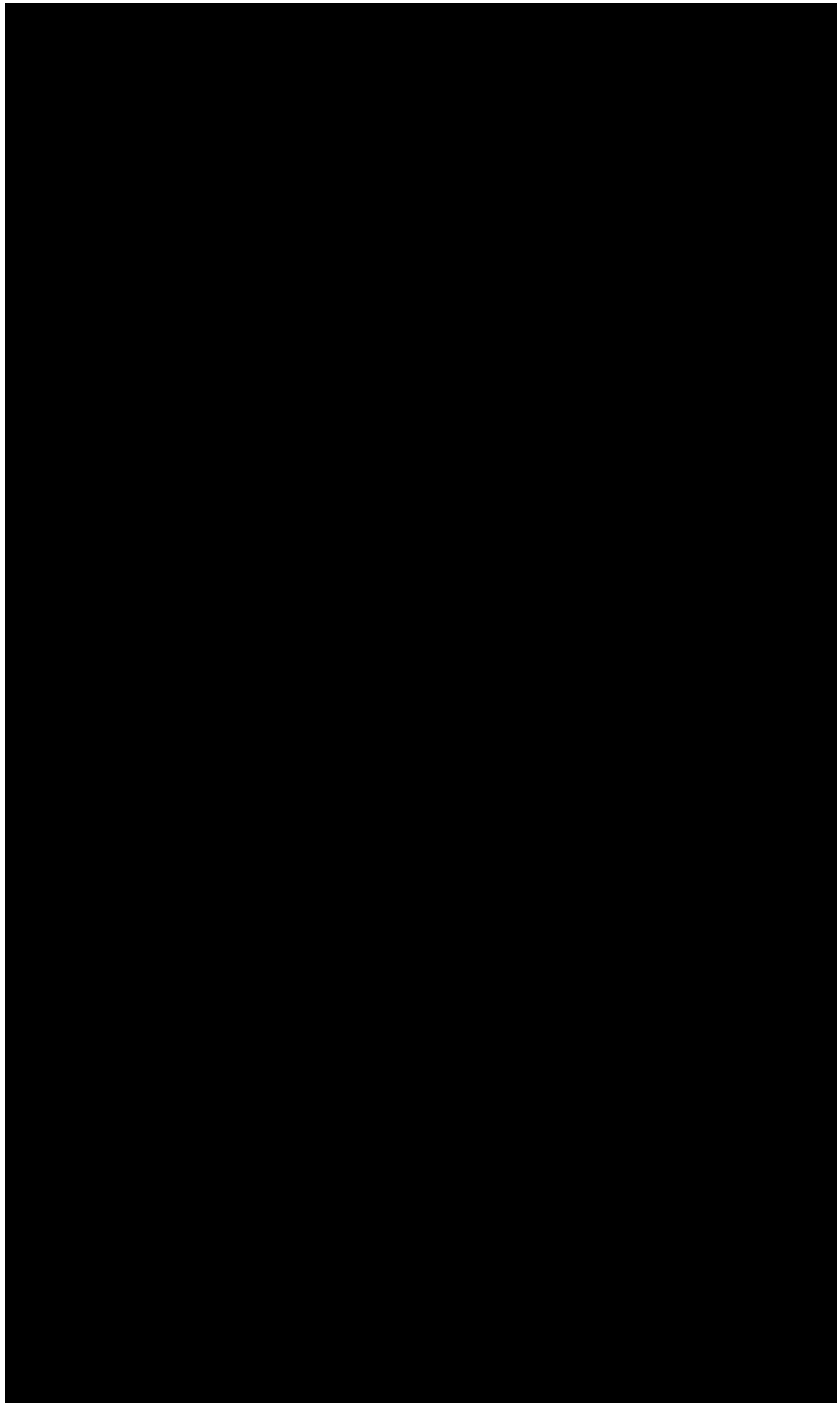


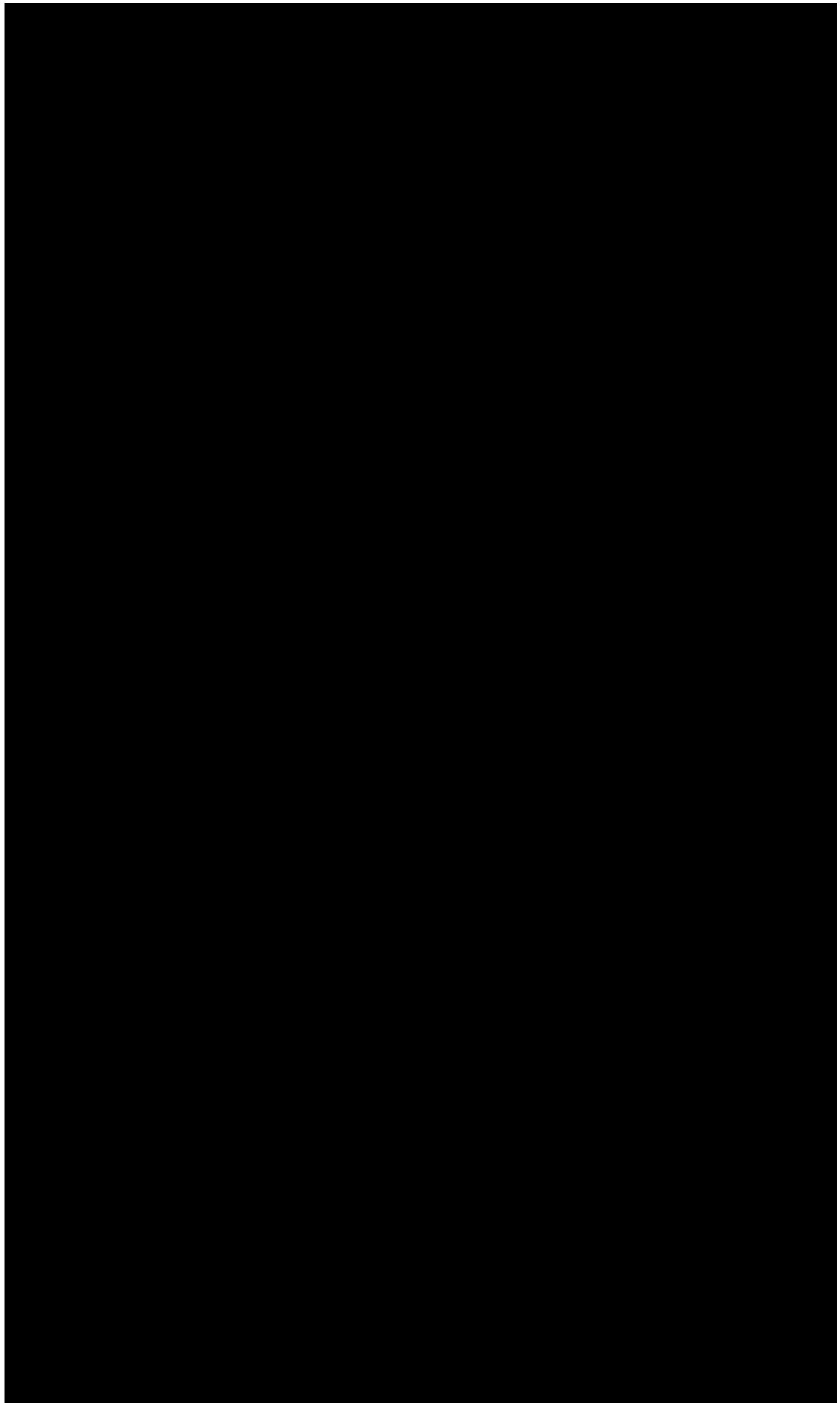












constantly learning and developing skills that will prepare them for kindergarten.”

Riaz Tejani is a professor in Legal Studies at UIS whose children, 4 and 6 years old, have been enrolled at Cox for the past two years since the family’s arrival in Springfield. “We enrolled our children at Cox partly on the advice of faculty colleagues who extolled the Center’s caring Director and teachers as well as the exclusive accreditation ratings,” he says.

“The campus location has been a huge asset, providing our children access to many UIS resources like children’s programming at the Sangamon Auditorium performing arts center, the campus/community garden, and even the colonnade fountain – which doubles as a splash pad during summer months.”

Alexandria Cosner, Coordinator of UIS Campus Recreation, heard wonderful things about the Cox Center from other families when she was expecting her daughter – who is now six months old. “The teachers really work hard with the children and their families to make learning fun in a welcoming environment,” says Alex.

“We also really like the Brightwheel app that enables Center staff to provide us with updates on our daughter via cell phone throughout the day. The constant communication is much appreciated and puts our minds at ease during the work day.”

Though serving UIS students, faculty and staff is the Center’s first priority, community clients are also served on a space-available basis. UIS alum Nichole Dorsey, whose son is 2½, is one of those community clients. “I am so grateful I can go to work with ease knowing my son is experiencing great care,” says Nichole, who worked at the Center for two years when she was an undergraduate.

“I honestly felt like I had won the lottery when a spot became available at Cox for him.”

According to a report published by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research in January, 2017, the number of college students who are also parents is growing. At the same time, the availability of convenient, high-quality childcare continues to be a critical factor for working parents and one that contributes to employee retention and morale. There’s no doubt about it – the Cox Children’s Center is a valuable asset for the campus and the Springfield community.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Class Acts, June 2017

Just a few days ago, the State Journal Register's "Weekend and More" section featured the rollout of UIS Sangamon Auditorium's 2017-18 performing arts season. "A year of diverse programming" reads an inviting headline and, more than ever, the 2017-18 season includes wonderfully talented artists from around the world performing in Broadway shows, jazz ensembles and rock bands, as well as professional dance performances, comedy and even some bluegrass.

The season represents the final encore for Auditorium Director Bob Vaughn. Bob is transitioning to a well-earned retirement after 11 years of bringing exceptional quality and diversity to the Sangamon Auditorium stage.

But many of the more than 75,000 patrons who regularly attend Sangamon Auditorium Broadway Shows, Visiting Artists, and Kitchen Sink Series each year are not aware of an additional slate of rich performances that are equally appreciated. I'm talking about the Class Acts program – special daytime performing arts programming offered for students from preschool through high school from across Central Illinois.

Thanks to enthusiastic partnerships with several school districts, including the Springfield public schools, almost 15,000 students attended at least one of 15 Class Acts performances this year ranging from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* for high school students to *Pete the Cat* for primary-aged children.

"These are professional touring companies and this is what they do," says Amy Zepp, Audience Development Coordinator for the Auditorium. "They are full time professionals creating art especially for young audiences."

Pete the Cat, for example, a Class Acts show based on a popular children's picture book written by Eric Litwin, brought 3,400 preschoolers and first graders to the UIS campus and the Auditorium on a single busy day this season. Most of those students were seeing live theater for the first time.

A complimentary program called "Grow Up Great" provides additional funding for professional development for teachers and opportunities for parents and Head Start children to attend an evening meal and performance.

The Class Acts and Grow Up Great programs would not be possible were it not for the generosity of donors who believe in the importance of arts education and who help fund the programming, subsidize the purchase of tickets for the students, and help pay the cost of bus transportation.

In addition to being a show sponsor every year, PNC Bank is a major sponsor of both Class Acts and Grow Up Great. "We're so appreciative of PNC's consistent support for these programs," says Vaughn.

"They're helping us create a point of entry to the performing arts for both students and educators who might not otherwise have access to these experiences."

Bob and Liz Staley have also been longtime supporters of the programs. Though Liz is now deceased, the Staley family continues to provide a generous grant each year to enable small town schools in New Berlin, Auburn and Waverly to participate in the Class Acts program. The Staley gift also provides funding for teachers to attend an evening performance at the Auditorium each year.

Participating teachers are asked to provide feedback about their students' experience and their words may provide the best commentary on the value of the Class Acts and Grow Up Great programs. A music teacher from Riverton High School reported, after her class attended a performance of the acapella group Vocalosity: "An excellent performance! The students loved it. Students need opportunities to compare and contrast real professionals with their own ensembles so they can better understand what a high quality performance really is."

A teacher from Wilcox Elementary School who accompanied her first graders to *Pete the Cat* had this to say: "The experience of students getting to sit in a real theater and watch a live performance is priceless. Some of my students will never get to experience that with their families. It was fantastic!"

Perhaps this second grade teacher from Enos Elementary School said it best following a performance of *Junior B's Essential Survival Guide To School*:

"The whole experience was engaging and educational," she said. "It is a great way to integrate the arts into the curriculum and motivate students to learn and grow."

As we bid Director Bob Vaughn a fond farewell and welcome new Sangamon Auditorium Director Bryan Rives in the coming weeks, I'm looking forward to another exceptional year of performing arts at the University of Illinois at Springfield – for audiences of all ages!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

End-of-year Message, May 2017

Dear Colleagues:

With much-anticipated graduation just around the corner, we have experienced adversity. No matter how challenging or ordinary when we apply our collective wisdom, creativity and energy — we can meet it, solve it and emerge stronger.

In this spirit, I offer my profound gratitude to campus leaders who devoted untold hours and commitment into often thankless assignments: **Campus Senate Chair Ranjan Karri**, **APAC Chair Maureen Hoover** and **CSAC President Jo Barnard**. UIS student leaders also deserve special mention – my thanks to **Austin Mehmet** for serving as **SGA President** and to **Nathan Hoffman** for representing

UIS as **Student Trustee** on the UI Board of Trustees. Ranjan, Maureen, Jo, Austin and Nathan took on major responsibilities in an effort to strengthen and promote UIS, and they deserve our appreciation.

I'm pleased to announce, as you likely already know, that a tentative agreement between the University administration and the new UIS faculty union has been reached. A ratification vote for the new contract was scheduled for today. As we move forward with this new collective bargaining unit on campus, we are committed to working together to realize more of the aspirations of our students, faculty and all those who belong to our university family.

It has been my pleasure to share in celebrating the contributions and successes of several exceptional UIS staff members this year, including:

- **Barbara Cass, Online Program Coordinator**, CAPE Award for outstanding performance by an Academic Professional
- **Tisha Palmer, Administrative Aide to the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs**, CARE Award for excellence in Civil Service
- **Joy Thibadeau, Assistant to the Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education**, UIS Employee of the Year

Faculty honors awarded this year included:

- **Dr. Peter Shapinsky (History)** – University Scholar
- **Dr. Amy McEuen (Biology)** – Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching
- **Dr. Jorge Villegas (Business Administration)** – Spencer Award for Exemplary Service
- **Dr. Scott Day (Educational Leadership)** – Award for Faculty Excellence
- **Dr. Cheng-Chia (Brian) Chen (Public Health)** – Burks Oakley II Distinguished Online Teaching Award

These honorees, and so many others on our campus, exemplify “Leadership lived” and inspire our community every day.

Last year at this time, we were giddy over the groundbreaking for the new **UIS Student Union** and now we are less than a year away from cutting the ribbon at its grand opening. Having joined Director of Facilities and Services **Chuck Coderko** for several group construction tours already, I have been struck by the incredible space and beauty of this campus-altering project. It is going to exceed the expectations of everyone and I hope you've saved Sunday, January 14, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. on your calendar for the grand opening. (Note: you can still monitor [live construction progress](#) during daylight hours.)

After unveiling our exceptional Abraham Lincoln sculpture last year, we took another step in beautifying our campus with the addition of the Shakespeare Garden. This project required careful attention to detail, planning and execution; **Brian Beckerman** and the entire grounds crew not only unveiled the garden with panache, they have maintained it as an eye-catching and inviting new destination for students, staff and visitors to our campus.

As I've done before, allow me to highlight some examples of the great work of our colleagues and students this past year:

The Child Advocacy Studies (CAST) certification program, under the direction of Professor **Betsy Goulet**, was named one of only three Gunderson National Child Protection Training Center-approved programs in the United States. The UIS CAST certification program was launched in the spring semester of 2015 and uses a Residential Simulation Lab and mock courtroom on campus to teach students how to better protect at-risk children and families.

Students from the **UIS Clinical Laboratory Science Program** captured the state title in the Student Bowl competition at the annual meeting of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science.

Hundreds of UIS Students helped collect a record 14,085 pounds of food for the Central Illinois Foodbank on Halloween night for **Trick-or-Treat for Canned Goods**.

The **Illinois Innocence Project** helped with the release of a Decatur man who was wrongfully convicted and had been imprisoned for 18 years. Six UIS students assisted on his case.

In one of the largest volunteer efforts of the year, more than 100 UIS students participated in the national **Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service**. The students volunteered at ten Springfield locations.

The **College of Business and Management's** accreditation by the prestigious Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International) was reaffirmed. The UIS College of Business and Management was first accredited by AACSB International in 2007 and the last reaffirmation took place in 2012. AACSB is known for advancing quality business education programs worldwide.

Several UIS student-athletes were named all-conference (All-GLVC) this year in their respective sports. Some other highlights this Spring include: the **UIS women's golf team** advancing to the NCAA Super Regionals; UIS golfer **Talon Supak** advanced to the NCAA Central/Midwest Regional; **UIS women's tennis team** advanced to the GLVC tournament for the first time in program history; UIS baseball player **Michael Rothmund** was leading the entire country in all three NCAA Divisions in home runs (24) as the Prairie Stars began GLVC postseason play.

The Athletic Academic Honor Roll included 171 student athletes with 20 earning a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Tomorrow, UIS will have the largest number of students participate in **Commencement** in the history of the university. Of the 1,836 students eligible to graduate, **1,270** will participate in the ceremony and it will be my privilege to shake

the hand of each one of them. As part of our celebration, Memorial Health System President **Ed Curtis** will be awarded an honorary degree and provide some words of inspiration for everyone in attendance.

Thanks to you, we are maintaining the positive momentum of our campus. As we close another academic year, **thank you so much** for all that you've done to contribute to another great year at UIS. I remain so proud to be your Chancellor because I believe so deeply in the promise of our campus.

Have a great summer, everyone!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2017

Today's UIS Perspectives column appears just hours after the 2017 UIS Commencement. With 1,250 students crossing the stage at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in two separate ceremonies, the 46th Commencement of the University of Illinois at Springfield celebrated the largest graduating class in school history and was a memorable day for graduates and their families. Like every other faculty and staff member, I'm proud of our graduates – each of whom has worked with such determination to earn their University of Illinois degree.

Among the many smiling graduates shaking my hand on the commencement stage was Jeremy Embalabala, who is now a two-time UIS graduate in Computer Science. Jeremy completed his Master's degree online at the same time he was employed at Horace Mann as a member of the corporate security team.

"I decided to pursue my Master's degree," says Jeremy, "because I wanted to challenge myself from a technical perspective."

"The flexibility of online was key for me," he continues. "I appreciated being able to take courses from professors with real-world experience who are on the cutting edge of implementation and execution."

Thanks to the online program, I could go to work, come home and play with my kids, and then work on my online coursework." Jeremy recently accepted a new position at Hub International in Chicago (a global insurance broker) where he is Director of Security Architecture.

Audrey LeVault from Edinburg, Illinois, a member of the Capital Scholars Honors Program, graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. "I loved the Social

Work department,” she says. “The professors are great and we had a real sense of camaraderie in my class.”

Audrey lived on campus all four years of school and worked as a Resident Assistant in a UIS apartment complex. “I’m proud that, as an RA, I had an opportunity to work with a resident who was visually impaired,” she reports.

“I learned a lot from her and we even created a program together to teach other students how to interact with visually-impaired people.”

Audrey has been accepted into the prestigious Master’s in Social Work (MSW) program at UIUC and plans to become a school counselor.

Nathan Hoffman, a Political Science major from Springfield, and Noah Sisson, a Business Management major from Virden, may not know each other but they have more in common than being in the same graduating class. Both came to UIS looking for opportunities to pursue their passions – Nathan for public service and Noah for business entrepreneurship.

“I owe much of what I’ve learned at UIS to several outstanding professors,” says Nathan, “including Dr. Adriana Crocker and Dr. Richard Gilman-Opalsky.” Noah echoes that same sentiment. “Professors Nathan Steele and Bruce Sommer are both great teachers,” he reports.

“Dr. Steele’s class on negotiations helped me successfully negotiate the purchase of a piece of land and I’ve worked with Bruce to develop the concept for a firefighter accountability system – new technology to track a firefighter’s location inside a burning building.”

Besides being a fulltime student, Noah is a farmer, small business owner and EMT/firefighter.

After completing his term as UIS Student Trustee on the University of Illinois Board of Trustees this month, Nathan will continue working for the Illinois Chamber of Commerce as a funding, law and lobbyist at St. Louis University. Noah firefighting.

The phrase “Leadership lived” is often used to describe UIS – a reputation that is infused throughout the student experience. No graduate exemplifies that reputation more than Alicia Woodman from Shipman, Illinois, who graduated yesterday with majors in Communications and Legal Studies. Alicia has been an active student leader throughout her undergraduate career, serving in student government and residence life as well supporting other students through her work in the campus advising center. She is currently Chairing the Student Organization Funding Association – an important group that allocates financial support to various student organizations.

“My most positive UIS memories involve meeting and working with so many different people,” says Alicia. “I’ve learned a lot and

developed expertise in social media marketing – a field I’d like to pursue as a profession.”

Alicia was recently named Ms. Wheelchair Illinois USA and will be competing in the national pageant in Ohio this summer.

The mission of the University of Illinois is to “transform lives and serve society.” I am confident the lives of Jeremy, Audrey, Nathan, Noah and Alicia have, indeed, been transformed by their UIS experience. I’m also confident they, like the thousands of other 2017 graduates of all three University of Illinois campuses, will serve society in productive ways across Illinois and around the world for many years to come. Congratulations, graduates. We’re proud of you!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: STARS Symposium, April 2017

Less than a year ago, the University of Illinois Board of Trustees approved a new strategic framework for the three universities in the UI system – with the goal to reaffirm the central role that higher education plays in promoting the public good in Illinois and beyond. One of four strategic pillars of our framework is: “Research and Scholarship with Global Impact”.

Research and scholarship, including creative work in the humanities and the arts, not only generates new knowledge of great value to our state and to society but also provides students with valuable opportunities to enrich their educational experiences.

Providing opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty one-to-one is a particularly strong feature of the UIS student experience and the results of those opportunities will be “front and center” this month at the STARS Symposium. STARS stands for Student Arts and Research Symposium and this annual event offers a rich array of presentations and performances by UIS students, each of whom has worked closely throughout the year with a faculty mentor to complete an individual research or creative project.

With a special symposium theme of “Sustainability,” this year’s event, co-chaired by Mike Miller, Associate Professor of Visual Arts, and Carolee Rigsbee, Assistant Professor of Management, promises to be especially intriguing.

The program includes student presentations of more than 80 projects representing the Natural Sciences, the Social Sciences, the Arts, Business, the Humanities, and Technology.

The program also includes many musical performances as well as keynote presentations by poet Ross Gay, winner of the 2016 National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry, and economist William Cosgrove, an expert in water economics and winner of the Cannes International Prize for Water Economics.

A special addition to the Symposium this year is a field trip (by charter bus) to the Emiquon Nature Preserve floodplain restoration project on the Illinois River near Havana, where participants will be hosted by Field Station Director Dr. Tom Rothfus for a tour of the preserve and opportunities to learn about research that faculty and their students are conducting at the UIS Therkildsen Field Station.

“STARS represents so much of what we try to do and be as UIS faculty,” says Dr. Rigsbee. “It is a community of faculty, students and staff supporting student scholarship.

Having the opportunity to help students strengthen their skills and abilities so they can be more successful in their careers while at the same time advancing work in your own area of study is a win-win proposition!”

“The benefits of participating in the STARS symposium are manifold,” says Professor Miller. “Students learn presentation skills, identifying their core research interests and sharing those ideas with peers, faculty and community members.”

“Students are motivated to a higher quality of work,” Professor Miller continues, “when they know their ideas will be publically recognized and interpreted.”

(Professor Miller should know. He has individually mentored dozens of STARS presenters himself during the past several years.)

According to the U.S. Council on Undergraduate Research, research and creative projects like those showcased at the STARS Symposium help students develop critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and intellectual independence, and promote an innovation-oriented culture on the university campus.

When it comes to the experience of discovery at UIS, it may be that students describe it best: Alex Skarr, a double major in Political Science and Sociology/Anthropology, is participating in STARS for the second time this year and also serves on the planning committee for the event.

“Participation in STARS has been tremendously helpful in my education,” he says.

“My project has helped me to gain research, writing, and public speaking skills that are highly sought out in job and graduate school applications and that I know will be of importance upon graduation.”

“My mentors have helped me develop self confidence and a sense of belonging in the academic community,” he continues. “I like to think of STARS as a stepping stone to some of the other great opportunities I have had at UIS.”

The STARS Symposium is scheduled for Thursday, April 20th, and Friday, April 21st. Community participation is welcome, though the Emiquon Field trip is limited to those registered in advance. For more information and a complete schedule of events, see the [STARS website](#). I hope you'll join us!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Campus Wellness, March 2017

In 1948, the preamble of the new World Health Organization's constitution redefined "health" as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease." That unprecedented definition, conveying the more positive aspects of health, sparked the worldwide "wellness movement." Since then, wellness has become an important part of both community and university life across the U.S.

The heart of campus wellness at UIS is the TRAC (The Recreation and Athletic Center), a 72,000 square-foot facility that opened in 2007 – thanks in part to a generous gift from the Hoogland Family Foundation of Springfield's own Charles and Kathleen Hoogland.

A state-of-the-art wellness and recreation facility, TRAC houses multiple indoor ~~sporting~~ ~~drinks~~ ~~cardio~~ ~~weight~~ ~~training~~ ~~bars~~ ~~and~~ ~~olympic~~ ~~ports~~ ~~exercise~~ ~~room~~. Led by Director of Campus Recreation James Koeppel, TRAC staff provide a variety of wellness programs for students, faculty and staff including group fitness classes (like strength and cardio training, Pilates, yoga, martial arts and dance), intramural sports programs and even personal training services.

"TRAC is more than just a place to work out," says James. "It's a lively gathering place on campus. There's a real sense of belonging and community here at the same time the programs we offer encourage participants to develop healthy habits of exercise and good nutrition – habits that improve all aspects of their lives."

Taylor Davis, a sophomore majoring in Exercise Science, is one of those participants. "I started my fitness journey at the TRAC on February 16, 2016," she says, "when I participated in a free fitness assessment." Taylor now works out on her own or participates in a fitness class six days per week. She is also working on earning certification as a personal trainer and is a student employee at TRAC teaching weight training.

TRAC is also home to UIS's Division II Prairie Stars athletics and a valuable addition to the program this year is Chris Lowe, the new Strength and Conditioning

Coach. Thanks to a partnership with the Springfield Clinic, Chris works with the 260 Prairie Stars student-athletes on all 15 athletic teams.

“Though each team has their own strength and conditioning plan, I take an individualized approach,” says Chris. “Teams with professional strength and conditioning programs are more competitive and, in addition to strength and conditioning workouts, I educate students about the importance of sleep, good nutrition and adequate hydration.”

“Working with Coach Lowe has changed how I take care of myself physically and emotionally – making me a better player and a better student,” says Mike Rothmund, a Junior first baseman from Lombard, Illinois who is majoring in Communications.

“My diet has changed dramatically for the better and it’s nice to have someone here who is really looking out for you on a personal level.”

Mike’s work with Coach Lowe is certainly paying off ... during a 4-game swing last weekend, he hit 3 home runs and drove in 8 more, helping the Prairie Stars win 3 of 4 games.

Campus Recreation also offers wellness opportunities for UIS employees and their partners via a TRAC membership program and many faculty and staff utilize the facility to maintain health and wellness.

“The importance of exercise is well established in health related literature not only for physical but also for mental health,” says TRAC member Rassule Hadidi, UIS Professor of Management Information Systems.

“Most of us [faculty] do not get the daily required walking and moving that is essential for good health,” he continues. “I have enjoyed participating in fitness classes at TRAC during my lunch hour and the instructors are welcoming, knowledgeable and motivating.”

Sophia Gehlhausen Anderson, Coordinator of Programs and Outreach for the UIS Diversity Center, agrees. A regular participant each week in the “On TRAC” fitness class (a popular cardio and strength training program), Sophia especially appreciates the educational opportunities TRAC provides. “I’ve really learned a whole new way to work out that exercises the whole body – much different than the jogging I used to do exclusively,” she says.

“It’s not just the fitness and social aspects of the classes that we like, but also the learning that takes place.”

Residents of the Springfield area are invited to [visit the TRAC](#) on April 19 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM for the Annual Health and Wellness Fair. The Fair features a variety of interactive booths and educational opportunities presented by UIS departments and Springfield community participants. I hope to see you there!

SJR Column: Government and Politics, February 2017

From its very beginning in 1970, the University of Illinois at Springfield has embraced its location in the state capital of Illinois and the home of Abraham Lincoln – providing unique opportunities for students to examine, explore and experience politics and public affairs from a “front and center” vantage point. In fact, thousands of UIS alums have used their undergraduate or graduate experience as a springboard for a rewarding public service career in state or federal government or in related professional pursuits.

With a contentious presidential election and ongoing political strife in the Illinois statehouse, this particular academic year has offered unique educational opportunities – particularly for UIS faculty whose teaching and research is focused on these areas.

Professor of Political Science Chris Mooney, an expert on state politics currently serving as Director of the University of Illinois’s Institute of Government and Public Affairs (IGPA), is one of those faculty.

“An election season like the one we’ve just experienced,” says Dr. Mooney, “demonstrates that politics is a living, breathing organism. It heightens students’ awareness of politics and government and serves as a very real reminder that politics has a real effect on people’s lives.”

“Being in the seat of government presents so many opportunities,” he adds, “including taking students to observe legislative sessions, committee hearings, supreme court proceedings and press conferences. Our classes often include legislative staffers and other students with state government backgrounds who make the classroom experience better for everyone and it’s exciting for students to have public affairs practitioners speaking regularly in their classes.”

Dr. Magic Wade, Assistant Professor of Political Science, is relatively new to the University and recently helped develop courses for the new undergraduate major in Public Policy.

“One of the things I appreciate about UIS,” she says, “is the ideological diversity of my students. Students in my classes represent a variety of points of view – both conservative and liberal, Democrats and Republicans.”

“The presidential election was painful and hurtful for a lot of people,” she continues. “I encourage my students to examine why people support what they do

and be willing to engage with them.”

“What I try to model in our discussions is that Democrats and Republicans can sit in a room and have conversations that don’t evolve into name-calling. In the current climate at the Illinois capital, things are very divided. That’s not how things get done. Things get done by working across the aisle.”

Professor Ali Nizamuddin, also in Political Science, was born in India, but grew up in Downers Grove, Illinois. “The current political environment,” says Professor Nizamuddin, “has created an opportunity for us in the classroom to try and bridge the human gap.”

“Current events provide an ideal platform for students from various backgrounds and beliefs to speak from their perspective and to become more politically aware. By entering the realm of another, we can better understand how it feels to be part of a different ideology or perspective and respect the other person’s position without demeaning them.”

“When it comes to present-day politics,” adds Dr. Mooney, “I think the best education we can provide gives students a broader view than what they come in with. Being able to see different perspectives and learn from them is an important part of the liberal arts education UIS provides. It is a narrative of critical thinking.” This UIS Perspectives column began with reference to Springfield’s own Abraham Lincoln. On Lincoln’s birthday, it seems appropriate to close it with a few of Lincoln’s words on the subject of politics. Though this message was delivered to Congress December 1, 1862 in the midst of the Civil War – it remains a timely message today:

“We can succeed only by concert. It is not, ‘Can any of us imagine better?’ but rather, ‘Can we all do better?’”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message - Spring 2017

January 17, 2017

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

Welcome to the 2017 Spring Semester at the University of Illinois at Springfield! I hope you’re looking forward, as I am, to the opportunities ahead during the coming semester.

Many members of our academic community started the semester yesterday by participating in Springfield’s 42nd recognition of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Congratulations to Dr. Mark Dochterman, Director of the UIS Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, as well as to the more than 100 UIS students who commemorated the legacy of Dr. King by participating in a Day of Service volunteering in the community. I can't think of a better way to honor the memory of one of our country's greatest leaders. Our UIS volunteers were featured in an [article in the State Journal Register](#) as well as in other media.

I hope you will join me in offering an especially warm welcome this week to students who are new arrivals to our campus, including international students who are adjusting to a new culture as well as to new academic challenges. UIS has a reputation for providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment thanks to the efforts of students, faculty and staff. A smile, a friendly "Hello," or a helping hand can go a long way toward making someone feel welcome and a part of our community.

With hundreds of course offerings being launched this week, both on campus and online, UIS faculty will again be providing exceptional learning opportunities. I encourage students to invest your efforts deeply in your education as you learn and prepare for your future. The mission of the University of Illinois – to transform lives and serve society – is alive and thriving at UIS thanks to the contributions of faculty and staff who truly put students first.

In addition to course offerings, the Spring 2017 semester offers many other possibilities for leadership, engagement, learning and just plain enjoyment. Whether it's attending a basketball game in the TRAC, seeing a Broadway show in Sangamon Auditorium, attending a UIS Theatre production, joining a student organization or putting together a team for Springfest – I hope you'll make this semester the one when you try a few things new! There is no shortage of ways to be involved, stretch your boundaries, and take advantage of UIS campus life to its fullest.

Dr. King said: "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically." With that thought in mind, I wish you a semester filled with intensive thinking!

With all best wishes,

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: A Liberal Arts Education, January 2017

When Illinois residents think about the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, the University's longstanding reputation for preparing public servants for leadership in government and related sectors is often top of mind.

While that association is most certainly appropriate, a broader institutional value at UIS is our commitment to providing all students, regardless of major, with an outstanding liberal arts education. In fact, UIS is one of only 30 universities nationwide – and the only university in Illinois – that is part of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC); a selective organization that drives awareness of the value of high-quality liberal arts education in an affordable public college setting.

The term “liberal arts” refers to studies that are considered essential to an exceptional undergraduate education. It includes the Humanities (the Arts, English, History, Foreign Languages, Literature, and Philosophy), the Social Sciences (Anthropology, Communication, Economics, Geography, Psychology and Sociology), the Sciences (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) and Mathematics (Algebra, Calculus, Geometry and Logic).

And what are the benefits of a liberal arts education in the year 2017? I asked that question of four exceptional UIS faculty members – each of whom has received the University of Illinois University Scholar Award¹ within the past few years and the highest honor a University of Illinois faculty member can receive.

Hua Chen, a professor in the UIS Biology Department, responded:

“The biggest benefit of a liberal arts education is that it empowers individuals to deal with the complexity, diversity and change that living in the 21st century demands.”

Says Dr. Chen, “A good example is climate change – an important global issue today that students study in my Environmental Biology courses. Understanding climate change requires students to develop a multi-disciplinary perspective that includes Ecology, Environmental Science, Social Science, Politics and even International Relations. One take-home message after studying this topic is that I hope students have learned to think critically when they enter the workforce and they have learned to be more engaged and informed citizens.”

According to David Bertaina, a professor in the History Department at UIS, a liberal arts education is “not just about filling up gaps” in students’ knowledge. “At a liberal arts institution like UIS, faculty want to be an important part of students’ intellectual formation,” he says.

“Professors are excellent resources and some of the best learning opportunities are through discussions and interactions outside of class. Success requires a whole set of connections and experiences and a liberal arts education helps make those connections and experiences possible.”

Dr. Bertaina’s colleague in the History Department, Dr. Peter Shapinsky, won the University Scholar Award this year.

“The liberal arts are essential for helping us see the ‘why’ of

something – not just the ‘how’“, he reflects.

“By studying the liberal arts, students become cosmopolitan in a meaningful way; receptive and respectful of other cultures and worldviews.”

Lan Dong is an Associate Professor in the English Department who is highly regarded as a talented teacher.

“The liberal arts experience at UIS helps students become more open-minded and socially responsible,” she says.

“It fosters intellectual curiosity and helps students learn to articulate complex ideas and be more effective life-long learners on their own.”

According to a report published in 2014 by the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), whatever major they choose, students who pursue their education within the context of a broad liberal education substantially increase the likelihood of achieving long-term professional success. At the same time, employers readily identify the communication and problem-solving skills associated with a liberal arts background as the most valuable attributes of new hires.

The University of Illinois at Springfield is on a growth trajectory, with more students choosing each year to pursue their dream of earning a University of Illinois credential in the personalized and supportive environment that UIS faculty and staff provide. Thanks to faculty members like Hua, David, Peter and Lan, an exceptional liberal arts experience will continue to serve as the foundation for their University of Illinois degree as well as for their success beyond graduation.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcoming Institution, December 2016

At UIS, we value engagement. We provide opportunities for students to learn and interact with the world outside of our campus through their studies as well as through student activities, internships and volunteerism. True success in this effort is only possible if everyone understands we are an open, welcoming institution.

In that spirit, this message is to reaffirm our commitment to the University of Illinois at Springfield as an educational institution for all — regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship, immigration status or national origin.

The UIS mission statement promises an intellectually rich and collaborative learning environment for students, faculty and staff. We strive to create a campus climate that values diversity and that eliminates intolerance and stereotyping. Unfair treatment, intimidation or threats of violence is always unacceptable and we

will do everything necessary to support and protect members of our campus community.

If you or a fellow student or colleague is unfairly targeted in what may be a bias incident, you should contact UIS Police [Emergency: (217) 206-7777 Non-Emergency: (217) 206-6690] to report it. You can be assured UIS Police do not inquire about or detain community members based on immigration status.

It is also important to note the University is legally and ethically obligated to protect the confidentiality of student records and UIS will continue to protect confidential student and employee information to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Recent national discourse has raised concern and speculation about undocumented students and other international populations in our country. In late November, the three Chancellors of the University of Illinois joined more than 500 university leaders in signing a [“Statement in Support of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\) Program and our Undocumented Immigrant Students,”](#) calling on our country’s leaders to uphold, continue and expand the DACA program as both a moral imperative and a national necessity.

The American Council on Education (ACE) has prepared a useful [“Immigration Q&A”](#) (PDF) that you may also find informative.

UIS has many resources and services to assist students. For example, the Diversity Center, LGBTQ Resource Office, International Student Services and the Women’s Center provide individualized support and referrals for any student seeking information about academics, financial aid, community resources and other information.

The UIS Division of Student Affairs will sponsor “Donuts and Democracy Part II” on January 20, 2017. This year-long series explores current issues related to diversity that affect our UIS community. The January 20th program will focus on immigration, advocacy and policies affecting undocumented students.

Student Affairs is also creating a resource guide for undocumented students to be available online and in the Diversity Center at the beginning of the Spring semester. In the meantime, the University of Illinois will continue to closely monitor any developments at the local, state and federal level that may impact students.

Given our location in the state capital and our long tradition of preparing public servants and leaders, UIS can and should be a model for others in welcoming and supporting all members of the campus community. In this time of discussion and uncertainty, the real imperative for us is to ensure that all students who enroll at UIS can pursue their educational dreams and be part of a safe and supportive community. We are committed to those goals and, with your support, we will achieve them.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Susan Koch
Interim Provost Jim Ermatinger

Holiday Message, December 2016

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

During the final days of the Fall Semester, we all tend to be focused on preparing for final exams, meeting important deadline, and completing important projects; but I hope you'll take just a few minutes to enjoy this holiday message.

My thanks to Blake Wood and Angela Try, UIS Public Relations; Clay Stalter, UIS photographer; and Ralph Shank, Media Developer, for their creativity and technical expertise.

Happy holidays to all!

Susan J. Koch
Chancellor

SJR Column: Nontraditional Students, December 2016

If you picture the average college student as someone 18-22 years old who lives on campus, attends classes during the day and whose life includes an array of campus social activities – you may need to adjust your thinking.

Adult learners, sometimes referred to as “nontraditional students,” have been a growing presence on college campuses for several years. That is certainly true at the University of Illinois at Springfield, where, at the same time the number of traditional-aged students is growing, almost 41% of UIS undergraduate students this year are over the age of 24.

And age is only part of the story.... the National Center for Education Statistics has

identified several interrelated characteristics that are common among nontraditional undergraduates. Besides age, these students often did not start college immediately after high school, attend school part-time while also working, are not financially supported by their parents, may have children or other dependents, and are more likely to be a single parent.

Eventually, a promotion in the National Guard brought her and her young daughter to Springfield. She earned an associate degree from Aitchison Land Community College before enrolling at UIS. “With school work and parenting obligations, there’s a lot of responsibility and financial challenges,” says Ashti, “but I always feel like I have been determined and persistent... and I love the psychology Department.”

Ashti, a 35-year-old senior majoring in psychology, is one such student. A foster child from a young age, Ashti decided the military was her best financial option. In addition to being a fulltime student, Ashti is President of the Military Veterans Club on campus.

Meagan Turner is also a nontraditional student and a single mom. Now 28, Meagan will graduate this year with a major in biology earned at the same time she’s been working two jobs. “With work and my 4-year old son, I don’t have time to be socially involved like younger students,” says Meagan. “Many borderline students need extra help; but I have found staff in the Diversity Center and faculty members in biology who are helpful and want me to succeed.”

“My plan is to earn a master’s degree in education and become a science teacher in a low income neighborhood. I understand how it is to be there and want to help low income students with their struggles.”

Allen Dixon is a Lanphier High School graduate who spent a semester at Illinois Wesleyan before having to leave college to help support his mother and five siblings. He later returned to LLCC for an associate degree and is now a 35-year old junior majoring in communication.

“The Office of Disability Services at UIS has been great,” says Allen (who is legally blind), “but working, living off campus and managing financially is a struggle. All you can do is pick yourself up and move forward.”

Many classes at UIS today include both traditional-aged and adult learners and faculty greatly value the diversity that mix provides. According to Marcel Yoder, an Associate Professor in psychology, “Nontraditional students bring life experiences to class discussions that provide unique and powerful examples of the ways specific course concepts are illustrated in the world – points of view that would not otherwise be heard.”

Assistant Professor of communication Ann Strahle has also taught many nontraditional students.

“I’ve found these students often face multiple challenges,” she says, “but the vast majority rise to the challenges and excel in the classroom.”

Nontraditional students tend to be well organized and focused and are already excellent multi-taskers – considering the other responsibilities in their lives.”

Being able to take some or even all coursework online is particularly helpful to nontraditional students, who tend to be balancing myriad other responsibilities. According to Vickie Cook, Director of the Center for Online Learning, Research and Service, about 1,500 students are pursuing their degrees online at UIS this year, which allows them to schedule time to study and participate in coursework based on their individual schedules.

“Our faculty design online courses that engage students and promote a learning community,” says Dr. Cook, “and Online Program Coordinators provide sustained support and services to ensure a positive learning experience and, ultimately, program completion.”

Looking at the trending demographics of today’s college student body, nontraditional may, in fact, become the new traditional. Whatever those trends, the Springfield campus is strengthened by the presence of both traditional and nontraditional students and we’ll continue to adopt practices and resources that help all students to succeed regardless of their age.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Dining Services, November 2016

An old Spanish proverb says: “The belly rules the mind.” That might explain the appreciation students, faculty, staff and visitors have for the outstanding dining services provided on the UIS campus. With an average of 4,500 food service transactions taking place every day, members of the campus community probably interact with Dining Services more than any other entity on campus.

Excellence starts with leadership and the leader who ensures all this planning, procuring, cooking, baking and serving runs smoothly is Geoff Evans. A Springfield native, Geoff completed his bachelor’s degree at SIU- Carbondale and then attended the prestigious California Culinary Academy in San Francisco – eventually working in London and Tucson, Arizona before returning to Illinois. Geoff was chef at the Illini Country Club before joining the culinary team at UIS in 2003.

Randy Williams, who earned his culinary credentials at Parkland Community College in Champaign, has been part of the UIS Dining Services leadership team since 2009. Randy is well known in Central Illinois as a successful restaurateur who owned and operated the Trucker’s Homestead near Divernon for many years

Randy also teaches Culinary arts at Dinco in the All Coors State College and often judges various food competitions at the State Fair.

What's the secret to keeping food service customers happy? "We serve affordable, fresh and appetizing food every day," says Geoff, "and emphasize providing great service in every transaction."

With about 35 full-time employees and 45 part-time student workers, the departmental culture in Dining Services emphasizes teamwork, collaboration and striving for the highest possible level of customer satisfaction.

It starts each day with breakfast – a very popular meal that is in high demand throughout the day! Dining Services uses about 45 dozen eggs daily (mostly for made-to-order specialty omelets) and about 4,000 pounds of bacon each semester.

"Thanks in part to Food Network on cable TV, our customers have more sophisticated palates today than students had several years ago," says Randy.

"Responding to requests from our customers, we've expanded vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free menu items during the past few years. At the same time, we've introduced foods like quinoa, couscous, orzo and edamame (a preparation of immature soybeans)."

International dishes are also more in demand by both international and more adventurous local students. In fact, everyone seems to know when popular cook and UIS Employee of the Year Danny Lau is serving his fried rice! Customers start lining up two hours before lunchtime to ensure they will be able to pick up their order.

Students and other customers regularly provide suggestions to the culinary team for new menu items familiar from their own backgrounds. For example, some Chicago-area students recently recommended Dining Services offer Sweet Baby Ray's bar-b-que sauce – a Chicago favorite. It has since become a popular choice for customers regardless of their home address.

Beverage preferences have also changed in recent years. Fountain soda used to be the big draw; but now specialized bottled drinks like mineral water, sparkling water, fruit beverages and specialty teas and coffees are more popular.

And what can students and other customers look forward to when UIS Dining Services moves into the new Student Union next year? According to Geoff, "Plenty!" Members of the culinary team have worked closely with Dewberry Architects and Ricca Newmark Designs (the food service consultant for the project) to design a state-of-the-art kitchen, servery areas and a second-floor banquet facility that can serve up to 450 guests. An emphasis on sustainability throughout the facility, including a green roof, will add to both its economic and educational value.

“The new kitchen equipment is going to greatly increase efficiency of operations,” says Randy, “and a display cooking station will add a little drama – allowing students to watch our chefs prepare fresh, made-to-order dishes right in front of them.” Attractive new dining areas, including a “sports grill,” will also enhance the dining and social experience.

One of the most exciting additions Dining Services will provide in the new Student Union is a much-anticipated Starbucks franchise – which will be located on the mezzanine level of the building overlooking the main lounge areas.

“Our new home in the Student Union will certainly contribute in positive ways to the reputation of UIS Dining Services at the same time it will enhance student life and add new opportunities for the campus,” says Geoff, “but our core mission to serve fresh, appetizing food and provide exceptional customer service will remain what we always strive to achieve every day.”

It sounds like that proverb will continue to prove true at UIS for a long time to come.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Presidential Election, November 2016

November 10, 2016

Dear Members of the UIS Campus Community:

As this presidential election week comes to a close, this moment provides an opportunity for us to both reflect and look ahead.

Whether you celebrate or lament the outcome of the presidential election, I hope you share my respect for the many UIS students, staff and faculty who gave so much of themselves during this election season. Those who took the time to become educated and think critically about important issues, who listened respectfully to the views of others while thoughtfully sharing their own opinions, who gave of their time, talent and resources to represent and support their candidates, and who exercised their right to vote deserve to be commended for their citizenship. This is democracy in action.

The election is now behind us and a new group of elected officials is preparing to assume leadership roles. It will be several months before we can accurately assess the impact these leadership changes may have on our university; but I want to assure you the University of Illinois will be prepared to address both opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

As UI system President Tim Killeen stated at our Board of Trustees meeting yesterday, “We have already charted our path and our faculty, staff and students, wherever they come from, can be assured that our [three] Universities are places where they can pursue their dreams and cultivate the talents that will best serve our state, our nation and beyond.”

I ask that we continue our outstanding tradition of public affairs leadership at UIS – a tradition that is grounded in a commitment to excellence.

Let us work together to embody the University of Illinois guiding values:

- to aim high,
- to be accountable for our actions,
- to treat each other with dignity and respect, and
- to promote citizenship.

By doing so, our UIS community can serve as an example of what citizenship and democracy should look like.

Let us approach our work here – whether that work is to earn a University of Illinois degree, to educate students, or to provide support for students – with a renewed commitment to the mission of the University: “To transform lives and serve society.”

This is no small task, but I am confident in our collective capabilities. Let’s roll up our sleeves and get to work.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Teacher Education, October 2016

The hours may be long, the salary modest, and the “customers” sometimes challenging; but according to the National Center for Education Statistics, earning a bachelor’s degree in Education and becoming a teacher is still among the top choices made by college students in the U.S. today. Every year, nearly 200,000 candidates graduate from teacher preparation programs across the country, each of whom aspires to help young minds grow and reach their full potential.

According to the Illinois State Board of Education, there are 77 approved teacher education institutions in Illinois. The University of Illinois at Springfield is one of them and Dr. Cindy Wilson, Chair of the Teacher Education Department, is enthusiastic about recent growth of the program.

“Students are attracted to the UIS teacher education program for several reasons,” she says.

“We take a team approach to supporting our students, providing individualized attention beginning when students declare their major and continuing through their student-teaching experience and job placement.”

Another strength of the program is the variety of pathways students can follow to achieve their educational goals. The department offers a major in Education that leads to licensure at the elementary level when combined with an appropriate academic major. Thus, students earn a double major, one in Education and one in a content area like Psychology, History or English. This pathway allows traditional full-time students to earn their bachelor’s degree in four years at the same time it prepares them for success in the classroom and related career options.

According to Dr. Wilson, students who enroll in Teacher Education come from many walks of life, with about 30% being non-traditional aged. It’s not unusual for a teacher education student to have already earned a bachelor’s degree in some other area or to have had a career in another profession. For such students, a post-bachelor’s teacher licensure program is available, offering credit for prior educational experience while at the same time providing the necessary sequence of courses needed to acquire a teaching license for Illinois. The introductory sequence is offered both on campus and online, further enabling working adults to participate.

UIS Dean of Education and Human Services Dr. Hanfu Mi is particularly proud of UIS students’ performance on the edTPA exam, an assessment used to verify an aspiring teacher’s readiness to succeed in the classroom, that is required for teacher licensure.

“UIS students consistently score well above the state’s average,” he reports, “with 100% of UIS students who attempted the exam passing it last year.”

“We currently have more than 50 agreements with local school districts that provide opportunities for our students to observe and participate in hands-on experiences including student-teaching,” says Dean Mi. “Area superintendents speak highly of UIS graduates.”

One of those superintendents is Dustin Day, Superintendent and Pre-K-6 Principal at Waverly School District #6. “UIS provides the quality of education and preparation I am looking for in potential teachers,” says Mr. Day.

“The program provides future teachers with real world knowledge about schools and how they operate, preparing them to use proper assessment to drive instruction and assist their students with potential deficits.”

Superintendent Day, himself a UIS alum, also serves on the College of Education’s

Advisory Board – providing critical feedback and advice to the Dean and faculty to ensure the continued quality of the program.

Simon Wilson is one of many area residents who chose UIS to pursue a teaching degree. He now teaches 5th grade at Butler Elementary School in Springfield's District 186 and is also pursuing his Master's degree in Educational Leadership on campus.

“My courses at UIS provided in-depth knowledge on the development of children in all aspects of life,” he says, “and my professors helped me understand that every child is capable of learning, regardless of the challenges. The program also enabled me to develop the educational portfolio, clinical background, and technology skills I needed to be effective as an educator.”

“In other words,” says Mr. Wilson, “my UIS professors wanted me to succeed.”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Civil Discourse Message – September 2016

Dear Members of the UIS Campus Community:

Like so many others, I have been distressed in recent weeks by the often toxic tone of the political atmosphere in our country. Our University is certainly not insulated from the sometimes harsh and divisive language that has become commonplace.

We are always mindful the First Amendment is a powerful and important safeguard for all points of view, including those we may not agree with and, as an academic community, it is important that we protect free speech and the full expression of ideas. As I said in my recent communication, openly and intelligently about the issues that pervade our state and national discourse.

As is the case on most college campuses in the U.S., chalk messages on sidewalks are a common method of communication and are permitted in many areas of our campus. We do not intend to ban or place severe restrictions on chalking as some campuses have done in response to offensive postings. After all, chalking can be a way to promote involvement in campus and community events – or even to share inspiration.

We do expect that, as anyone communicates on behalf of a point of view or a candidate they support (whether in chalk or via some other communication channel), they do so in a way that is respectful of the members of our campus community. The UIS Student Conduct Code specifically prohibits “violence, the

threat of violence, harassment or intimidation directed against another person or persons.” To the extent any message is viewed as threatening, it should be reported immediately to Campus Police.

When the phrase “Build The Wall” was chalked on our campus sidewalks several days ago, authentic feelings of pain and anger were provoked. Several student leaders have shared their feelings with me on this subject and I honor and appreciate their candor. I understand why such a message can be hurtful and I want to say unequivocally that I respect the outrage of those on our campus who feel as they do on the subject.

I do not ever want our University to be a place where certain groups feel unwelcome. Whether intentional or not, direct or indirect, clear or thinly veiled; racially charged euphemisms, epithets or slurs against members of our campus community are disheartening in light of our efforts to foster an inclusive campus community. I want our campus to remain a place where denigrating, divisive, disrespectful speech never becomes the norm.

Today’s current events provide opportunities for us to educate ourselves and the larger community and to engage in active citizenship that is so very much needed. We have to forge new ways on our campus to produce meaningful discussions about the tough issues of our time and I invite you to contribute to that effort this fall.

Let’s work together in the weeks ahead to build and reinforce a campus culture of mutual respect and tolerance, even for those with whom we disagree.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Shakespeare Garden, September 2016

This September is an exciting time on the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois – with construction of the new Student Union well underway and more students choosing to pursue their U of I degree in the personalized environment for which UIS is so highly regarded.

UIS is also participating this Fall in an important worldwide celebration: the 400th anniversary of the death in 1616 of poet and playwright William Shakespeare, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language.

Thanks to an award from the Chester Fund of the University of Illinois, UIS will soon be unveiling a Shakespeare Garden on campus – a themed garden that features

plants mentioned in the works of Shakespeare. The Bard often used plants and gardens as metaphors for life, with many important scenes taking place in garden settings.

For example: “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” is a frequently referenced line spoken by Juliet to her lover, Romeo, in Shakespeare’s play “Romeo and Juliet”.

The Shakespeare Garden will include signs near each plant with the relevant quotation and reference to the appropriate play or poem, as well as a fountain, walkways, and benches. The centerpiece of the Garden is a life-sized bronze sculpture of the Bard himself, titled “Shakespeare,” by renowned sculptor Gary Lee Price. The sculpture depicts Shakespeare relaxing on a garden bench – an open invitation for visitors to sit beside him for a chat or a photo.

A lovely addition to the UIS campus, the Shakespeare Garden will be an educational resource and a place of enjoyment for students, faculty and staff. It will also be a destination that welcomes visitors and friends from the local Springfield community and beyond.

UIS English professor Ethan Lewis, an award-winning teacher/scholar and resident Shakespeare expert, couldn’t be more pleased about the latest soon-to-be campus landmark.

For the past 20 years, Dr. Lewis has directed “The Shakespeare Project” at UIS, a popular seminar series for undergraduate students that uses Shakespeare’s plays and sonnets as “terrain for critical thinking” about issues that affect our lives today.

“The Bard uncannily interrogates every age,” says Dr. Lewis. “We feel, reading him, as though he were reading us.”
“The Shakespeare Garden will be an ideal sanctuary,” he says, “like one of Shakespeare’s sonnets – offering space for reflection and peace.”

Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson, Associate Professor of Theatre and Director of the UIS Theatre program, teaches a course titled “Playing Shakespeare” and has directed and acted in many Shakespeare plays. In fact, Eric will play the lead in the UIS Theatre production of Shakespeare’s “Macbeth” later this Fall – another part of our 400th anniversary celebration.

“Shakespeare is for everybody,” Eric remarks. “He talks about what we are all going through – themes like power, love, jealousy, right vs. wrong – all are as relevant today as they were when he wrote about them over 400 years ago.”

“I love the idea of a Shakespeare Garden on campus,” he says. “It sends a message that we value the liberal arts – the soul-filling side of the university experience.”

James Ermatinger, UIS Interim Provost, longtime Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and himself a medieval historian, notes that the Shakespeare

Garden provides a cogent reminder of UIS's membership in the prestigious Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges. COPLAC is a selective group of only 30 colleges and universities nationwide that have committed to providing a superior liberal arts foundation for all students as an essential part of their university experience.

“It couldn't be more fitting,” Ermatinger says, “that a Shakespeare Garden will now be part of the UIS landscape.”

Shakespeare's Garden will be unveiled at a public celebration on Thursday, September 29th at 1:30 p.m. in Patton Park, located next to Brookens Library on the UIS campus. The celebration will include a brief program and the sculpture unveiling, followed by refreshments.

The UIS Theatre production of “Macbeth”, one of the world's most famous plays, will be presented October 28 – 30th and November 3 – 6 in the UIS Studio Theatre. Tickets are available through the Sangamon Auditorium Ticket Office.

I hope you'll join us for both these special events at UIS as we celebrate Shakespeare in 2016!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message – Fall 2016

To students, faculty and staff:

Welcome to the start of the 2016-17 academic year at this Springfield campus of the University of Illinois! I hope you enjoy the short video below... and don't forget the annual Chancellor's Welcome Picnic is tomorrow, August 23rd. All students, faculty, and staff (along with family members) are invited! Please join us near the Colonnade from 4:30-6:00 pm. There will be plenty of great food, beverages, music, and conversation. The weather and the atmosphere should be superb. See you there!

Chancellor Koch

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2016

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 18, 2016

Good Afternoon!

Thank you all so much for participating in this Fall, 2016 Convocation!

It's great to see all of you here this afternoon.

Convocation is, in part, a time for us to meet new colleagues; but it's also a time to get together and get reacquainted with long-time co-workers as we anticipate the new academic year.

So whether you're new or not-so-new, welcome to the 2016-17 academic year at the University of Illinois at Springfield.

I'd like to offer a warm welcome also to a few special guests who are with us today: (please stand when I introduce you and I promise a rousing round of applause after everyone has been named):

- Jim Langfelder, two-time UIS alum and Mayor of the City of Springfield;
- Lisa Clemmons Stott, Executive Director, Downtown Springfield, Inc.
- Katie Davison, Executive Director of Innovate Springfield;
- Former UIS Interim Chancellor, longtime Provost and faculty member, and also great friend of UIS, Dr. Harry Berman and his wife, Deborah;
- Professor Ranjan Karri, Chair of the Campus Senate;
- Professor Betsy Goulet, Vice Chair of the Campus Senate;
- Maureen Hoover, Chair of the Academic Professional Advisory Committee;
- Jo Barnard, Chair of the Civil Service Advisory Council;
- Gary Yang, UIS Representative for Chinese student recruitment;
- Nathan Hoffman, University of Illinois Student Trustee;
- Austin Mehmet, President of the UIS Student Government Association;
- And last but not least, a "personal" guest, my husband, Dennis Koch.

[Please join me in welcoming these special guests: APPLAUSE.]

Thank you all so much being here today and thank you for the important role you play in the success of our campus.

I want to also offer a grateful salute to any faculty emeriti, university retirees and alums who are with us today. Past faculty, staff and students have built our legacy

and our history at UIS.

I am so grateful for your contributions, continued interest and commitment to this institution.

As most of you know, I became part of the UIS community in 2011 after spending about 25 years in faculty and other leadership roles at two other universities.

I joined this campus as a new Chancellor, and a new part of the UIS community. It was an exhilarating time for me – and a moment for us to set ambitious, aspirational goals.

It was a time to look with fresh eyes at the challenges and opportunities we all knew existed here.

Five years later, here we are.

In the time that has passed since I began my tenure as your Chancellor, we've been extraordinarily committed to three strategic priorities developed in my first year:

- growth in visibility, reputation and enrollment;
- providing the outstanding facilities that our students, faculty and staff need and deserve.

GROWTH – TALENT – FACILITIES

I'm not going to spend much time looking back today except to say, I am deeply grateful to all of you who have helped in so many ways to advance those priorities.

Since 2011, we've experienced steady growth in student enrollment and added over a dozen new degree programs.

We've continued to recruit top notch faculty and staff to our campus.

Would anyone like to venture a guess as to how many new employees have joined our academic community since July 1, 2011?

That number is 566, including 230 faculty, 157 Academic Professionals and 179 Civil Service employees!

That's a whole lot of new talent!

And when it comes to facilities, having done a tour of campus housing a few days ago, let me report (in case you don't know) that we have unbelievable student housing! Really, it's ridiculously nice! (Did you know that students in our residence halls only share a bathroom with three other people?)

We've also made steady facility improvements – too numerous to mention – across the entire campus – from academic areas to campus recreation and athletics.

And of course, we are building a Student Union!! (Someone still tells me at least once a week that they still can't believe it!)

Designed with the involvement of a terrific group of UIS faculty, staff and students and with the generous support of many donors and friends, this facility will soon be the social heart our campus – providing new spaces for dining, a coffee shop, lounge areas, study areas, game room, meeting rooms, a ballroom and a Student Leadership Center. There couldn't be a better student recruitment tool in Illinois right now!

But more important than any of those accomplishments during the past five years is the fact that, through our work together, we have delivered on the promise of a high-quality university experience – an undergraduate or graduate degree – to over 7,000 now University of Illinois at Springfield alums!

As our University of Illinois mission states: we're in the business of “transforming lives and serving society.”

That's what we do and I'm so thankful for the contributions that each of you make to achieving that mission each day.

So what about the year ahead?

In the 2016-17 academic year, we will continue to build on our heritage and our achievements at the same time we must confront our persistent challenges head-on.

We've been doing very, very well; but as one of UIS' best known early leaders, Senator Paul Simon often said and wrote:

“We can do better.”

This year, I am calling for a redoubling of efforts to utilize the UIS campus as a safe space to communicate openly and intelligently about the issues that pervade our state and national discourse.

World affairs, environmental concerns, the Presidential election, the budget crisis in Illinois, racial tensions in so many communities across our country – these current events and others provide timely opportunities for us to educate ourselves, our students and the larger community and to engage in active citizenship that is so needed today.

With your involvement and leadership, I'd like to see us sponsor open forums and featured experts so that everyone has a meaningful venue to learn and share their perspective on the vexing challenges of our time. I pledge to be a full partner with every person on this campus who wants to be a constructive participant in civil dialogues with one another.

Mayor Langfelder has articulated an unprecedented commitment to examining and improving race relations here in Springfield – a topic that runs deep here in our

home community. What a great opportunity for the University of Illinois at Springfield to be a contributing partner in an effort that matters to the University as much as it matters to the city.

So today, I am announcing my intent to form a staff/student/faculty collaboration with our city to further the Mayor's call for greater education, understanding, tolerance, respect, equal opportunity, and social justice in our community and beyond.

Mayor Langfelder, thank you for your leadership and thank you for inviting us to participate and contribute. We are eager to join you in this important mission.

No campus-wide commentary would be complete without an update on the state budget crisis and its impact on our university.

You all know support for higher education from State government has declined ~~significantly in each of the last two fiscal years, but planning has focused on our~~ university very, very well and has insulated us to some extent from the layoffs, program cuts, and bond rating downgrades being experienced by other regional public universities in Illinois.

The three UI campuses are among the few university campuses in our state that have experienced enrollment growth year after year.

Yes, we have deferred projects, left vacant positions unfilled and watched every penny with special care.

I'm particularly concerned that, after much analysis and discussion with President Killeen and other system leaders in July, we've had to defer the merit-based salary program that you all need and deserve.

As the President said in his early August letter to employees, we're hopeful we'll be able to implement a modest program in fiscal 2017 and I will advocate as strongly as possible for that.

Unlike the rest of our Illinois peers, we are weathering this storm and continuing to progress despite these challenges. We will continue to do so with your help and understanding.

Of course, our fervent hope is for Governor Rauner and the state legislature to come together and pass an appropriation to round out the limited support they provided in the late Spring.

Especially important is that they develop a plan to support the Monetary Award Program (known more widely as MAP) to help low-income students pursue their degrees. MAP is a crucial tool that makes college possible for over 700 UIS students each year. As you probably know, as we wait for a MAP allocation from the state, we have assured our students that we will provide MAP funding for those who need it for the coming semester.

I do want you to know we're doing a lot more than hoping on the political action side. An outstanding UI government relations team and concerned UI alumni and friends, along with many active staff, faculty and students will continue to be zealous advocates for the long term support needed to support higher education in our state. I am active in the Illinois Presidents/Chancellors group that is working with legislative leaders and the Governor's Office and I hope you will join me in that effort in the coming year. Stay tuned for related advocacy alerts this fall.

As many of you know, the University of Illinois system has a new Strategic Framework that redefines the University of Illinois as "The Public's University" and calls upon all the parts of the UI system to "Optimize Impact for the Public Good".

We in Springfield have a special ability, thanks to our location in the capital city and our distinct legacy as a place focused on improving social policy, to execute some of the goals of the new strategic framework. Given that we are the smallest University in the system, we may also be uniquely positioned to navigate more nimbly and perhaps benefit more significantly from some of the ideas the new strategic framework contains.

For example, with more than a little nudging from the UIS representatives on the strategic planning team, the new Framework calls for fuller access for all UI students to *"internships, co-ops, service-learning options, volunteer roles, and ... employment [databases] across the entire system."* This is a welcome development and one I hope we will benefit from.

Additionally, the final report called on the University at large to *"Leverage the System's expertise in online education to increase access to higher education and degree completion for Illinois residents."*

I am so proud of the leadership UIS provides for online learning endeavors. Vicki Cook and Ray Schroeder are the North Stars on our campus and across the country when it comes to online education and innovation. This year, as we have done before, let's lead the way on crafting and sharing best practices in distance learning.

The Framework also establishes the aim of building a *"University of Illinois Innovation Network, [as] a set of virtually connected clusters, [beginning] with public-private partnerships in Peoria, Rockford, Springfield, the Quad Cities, and Southern Illinois."*

We are uniquely well-positioned to accelerate this effort, with the momentum of Innovate Springfield, the new downtown incubator for business, technology and social enterprise start-ups headquartered next to the Old State Capitol and spearheaded by faculty leaders in our College of Business and Management.

The momentum of Innovate Springfield can fuel the U of I Innovation Network in a big way this year, and we have the right formula of talent, organization and energy to help get this effort off the ground and have a real impact statewide.

The same formula applies to another idea in the Framework, which is to establish some form of “*Lincoln Institute*”.

No part of the UI system is better equipped to elevate the stature and visibility of Abraham Lincoln in our state than we are. UIS has an incredibly rich history of working in partnership with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Abraham Lincoln Association and others to deepen the public’s appreciation for our beloved President Lincoln. Our Lincoln Scholar and Lincoln Legacy Lectures are just the beginning. This year, let’s once and for all make UIS an epicenter for Lincoln Studies. Our beautiful new sculpture of “Mr. Lincoln, The Young Lawyer”, now a beloved campus landmark, is a perfect springboard for expanded leadership for UIS on this element of the new UI system strategic framework.

A final idea, drawn from the Framework, that I’d like bring to your attention today is a pillar titled “A Healthy Future for Illinois and the Midwest”.

Way back, circa 1970 when SSU was being created, the Illinois Board of Higher Education called on SSU to –quote–“take advantage of the existing medical facilities in Springfield as [we] plan programs in the allied health fields.”

It’s now 2016 and we have extraordinary medical resources in Springfield, as you know. These are major employers in our region, and we could be even stronger partners with them, in the areas of health administration, policy, and direct care. We’ve taken some positive steps to do that, the most recent being our partnership with UIC to offer a BSN program in Nursing.

This year, I’d like us to write a compelling “next chapter” in our history as it relates to the unbelievably strong medical community right here in our backyard.

And let’s not forget, District 186 Superintendent Jennifer Gill is a UIS alum. I want our local schools, and employers from A to Z, to view UIS as an even deeper source of talent, just as we can be in the health care field.

I applaud the audacious, ambitious plans set forth in the Strategic Framework. Some may brush them aside as an overreach. I won’t do that. We should go after them and make them work for us.

Now, with all the discussion of new ideas and goals, some might caution us against forgetting an important feature of our legacy and our future; but I will never shy away from our liberal arts heritage.

We have made significant investments in the arts on our campus in part because the arts make our campus more vibrant and makes the student experience richer in countless ways. Thanks to the creative work of our Theatre faculty, we will be announcing a new major in Theatre this Fall – a welcome addition to our curriculum.

Our membership and involvement in COPLAC, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges, has been a valuable, encouraging reminder of an essential element of the undergraduate experience of every student regardless of major. I, along with other representatives of UIS, were active participants in the annual COPLAC meeting this summer and we'll continue to benefit from our COPLAC membership.

A new and highly visible reminder of our liberal arts legacy is under construction right now next to the Library in Patton Park. We're creating a Shakespeare Garden in celebration of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death – which is this year.

The garden will include a beautiful sculpture of Shakespeare (soon to arrive) and a lovely fountain, along with various flowers and plants named in Shakespeare's poems and plays. (e.g. "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet.") I'm sincerely grateful to UIS landscape designer, Brian Beckerman, who has designed the Shakespeare Garden, to all the terrific members of the grounds crew who are doing the work, and to Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson, Ethan Lewis, Joan Sestak and others who are also helping to make the garden a reality.

The UIS Shakespeare Garden will be dedicated at the end of September, just before our campus production of "Macbeth". I look forward to joining many of you in enjoying this lovely addition to our campus, which, like our Lincoln sculpture, has been funded through a generous private gift to the University.

During my first convocation remarks in 2011, I noted an important lesson, drawn from over 30 years in higher education – it was that leadership is about collective wisdom used strategically.

In my first year on campus, I worked hard to glean some of our own collective wisdom on a very local basis by spending time with each department in listening sessions across campus.

Five years later and with over 500 new employees since then, it is time for me to renew those sessions in individual visits to units that now have a lot of new faces, and new leaders. I am eager to visit with you, listen to you and learn more about your vision for our campus.

In closing (and on a more personal note) since I started my time at UIS my family has welcomed two more grandchildren, Izzabeau and Joseph, which brings our total to 10. It's hard to believe we're now in double figures! Somehow that little one (#10) feels like a milestone of sorts and as I've listened to his parents talk about their hopes and dreams for him I've found myself wondering what the world will be like when he enters college in 2034.

That is a future difficult to foresee but I do know this for sure:

The work we do every day, educating future citizens of our state and our nation is important In fact, it's critical.

Our University has much to contribute to the world my grandchildren (and yours)

will inhabit decades from now.

Thank you for what you do every day to educate future citizens and leaders and to make this University better than it was the day before, the month before, the year before.

Let's make this academic year a record-shattering, award-winning, inspirational and satisfying year.

Thank you.

SJR Column: First-Year Students, August 2016

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, almost 70% of the 3.3 million students who graduated from American high schools during the past year will be starting undergraduate classes at colleges and universities across the U.S. during the next few weeks. They will soon constitute the 2016 freshman class at campuses across the country – including at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois.

Anyone who has attended college or who has sent a child off to college likely remembers that first year, along with the excitement, anticipation and anxiety that accompanies one of the most important transitions in the educational process. The freshman year is a time of significant adjustment as students attempt to find the appropriate balance between higher academic demands and new levels of personal freedom and responsibility. Affordability has become an additional concern for many of today's college freshmen who need to manage personal finances, loans and scholarships or who need to work to help pay for their education.

Fortunately for students, researchers have learned a great deal about the college freshman experience during the past few decades. At UIS, we've been applying that knowledge and implementing best practices to support new students both academically and socially and to increase student retention and success.

Lisa McGuire is Director of the Office of New Student Orientation and Parent Relations at UIS and is on the front lines of those efforts.

“They start long before classes begin,” says Lisa. “As soon as a student is accepted to UIS, we start communicating with both the student and their parents.”

Though most students will have spent time with an admissions counselor and made a campus visit during the college search process, a steady flow of communications helps insure any questions or concerns are addressed when they arise.

Students (with a parent or guardian) then participate in the two-day summer “KickStart Program”, which includes academic advising, placement testing, registration for fall courses, financial aid consultation, an overnight stay in a residence hall and a variety of social activities. The goal is, by the time students return for “Launch Week” in late August, they’re already familiar with campus resources and they’ve begun to make a plan and form the networks of support that will contribute to a healthy lifestyle and academic success.

According to Lisa, surveys have shown most students want their parents to remain involved and appreciate their continued support during their college years. The trick is for parents and their student to communicate and find the right balance. Fortunately, cell phones, social media and other technologies make that task easier today than ever before.

“I encourage students to stay in touch with their parents,” says Lisa. “The transition to college can be tough for parents as well as students and communication is part of what helps make the freshman year smooth and successful for the entire family.”

Faculty and staff play an important role in supporting students during the freshman transition and many UIS faculty and staff are closely involved with first-year students. Tena Helton, Associate Professor of English and Chair of the English Department, has directed the first-year writing program and currently coordinates freshmen seminars.

“One goal in the freshmen seminar,” says Tena, “is to familiarize students with the academic expectations of college coursework. Some students have the skills they need; but they just can’t quite put them together. For others, we need to work on basic writing skills.”

Happily, adds Tena, “We also get students who are better than they think they are and the fun part is telling them they are a good writer!

Regardless of where they are in the beginning, students need to ‘own it’ and take responsibility for their learning, time management and performance.”

Hilary Frost-Kumpf, in Political Science, and David Bertaina, in History, both teach the freshman seminar every year. “We’re not only engaging with students academically,” says Dr. Bertaina, “but we’re also integrating them into the freshman experience and the life of the university.”

Dr. Frost-Kumpf also speaks to the parents of incoming freshmen during summer orientation.

“I don’t encourage ‘helicopter parenting’,” she says, “but I do advise parents about helpful questions they can ask their student when they call home at the end of that first week. The first thing I tell them is to ask their student if they have read the syllabus for their class. I want to give parents a clue about the resources their student has available to

them.”

Dean of Students Dr. Charles Osiris works directly with new students to smooth their adjustment to residence hall living and college-level academics. “The first year of college presents a transitional time for students,” he acknowledges.

“If students take advantage of the programs and services available to them and reach out to both faculty and staff for support, it will greatly enhance their transition and success.”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: UIS Archives, July 2016

The academic community at UIS includes a wide range of talented individuals – more than 1,000 faculty and staff members who contribute in important ways to providing students with an intellectually rich learning experience while also serving local communities and beyond.

Perhaps one of the most unique members of the UIS community is Tom Wood, the Archivist in the University's Norris L. Brookens Library for nearly 30 years. You might say Tom is the "memory" of the University, for archivists are professionals who collect, assess, organize and preserve valuable records because they have continuing importance to the institution and to others.

When Tom Wood arrived at then SSU in 1986 after earning a Master's degree from the prestigious Library and Information Science program in Urbana, his first goal was to organize the UIS collection. "We had a lot of records," he says, "but little had been processed and made available for teaching and research functions."

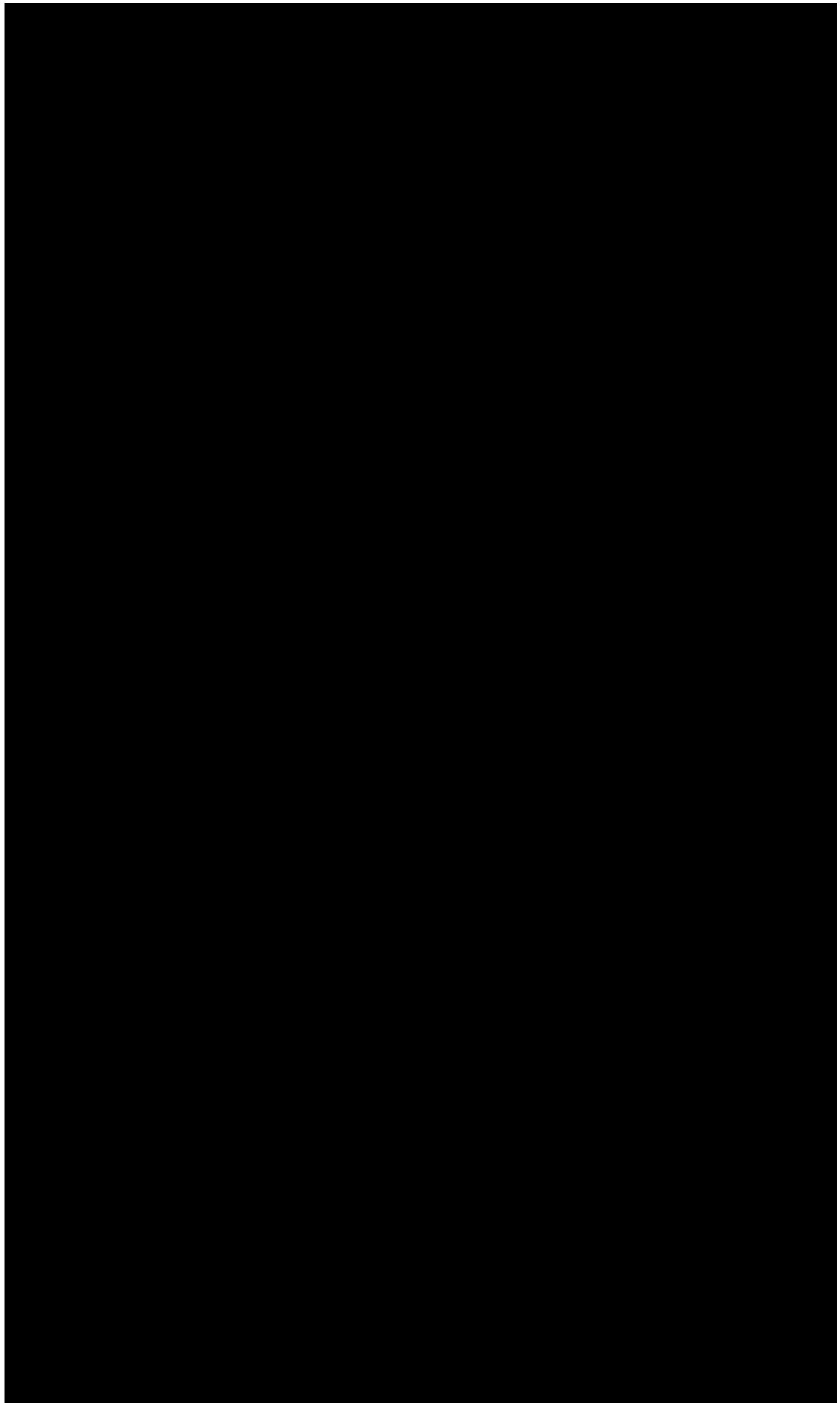
Expanding the collections of primary source materials and making them more easily accessible for use by faculty, students and the public has been another ongoing goal. Thanks to various external grants and technical advancements in the field, the collection has grown substantially, with more and more documents and records available and searchable online.

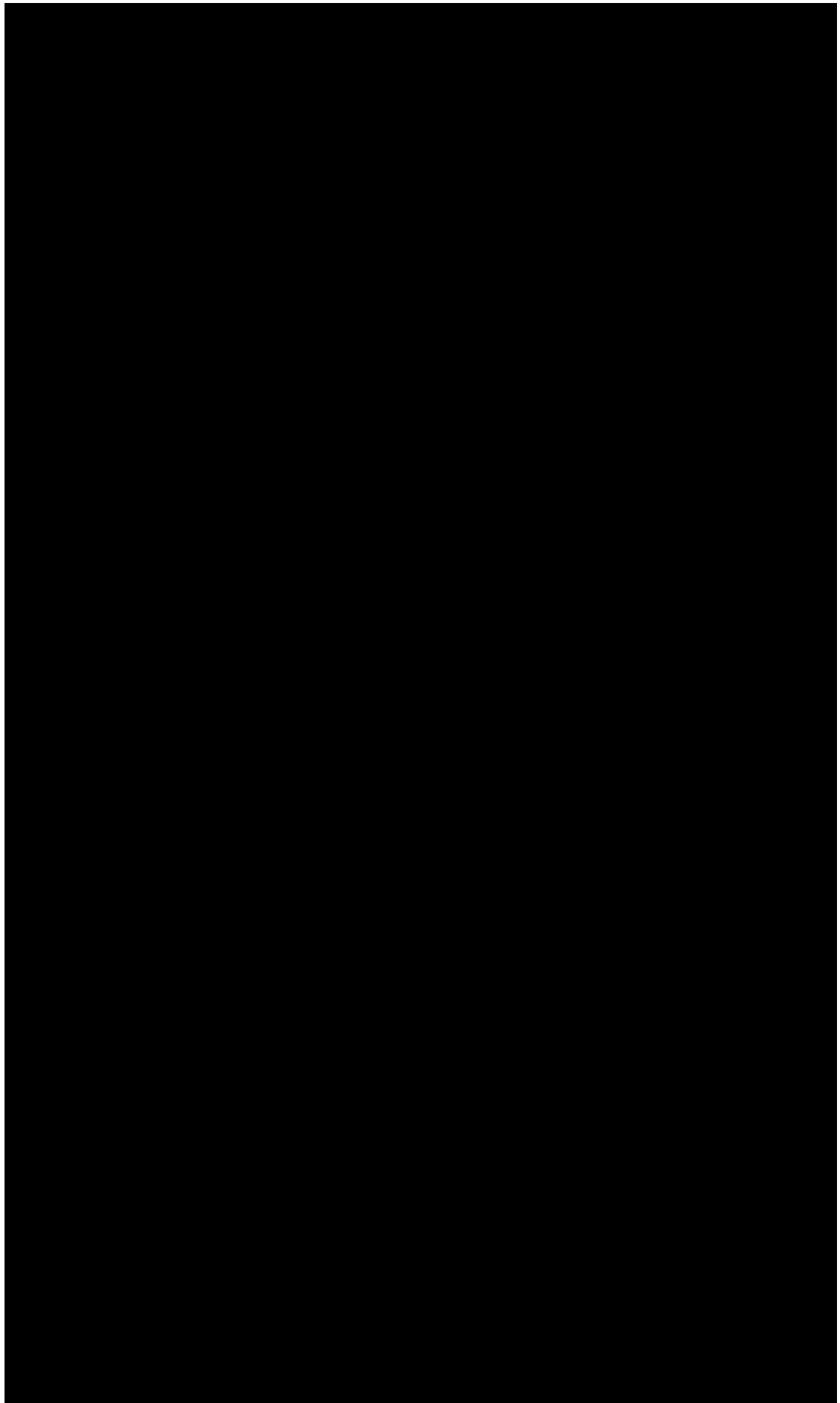
"Digitization has been a revolution over the past several years," says Tom, "and it has made a lot of the aspects of archiving and archival research easier and more effective."

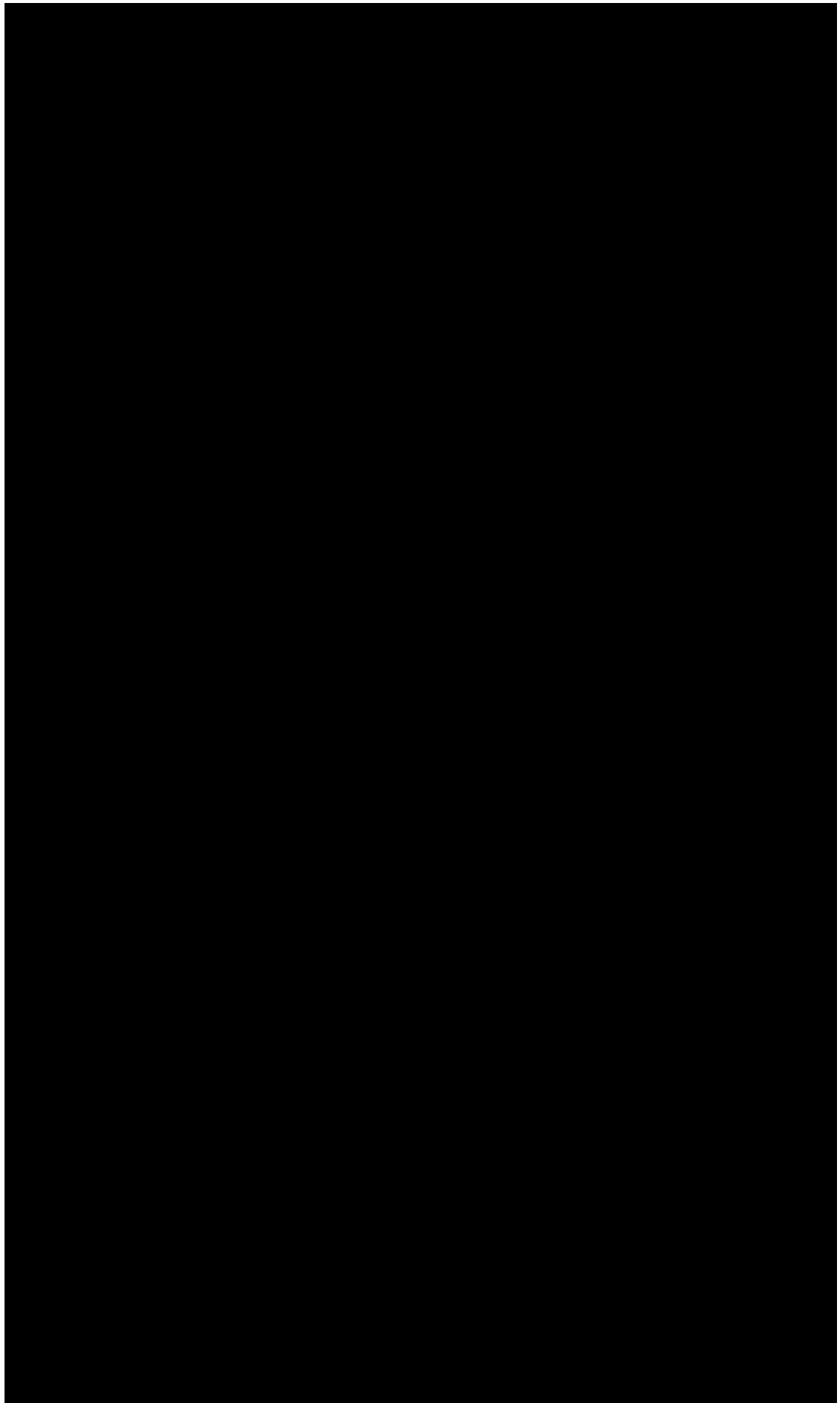
Valuable records in the UIS Archives include not only the ever-growing archives of UIS and its predecessor institution Sangamon State University, but also a variety of special collections including rare and valuable books, periodicals, photographs and reference items of historical and regional interest.

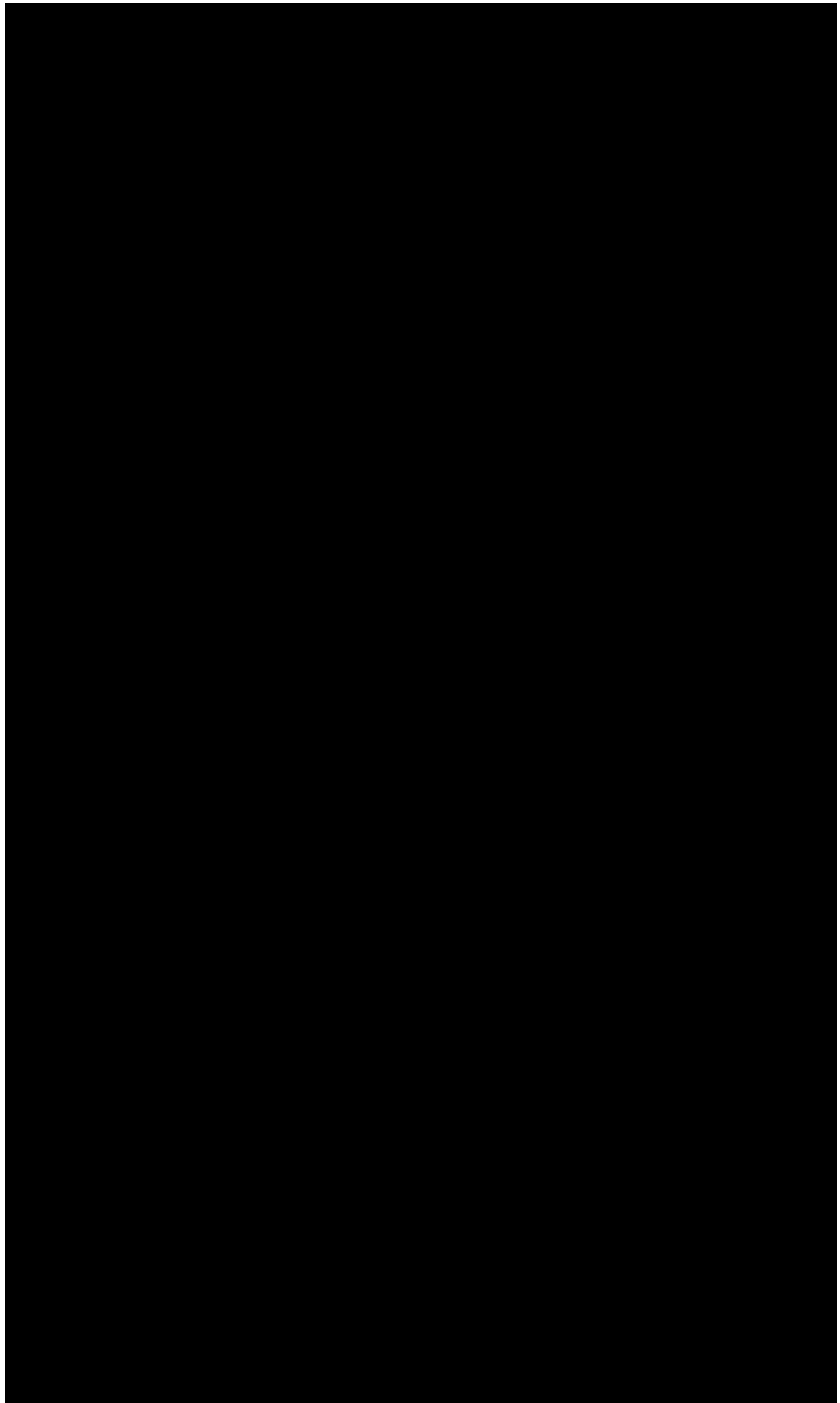
The Archives is one of seven Illinois Regional Archives Depositories (IRAD), housing a collection of valuable county and local government records such as birth, marriage, death and court records from a 14-county region that date back to the 1800s. The Archives is also home to various documents from Abraham Lincoln's law career, most of which are on original paper.

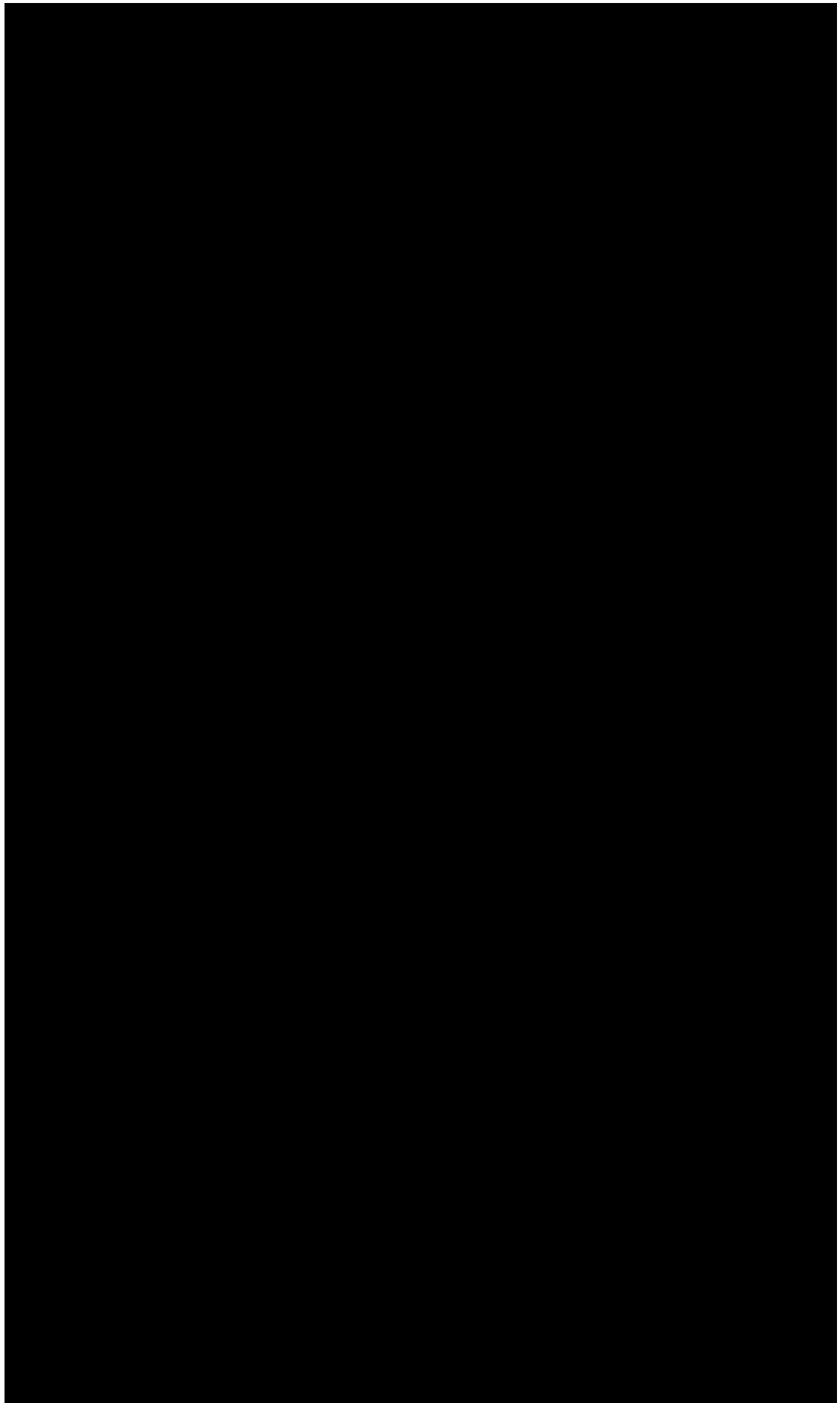
The UIS Oral History Collection, initiated in 1975 by now-retired UIS History professor Cullom Davis, is a priceless collection of taped and digitized oral history interviews collected from a wide variety of persons in and around Illinois. It is a unique record of life in the Midwest from the late 19th century to the present. The collection includes interviews with state legislators and other political leaders, but also interviews with coal miners who were part of labor unrest in Illinois in the

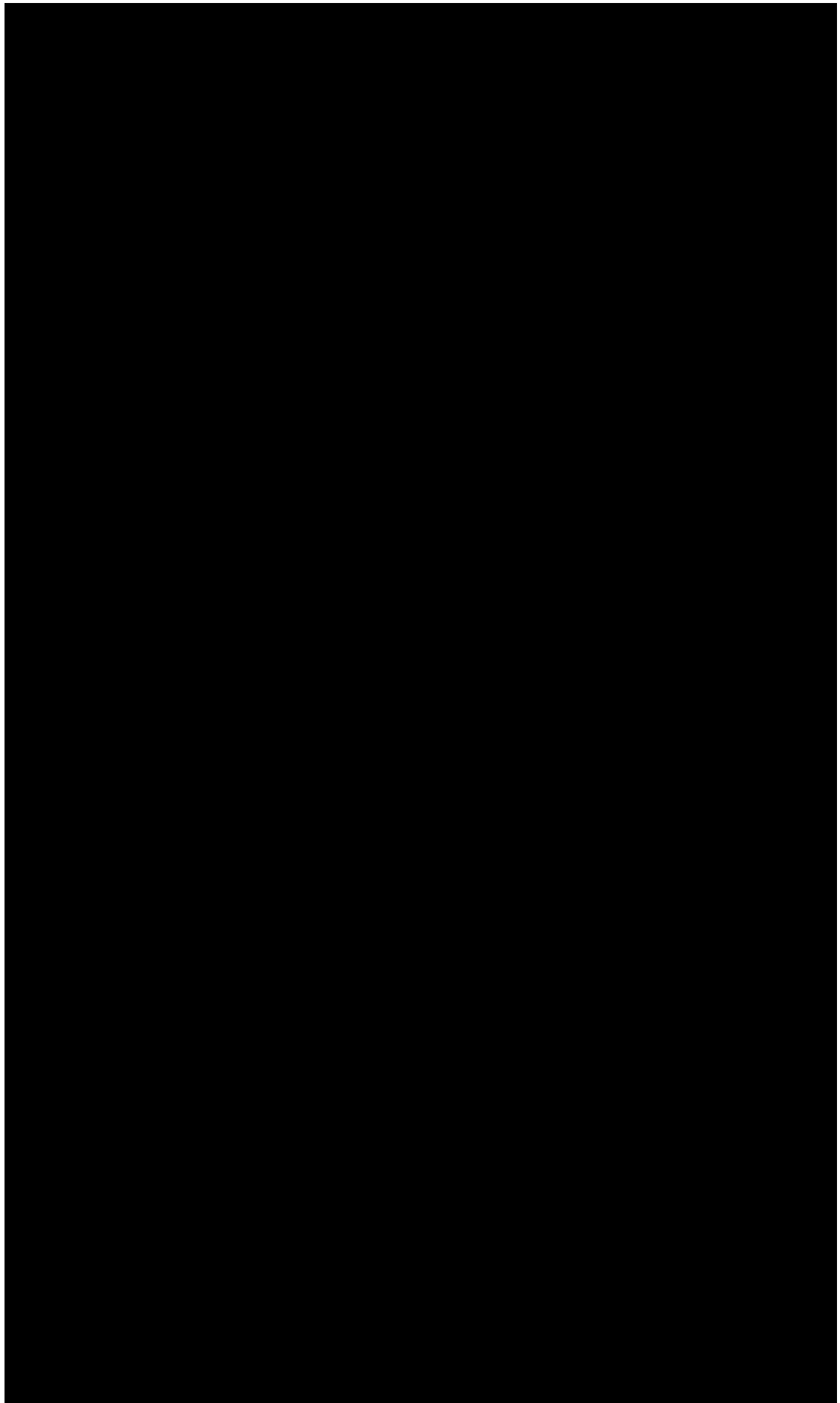


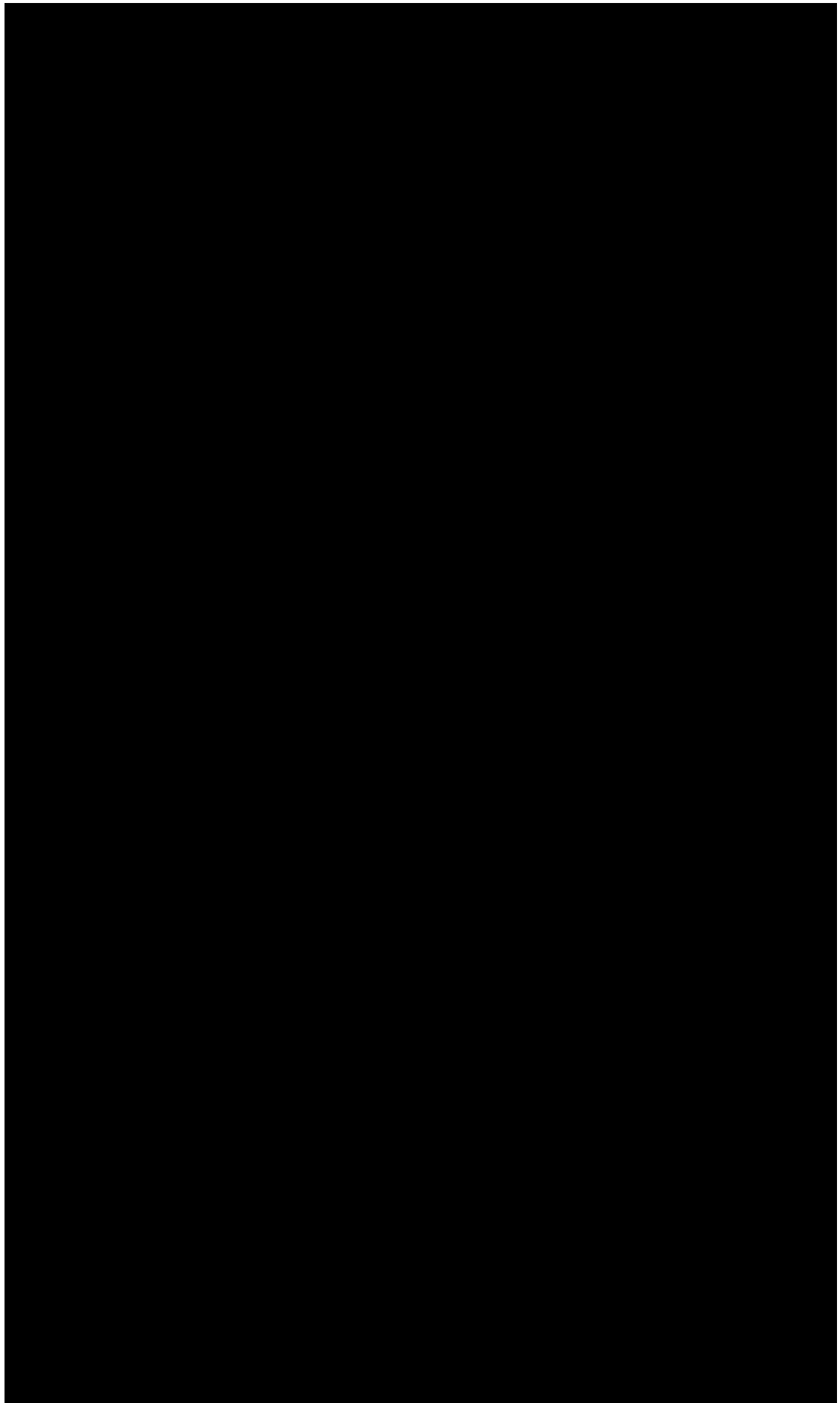


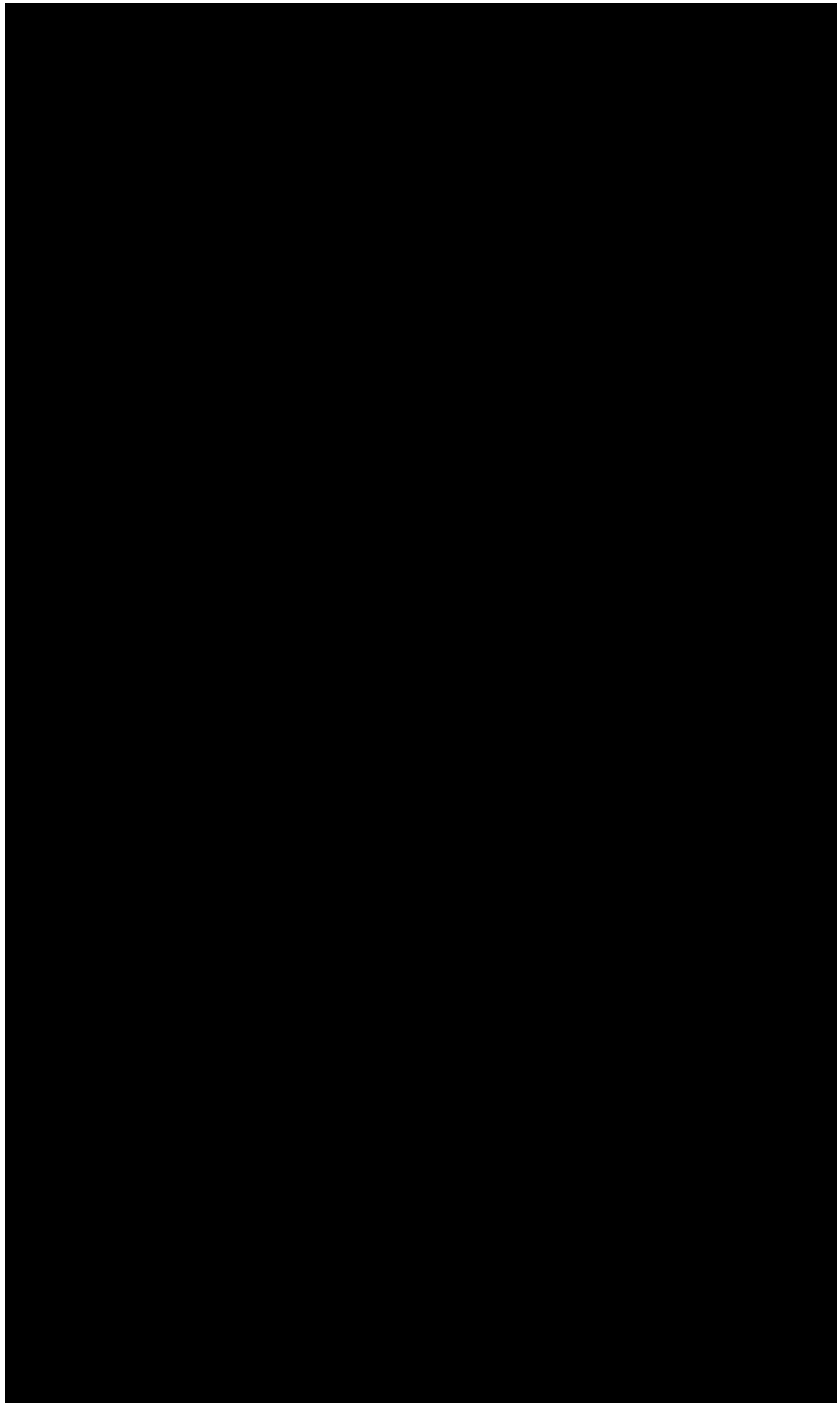


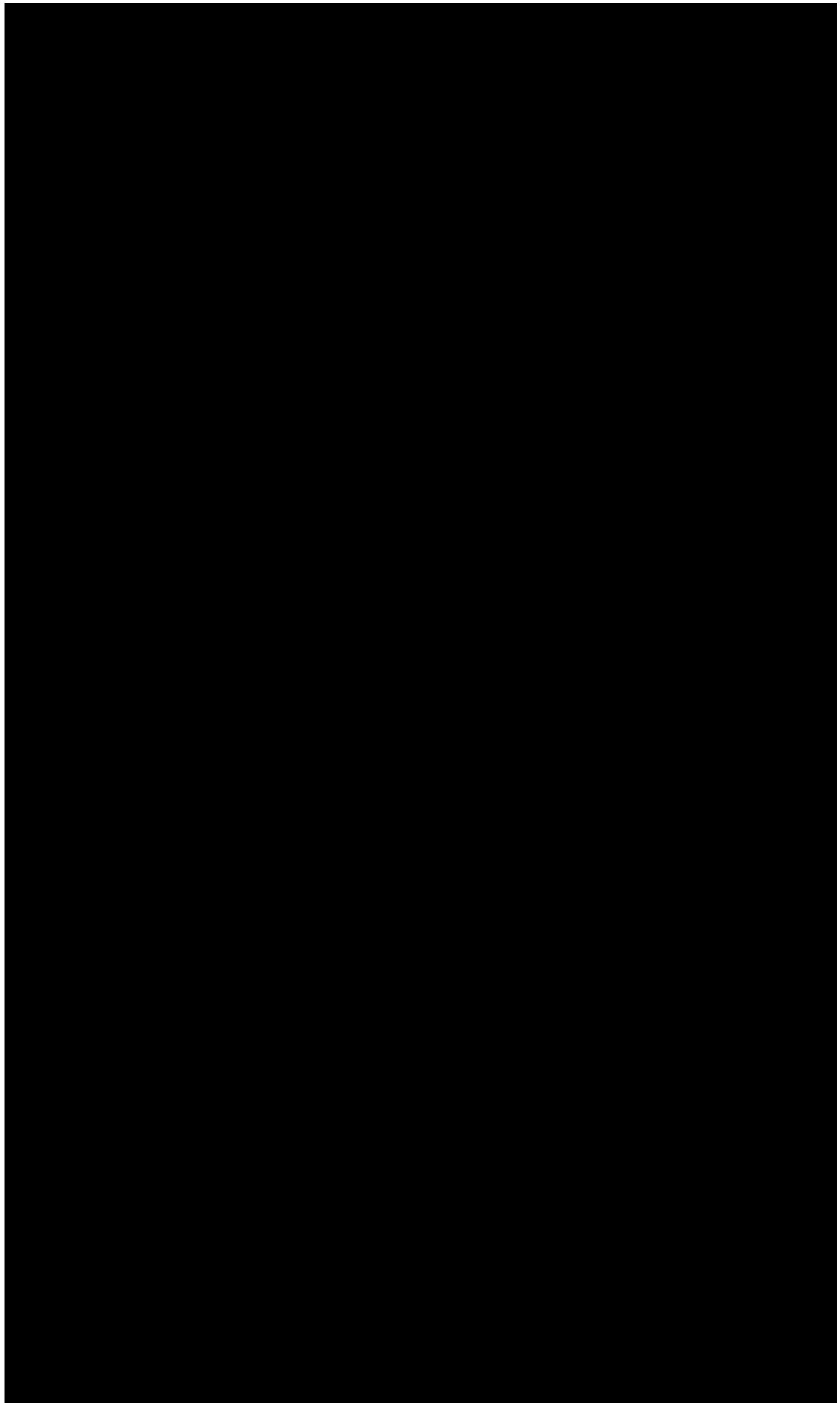


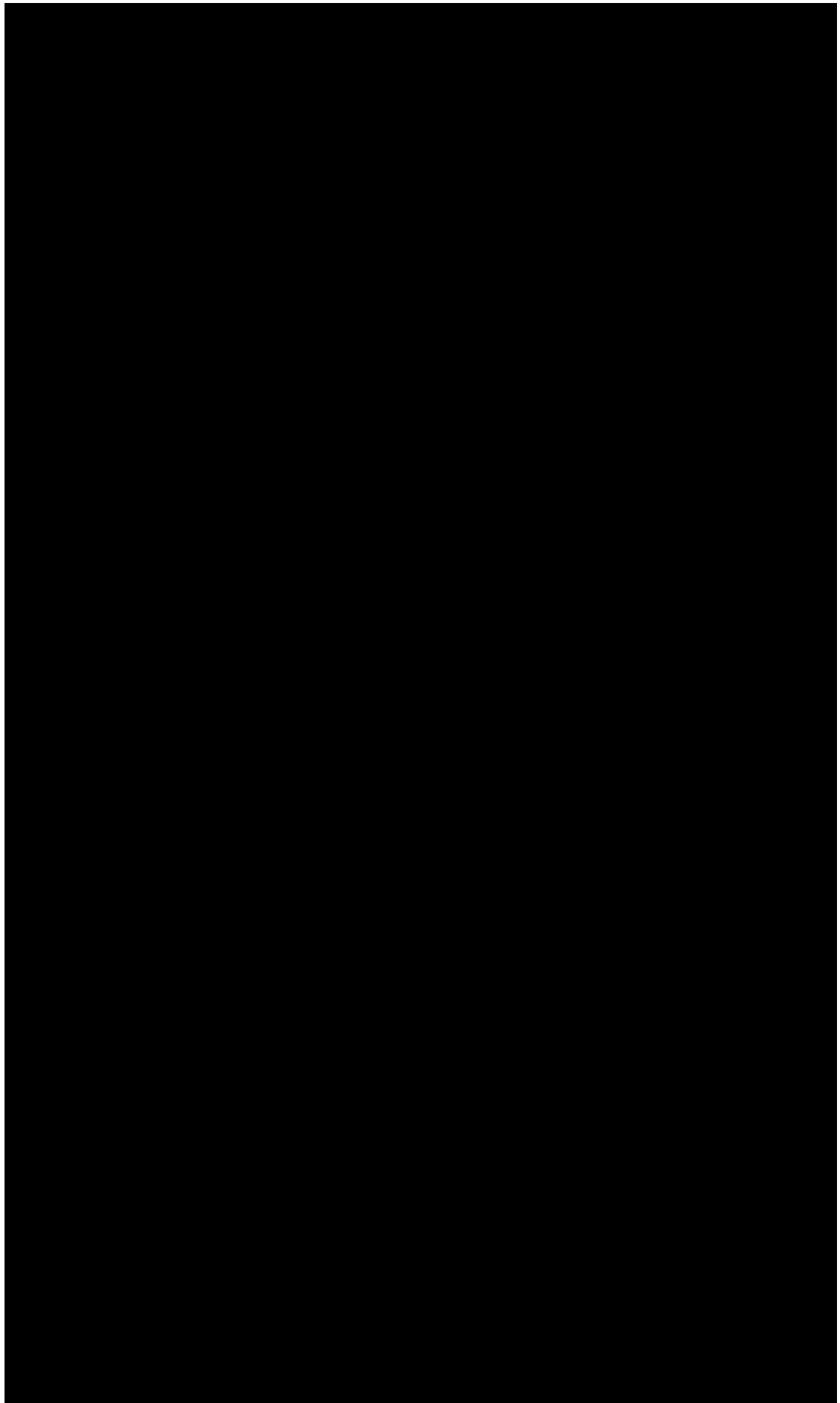


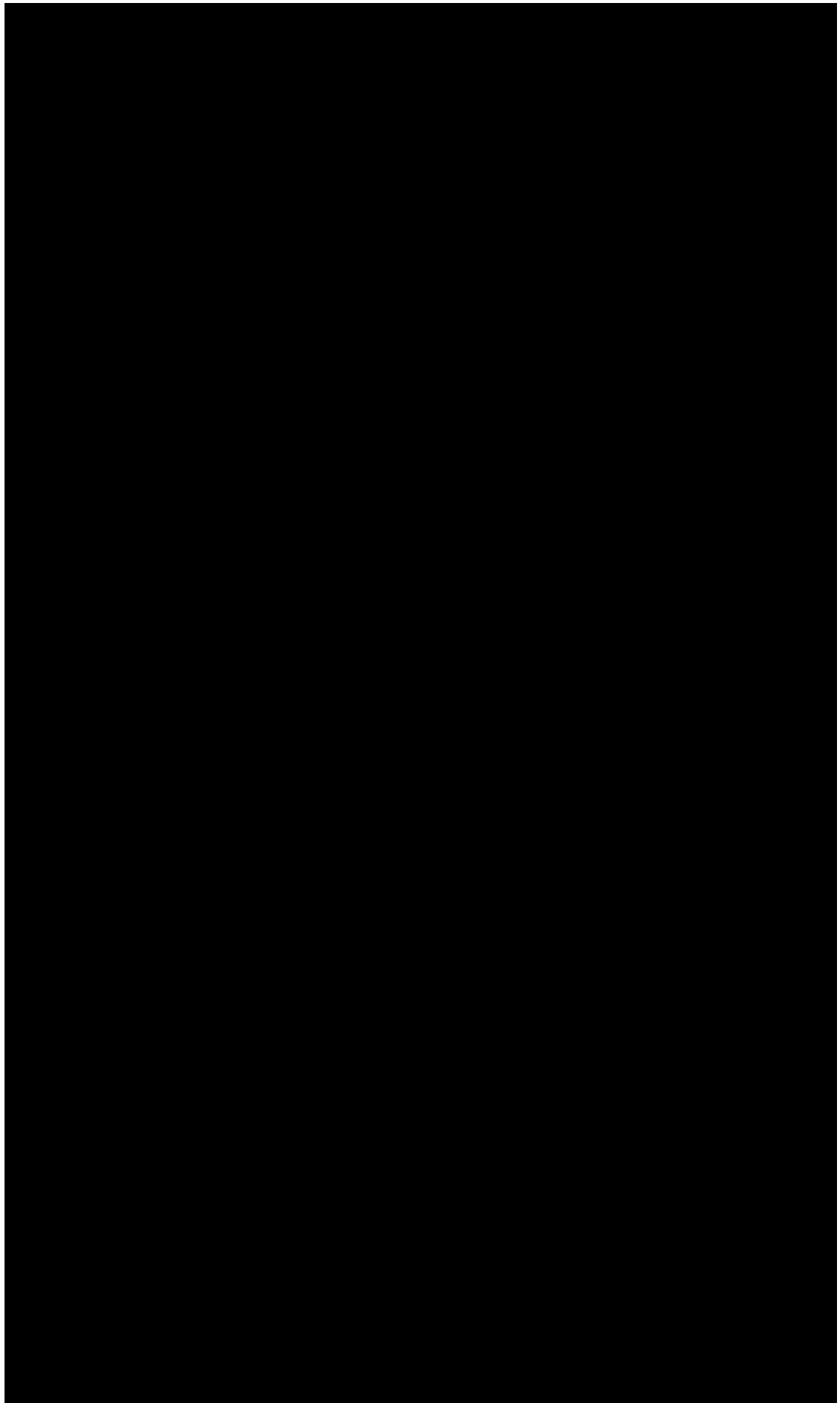


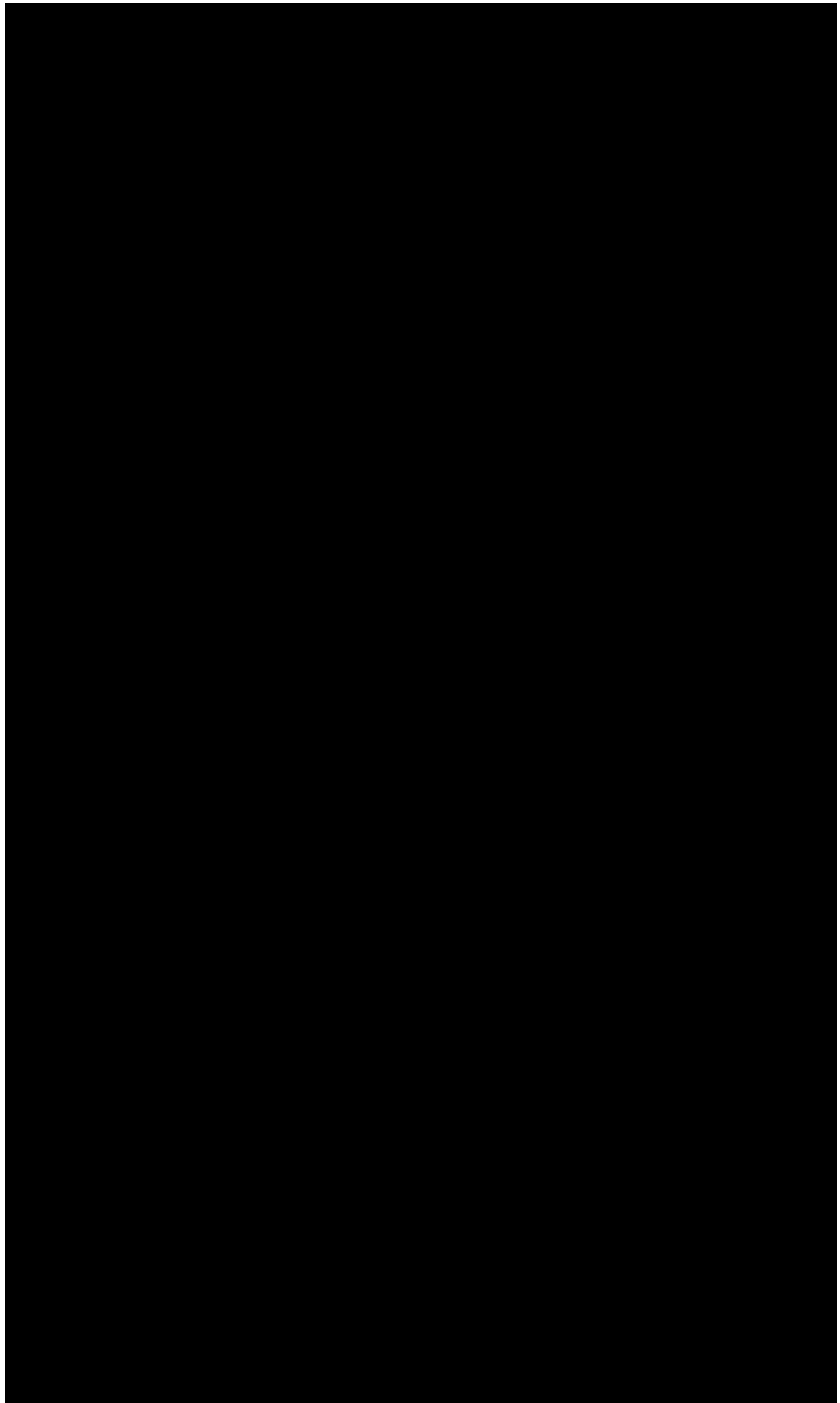


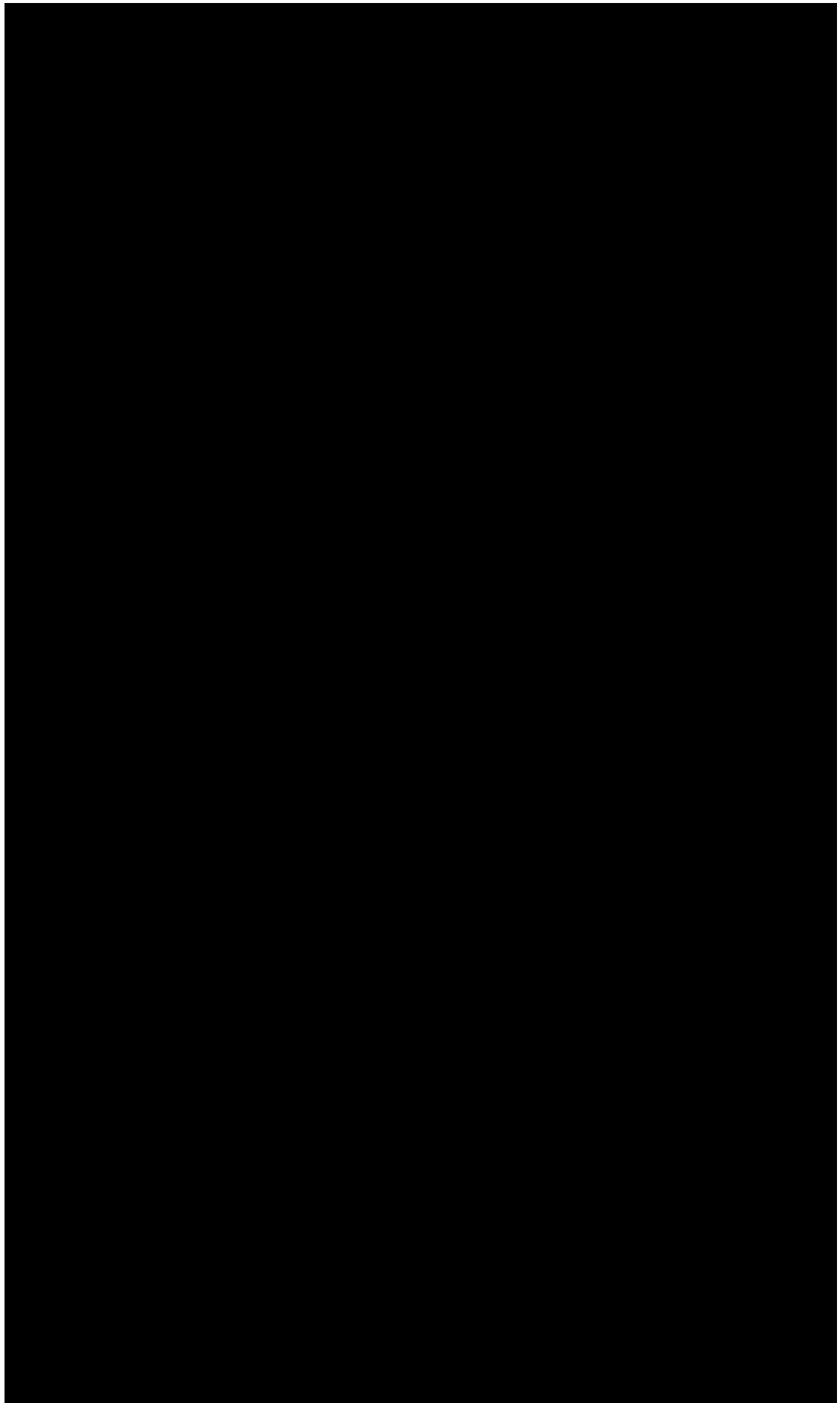


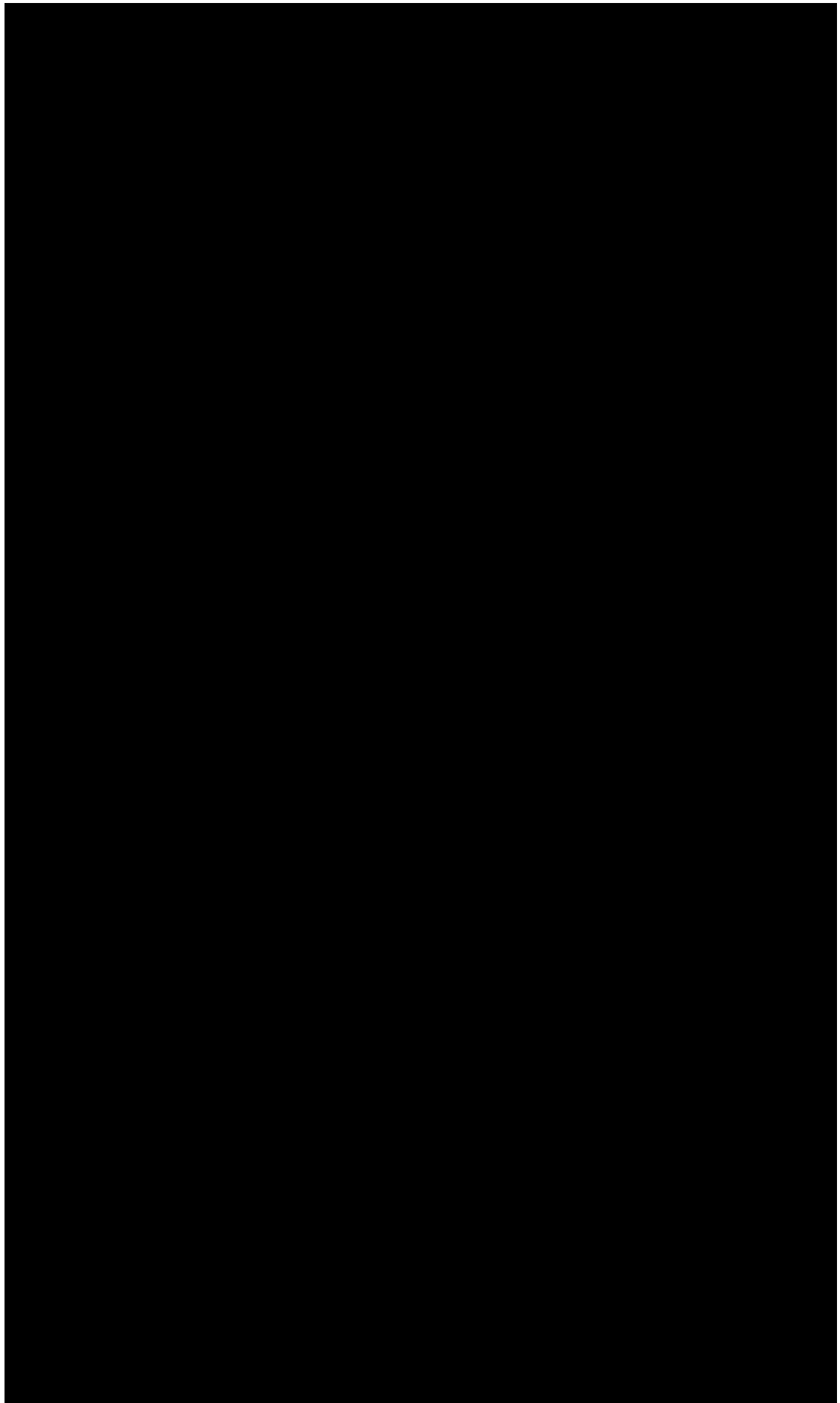


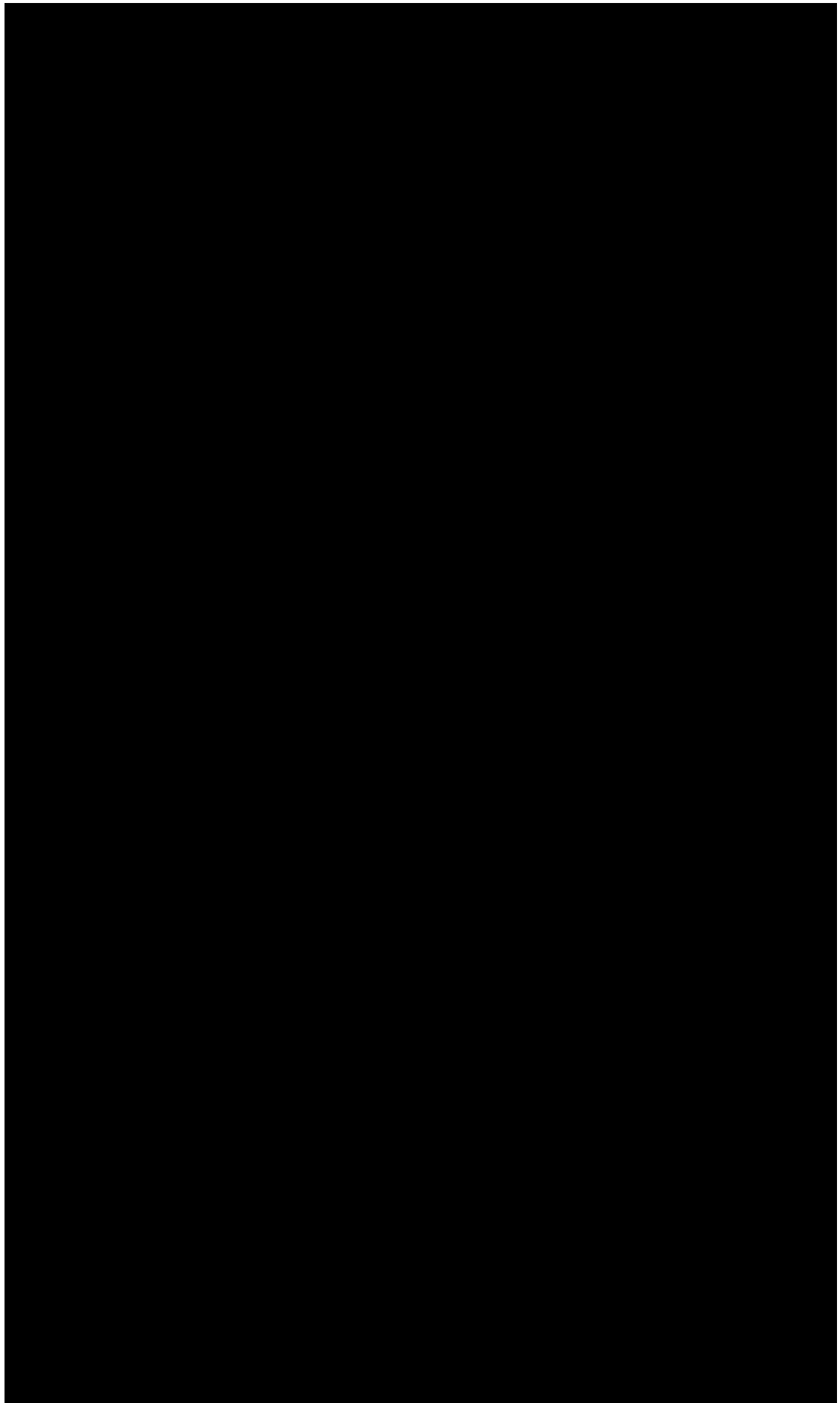


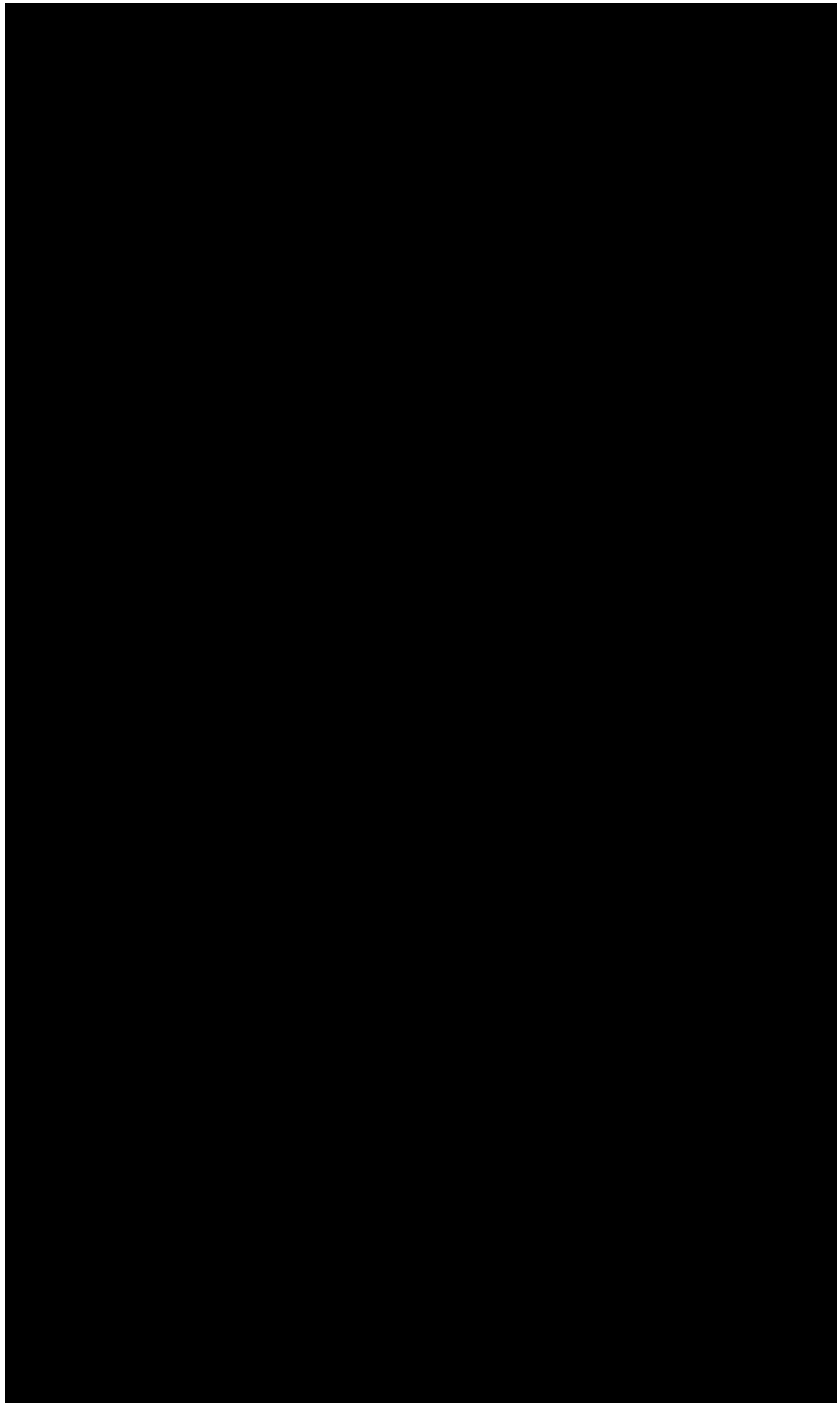


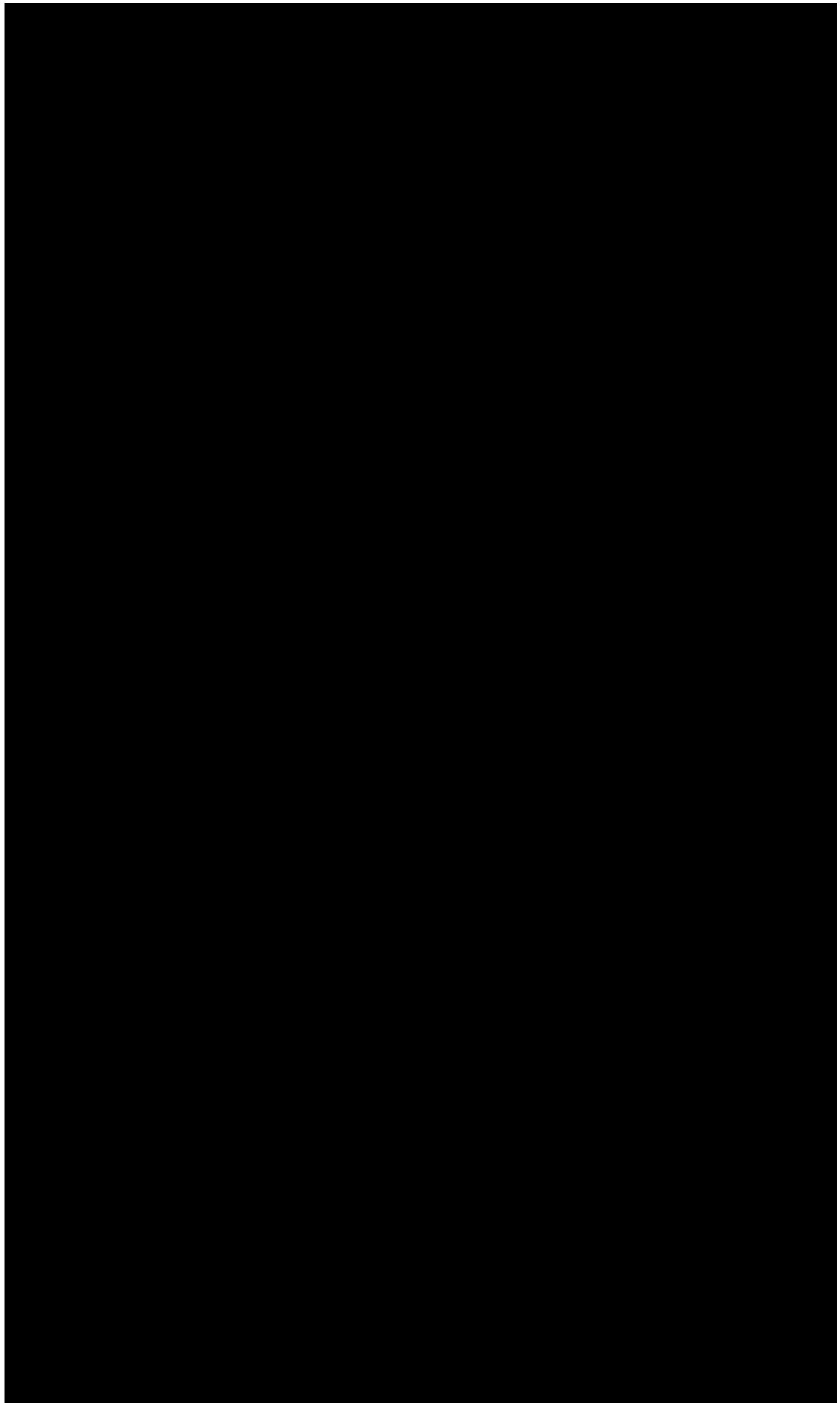


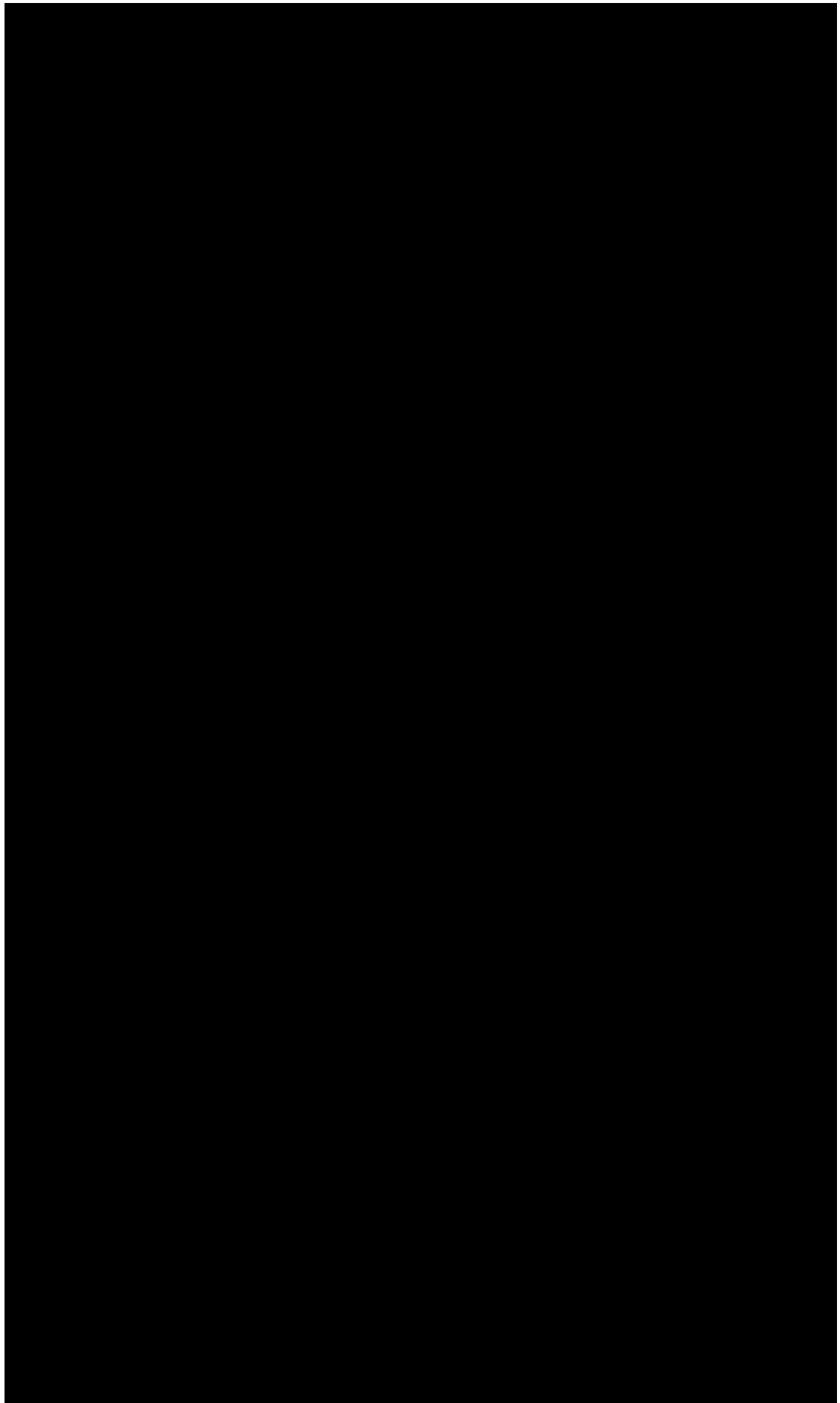


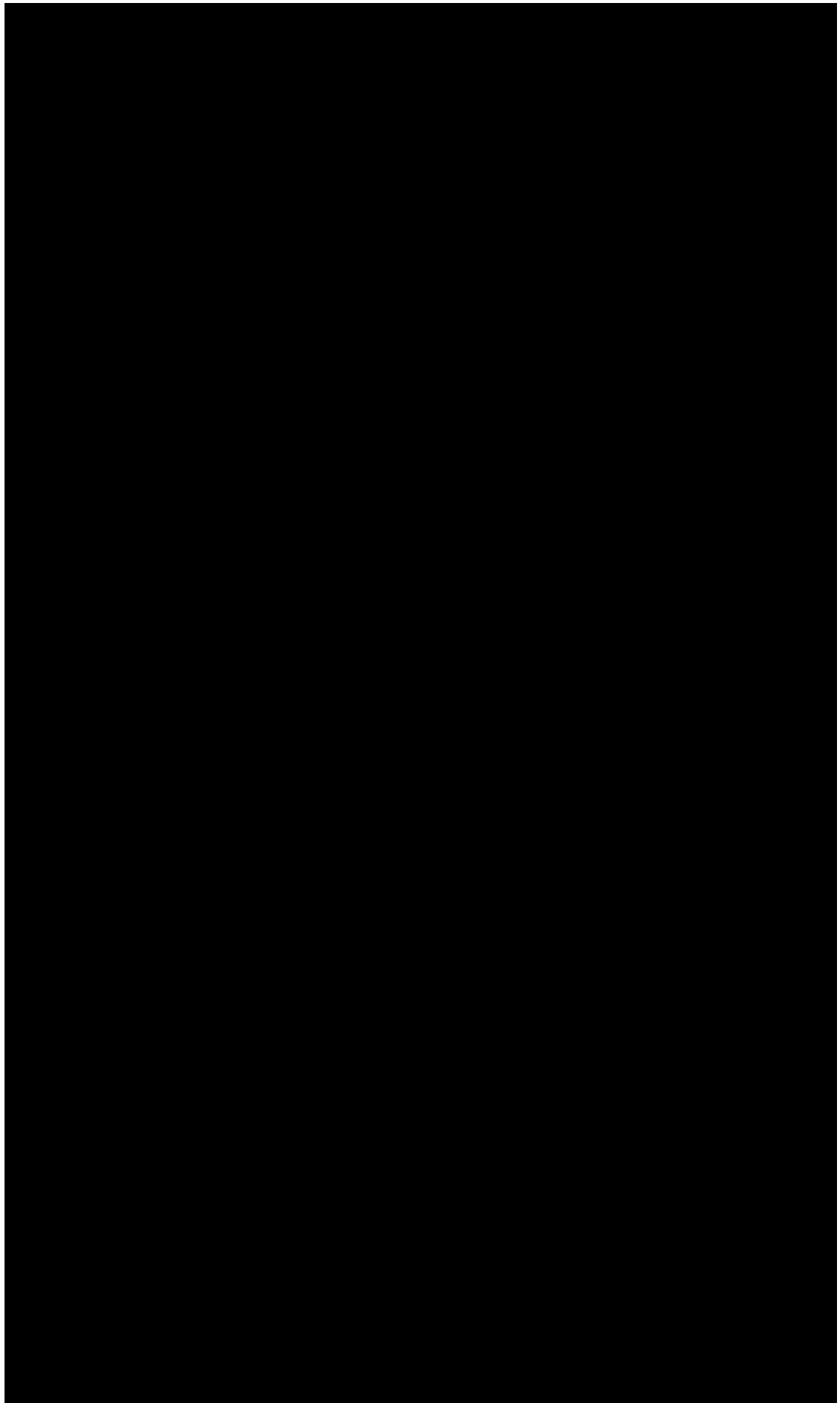


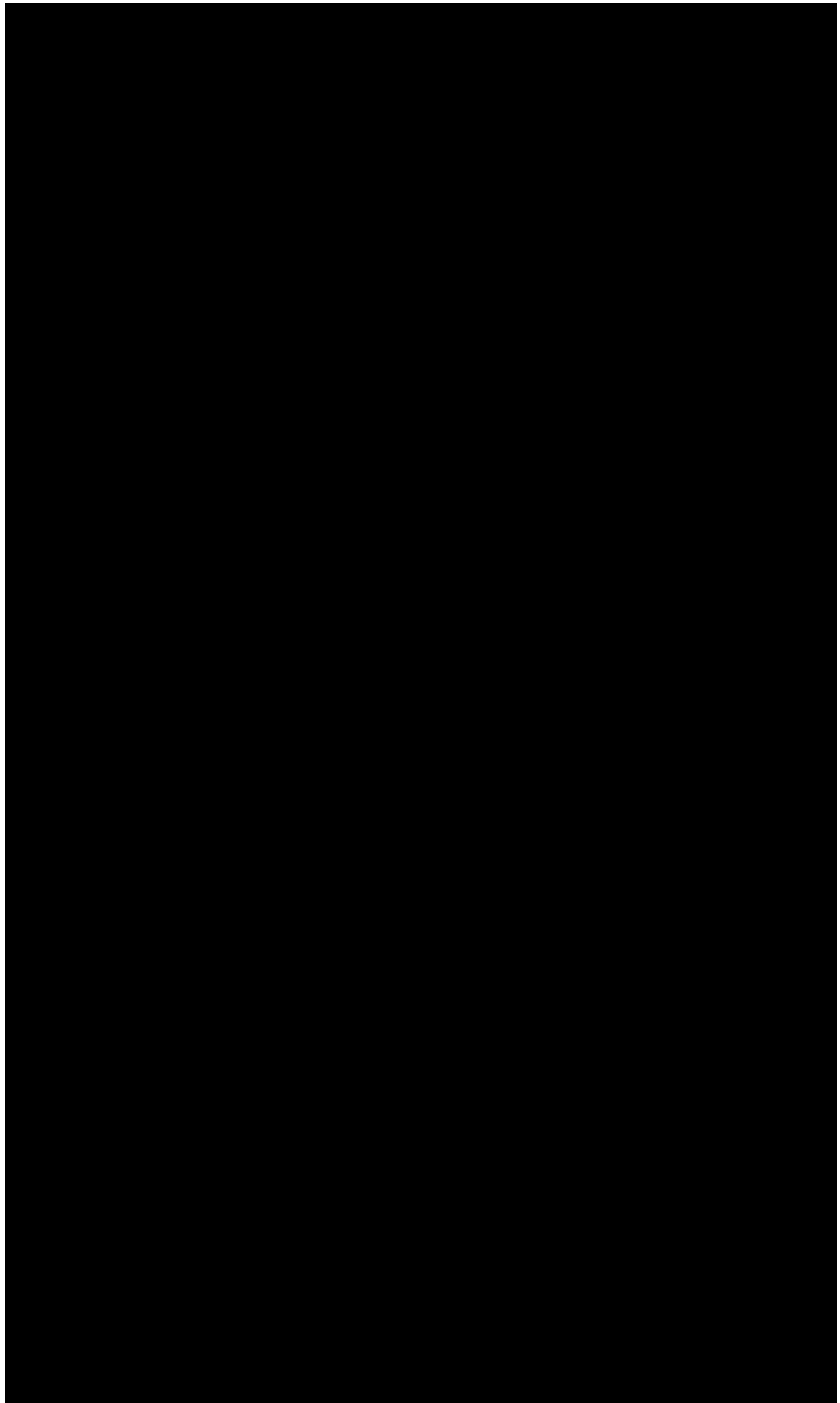


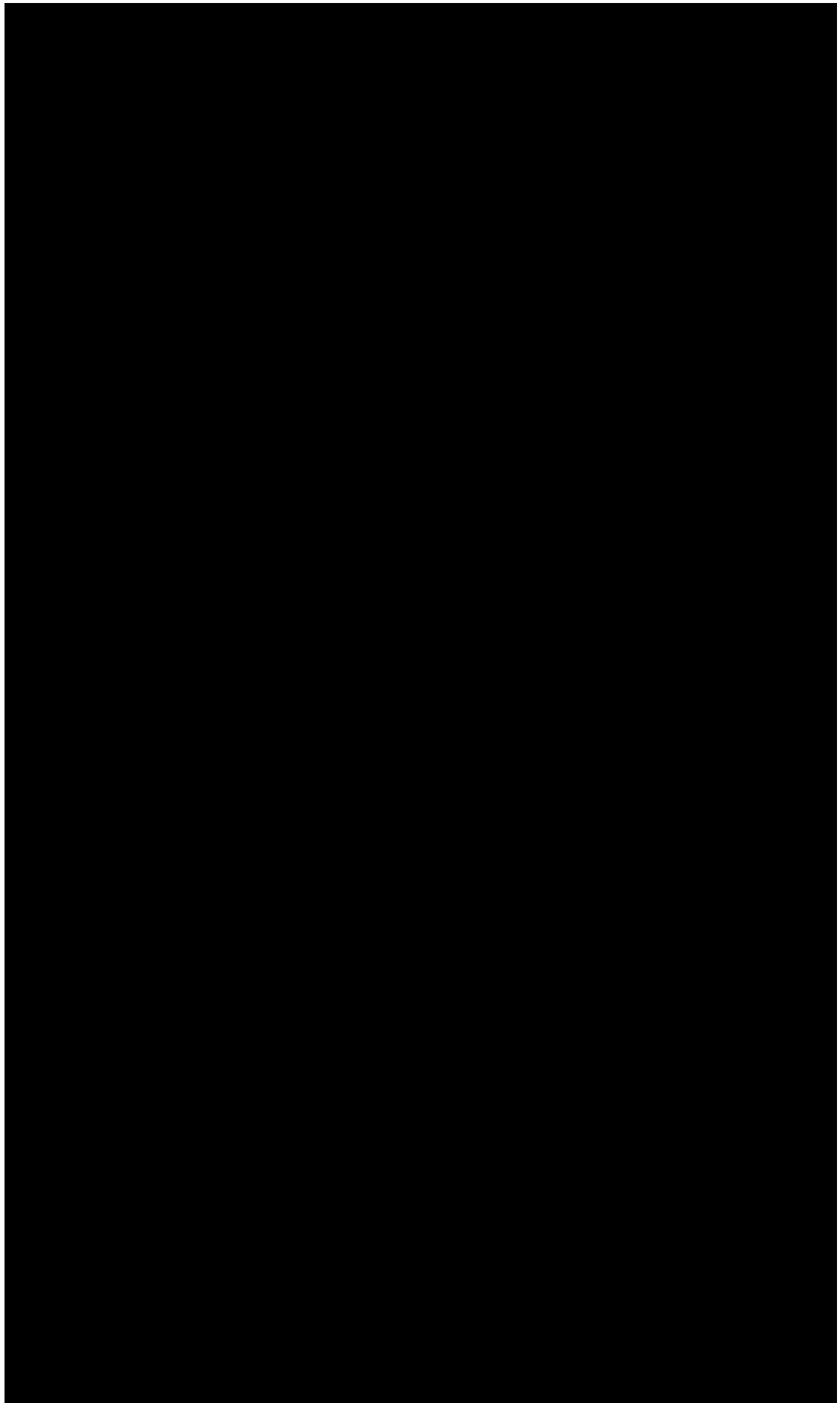


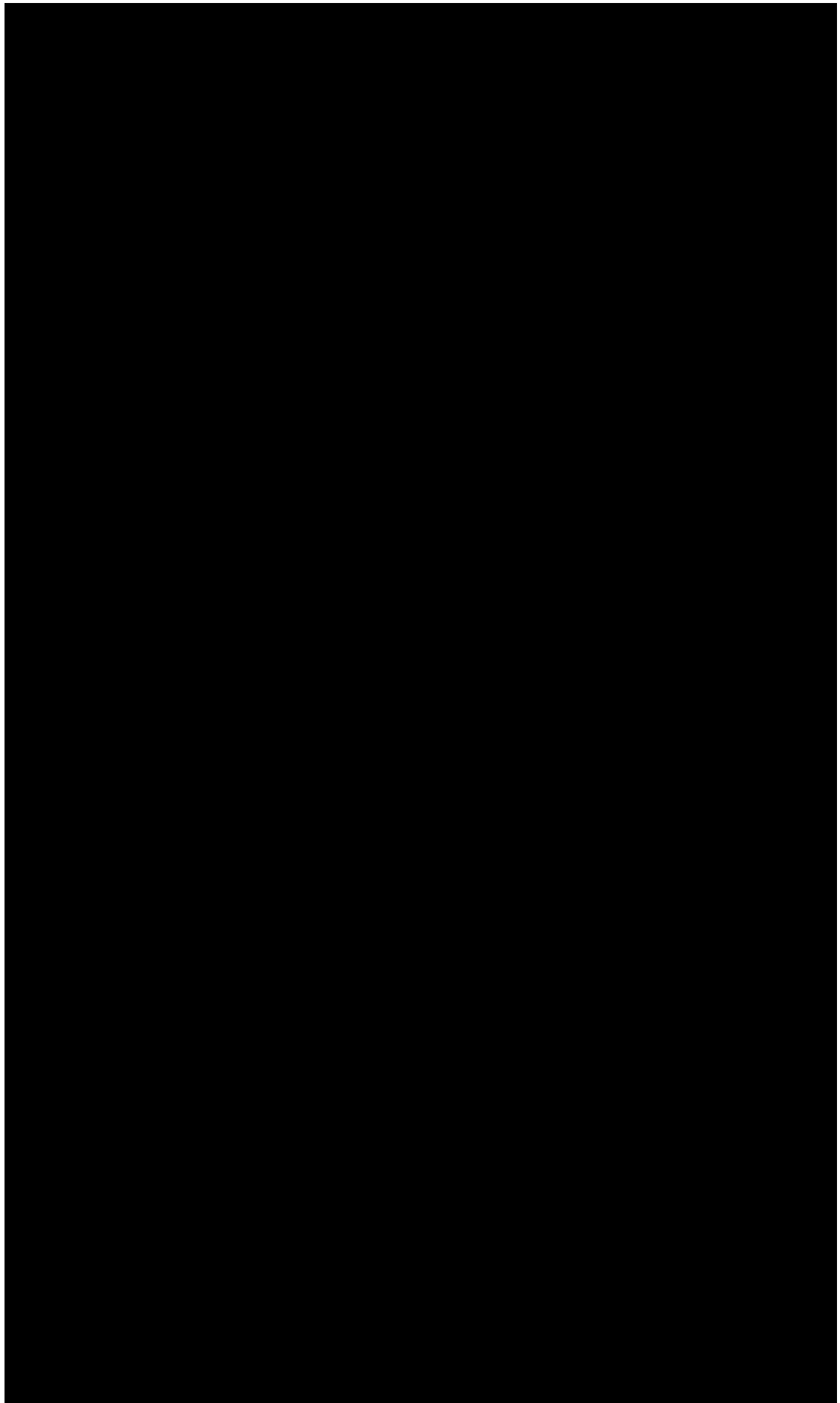


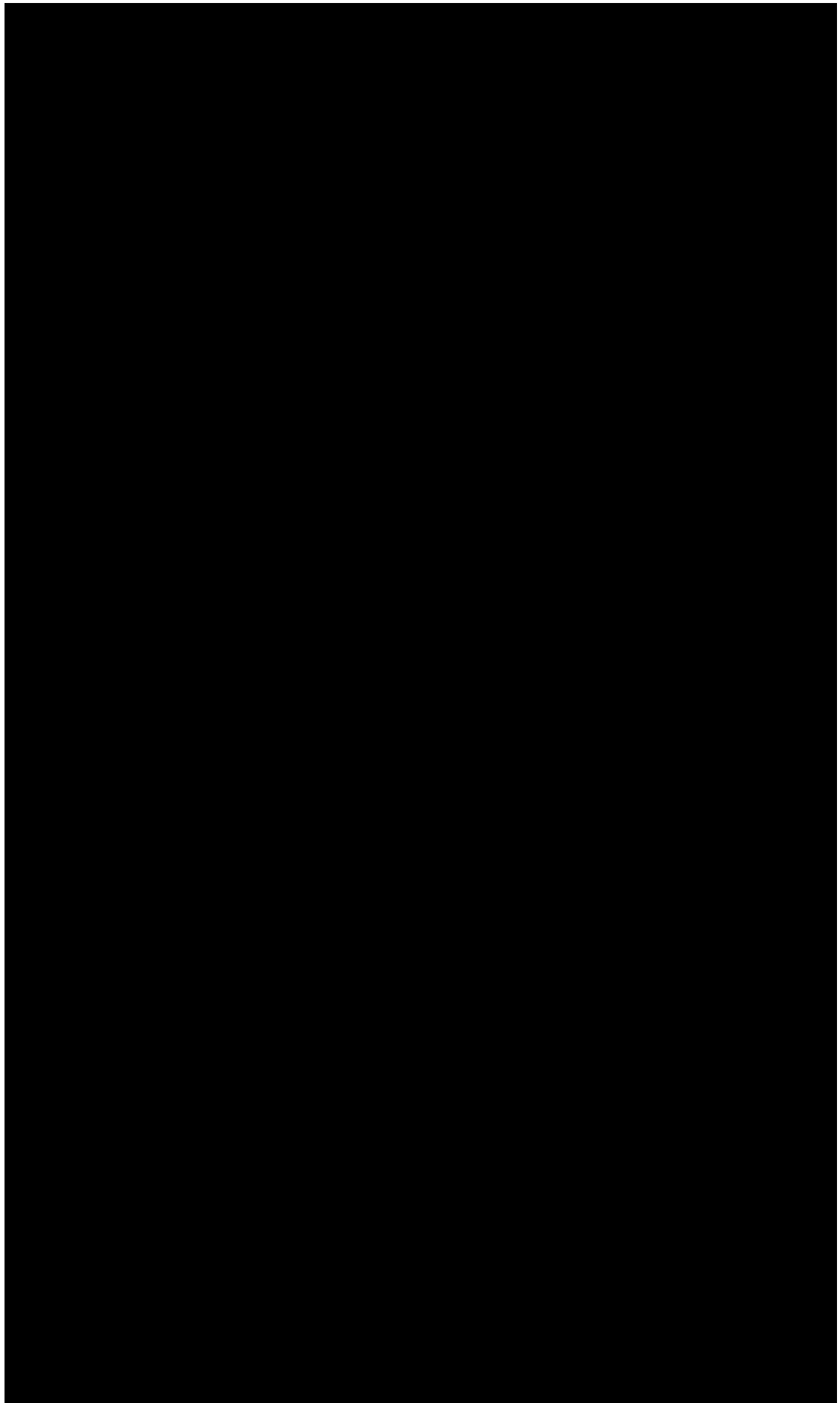


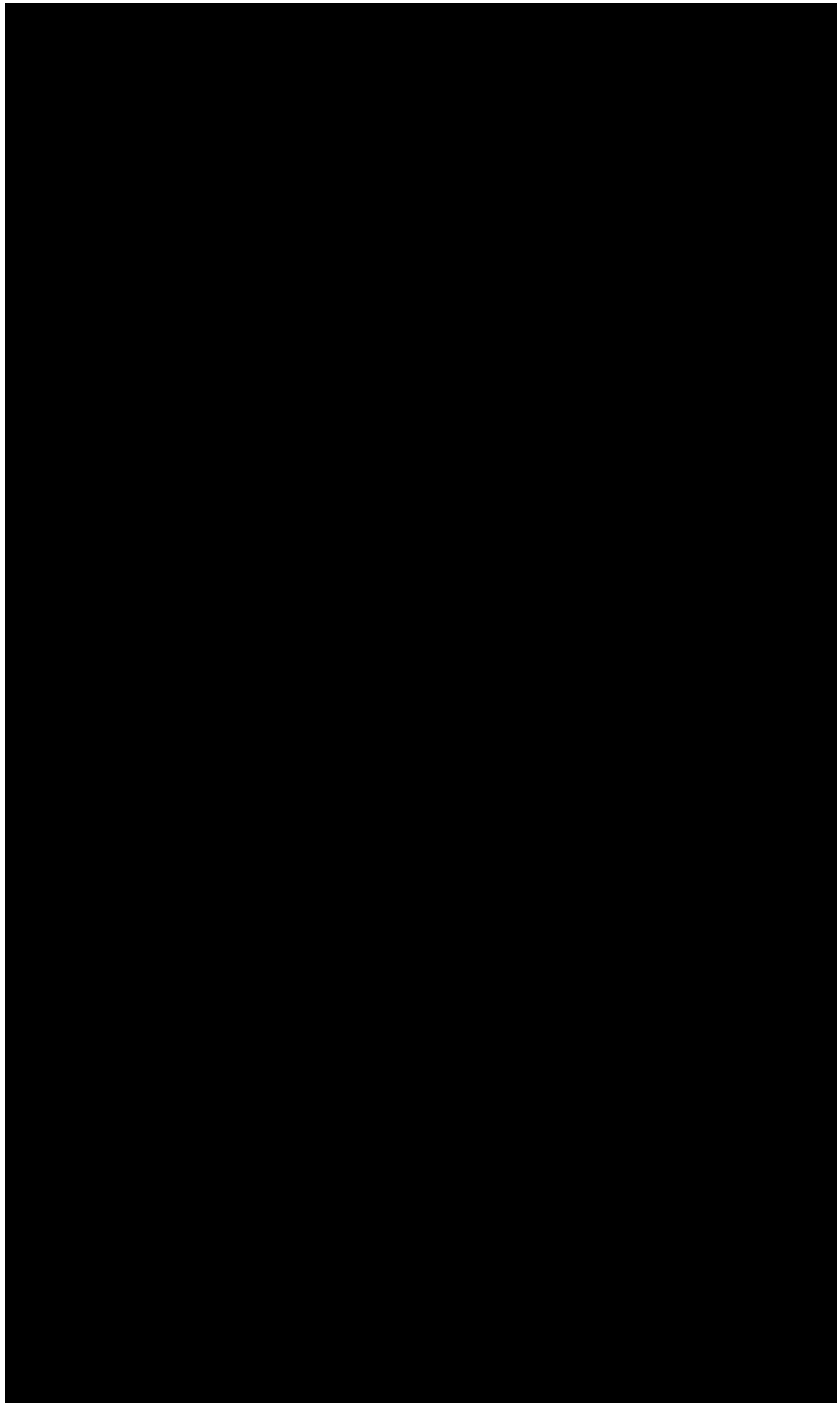


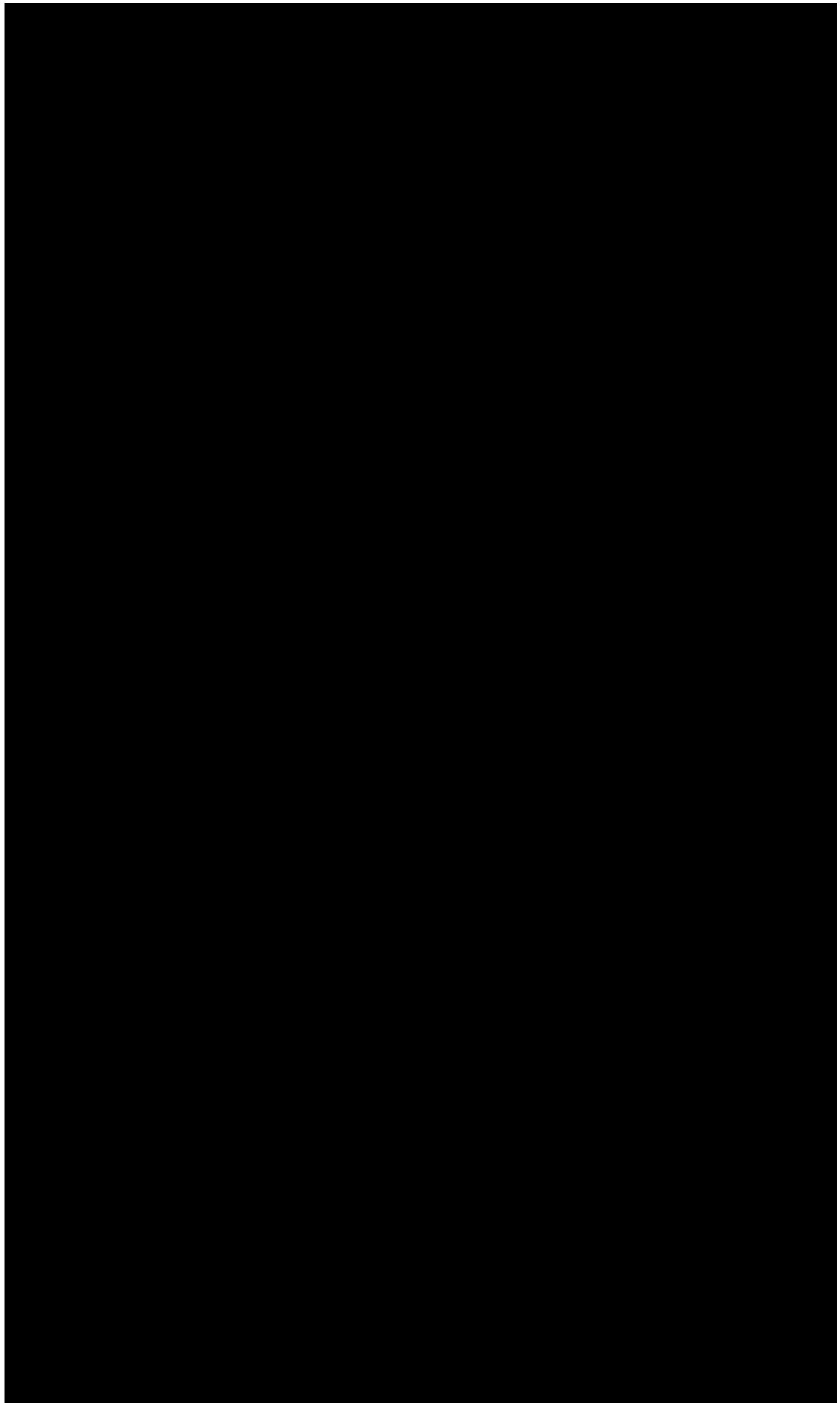


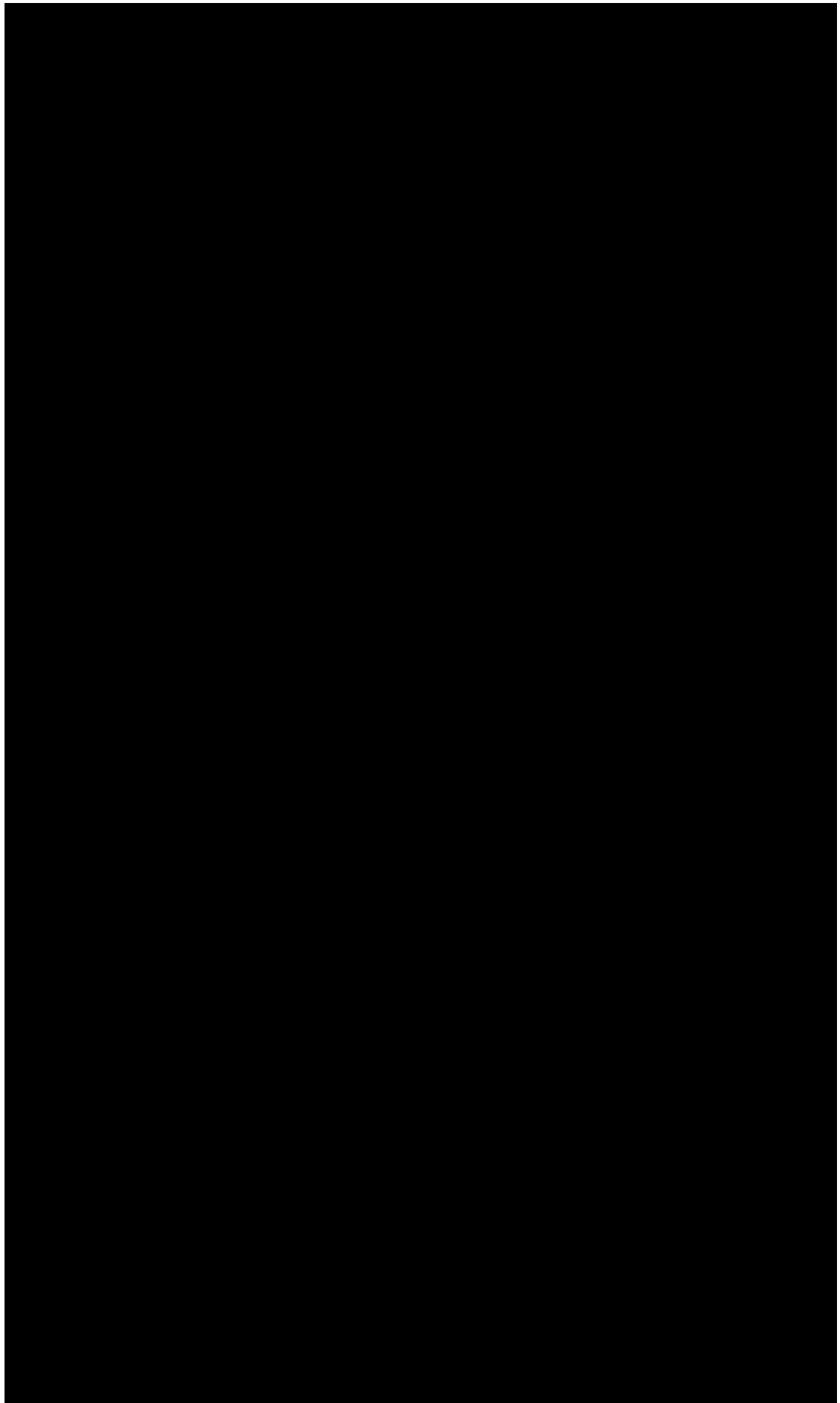


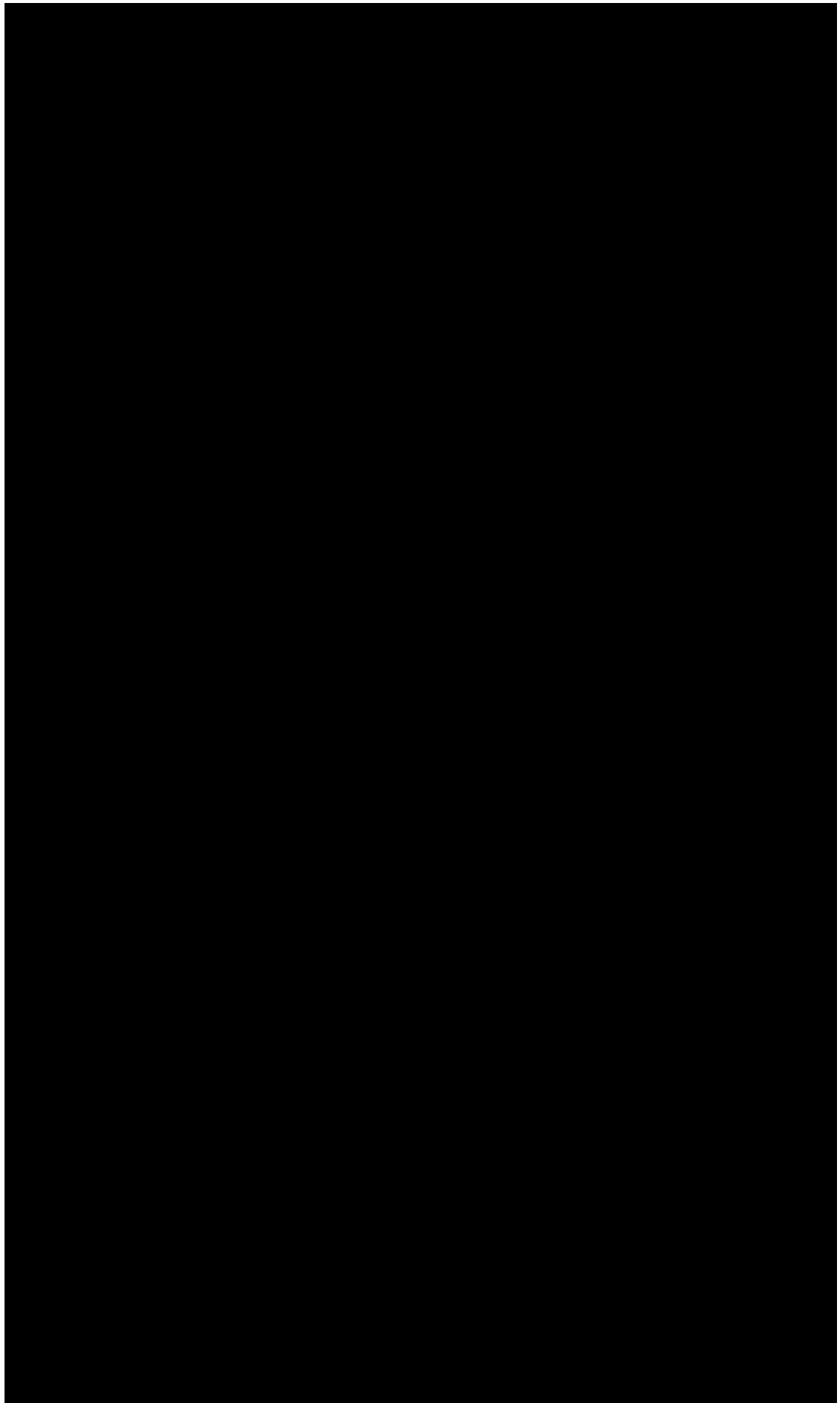


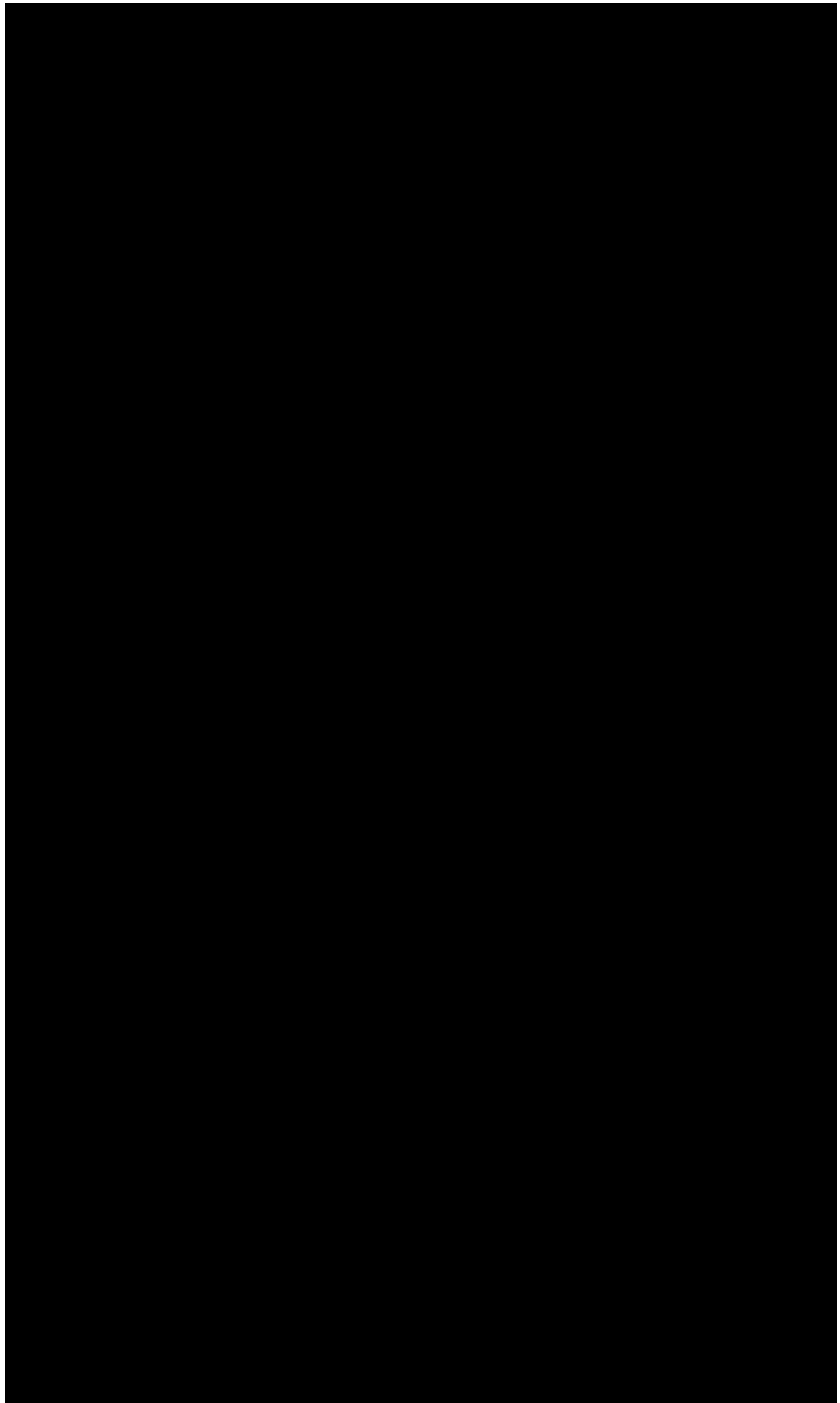


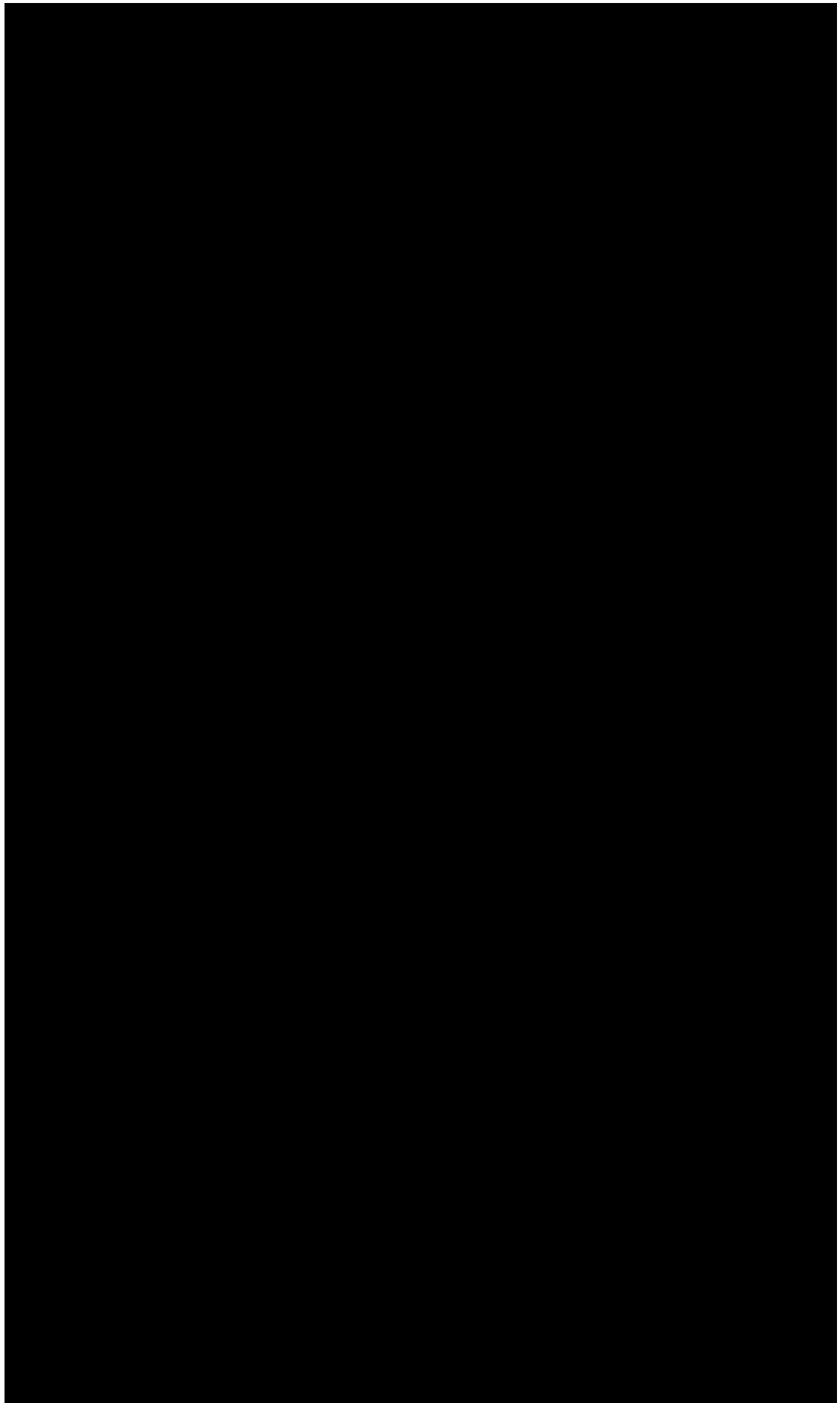


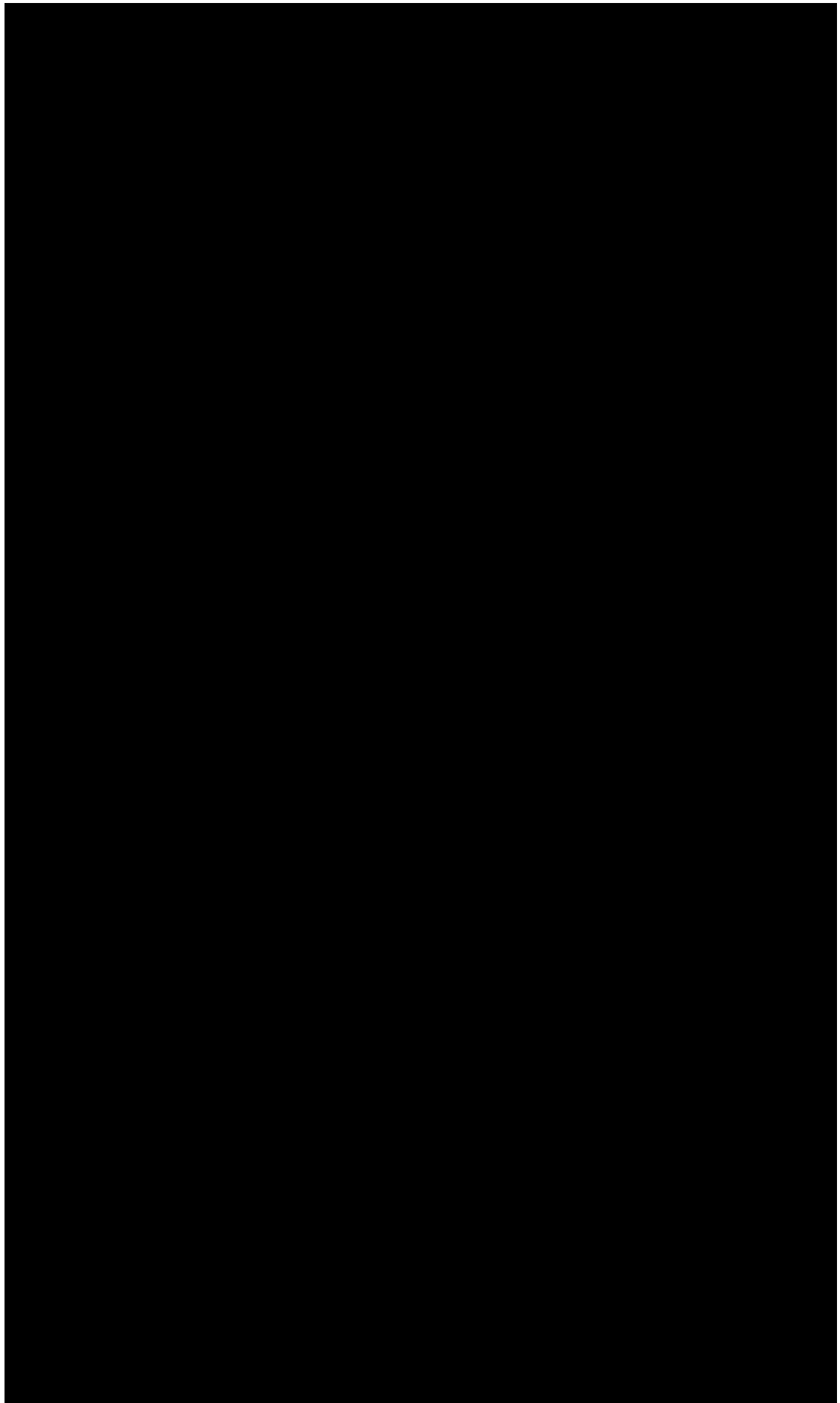


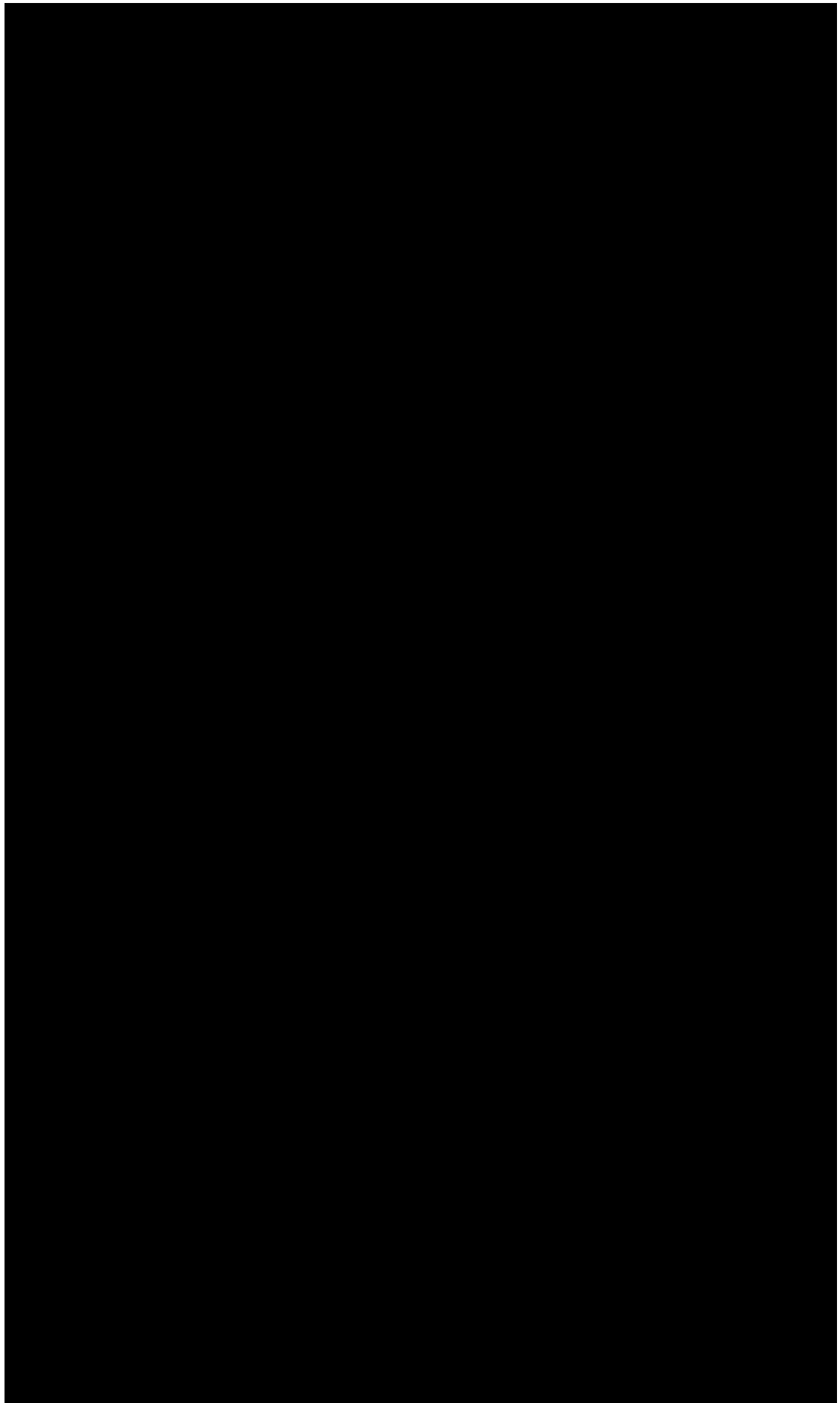


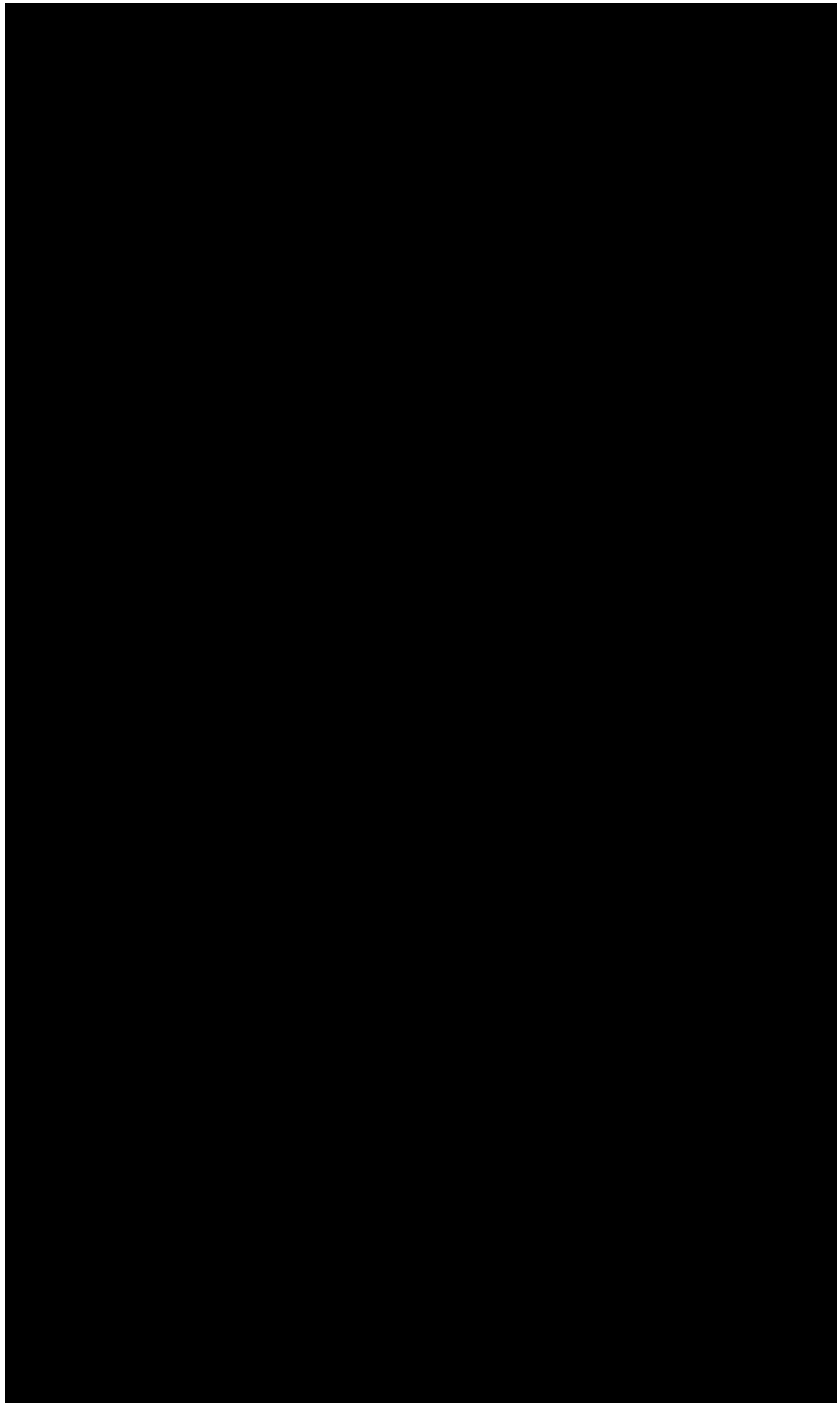


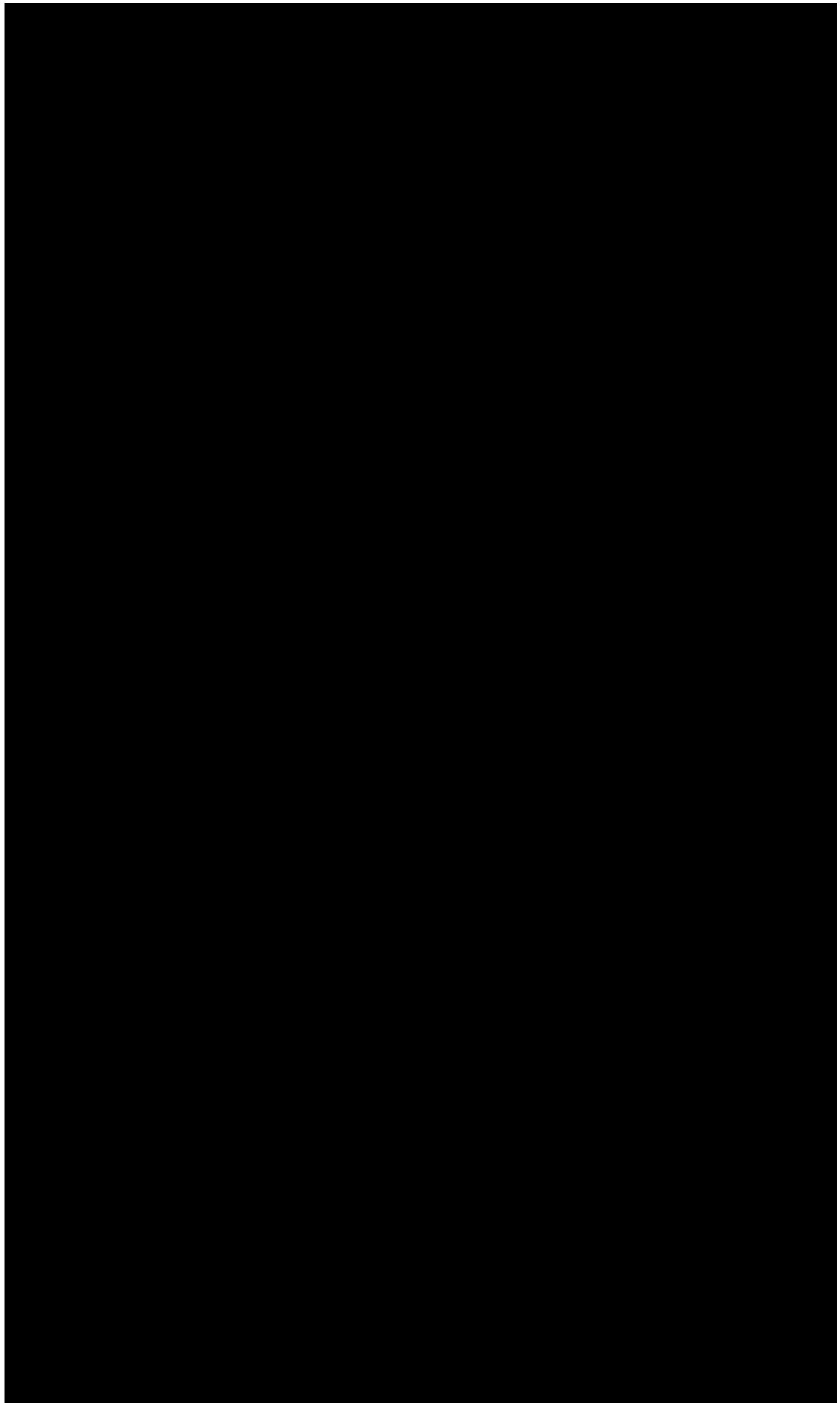


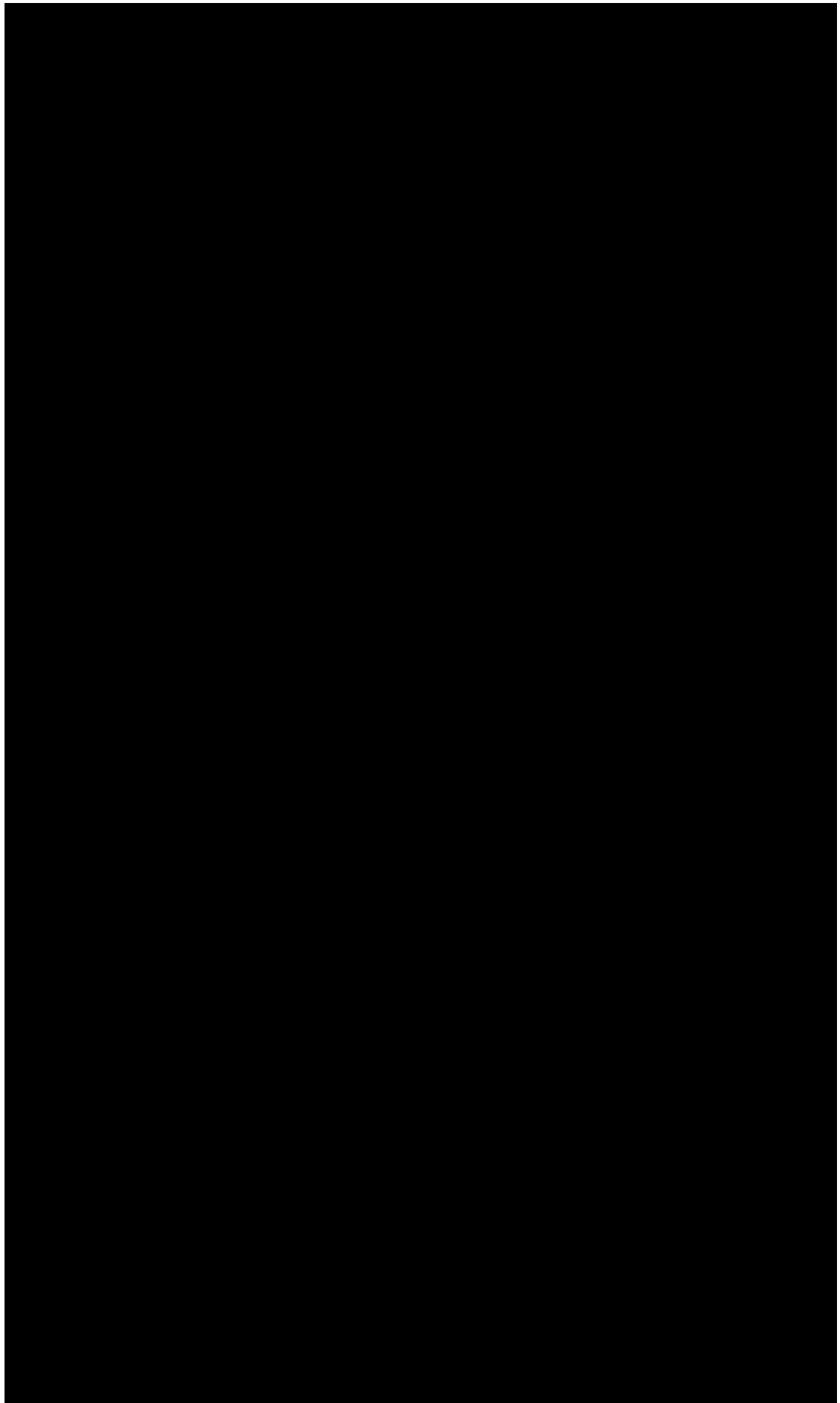


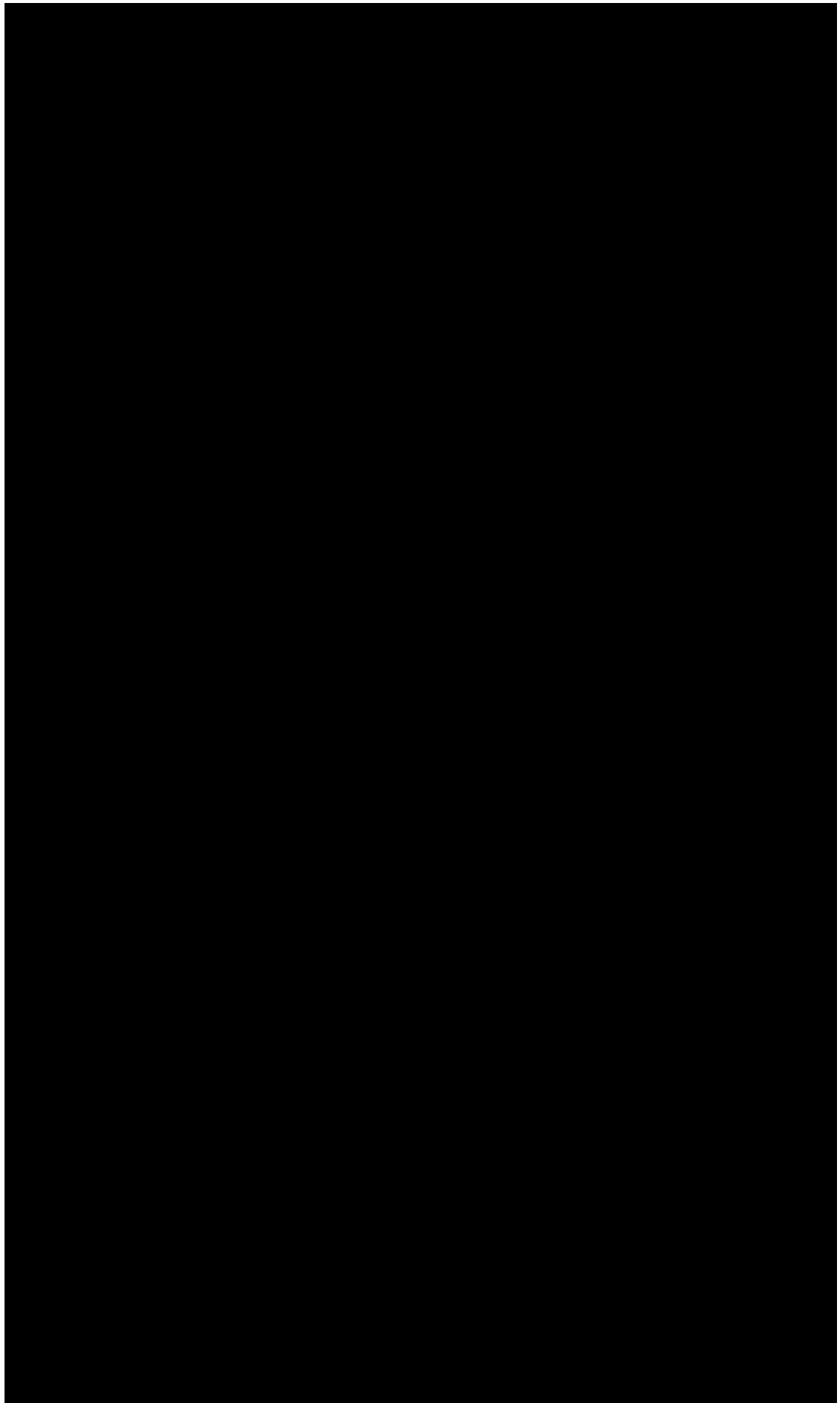


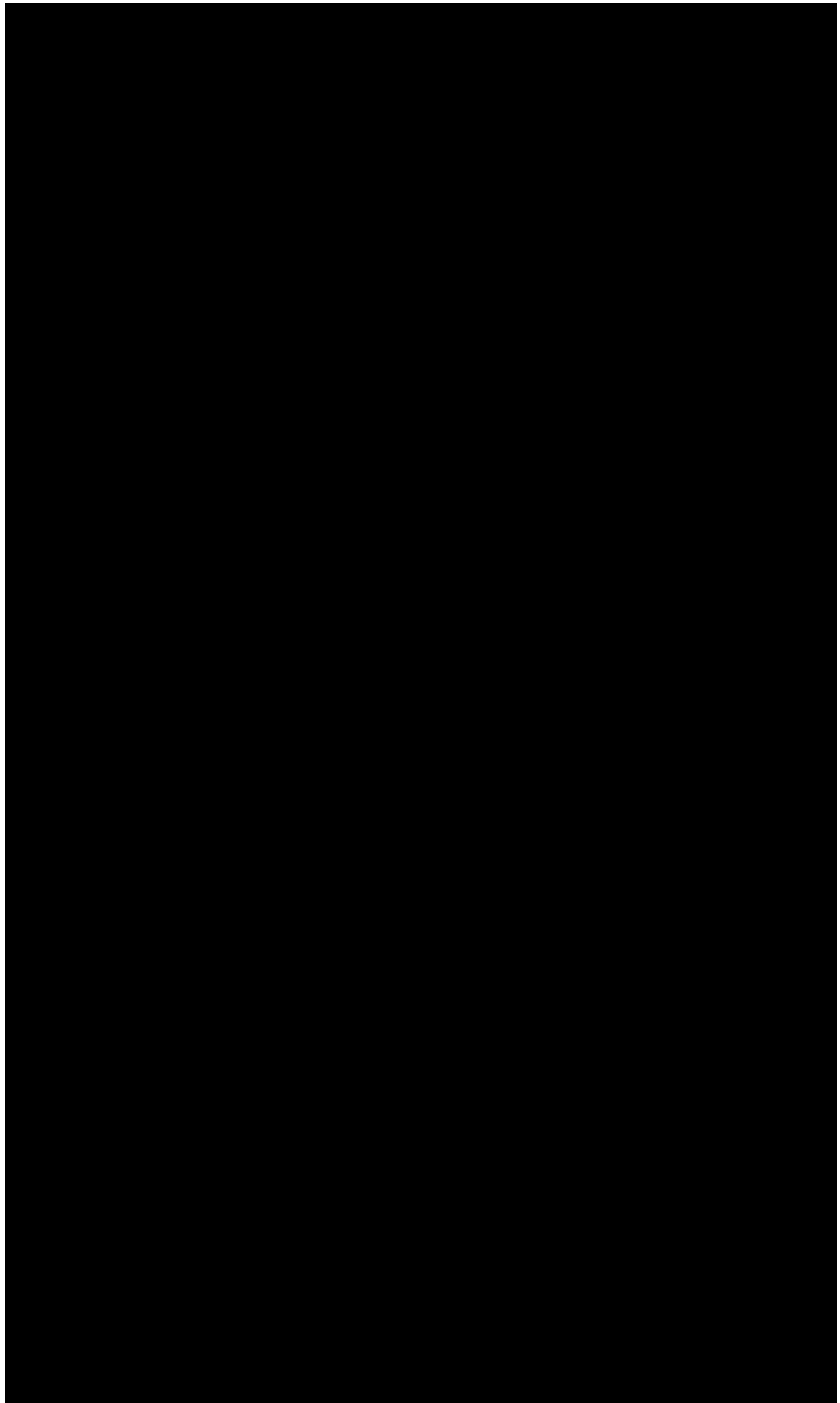


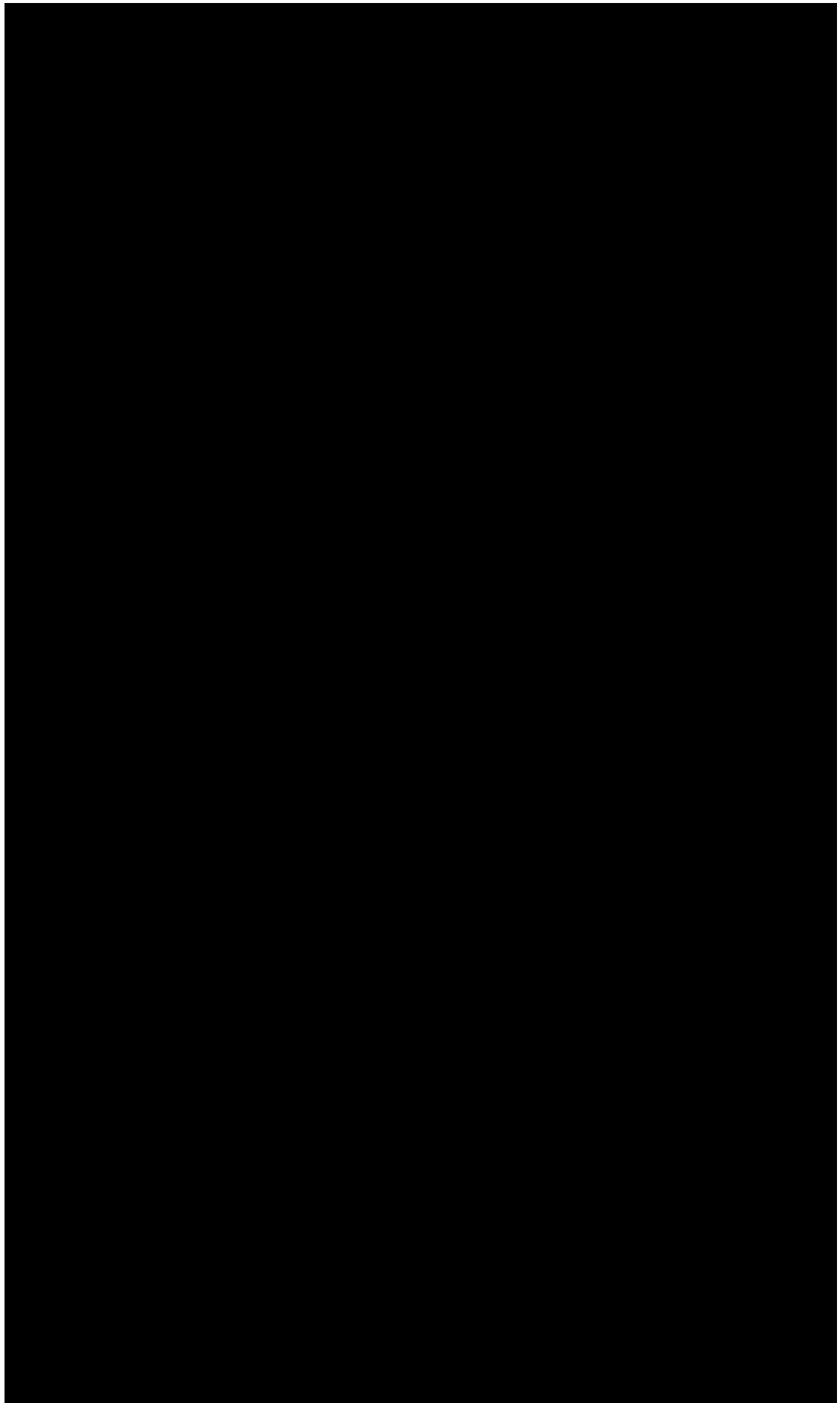


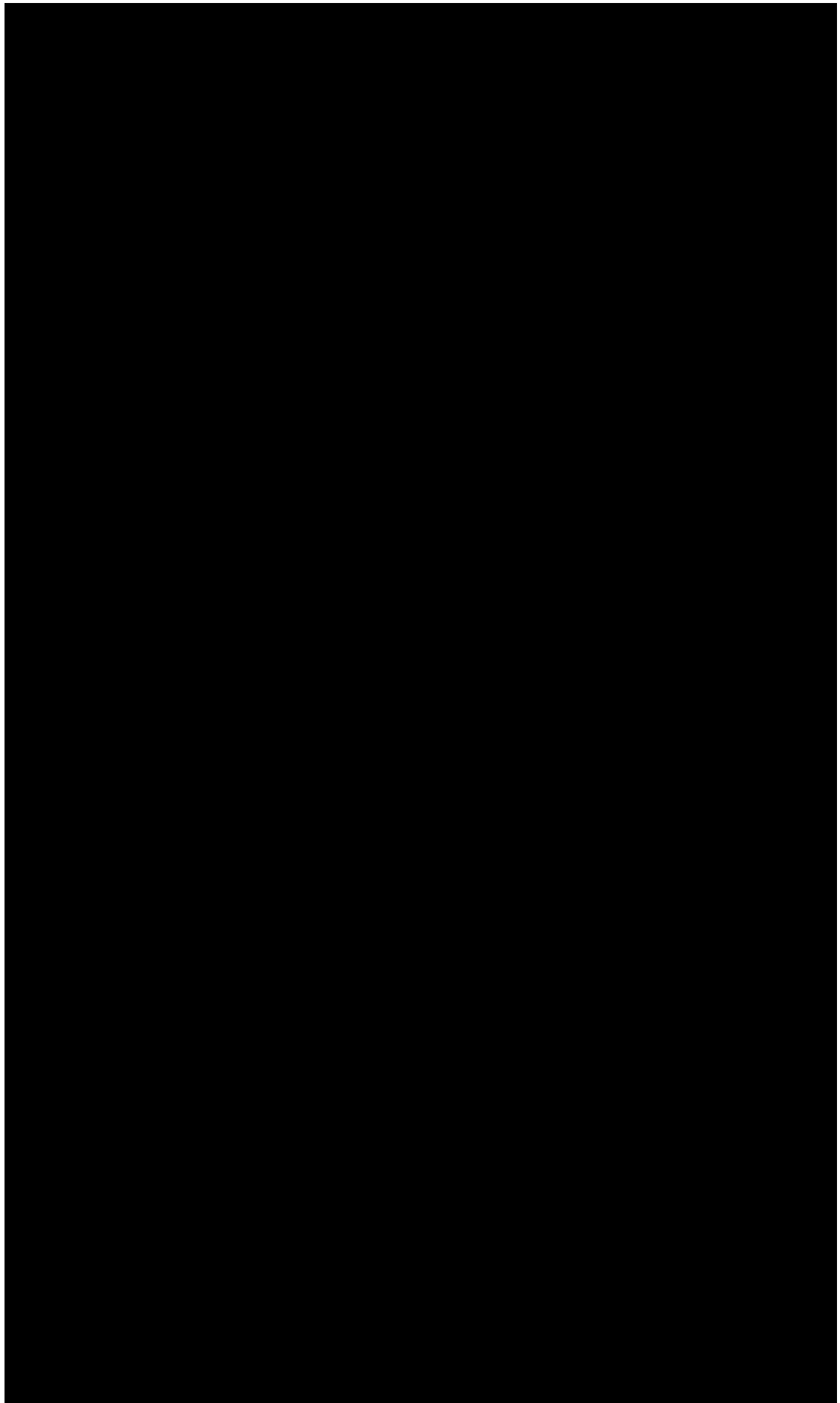


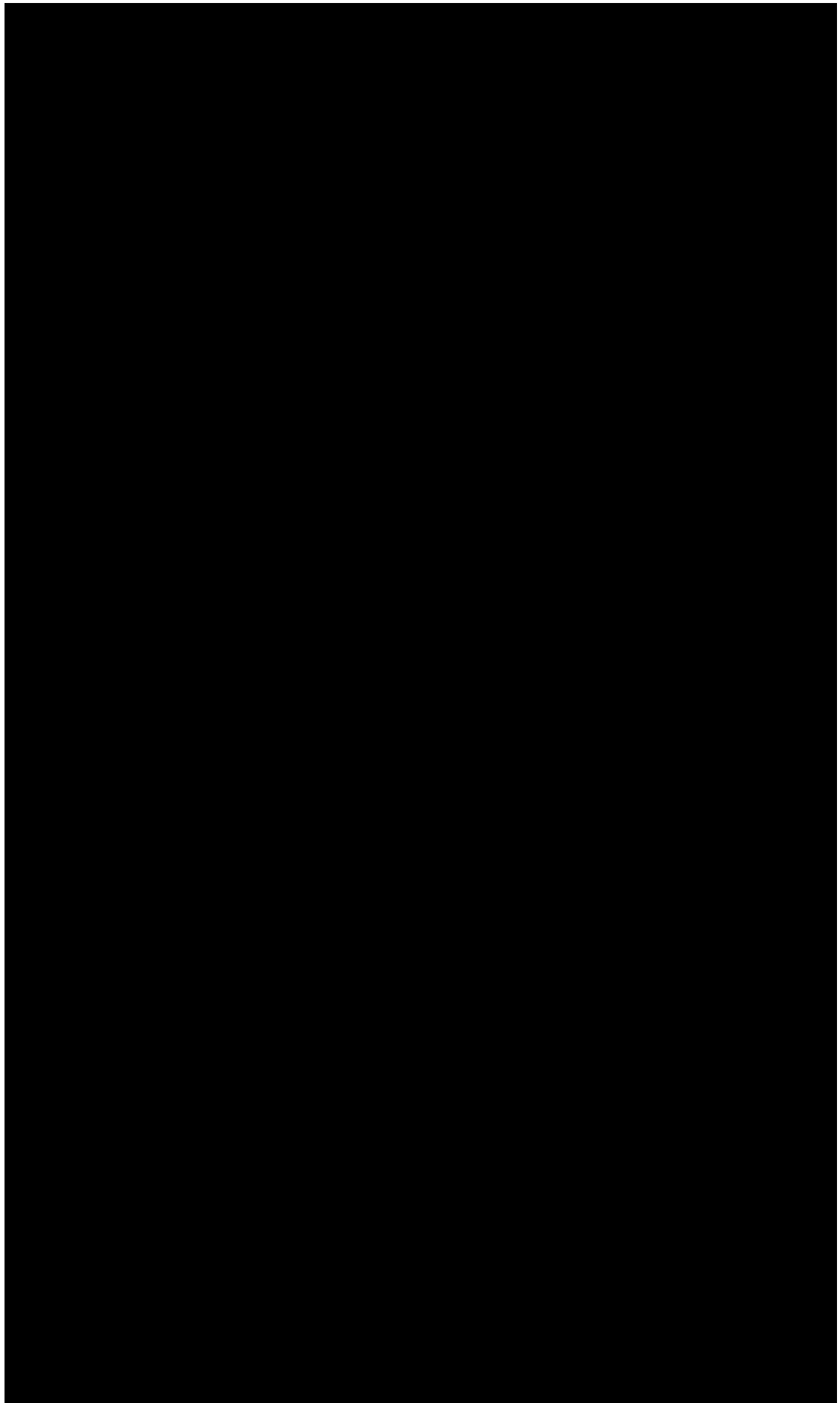


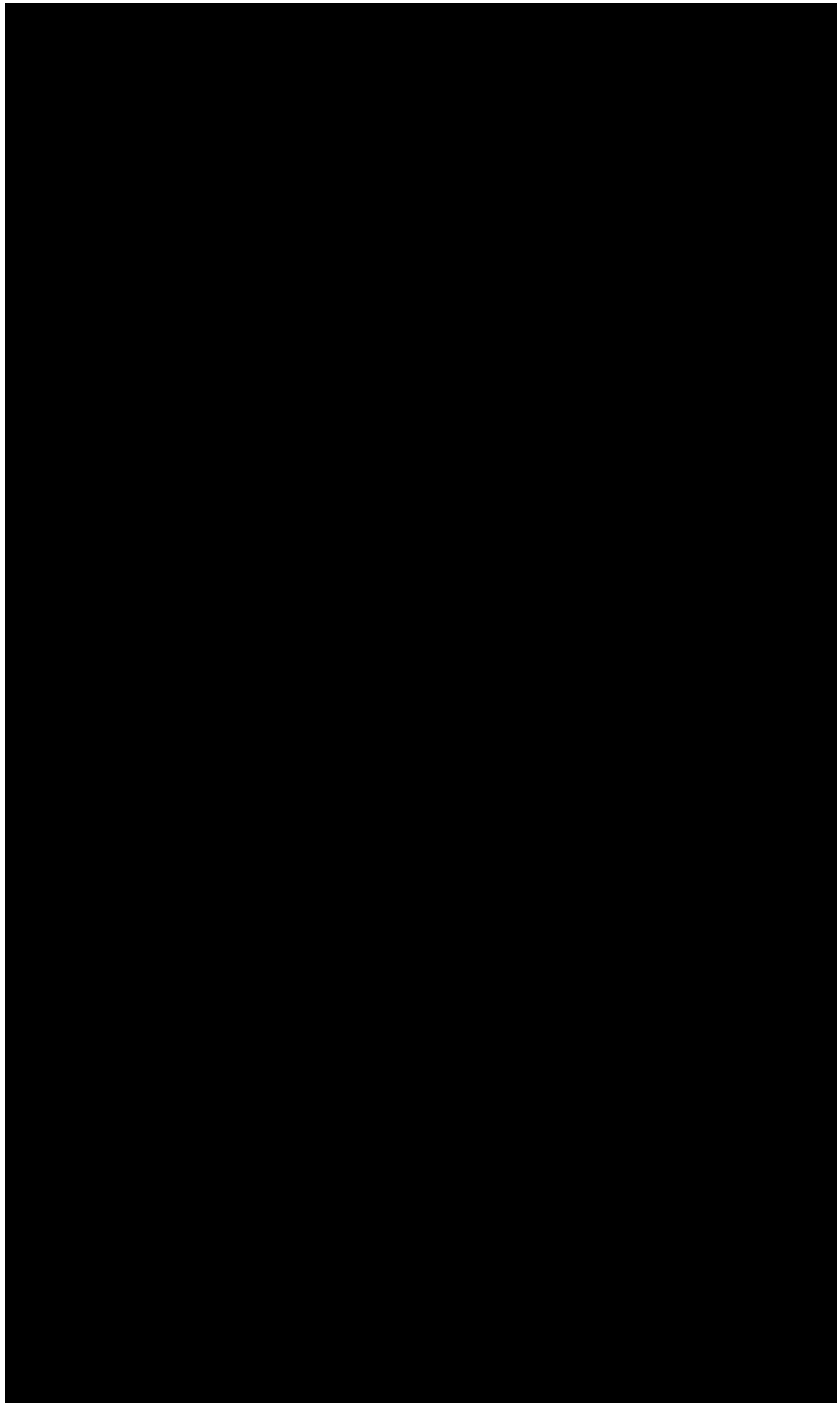


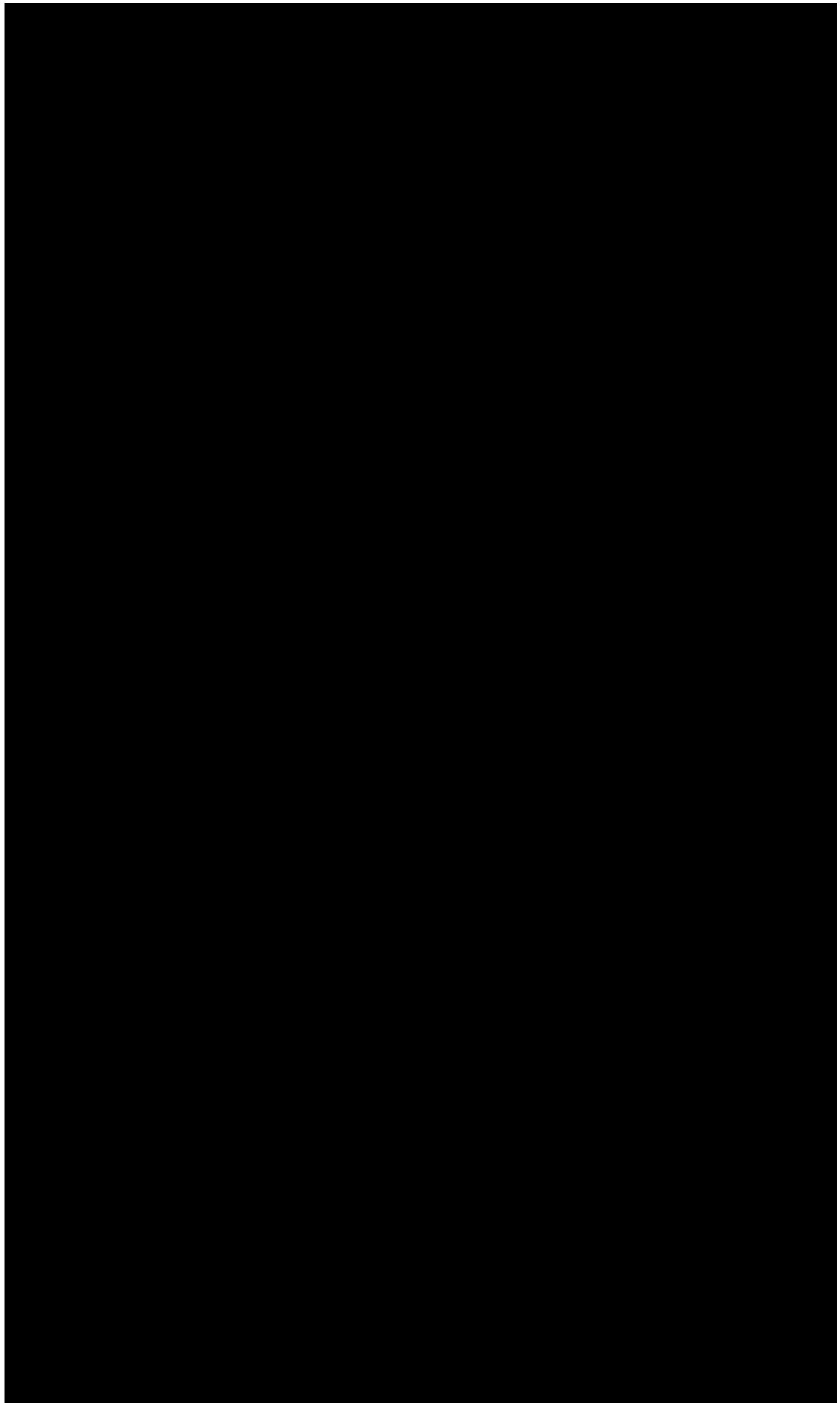


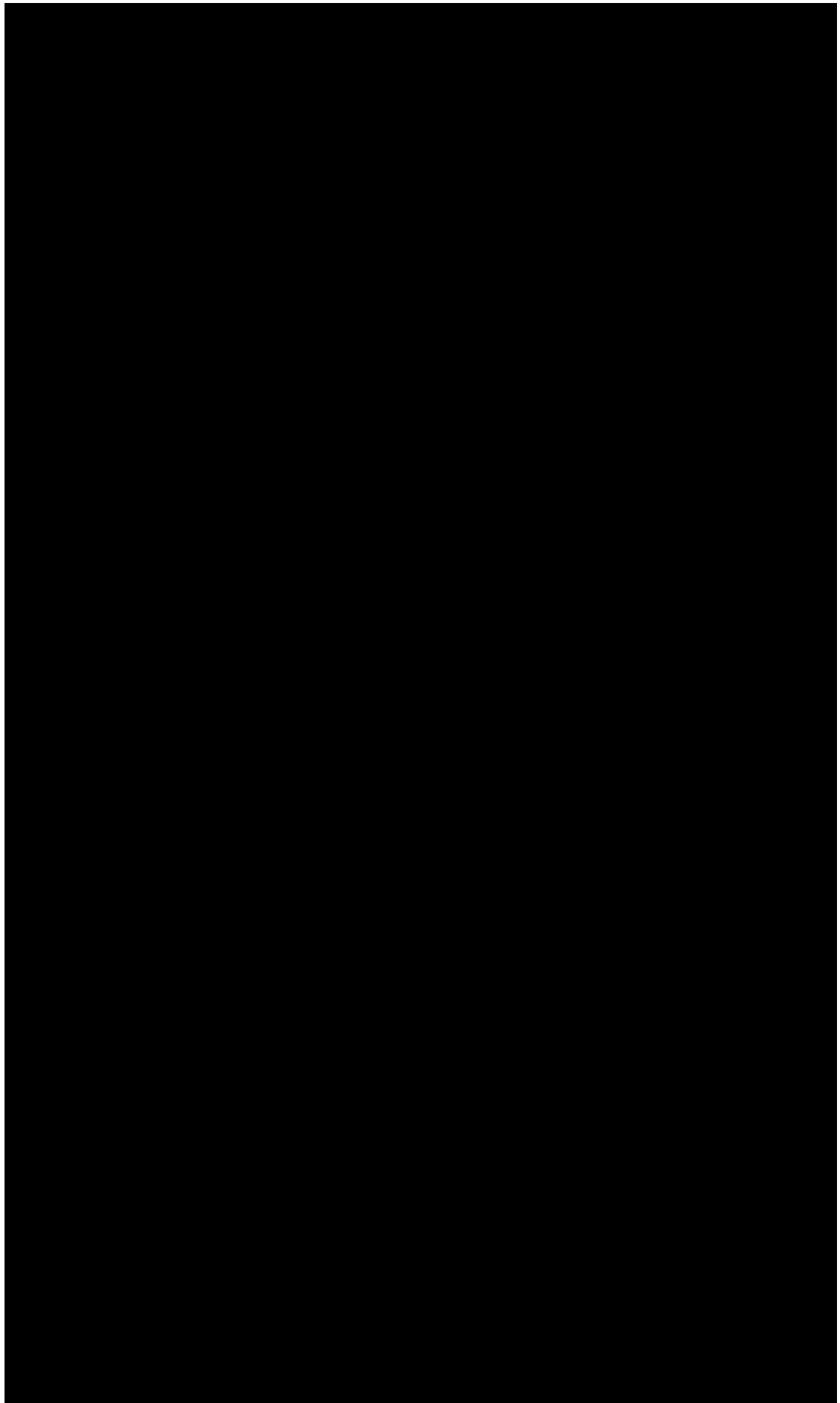


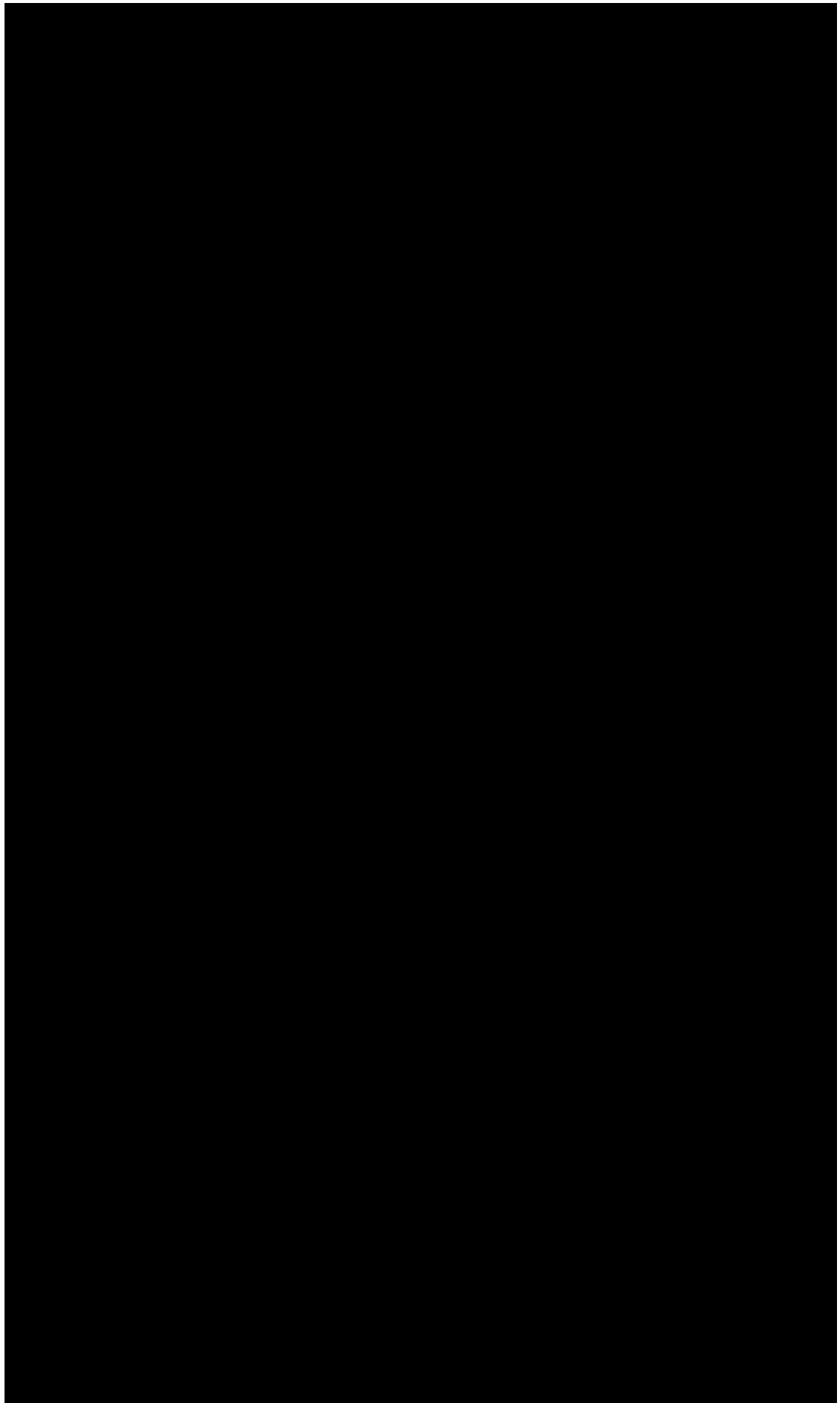


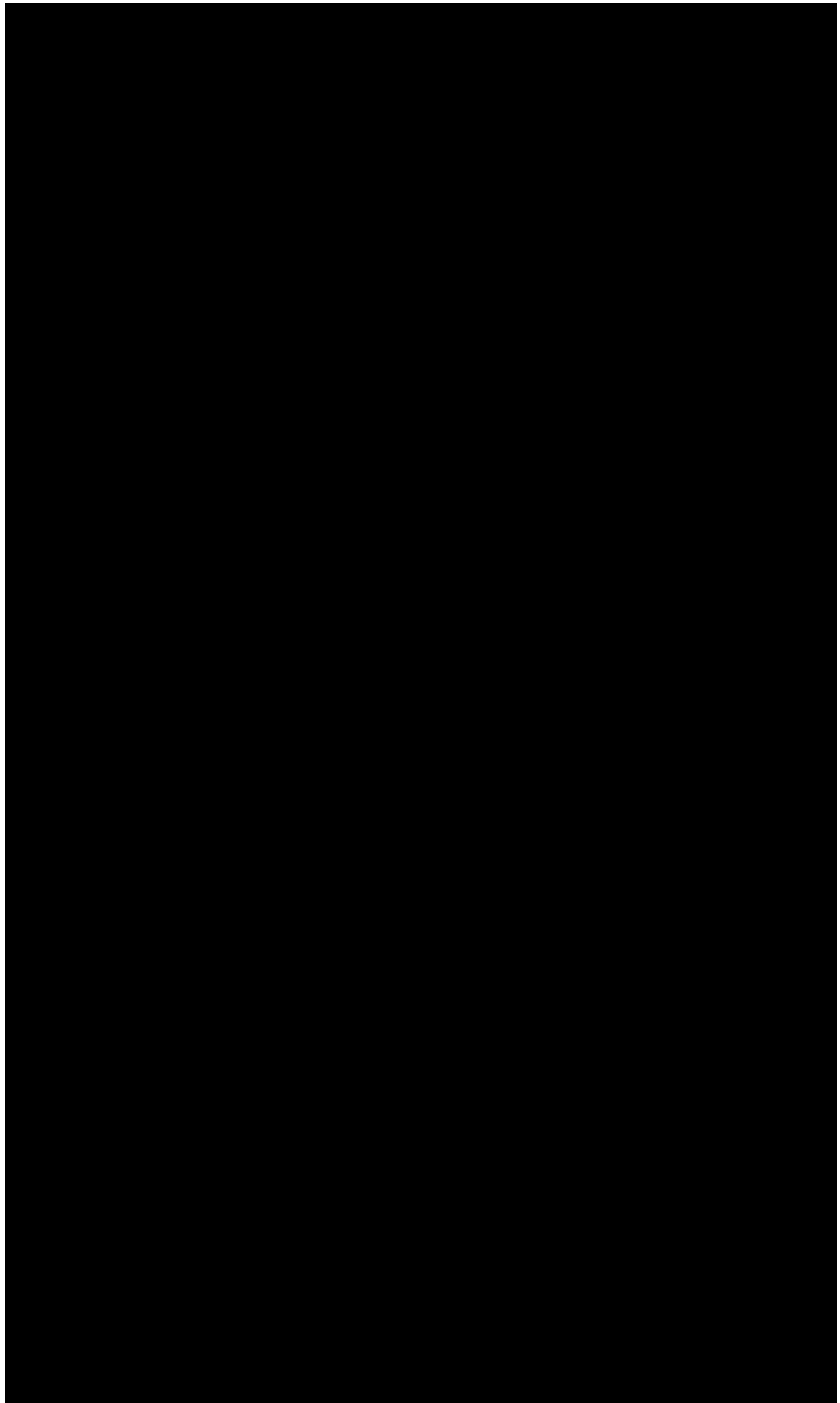


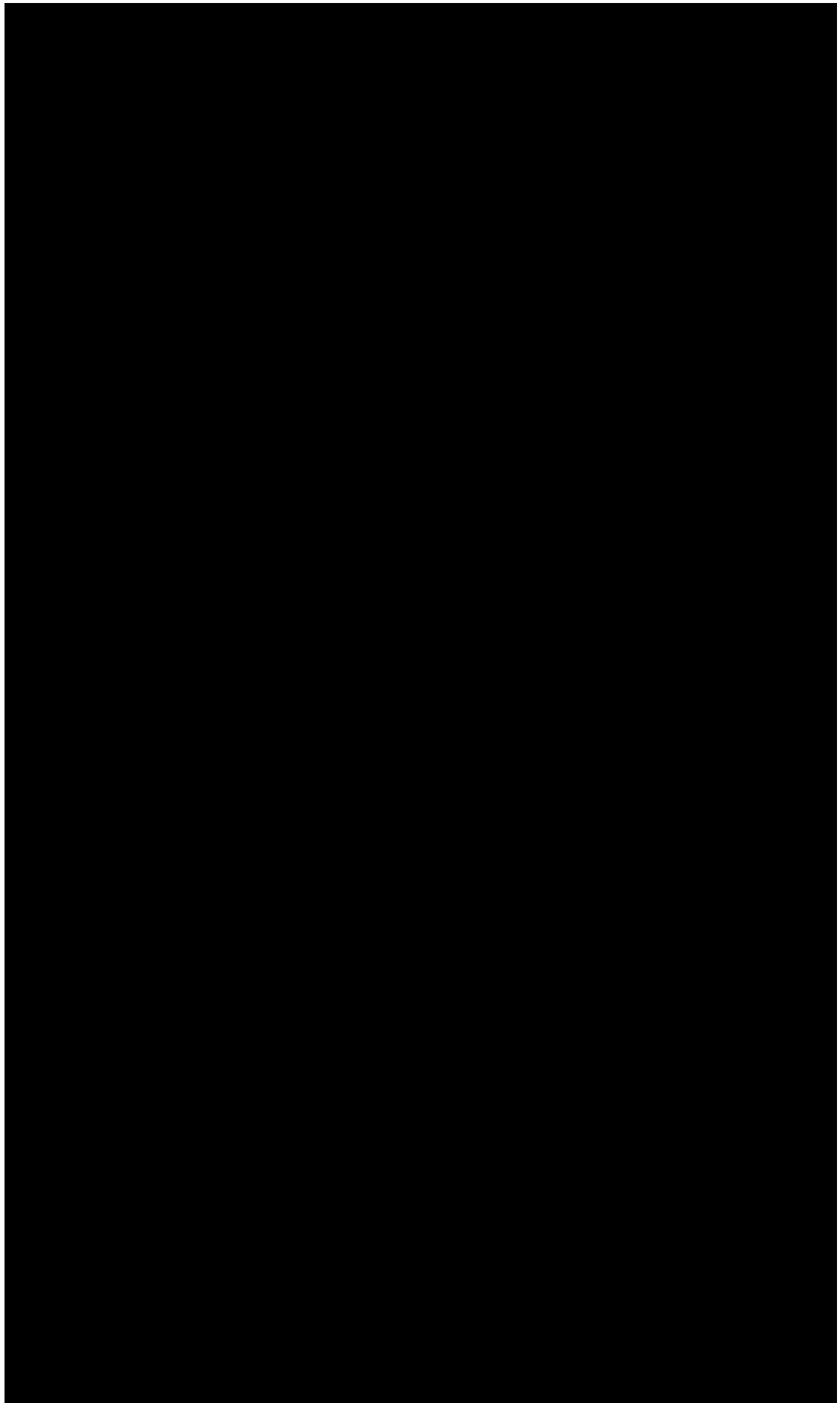


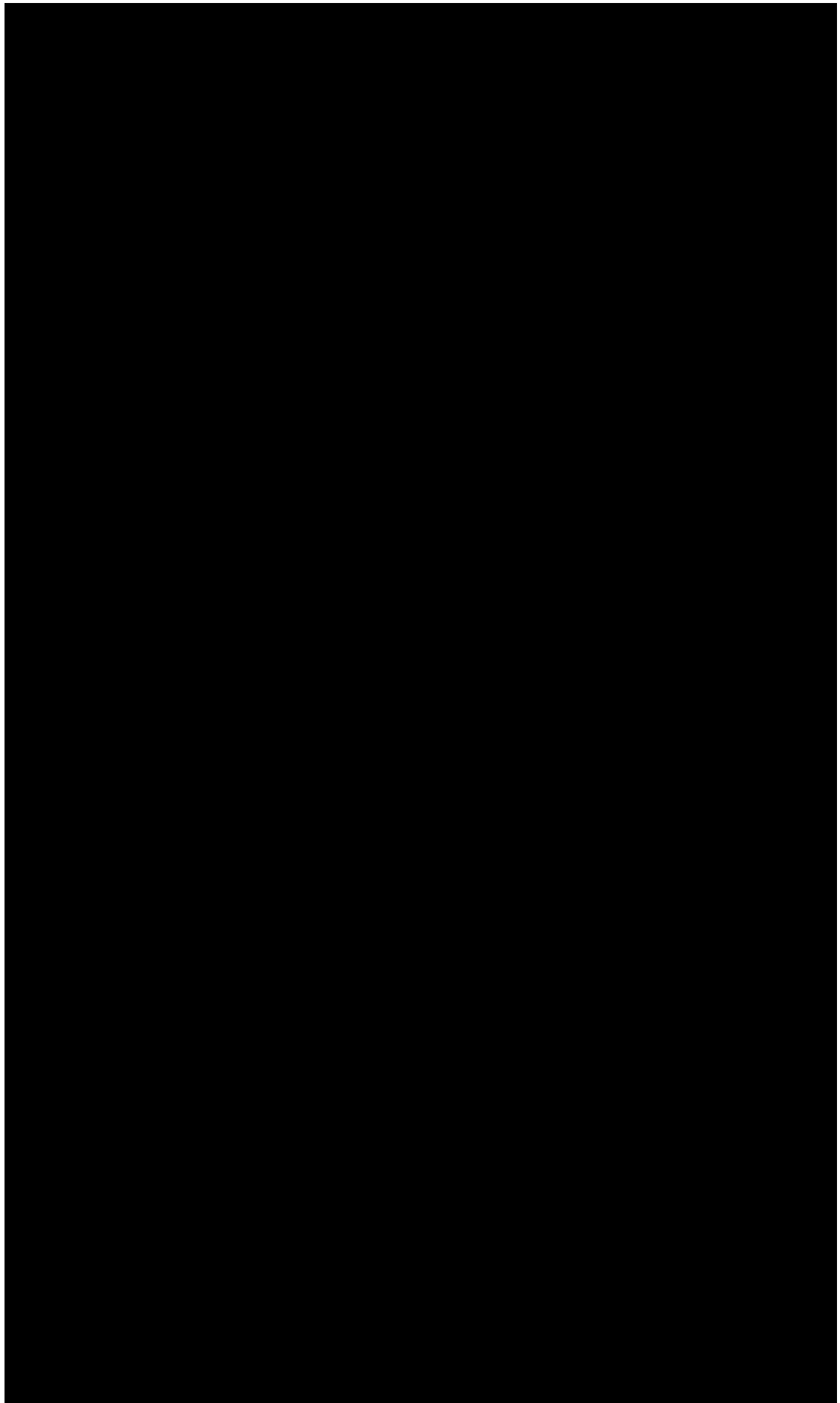


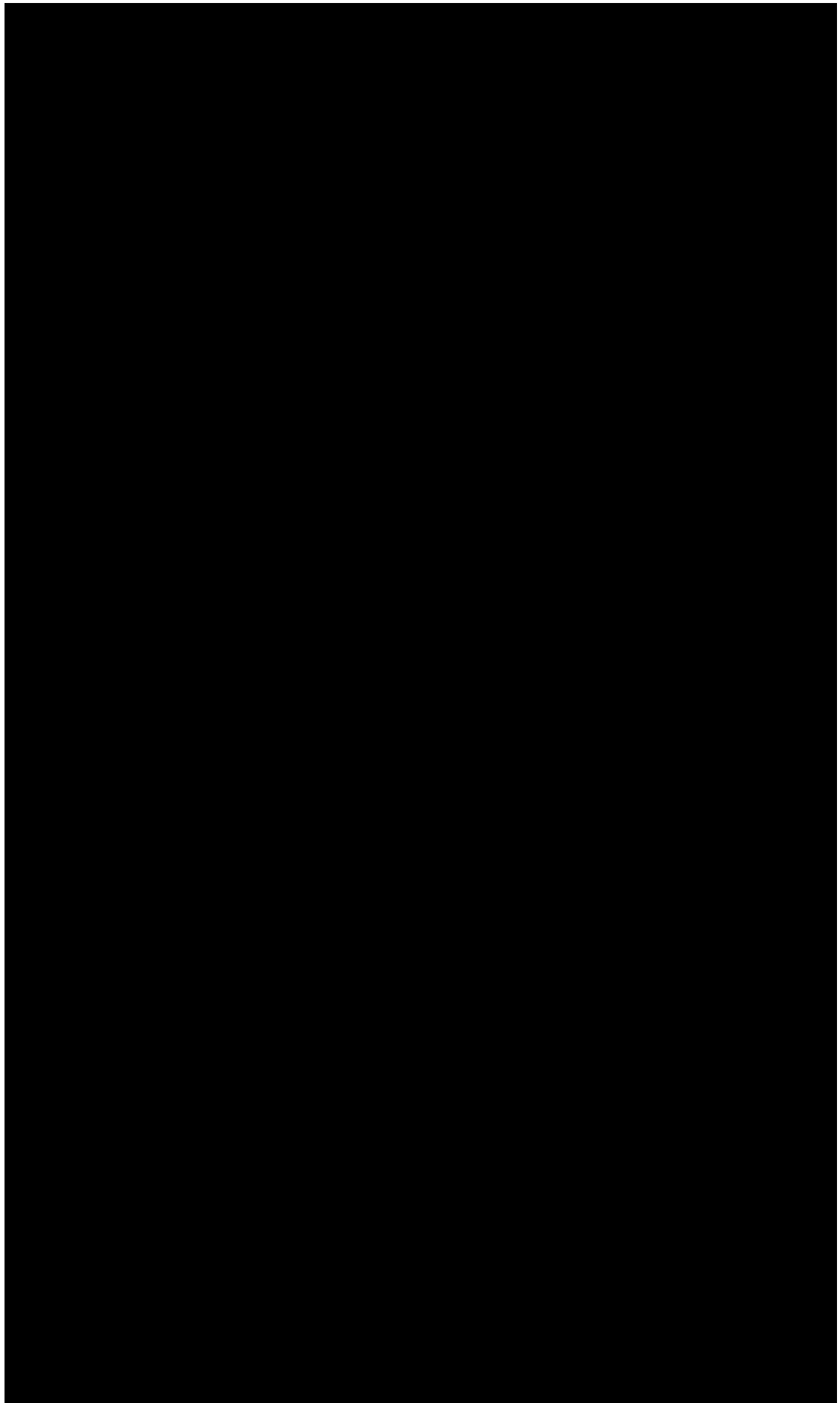


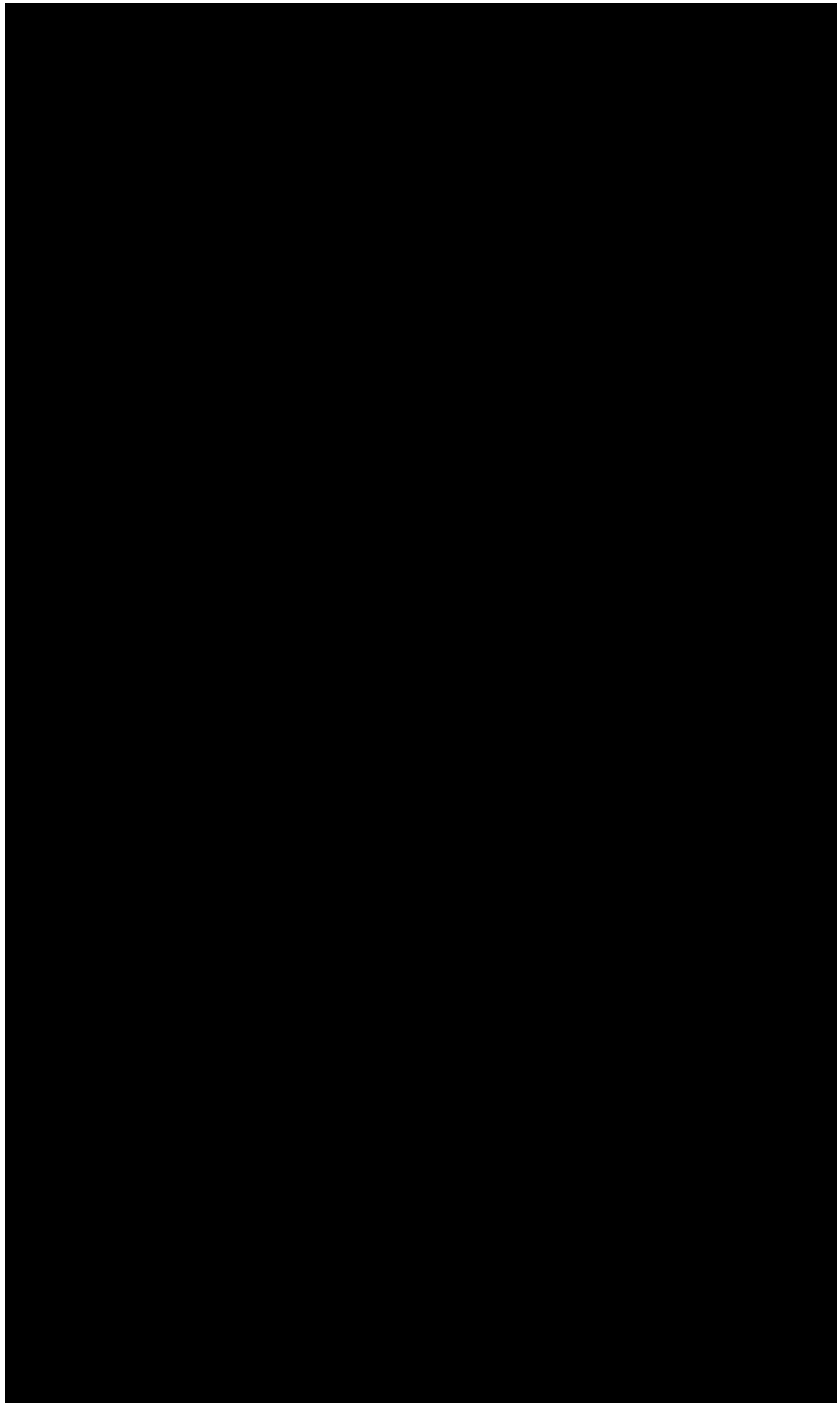


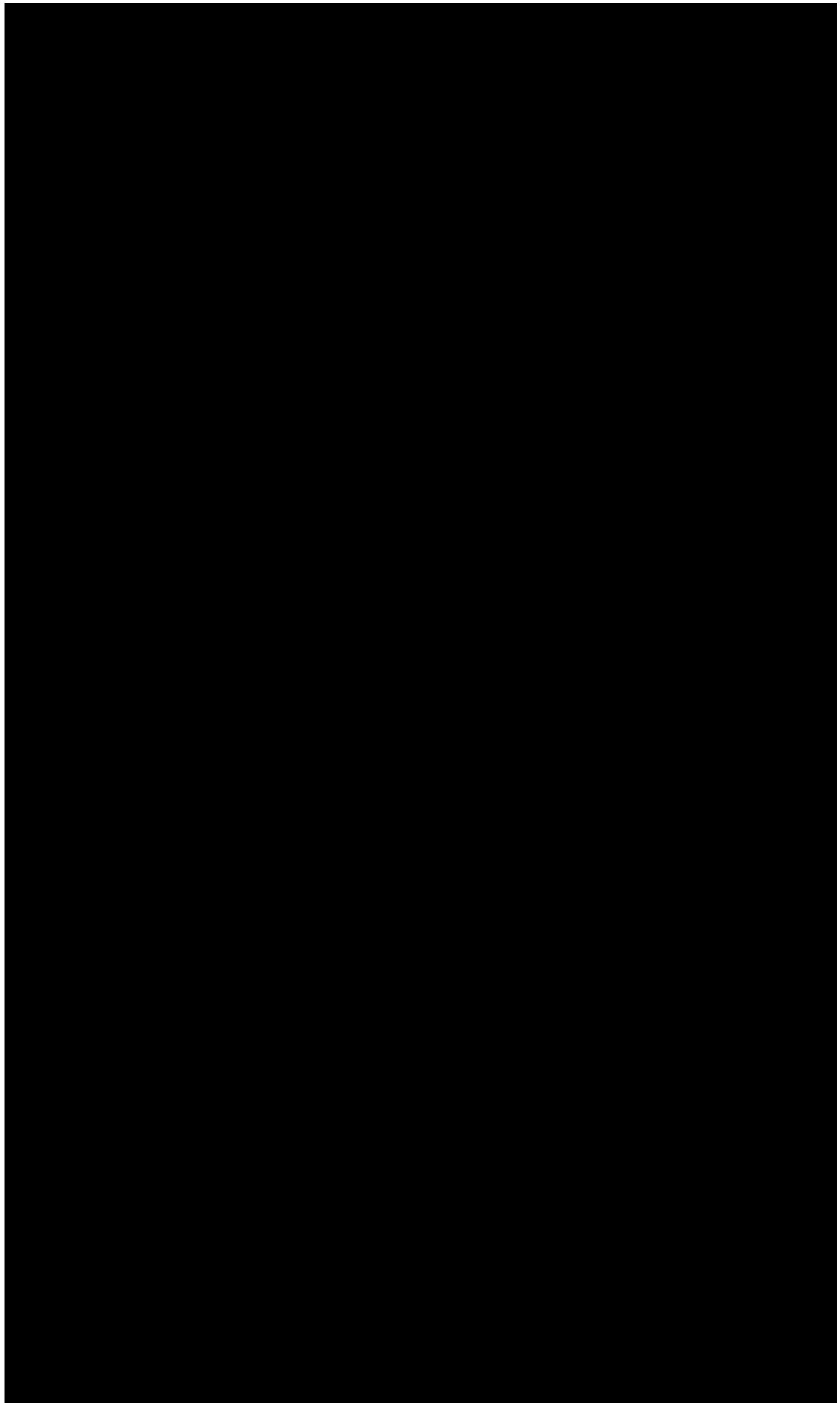


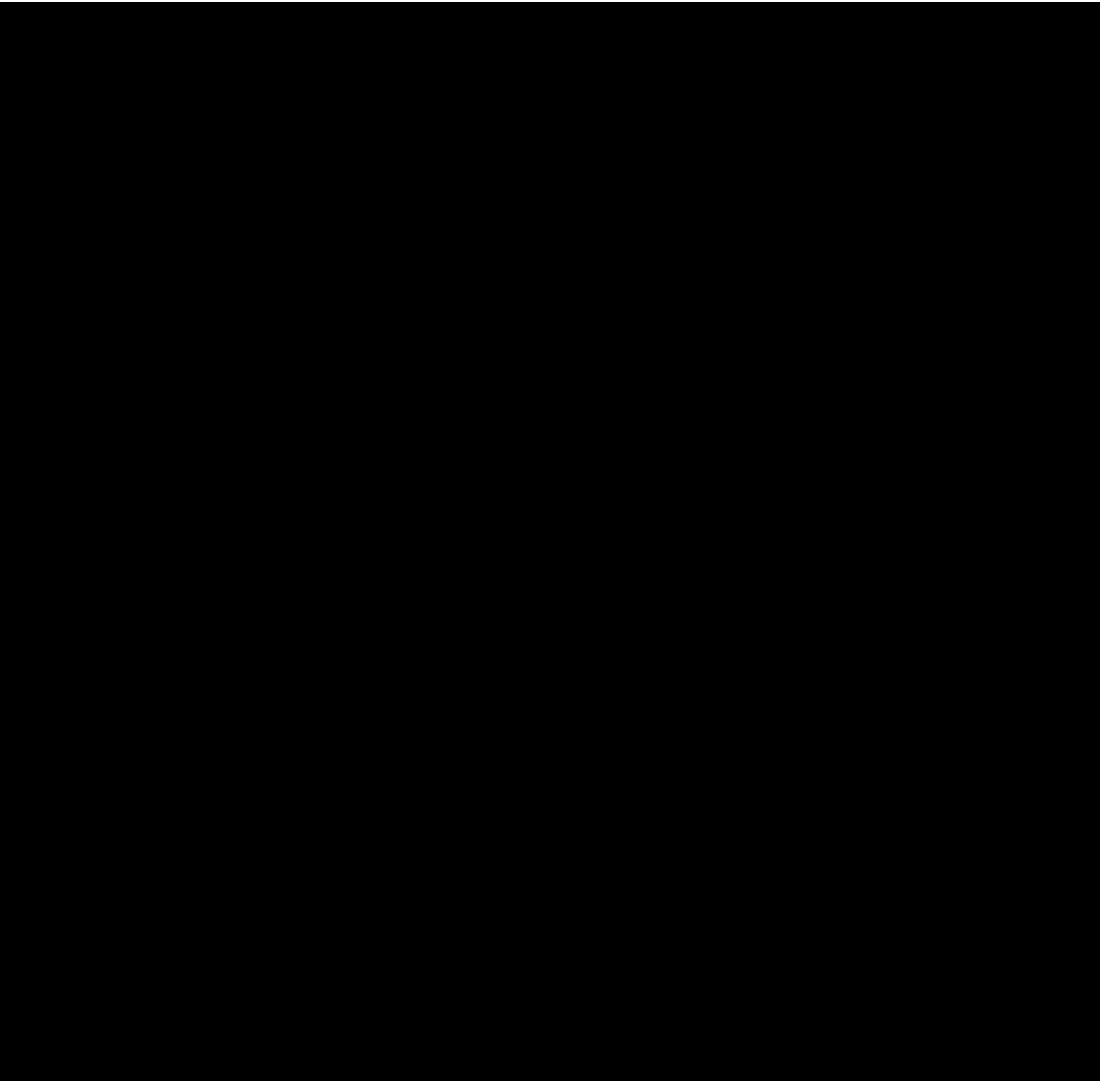












1920s and 1930s and Springfield residents who remembered witnessing the local race riots of 1908.

The Archives is also home to the Handy Colony Collection, which includes materials, personal correspondence and photos from a writing colony founded in 1950 by Illinois-born novelist James Jones (author of the 1951 best-selling classic, *From Here to Eternity*) and his mentor, Lowney Handy.

“I enjoy working with history and the questions people ask are very interesting,” says Tom. “The Archives are a great resource for UIS faculty and students and for local historians, but we’ve also had requests from all over the country and from as far away as Norway, Russia and Tasmania.”

The price is certainly appealing – the Archives (and Tom’s expert advice) are free for the asking!

Award-winning writer, Springfield native, and two-time UIS alum, Tara McClellan McAndrew has discovered many valuable resources in the UIS Archives and has made extensive use of the IRAD and Oral History Collections in her writing

projects. “I’ve used records from lawsuits in the 1800s and records of the historic Clayville stage coach stop when I was commissioned to write a play about Clayville’s founders, the Broadwells.”

“I love the oral history collection,” she says. “There is no substitute for personal accounts of the past – they are what brings our history alive and are so important in trying to learn what happened at a particular time.”

The UIS Archives/Special Collections, a unique and valuable campus and community resource, is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Many databases are also available online via the [Library website](#).

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Strategic Framework, June 2016

When University of Illinois President Tim Killeen presented the UI’s new strategic framework at the Board of Trustees meeting on the Springfield campus a few weeks ago, he aptly chose the words of Abraham Lincoln. “Be sure you put your feet in the right place.” he quoted. “Then stand firm.”

The process of “putting our feet in the right place” has been a year-long endeavor involving hundreds of faculty, staff, students, alums and advisors from all three campuses of the UI, including UIS. With Illinois’s leading public university system now encompassing over 80,000 students, 25,000 faculty and staff, and more than 700,000 alumni, there was no shortage of opinions and ideas!

The result of those hours of meetings, discussions, debates and emails is an exciting plan that builds on past successes at the same time it is filled with fresh thinking and high aspirations. The framework is intended to leverage existing strengths and add critical value to each of the three campuses; but also, as President Killeen stated, “... to lead a new era of progress and prosperity for the people of Illinois.”

In fact, the very name of the plan, “**The Public’s University: Optimizing Impact for the Public Good**,” reinforces the University’s deep commitment to the future of our state. The framework is timely to say the least!

Longtime university leader and UIS Business professor Jorge Villegas served as one of 23 members of the Strategic Framework Steering Committee.

“From the beginning of our discussions,” he says, “there was strong consensus that the system’s mission is to serve the public good.

The whole world benefits from our teaching, research and service and the outsized impact that the Springfield campus has on state government, with thousands of UIS alums working in the public sector, means that UIS will play a lead role in optimizing the system's positive impact on that public good."

System-wide priorities in the framework are outlined under four strategic "pillars" around which the University has pledged to organize its world-class resources for the next decade. They include: An institution of and for students, Research and scholarship with global impact, A healthy future for Illinois and the Midwest and, Tomorrow's university today.

Megan Styles, a UIS professor in Environment Studies and another member of the group that created the plan, is enthusiastic about opportunities for faculty (and students) embedded in all four areas.

"The U of I is an incredible network of people, resources and ideas and the strategic framework will help UI faculty work collaboratively across the three campuses to solve the wicked problems of the 21st century," she says.

At the same time, the framework highlights the centrality of the humanities and the arts in the human experience – reminding us, according to Styles, that "humanities and the arts play a crucial role in developing well-rounded, socially engaged graduates who will be effective global citizens."

UIS Associate Chancellor Ryan Croke believes the framework presents an opportunity for UIS to deepen its impact in Springfield, Central Illinois and statewide.

"It puts Springfield on the map," he points out, "as part of a newly conceived U of I Innovation Network, a set of virtually-connected innovation clusters across the state, which could benefit the recently launched I-SPI business incubator downtown."

"I was also glad," he says, "that strong language on accessibility made it into the plan. To truly be an institution of and for our students, accessibility has to be a priority in every corner of the UI system."

Student voices were prominent throughout the planning process. Student Trustee Dominique Wilson, who graduated from UIS with a major in Communications this spring and who has been accepted for the Peace Corps next fall, recognized early on his responsibility to ensure the ideas and opinions of students were well represented in the strategic framework. "With a growing student body at UIS," he states, "our graduates will be a key to creating needed future impact in Illinois communities."

Karen Hasara, former Mayor of Springfield and UIS alum, is one of the University of Illinois Trustees who unanimously approved the plan in May. "The framework includes a commitment to a more student-centered atmosphere and plans for an

enrollment growth strategy that greatly enhances the goals UIS has envisioned,” she reflects.

“It recognizes the importance of the Springfield campus’s location in our capital city with a commitment to civic engagement that will benefit the communities and citizens of our area.”

With the new UI strategic framework, we’ve followed Lincoln’s advice to “put our feet in the right place;” but Lincoln also said, “The best way to predict the future is to create it.” As Chancellor of UIS, I believe this new framework represents a launch pad for the University of Illinois system, and for UIS, to create its own future – a future that is relentlessly centered on educational excellence and on providing a level of public good that only the University of Illinois can achieve. ([The Public’s University: Optimizing Impact for the Public Good](#) is available for review.)

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

End-of-year Message, May 2016

Thursday, May 12, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

Commencement is again upon us – the 21st in UIS’ history as a part of the prestigious U of I system. As this Spring, 2016, semester comes to a close, the end-of-year message continues an ongoing series of regular communications from the Chancellor to the UIS community on issues of importance to the University and to our overall mission and goals.

We have much to celebrate and plan for in the weeks and months ahead. Throughout this year, with an unprecedented state budget crisis looming over our campus, I was so moved to witness students, faculty and staff banding together repeatedly to urge Illinois lawmakers and Governor Rauner to pass a budget that provides adequate support for higher education generally and MAP grants in particular.

With an incomplete state budget, that work will continue in the coming weeks. While a stopgap measure was passed in late April to restore partial state funding to Illinois’ public universities, there is much more to do and I can assure you that our government relations team and our many supporters will continue working feverishly to secure appropriate resources for the U of I system in 2016, 2017 and beyond.

As I reflect upon the 2015-2016 academic calendar, I am appreciative of the frequent, open communication I’ve enjoyed with campus leaders this past year. My sincere thanks to outgoing **Campus Senate Chair Kathy Novak, APAC Chair**

James Burgdorf and **CSAC Chair Bobbi Fults**. These individuals took on major responsibilities in an effort to make life better for everyone at UIS, and they deserve our collective gratitude for it.

UIS student leaders also deserve special mention – my thanks to **Josh Lawson** for serving as **SGA President** and to **Dominique Wilson** for representing UIS as **Student Trustee** on the UI Board of Trustees.

It has been a pleasure to share in celebrating the contributions and successes of several exceptional UIS staff members this year, including:

- **Mark Dochterman**, Director of the Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, who was recognized with the CAPE Award for outstanding performance by an Academic Professional;
- **Patty Sullivan**, Graphic Designer in Campus Services, who received the CARE Award for excellence in Civil Service; and
- **Eric Needham**, Mailing Equipment Operator in Campus Services, who is this year's UIS Employee of the Year.

Faculty honors awarded this year included:

- **Dr. Elizabeth Kosmetatou (History)** – University Scholar,
- **Dr. Adriana Crocker (Political Science)** – Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching,
- **Dr. Harsh Bhatia (Chemistry)** was selected for Faculty Excellence Award for Exemplary Service,

My congratulations and sincere thanks to each of our award winners for all that you contribute to our campus and to the larger community. You exemplify “Leadership lived” and inspire our campus community every day.

As you know, our forward momentum continues to be centered on three strategic priorities: **growth** in visibility, reputation and enrollment; **talent** acquisition and retention of both faculty and staff; and provision of the **facilities** that will best provide our students with a comprehensive university experience. Despite the budget challenges, we've remained focused on several strategies to advance these priorities and, thanks to the efforts of many, they are working.

You already know that our Spring enrollment was up over last year. I'm glad to report that Summer and Fall 2016 enrollments are also on the rise. I continue to appreciate the work of our outstanding **Admissions team** who, in partnership with academic, marketing and public relations professionals on our campus, have done a terrific job this year of communicating the UIS story to potential students and their parents.

Of course you know that our **physical facilities** are also growing! I hope you were able to attend the long-awaited groundbreaking for the new **UIS Student Union** last week. It was a historic moment for our community and a wonderful celebration – a beautiful day and a fitting kickoff for our long-awaited “campus living room”. I am deeply grateful to the many **student leaders** who for the past several years have

pushed so hard for this much-needed facility, to UI-system President **Tim Killeen** and retired President **Bob Easter** who have been so supportive of the project, and most importantly to the **donors** who believe in our future and who have already contributed over \$5 million in gifts to support the project. (If you missed the groundbreaking, you can [watch a brief news clip](#) and if you'd like to monitor construction progress over the next several months, you can [observe via webcam](#) during daylight hours.

Earlier this week, UIS senior **Faith Hook** helped us to unveil the newest campus landmark, an exceptional sculpture of our hometown hero, Abraham Lincoln titled, “**The Young Lawyer**” by renowned artist **George Lundeen**. The sculpture is a gift to the students of UIS from the **John N. Chester Endowment of the UI** for the acquisition of works of art to grace the campuses of the University of Illinois. It has been delightful to see students, faculty and staff stopping by to visit Abe at his new home – a lovely plaza created by our **talented facilities team** between UHB and the Public Affairs Building. I can already see new traditions emerging – shaking hands with Mr. Lincoln or adding a small flower to his lapel. ([View a clip of the unveiling ceremony.](#))

UIS graduate students who intern in state government will also benefit from a new, student-oriented **downtown apartment complex** which is making rapid construction progress on the corner of Fourth and Madison and will be available for lease next fall. Though not a UIS project, this new living option will help revitalize downtown Springfield at the same time it provides an appealing housing option for our students.

Innovate Springfield, a business incubator that offers workspace for budding entrepreneurs and social innovators in our community, also opened this year and will become a powerful laboratory for UIS faculty, staff and students in the heart of downtown Springfield.

Though a necessarily incomplete list, here are several examples of the great work of your colleagues – faculty, staff and students – this past year:

- The **UIS Illinois Innocence Project** achieved two exonerations involving 15 UIS students who worked tirelessly on behalf of their innocent clients. The project also secured a \$753,958 federal grant with the support of U.S. Senator Richard Durbin.
- Hundreds of UIS students partnered with Springfield's Hy-Vee to collect and donate more than **18,000 pounds** of food to the **Central Illinois Foodbank**.
- The offices of Development and Alumni Relations were merged into a single, more collaborative Office of Advancement, with leadership provided by **Dr. Jeff Lorber**, Vice Chancellor for Advancement.
- UIS strengthened its reputation as a leader in **online learning**, earning several new accolades, including the national award for “**Strategic Innovation in Online Innovation**” from the UPCEA (University Professional & Continuing Education Association).
- **James Welt**, who earned a Master's Degree in History from UIS, persuaded

the National Park Service to add a University property (the 1840s-era **Strawbridge-Shepherd House**) to the **National Register of Historic Places**.

- **Dr. Betsy Goulet**, Clinical Assistant Professor of Public Administration, launched the **Residential Simulation Laboratory** in partnership with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and UIS' Center for State Policy and Leadership. The laboratory offers training for students, investigators, law enforcement, and other first responders to identify and respond to child maltreatment.
- Participation in the **faculty/staff fund-raising campaign** topped more than 40% for the fourth year in a row, a remarkable level of generosity for a public university campus.
- The staff of **WUIS and Illinois Issues Magazine** demonstrated their versatility and resilience in the face of state budget cuts and a changing media landscape by merging, going all-digital and maintaining their tradition of journalistic excellence in Central Illinois under a new name – **Illinois Public Radio**.
- The “**One Book, One UIS**” initiative brought civil rights icon **U.S. Congressman John Lewis** (along with the co-authors of his 3-part graphic novel “**MARCH**”) to the Sangamon Auditorium for an unforgettable speech and book signing.
- **Sangamon Auditorium** director **Bob Vaughn and his team** brought an array of incredible music, theater, dance and other entertainment to the Auditorium and our Studio Theatre, hosting more than 72,000 people for nearly 100 events.
- Division II **UIS Prairie Stars Athletics** successfully completed inaugural seasons for the **Men's and Women's Cross-Country and Distance Track** programs while, at the same time, **150 student athletes made the Athletics Academic Honor Roll** and **seven earned a perfect 4.0 GPA**.
- UIS golfer **Talon Supak** won the NCAA Midwest/Central Regional Golf Championship and become the first UIS athlete in Division II history to advance to the NCAA National Championships. Coached by UIS Men's and Women's golf coach **Frank Marsaglia**, Talon will compete for the national title in Denver, Colorado next week.

This **Saturday, May 14**, it will be my privilege to shake the hands of **1,106 new graduates** of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. As part of the celebration, UIS alum **Donna Sollenberger** will offer the commencement speech. Donna earned both Bachelors and Masters degrees from our campus in **English and Literature** and is **CEO of the University of Texas Medical Branch Health System**. She was a member of the very first graduating class of Sangamon State University. I'll be proud to welcome Donna back to Springfield to serve as yet another living example of our incredible alumni achievements.

As we close another academic year, **thank you so much** for all that you've done to make this past year such a great year at UIS. As I wrap up my fifth year serving as your Chancellor, I continue to be inspired by and thankful for the incredible work performed across campus by UIS faculty, staff and students. The positive

momentum we have created together continues to propel us closer to our highest aspirations. I am so grateful to you all.

Have a great summer, everyone!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2016

As I write this column, we're just days away from the end of the university semester. By last count, 1,716 UIS students are slated to complete their University of Illinois degree at the Springfield campus – making this class the largest graduating class in our history. We'll celebrate this milestone on Saturday, May 14th at Springfield's Prairie Capital Convention Center when graduates, along with faculty, staff, family members, dignitaries and friends, convene for the 45th UIS Commencement.

Commencement at any university is always a very special day and, in 30 years at three different institutions, I've never missed one. Like every other faculty and staff member, I'm proud of our graduates – each of whom has their own unique story.

Among the many smiling participants shaking my hand on the commencement stage will be Faith Hook. An Honors student from Effingham, Illinois, Faith has had an unusually busy four years at UIS. Besides completing her coursework for a major in Sociology and Anthropology and a minor in Criminal Justice, Faith has played throughout her undergraduate years on the Prairie Stars Division II Women's Tennis Team.

Faith has also been active on the Mock Trial team, volunteers with the Illinois Innocence Project on campus, and traveled to New York City twice for Model United Nations. "Being a student-athlete has really taught me time management and how to keep my things together," says Faith; "but being involved in the Innocence Project changed everything for me."

After volunteering many hours working on his case, Faith had the opportunity this past January to witness Innocence Project client Teshome Campbell walk out of the Danville Correctional Center a free man – after 18 years of wrongful imprisonment.

"I feel like UIS has done a good job of exposing me to opportunities and different experiences that fit me the best," reports Faith.

She plans to continue to work for the Innocence Project this summer and then

prepare for law school.

Kowsalya Viswanathan traveled a little further than Faith to attend UIS – about 8,600 miles further! Kowsalya is from Tamil Nadu in southern India and is graduating with a Master’s degree in Computer Science. Kowsalya learned about UIS from a friend in India who had studied here and who recommended the Computer Science program.

“I wanted to earn a degree from the University of Illinois,” she says. “Faculty members at UIS have been knowledgeable and helpful and, thanks to them, I’m confident I can crack my interviews and get a wonderful job.”

What was the hardest part about moving so far from home to pursue her studies at UIS? “The weather!” says Kowsalya. “I arrived in Chicago in January and it was quite a shock!” She plans to resolve the climate problem by moving to Salt Lake City after graduation, where she will join her husband who is already working there.

Soon-to-be UIS graduate Katie Kleinhample won’t be able to make it to commencement; but she’ll be with us in spirit. She completed her undergraduate French at ~~William Howard Taft High School, Urbana, Illinois~~ ~~and~~ ~~she~~ ~~is~~ ~~now~~ ~~teaching~~ ~~at~~ ~~the~~ ~~University~~ ~~of~~ ~~Chicago~~ that served as the inspiration for the musical Grease.

Katie started pursuing her Masters degree in Education from UIS online in 2014. “The UIS online program has been great,” says Katie.

“I like the convenience of it and I’ve been able to go at my own pace, taking a couple of classes each semester. I feel like I know my professors and, with the weekly participation requirements, the online courses have helped me to share my opinions and be part of the discussions. My classes have really challenged me and made me try new things with my students.”

With Masters degree in hand, Katie hopes to be better prepared to pursue leadership opportunities in her profession.

The mission of the University of Illinois is to “transform lives and serve society.” I am confident that the lives of Faith, Kowsalya, and Katie have, indeed, been transformed by their UIS experience. I’m also confident that they, like the 20,000-plus other Spring, 2016 graduates of all three University of Illinois campuses, will serve society in productive ways across Illinois and around the world for many years to come. Congratulations, graduates. We’re proud of you!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Golf and Tennis, April

2016

April on the University of Illinois at Springfield campus brings an exciting countdown to graduation, the students' much-anticipated Springfest celebration, and the annual opening of Prairie Stars baseball and softball seasons. Though perhaps a little less visible, April also means members of the golf and tennis teams are hard at it – competing in the 16-member Great Lakes Valley Conference.

Frank Marsaglia, longtime coach of the men's and women's golf teams, has a plan and that plan is paying off. "My goal has been to recruit top student-athletes who are talented both in the classroom and on the golf course," says Frank.

"We've developed a culture for our program where team members support each other and have each other's backs both on and off the course. We show up at major tournaments and we expect to win."

As Talon Supak, a junior Accounting major from Washington, Illinois, can attest – the UIS golf teams do win – often. Talon started playing golf at age five and was a multi-sport athlete in high school. He came to UIS for both the CAP Scholars Honors Program and to play golf. Talon currently plays #1 and is ranked fourth in the Division II Northeast region of 50 teams. The UIS men's team is ranked 13th.

Becca Ramirez is the top player on the Women's team – which is currently ranked 11th in the Northeast region. An alum of Springfield High School, Becca is a Psychology major who graduates this May. "It's been gratifying to be part of a program that is not only a threat, but that has beaten top teams," says Becca. "It's also an amazing experience to travel to so many different parts of the country – even Puerto Rico – and compete on all different kinds of courses." Becca will be the Assistant Golf Pro at the Illini Country Club after she completes her senior season.

As the golf teams faculty partner, Professor Marcel Yoder volunteers to help enhance the student-athlete experience.

"Coach Marsaglia does an excellent job enabling student-athletes to reach their full potential on and off the course at the same time he provides experiences that give them lifelong memories, he says.

"He also has two of the most diverse rosters in the athletic department with students from Illinois playing side by side with students from Colombia, China, Canada and Ecuador. Our whole campus benefits by learning from and alongside individuals with a variety of backgrounds and life experiences."

Second-year men's and women's tennis coach Tom Rees is a native of England whose own collegiate career in tennis was played at the University of North Carolina Asheville. "We're building on the foundation of a strong program and we've made some great strides," says Tom.

“The new courts on campus really help us with practice schedules and make our program more visible, and we have some great community members who come to watch us compete and support our program.”

A historic highlight for the UIS tennis program came at the end of last season when Jane Carter, from Auckland, New Zealand, was named the GLVC Freshman of the Year – the greatest individual Division II conference accomplishment to date for any UIS student-athlete. Jane’s achievement set the stage for continued success this year for the women’s tennis team.

Cole Buehnerkemper, a junior majoring in Business and Economics, has been playing tennis since his mother (who played at Eastern Illinois) put a racket in his hand. Team captain and playing the #1 position, Cole is poised during this spring season to set a new UIS Division II record for most singles matches won. “My freshman year we were average at best; but we have improved and we can win,” says Cole. “We’re really building a great program.”

Kanwal Alvarez, Assistant Professor of Biology, is the faculty partner for tennis. “I think Tom is a great coach,” she says,

“He not only strives to improve each player’s game individually, but he also prioritizes team unity and emphasizes dedication on and off the courts. I hope we will continue to get community support and keep seeing an increase in attendance at future competitions.”

Speaking of competitions, local fans will have a great opportunity to see a high level of collegiate play when UIS hosts the GLVC Men’s Golf Championship (April 16-18) and the Division II Women’s Golf Super-regional Tournament (May 2-4) – both on our home course at Springfield’s Panther Creek Country Club.

Go Stars!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Faculty Excellence, March 2016

During any given week on the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, a wide variety of engaging activities enliven the university. The first few days of March, 2016 offer typical examples: a Pulitzer Prize winning alum talking with students about his development as a journalist, the university chamber orchestra rehearsing for its upcoming spring showcase performance, student organizations holding a dance marathon to raise money for a local charity, the UIS recreation center hosting a high school basketball playoff, the Broadway show 42nd Street on stage at Sangamon Auditorium, the women’s softball team practicing for an

upcoming contest.

All of these activities, and others, are valuable elements of what makes UIS a comprehensive university and a great community asset. However, our most fundamental work – what the University of Illinois mission statement predicts will “transform lives and serve society” – happens every day in classrooms and laboratories throughout the UIS campus. That work is teaching and it is provided by a truly extraordinary faculty. Allow me to introduce you to a few of my colleagues:

David Bertaina is a historian in the field of Comparative Religion who was recognized as the 2014 University Scholar, the UI’s highest honor awarded to exceptional faculty on each of the three campuses. Dr. Bertaina came to the profession naturally, he says. “My parents were both middle school teachers and I was shaped by many exceptional educators throughout my own school experience.”

Like many members of the UIS faculty, David teaches courses both on-campus and online. “I think of each class as a journey my students and I take together,” he says.

“Whether the topic is *World Religions*, *Christian-Muslim Encounters*, or *Historical Methods*, we’re always extending the conversation beyond the materials or the lecture. Students are gaining new knowledge at the same time they are working on transferable skills that will serve them beyond college and make them better human beings.”

Speaking of journeys, sometimes Dr. Bertaina’s course even involves a passport! A few years ago, he taught a class titled *Empire and Faith of Rome in the Eternal City* and he plans to teach another course abroad next year in Italy and Malta.

Nathan Steele, Associate Professor of Management, received this year’s UIS Pearson Award, presented annually to the professor whose performance best exemplifies the University’s commitment to excellence in teaching and who stands among the very best teachers on the UIS campus. Though Dr. Steele has been teaching Management courses including *Organizational Behavior* and *Negotiation* for ten years, his passion for teaching extends further back – he started by teaching Sunday school when he was in fifth grade.

“I enjoy taking students down the path of discovery for themselves,” says Nathan. “The satisfaction comes when a former student contacts you a year or maybe many years later and lets you know about the impact you had on their life or their career.”

Elizabeth Kosmetatou is the 2015 University Scholar and also a recipient of the Burks Oakley Award for Distinguished Online Teaching. An Associate Professor in the History Department, Dr. Kosmetatou grew up in Athens, Greece – always knowing that she would become an archeologist despite, she says, her father wanting her to study law as he had. Fluent in seven languages including Turkish, Elizabeth relishes opportunities to share her passion for ancient civilizations in courses like *Egyptology* and *Animals in Antiquity*.

“A great teacher is also a mentor who thinks beyond the specific class to explore how the material fits in the students’ programs and career plans,” she says.

“It is an ever evolving pedagogy that includes keeping abreast of developments and innovations in teaching, listening to the students, being open, and giving them individual attention.”

Jim Ermatinger, who has served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UIS for the past seven years, has an ideal vantage point for observing teaching excellence. “With more than 100 faculty in the College teaching hundreds of courses each year,” he reports, “I’ve seen the same signs of teaching excellence engaged together. When students absorb the passion of their teacher, when technology is used to enhance learning, a transformative educational experience is created.”

That transformative experience is what David, Nathan, Elizabeth and many of their colleagues create for students every semester at UIS. That’s what Robert Spencer, founding President of Sangamon State University, imagined when the campus opened in 1970 with a “primary focus on teaching”. Especially given the challenging times for higher education in our state today, I know he would be pleased if he could see the campus today.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Map Grants, February 2016

Almost 144 years ago when young Abraham Lincoln was seeking his first seat in the Illinois General Assembly, he composed a message “To the people of Sangamo County” communicating his position on legislative priorities. It was published in the local Sangamo Journal – now the State Journal Register. Lincoln’s message read, in part: “Upon the subject of education, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.”

I can’t help wondering today (just a few days after Lincoln’s birthday) what Mr. Lincoln would think about his modern-day political successors and the budget impasse that has brought on such unprecedented challenges for higher education in our state.

As Chancellor of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, I’m addressing those challenges each day at the same time I’m thankful that robust enrollment growth, deeply committed faculty and staff, and an unrelenting focus on campus priorities is enabling our continued positive momentum.

But while I worry about long-term damage to Illinois colleges and universities, what keeps me up at night is often thinking about students, especially first generation students who depend heavily on the Illinois MAP grant – the Monetary Assistance Program caught in the current budget impasse. Let me introduce you to a few of them:

Gary Nutt is a Springfield Southeast High graduate and now a UIS freshman. Gary's mother, a single mom, died during his senior year of high school after a long battle with lung cancer. There was no money for college; but thanks, in part, to good grades and the AVID program, a nonprofit that helps talented students navigate college admissions, Gary was admitted to UIS and awarded a financial aid package including a scholarship, the federal Pell grant and an Illinois MAP grant that made UIS possible.

Besides being a fulltime student, Gary works 30 hours per week at a local restaurant and keeps a close eye on his little brother – a student at Lanphier High School. "My mom was a medical professional who worked in home health care. I saw what she was all about," he says, "and I'm going to become a nurse so that I can do what she did."

Duane and Deja Willingham are two-thirds of triplets from the south suburbs of Chicago – both juniors at UIS. Like Gary, Deja and Duane come from a single parent household.

"Our mom made it clear when we were in 8th grade that she couldn't afford to pay for college; but she encouraged us to do well and 'be marketable'."

They certainly followed mom's instructions!

Deja is a member of the prestigious UIS CAP Scholars Honors Program and receives the Presidential Scholarship, as well as MAP and Pell grants. She also helps pay her way by working as a resident assistant and at other campus jobs. "I book myself hour by hour on a daily basis," she says, "but I always reserve time for volunteering as a Big Sister and for my work with student organizations." Deja plans to become a high school teacher.

Deja's brother, Duane, is also a strong student who receives a music scholarship (he plays trombone), along with MAP and Pell grants. Duane has worked several jobs on campus, including orientation leader and intramural sports supervisor. He is also active in the campus Christian Youth Fellowship organization, where he is a volunteer preacher.

No graduate will be prouder to shake my hand on the commencement stage this May than Jamie Anderson. Jamie grew up in Stillman Valley, a village south of Rockford. A foster child for most of her childhood, she knew she had to work hard in high school in order to attend college and pursue her dream to become a social worker.

“I worked at a grocery store throughout high school to save money for college,” reports Jamie, “and I work two jobs now. It’s unbelievable what a great experience I’ve had at UIS; but I wouldn’t be here without the MAP and Pell grants.”

UIS students Gary, Duane, Deja and Jamie are just four of the nearly 700 UIS students for whom the state-supported Monetary Assistance Program (MAP) is essential for access to a college education and the promise of a brighter future. They are among 128,000 needy Illinois students whose MAP funding for this year is still held hostage in the current budget crisis.

In 1832, Lincoln viewed education as, “... the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in.” For Gary, Duane, Deja and Jamie – and for the future of Illinois – I encourage Lincoln’s successors to make education a “most important subject” again today.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message - Spring 2016

January 19, 2016

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff:

Welcome to the 2016 Spring Semester at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois! Today’s temperature certainly reminds us we’re in the heart of winter but, despite the frigid weather, I hope you’re looking forward, as I am, to the opportunities ahead during the coming term.

Many members of our academic community started the semester yesterday by participating in Springfield’s 41st recognition of Martin Luther King Day. My congratulations to Dr. Mark Dochterman, Director of the UIS Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, as well as to the 130+ UIS students who commemorated the legacy of Dr. King by participating in a day of service volunteering in the community. I can’t think of a better way to honor the memory of one of our country’s greatest leaders.

I hope you will join me in offering an especially warm welcome to students who are new arrivals to our campus this Spring semester, including international students who are adjusting to a new culture as well as to new academic challenges. I hope you’ll be mindful that creating a positive and supportive culture on campus is everyone’s responsibility – students, faculty and staff. A smile, a friendly “Hello,” or a helping hand can go a long way toward making someone feel welcome and a part of our community.

With hundreds of course offerings being launched this week, both on campus and

online, UIS faculty will again be providing exceptional learning opportunities. I encourage students to invest your efforts deeply in this abundance of opportunities to learn and prepare for your future. The mission of the University of Illinois – to transform lives and serve society – is alive and thriving across our campus thanks to the contributions of faculty and staff who truly put students first.

In addition to course offerings, the Spring 2016 semester will offer many other opportunities for leadership, engagement, learning and just plain enjoyment. Have you ever attended a basketball game in the TRAC? Have you seen a Broadway production in Sangamon Auditorium? Have you spoken at a Science Center or UIS Weather or Music student, a faculty member or a staff member, I hope you'll make this semester the one when you try a few things new! There is no shortage of ways to be involved, stretch your boundaries a bit, and take advantage of campus life to its fullest.

Dr. King said: *“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.”* With that thought in mind, I wish you a semester filled with intensive thinking!

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Sangamon Auditorium- Listening Assistance, January 2016

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIDCD), hearing loss is a major public health issue affecting more than 28 million people in the United States. Overall, the prevalence of hearing loss increases with every age decade and about 1/3 of Americans over age 65 have a significant hearing impairment – a loss that can negatively affect communication, personal relationships and even safety.

Hearing loss also affects the ability to fully enjoy music and other forms of entertainment. This concern has been the subject of considerable discussion for the UIS Sangamon Auditorium Advisory Board – a group of active community volunteers who help to guide, promote and support the University of Illinois Springfield campus's performing arts programming each year.

According to Bob Vaughn, Director of Sangamon Auditorium's performing arts programs, the Auditorium (and its smaller Studio Theatre venue) has had an assistive listening device system since 1981, but advances in technology in recent years offered new options for greatly improving the listening experience.

“I'd been concerned for some time about our outdated assistive listening system,” says Bob.

“Most of it was the inadequacy of the sound quality and the degree of difficulty of

operating the unit.”

Bob’s concerns were shared by longtime Sangamon Auditorium patrons, Carol Esarey (a member of the Auditorium Advisory Board) and her husband, Clark, both of whom had noticed they were sometimes having trouble understanding and hearing the performers speak or missing various nuances of the programming. “We reached out to auditorium Director Bob Vaughn,” says Carol, “to see what options were available to increase our ability to better hear what was going on.”

Carol’s and Clark’s inquiry resulted in a generous gift from the Esareys to fund the installation of a new digital assistive listening system this year in both the Auditorium and the Studio Theatre. The system, purchased from Listen Technologies, was used for the first time in November for the Broadway show *Elf the Musical* and is now available to patrons by request at no charge for performances in both venues.

Ease of use was a major factor considered when selecting the new system and, for Auditorium and Studio Theatre patrons, it couldn’t be easier. Patrons simply stop by the coat check before the performance to request a Personal Assistive Listening Unit, leaving a form of ID to pick up later when they return the unit after the performance. (The PAL unit is a small, inconspicuous receiver that fits conveniently into a pocket or hangs from a lanyard around the neck.) Coat check personnel briefly consult with each patron to determine headphone or earpiece preferences, with a variety of options being available. The Auditorium provides high-quality Sennheiser headphones that have a wider frequency range, but patrons are also welcome to bring their own if they prefer. PAL units are compatible with various hearing aid devices and, if the patron has a T-coil equipped hearing aid, induction loops that eliminate the need for headphones entirely are also provided.

The PAL devices can also improve the listening experience for patrons with hearing loss who do not have a hearing aid, allowing them to adjust volume though not ranges they can no longer hear. The devices help reduce distracting background noise, reverberation and sound distortions and help improve clarity, understanding and hearing from a distance.

“This exciting upgrade to UIS performing arts programming will make a huge difference in the quality of enjoying a performance for many of our patrons,” says Bob.

“I’m hoping this will bring some folks back to the Auditorium who had given up on being able to fully enjoy the experience due to hearing loss.”

“We are so pleased to have had the chance to work with the Auditorium and the UIS Foundation on a project that can truly enhance the enjoyment for patrons attending the great programs at Sangamon Auditorium,” said Carol in a recent email message. “Our hope is that the PAL program will be a boon to all who might need a boost to enjoy this wonderful community asset to its fullest.”

With the second half of the 2015-16 season, including the Broadway shows *Annie*,

42nd Street, Ragtime the Musical and Disney's Beauty and the Beast on tap, this is an ideal time to take advantage of the new PAL program and enjoy enhanced performing arts performances at UIS.

Please consider this your personal invitation! Tickets are available at www.SangamonAuditorium.org or by phone at: 217-206-6160.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Holiday Message, December 2015

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

During the final days of the Fall Semester, we all tend to be focused on preparing for final exams, meeting important deadlines, and completing important projects; but I hope you'll take just a few minutes to enjoy this holiday message.

My thanks to Jeff Williams, Graphic Designer in Creative Services, UIS photographer Shannon O'Brien and Web Portal and Media Developer Ralph Shank for their creativity and technical expertise.

Happy holidays to all!
Susan J. Koch
Chancellor

Message from the Chancellor, December 2015

Dear Colleagues:

As we bring the Fall, 2015 semester to a close this week and look ahead to a new calendar year and a new semester, this message is intended to provide several updates on matters of shared significance to our campus family.

You undoubtedly have been following the news (or lack thereof) about the ongoing

state budget stalemate, which continues to have a negative impact on higher education in Illinois. At UIS, we have nearly 1000 students who depend on state scholarship funds to make college more affordable. The MAP scholarship program remains in jeopardy, but I am hopeful that state officials will resolve their differences and fund this critically important program. In the meantime, I have communicated with UIS MAP-eligible students and encouraged them to enroll for Spring 2015. With the funding for the Spring semester, despite budget constraints, UIS will have MAP funding.

Of course, in addition to the individual student impact, the lack of a state budget threatens the regular operational budget of our campus – affecting our ability to maintain progress in strategic priority areas. We have been implementing the budget reductions that we discussed in detail with leadership groups earlier this semester, following the budget principles that we have discussed in previous budget forums, and are continuing to closely monitor all expenditures and budget-related decisions. The University of Illinois Government Relations team is leading our advocacy efforts in the State Capitol and we will continue to make our voices heard with elected officials in the coming months to ensure that campus and university priorities are given the attention and resources they deserve. I will continue to schedule individual visits with local legislators and others who are in a position to advocate for higher education and for UIS.

As you know, UI President Killeen is leading a system-wide strategic planning effort that we anticipate will chart our institution's path to the future and build on our rich legacy of service to students and to the public good. UIS hosted the first of the campus-level strategic planning sessions last month, with President Killeen and consultants with the AKA Strategy Group guiding listening sessions and several focus group discussions to inform their work. Similar sessions at UIUC and UIC have now been completed and we anticipate that a draft of the plan will be available for our review and feedback early in the Spring semester. A final draft will then be presented to the UI Board of Trustees. My sincere thanks go to all who have participated thus far in this important process – contributing their ideas, candor and enthusiasm for strengthening our campus and the UI system as a whole. ([Offer more ideas or learn more about the strategic planning effort](#))

UIS has a wider footprint in central Illinois and in Springfield than it has ever had before and we are making significant strides to become more visible and relevant throughout the region thanks to the many productive efforts of talented and creative faculty, staff and alums. A first-of-its-kind (for Springfield) business incubator, known as Innovate Springfield (iSPI) has just opened with the leadership of Bruce Sommer from UIS's College of Business and Management. The incubator will support start-up businesses and non-profit organizations in a building across from the Old State Capitol. [iSPI was featured in my SJR column this past Sunday.](#)

Beyond this development, a long-awaited new student housing project, with 72 apartment units, broke ground this week in downtown Springfield and, when completed, will make living, learning and working in Springfield even more convenient and enjoyable for current and future generations of UIS students. We

have strongly advocated for this project, which will assuredly provide new opportunities for students and alums and deepen the impact of UIS in the Springfield business and civic arenas. I am especially grateful to Vice Chancellor Clarice Ford and Assistant Vice Chancellor Van Vieregge for their efforts in bringing the downtown housing initiative to fruition.

This past summer with the leadership of Vice Chancellor for Advancement Jeff Lorber, we integrated alumni relations into the development office, renaming the unit the Office of Advancement – a best practice that I have wanted to implement since my arrival at UIS in 2011. This reorganization has already increased our effectiveness in both alumni relations and development and, thanks to the outstanding efforts of our advancement team, fundraising success continues to grow. We have set cash giving records the past two years and are on pace to have another outstanding year.

Fund-raising for the Student Union has been particularly successful this semester, with a \$1.5 million gift from a distinguished UIS alum as well as several six-figure gifts being confirmed. At this point, we have over \$5 million in commitments made toward our \$8 million fund-raising goal. As I have visited with so many donors and prospective donors during the past several months to discuss the Student Union project and request their support, I have been heartened by their belief in our campus and the important work that we do and I am deeply grateful for the confidence in us that is represented by each and every gift.

More than 40 construction company representatives attended a Student Union bidders conference held on campus earlier this term, demonstrating wide interest in work on the project. The final bid opening took place yesterday and the project continues to move steadily forward. Special thanks are owed to UIS Director of Construction Chuck Coderko who is leading the “nuts and bolts” requirements of this major building initiative. [I invite everyone to learn more about this exciting project.](#)

Continued increases in student enrollment will depend in part on the availability of academic programs that fit the interests and career goals of our student population. Diligent work by many faculty and staff has led to the launch this semester of undergraduate programs in Nursing (in collaboration with UIC and Memorial Health Systems) and Elementary Education and will soon lead to new majors in Athletic Training and Exercise Science. Other new academic programs are in the approval pipeline. It takes a tremendous amount of effort and coordination to add a new undergraduate or graduate program and I greatly appreciate the curriculum committees, department chairs, deans, Provost Pardie, the Campus Senate and all who have contributed to expanding our academic offerings.

New programs are, as you know, an essential element of the larger need to grow our enrollment and we have been making good progress in that regard. The recruitment and retention of qualified students is a responsibility that we all share and we will need to continue to focus our collective efforts in these areas in the coming months.

On that note, I can't leave out mention of a few important elements of student life that have been particularly notable this semester. Our UIS Theatre program, featuring several talented student-actors, offered a delightful performance of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, that troupe of actors that I greatly appreciate. Growing opportunities to attend every UIS Music performance on campus, I think my favorite this term was the private "holiday concert" that our students (conducted by Professor Sharon Graf) provided for UIS Music lover and donor Polly Roesch at St. Joseph's home this past week. Polly is 105 years old and she (and I) so enjoyed our choir's musical performance ... delivered with loving enthusiasm at her bedside.

My congratulations to new UIS cross-country coach Mike De Witt and our student-athletes on the completion of their first season in a highly competitive sport that attracts some of the most disciplined, hard-working students in collegiate athletics. With our new school mascot, Orion, on the sidelines, I continue to appreciate the opportunities (and enjoyment) that our Division II sports programs provide for students and for the campus community at large.

It is so important that we all remain aware that UIS does not exist in a vacuum. World and national events that take place in Paris, San Bernadino and Chicago have an impact on each of us and on our students. We owe it to our students – and to each other – to educate ourselves about these events at the same time we recognize our responsibilities as members of the community and look out for one another. I was proud to see so many UIS faculty, staff and students at the interfaith prayer vigil held at the Islamic Society of Greater Springfield mosque this past Sunday evening. I hope that every member of our campus community is mindful that we are a welcoming, inclusive and courteous place where people from different backgrounds can pursue their educational goals in an atmosphere of tolerance and safety.

I have great appreciation and respect for our campus police, who are eager to be partners in maintaining a safe learning environment for everyone. The best advice to ensure our collective security on campus is always: "If you see something, say something." Campus police are available 24/7 by phone at [217-206-6690](tel:217-206-6690).

Finally, I would love to see you at the annual campus-wide Employee Holiday Party this Friday, December 18th, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the PAC Lobby. Please consider this my personal challenge to wear your most celebratory holiday attire. I plan to do so and bragging rights will go to the most interesting fashion statement of the day. Live music by one of our favorite local musicians is an added inducement for your participation.

In closing, thank you for everything you do every day to provide our students with the excellence that is so central to who we are and what we do at the University of Illinois Springfield. I wish you good times and some well-earned relaxation during the upcoming break.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2016.

SJR Column: Innovate Springfield, December 2015

[The Springfield campus of the University of Illinois is firmly committed to community engagement](#) – collaboration with local and regional partners for the mutual benefit of all. Such reciprocity enriches the student experience and enlarges the impact of the university at the same time it contributes to the public good in critically important ways. If you were to take a stroll around Springfield’s **Old State Capitol** today, you’d likely notice the latest, and perhaps most exciting, example to date of that engagement.

I’m talking about **iSPI – Innovate Springfield** – a new business incubator now located in the Paragon building in the heart of downtown. With a vision to catalyze an innovative culture in our community, iSPI is supported with the shared commitment of the Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln, UIS, and the Q5 Strategic Leadership Council of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce.

According to the National Business Incubation Association, there are more than 1,200 business incubators operating successfully across the country today. Though they may vary in their strategies, incubators are geared toward nurturing and developing entrepreneurial for-profit companies and social enterprises; focusing specifically on the start-up period when young firms and organizations are most vulnerable. The ultimate goal is to enhance the community’s entrepreneurial climate, create new employment opportunities and further diversify the local economy. Given iSPI’s location in the heart of downtown Springfield, an added benefit is that it will help to enliven the downtown area, making it a more attractive place for creative young professionals to work and live.

Bruce Sommer, a native of Springfield who “came home” from Boston about four years ago to teach Entrepreneurship courses in the UIS College of Business and Management, has been a driving force behind iSPI. An investor in start-up companies himself, Bruce is passionate about providing opportunities for creative young people. He started by co-founding the Sangamon CEO program – a nontraditional classroom experience for high school seniors where young entrepreneurs are inspired to become leaders in their community. “iSPI is the next step,” he says.

“We’re providing a space where enterprising young people can create value and effectively launch their dreams at the same time they have access to needed financial capital and business-related expertise.”

Jorge Villegas, Associate Professor of Marketing at UIS, represents some of that expertise. Dr. Villegas is the former owner of a strategic marketing enterprise in

Monterey, Mexico who now studies small companies. “We need to create more opportunities for UIS graduates to stay here in Illinois,” he says, and iSPI will provide some of those opportunities.” Dr. Villenas is one of several UIS faculty who are involved with the new incubator. His students will conduct market studies for iSPI client companies, providing a needed service and gaining valuable business experience.

Dr. Magic Wade also brings expertise to iSPI – at the same time she represents the very demographic that will benefit most from it. A first-year professor in Political Science at UIS who studies economic inequality and social cohesion, Dr. Wade is also a new resident of downtown Springfield who appreciates the environment of the downtown area. She is a member of the Social Enterprise Committee of iSPI, helping to recruit and evaluate social entrepreneurs and prospective non-profit leaders who could benefit from the mentorship and support provided during residency in the incubator.

“Students have ambitions to work in the city and many just don’t get the opportunity.” she says, “I think iSPI can provide a bridge for our students from the campus to downtown ... and to a future career.”

According to Mr. Sommer, a typical incubator residency for a client is about 18 months, with services like shared space, tech support, mentoring, team development and access to valuable human and financial capital being available. Research shows five-year survival rates for businesses and organizations that have started in incubators like iSPI ranging between 55% and 87%.

“Hy” Bunn, President and CEO of Springfield’s Bunn-O-Matic Corporation has been an advocate for iSPI from its earliest conception. “[Innovate Springfield will create a catalyzing environment for entrepreneurs](#)”, particularly younger, less experienced ones,” he says. “In addition to bringing pure economic energy to Springfield, the incubator will help connect the dots on many of our key community priorities like attracting and retaining talented young adults in our community and creating employment opportunities for the entire metro area.”

I’d say that’s community engagement we can all appreciate!

Additional information about iSPI is available via email at info@InnovateSpringfield.com

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Residential Simulation Lab, November 2015

According to its vision statement, the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois is dedicated to offering innovative educational programs that “... make a

difference in the world.” That admirable ambition lies at the heart of a new program coming to life this year in a small, long-vacant house on the UIS campus that formerly housed the campus credit union.

Thanks to the creativity and expertise of Dr. Betsy Goulet, a faculty member in the Department of Public Administration who specializes in child advocacy and protection, the house has been transformed into a Residential Simulation Laboratory, part of the new UIS Child Advocacy Studies program.

In 2014, there were 231,536 calls to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Hotline. From those calls, nearly 27,000 children in our state, 47% under five years of age, were confirmed as victims of child abuse and neglect. [Here in Sangamon County, 845 children were confirmed cases during that same year.](#) For each of those children and thousands more like them, a competent DCFS child protection investigator represents their best, and sometimes only, chance for a better and safer life.

These Illinois statistics and Dr. Goulet’s personal experience as a child abuse investigator and later a leader in the field of children’s advocacy led to her conviction that simulation training could be an essential element in the improvement of professional preparation for child protection workers. According to Dr. Goulet, research has shown that only 10-15% of content transfers from the classroom to the workplace. Classroom experience just isn’t enough to ensure competence. Thus, the Child Advocacy Studies program (CAST) and its Residential Simulation Lab was born.

In addition to three core courses that provide content related to child maltreatment and child advocacy, the CAST program provides a hands-on laboratory for frontline professionals and students where they can gain experience and practice in the skills needed for effective intervention in child abuse and neglect. Simulation training, based on real child abuse cases and enacted in a mock home setting (the simulation lab), allows trainees to practice their knowledge and skills in a supportive environment where mistakes can be observed and corrected before investigators are actually in the field. Cameras throughout the residence capture enacted scenarios for real time observation and later debriefing. The goal is to increase both confidence and competency and to ultimately improve crisis intervention, investigations and referral of services for at-risk families.

The new program is driven in part by Illinois Senate Bill 653 – recently passed legislation that restructured training for child protection investigators and supervisors to include an experiential training component. Through an agreement between DCFS and UIS, a Child Protection Training Academy has been established to provide professional development for hundreds of child protection investigators and their supervisors from across the state. A professional certificate in Child Advocacy Studies, which includes three online courses certified by the National Child Protection Training Center and simulation training in the Residential Simulation Lab, will be awarded upon program completion.

At the same time the CAST program will provide training for current child

protection investigators, the Child Advocacy Studies certificate is also open to UIS degree-seeking students. Students majoring in Psychology, Public Administration, Social Work, Criminal Justice, Teacher Education and Legal Studies are already taking advantage of the coursework to supplement their major, acquiring knowledge and skills that in a very practical way increase their competence and make them more marketable for future professional opportunities.

“We are really coming at this because of our own experiences in the field,” says Dr. Goulet.

“Child protection workers are often put into tough encounters. Simulations are a valuable opportunity to step into the role and experience the twists and turns that might occur; without the risk that comes with the real thing.”

Feedback from participants in the new program has been exceedingly positive. One student pursuing the certificate in Child Advocacy Studies remarked:

“Knowledge is power and I feel that my knowledge has grown exponentially in this program. Having the ability to practice doing investigations will make better child protection investigators.”

As the program grows, Dr. Goulet anticipates that the UIS Residential Simulation Lab may also be used to provide training for police officers, health care workers and attorneys – professionals who also play important roles in child protection.

A fundraiser to provide support for the new simulation lab will be held Thursday, November 19 from 5:00 – 7:00 P.M. at the Firefighter’s Postal Lake Club at 940 West Lake Shore Drive in Springfield. If you’d like to learn more about this innovative program and “make a difference” in the world of child abuse and neglect, I hope you’ll join us.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Taylorville, October 2015

Today’s *Our Towns* section of the State Journal Register features Taylorville, a community just 33 miles southeast of Springfield and one of my favorite Fall destinations thanks to “Chillifest,” a wonderful weekend festival that was held just a week ago. The route between Taylorville and Springfield is even more familiar ~~Springfield to the campus of Taylorville residents who are taking full advantage of the~~ opportunity to earn a U of I degree so close to home.

Taylorville resident and US Bank Community President, **Amy Hagen** is a great

example. After earning her undergraduate degree in Finance and Economics and launching a successful career that included work as a bank examiner with the Federal Reserve Bank in St. Louis, Amy decided to pursue her Masters in Business Administration at UIS while continuing to advance in her banking career. “My dad always encouraged me to pursue more education,” she says, “and a respected colleague recommended UIS.” Amy calls herself a “proud product” of the UIS MBA program and appreciated the challenging coursework as well as the “connectiveness” with faculty that she has enjoyed for years beyond graduation. [“MBA study at UIS opened my mind to new and more complex ideas,” she reports](#), “and helped me be ready for new challenges and opportunities.”

Elizabeth (Wright) Huffines and her twin sister, **Margaret (Wright) Carlen**, grew up in Taylorville and, as children, often attended ballet performances at Sangamon Auditorium on the UIS campus. “When I was a high school student, UIS wasn’t on my radar right away,” says Elizabeth, “but the Honors Program there had such a great reputation and my sister and I wanted to go to school together close to home.” Margaret adds: “[I liked that classes were challenging and that my professors knew my name](#). And being close to home meant my sister and I could keep our weekend jobs back in Taylorville.” After graduating in 2012 with degrees in Communication, both Elizabeth and Margaret became UIS employees and, like Amy, “proud products” of UIS.

A junior from rural Taylorville, **Audrey LeVault** is a Social Work major who aspires to be a school guidance counselor some day. “My father encouraged me to consider UIS and, though it’s close to home, it’s been just far enough away for me to experience independence,” says Audrey. “[The campus is more diverse than where I grew up](#) and I’ve had opportunities to get to know people from different backgrounds, which I know will help me down the road in my career.”

Quentin Kuntzman transferred into the UIS Accounting program last year after completing his Associate of Arts degree at Lincoln Land Community College – a transition he describes as “seamless” thanks to a longtime relationship between the two campuses. “[I chose UIS because it has a good business school and I wanted to earn a University of Illinois degree](#),” says Quentin, “but a big factor was really financial.” Besides commuting three days a week to campus for classes, Quentin works nearly 30 hours each week at Menards. Thanks to his job, living at home, and a great UIS financial aid package that includes several scholarships, Quentin expects to walk across the stage at commencement next May having earned his Accounting degree debt-free ... a truly remarkable achievement.

UI system President, [Tim Killeen, refers to each University of Illinois graduate as an “economic engine” for the state of Illinois](#). I’m proud of these graduates and soon-to-be graduates of the UI Springfield campus. Each of them has roots in Taylorville and aspirations for personal and professional success. They will be economic engines for our state and contributing citizens of their communities well into the future.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Nursing Program, September 2015

The start of the academic year is always an exciting time at UIS, especially for first-year students anticipating the many opportunities that a college experience provides. That excitement may be heightened this fall for about thirty trailblazing freshmen at the Springfield campus. These students have been admitted to the new nursing program – the first step to earning the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. The new BSN program is an innovative collaboration that includes UIS, the College of Nursing at the University of Illinois Chicago campus, and Springfield’s Memorial Health System.

As many area residents already know, health care now employs more people than state government in Springfield, becoming the number one employment sector in the region. According to the State of Illinois Center for Nursing, the demand for BSN-prepared nurses continues to grow across the state, with a shortage of more than 21,000 nurses estimated for Illinois by the year 2020. Thus, it is not surprising that nursing has been, for several years, one of the top undergraduate majors for which UIS receives inquiries from prospective students.

Jim Ermatinger, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UIS, was an early advocate for this new BSN collaboration.

“Offering a nursing program is another important way for UIS to serve the community at the same time the program contributes to the overall growth priority of the campus,” he says.

“The bachelor’s degree experience will provide students with a liberal arts foundation and the core skills of critical thinking and expression that are so necessary for nursing professionals today.”

Linda McCown, Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Clinical Lab Sciences at UIS, is also pleased with the presence of the new program. “I’m happy to have more health profession options for students on campus,” she says, “especially with an ivy-league caliber College of Nursing like UIC’s involved.”

Harsh Bapat is Associate Professor of Chemistry and already has pre-nursing students enrolled in his introductory Chemistry class this fall. He anticipates that “they will excel and improve the quality of the class as a whole.” Kanwal Alvarez, Assistant Professor in Biology, adds that “pre-nursing students bring another element of diversity to her biology courses – potentially adding value to classroom discussions that will benefit the entire class.”

Dr. Cynthia Reese, whose Ph.D. in Nursing Science is from Indiana University, is Director of the new UIC College of Nursing regional campus at UIS and has

already settled in to her office on campus. Dr. Reese is no stranger to the medical community here, having spent more than ten years as a cardiac care nurse at Memorial and, more recently, as Associate Dean of Nursing at Lincoln Land Community College.

“The nursing profession is growing and changing,” says Dr. Reese, “and opportunities for highly-qualified nurses will keep expanding with the Affordable Care Act.”

She (and I) expect that many students who pursue their BSN degree in Springfield through the UIS/UIC/Memorial nursing collaboration will stay on and pursue their careers here in the area after they graduate – good news for health care and for the community.

Those future Springfield citizens might just include Kayla Metcalf, a talented graduate of Auburn High School who is one of six UIS freshmen selected to receive a \$10,000 scholarship provided by Memorial as part of its substantial financial investment in the new nursing collaboration. Brooke Ginglen from Lewiston and Madison Reuss from Nashville, Illinois are also among the first Memorial Nursing Scholars.

Like their other nursing program classmates, Kayla, Brooke and Madison chose UIS because of its reputation for providing a high-quality, personalized education; but also because the collaboration with a top-ranked nursing program will prepare them well for a professionally satisfying career. [Kayla and Madison hope to pursue specialties in anesthesia while Brooke aspires to be a nurse practitioner.](#) We’ve got four years to convince them that those careers should happen right here in Springfield and we’re off to an excellent start.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message – Fall 2015

To students, faculty and staff:

Welcome to the start of the 2015-16 academic year at this Springfield campus of the University of Illinois! Below is a short video that I hope you enjoy...and don't forget that the annual Chancellor's Welcome Picnic is tomorrow, August 25th. All students, faculty, and staff (along with family members) are invited! Please join us near the Colonnade from 4:30-6:00 pm. The weather and the atmosphere will be superb! There will be plenty of great food, beverages, and conversation. See you there!

Chancellor Koch

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2015

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 20, 2015

Good afternoon! Thank you all so much for participating in this University of Illinois at Springfield Fall 2015 Convocation.

It's great to see all of you here!

I want to begin today by offering a special welcome to all of our faculty and staff who are new to the UIS academic community. Congratulations on your appointment!

Whether you are new to the University of Illinois or "seasoned" I look forward to our work together in the coming year.

I want to also offer a warm welcome to some special guests who have joined us for Convocation today: (please stand when I introduce you and I promise you we'll provide a rousing round of applause after everyone has been introduced):

- Mayor Jim Langfelder, two-time UIS alum and Mayor of the City of Springfield;
- Trustee of the University of Illinois, former Mayor of Springfield, UIS alum and strong supporter of our campus, Karen Hasara;
- UIS Chancellor Emeritus and still wonderful advocate for our University, Dr. Naomi Lynn; and her husband, Bob;
- Former UIS Interim Chancellor, longtime Provost, and also great friend of UIS, Dr. Harry Berman and his wife, Deborah;
- Jennifer Gill, UIS alum and Superintendent of Springfield Public School District 186;
- Victoria Ringer, another two-time UIS alum and Executive Director,

Downtown Springfield, Inc.

- Jennifer Creasey, also a UIS alum and University of Illinois Interim Director for State Relations;
- Kathy Novak, Associate Professor of Communications and Chair, Campus Senate;
- Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson, Vice-Chair of the Campus Senate;
- Maureen Hoover, representing the leadership of the UIS Academic Professional Advisory Committee today;
- President of the UIS Civil Service Advisory Council, Bobbie Fults;
- Gary Yang, UIS alum and UIS representative for Chinese student recruitment;
- University of Illinois Student Trustee and major in Communications, Dominique Wilson;
- Josh Lawson, President of the UIS Student Government Association and a Senior in Political Science;
- And I'd also like to welcome my "personal" special guest, my husband, Dennis Koch.

Please join me in welcoming these special guests to our convocation.

I'm not going to take much time to reflect backwards today -except to remind you that, despite the ongoing economic challenges in our state, the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois had a very productive past year ... thanks to many of the dedicated faculty and staff in this room:

- Our Fall, 2014 enrollment was the largest in campus history;
- Our Spring graduating class was the largest in history (by about 300!) and we had nearly 1,000 graduates participate in commencement this past May (my congratulations to Brian Clevenger and Joan Sestak for pulling off that wonderful celebration!);
- In addition to hundreds of courses delivered both on campus and online, our faculty produced a wide variety of scholarly contributions and creative works last year;
- More than 75,000 people visited our campus last year to attend at least one performing arts event in either Sangamon Auditorium or the Studio Theatre;
- Our fund-raising success continued to grow this past year and we set a new cash giving record of over \$3.95 million;
- An Economic Impact Study published in January demonstrated the annual \$176.8 million impact of UIS on our local community – and that number does not even include the economic and social value of the 66,000 volunteer hours that our students, staff and faculty contributed to the community;
- Our UIS student-athletes broke more than 30 school records at the same time that more than half of those students were on the Athletics Academic Honor Roll;
- The UIS Illinois Innocence Project achieved two exonerations – the freeing of Christopher Abernathy and Angel Gonzalez who had been imprisoned for 30 and 21 years respectively for crimes they did not commit; these efforts involved 15 UIS students who worked tirelessly on behalf of their innocent

clients;

- And let's not forget Food Service Worker Danny Lau who was named Employee of the Year this past year. Like so many other members of our community, Danny makes a difference in the lives of students every single day.

I am so proud of what we have accomplished together and I am deeply appreciative of all of you who have worked so hard to put students first and create those accomplishments.

We are doing well (when many other campuses are not) because we have remained collectively and intently focused on our three strategic priorities:

- growth in both reputation and enrollment,
- the acquisition and retention of talented faculty and staff,
- and providing the facilities needed to support a comprehensive student learning and living experience.

This approach is paying off for our campus and for our students.

As I look ahead to this fifth year serving as your Chancellor, I remain grateful to many who have served in important campus leadership roles; people like:

- Jorge Villegas, Kathy Novak, Bobbi Fults and Teresa Szabo;
- Provost Lynn Pardie, Vice Chancellor for Advancement Jeff Lorber, our campus CFO, Jerry Joseph, and Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Clarice Ford, to name just a few.

They and others have helped to create an open, accountable, and transparent environment where shared governance is lived. I want to assure you that my efforts (and the efforts of other members of our leadership team) will continue in the coming year and beyond.

Well, let's turn our attention now to the future – and as we did a year ago, I want to put a name to some of the challenges that will affect our work this year and then, cover how we are addressing them to best position the Springfield campus for continued success.

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary as one of three campuses of the University of Illinois, this year also happens to be the 201st anniversary of something relevant to my comments today:

I'm sure you will be fascinated to know that 201 years ago, in 1814, a poet named Ivan Krylov published a fable titled "*The Inquisitive Man*," which tells the story of a man who goes to a museum and notices lots of tiny things, but fails to notice something much bigger and more important: a live elephant. Thus came to life the now-famous idiomatic expression – "the elephant in the room."

So with a nod and a smile to Ivan and his important contribution to metaphorical

idiom, let's take a close look one of our biggest challenges – our Illinois “elephant in the room” today: the budget.

- There is continued stalemate at the state level – an impasse.
- Nobody appears to know when this will be resolved – but probably well into September (at least); I've even heard the word December mentioned.
- President Killeen and our government relations team are very engaged on our behalf with our local, state, and federal elected officials.
- At the start of the higher ed funding discussions in February, you may recall, was the 31.5% reduction in the state appropriation for public higher ed proposed by the Governor.
- House Bill 4147 later in the spring included an 8.5% reduction in our state allocation. This was passed by legislature, but vetoed by the Governor along with all but one of the other budget bills.
- In the meantime, there is no capital bill (again) and no agreement on increasing revenues for the state.
- The Monetary Award Program (MAP grants), need-based state funding that about 27% of UIS students depend on, has not yet been authorized for this year. We've seen some movement on that this week but, in the meantime, we are including estimates of MAP support in students' financial aid packages to ensure they will be able to continue progress toward their degrees this fall.
- We've seen the temporary suspension of several needed capital projects that were previously funded, including the UIS Public Safety Building.
- We have a pause in various other UI construction projects including the UIS Student Union because of overall budget concerns.
- A hiring freeze at UA was made effective July 1, 2015.
- The UI salary program is on hold until further notice. I remain exceedingly committed to a salary program for this year because it is part of our #2 priority – talent acquisition and retention.
- Funding for our graduate internship programs (GPSI, ILSIP), which comes from various state agencies, appears to be stable at this point.
- We've been planning for several months for various budget reduction scenarios – some more severe than others.
- Compared to the other regional publics in Illinois; we're relatively well positioned to maintain operations, thanks to the multiple strategies we have successfully implemented in the past few years.
- We will continue to focus on our priorities and make strategic decisions that will support our three priorities – growth in excellence and enrollment, talent acquisition and retention, and providing the facilities that our students need
- ~~And we're~~ We will be ready for whatever comes and we will communicate and seek input on budget decisions (as we've done for the past four years) as soon as we have more information.

The issue of affordability (the cost of college in Illinois) remains a significant challenge for many prospective and current students. We're at risk in our state of pricing qualified students out of postsecondary education.

As most of you know, this is an issue of vital interest to our Board of Trustees,

which voted this year to hold in-state undergraduate tuition as the same rate as last year.

Competition for qualified students from an increasingly wide array of educational providers in Illinois including for-profit providers, is another continuing challenge, as is the related issue of visibility. Making our young campus known and felt in the wider community, throughout the region and beyond requires strategic and smart collaboration among a variety of campus units including Marketing, Admissions, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Athletics, and various campus outreach and service endeavors, and as well as with academic colleges and departments. Leaders in our community, like Mayor Langfelder and Superintendent Gill, are eager to work with us to increase awareness of and appreciation for our campus in the local community and we look forward to new collaborations with our community partners that will be mutually beneficial.

The need for us to be respectful, inclusive and responsive to an increasingly diverse student body is another challenge. We're very proud of the success we have created the past few years in recruiting African American and Latino students as well as international students, veterans and students with disabilities. But to accompany that success we need to ensure we have high-quality educational experiences and services available to them and to all students to ensure they will succeed and graduate.

An ongoing challenge (and opportunity) continues to be the new and emerging technologies that are changing the way faculty teach and the way students learn; and that has major implications for every educational institution including ours. Many of our faculty are national leaders in technology innovation including: Management Professor Dr. Laurel Newman, who founded the UIS Community of Practice in E-Learning; collaborating with her colleagues in exploring new and emerging effective practices in online learning and sharing those practices at the national level. As a result of this work, Dr. Neuman along with COLRS staff members Emily Bowles and Carrie Levin received a national award this year for Effectiveness in E-Learning. Another is Dr. Layne Morsch in Chemistry who was named an Apple Distinguished Educator this May, joining an elite international group of educators recognized for doing innovative work with technology.

Finally, to return to our "elephant idiom," I want to acknowledge a new relationship before us this year that comes with the notification received in January from the Illinois Federation of Teachers that tenure-earning faculty at UIS have voted to be represented by the IFT.

This brings to nine the number of labor unions on campus and I want to assure you that, as we move into the collective bargaining process with this new group, we will follow best practices and bargain in good faith.

I am grateful for the productive and respectful relationship we have developed during the past several years between faculty and administration and I am confident that with the best interests of our university represented on both sides of the bargaining table, we will achieve a satisfactory agreement.

So – what are we doing to address the challenges before us?

First, let me remind you, especially for the benefit of those who are new to our academic community this fall, that we have a foundation that continues to hold firm. We are part of a world-class university that was created with the signature of Abraham Lincoln; an institution whose mission to “transform lives and serve society” and whose reputation for excellence is recognized across our state and around the world.

This campus was founded in 1970 by a group of visionary leaders, faculty and citizens with a commitment to innovation. Thanks to the contributions of many, actions taken in accord — first, with the campus 2006 Strategic Plan and, more recently, in accord with the three priorities affirmed in our 2013 Strategic Planning Update — have advanced UIS significantly.

Where the budget is concerned, we will continue to be strategic with every budget decision.

While the political stalemate remains and when we eventually have a budget we will continue to follow those guiding budget principles that I’ve mentioned repeatedly in our campus budget forums and we will be responsible and accountable in the management of our resources at every level. At the same time, we will not stand still. We have to make strategic investments that support our three priorities.

Of course, the Campus Planning and Budget Committee will continue to play a central role in planning and decision-making in the future.

Our growth priority remains central to budget stability because, as you have heard me say so often, tuition drives the revenue engine of the university more than any other factor.

Enrollment growth, however, (as our Deans and Department Chairs know very well) does not come without challenges. The growth at UIS that is the envy of very other regional and private college campus in Illinois is not (to put it mildly) evenly distributed across the curriculum. While Computer Science and MIS are burgeoning with students, several other departments continue to experience flat or declining enrollment.

Increasing the number of undergraduates across the curriculum and scheduling courses and faculty assignments appropriately to meet shifting needs is going to require flexibility, innovation and cooperation. The new academic programs in high demand areas, as well as innovations that will increase enrollment within existing majors, are critically important.

One of the best examples this fall is our new BSN Nursing program – a partnership with Memorial Health Systems and the UIC College of Nursing. Thirty-two new students are now enrolled in pre-nursing courses. I appreciate the continued efforts

of faculty leaders and others who are studying trends and opportunities and moving strategic new programs through the approval process.

You may have noticed in media reports yesterday and today that our new UI system President, Dr. Tim Killeen, is “testing the waters” with an idea to increase enrollment across the UI system to 100,000. He was quoted in one news story this morning as saying this, “would not be done willy-nilly and it would have to be done very carefully.”

This is something that we will discuss in the coming year as part of the UI strategic planning process. I’m looking forward to our being active participants in that discussion!

I mentioned the challenge of visibility and creating awareness of the Springfield campus of the UI and the high quality educational experiences that we provide. Strategic marketing and recruitment remains essential if we are to compete effectively for highly-qualified students. With the outstanding leadership of Michelle Green, Director of Marketing and Fernando Planas, Director of Admissions, we continue to implement our plan.

The 10 counties in Central Illinois remain our #1 market priority; but at the same time this fall, we’ll be implementing a new recruitment strategy in Metro East St. Louis – an area that is highly populated with college-going students. The new strategy includes an on-ground and digital advertising campaign and other focused recruitment efforts.

I want to acknowledge that the outcomes of faculty research – the publications, presentations and creative activities that are so central to faculty work – also enhance the visibility and the reputation of our university. Our engagement with the Springfield community is also very important to enhancing our contributions to our neighbors and our reputation.

Whether it’s the volunteer activities led by our Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, UIS Athletic events, the monthly UIS Perspectives column in the SJR, or simply the increasing positive news coverage of our campus, our faculty, and our students by local, state and national media – it all improves our visibility – and our reputation.

I already mentioned that our Board has held the line on undergraduate tuition increases this year and last week we announced the continuation for the third year of the Leadership lived student employment program. This program is providing more on-campus jobs for students and assisting them to pay college costs.

At the same time, we set an all-time record for cash giving to the university this year. Many of those gifts are for scholarships, which also help address the challenge of affordability for students.

We are one of the most affordable campuses in Illinois at both the undergraduate and graduate levels – and we are increasingly so because of our work to address the

affordability issue with multiple strategies proactively.

There are 192 higher education institutions in Illinois – including 48 community colleges, 12 public campuses, 97 private colleges and 35 for-profits. Clearly prospective students have many choices and they make those choices based on a wide variety of factors.

If we remain mission-driven – committed to providing students with an innovative, intellectually rich, collaborative and personalized learning environment; and if we remain focused on our priorities, we will be the choice of increasing numbers of students.

In closing today, I want to share with you some excerpts from a letter I received last week from one of our students:

“Dear Chancellor Koch:

My name is Xu Jia. I am a UIS new graduate from May, 2015. I recently become a full time employee and I am very excited because I found the job I always wanted within three months after graduation from the UIS. I feel the contents and topics I learned from my courses at UIS will be used extensively in my work. I appreciated my faculty’s trust, challenge and encouragement. I have valued my UIS education very much and it is my honor to be a proud UIS alumni in the future.

Sincerely,

Xu Jia”

I receive communications like this periodically and they always remind me, as I am reminding all of us today, of the reason we do the work that we do. We’re fond of saying, as you all know, that UIS is a “right-sized and supportive community.” And we promise our students a “Leadership lived,” experience that will prepare them for a successful future. It certainly sounds like we delivered on that promise for Xu Jia.

So as we start this 2015 academic year, I’m asking you to join me in making a personal commitment to student success – the same success that this new UIS graduate experienced. I’m asking you to do something extra – as faculty did for Xu Jia – to enable at least one more student to be successful.

If every one of our 1,100 faculty and staff made that effort this year – imagine the impact it would have on retention and student success! It might even lead to a few more letters, like the one I’ve mentioned, arriving in my inbox. (If so, I’ll be sure to share them with you.)

Yes, indeed, there are challenges ahead.

We need a resolution to the stalemate in Illinois capital in order to sustain the promise of higher education for deserving students.

We need to stay focused on our strategic priorities.

We need to have a ribbon cutting for that Student Union!

We need to make sure that we always see the “elephant in the room” and that we address that elephant strategically and collaboratively;

I am confident that as long as we all work together as colleagues and do our best work every day, we will continue to deliver on the mission that has prepared almost 37,000 SSU and UIS graduates to make a difference in Illinois and in the world.

Thank you for the leadership that you live every day, whatever your role may be here at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois.

I want you to know that I am proud to be part of this community and I will continue to do my best work every day on your behalf and on behalf of our students.

Best wishes for a successful and satisfying year.

Thank you.

SJR Column: Cross Country, August 2015

August is upon us and students will soon be arriving for the 45th Fall semester at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. One particular group of students is especially excited about the coming year. That group consists of the student-athletes who will be the founding members of the UIS cross country running program.

Following a yearlong analysis of sports opportunities led by Director of Athletics Kim Pate and with the unanimous recommendation of our Intercollegiate Athletics Committee, we announced the addition of cross country (and distance track) last December. According to a study conducted by the National Federation of State High School Associations, cross country ranks in the top five sports in the U.S. for high school participation by both girls and boys. Interest locally and across Illinois is high, which means significant recruitment opportunities within the central Illinois region.

The academic profile of cross country student-athletes is strong – making the sport a natural fit for the UIS campus and an addition that contributes to our campus-wide enrollment growth priority.

Though the sport is new to UIS, it is most certainly not new to Mike De Witt, who became UIS's first cross country coach in March. Mike is a world-class athlete himself who got his start playing baseball and running in his hometown of Kenosha, Wisconsin. An All American at UW Parkside, Mike was later a member of the U.S. Army Track Team (during military service) and became a race-walker – competing as a member of Team USA seven times, including at the 1989 World Cup when he was 38 years old. De Witt was named the GLVC Coach of the year seven times during his 29-year coaching career at Parkside and is a member of the NAIA Hall of Fame.

Since his arrival on campus, Mike has been busy sending introductory letters to coaches at every high school within a 45-minute drive of Springfield and attending high school track meets – networking with high school coaches. Thanks to his reputation and enthusiasm, the response has been both welcoming and exciting.

Mike has also discovered that interest among current students was “way more” than he expected. After a six-week tryout this spring, several current UIS students made the team and have been doing summer workouts and looking forward to the inaugural season. “Rounding up a group to get started here in the fall has been my number one priority,” he tells me.

“UIS is a great niche for runners from across the entire state,” he says, “because of the affordability and the location.”

A glance at the 2015 UIS cross country team roster has a decidedly local flavor! Krissy Finley and Eli Cook, for example, ran cross country at Rochester High School under coach Bill Owens. Eli, who spent his freshman year at Millikin, tells me that he’s excited to be back in his hometown. “Being on the new UIS team with my long-time friend and rival, Ethan Bluhm, makes the switch that much easier,” he says. Ethan is a recent Sacred Heart Griffin graduate whose dad is the cross country coach there.

Krissy became a cross country all-state runner at Rochester and her high school team finished second at the state meet her senior year.

“I like that cross country is not only an individual sport, but also a team sport,” she says. “It’s exciting to be a part of a new sport at a college in the city I grew up in and I hope to be part of the start of a dynasty.”

Not everyone on the team will be going home on the weekends though. Thomas Ness is a freshman from Las Vegas, Nevada who’ll be traveling about 1,600 miles to become a Prairie Star. “I tend to have a sense of adventure,” he tells me, “and [I am beyond excited to have received this opportunity to compete for UIS.](#)”

The new cross country team will be practicing at Lake Park near the Henson Robinson Zoo, as well as at Lincoln Memorial Garden, Southwind Park and on local bike trails. Megan Styles, Assistant Professor of Environment Studies at UIS, is the faculty partner for the new program and has even done a few workouts with the team. “I look forward,” she says, “to being inspired by the student-athletes who share my love of running, personal growth, and teamwork.”

Coach De Witt is working with UIS grounds keeping staff to create a new cross country course on the UIS campus. “I’m looking forward to the community having a chance to come out and see local kids run at UIS,” he says. We’ll have that chance when the first-ever UIS Cross Country Invitational Meet is held on campus September 11th – with the women’s race starting at 5:30 p.m. and the men’s start at 6:00 p.m.

What is Coach De Witt's prediction for this new team? "Our students are going to know what it's like to see the front of the race."

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: ILSIP, July 2015

The Springfield campus of the University of Illinois is known for "Leadership lived", a reputation that honors the university's tradition of educating public servants and leaders and that reflects the unique advantages offered by the campus's location in the state capital of Illinois and the home of Abraham Lincoln.

Though many UIS programs and activities illustrate the "Leadership lived" reputation, the Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program, fondly known as ILSIP, is an exceptionally productive example.

Barbara Van Dyke-Brown, who has directed the ILSIP program for the past 11 years, informs me that nearly 1000 young college graduates have participated in the ILSIP program since its founding over 50 years ago and many (including former Illinois Governor **Jim Edgar**) have gone on to distinguished careers in public service in our state and elsewhere.

Funded by state government and administered by UIS, [ILSIP grew out of a desire to provide talented and motivated individuals with insight](#) into the legislative process in the real-world environment of the Illinois legislature. At the same time the experience sets participants on a solid career path, with a valuable resume-builder that can lead to fulltime careers in state or federal government, executive roles in business or non-profit agencies, or additional educational opportunities like law or graduate school.

Recruitment for the ILSIP program is a highly competitive process, with more than 100 applicants competing for 24 internship placements each year. Though most applicants are graduates of Illinois universities, recent ILSIP participants have also come from Brown University (Rhode Island), Michigan State University, San Diego State University and the University of Washington. There was even a program applicant from London this year.

[The ILSIP program offers interns a 10 1/2 month, fulltime paid position](#) as a professional legislative staff member working with one of the partisan staffs of the Illinois General Assembly or with the Legislative Research Unit. Interns also participate in a graduate-level academic seminar conducted by UIS faculty – which often launches their pursuit of a valuable graduate degree from UIS.

In addition to providing interns exposure to the legislative process, ILSIP also benefits Illinois legislative leaders and the entire General Assembly with valuable research and other professional staff assistance.

“The idea,” says Barbara, “is not only to provide interns an opportunity to experience the legislative process but also for them to grow and contribute to the process. ILSIP interns feel like their actions have consequences – and they do.”

Kristen Deane and **Ramiro Hernandez** were both accepted for the ILSIP program a year ago. Kristen is from the village of Carol Stream in DuPage County and earned a bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of Dayton. Ramiro, a first-generation Mexican-American, is from the south side of Chicago and graduated from DePaul with a degree in History. Ramiro describes his experience this past year with the Illinois House of Representatives Research and Appropriations Staff as “infinitely fulfilling.” His assignment included assisting with the drafting of legislation, working on several committees including the House Revenue and House Labor Committees, conducting analyses for state agency budgets and helping on various research projects. “The work I produced, the experiences I enjoyed, and the knowledge I gained,” says Ramiro, “have made me a better citizen and a more capable person.”

Kristen, whose internship was also with the House of Representatives Staff, echoes Ramiro’s appreciation for the experience: “One thing I learned from the ILSIP internship is that being a hard worker is one of the most important qualities someone can have ... and that applies to both fulfilling job duties and building relationships.” Among several assignments, Kristin staffed the Elementary and Secondary Education committees and found the networking opportunities with every assignment to be “invaluable”.

According to Director Van Dyke-Brown, 14 of this year’s 24 ILSIP internship graduates accepted fulltime professional positions in Illinois state government after their internships were completed. That number includes Kristen and Ramiro, who have both become members of the House Republican Research and Appropriations Staff – where their careers in state government began nearly a year ago thanks to the exceptional opportunities provided by the Illinois Legislative Staff Internship Program. Who knows? Maybe one of them will be Governor some day!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Camp Invention, June 2015

Let’s go invent tomorrow! This provocative invitation, attributed first to Apple cofounder Steve Jobs, might also be the best way to describe an exciting week-long summer day camp that children from the Springfield area will experience June 22-26 on the UIS campus. These children will be part of *Camp Invention*, a new partnership involving UIS and **Invent Now**, a national non-profit organization that provides high quality science education in association with the **National Inventors**

Hall of Fame and the **U.S. Patent and Trademark Office**. Given how quickly the program reached its capacity of 110 campers, I'd say this camp is going to be a whole lot of fun!

It's all happening thanks to the initiative of UIS Chemistry professor **Harsh Bapat**, who has been [looking for ways to nurture children's natural interests in science](#) ever since he noticed that his own first-year Chemistry students are sometimes lacking in the imagination and creativity so important for success in that challenging subject.

A native of Pune, India's eighth-largest city, Dr. Bapat grew up in a family where creativity and imagination were nurtured from an early age in wide-ranging conversations at the dinner table. He describes his father as a Renaissance man who loved Shakespeare but had a Ph.D. in Chemistry. His mother was an English teacher.

After earning bachelor's and master's degrees in India, Harsh came to the U.S. as an international student and earned his Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Missouri. A member of the UIS Chemistry faculty for 13 years, Harsh says:

"I'm not interested in just punching my time ticket; I want to give back to my community and hopefully spark a young child's thinking and pathway to the sciences."

According to the **National Science Foundation**: "In the 21st century, scientific and technological innovations have become increasingly important. To succeed in this new information-based and highly technological society, students need to develop their capabilities in STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – to levels much beyond what was considered acceptable in the past."

STEM professions, along with health care, are the fastest growing professional occupational categories in the U.S. economy.

This year's *Camp Invention* program, directed by Dr. Bapat, is called "Illuminate" and is comprised of a series of high-energy, hands-on activities designed to encourage children to harness their curiosity at the same time they explore connections between science, technology, engineering and innovation.

Campers will have the opportunity to create and tinker throughout the week as they explore bioluminescence, circuitry, video game design, DIY kart designing, and battery-powered, life-saving devices. It all culminates with an Inventors Showcase on the last day of camp – a celebration of the week's inventiveness.

Months of planning have included collaborating with UIS Teacher Education faculty including **Dr. Cindy Wilson**, who will serve as Assistant Director of *Camp Invention*, and **Professor Victoria Childs**, a specialist in elementary math and science education. Experienced teachers from area elementary schools have been recruited to serve as *Camp Invention* instructors. Instructors and other staff

participate in a professional development program in advance of the camp in order to ensure their familiarity with the curriculum and materials.

Though this summer's UIS *Camp Invention* is a first for our campus, 2015 is actually the 25th year of the national program which is being offered this summer at more than 1,200 sites across the country with more than 80,000 students participating. An independent evaluation of the program, conducted a year ago, demonstrated that *Camp Invention* has a positive impact on creativity and that children's interest in STEM and invention increases as a result of their participation in the program.

And I have a feeling that some of those creative *Camp Invention* students will come back to UIS in a few years as university students. They might even enroll in Dr. Bapat's first-year Chemistry class on their way to an exciting STEM career. We'll be delighted to welcome them!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

End-of-year Message, May 2015

Wednesday, May 13, 2015

Dear Colleagues:

As we approach commencement just a few days away, this end-of-year message continues an ongoing series of regular communications from the Chancellor to the UIS community on issues of importance to the university and to our overall mission and goals. At the end of this my fourth year serving as your Chancellor, I continue to be inspired by and thankful for the commitment I see demonstrated daily by UIS faculty, staff and students. Despite the reality of budget threats, the positive momentum we have created together continues to move us toward achieving our vision to be a premier public university. I am deeply grateful for all of your contributions.

As many of you know, we hosted the University of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting on campus this past week, welcoming two new Trustees, **Ramon Cepeda** and **Jill Smart**, to the UIS campus for the first time. I am sincerely grateful to all who contributed to making the Board meeting and associated events such a success.

This particular BOT meeting was the last for **President Bob Easter**, who has been a strong advocate for UIS throughout his presidency. **Dr. Tim Killeen** will assume the system presidential role at the end of the UIS commencement on May 16th. I hope you will join President Killeen and all three UI Chancellors for a **Town Hall meeting** and reception on **Friday, May 22, from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. in the Sangamon Auditorium Lobby**.

You may also be interested to know that UIS played a central role in the recent Lincoln Funeral Coalition Commemorative Events in Springfield, marking the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's death. With the leadership of UIS Lincoln Scholar **Michael Burlingame** and our **Center for State Policy and Leadership**, we hosted an academic symposium titled: Mourning Father Abraham that was attended by more than 650 people. We also hosted a capacity crowd of nearly 2,000 in the **Sangamon Auditorium Performing Arts Center** for a special Illinois Symphony Orchestra performance titled "The Lincoln Train." **Ralph Shank**, whose "day job" is in the UIS Office of Web Services, was a featured vocalist for the symphony event and his was truly an exceptional performance. These events and others throughout the year continue to demonstrate in a very visible way the great economic, social and cultural value that our campus brings to the community and to the region.

As I reflect back on the 2014 -15 academic calendar, I am appreciative of the regular meetings and many important consultations with campus leaders this past year. My sincere thanks to Senate Chair **Jorge Villegas** and **Bill Klein, John Transue**, and **Holly Thompson** who served on the Senate Executive Committee. Thanks also to **Teresa Szabo** who again led the APAC so ably and to **Bobbi Fults**

who continues as an exceptional leader of CSAC. You've heard me say before that shared governance works at UIS because we work at it and it has been particularly true this year given the various challenges we continue to face.

UIS student leaders play an important role in informing and advocating for student interests and concerns, which is so critical to our continued growth in both reputation and enrollment.

- My thanks to **Joe McGee** for serving as SGA President;
- Student trustee **Hannah Cave** received the Donovan Pepper Award for Outstanding Student Leadership this past weekend and I am grateful to Hannah for representing UIS and our students exceptionally well on the UI Board of Trustees.

It has been a pleasure to share in celebrating the contributions of several exceptional UIS staff members this year.

- **Jim Korte**, Dean of Students, was recognized with the CAPE Award for outstanding performance by an Academic Professional;
- **Cliff Edwards**, grounds services, has received the CARE Award for excellence in Civil Service; and
- **Danny Lau**, food service, is our UIS Employee of the Year.

Faculty honors awarded this year included:

- **Dr. David Bertaina** (History) – University Scholar
- **Dr. Nathan Steele** (Business) – Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching,
- **Dr. Dennis Ruez** (Environmental Studies) – Spencer Award for Exemplary Service, and
- **Dr. Roxanne Kurtz** (Philosophy) – Oakley Distinguished Online Teaching Award and
- **Dr. Ann Strahle** (Communication) – 2015 China Faculty Exchange Scholar. (She will spend the summer as Scholar in Residence at Heilongjaing University.

My congratulations and sincere thanks to each of our award winners for all that you contribute to our campus and to the larger community. You exemplify “**Leadership lived**” and provide inspiration for our campus community every day.

As you know, our forward momentum continues to be centered on three strategic priorities: **growth** in both enrollment and reputation, **talent** acquisition and retention of both faculty and staff, and **facilities** that will best provide our students with a comprehensive university experience. We've remained focused on several strategies to advance these priorities and, thanks to the efforts of many, they are yielding real results.

You already know that our Fall enrollment saw a significant increase. The Spring 2015 enrollment has also been robust. I greatly appreciate the leadership of **Fernando Planas**, Director of Admissions, and other Admissions staff who have

done such a terrific job this year of communicating the UIS story to prospective students and their parents. I observed Fernando's expertise firsthand this year when I accompanied him on a visit to two of our target high schools in Chicago – Gary Comer College Prep and the Perspectives Leadership Academy. It was heartening to experience the positive reception that UIS receives from teachers and administrators at these two excellent schools.

Faculty and staff in the departments of Computer Science and Management Information Systems have made extraordinary efforts to accommodate significant increases in enrollment in their programs this year at the same time that **staff in the Office of International Student Services** and the **Intensive English Program** have worked very hard to accommodate the increasing number of international students on campus. They deserve our thanks and appreciation.

The earlier work of the **Academic Programs Task Force** is now yielding results and several new academic programs including Healthcare Informatics and Sports Management concentrations in Business, a Biochemistry major, and online versions of the bachelor's and master's degrees in Political Science will be launched in Fall, 2015.

We've had over 100 applications for the new BSN program in Nursing that is being implemented in partnership with the **UIC College of Nursing and Memorial Health Systems**. The pre-nursing curriculum will start this Fall and several talented UIS first year students will receive \$10,000 scholarships funded through a \$2 million gift from Memorial.

We've also added a Cross Country and Distance Track program, a sport that will bring new students (both men and women) to campus and that is a terrific addition to our Division II sports program. All of these additions will help us grow both on campus and online and will enhance our relevance and reputation in the region.

Though a necessarily incomplete list, here are several other examples of the great work of your colleagues – faculty, staff and students – this past year:

- The **UIS Illinois Innocence Project** achieved two exonerations this year involving 15 UIS students who worked tirelessly on behalf of their innocent clients;
- The National Research Center for College and University Admissions (NRCCUA) has named the **UIS website** one of the top-ranked college and university websites for engaging prospective students. UIS ranks 8th nationally in recognition of its excellent interface functionality and use of social media.
- In addition to the hundreds of courses delivered on ground and online, **UIS faculty** also published 46 journal articles, 9 books/monographs and 17 book chapters. Faculty also produced 23 creative works including visual arts, music and theatre.
- **UIS Springfest**, one of the most popular traditions in student life, had the largest participation ever this year;

- **Cash gift support** (to date) for the campus totals more than \$3.6 million this fiscal year and we will soon surpass last year's record year of \$3.7 million;
- More than 75,000 people have visited campus to attend at least one performing arts event in either **Sangamon Auditorium** or the **Studio Theatre**;
- Participation in the **faculty/staff fund-raising campaign** topped more than 49% for 2013-14 and we expect an equally positive outcome when the current campaign wraps up on June 30.
- The **UIS Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement** has involved hundreds of students in more than 66,000 hours of volunteer service this past year;
- An **Economic Impact Study** published in January, 2015 demonstrated that the UIS campus contributes about \$176.8 million to the local economy every year;
- Thanks to the contributions of faculty in the **Fine Arts** as UIS continues to grow and provide cultural assets to the campus and the community with theatre productions, musical performances, and art exhibitions on campus hosting hundreds of appreciative participants;
- UIS now offers a variety of services to **veterans** and **active duty military personnel**, enhancing their ability to pursue an undergraduate or graduate degree;
- The campus is collaborating with a private developer on a **downtown housing project** for UIS graduate students and SIU medical students;
- The design/development phase for the **UIS Student Union** was completed this year and, though budget pressures have slowed progress, the project continues as a major building priority for the campus;
- The **fund-raising campaign** for the Student Union kicked off in September with a celebration on the Quad that included more than 800 people; to date more than \$3 million in gifts have been committed to the project;
- UIS student-athletes broke more than **30 school records** this year at the same time that **114 student athletes made the Athletics Academic Honor Roll** and **8 earned a perfect 4.0 GPA**;
- The UIS Prairie Stars athletics **booster club** has nearly **500 members** in only the third year of the initiative;
- WUIS celebrated its **40th anniversary** of delivering high-quality public radio programming this year;
- UIS launched the **Prairie Star Athletics Hall of Fame** and celebrated the **first class of inductees** with approximately 300 proud alums, former coaches, and longstanding friends of the University;
- A few weeks ago, two UIS alums won the **Pulitzer Prize: Kathy Best** (PAR) at the Seattle Times for "Breaking News" and **Mitch Pugh** (English) for "Public Service";
- **Most importantly, the UIS campus continues to grow in visibility, reputation and enrollment.**

As we discussed at the **March 25 Campus Budget Forum**, the budget environment for the state and the university remains challenging and uncertain to say the least. Governor Rauner's February budget address included a

recommendation for a 31.5% reduction in the state's allocation to Illinois's public universities. Such a reduction would mean a loss of approximately \$6 million for UIS and, if implemented, would most certainly have a very negative impact on the entire campus. Our Board of Trustees voted in January **not to increase tuition** for undergraduate, in-state students, realizing that continued increases in tuition cannot continue to offset losses in state support if we are to remain competitive.

The **UI governmental relations staff** are working with campus leadership and legislative leaders discussing alternatives to the proposed reduction and it seems likely at this point that debates and negotiations regarding the entire state budget may extend into the summer. In the meantime, we will continue careful planning and, if a major budget reduction becomes a reality during the next several weeks, we will reach out to faculty and staff leadership for further consultation.

This **Saturday, May 16th**, it will be my privilege to shake the hands of **965 new graduates** of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. (That's 225 more than a year ago.) We anticipate a capacity commencement crowd that will include, among others, the **parents of Computer Science graduate Swetha Vallamreddy**, who are traveling **over 8,000 miles** from southern India to attend commencement. Our ceremony includes an address by distinguished Public Affairs Reporting program alum **Thom Serafin**. It will be a wonderful day!

As we close another academic year, **thank you** for all that you've done to make this past year such a great year at UIS.

Have a great summer, everyone!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2015

In less than a week, I'll have the privilege of shaking the hands of 964 graduates of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois who will join several thousand family members, faculty, staff and special guests for the 44th UIS commencement ceremony – the largest commencement in the history of the campus.

I'm anticipating an especially enthusiastic handshake when **Tony O'Neal** crosses the Prairie Capital Convention Center stage! Tony is what universities call a "non-traditional" student – an imprecise term that usually refers to someone who did not enter post-secondary education immediately after high school.

I'd say, by any definition, Tony is most certainly non-traditional. A forty-three-year old father of three, Tony will have earned a bachelor's degree and, within a few days will also retire from the U.S. military after 26 years of service. Currently stationed at Camp Lincoln, he is a Master Sergeant who has traveled to more than 30 foreign countries. Tony enrolled at UIS to pursue his undergraduate degree a few of years ago because he knew a college degree would be essential for a successful post-military professional career.

When I spoke with Tony recently, he wanted me to know how much he had grown through his undergraduate experience and how much he appreciated the support of UIS faculty and staff when he was deployed on short notice to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba in the middle of the Spring, 2013 semester. With exceptional advising provided by Andy Egizi, Coordinator for the Liberal and Integrative Studies Program, and with the extra efforts of many, including Professors Elizabeth Kosmetatou and Holly Kent who helped him to address unique challenges communicating between the military base in Cuba and the campus, Tony was able to stay connected, complete his courses successfully that semester and stay on track for his Spring, 2015 graduation.

Four days after his military retirement and with bachelor's degree in hand, Tony will start his new career at Ameren, a major Illinois energy distribution company, where he will be an emergency response specialist. He's also considering pursuing a master's degree at UIS.

Brittany Carls and **Kentrell King** come from different backgrounds but will be sharing the stage at the 2015 commencement. Besides graduating on the same day, another thing these two share is their extraordinary involvement in activities outside the classroom.

Brittany grew up on a farm near Arenzville, Illinois. An Honors Program student with a major in Business Administration, Brittany has volunteered hundreds of hours with Habitat for Humanity and many other campus and community organizations. She was recognized earlier this year for her exceptional volunteer service with the Star Student Award – given annually at Springfield's Good as Gold Ceremony to the UIS student who best exemplifies dedication to service to their campus and to the Springfield community. Brittany credits Dr. Mark Dochterman, Director of the UIS Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, with igniting her passion for community service and she hopes to lead her own Habitat for Humanity organization some day.

Kentrell King graduated from Crete-Monee High School on the south side of Chicago. Besides being a fulltime Communications major and working on campus in the Office of Electronic Media, local sports fans know Kentrell as a mainstay of the UIS men's basketball team. He is a point guard who has started more games than any other player during his four years as a Prairie Star. As graduation

approaches, Kentrell is especially grateful to Professor Jay Gillam, who at the end of his freshman year, convinced him to stay in school.

“Because of Dr. Gillam and Athletic Director Kim Pate,” says Kentrell, “I am going to be the first in my family to graduate from college.”

If there is a prize for the student whose family comes the furthest distance to attend the 2015 UIS commencement, I suspect that **Swetha Vallamreddy** may win it. Swetha will receive her master’s degree in Computer Science this year and her parents are traveling over 8,000 miles to watch her receive her diploma – all the way from the city of Vijayawada in southern India. At the same time she has enjoyed her graduate classes at UIS, Swetha has appreciated the mentorship of Munindra Khaund, who hired her as a student employee in Web Services on campus, an experience that taught her how to apply her classroom learning in a project-based team environment – exactly what she will do after she graduates. Interestingly, Swetha will not be the first in her family to earn a University of Illinois degree. Her brother graduated from UIS in 2009.

[The mission of the University of Illinois is to “transform lives and serve society.”](#) I am confident that the lives of Tony, Brittany, Kentrell and Swetha have, indeed, been transformed by their UIS experience and I’m supremely confident that they, like thousands of other UI graduates, will serve society across Illinois and around the world in the coming years. Congratulations, graduates. We’re proud of you!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Alumni, April 2015

A recent study discussed in a previous column demonstrated that the overall **economic impact** of UIS on the local economy each year is an impressive \$176.8 million. Though financial resources the campus spends locally on university operations and money students spend in the community account for sizeable portions of that number, the largest contribution to the local economy is generated by students who graduate and then remain in Sangamon County to pursue their careers.

The fact is, of the 34,496 living UIS alums, including those who graduated when the campus was known as Sangamon State, 10,813 live in Sangamon County. UIS is truly Springfield’s university!

[The business community is one segment where the impact of UIS alums is particularly important](#) to the local economy. During the past four decades, hundreds of UIS grads have established their own businesses here – employing others, providing services and creating value. **Julie Zara**, a native of Harvey, Illinois, graduated from SSU in 1986 and is now co-owner of Zara’s Collision Center, an

award-winning local business. **Megan Henley Brown** from Tovey, Illinois, graduated in 2002 and is owner and president of Trendsetters Design, a successful floral design business. **Eric Robinson**, whose hometown is Lincoln, Illinois, completed a master's degree in 1991 and is a founding partner at Frontline Public Strategies, a national award-winning public relations firm. **Stephanie Johnson** from Edwardsville completed her UIS degree in 2003 and created Just Right Eating. **Randall Witter**, whose hometown is Rock Island, earned his master's degree in 1974, co-founded and is now president of Cook-Witter, a well-respected Springfield lobbying firm. Prominent business leaders and UIS alums also include: **Sarah Phalen**, President and CEO of Illinois National Bank; **Micah Bartlett**, President and CEO of Town and Country Bank; and **Mark Donovan**, Senior Vice President at Illinois National Bank.

[The non-profit sector is another area where UIS alums are demonstrating their leadership](#) while making our community a better place to live, work and grow. **Nina Harris** is a great example. A Springfield native, Nina completed both bachelors and masters degrees at UIS. She now serves as President and CEO of the Springfield Urban League, one of the most successful community-based service organizations in the country. Alum **Bill Furry**, also a Springfield native, is Executive Director of the Illinois State Historical Society. **Kelly Thompson** is a Glenwood native who graduated in 2002. She is Executive Director of Ronald McDonald House Charities of Central Illinois and was named Non-profit Director of the Year in 2013 by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. **Victoria Ringer**, also a two-time grad, is the Executive Director of Downtown Springfield, Inc., an organization that promotes Springfield's historic central business district. **Gina DeCroix Russell** is a 2002 UIS grad and is the Ballet Mistress of the Springfield Ballet Company. **Julie Kellner**, a 1986 graduate, is Executive Director of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois and **Jennifer Gill**, who earned her masters degree from UIS in 1997 is Superintendent of the Springfield Public Schools. UIS alum **Neil Calderon** is a local educator and leader. He teaches Social Studies at Springfield's Southeast High School.

It is often said that you can't walk around a corner in the halls of state government without running into a UIS alum and I can verify from my own experience that it's true! [UIS alums have been working at every level of state government since the campus was founded](#) in the 70s as Illinois's "public affairs university." On any given day, about 300 UIS students are working in state government as interns, often the first step to a career in public service. **Tyler Scherer** was one of those interns and is now a Budget Analyst for the Governor's Office of Management and Budget. UIS alum **Samantha Gaddy** is a Senior Policy Advisor for Governor Rauner and grad **Sara Wojcicki-Jimenez** serves as Chief of Staff for First Lady Diana Rauner. **Preston Hardge** was part of the prestigious Graduate Public Service Internship Program; he is now the Communications Coordinator for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Alum **Scott Kaiser** is Assistant Secretary of the Illinois Senate while **Rikeesha Phelon** (with two UIS degrees) is Press Secretary for Illinois Senate President John Cullerton. **Paris Ervin**, a 2002 alum from Collinsville, is the Director of Communications for Illinois State Treasurer Michael

Frerichs while **Dave Joens**, who is originally from Lombard, Illinois, is the Director of the Illinois State Archives.

In just a few weeks, commencement speaker **Thom Serafin**, another prominent alum who owns a successful business in Chicago, will address about a thousand graduating students at the largest commencement ceremony in UIS history. I like what Chuck Schrage, our leader of alumni relations, has to say about them.

“Regardless of where they come from or where they live”, he says, “these new members of the UIS alumni family will remain vital stakeholders in our campus throughout their lives – making valuable contributions through their service, advocacy and philanthropy at the same time they demonstrate, by their own success, the great value of their University of Illinois degree.”

Amen.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Philanthropy, March 2015

Many Springfield residents, including me, have greatly appreciated the opportunity to attend one or more presentations by **Dr. Michael Burlingame**, an internationally renowned teacher and scholar at UIS who is said to know more about **Abraham Lincoln** than any other living person. What many may not know, however, is that Dr. Burlingame is a member of the UIS faculty thanks to an exceptionally generous gift.

In 2000, **Dr. Richard Vaden** and his family donated funds to the campus to establish a Distinguished Chair in Lincoln Studies to celebrate their longtime admiration for then – **Chancellor Naomi Lynn**. Dr. Burlingame is the current occupant of the **Distinguished Lincoln Chair** and, through him, the Vaden family gift continues to give each year... to students, to the Springfield community and to the ever-growing body of knowledge about Abraham Lincoln. The Lincoln Chair is just one of many examples of the important impact that philanthropy has on the UIS campus.

According to a recent report published by the **Giving USA Foundation**, charitable giving to education has been on the rise, with donations to education drawing more gifts than any other category of giving except religion. According to the study, colleges and universities are viewed by donors as being among the most attractive places to direct gifts because they can so readily see that their contributions make a difference in an important area.

Gifts support scholarships for deserving students, programs or projects in a particular academic area, community outreach like performing arts or public radio, critically needed facilities, athletics, or the broader strategic goals of the campus.

Whatever the use, a gift serves to connect something that the donor feels passionate about with a corresponding compelling need on the campus.

UIS alum **Pamela McClelland** is one such donor. Pam attended what was then **Sangamon State University** as a working adult and earned both bachelor's and master's degrees in Accountancy. She became a Certified Public Accountant (winning recognition for scoring in the top 100 nationally on the CPA exam) and later became a partner at Kerber, Eck and Braeckel, one of Springfield's top accounting firms. Now retired, Pam is passionate about providing access to higher education for students. Besides funding her own named accountancy scholarship, Pam has provided leadership to establish several other scholarships including the Stanhope Scholarship in honor of accounting professor Don Stanhope, the Leona Stanford Vollantine Scholarship, and the KEB Accountancy Scholarship, funded by her former employer. She has been recognized for her leadership and generosity with the Alumni Association's **Distinguished Service Award** and will receive the University of Illinois Foundation's **William Winter Award** this May – an award that honors a volunteer who has shown extraordinary leadership in supporting philanthropy at the University of Illinois.

Recently retired UIS professor **Kathryn Eisenhart** and her partner **Lucille “Mickey” Rendok** have a special place in their hearts for returning students and they have created a scholarship fund especially for them.

“I didn't start college myself until I was almost 30,” says Kathryn.
“Part of our motivation to set up a scholarship for returning students is that they often maintain high grade point averages, work full time and are single parents and yet don't qualify for federal financial aid.”

Like Kathryn, many UIS employees are donors to the campus. In fact, last year [49.2% of UIS faculty and staff made gifts to UIS](#) – an extraordinary endorsement of their commitment to students and to the mission and vision of the university.

Donors are also increasingly investing in capital projects (i.e. buildings) on campuses across the country and that is also true at UIS. With the Student Union campaign a current priority that has such compelling benefits for the university and the community, it is a particularly exciting opportunity.

Whatever their passion, [we're deeply grateful for the investment that so many friends and alumni are making at UIS](#). Charitable giving represents an important aspect of an institution's financial well-being and philanthropy plays a central role in making a good university and great one.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Classroom Technology, February 2015

Every day at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, students and faculty convene in classrooms, laboratories and seminar rooms as well as in online (virtual) spaces and even off-campus locations. Wherever they are and whatever the area of study, the goal is always to maximize learning and faculty, to that end, are constantly developing new and [more effective ways to engage students in the educational process](#).

New technologies have accelerated innovations in learning in ways that were not even imagined a decade ago.

According to Educause (an organization that promotes technology research and professional development), mobile technologies like smartphones, tablets and e-book readers are playing an increasingly important role in college students' academic lives today. Flexibility, engagement, convenience and interactivity are all factors that make mobile learning more and more attractive to students.... and to their professors.

One such professor is **Dr. Layne Morsch**, Associate Professor of Chemistry at UIS, who has transformed his Organic Chemistry class using the iPad. The catalyst for this transformation was a provocative question: [“What is the hardest thing I ask my students to do each week?”](#) The answer was: “solve difficult chemical problems”, an activity that students traditionally do by themselves between classes with no support or involvement from their professor or from technology.

The outcome of Dr. Morsch's course transformation is a **“flipped classroom,”** a pedagogical model with lectures posted online and watched by students before class and valuable class time being used for more engaged learning like problem solving, exercises, projects and discussions. Every student in Dr. Morsch's class has an iPad (their own or one provided by the university via an affordable lease program) and all resources for the class including lectures, an interactive e-book, electronic lab notebook, links to videos, quizzes, and *Chemdraw*, the leading chemical drawing software, are loaded on the device.

“The thing with mobile computing in general,” says Dr. Morsch, “is that it's quick and easy. You open it up and it's on. The touch interface is great and you can start interacting right away.”

Farokh Eslahi, UIS Associate Provost for Information Technology, and his team of tech support staff have been Dr. Morsch's enthusiastic partners on the project.

“It’s really not about the technology, but what you do with the technology and the value it adds to the learning experience.” says Farokh. “We’re working with faculty across campus to determine their ideal classroom environment including new technologies (and new ways to use them) to best support active learning for their particular situation.”

Besides convenience, flexibility and engagement, cost savings is also a major advantage. An organic chemistry college textbook costs nearly \$400, while access to the e-book version is only about \$125. Software is provided at no extra cost as are all other electronic resources. Of course, students can also use their iPads for other classes as well as for email and social media.

Though virtually all college students today have some experience with mobile technologies, a digital divide reflecting students’ own socioeconomic background and pre-college experience sometimes still exists. However, students tend to adapt quickly regardless of their starting point. No matter what the initial skill level, they are gaining valuable technology skills that will contribute to success in a future career.

Feedback from Organic Chemistry students on the flipped high tech class has been mostly positive. Though research on learning outcomes is not yet definitive, students say they appreciate the increased engagement as well as more opportunities to work through problems directly with their professor and with other students. “They’re engaged all the time and that’s what I love about it,” says Dr. Morsch, “... and nobody sleeps in my class.”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

UIS Tobacco-Free Policy Message, January 2015

As you may already know, then-Governor Pat Quinn signed the Illinois Smoke-Free Campus Act several months ago. This legislation prohibits smoking on the campuses of all-state supported colleges and universities in Illinois. Since that decision, an implementation team (see list below), led by UIS Senior Director of Human Resources Laura Alexander, has been working to develop appropriate policies and procedures to enable the UIS campus to be in compliance with the new law which will be implemented July 1, 2015. The task force has been guided by best practices implemented on other campuses throughout the country as well as by their own conclusion that a tobacco-free campus is an important element in the health, well-being, and safety of students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors.

The task force developed a two-year phased approach for implementation of a tobacco-free campus policy and I am pleased to communicate that approach and the associated policies and activities today.

Starting July 1, 2015, the use of all tobacco products on university property (except in privately owned vehicles traveling or parked on campus) will be prohibited. The policy begins on the same day the Illinois Smoke-Free Campus Act goes into effect statewide. The law bans smoking on all college and university campuses, except in private vehicles.

[View the UIS Tobacco-Free Policy starting July 1, 2015](#) (PDF)

The following year, starting on July 1, 2016, UIS will become a completely tobacco-free campus. The use of tobacco products will be prohibited on all university property, including in private and university vehicles traveling or parked on university property.

[View the UIS Tobacco-Free Policy starting July 1, 2016](#) (PDF)

In implementing a tobacco-free policy, UIS joins almost 1500 other colleges and universities across the U.S. that have gone “smoke free”, including the other University of Illinois campuses in Champaign-Urbana and Chicago. There is incontrovertible evidence that smoking is dangerous to health and that secondhand smoke affects everyone exposed to it. By providing a tobacco-free campus, UIS will encourage the overall well-being of students, faculty and staff and can better prepare students for tobacco-free workplaces where they are likely to be employed in the future. It will also create a cleaner and safer campus.

We obviously respect everyone’s personal decision to choose what is best for them. At the same time, we hope that the new policy and resources provided will offer helpful incentives for smokers who wish to quit their tobacco use. UIS has joined with the American Lung Association to provide free tobacco cessation resources to students and employees through the Illinois Tobacco Quitline. The Quitline provides tobacco cessation counseling and other tools for tobacco users who want to quit. The line is staffed daily from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. More information can be found at the [American Lung Association website](http://www.lungil.org). (<http://www.lungil.org>)

My sincere thanks to all the members of the task force who worked so diligently to develop the Tobacco-Free Policy and implementation plan. We anticipate a smooth transition over the next several months.

Tobacco-Free Campus Implementation Committee:

- Laura Alexander, Senior Director of Human Resources, Human Resources
- David Barrows, Associate Chancellor of Administrative Affairs, Executive Director of Facilities & Services
- Valerie Gebhardt, Adjunct Instructor, Counseling Center
- Shipra Gupta, Assistant Professor, Business Administration

- Carolyn Neitzke, Director of Conference Services, Facilities Scheduling Services
 - Kurt Piskin, Natural Sciences Technical Assistant
 - John Ringle, Director of Housing and Residence Life
 - Tim Smith, representing Sangamon Auditorium Advisory Council
 - Chevaughn Starling, President, Resident Housing Association
 - Bradley Strickler, Police Lieutenant, Campus Police
 - Guerry Suggs, representing UIS Athletics Advisory Council
 - Blake Wood, Multimedia Writer/Producer, Campus Relations
-

Welcome Message – Spring 2015

January 20, 2015

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the UIS 2015 Spring Semester! Today's weather in Springfield, Illinois, which feels more like March than January, is one of many reasons to think positive about the upcoming term!

I enjoyed the start of the semester yesterday by participating in Springfield's 40th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast where I had the honor of introducing the guest speaker. The MLK Breakfast is always an important event and it was wonderful to be among the hundreds of members of the Springfield community, many of whom are UIS alumni and supporters, and be reminded of the ideals that guided the life of this great American hero.

My congratulations to Mark Dochterman, Director of the UIS Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement, and the nearly 100 UIS students who spent Martin Luther King Day volunteering in the community. What a great way to honor Dr. King's legacy.

I hope you will join me in offering an especially warm welcome to students who are new arrivals at UIS this Spring semester, including many international students who are adjusting to a new culture as well as to new academic challenges. With more than 1,100 course sections being launched this week, both on campus and online, UIS faculty are offering exceptional learning opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I encourage students to invest your efforts deeply in this abundance of opportunities to collaborate, learn and prepare for your future.

I hope you'll also be mindful that we're all privileged to be part of this academic community and that creating a positive and supportive culture on campus for everyone is everyone's responsibility – students, faculty and staff. A smile, a

“Hello” and a helping hand can go a long way toward making someone feel a part of our community.

In addition to academic courses, the Spring 2015 semester at UIS offers many other opportunities for leadership, engagement and just plain enjoyment on campus and in the community. Whether it’s involvement in student organizations, volunteering, attending men’s and women’s basketball games, participating in Black History Month and Women’s History Month events, attending UIS Theatre or Music performances, or taking in a show at the Sangamon Auditorium Performing Arts Center on campus; there is no shortage of ways to be involved, grow and enjoy campus life to its fullest. And, of course, Springfest in April is an annual highlight of the Spring semester.

The Spring Chancellor-student gathering is already being planned. What will be the featured food? You’ll have to wait for the announcement to find out; but, as always, it will undoubtedly start with a “C”.

Dr. King said: *“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of education.”* Best wishes for a semester filled with intensive thinking!

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Economic Impact, January 2015

Business and community leaders know well the work of Richard Florida, whose path-breaking 2004 book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, describes the forces and factors that drive social and economic prosperity in any community. More recently, Florida and his colleagues published an expanded version of their research, *The Rise of the Creative Class Revisited*, and again concluded that the presence of a thriving university, a key institution of the “creative economy,” is a necessary condition for prosperity. Universities are both talent magnets and talent producers and in myriad ways help to establish the “quality of place” of the communities where they are located.

But is it possible to calculate the actual economic impact, the financial value creation, of a university on its community? The answer is “yes” and the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois has recently done just that with the help of **Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI)**, a nationally known research firm whose economists have conducted over 1,200 economic impact studies for colleges and universities across the country.

A central element of the recent study, which uses fiscal year 2013-14 student and financial data, is a regional economic impact analysis that estimates three effects:

university operations, student spending, and the increased productivity of college-educated alumni who were employed in the regional workforce during the analysis year.

The numbers are impressive. In terms of university operations, [UIS is, of course, an important employer in Sangamon County](#). In 2013-14, the campus employed 1,129 faculty and staff with a total payroll of \$67.1 million, much of which was spent by UIS employees in the county on food, housing, clothing and other living expenses. UIS is also a large-scale buyer of goods and services – spending \$31.1 million in the analysis year for supplies, professional services and facilities. The total income that UIS created in 2013-14 as a result of its day-to-day operations was \$75.3 million.

Student spending is also an important part of the economic impact of the campus. UIS served 6,374 unique students during the 12-month study period and, as many Springfield business owners appreciate, college students spend money (beyond tuition, fees and books) on food, rent, technology, transportation, entertainment and many other expenses. Considering the spending of only the 20% of UIS students who relocated to Sangamon County to attend university, those [students add approximately \\$5.9 million in income to the local economy each year](#).

Though the impact of UIS operations and student spending is impressive, UIS's greatest economic impact on the community comes with the education provided for graduates who remain here after completing their degrees.

Almost 30% of the college-educated workforce in Sangamon County has earned at least one degree from the campus and thousands of UIS alums are employed throughout the area- generating income, raising business profits through their increased productivity and paying taxes. During the analysis year, the study shows that UIS alumni generated \$95.5 million in added income to the county. This figure represents the higher wages earned, the increased output of businesses that employed them and the multiplier effects that occurred as alumni and their employers spent money at other businesses.

Thus, [the overall economic impact of UIS on the local community during the analysis year amounted to \\$176.8 million](#); equal to the sum of the university operations effect (\$75.3 million), the student spending effect (\$5.9 million) and the alumni productivity effect (\$95.5 million).

In addition to the economic impact analysis, the EMSI study also investigated the benefits that the university generates in return for the investment made by key stakeholder groups – students, society and taxpayers. Though results of the investment analysis are too lengthy to describe in detail in this column, they clearly demonstrate that a [UIS education is one of the best investments](#) students and their families, as well as society and taxpayers, can make. The stream of higher future wages that graduates receive in return for their educational investment continues to grow throughout their working lives with bachelor's degree completers in

Sangamon County earning on average \$63,300 at the midpoint of their careers, \$29,900 more per year than a county resident with only a high school diploma. The study also demonstrates that for every \$1 spent by Illinois taxpayers to support UIS (via the state's annual allocation), Illinois gains \$3.50 in added taxes from higher-earning graduates and public sector savings due to the reduced demand for government-funded social services.

Though the EMSI study does not measure other important effects of the university such as social, cultural and community service contributions, it does provide a rich source of data that demonstrates the very real economic value of UIS in Springfield – \$176.8 million per year. It also confirms Florida's conviction that a university is indeed a key institution of a creative economy and an important contributor to establishing the "quality of place" that is so necessary for prosperity now and in the future.

The entire report, as well as other related documents, is available at <https://www.uis.edu/impact/>.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Admissions, December 2014

One of the most enjoyable aspects of serving as the leader of a university is spending time with talented young people and I'm always interested to learn from UIS students how they successfully navigated the college decision process and ultimately chose the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois for their college experience.

For first-year students from Illinois, there are well over 100 possibilities in-state alone and the type of school, distance from home, academic majors offered, cost, selectivity, size, location, housing, student life, and even food are all important factors that help students match their personal profile to the right institution. Navigating through the possibilities and making the right match, however, can be both challenging and complicated.

For students (and parents) considering UIS, [one of the best resources for navigating the college decision process](#) is our talented Director of Admissions, **Fernando Planas**. Mr. Planas, a native Illinoisan, has been a college admissions professional for more than twenty years and the first recommendation he makes to prospective students and their parents is to start planning for college early.

“Taking the right college prep courses throughout high school is very important,” says Fernando, “and working with a counselor from the

beginning of high school to put together a plan helps to insure college readiness.”

Clair Casper, a UIS Admissions Counselor who provides assistance for prospective college students in Sangamon County, agrees. “High school guidance counselors are our trusted partners,” she says. “We work closely with them and students should utilize them throughout their high school career.”

Noelle Bourne, a UIS Admissions Counselor who works in West and Central Illinois advises that the campus visit is a crucial part of the college decision. “Make sure you get the feel of the campus,” she says. “Consider how you are treated during your visit and get a sense of the layout and the facilities.” Noelle and Clair agree that visiting at least three schools is important so that students can compare campuses and “picture themselves” being a student there. “Even if a school is local and familiar,” says Clair, “schedule a college visit with the Admissions Office in advance so that you can receive personal attention and so that arrangements can be made for you to meet a faculty member and/or current students in your areas of interest.”

The College Board, a non-profit organization that was created to expand access to higher education, is also a good resource for college planning. The website (collegeboard.org) offers a variety of tools for college decision-making, including a set of 10 provocative questions (What are some things you feel you do well? What’s your favorite class? If you could do a job for one day, what would it be?) to help students think about possible college majors and future careers. The site also offers action plans for parents with important information to help them assist their students to manage college admissions tests, financial planning and other aspects of the college admissions process.

For Illinois residents, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is another helpful resource. The ISAC website (isac.org) provides various online tools to help students find information about colleges and universities, explore programs and majors and get tips on preparing for college. ISAC also hosts events across the state during February (Financial Aid Awareness Month) to help students and their families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and to [get advice about the college selection and admissions process](#) .

Mr. Planas recommends that students apply to (and visit) three to five schools including at least one “reach school”, one “target school”, and one “safety school”. “The reach school is your dream school,” he says, “while target schools are ones you would be very happy to attend and are likely to be admitted; and safety schools are those that you are certain to be accepted and you would be content to attend.” In the end, the right school is the one that both matches academic qualifications and fits the characteristics that each student values most.

But what about those UIS students I mentioned earlier? Well, they almost universally tell me the most important factors that led to their enrolling at UIS included the individualized and supportive learning environment provided by

faculty, the small “private-college feel” of the campus, the opportunity to earn the high-value University of Illinois credential in a small-college setting, the internship experiences available, and the robust financial aid and scholarships that make UIS so affordable. That sounds like a great match – and fit – to me! (The next UIS Preview Day for prospective students and parents is January 24, 2015. To register, schedule a personalized visit or get more information about UIS, go to: <https://www.uis.edu/admissions/> or phone: 1-888-977-4847.)

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Computer Science, November 2014

Just a few days ago, HuffPost Education (an education news website) featured an article by Dr. Linda Rosen, a well-known national leader in STEM education. STEM refers to science, technology, engineering and mathematics and, according to a study cited by Dr. Rosen, students who gain a strong STEM foundation and who pursue college majors in STEM fields face much brighter career prospects today than students in many other professional areas. “Even in a tough economy,” she stated, “STEM is where the opportunities are.”

[Those ever-increasing opportunities in STEM fields are certainly evident on the UIS campus](#), where our Computer Science program has grown from just over 100 students in 1990 to well over 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students today.

The program has earned the prestigious Center for Academic Excellence designation from the U.S. National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security and its online Computer Science degree has been cited as one of the four leading online Computer Science programs in the country (along with MIT, Oregon State and Udacity).

UIS Computer Science professor Svet Braynov was attracted to UIS a decade ago from the University of Buffalo because of the department’s reputation for high quality teaching. “On many campuses, a student can get lost”, he says, “but not here. Our students feel a great atmosphere in the department and both students and faculty grow together.”

“We don’t really recruit students,” adds longtime Department Head Ted Mims. “Our recruiting is done by our own graduates, who tell others about their great experiences in the program.”

A constantly innovating curriculum is another reason that students are attracted to the UIS Computer Science program. Faculty stay in close touch with ever-changing technologies, as well as with major employers of the department’s graduates, and

have created courses that include not only foundation classes in programming and networking but also classes like Big Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Forensics. A year ago, the department launched a new major in Information Systems Security – created in response to the high demand for IT security professionals who can design and implement secure technology systems.

Jessica Williams, a Junior from Granite City, Illinois is taking full advantage of the challenges and opportunities offered by the UIS Computer Science program. “The countless hours I’ve devoted to solving a problem or working the bugs out of my program assignment have been some of the most invaluable educational experiences,” Jessica says. “I’ve learned how to solve problems and I can honestly say that is the greatest thing I will take away from this program.” Jessica was selected to participate in a paid internship program at State Farm headquarters last summer where she was part of a team working on real-world security problems. She plans to become a security analyst after graduation in May, 2016.

Daniel Evertz, from Centralia, Illinois, is a Junior Computer Science major who is also an Air Force veteran. Having already experienced a larger university with classes of 400-plus students, stadium-style seating and teaching assistants communicating the class content, Daniel says his friends told him that “this school was different”. “My first class at UIS started with the professor attempting to learn everyone’s name and that experience was mirrored in every one of my other classes that first week.” According to Daniel, the most defining aspect of the program is the “approachability of the faculty and staff”. Daniel is interested in artificial intelligence and software engineering. After completing his undergraduate degree next fall, he plans to pursue his master’s degree at UIS and then a career in software development.

[UIS Computer Science students regularly get high-value internships at major technology-related companies.](#) One of our students, for example, will be spending the Spring, 2015 semester interning at NASA’s Johnson Space Center in Houston. Like many STEM graduates, UIS Computer Science alums are in high demand in a variety of sectors including technology services companies, insurance, finance, banking and health care – to name a few. Wherever they are, they are proud alums of the UIS Computer Science program ... and they are recruiting future students who will benefit as much as they did from their UIS experience.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Sangamon Auditorium, October 2014

I’ll never forget my first live theatre performance. My father, who was an opera fan, took me and my brothers to the Goodman Theatre in Chicago to see the operetta, *Pinocchio*. It was splendid ... and, at the tender age of six, I was hooked!

Since then, thanks to many opportunities throughout my student years, my appreciation for live performance has grown to include music of all kinds, theatre, dance, and even puppetry. There is something special about a live performance that challenges and engages the audience in a way that nothing else can.

That's part of the reason that I am so grateful for the extraordinary vision of university and community leaders here in Springfield who, in the late 1970's, insisted that an essential element of the new Public Affairs Building on the then-SSU campus would be a major performing arts center.

Sangamon Auditorium, an extraordinary facility by any measure, opened its doors to a capacity crowd on February 21, 1981 with Hal Holbrook's one-man show, *Mark Twain Tonight*. Since then, the Auditorium (and its more intimate Studio Theatre venue) has presented more than 2,000 events to over 2 million campus visitors. The Auditorium is also home to two of Springfield's greatest cultural assets – the Illinois Symphony Orchestra and the Springfield Ballet Company, as well as the Class Acts youth performing arts series which has introduced thousands of school children to the excitement of live artistic performance. Many independent productions and educational institutions in the region also use the Auditorium for graduations, meetings and seminars. We even host the inauguration ceremony for the Illinois House of Representatives!

[So what does it require to successfully operate a complex facility like Sangamon Auditorium?](#) The answer is institutional commitment, an exceptional staff, and extraordinary friends.

As a public liberal arts university, UIS is deeply committed to the role that the arts play in a university education and Sangamon Auditorium is an essential element of the UIS student experience.

We're also deeply committed to engagement with our community and the Auditorium is an important part of our civic leadership – an outreach endeavor that serves thousands of residents of Springfield and Central Illinois each year.

The Auditorium staff includes talented professionals, student-workers and over 200 volunteers and is led with exceptional skill by Director, **Bob Vaughn**. A Griffin High School grad and an alum with a Masters degree in Community Arts Management, Bob has had greasepaint running through his veins since, at age eight, his aunt and uncle from California sent him a transistor radio in hopes of expanding his musical repertoire. We hired him away from the Leid Center at the University of Nebraska in 2006; since then, his unique blend of expertise and creativity has made Sangamon Auditorium one of the top performing arts centers in the Midwest.

Bob has spent nearly forty years cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with a global network of performers, booking agents and fellow directors. Add to that his deep knowledge of the local community and the result each year is a performing

arts season that provides an extraordinary balance of virtuosity, technical quality, intellectual stimulation, educational opportunities, and pure enjoyment.

“Our goal each year,” says Bob, “is to inspire audiences to broaden their horizons and to provide transformative experiences for both audiences and artists.”

The final critical element in the success of the Auditorium is extraordinary friends and I’m thankful that we have many. **Marsha Narmont**, Senior Vice President for Marketing at United Community Bank in Springfield, is one of them. Marsha was introduced to the performing arts as a child in St. Louis, where her father managed the Kiel Auditorium – famous in those years not only for its opera, but also as one of North America’s most well-known professional wrestling venues. “UCB supports Sangamon Auditorium,” she says, “because my husband and I both love it and because it provides such important learning opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds in the community.”

The 2014-2015 season is now well underway and there are dozens of exceptional performances and hundreds of exciting artists soon to be on stage. This year, with our new mobile app, it’s easier and faster than ever to explore upcoming shows and purchase tickets. You can download it for free from the website at www.SangamonAuditorium.org. I hope to see you at an upcoming performance!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Positive Impact of Faculty, August 2014

My calendar signals that students will soon be arriving for the start of the Fall, 2014 semester at the University of Illinois’ Springfield campus. At the same time we’re greeting students, we’ll also be welcoming 24 new faculty; newcomers from across the country and around the world who will join a community of creative and dedicated professors at UIS and who will also become residents of the Springfield area. These new arrivals are part of what author Thomas Friedman calls the “human intellectual capital” that is such an essential element of a thriving 21st century community ... and that is the bedrock of a high-quality university.

Beverly Bunch will be a great example for those new faculty. Dr. Bunch grew up in Macomb, Illinois and earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), an M.P.A. from the prestigious Maxwell School at Syracuse University and a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon. An expert on budgeting and financial management, Beverly was wooed to UIS in 2001 from UT Austin – another state capitol university. She was attracted to UIS by the opportunity to prepare future leaders for work in government and the non-profit sectors as well as by an appointment in the Center for State Policy and Leadership

where she does collaborative research on public affairs issues. Reflecting on her teaching, she says:

“There are so many things I can teach my students that they can use. Many are already employed and they are eager to learn things they can apply in their work.”

It seems that both the campus and the community benefit from the “intellectual capital” that Dr. Bunch provides. She chairs the UIS Campus Planning and Budgeting Committee, an important group that provides input for decision-making at the University and she also chairs a panel of volunteers who make funding recommendations for the United Way of Central Illinois. Beverly and her family are big fans of Springfield’s Washington Park, where she walks her dog every day. She can also be found Saturday mornings at the Lincoln Home historic site – volunteering as a tour guide.

And speaking of Lincoln, we may be able to thank Springfield’s most famous citizen for helping to attract another faculty member to UIS. **Holly Kent** is a historian who specializes in the early U.S. republic and antebellum eras. A native of New Jersey with a Ph.D. from Lehigh University, Dr. Kent joined the History Department in 2011 in part because of Springfield’s Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

“As an undergraduate,” says Dr. Kent, “I attended a small liberal arts college and I’ve appreciated being part of a similar faculty here that invests in young scholars. We’re encouraged to innovate and I enjoy introducing students to things that make them feel productively uncomfortable.”

In a just a few years, Dr. Kent has sunk roots in Springfield, which she cheerfully calls her “first Mid-Western experience”. She collaborates often with the ALPLM, including for a presentation on Hollywood’s interpretation of 19th century women’s fashions (now on You Tube). Holly lives within walking distance of Springfield’s downtown where “there is always something new and interesting going on.” She is a regular at the popular downtown farmer’s market and the new Wm. Van’s Coffee House that opened this past year in a historic Italianate mansion across the street from the Lincoln Visitors Center.

Dorine Brand can truthfully claim that she has been a member of all three University of Illinois communities. A native of Chicago, Dr. Brand earned her undergraduate degree at UIUC, a Masters of Public Health at UIC (in Chicago) and then returned to Urbana-Champaign to earn her Ph.D. before joining the UIS Public Health faculty in 2012. Dr. Brand’s research examines the role of faith-based organizations in reducing health disparities and she has found the Springfield African American community to be a welcoming grassroots partner for her work.

“Public Health is a hands-on discipline,” says Dr. Brand, “and my students need to be involved in the community in order to see outside their own experience.”

Her classes often involve an element of community service where students assist with health screenings, fitness programs, nutrition lessons and other culturally-appropriate programming that fosters healthy lifestyles. In fact, Dr. Brand will be doing just that later this month when her outreach program is part of the Family Fun Fest at Springfield’s Emmanuel Temple COGIC.

One of the best things about being a university chancellor is the opportunity to enable and witness firsthand the positive impact of faculty – the intellectual capital of the university – on students, on campus culture and on the broader community. With 24 new faculty soon to join us at UIS, I’m looking forward to the further expansion of that intellectual capital in the coming academic year.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: CAP Scholars, September 2014

A front page headline a few days ago in Springfield’s *State Journal Register* announced a record enrollment at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. That’s great news for both the campus and for the larger Springfield community – where UIS students live, work, volunteer and contribute to the local economy.

I’m pleased, most assuredly, with our continued growth; but it is equally gratifying to know that the reputation of UIS across the region continues to advance.

Achieving excellence has been a consistent strategic goal for the faculty and staff at UIS and one of the best examples of that excellence is the Capital Scholars Honors Program.

Established in 2001 when the UIS campus first admitted freshmen, the [CAP Scholars program](#) welcomes about 120 highly-qualified and motivated students each year who have been selected to participate in a unique and challenging residential college experience.

[At the heart of the CAP Scholars program is an understanding that the problems facing today’s world](#) are complex and solutions often require the application of knowledge from many different areas of study. For that reason, the program is centered on an engaging interdisciplinary curriculum where exceptional UIS

faculty challenge students to investigate, debate and think critically about the complexities of today's society.

The development of leadership skills – what Honors Program Director Mark Klingshirn calls “finding their inner leader” – is also a major emphasis of the honors experience. An Honors Global Awareness requirement encourages participants to gain an appreciation of cultures other than their own and enables students to study abroad and learn other languages.

[CAP Scholars has served as a launching pad for many talented students](#) since that first class arrived on campus over a decade ago. **Mark Frakes** is a good example. A Chemistry major from Champaign, Illinois, Mark was president of the Chemistry Club, a leader of the Christian Student Fellowship Team and a volunteer for Big Brothers Big Sisters. He graduated with honors in 2012 and is now a third-year medical student at the University of Illinois College of Medicine in Rockford, Illinois.

Priyanka Deo (from Chicago) is another great example. While at UIS she was captain of the UIS Women's Varsity Tennis Team, participated in Model United Nations (chairing the national Model UN General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York), was named a Student Laureate of the prestigious Illinois Lincoln Academy, and was student commencement speaker in 2010 when she graduated with honors. Priyanka is now pursuing two Masters degrees – one at the London School of Economics and the other at the USC Annenberg School of Communication.

Matt Dobill, who is from Bloomington, Illinois, helped found the award-winning UIS Forensics (Speech) Team while pursuing his undergraduate degree in Legal Studies. He also studied abroad in Argentina (becoming fluent in Spanish) and volunteered with the UIS-based Illinois Innocence Project to gain practical experience in preparation for law school. Matt graduated just a few months ago and is now studying at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles.

Political Studies alum **Holly Fowler**, who was in the third class of CAP Scholars, may describe the experience best when she says:

“The CAP Scholars program provided me with incredible connections that I never could have made otherwise – connections to ideas, to questions, to understandings, to opportunities and to friends who remain an important part of my extended family today.” I'm proud to say Holly now works for UIS as our Alumni Relations Officer.

The UIS Capital Scholars Honors Program is a central element in our growth as one of the nation's premier public liberal arts universities and one of the three campuses of the world-class University of Illinois. I'm grateful to the many UIS faculty and staff who have contributed to the development of this exceptional program and I look forward to the many contributions our CAP Scholars graduates will make to communities in Illinois and beyond.

SJR Column: Summer Camps, July 2014

Summer months bring a somewhat different pace to the UIS campus. It's a time when many students go home to a summer job while others stay on to take summer classes – accelerating their progress toward graduation. Orientation programs bring new students and their parents to campus almost weekly, many faculty are engaged off campus in research or professional development, and various construction projects are fast-tracked for completion before the opening of the fall term.

But summer is also a time when one high-energy population at UIS greatly increases! I'm talking about kids – the hundreds of young people who come to UIS in summer to participate in an increasingly wide variety of summer camps.

[One popular camp at UIS is Girl Tech – an innovative technology program for middle school girls.](#) Conducted under the leadership of Computer Science instructor **Mary Sheila Tracy** and funded in part by gifts from the Tracy Family Foundation and Horace Mann, Girl Tech is designed to address the technology gender gap in the STEM professions – Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. According to the National Center for Women and Information Technology, women comprise more than half the U.S. workforce yet they play only a small part in inventing the technology of tomorrow. The problem is a “pipeline” issue – starting in middle school and continuing through college. At UIS, for example, only 53 of the 423 undergraduates currently majoring in Computer Science (about 12%) are women.

[Participants in Girl Tech are immersed in creative tech topics and activities.](#) In one session the girls make and program their own robotic companion to take home. In another they use Gimp (a scaled-down version of Photoshop) to create a design and print it on their own t-shirt. The whole idea, says Professor Tracy, is to help girls experience how much fun and how creative computing can be ... and ultimately for them to see Computer Science careers as a viable and appealing option.

Youth sports camps, of course, are popular summer activities for kids and [UIS Athletics offers camps including soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball and golf.](#) UIS Head Baseball Coach **Chris Ramirez**, who led the Prairie Stars to a historic 28 wins and their first conference tournament appearance this year, is a big believer in youth sports camp experiences. A recent upgrading of UIS baseball facilities has helped make his camp expansion possible. “It's part of our mission to be a resource for the people in this area,” says Coach Ramirez. “We get to work hands-on with

young kids, improving their fundamentals and making lasting connections with our campers and their parents.”

The baseball program offers instructional programs for younger children (Future Stars camps), as well as an August Baseball Showcase – an opportunity for high school players who are interested in playing college ball to showcase their skills to the UIS baseball staff and other college coaches who attend.

Head Women’s Soccer Coach **Molly Grisham** brought a new concept in youth camps to UIS this summer – the Girls in Sports Leadership Academy. The GSLA is for high school female athletes; but rather than improving sports performance, the focus of this 3-day residential experience is on developing leadership skills not just for sports, but for all aspects of life. Student-athletes, some of whom came from as far away as Chicago and St. Louis, engaged in a variety of activities focused on topics including the characteristics of great leaders, communication skills and team dynamics. They also participated in a community service project and had opportunities to meet several former college athletes who went on to successful careers and leadership roles after college. “Young female athletes need more visible female role models,” says Coach Grisham, “so that they can emulate their style of leadership.” Feedback on the GSLA has been very positive and Coach Grisham plans to expand the camp next year.

By the middle of August, several hundred elementary and high school students will have spent time on the UIS campus participating in a summer camp. I’m glad we can be a resource for the community in this way and I like to think that at least some of those campers will be back on the UIS campus a few years down the road – pursuing their University of Illinois degree!

[A complete listing of summer youth camp opportunities is available on [the UIS website](#).]

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2014

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 21, 2014

Good afternoon!

Thank you all so much for coming to this University of Illinois at Springfield Fall 2014 Convocation.

It's great to see all of you here!

I want to begin today by offering a special welcome to all of our faculty and staff who are new to the UIS academic community this year.

Congratulations on your appointment!

I hope you feel, as I most certainly do, that it is a privilege to be part of one of the finest educational institutions in the country, the University of Illinois, and that working with students and on behalf of students at this Springfield campus – whatever your role might be here – is important and meaningful.

Whether you are new to our academic community or seasoned I look forward to our work together this year.

As many of you know, this is my fourth year serving as your Chancellor.... in fact, I will be the senior Chancellor within the University of Illinois enterprise in a few months.... so I guess you could say that I'm also in that "seasoned" category.

This is also my 34th Fall on a college campus and I am looking forward to this fall 2014 semester with even more anticipation than I felt in my first year as an assistant professor at the University of Northern Iowa.

I want to offer a warm welcome to some special guests who have joined us for Convocation today: (please stand when I introduce you and I promise you we'll provide a rousing round of applause after everyone has been introduced):

- Michael Houston, Mayor of the City of Springfield;
- Trustee of the University of Illinois, former Mayor of Springfield and strong supporter of our campus, Karen Hasara;
- UIS Chancellor Emeritus and still wonderful advocate for our University, Dr. Naomi Lynn; and her husband, Bob;
- Longtime UIS academic leader and also great friend of UIS, Dr. Harry Berman and his wife, Deborah;
- Dr. James Applegate, Executive Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education;
- Ms. Jennifer Gill, Superintendent of Springfield Public School District 186;
- Victoria Ringer, Executive Director, Downtown Springfield, Inc.
- University of Illinois Student Trustee and UIS Senior in Global Studies and Secondary Education, Hannah Cave;
- Professor Bill Kline, Vice-Chair of the Senate Executive Committee, who is here to represent the Campus Senate today;
- Chair of the UIS Academic Professional Advisory Committee, Teresa Szabo;
- President of the UIS Civil Service Advisory Council, Bobbie Fults;
- Joe McGee, President of the UIS Student Government Association and a Senior in Political Science;
- Ms. Wendy Tao, President of Bluestone Consulting, and a great partner with UIS in the continuing development of our relationships in China;

- And I'd also like to welcome my "personal" special guest, my husband, Dennis Koch, who, though he has his own busy career in agriculture, is himself a wonderful supporter and advocate for our university.

Please join me in welcoming all of these special guests to our convocation.

Last year in my convocation remarks, I spent time with you reflecting back at some length on the previous year before turning our attention to the days ahead.

Today, if you'd like to look back, I refer you to the Chancellor's "[End-of-year](#)" message from just a few months ago – which you can find on the Chancellor's Office website.

That message details, as you may recall, the exciting and productive year we had together this past year – a year that was intently focused on our three strategic priorities:

- growth in both reputation and enrollment,
- the acquisition and retention of talented faculty and staff,
- and providing the facilities needed to support a comprehensive student learning and living experience.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together ... in a very challenging time here in Illinois.... and I am deeply appreciative of all of you who have worked so hard to put students first and create those accomplishments.

I'm also grateful that we have created together an open, accountable, and transparent environment where shared governance is truly lived; particularly in terms of decisions that affect our students, our faculty and staff, and the future of university.

That's no accident and I want to assure you that my efforts (and the efforts of other members of our leadership team) to be present with you, listen to you and live our commitment to shared governance, accountability and transparency each day will continue in the coming year and beyond.

But today, rather than spending any of this brief time looking back, I'm going to focus on the future – here at the beginning of our 45th year.

I'll do so first by naming some of the challenges that will affect us in the immediate future and then, more importantly, I'll describe how we are addressing those challenges to best position the Springfield campus for continued success.

Challenges ahead:

So let's start with a somewhat sobering list of challenges – a list that is by no means all inclusive:

You won't be surprised to hear that the funding of public higher education in Illinois is at the top of the list. (I'll say more about that in a moment.)

Closely related to the funding challenge is the issue of affordability – although UIS tuition is affordable, comparatively speaking, we're increasingly at risk in our state, as Dr. Applegate has said many times this past year, of pricing qualified students out of postsecondary education (an issue of vital interest to our Board of Trustees).

Competition from an increasingly wide array of educational providers, including for-profit providers, is another challenge;

... as are new and emerging technologies that are changing the way faculty teach and the way students learn; and that have major budget implications for every educational institution.

The need for us to be respectful, inclusive and responsive to an increasingly diverse student body is another challenge.

UIS Strategies:

So – what are we doing to address these challenges?

Well first, let me remind you that we have a foundation that continues to hold firm.

We are one of three campuses of the world-class University of Illinois, an institution whose mission to “transform lives and serve society” extends back almost 150 years and whose reputation for excellence is recognized around the world.

This campus was founded in 1970 by a group of visionary leaders, faculty and citizens with a commitment to innovation and, thanks to the contributions of many, actions taken in accord with the campus 2006 Strategic Plan have advanced UIS significantly.

The series of dialogues, forums and conversations held across campus and in the community 3 years ago (in my first year as Chancellor) affirmed the validity of our foundations and the directions set in the 2006 plan. The Strategic Planning Update completed last summer detailed a consensus around our three strategic priorities:

- growth,
- talent,
- facilities.

What are we doing about the funding/budget issues? We are not alone! We are partners with the larger University of Illinois enterprise, our Board of Trustees, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, our Illinois Connections Alumni Network and

friends of higher education across our state in advocating for investments in higher education.

We managed to do pretty well this past year, at the state level, with essentially flat funding, but we are also realistic. We are keenly aware of the economic outlook in our state and the likelihood, given the ongoing pension crisis and other factors, that state funding for higher education in the next several years is anything but secure.

We are being exceedingly careful and strategic with every budget decision. We will continue to follow those guiding budget principles that we discussed in the budget forum this past April and we will be responsible and accountable in the management of our resources at every level. At the same time, we will continue to make strategic investments that support our three priorities.

The Campus Planning and Budget Committee, led so ably by Professor Beverly Bunch, will continue to play a central role in planning and decision-making in the future.

As you all know, our growth priority is central to budget stability because, as you have heard me say so often, it is tuition that drives the revenue engine of the university more than any other factor.

In part because of our youth, we have the smallest number of undergraduate majors of any public campus in the state. The new academic programs in high demand areas, as well as innovations that will increase enrollment within existing majors that many of you are working on, are critically important and urgently needed.

Our new and targeted recruitment strategies, including the Leadership lived promise, continue to be deployed and are making us more visible throughout the state. Creating awareness of the Springfield campus of the UI and the high quality educational experience that we provide is an ongoing effort. Strategic marketing and recruitment are essential if we are to compete effectively for highly-qualified students and increase access to the University of Illinois degree.

Our faculty, through their research, continue to make important contributions across many disciplines, creating new knowledge and putting that knowledge to work. I want to acknowledge that the outcomes of faculty research – the publications, presentations and creative activities – also enhance the visibility and the reputation of our university.

Our ranking as the #1 regional public campus in Illinois is a direct reflection of the excellence of the educational experience that our faculty and staff provide for students and one of the best recruiting tools we have in our tool box.

Recent restructuring of financial aid and a very significant increase in fund-raising success for scholarships is helping us to substantially impact the affordability issue.

The new student employment initiative that we implemented last year (and that is

being expanded further this semester) is paying off – providing more on-campus jobs for students and assisting them to pay college costs.

How many of you know what a UIS Freshman will be charged this year for tuition and fees?

That amount is \$9,376.80; which puts us just below the middle of the public higher education institutions in Illinois.

However, only about 1/3 of our students pay that full “sticker price,” thanks to effective financial aid deployment and increasing scholarship support.

We are competitive in price and the most affordable UI campus – and we are increasingly so because of our efforts to address the affordability issue proactively.

I mentioned competition from an increasingly wide array of educational providers as another of our challenges a few minutes ago.

Do you know how many higher education institutions we have in Illinois – just in Illinois?

Well, according to the IBHE, there are 192 – including 48 community colleges, 12 public campuses, 97 private colleges and 35 for-profits.

You might be interested to hear that the three University of Illinois campuses were the only public campuses in Illinois that grew in enrollment this past year. The good news is that our enrollment numbers look strong for this fall as well – with the official count due on September 8.

A concern, however, as Bobbi Fults, Administrative Associate in the Department of Computer Science, knows better than anyone, is that our current growth is skewed toward a few high-demand areas, while several other areas of enrollment are declining or are stagnant.

Clearly prospective students have many choices and they make those choices based on a wide variety of factors. I’ve already mentioned the need for more academic options, especially at the undergraduate level; but another critically important factor in a prospective student’s decision is campus facilities.

That’s why we have placed such a high priority right now on the Student Union – a facility that we currently lack.

Students today expect (and I think deserve) the facilities necessary to support a comprehensive university experience. I’m delighted to tell you that the design-development phase of the Student Union project was completed last month. The vision that our student union committee created – what our architect’s refer to as a “thick space,” that will bring the campus and our larger community together – is

now a reality. We're right on schedule and plan to break ground next spring or early summer.

I look forward to celebrating a ribbon-cutting at the entrance to the Student Union in a couple of years from now with everyone in this room and many more alumni, donors, and friends!

Let me briefly mention two other challenges that we are addressing and then I'll close these remarks with a very short story:

The challenge of new and emerging technologies that are changing the way faculty teach and the way students learn is a reality ... and one that many in this room know better than I do. The leadership and innovation of talented faculty and staff has positioned us well in this regard; but we must always be pushing innovation forward.

Just this week, for example, I had the opportunity to learn from UIS Chemistry professor Layne Morsch and Associate Provost for Information Technology Farokh Eslahi about the iPad pilot program that faculty in the sciences are implementing this year. This is truly innovation on the cutting-edge ... and it is improving students' engagement in their learning.

We will continue to support and enable in every way possible the flow of creativity that comes from faculty and staff who are collaborating so successfully in the Center for Online Learning, Research and Service and, at the same time, encourage technology innovation in other areas.

Though many people on our campus are engaged in that technology innovation, I want to offer my sincere appreciation today to two members of our academic community who are usually unheralded and whose leadership and dedication is vital on this campus at literally every moment.

I'm talking about Farokh Eslahi, our CIO, and Munindra Khaund, Director of UIS Web Services.

A big thank you to both of you and your teams of talented professionals who provide the expertise, services and resources that enable so much of our success!

The final challenge that I want to address today is one that I have been thinking about for the past two weeks more than any other. That challenge is the imperative for us to be inclusive and responsive to the demographics of our student body.

We all know that our student body is increasingly diverse. In fact, we will very likely have the most diverse student body in history on our campus this year, including a record number of international students.

What an incredible opportunity this presents for us to truly and fully enact Goal Four of our Strategic Plan:

to establish an atmosphere that contributes to the intellectual, cultural, social and personal enrichment of all members of our campus community; to be a community that is infused with an appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives and to provide a learning environment that is inclusive and safe for every individual regardless of their age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic background or any other dimension of diversity.

I think you will agree with me that we've made progress in some areas related to diversity; but we have a long way to go.

You're probably tired of hearing me say that the diversity of our student body is not adequately reflected in our faculty and staff.

Believe me, I'm tired of saying it and I'm frustrated that we've not made more progress.

I'm extremely pleased that concerted and sustained efforts led to the hiring of two highly qualified African Americans to join our campus Police Department this past spring. But despite that success, the hiring and retention of a talented and diverse faculty and staff – and I would argue fully achieving the fourth goal in our strategic plan– has remained an elusive goal.

Some of you will remember that Kerry Poynter, Director of the UIS LBGTQ Resource Center, called me out on this point last Spring at the campus forum and essentially asked me: “When are you going to stop talking about it and do something!”

(Thanks for that, Kerry.)

I'm announcing today that I am forming a Chancellor's Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion. We will invest in this effort, seeking outside expertise to assist us. I will charge this special task force early in the semester to examine best practices and present recommendations for action within the year.

In the meantime, I am asking each of you today to do everything you can do, whatever your role on the campus, to be welcoming, inclusive and supportive of all of our students, whatever their backgrounds, and to seek opportunities to learn about and better understand the wonderful asset that diversity really is for our campus, for the student experience and for the larger Springfield community.

(One of those opportunities, by the way, is being offered the evening of September 4th here in Springfield at Southeast High School when UIS alum Teresa Haley, President of the local NAACP, will convene a community meeting to talk about race relations in Springfield in the wake of the Ferguson shooting. I plan to participate along with UIS Diversity Center staff member Justin Rose and SGA President Joe McGee. I hope you will consider joining us.)

Let me close with a brief student story:

Many in this room know Dexter Burns, who graduated this past Spring. Dexter spent four years at UIS, majored in Global Studies, studied abroad in both Mexico and Peru, became a fluent Spanish speaker and is, at this very moment, in Urbana, where he has received a fully-funded opportunity to pursue a graduate degree in Latin American Studies. Dexter plans a career in international diplomacy.

But what you probably don't know is that Dexter was admitted to UIS in the Fall of 2010 with three classmates who graduated together from Chicago's inner-city South Shore High School. They all had similar backgrounds – academically qualified “on paper” but, in reality, seriously under-prepared for college. Each was also a first generation African American college student with little understanding of the challenges they would face as they attempted to achieve their dream of becoming the first college graduate in the family.

Like the many members of Dexter's family who I met at our Commencement this past May, I am exceedingly proud of Dexter and his achievements.

But the point of my story is really not Dexter. The point of my story is Dexter's three classmates. You see, Dexter is the only one of the four of those students who made it to Commencement.

The other three young men are part of what the Illinois Board of Higher Education calls the “leaky student pipeline.”

To be sure, a major factor may simply have been grit. Dexter tells me that they all knew they were “in over their heads” within the first few days of class; but Dexter just would not give up.

(He also told me he was terrified to go home and have to face his Aunt who had so much faith in him.)

Dexter accepted criticism and tried to learn from it, he listened, he worked harder when harder work was necessary.

But, most importantly, (and, according to Dexter, this was the critical difference between his experience and that of his three high school friends) – several UIS staff and faculty helped Dexter to get connected. Dr. Clarice Ford got him involved in Diversity Center programs; Professor Hilary Frost and other UIS faculty recognized his potential and provided encouragement at the same time they set high expectations; Dr. GoldbergBelle, Director of International Programs, helped make studying abroad possible.

I don't think we can know exactly what went wrong with Dexter's high school classmates; but I'm asking you to join me this year in making a personal commitment to “plug some of those leaks” in our student pipeline.

I'm asking you to "keep an eye out" for students like Dexter's former classmates – whether they are first-year students, transfer students, returning students or even graduate students.

I'm asking you be more vigilant for students who don't seem to be connecting.

I'm asking you to do something extra to enable at least one more student to be successful.

If every one of our 1,100 faculty and staff made that effort this year – imagine the impact it would have on retention and student success!

So the bottom line, as I see it, is this:

Yes, there are challenges ahead; but thanks to who we are as an academic community, and as long as we all work together as colleagues to achieve our priorities, I am confident that we will continue to provide that intellectually-rich student experience that lies at the heart of our mission and that has prepared almost 35,000 SSU and UIS graduates to make a difference in Illinois and in the world.

UIS is a place where leadership is lived every day.

Thank you for the leadership that you live every day, whatever your role may be here at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois.

I want you to know that I am proud to be part of this community and I appreciate your contributions very much.

Best wishes for a successful and satisfying year.

Thank you.

SJR Column: Campus Grounds, June 2014

I often ask students what the deciding factors were in their choice of the University of Illinois's Springfield campus as the place where they would pursue their college degree. Though academic reputation, small class size and reasonable cost are often mentioned, students also tell me that they fell in love with the campus itself when they made their first visit. I guess that's proof that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. In fact, research shows that [a beautiful and functional campus is often a deciding factor in a prospective student's college choice](#).

The UIS campus consists of 750 acres and it is, indeed, beautiful. About half of the property is still Class A prime agricultural land –

deep (and valuable) Ipava soil that rotates, like most active farmland in Central Illinois, between crops of corn and soybeans.

A talented and dedicated crew of 12 landscape professionals and grounds workers maintains the other 350 or so acres of the campus. That includes 6.5 miles of streets and roads (13 of which are named after Illinois authors), 7 miles of sidewalks, over 400 different types of trees and shrubs, about 2,000 perennial and annual plants, a pond, and acres of lawn and sports fields. It's no wonder that the campus grounds are a popular destination, not just for students and youth soccer players, but also for local walkers, runners and bikers who can be seen daily making their way around the ring road rimmed with those lovely October Glory red maple trees.

I recently asked **Joan Buckles**, the talented horticulturalist who leads the UIS landscape team, how they manage to do it all -season after season. Joan was quick to point out that training, experience and dedication make all the difference. The 12 UIS employees who maintain the campus grounds collectively represent over 150 years of public landscaping experience and include four individuals who've earned horticulture degrees!

Each season brings its unique challenges and, of course, this past winter that was especially so. **Brian Beckerman**, who handles much of the snow removal on campus, said that plowing this year "seemed like it was never-ending." In fact, Brian stayed overnight on campus several times to ensure that the roads would be cleared for students and staff for early morning classes.

According to Buckles, Mother Nature most definitely keeps things both interesting and unpredictable. In the past few years, the crew has dealt with multiple droughts, at least one harsh winter, hot and humid summers, flooding, and severe straight-line wind storms, one of which destroyed the campus greenhouse. Add to varying weather conditions, regular encounters with resident skunks, deer, groundhogs, possum, geese, raccoons, ducks, foxes and coyotes and it's probably safe to say that no day on the grounds crew is likely to be the same as the day before.

[Joan and her team are especially proud of the steady improvements they've made to the campus grounds](#) in recent years, particularly the diversity of plant material that has been added to enhance the attractiveness of the landscape no matter what the season. Though a few trees like the mammoth cottonwood near Spencer House and the large ash trees at Strawbridge-Shepherd House go back to homestead days, a unique Persian Ironwood, with its beautiful ornamental bark and stem structure, is a more recent addition as are numerous dwarf and skinny evergreens. Perhaps our most unusual botanical specimen is a large (and seldom-seen) bald cyprus tree on the edge of campus property just off the YMCA soccer fields. Like the cyprus trees more commonly found in the swamps of southern Illinois, ours has developed knees and tangles of roots above ground – a sure sign that it has plenty of water underneath.

It's actually a regular occurrence for faculty or staff members, students and campus visitors to stop a member of the UIS grounds crew just to express their appreciation

for the beauty of the campus and the great work they do. For Joan Buckles, that work will come to an end when she retires later this month. We're going to celebrate her contributions by planting a tree in her honor. She is leaving the campus in the very capable hands of Brian and the rest of the team and I'm confident that many more [students will "fall in love with the campus itself" in years to come](#).

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

End-of-year Message, May 2014

Thursday, May 15, 2014

Dear Colleagues:

As we approach commencement this Saturday, the purpose of this letter is to continue the ongoing series of regular communications from the Chancellor to the UIS community on issues of importance to the university and to look ahead to the next few months. At this, the end of my third year serving as your Chancellor, I'm so pleased with the positive momentum we have created together and I am grateful for the faculty and staff who contribute every day to the advancement of our university.

As many of you know, we hosted the University of Illinois Board of Trustees for their meetings this week and I was pleased that the Board approved our new major in **Elementary Education**. The new major will contribute to our growth priority, enabling us to make Elementary Education more visible to prospective students in the area at the same time it aligns our education program with new state requirements.

A special feature of the May UI BOT meeting was our collaboration with the **Lincoln Presidential Museum** to host the Board, legislators and guests for a dinner in the rotunda of the museum, one of our state's greatest cultural resources. I was delighted to introduce as the evening's speaker UIS faculty member **Dr. Michael Burlingame**, one of our state's greatest intellectual resources. It's been said that Dr. Burlingame "...knows more about Abraham Lincoln than any other living person". It was a wonderful way to feature our campus to a distinguished audience. My sincere thanks to all who contributed to a very successful series of Board events this week.

As I reflect back on the 2013-14 academic calendar, I'm really appreciative of the regular meetings and many important consultations with campus leaders this year. My sincere thanks to **Lynn Fisher**, Senate Chair, and **John Transue**, **Kathy Jamison** and **Holly Thompson** who served with Lynn on the Senate Executive Committee. Thanks also to **Teresa Szabo** who led the APAC so ably and to **Bobbi Fults** who is an exceptional leader of CSAC. Shared governance works well at UIS

because we all work at it and it has been particularly helpful this year given the challenges we've faced.

UIS student leaders also played a central role this year in advocating for student interests and concerns, which is so critical to our continued growth in both reputation and enrollment.

- SGA President **Aaron Mulvey** has received the Donovan Pepper Award for Outstanding Student Leadership and he has earned it!
- Student trustee and Computer Science major **Jamaal Hollins** will graduate this Saturday and start his new job at State Farm a week later. I am grateful to Jamaal for representing UIS and our students exceptionally well on the Board of Trustees.

It has been a pleasure to share in celebrating the contributions of several exceptional staff members this year.

- **Janice Marvel** (Facilities and Scheduling Services) was recognized with the CARE Award for excellence in Civil Service;
- **Tara Sweeting-Trotter** has received the CAPE Award for outstanding performance by an Academic Professional and
- **Carolyn Neitzke** is our UIS Employee of the Year.

Faculty honors awarded this year included:

- **Dr. Hua Chen** (Biology) – University Scholar
- **Dr. Leonard Branson** (Accounting) – Faculty Excellence Award
- **Dr. Donna Bussell** (English) – Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching,
- **Dr. Beverly Bunch** (Public Administration) – Spencer Award for Exemplary Service, and
- **Dr. Karen Swan** (Educational Leadership) – Oakley Distinguished Online Teaching Award.
- **Dr. Patricia Byrnes** (Economics) and **Dr. Ann Strahle** (Communication) – China Faculty Exchange Scholars for 2014 and 2015, respectively. (Each will spend a summer as Scholar in Residence at Heilongjiang University.)

My congratulations and sincere thanks to each of our award winners for all that you contribute to our campus.

As we all know, there is no shortage of leadership at UIS. I want to acknowledge and thank the **451 UIS employees** who took the time this semester to participate in the Leadership lived Workshops. I did as well and I appreciated the opportunity to learn more about my fellow UIS employees and about how, regardless of our roles, each of us can contribute to the promise of “Leadership lived.”

We've had an exciting and productive year here at UIS and we have remained intently focused on our three strategic priorities: **growth** in both enrollment and reputation, the recruitment and retention of **talented** faculty and staff, and

providing the **facilities** needed to support a comprehensive student learning and living experience. Here are just a few examples of our productivity this year:

- The UIS Provost's Office, in collaboration with SIU School of Medicine, has implemented the Caryl Towsley Moy Endowed Fund for Collaborative Research – a \$250,000 gift to UIS from the Moy family. Professor Karen Reinke (Psychology) and Dennis Ruez (Environmental Studies) are the first two UIS award recipients.
- UIS has received combined cash and other gift commitments totaling **\$5.49 million** this fiscal year as compared to \$2.28 million for the same period last year – a 140% increase in giving to UIS.
- The new student employment project (Leadership lived Experience) has been fully implemented and **32 students** now have on-campus jobs who did not have jobs previously, making the college experience more affordable for each of them.
- UIS faculty published more than **50 journal articles, seven books and 17 book chapters**. The faculty also produced **20 creative works** including several music concerts and two award winning plays.
- The UIS Prairie Stars athletics booster club has more than doubled its membership to nearly **400 members** (including 66 UIS employees).
- The **student union** building project continues on schedule with the BOT approving the project in January and the final design phase nearly completed. We expect to break ground in Spring, 2015.
- We've created a significant increase in **alumni engagement** this year with many well-attended events in Springfield as well as alumni events in Chicago, St. Louis, Naples, Phoenix and (in June) Washington, D.C.
- Brookens Library launched a **Kindle Fire lending service** and now offers over 76,000 e-books that can be accessed electronically.
- **International Student Services** and the **ESL Program** have provided extraordinary support and many new activities for the increasing number of international students on campus.
- The new **Center for Academic Success** officially opened in March – a one-stop academic support shop for students.
- UIS athletes broke more than **20 school records** this year, at the same time a record **111** student athletes made the Athletics Academic Honor Roll and **10 earned a perfect 4.0 GPA**.
- The number of students living on campus increased by **11.3%** and purchases of food service meal plans increased by **26%**.
- The UIS men's baseball team played at **home** on an improved field (across the street from TRAC) for the first time this season.
- The **Safe Zone program** (a project that educates UIS staff and faculty to be better allies to LBGTQ) now has 130 trained members, up from 9 original members in 2010.
- A **shuttle bus service** has been successfully implemented that provides regular transportation for on-campus students to major commercial hubs around Springfield.

- Web Services has introduced an innovative **UIS website** that features large high-quality photos of campus activity and serves as a portal for our highly engaging social media.
- Our **Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement** has involved hundreds of UIS students in various projects that benefit the **Springfield community**.
- **Most importantly: This University of Illinois campus is growing in visibility, enrollment and reputation.**

We discussed at the recent Campus Forum in April the serious **challenges** that continue – including the ongoing pension crisis and the uncertainty of the state appropriation for the University. Several members of our faculty and staff have felt compelled to make retirement decisions early because of changes in pension formulas. The loss of these valuable members of our academic community is going to be difficult. President Easter and I, along with members of the Board of Trustees and UI leadership team, met with legislative leaders in the Capitol yesterday to stress the necessity of funding for higher education. As the legislative session moves to a conclusion, we'll keep you informed. If a major budget reduction becomes a reality during the next several weeks, we will reach out to faculty and staff leadership for consultation.

This **Saturday, May 17th**, it will be my privilege to shake the hands of **740** new graduates of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. We anticipate a capacity crowd and our commencement ceremony includes an address by distinguished alum **Donovan Pepper**. We will award an honorary degree to **Evelyn Brandt Thomas**, local philanthropist and co-founder of Brandt Industries. It will be a wonderful day!

Thank you for all that you've done to make this such a great year at UIS. Have a great summer, everyone!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Commencement, May 2014

Today marks just a few days from the end of the university semester and -by last count- 1,364 students are slated to complete their college degrees this spring at UIS. The University will celebrate this milestone on Saturday in Springfield's Prairie Capital Convention Center when several thousand graduates, faculty, staff, family members, dignitaries and friends will convene for our 43rd Commencement. Commencement at any university is always a very special day and, as Chancellor of UIS, I'm proud of every participant. But as I shake the hand of each graduate, I'll be aware that the path to graduation for some students has been much steeper

than for others. I spoke to a few students last week who have made that steep climb most successfully.

At age thirty-five, **Dane Vincent** is what higher education calls a “non-traditional-aged” student. His path to an undergraduate degree in Legal Studies has most certainly been non-traditional. Dane is from Jacksonville (a graduate of Girard High School) and, since there was no money for college, he went to work after high school as a police dispatcher. Dane eventually managed to enroll at Lincoln Land Community College in Jacksonville and later transferred to UIS, where he reports the Office of Financial Assistance helped him to “patch together” grants, scholarships, loans, student employment and other support to stay in school and complete his degree. “It’s definitely been a year-by-year situation,” Dane says, but his Mother is part of the reason he wanted so much to earn a college degree. “I don’t like disappointing her,” he says. “I want her to be proud of my accomplishments.” Dane’s parents are going to attend commencement and Dane’s prediction is that they will be “ecstatic!” He is looking toward a career in law enforcement and hopes to eventually earn a law degree.

Samia Ahmad is from Peotone, Illinois and is graduating with a double major in Political Science and Criminal Justice. The daughter of Palestinian immigrants, Samia is the oldest of her siblings and the first to attend college. Though neither of her parents had the opportunity to even complete high school, Samia says. “My parents have always pushed education.” When Samia was a senior in high school, she came to a UIS Preview Day, “fell in love” with the welcoming feeling of the campus and liked the idea of earning a U of I degree in a smaller setting. In order to pay for school almost entirely on her own, Samia has worked two jobs every semester in addition to carrying a full class load. In fact, during her sophomore year, she worked 60 hours per week at Panda Express (a job she loves) and another 20 hours per week in the UIS Admissions Office. Despite heavy financial responsibilities, she has also found time to become a campus leader, serving as Secretary of the Student Government Association and being active in other student activities. Samia will graduate with about \$26,000 of student debt – a little less than the average debt this year for Illinois graduates who have debt. Her mother has never visited UIS, but she will be coming to Springfield next weekend to see the campus ... and to attend her first-ever university commencement.

Dexter Burns is a Global Studies major who will also be a first generation college graduate a week from today. Dexter attended Chicago’s South Shore High School (which has since been closed) and he is one of only two members of his high school senior class who is graduating from college. Though he always got “A’s” in high school, Dexter learned quickly his freshman year that he was seriously under-prepared for the level of college work expected by his UIS professors. “It was a rude awakening, but I could take criticism and I was willing to grow,” says Dexter. “I got a lot of encouragement from UIS faculty and staff and besides, going home was not an option.” Dexter especially credits the Necessary Steps Program (a special program for at-risk students) for helping him through challenging times. While at UIS, Dexter has studied abroad in Peru and Mexico. He is now a fluent

Spanish-speaker and will be pursuing a graduate degree in Latin American Studies next fall at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign – on a full scholarship!

[Part of the vision of UIS is to prepare graduates who will make a difference in Illinois ... and in the world](#). I am supremely confident that Dane, Samia and Dexter, like so many of our graduates, will do just that. Congratulations, graduates

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Brookens Library, April 2014

One of my favorite locations on the University of Illinois Springfield campus is the Norris L. Brookens Library. Dedicated in 1976, the Library was the first permanent building on the campus. During the nearly four decades since its construction, the [Brookens Library, like many other academic libraries, has been transformed](#) to become much more than a repository and circulator of books. Thanks in part to the strong leadership of Library Dean **Jane Treadwell**, the legendary hushed atmosphere is long gone and in its place is a lively, digitally sophisticated, and entrepreneurial “learning commons” where professional librarians and peer support staff provide all manner of resources and services and make possible – for students, faculty, staff and visitors – the vibrant circulation of ideas.

And when you think of a librarian, what words come to mind? Quiet, stuffy, drab, timid, puritanical, strict, fastidious? Well, that’s another thing about libraries that has changed! **Sarah Sagmoen**, whose official title is Director of Learning Commons and User Services, is a perfect example. [Sarah has just been named a 2014 “Mover and Shaker” by the American Library Association](#). This prestigious national recognition is given each year to 50 emerging leaders in the library profession who are innovative and creative and who are moving libraries ahead to be more relevant and to better serve library users.

Sarah acquired her “customer service skills” at a young age. Growing up in Kewanee, Illinois, her parents both ran local businesses and, while in high school, Sarah worked at Heartfelt Gifts, her mother’s gift shop. As a graduate student in Library and Information Science at Chicago’s Dominican University, she managed a Lebanese restaurant.

Those early experiences have served Sarah – and UIS – exceedingly well. She now leads a team of 16 tech-savvy student employees who provide “roving reference” customer service throughout the Library and who use computers and iPads to assist library patrons to select and access resources; including over 40,000 e-journals, 200,000 e-books and 120 full-text multidisciplinary databases as well as over a half million print volumes.

“Students come to the library for many reasons,” says Sarah, “to participate in an information literacy class, to meet with a study group, to access electronic resources, to study on their own, to watch a video, to work on projects together, to meet for individual consultation with a librarian and, yes, even to check out books.”

“One of the biggest challenges for academic libraries today,” says Dean Treadwell, “is teaching students how to navigate the masses of information now available electronically. An essential part of information literacy,” she says, “is learning how to wade through, filter, evaluate and select the best resources.”

Whatever their needs, Brookens library patrons learn quickly that library staff are energetic, knowledgeable and creative and are there to help them. The old stereotypes of the librarian have disappeared and, according to Sarah, she gets shushed more often than she ever shushes someone else!

Like all of her colleagues in the Library, Sarah is passionate about working with students. “Some days that means I’m in the classroom teaching,” she notes. “Other days I’m supervising the library’s student book club, working with student support staff, creating new ideas for the annual Haunted Library or locating resources for a faculty member who is designing a new course.” Next week, Sarah will be standing knee-deep in mud. She volunteers each year to serve as a judge during the annual UIS Springfest tug-of-war – a popular campus event. We would expect nothing less from UIS’s own “Mover and Shaker!”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Emiquon, March 2014

Some of the most important opportunities that make up an exceptional university experience occur well beyond the classroom and the campus. For many students who attend the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, some of the best of those opportunities happen about an hour northwest of Springfield near Havana- at Emiquon.

In 2007, the Nature Conservancy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service identified this 7,000-acre stretch of land along the Western bank of the Illinois River to transform it from farmland back to its natural state – a river floodplain. The intent was to reestablish the ecological diversity that had once sustained generations of plant and animal life.

This remarkably successful project represents one of the first and largest river reclamation efforts anywhere in the world.

Recognizing that the reclamation would be a unique opportunity, UIS Biology professor **Dr. Michael Lemke**, whose research focuses on freshwater ecosystems, proposed that UIS partner with the Nature Conservancy to establish a field station at Emiquon to study and document this immense experiment. Today, Dr. Lemke serves as Director of the field station and, thanks to his leadership and the involvement of many other UIS faculty, staff and supporters, the UIS [Therkildsen Field Station has become a thriving, year-round, interdisciplinary teaching and research facility](#) that has hosted hundreds of scientists, teachers, students and interested visitors.

One such student is **Logan Benedict**. Logan is a UIS graduate student in Biology from Clinton, Illinois. He heard about Dr. Lemke and the field station from a family member and visited Emiquon before deciding where to go to graduate school.

“I’d never seen anything like it,” said Logan about his first visit. “I love the wildlife...and getting my hands dirty. You can’t find a more beautiful place to study.”

For his graduate project, Logan is conducting research on large-scale community shifts (fish, plankton and vegetation) in Thompson Lake and how those populations may have changed since the wetlands restoration began in 2007. His research will contribute to better understanding of the ongoing process of wetlands restoration – a topic of increasing importance around the world.

[Scientists and graduate students are not the only regular UIS visitors to Emiquon.](#) The Biology Department offers a popular freshman seminar titled ‘Emiquon Stories’, a course that brings first-year students (most of whom have never seen such a place) to Emiquon to experience the wetlands and hear from experts who offer different perspectives about the region’s past, present and future.

And biology is not the only area of study for which Emiquon and the Therkildsen Field Station is a valuable resource. Faculty in Chemistry, Environmental Science, Ecology, Education, Computer Science and Art have also used Emiquon for teaching and research. Since the location was a major Native American settlement centuries ago and includes the Dickson Mounds Museum as well as 149 known archeological sites, it also provides important study opportunities in Anthropology and Sociology. “Emiquon is a living laboratory,” says **Michael Cheney**, a professor in Communications who was also instrumental in establishing the field station. “It is an exceptional resource for both the university and the community.”

Major flooding along the Illinois River last Spring has created another research opportunity for the field station team. Dr. Lemke and UIS Chemistry professor **Keenan Dungey** have recently received a grant from the National Science Foundation to study the impact of the recent flooding on the wetlands restoration project. Part of the grant will provide financial support for UIS graduate and undergraduate students who are studying river ecology. The project will be done in

collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and with the Illinois River Biological Station and Forbes Biological Station, both of which are Illinois Natural History Survey facilities. Lessons learned from the research will be shared with public, government and private organizations through publications and field-based lectures and workshops for students and groups visiting Emiquon.

Speaking of visiting Emiquon, Thursday, March 27 would be an ideal time to do so. That is the date of the UIS Emiquon Field Station Eighth Annual Science Conference, which will be held at the Dickson Mounds Museum. This year's conference will feature presentations on wetlands and prairie restoration and the public is welcome. To register and get directions, visit the Emiquon field station website at <https://www.uis.edu/emiquon/>.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: WUIS, February 2014

Since its founding 40-plus years ago as Sangamon State University, the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois has sunk its roots deep into the Springfield area. The university and its growing alumni community contributes in countless ways to the economic, social and cultural advancement of the region at the same time that UIS students benefit from the university's location in Springfield and central Illinois. This intentional connection between campus and community is what the Carnegie Foundation defines as community engagement – "... collaboration between universities and their communities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity."

So where might U.S. President Lyndon Johnson fit into this discussion? Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act in 1967, establishing the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and opening the way for colleges across the country (including then SSU in Springfield) to develop a new way to serve their educational mission in the community – public radio.

Since its 1975 launch at 91.9 on the FM dial, WUIS public radio, an NPR affiliate, has grown to become an important daily presence in the lives of thousands of Illinois residents and one of the most important ways that UIS is engaged in the community.

According to station General Manager **Randy Eccles** [WUIS touches more than 30,000 unique listeners and several thousand visitors to the WUIS website each week](#).

[And what's so special about public radio and WUIS?](#) As every loyal member of the public radio community knows, it starts with the content. The NPR brand, according to Eccles, is amazingly strong because it respects the listener – providing thoughtful coverage of issues, ideas and events and unique musical programming that is simply not available anywhere else. NPR's most popular news broadcasts, the drive-time flagships *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* are the two most popular programs on the WUIS station – which is part of a network of more than 1,000 public radio stations across the U.S. that reaches nearly 33 million listeners.

Besides the popular NPR programming, [a much-valued aspect of WUIS is, of course, its unique focus on Illinois government](#). Taking full advantage of UIS's strengths in public affairs and our location in the state capital, [WUIS operates a Statehouse Bureau that is a respected presence in all aspects of Illinois government](#). The station's Illinois Public Radio Network feeds content to NPR stations throughout Illinois, extending the station's reach and engagement statewide.

One of the things I appreciate the most about WUIS's focus on state government is that it provides an exceptional training ground for students. **Amanda Vinicky** is a

great example. A native of LaGrange, Illinois, Amanda honed her public affairs reporting skills as a WUIS intern while pursuing her masters degree in UIS's nationally known Public Affairs Reporting program. She is now the Statehouse Bureau Chief for WUIS and her news stories are heard all around the state and sometimes nationwide. WUIS News Director **Sean Crawford** and reporters **Brian Mackey** and **Rachel Otwell** are also PAR graduates who developed their craft interning at the station. Current UIS student and Springfield resident **Dan LoGrasso** is another example. After serving a year of military service in Iraq, Dan started as a volunteer at WUIS and is now working as an intern while pursuing his degree.

One of the many dedicated supporters of WUIS and a member of the UIS Chancellor's Circle (a leadership-level donor group) is Springfield resident **David Farrell** who appreciates how WUIS has strengthened its local and regional coverage with the addition of the Harvest Desk, the Health Desk and a soon to open Education Desk, as well as Illinois Edition, the local daily news program at noon. "WUIS provides a wonderful smorgasbord of thoughtful and unique commentary about all aspects of modern life," says Farrell.

"I support WUIS because it serves a very valuable purpose in our community – reaching far and deep to provide real content that genuinely meets the needs and interests of its listeners."

Now that's what I call community engagement!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Holiday Message, December 2013

As we're closing out fall semester, I'd like to offer you this message of thanks:

Chancellor Koch

Civil Discourse Message - January 2014

January 29, 2014

Dear students, faculty and staff,

One of the guiding values of the University of Illinois is our commitment to “treat each other with dignity and respect.” If you have been following the media these past few days, you are aware that a small number of students at the UIUC campus, upset that classes had not been cancelled on Monday due to the cold weather, failed to live up to that aspiration when they posted racist, sexist and vulgar comments on social media aimed at Chancellor Phyllis Wise, whose office had announced that classes would be held. The negative comments quickly went viral and have brought national attention to the University of Illinois for the worst possible reasons.

Though even these juvenile and offensive comments are protected speech, they are deeply disappointing for a University that prides itself on its civility and that values its increasingly diverse academic community. If any good can come from such an unfortunate incident, it may be to serve as a reminder for all of us that every member of our campus community has a responsibility to temper personal opinion with respect and to express disagreement without resorting to personal attacks. A university is a place where diverse ideas and differing perspectives, along with debate and reasoned argument, are welcome; but culturally derogatory, sexist and intimidating comments have no place in our academic community.

Sincerely,

Chancellor Koch

P.S. A message from University of Illinois Board of Trustees Chairman, Christopher Kennedy and President Robert Easter can be found at:
<https://www.uillinois.edu/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1324&pageId=136978>

Welcome Message - Spring 2014

January 21, 2014

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

Welcome to the UIS 2014 Spring Semester! Though it is a little chilly outside this week, spring is on the way and we’re looking forward to an interesting and exciting

semester here on campus. I had the privilege of starting the semester yesterday by participating in Springfield's 39th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Breakfast. Illinois was the first state to declare Martin Luther King Jr. Day an official state holiday and it was wonderful, on this important day, to be among hundreds of members of the Springfield community, many of whom are UIS alumni and supporters, and be reminded of the ideals that guided the life of this great American hero.

It was my pleasure this past week to welcome more than 100 new international students from around the world to our academic community and I hope you will join me in offering an especially warm welcome to them, as well as to other students who are new arrivals at UIS this semester. With more than 1,100 course sections being launched this week, both on campus and online, UIS faculty are offering exceptional learning opportunities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. I encourage you to invest your efforts deeply in this abundance of opportunities to collaborate, learn and prepare for your future. I hope you'll also be mindful, at this start of a new semester, that we're all privileged to be part of this academic community and that creating a positive and supportive culture on campus for everyone is everyone's responsibility. A smile, a "Hello" and a helping hand can go a long way toward making someone feel a part of our community.

In addition to courses, the Spring, 2014 semester at UIS offers countless other opportunities for leadership, engagement and just plain enjoyment on campus and in the community. Our Center for Volunteer and Civic Engagement is a great place to start if you'd like to get involved and get some valuable experience that will complement your academic work. UIS is committed to being a "steward of place" in our community – making it a better place for everyone to work, learn and grow – and UIS students, faculty and staff donate thousands of hours of volunteer service every year.

Sangamon Auditorium is going to be a real hot spot on campus this semester and I hope you will attend at least one performing arts event this semester – especially if you have not yet been in our beautiful Auditorium. It all starts this week with the Broadway play "Hello Dolly" tomorrow night and "Junie B. Jones" on Friday evening. I'm also really looking forward to our Theatre program's performance of "How I Learned to Drive" in April.

I encourage you to support and enjoy our men's and women's basketball teams during the next several weeks of GLVC Conference play. Both the women and men are next at home in the TRAC this Thursday and Saturday and our student/athletes are providing many exciting moments on the court this season. We're also looking forward to Black History Month activities in February, Women's History Month in March, and of course, Springfest in April, a highlight of the Spring semester at UIS.

The next Chancellor-student gathering is being planned for February, co-sponsored by SGA and other student organizations. What will be the featured food? You'll have to wait for the announcement to find out; but I suspect it will start with a "C".

Dr. King said: “*The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of education.*”

Best wishes for a semester filled with intensive thinking!

– Chancellor Koch

Message from the Chancellor, December 2013

Dear Colleagues:

This December, 2013 campus letter is part of an ongoing series of regular communications from the Chancellor to the academic community on issues of importance to the university and to our overall mission and goals. I hope this letter and other communications continues to demonstrate our shared expectation for open and engaged leadership at UIS and a commitment to shared governance that reflects the values of the University of Illinois as well as the finest traditions of our Springfield campus.

You received a letter a few days ago from UI President Bob Easter and me providing the latest update on pension legislation. As expected, the Governor has since signed the legislation. We expect to be able to provide additional information in January. As mentioned in the earlier letter, we encourage UI employees, in the meantime, to follow information provided by SURS and the State Universities Annuitants Association (SUAA) (<http://www.suaa.org/>). With talent acquisition and retention remaining one of our top three priorities at UIS, I want you to know that we are committed to maintaining a competitive retirement program and we are exploring potential options that will enable us to do so.

My sincere thanks to all who contributed to hosting the University of Illinois Board of Trustees on the UIS campus last month. A highlight of this two-day event for the board and other distinguished visitors occurred when six members of the UIS faculty gave outstanding presentations as part of the *Campus Insights Program* – a time for each to talk about their research and their teaching. I heard many comments after the program about its excellence and I want to recognize professors David Bertaina, Beth Ribarsky, Atul Agarwal, Meagan Cass, Dorine Brand and Frances Shen for their contributions. I was also pleased to feature our Capital Scholars Honors program in the *Chancellor’s Welcome* remarks at the board meeting. Honors Program Director Marc Klingshirn, along with students Vivica Futrell and Matt Dobill provided a vivid description of this “point of pride” on our campus. Two exceptional UIS student-musicians from China also performed for the Board of Trustees meeting. Shao (Christine) Yu played a Chinese traditional instrument called the Gu Zheng, and Ying Han played the Gayagum. My thanks to Professor Abigail Walsh, Coordinator of the UIS Camerata Music Program, for

coordinating this outstanding performance. Finally, many thanks are due to the dozens of UIS staff members who contributed to the success of the Board of the Trustees meeting in so many ways. We can all be proud of the excellence and hospitality that Trustees and others experienced during their recent visit to the UIS campus.

It is only coincidental that two dialogues are occurring on campus presently – one about the UIS smoking policy and the other about the nickname for our athletic teams. As you may know, in order to promote a healthier living, learning, and working environment, many universities across the U.S. have implemented policies to eliminate smoking and/or tobacco use on campus. UIC, for example, implemented a tobacco-free policy on July 1, 2013 and UIUC will become smoke-free on January 1, 2014. The Smoking Policy Task Force, with the leadership of Human Resources Director Laura Alexander, has been studying the issue – examining best practices and gathering input from the campus community. I look forward to receiving their report in February.

I appreciate the robust conversation that has been taking place on campus and in the community regarding the name of our athletic teams – the Prairie Stars. With support provided by Student Affairs and Athletics, the SGA has led this discussion and many students, staff and alums have offered their views. I expect to have a report from SGA President Aaron Mulvey soon. I want to emphasize that no decision has been made about either of these issues – we have task forces, forums, and surveys in order to carefully consider options, get input from all constituents and evaluate what is best for the university. I appreciate the thoughtful dialogue that has been occurring about both issues and I expect a successful conclusion to both next semester.

You may recall that I mentioned the great need for student employment on campus in my Fall Convocation remarks. Having a job, for many students, is an essential part of paying for college and an on-campus job can improve retention. To address this need, a new student employment initiative was announced last week. Titled the “Leadership Lived Experience,” the goal of the program is to provide 25 new student jobs on campus by the beginning of next semester. Request forms have been distributed to unit heads and priority consideration is being given to applications submitted by December 20th. My thanks to Associate Provost Aaron Shures and Director of Financial Assistance Jerry Joseph for taking the lead on this important effort.

I have been reporting to you regularly on the progress of the Student Union project. As you know, the Student Union is an essential element for the recruitment and retention of students and for the growth of student life on campus. It will be a warm and welcoming destination for students, faculty, staff and visitors. My thanks to the students, faculty and staff who continue to serve on the Student Union Committee. All who have been involved in the highly interactive design process can attest to the energy and excitement that the process has created. Yesterday, a well- attended campus forum provided an opportunity for members of the campus community to “walk through” the building. If you missed the forum, you can

“take a tour” at the Student Union website – www.uis.edu/studentunion/ We are planning to take the project to the Board of Trustees for approval in January. The silent phase of the fundraising campaign for the project is well underway with the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Jeff Lorber and his staff and a more visible campaign, with opportunities to participate at many different levels, will be announced in a few months.

We remain intently focused on our three strategic priorities: **growth** in both enrollment and reputation, the recruitment and retention of a **talented** and diverse faculty and staff, and providing the **facilities** needed to support a comprehensive student experience and that reflect the reputation of the University of Illinois.

We are building on last year’s successful launch of “Leadership lived” and are seeing a significant increase in the number of students inquiring about joining our academic community. I’ve been heartened this semester by the many examples of growing excellence that I see across our campus: the overflow crowd of people who attended an exceptional Lincoln Legacy Lecture, a wonderful Illinois Legislative Internship Hall of Fame Induction event, a capacity crowd for the 2013 UIS Alumni Gala at the Governor’s Mansion, the many students who played major roles in Theatre’s top-notch production of Clybourne Park, the UIS Fall Music Showcase just a few days ago that featured delightful performances by student soloist Xincheng Liu (voice) and Professor Abigail Walsh (flute) ... and I could go on. Everywhere I go in the community I get a sense of sincere appreciation for UIS and an eagerness to support our continued growth and success.

I hope, as this Fall semester draws to a close, that you will find time to participate in the upcoming special campus events including “City of Springfield Day” in the TRAC this Saturday, December 14th at 1:00 p.m. featuring UIS Women’s and Men’s Basketball as well as a recognition of all of Springfield’s First Citizens. The annual Campus-wide Holiday Party is Friday, December 20th from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. in the Sangamon Auditorium Lobby and (if you are a faculty member) the Faculty Coffee Break is Monday, December 16th in the 3rd floor Atrium Lobby (PAC) from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m. Our collective participation in these and other events is important because it contributes to building a collegial and welcoming campus culture for everyone ... and that’s everyone’s responsibility.

I want to close this December message with one important request. As you interact with students during these final days of the term, please ask about their plans for next semester and encourage students who have not registered for class to do so. If there is a financial issue, direct them to Student Financial Assistance or, if there is some other problem, please provide advice or a referral. We want every qualified student to remain a member of our academic community and complete their degree.

Thank you for everything you do every day to provide our students with the excellence that is so central to who we are and what we do. I wish you good times and some well-earned relaxation during the holiday season and the upcoming break. Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2014.

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

SJR Column: Springfield First Citizens, January 2014

It is no secret on the UIS campus that the Chancellor and her husband are “dyed-in-the-wool” basketball fans; but it was especially enjoyable to have eleven very special guests on hand for recent contests – part of UIS Athletics Springfield Day. It was the first-ever recognition of Springfield’s First Citizens outside of the yearly ceremony that announces the annual winner of this most prestigious community award.

Wes Barr, Rudy Davenport, Barbara Dickerman, Ann Dondanville, Butch Elzea, Bob Gray, Wally Henderson, Mary Loken, Paul O’Shea, Bill Schnirring, Guerry Suggs – it was inspiring to see each of these exceptional individuals walk to center court at halftime of the men’s basketball game and be recognized again for their decades of contributions that have made our community a better place to live, work, learn and grow. Wally Henderson, the 2013 First Citizen (and the architect who designed the Public Affairs Building on the UIS campus) received a signed UIS basketball from the team. For a campus whose motto is “Leadership lived,” it was a special moment indeed!

Not one to miss such a great opportunity, Paul O’Shea, Springfield’s 2012 First Citizen and longtime UIS campus supporter, suggested that the group meet before the recognition ceremony – a “brain trust,” you might say – to discuss the “bigger picture” that includes the community and the university.

This was a group with deep roots in Springfield. Some literally helped create the university 40-plus years ago; a few are alums of the campus; most are regulars at Sangamon Auditorium and other campus events; and many are generous donors who provide critical financial support for scholarships and other vital campus activities. All recognize the great value of a world-class University of Illinois campus growing in our community.

What I found most intriguing about our conversation is that these First Citizens of Springfield didn’t want to talk about their roots; nor were they interested in talking about their past accomplishments. They wanted to discuss the future of the campus – our strategic priorities for growth, talent acquisition and retention, and facilities. They wanted to think together about how they and the community can enable UIS to achieve its full potential as a top regional public university and a vital

contributor to economic development in the region. They wanted to consider and discuss ways to bring the university and the community even closer together.

It was a stimulating and exceedingly valuable conversation, to say the least. Topics included the increasing number of students living on campus and contributing to the local economy, the new academic programs being launched, talented faculty and staff who are joining the Springfield community, the increasingly large and active alumni community in Springfield and beyond, a possible downtown housing project for graduate students involved in state government and the new UIS Student Union building that is such a vital next step for the campus and that will also be a wonderful resource for the entire community. It may have been cold and bleak outside on this blustery December Saturday, but it was a warm and lively conversation within.

My sincere thanks to Paul O'Shea, UIS Athletic Director Kim Pate and SJR Executive Editor, Bob Heisse for bringing our Springfield First Citizens to campus. I'm grateful to Wes, Rudy, Barbara, Ann, Butch, Bob, Wally, Mary, Bill, Guerry and Mayor Mike Houston for being part of such a great day.

... and Mr. Henderson, now that you've received that nice new basketball, I'll be stopping by when the weather warms to shoot some hoops. I hope you're practicing!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Scholarships, December, 2013

December is a time of year when acts of generosity are perhaps more visible than usual; but, as Chancellor of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, I see the very tangible impact of generosity every day all year round. The generosity I'm talking about is that of the friends, alumni and supporters of our university who invest in talented students by providing them with scholarships to attend college.

According to a recent "Who Pays" analysis, only about one-third of undergraduate students who attend UIS are able to pay for college using their own family resources. For the other two-thirds, the greatest obstacle to attaining a college degree is financial. It is a scholarship provided by a generous donor that makes all the difference.

There are hundreds of stories on the UIS campus that illustrate the difference a scholarship can make.

Every one of those stories is unique and powerful – including the story of Jasmine Torres-Gonzales. Jasmine comes from a low-income background and is the only one in her entire extended family to graduate from high school and attend college.

“In my community,” Jasmine says, “people don’t expect Latinos to graduate high school or go off to college. No one in my family even knew what college was and I knew we couldn’t afford it.”

But despite the challenges of her circumstances, Jasmine was inspired by her mother to excel in high school and she qualified for admission to the prestigious UIS Capital Scholars Honors Program. More importantly, Jasmine was selected to receive the Lee Humphrey Dodd Memorial Scholarship, a scholarship that has made it possible for her to attend UIS, where she has blossomed as a successful student and a campus leader.

Longtime Springfield residents Howard and Lynda Humphrey established this scholarship in memory of their daughter, Lee, and Jasmine is not the only student to benefit from the Humphreys’ generosity. Six other UIS students are also receiving a Lee Humphrey Dodd Memorial Scholarship this year and the family has two other endowed funds that provide scholarships for student-athletes and for students to study abroad.

In a recent conversation with Lynda, I asked her what motivated her and her late husband to be such generous supporters of UIS students. “Howard and I have always felt that education is most important,” she said, “and our daughter, Lee, would have wanted that, too.”

There may be no better time than the present to help a student achieve their dream of a college education. The University of Illinois’s Access Illinois Scholarship Initiative is in its third and final year. Through June 30, 2014, a one-for-one match is being offered for qualified new scholarship gifts and for additional contributions to existing Access Illinois scholarships – doubling the impact of the donor’s contribution. (A scholarship gift of \$10,000, for example, results in \$20,000 in scholarship support for students.) So far, 1,283 gifts have been made to the Springfield campus through the Access Illinois Initiative and over \$1.2 million has been generated for student scholarships.

Jasmine Torres-Gonzales will graduate from UIS next Spring with a major in Criminal Justice. Her long-term goal is to become a Chief of Police ... and make a difference in society. “I would like to give a big thank you to the Humphrey family for investing in my future,” she says.

As Chancellor of UIS, I am deeply grateful to the Humphrey family and to the many other generous supporters who believe in us and who support deserving students with their contributions to scholarship funds. It truly is an investment in the future of a student and the future of our state.

[If you would like to discuss a scholarship gift, please contact the UIS Office of Development by phone at 217.206.6058 or by email at giftinfo@uis.edu.]

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Message from the Chancellor, December 2012

Dear Colleagues:

This December, 2012 campus letter continues an ongoing series of regular letters to the campus community on issues of importance to the university and to our overall goals. In addition to ongoing formal and informal meetings with faculty, staff and students, I hope this letter and other communications continue to demonstrate our shared expectation for open and engaged leadership at UIS and a commitment to shared governance that reflects the values of the University of Illinois as well as the finest traditions of our Springfield campus.

Though these are certainly challenging times in higher education in our state, I'm pleased that we continue to make significant progress toward our goal to be a premier regional university within the world-class University of Illinois organization. Our progress was certainly evident when we hosted the University of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting last month, the highlight of which was the UIS Campus Insights Program featuring presentations by several exceptional UIS faculty on their teaching, research and service activities. I appreciate the efforts of so many members of the UIS community who contributed in so many ways to making the entire meeting such a success.

At the Fall Convocation, you heard me speaking about priorities related to growth in both enrollment and reputation, talent acquisition in terms of both recruitment and retention of top quality employees, and facilities that meet the educational needs of our students. We continue to be actively engaged in these critical areas.

Increasing the visibility of UIS in the region is an essential part of our growth strategy and I'm sure you are seeing more of your university in many ways. I'm pleased that the new UIS theme, Leadership lived, has caught on so effectively both on campus and beyond. I think it resonates so well because it is authentic; it's who we really are and it's what really happens here every day in the classroom and on campus ... thanks to all of you. If you opened the State Journal- Register on Saturday you saw an excellent example of Leadership lived – graduate student Justin Rose and his fellow Black Male Collegiate Society members volunteering with great dedication every week as mentors to 4th and 5th graders at Matheny-Withrow Elementary School in Springfield ([UIS fraternity provides role models for elementary school students](#)). I hope you will also check out the new UIS

Perspectives column in the SJR, which now appears monthly both in print and online. It's all part of enhancing the visibility of our university and making prospective students, parents and community members more aware that UIS is a great place to pursue an undergraduate or a graduate degree.

I am pleased that Provost Pardie has assembled a first-rate "New Academic Programs Task Force." Another aspect of our growth strategy is the addition of new programs that prospective students want and that Illinois needs. The task force has received many recommendations for new programs and is now evaluating and prioritizing. I'm grateful for the important work of this group and I look forward to forthcoming recommendations that will position UIS well for the future.

Talent acquisition at UIS is also critical to the advancement of the university and every new hire is important. We have strengthened our leadership team this semester with the addition of Dr. Jeff Lorber as Vice Chancellor for Development. With a doctorate in higher education and significant successful fundraising experience in higher education, Dr. Lorber arrived at UIS ready and eager to meet members of the UIS community and engage with potential donors. Making the leader of our advancement efforts a vice chancellor signifies how vital it is for UIS to be successful in fundraising and advancement and I look forward to the leadership Jeff will provide at UIS in the coming years.

The searches for outstanding academic leaders for the College of Public Affairs and Administration and the College of Education and Human Services have been launched. Many thanks to Dr. Pinky Wassenberg for her leadership of PAA for the past eight years. Dr. Wassenberg will return to the faculty in January, 2013. I appreciate Dr. Will Miller's willingness to serve as interim dean of PAA. If all goes well, our new deans will join us next summer. We're also searching for a new UIS Director of Human Resources. Current director, Bob Lael, has been an effective leader during difficult economic times. We will miss him, but wish him well in his retirement. We hope to conclude the search before this semester ends.

Our number one facilities priority, as you know, is the construction of the student union. We need this "living room" and gathering place in order to enhance student recruitment and to provide our students with the student life experiences that they need and deserve. Last year, as you know, our students voted to create a new student fee to help cover some of the costs. The Board of Trustees has approved the site for the student union and we are now moving forward with construction planning and fundraising. The Student Union Planning Committee is hard at work on its charge "to work constructively and proactively with each other, the architects, representatives from UI Facilities Planning and the UIS community to design a building that will enhance campus life, advance the University's educational mission, inspire collaboration and leave a lasting legacy that is worthy of the world-class University of Illinois." What vibrancy this facility will bring to our campus, to our student body, and to the local community!

We are all concerned about ongoing developments related to the university employees' pension program (SURS) and you are aware that the state legislature

and the governor are considering proposals for change. Dr. Avijit Ghosh, Special Assistant to the President, and Kappy Laing, Executive Director of Governmental Relations, will be on campus this week to brief campus leadership about the potential changes and how the University of Illinois plans to respond. I have invited the leadership of the Campus Senate, APAC and CSAC to attend this briefing and we will keep you informed of further developments.

I hope as the Fall semester draws to a close you will find time to participate in the upcoming December events including the annual Campus Holiday Party this Friday from 3:00 to 5:00 PM in the Sangamon Auditorium Lobby and (if you are a faculty member) the Faculty Coffee Hour on Monday, December 17, from 2:30 – 4:00 in the PAC Atrium Lounge. Our collective participation in these and other campus events is important because it contributes to building a collegial and welcoming campus culture for everyone and that's everyone's responsibility.

Last year at this time, I thanked all of you for providing me and my husband, Dennis, such a warm welcome to UIS and to Springfield, Illinois. Today I can say that it feels – in all good ways — as if we have lived here for decades. I enjoy living here, working with you and serving this university. I wish all of you good times and some well-earned relaxation during the holiday season and during the upcoming break. I also wish for you a happy and healthy 2013.

Thank you for everything you do every day to provide our students with the excellence that is so central to who we are and what we do.

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch
Chancellor

SJR Column: Internships, November 2013

When the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois opened its doors as Sangamon State University in 1970, founding President Robert C. Spencer was quoted in the State Journal-Register saying:

“What employers are looking for (in a university graduate) is not a narrow skill; but a young person with good educational background who can be expected to develop specific skills on the job.”

Even before classes started, according to the Journal piece, managers of private businesses and industries in Springfield and heads of departments in state

government were being asked to partner with the campus and provide “on-the-job” experiences for students – a novel idea at the time.

Today, over forty years later, college internships are more than a novelty at UIS. Internships have become an important part of the university experience, providing a bridge between classroom learning and the real world and offering students a vital “leg up” in a highly competitive job market. According to Tammy Craig, Director of the UIS Career Development Center: “Internships provide a key way for students to get relevant experience at the same time they have value for employers.” In fact, internships have become an essential component of many employers’ college recruiting programs; a ‘high-touch’ way for them to observe and evaluate prospective employees before making the commitment to hire them.

UIS offers many such opportunities for students and one of the best comes with the partnership that has been formed between the UIS Computer Science program and State Farm. As most Illinois residents know, State Farm is a widely known and highly respected insurance company headquartered in Bloomington, Illinois. The company is a major contributor to the economy of the region, with about 66,000 employees and a high demand for IT professionals. UIS is one of only a small number of campuses in the nation that are “Target Schools” for State Farm’s Systems Department, competitively selected because of the high quality and relevance of our Computer Science program.

I had the opportunity to spend a fascinating day at State Farm not long ago – talking with Vice President Dianne Fleming and other members of the Systems Department’s leadership team, as well as with UIS summer interns and a number of alums who are now State Farm employees. One of those alums is Bob Clary, a manager in the Systems Department who also serves as the UIS Campus Liaison, working closely with the Computer Science Department to recruit new interns and employees and serving as a vital link between the Systems Department and UIS Computer Science faculty.

According to Bob: “The State Farm college internship serves as a continuation of the student’s educational experience.” Each intern is part of a team – working every day alongside seasoned employees who have challenging work assignments to complete. While the experience is a development opportunity for the student, the intern is also making valuable contributions to the department. “This is a good setting,” as Bob says, “for both the intern and State Farm to test-drive to see if this is a good match for each and it often leads to full-time job offers for students.”

One such student is Jamaal Hollins, a senior Computer Science major from Flossmoor, Illinois, who is also serving this year as our campus representative to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees. Jamaal has completed two summer internships at State Farm and he tells me that besides learning new technical skills from fellow interns and other team members, he gained valuable experience in “soft skills” like working together to solve challenging problems and learning to settle differences. He must have done very well ... at the end of his summer internship a few months ago, Jamaal was offered a position in the Systems Division

(which he has accepted) and he will be joining the State Farm team after graduation next May. I have a feeling that President Spencer would have been very proud of Jamaal ... and so am I.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Theatre Program, October 2013

The university experience comes with a great many important decisions: what major to choose, what courses to take, what activities to pursue, how to manage the financial burden of school, to name a few. Like most, I made those choices, too. But perhaps the best decision I made as an undergraduate had nothing whatever to do with my major. I decided to try out for a play and became, at least for a few months, Bella Manningham, whose diabolical husband was trying to drive her insane in the classic Victorian thriller, “Angel Street”. The performance won me the Best Actress award for that year; but being involved with Theatre proved far more valuable than the little plastic trophy that still sits on my bookshelf.

I was reminded of that valuable experience and how lucky I had been to attend a university with a strong Theatre program when I had a conversation recently with UIS Theatre professors Eric and Missy Thibodeaux-Thompson. They, along with their colleague, Dathan Powell, are building an intellectually vibrant and engaging Theatre program at the University of Illinois’ Springfield campus.

I asked Eric why he thought campus productions and Theatre courses, which are taken by students enrolled in all sorts of majors, are so valuable. He responded by referring first to the “universality of skills” that students develop when working on a production; skills like teamwork, collaboration, communication, creative problem solving and decision-making. Interestingly, they are the very skills that so many employers look for today when recruiting new talent.

Missy added that, through years of working with students as well as working as an actor and director, she sees the rehearsal as a laboratory; a place where perseverance, courage and discipline develop. Going “from the page to the stage,” she says, is a challenging process that involves failures and successes – a process at the end of which those engaged “do not tip over easily.”

Theatre is, of course, much more than acting. Students involved in theatre productions and courses also have opportunities to work with theatre professionals learning about and practicing playwriting, directing, stage managing, set design, construction, lighting, sound and costume design. All of these are necessary elements of a successful production and can lead, for some, to a rewarding career or avocation.

Both Eric and Missy agree that the very process of reading great dramatic literature in class or being a part of the audience for an excellent production can affect the way we think and feel about our own lives and can encourage self-examination about our values and behavior. In that way, both making and attending theatre contributes to the overall educational experience... and to becoming an educated person.

I think one of the things I appreciate most about Theatre is that, in the end, it brings people together. For any performance to happen, people have to gather together in one place and share in witnessing what the playwright intended – whether it is moving, tragic, funny, thought-provoking or simply entertaining. That wonderful gathering occurred in the UIS Studio Theatre a year ago when we shared the delight of Moliere’s *Tartuffe* – all 1,962 rhyming couplets of it. It will happen again in a few weeks when the UIS Theatre production of *Clybourne Park*, which won a Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the 2012 Tony Award for Best Play, opens on November 8th. Eric Thibodeaux-Thompson will be directing and it’s sure to be a great night. I hope you’ll join us.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: One Book, One UIS, September 2013

The University of Illinois is welcoming thousands of new and returning students this month and, on each of the three UI campuses, faculty, staff and students are already immersed in the many activities that collectively create the rich intellectual environment that is the University of Illinois, the state’s best and most comprehensive public university.

I’m especially pleased this year that our early fall schedule on the Springfield campus includes something new – a community reading project. Since the late 1990s, the concept of a community read, originated by the Washington Center for the Book, has proliferated across the country and around the world – bringing people together from a wide spectrum of backgrounds through the reading and discussion of a common book.

The One Book, One UIS initiative is the brainchild of Jane Treadwell, UIS Librarian and Dean of Library Instructional Services. When Jane and I first discussed the idea a year ago, she reminded me of the promise in our vision statement – to enrich individual lives and to make a difference in the world. “Books have been banned and burned,” she said, “because they have power; the power of ideas.” The Chancellor was an easy sell and Jane immediately launched the project, forming a planning group and soliciting suggestions from members of Friends of

the Brookens Library and others on campus and in the community of Springfield and beyond.

What an engaging book they chose! *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* has been described as “a triumph of a book” and “the best book yet written on contemporary India.” The author, Katherine Boo, won the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service in 2000 and is also a MacArthur genius grant recipient. Boo has spent most of her career reporting on disadvantaged communities, first across the U.S. and now, with this book, in India.

Some books we love because they are so enjoyable, because they are such a delight to read. *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* is not one of those books. The setting is a desperate slum near the Mumbai airport, awash in sewage and petrochemicals, yet surrounded by five luxury hotels. The four main characters, undercitizens Boo calls them, are caught in a precarious struggle for survival and powerless to control the economic and social forces surrounding them.

What makes this book such a great read, though a difficult one in some ways, is that Boo’s account comes from more than three years of investigative reporting; three years spent in Mumbai’s Annawadi slum doing research for the book. I heard Boo being interviewed on NPR’s Fresh Air a few months after the book won the National Book Award. She described her work, in part, as following people while they lived their lives, “going where they went and doing what they did.” The book reads like a novel even though the characters are real.

Reading is mostly a solitary endeavor, but I’m glad that reading *Behind the Beautiful Forevers* is part of something larger at UIS this fall. I’m looking forward to participating in the panel discussions that have been scheduled as part of this project. Best of all, Katherine Boo will be a guest on the UIS campus on October 7th and will provide a lecture in Sangamon Auditorium. Please consider this my invitation for you to join us! The Boo lecture is free and open to the public, though you’ll need to reserve a ticket at the UIS Sangamon Auditorium box office by calling 217-206-6160. For more information about the many activities scheduled as part of One Book, One UIS, check the UIS website at www.uis.edu/.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message - Fall 2013

To students, faculty and staff:

Welcome to the start of the 2013-14 academic year at this Springfield campus of the University of Illinois! This our campus’s 44th academic year and, for those of you who are returning to UIS, we are pleased to have you back. If you are new

to the campus, a warm welcome. I'm looking forward to another productive, rewarding and enjoyable year!

Like many members of our community, I especially enjoy the Welcome Week activities at UIS, with so many events perfectly designed for reconnecting with and meeting new colleagues and friends, getting information about programs, events and organizations on campus and in the community, and just feeling the positive anticipation for the upcoming year. One of those special events is coming up tomorrow, August 27th – **the annual Chancellor's Welcome Picnic** – and this is my personal invitation to you for that event.

All students, faculty and staff (along with family members) are invited!

Please join us at the Colonnade from **4:30 to 6:00 pm**. The weather is going to be superb, the atmosphere exciting and there will be plenty of great food, beverages and music for our enjoyment.

Hope to see you there!

Chancellor Koch

Chancellor Koch Kicks Off Access Illinois Scholarship Initiative at UIS with \$25,000 Donation - November 2011

Susan J. Koch, UIS chancellor and University of Illinois vice president is helping to kick off *Access Illinois: The Presidential Scholarship Initiative* on the Springfield campus with a \$25,000 personal donation.

In establishing the Dennis D. and Susan J. Koch Scholarship Fund, Koch said she plans to lead by example and won't be shy about asking for private support from friends of the University to fund badly needed student scholarships at UIS.

“Providing access for students is a personal matter for me and for my husband, Dennis,” said Chancellor Koch. “We're looking forward to watching the progress of the UIS students who receive this scholarship.”

The fund was established in honor of both Koch and her husband's parents and grandparents, who made it possible for each of them to seek a higher education.

“When my father, the son of an electrician and the grandson of an Illinois miner, was given the opportunity to attend a public university here in Illinois, it changed

his life and the lives of our entire family forever,” said Chancellor Koch. “My husband’s grandmother, a pioneer farm wife on the plains of South Dakota, provided my husband and his brother the financial means to attend college.”

University of Illinois President Michael Hogan launched the *Access Illinois* initiative in June. The goal is to raise \$100 million or more over the next three years to fund scholarships on the Urbana-Champaign, Chicago and Springfield campuses. The fund will increase financial aid to help students and their families offset tuition costs that have risen sharply as state funding for the University has declined over the last decade.

The initiative will solicit donations from the University’s more than 600,000 alumni from all three campuses and other supporters, seeking general-use gifts that can be used to meet current needs as well as endowed scholarships that provide financial aid in perpetuity.

For more information on the *Access Illinois* initiative at UIS, visit www.uis.edu/accessillinois or contact Vicki Megginson, associate chancellor for development, UIS, and senior vice president, University of Illinois Foundation at 217/206-6058 or email vhensl@uis.edu.

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2013

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 22, 2013

Good afternoon!

Thank you all so much for coming to this University of Illinois at Springfield Fall 2013 Convocation. It’s great to see all of you here!

I want to begin today by offering a special welcome to all of our faculty and staff who are new to the UIS community this Fall.

Congratulations on your appointment!

I hope you feel, as I most certainly do, that it is a privilege to be part of one of the finest educational institutions in the country, the University of Illinois, and that being a part of this Springfield campus – a young, but growing, academic institution – is an opportunity filled with possibilities and opportunities.

Whether you are new to our academic community or seasoned I look forward to our work together this year. This is my 28th Fall on a college campus

(not counting my student years) and I am looking forward to this fall 2013 semester with the same positive anticipation that I felt in my first year as an assistant professor.

I want to offer a warm welcome to some special guests who have joined us for Convocation today (please stand when I introduce you and I promise you we'll provide a rousing round of applause after everyone has been introduced):

- Chancellor Emeritus and still wonderful advocate for our University, Dr. Naomi Lynn; and her husband, Bob;
- Dr. Harry Berman, longtime UIS leader and now Director of the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and his wife, Deborah;
- Trustee of the University of Illinois and former Mayor of Springfield, Karen Hasara;
- University of Illinois Student Trustee and UIS Senior in Computer Science, Jamaal Hollins;
- President and CEO of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Steward Sandstrom;
- Professor Lynn Fisher, Chair of our UIS Campus Senate;
- Chair of the UIS Academic Professional Advisory Committee, Teresa Szabo;
- President of the UIS Civil Service Advisory Council, Bobbie Fults;
- Aaron Mulvey is President of the Student Government Association for this year but is unable to be with us today.

Ms. Wendy Tao, President of Bluestone Consulting, and Mr. Gary Yang, President of the Lincoln Council, both of whom are great partners with UIS in the continuing development of our relationships in China.

And I'd also like to welcome my "personal" special guest, my husband, Dennis Koch, who, though he has a busy career in agriculture, is himself a wonderful supporter and advocate for our university.

Please join me in welcoming all of these special guests to our convocation.

Preview:

Well, as you all know, the Chancellor isn't new any more.

The honeymoon, as they say, is over.

This is my third year serving as your Chancellor and I've got those one-way streets in downtown Springfield all figured out. Like many of our students, I've become a regular on the Lincoln Express Amtrak Service to and from Chicago.

I've found one other White Sox fan on campus – student, Mihai Smarandescu. We have formed a support group.

To be perfectly honest, I've eaten my fill of that Springfield classic, the horseshoe, and (like so many in this audience) I've become a fan of the MUNI, the wonderful

Springfield summer opera company – that featured our own Joan Sestak this summer she had seven costume changes!

And I have my own personal favorite Mel-O-Cream donut — the glazed raised (just like my friend Kelly Grant, whose father bought the original donut shop in 1932 ... for \$500).

I'm very pleased that in the past two years plus we've gotten to know each other.

We've established a variety of consistent and effective communication channels – regular meetings with faculty, staff and student leadership, lunch meetings and department meetings with faculty, regular letters to the campus from the Chancellor, campus forums, the Chancellor's blog, the "MyIdea" email address, and, of course, for students – the late-night gatherings (well after the Chancellor's bedtime) that seem to reflect our fondness for alliteration as well as for foods that start with the letter "C". (We've had chocolate, chili, chimichangas and cheesecake; and they tell me the next one is "Chicken with the Chancellor." I'm looking forward to it.)

We're in constant contact, in large part, because we are committed to shared governance, the shared responsibility that goes with it, and the communication that supports it.

This matters:

- because every member of this community, regardless of what you do, has a stake in the present and future of this university:
- because I'm quite certain from my own nearly three decades of experience in higher education, that our collective wisdom is far better than the wisdom of one,
- and because it is only by working together as colleagues who respect and value each other that we can deliver the highest level of excellence on the promise that we make to our students here at UIS – that they will experience an intellectually rich and collaborative learning environment at the same time that we, as a university, serve our communities from local to global – which happens to be our institutional mission.

I thank everyone here who has been part of so many conversations, communications, and even a few rather heated discussions for the past two years. Be assured that my efforts to be present with you, to listen to you and to work collaboratively with you will continue in the coming year and beyond.

I want to assure you, as well, that I will continue to be the strongest advocate possible for our campus, in my role as a member of the leadership team of the University of Illinois; and a positive spokesperson for our campus, continuing to build productive relationships with alumni, friends and supporters in the Springfield community and beyond.

So – I'd like to take a few minutes today to do two things. I'd like to reflect back briefly on this past year and, most importantly, to take a look with you at the days ahead:

Looking back:

Dr. Pardie already mentioned several significant achievements of the UIS campus since the 2006 strategic plan was adopted and I certainly agree with her that this campus has driven, of its own volition, transformational and positive change.

If I were to compose a highlights video of just this past year, these are a few of the memories that I would feature:

- The tour of our Emiquon research facility on the Illinois River provided last fall for Board of Trustees Chairman Christopher Kennedy, Trustee Ed McMillian, UI President Easter, myself and others that featured the research and teaching of Professor Mike Lemke and other UIS faculty;
- The day last December when we celebrated with our friend, Dr. Richard Moy, and his two sons a \$250,000 gift to UIS in memory of Dick's wife, Caryl, a much-loved former UIS professor. The gift will be used to fund research opportunities for UIS faculty in collaboration with faculty at SIU School of Medicine. Dick passed away just a few weeks after our celebration knowing that his wife's memory would live on in such a positive way with this gift.
- The Campus Insights program presented during the Board of Trustees meeting that we hosted on campus, featuring the research and teaching of several exceptional UIS faculty – Lan Dong, Karen Swan, Matthew Holden, Charlie Wheeler, Lynn Fisher, Chris Mooney and Michael Burlingame. It was a highly effective way to educate our Board (and many others) about the quality of teaching and research that occurs on UI's Springfield campus ... and we're going to do it again this year!
- The dedication of the Polly Roesch Music rehearsal hall last year, a renovation supported by a gift from Springfield philanthropist, Polly Roesch. We accelerated and completed the project in record time, thanks to our talented folks in facilities, in hopes that 101-year-old Polly would be able to attend. She did (and she even gave a speech), it was a delightful celebration, and the new Music space is contributing to the growth of our Music program every day.
- The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on the Emancipation Proclamation taught so successfully this past year by UIS Distinguished Professor, Matthew Holden and Assistant Professor, Gwen Jordan. The MOOC attracted some 700 participants from across the country and internationally, ranging from high school students to senior professors and well-known American historians. It is just one example of many from this past year that illustrates the exceptional leadership that UIS continues provide at the national and international levels in the area of online education.

- The day this past Spring when UIS golfer Abby Vorreyer earned an at-large bid to the NCAA Regional Tournament, the first in history for a UIS golfer. A few weeks later, after a record-setting senior year, Abby graduated with honors from UIS just shy of a 4.0 grade point average. She is now a golf coach at Illinois College.
- The positive response that our new “Leadership lived” campaign has received on campus, in the community and across the region. It is working and raising our visibility across the region, because it is true, consistent, and distinctive and I’ll say more later about how well it’s working. Our communications team is continuing with the implementation of the “Leadership lived” this year, focusing especially on the four attributes that describe so well who we are as an institution – a teaching-focused university with an abundance of opportunities for collaboration; a supportive academic community, and a campus with a tradition of educating public servants and leaders.
- And speaking of that highlights video, mine would certainly conclude with our 2013 UIS Commencement, a glorious day when we celebrated with about 800 graduates and nearly 8,000 of their closest family members and friends, listening to an inspirational commencement address by UIS graduate and Pulitzer Prize winner Kathy Best who, you may recall, instructed our graduates to “make sure that, when the curtain comes down [on your life], you are exhausted.”

Of course, we can’t look back without acknowledging that many aspects of our work together here at UIS continue to be very, very challenging – they are all familiar to you (and they are certainly familiar to me) and I won’t belabor them today. But to update you on just one; the overall budget crisis in Illinois, including the pension crisis, did not go away while you were on vacation this summer (and I’ll continue to keep you informed of developments this year).

As the Springfield campus, like other public campuses in Illinois, continues to become more private than public and as enrollment increasingly drives the revenue engine of the university, the need for us as members of this academic community to be, as you’ve heard me say before, “masters of our own fate” and focused and united in our efforts is stronger than ever.

And I want to say one more thing that fits under the “looking back” heading: The deeper I’ve sunk my roots on this campus and in the Springfield community, the more grateful I have become for the faculty, staff and friends of this university who came before us, particularly the founders and the founding faculty of our university, some of whom I now know personally.

We’ve come a long way since the doors of this institution opened in a downtown church in the fall of 1970. We’re not Sangamon State University any more; but we are (in those famous words of Isaac Newton) “standing on the shoulders of giants” (the giants being the folks who served and supported this institution with great dedication in the past four decades).

I believe we are as committed today to the university's founding mandate to be an innovative institution as we were when this institution was created and I am confident that, working together, we will continue to reinvent that original mandate.

Looking ahead:

So – looking ahead – what do we need to be focused on in the coming year ... and years?

As Provost Pardie has already indicated, the UIS strategic plan that was completed in 2006 has provided a strong foundation and actions, when taken in accordance with the plan, have advanced our campus significantly.

That document, including our vision to be a premier public university with a deep commitment to liberal learning, exceptional public affairs opportunities that take full advantage of our location in the state capital of Illinois, and outstanding professional programs that serve the community and the region, continues to have relevance and we should all be proud of the progress we've made.

But given the rapidly changing landscape of higher education in the US (and around the world for that matter) and the increasing budgetary challenges public institutions are facing in our state, we must be even more focused and strategic in our planning and in our actions.

Through a series of campus discussions involving many in this audience, as well as conversations and consultations with our Board of Trustees and UI President, Bob Easter, three compelling priorities are clear for the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois.

At this point, I suspect most people in this audience can recite them:

1. We need to grow our campus;
2. We need to recruit and retain a highly qualified, talented and diverse faculty, staff and leadership team;
3. And we must provide the facilities needed to support a comprehensive student experience (for both undergraduate and graduate students) that reflects the expectations and the standards of the University of Illinois.

Growth, talent acquisition and retention, and facilities – those are our priorities.

So, I'm going to take a few minutes here to talk a bit more about each of these; and then I want to close these remarks by sharing with you a very thoughtful comment made at our Board of Trustees meeting this past month.

Priority #1: Growth

As you've heard me say again and again, we must understand what drives the revenue engine of the campus if we're going to thrive in this new environment of diminished state support. If we're going to be "masters of our own fate," we're going to need to be a larger institution – that means more students; but it also means more faculty and staff. (And may I say this statement is music to the ears our Chamber of Commerce president.)

We have the capacity for growth and I am confident that we can do that thoughtfully and strategically, while still maintaining the teaching-focused academic experience that is a core attribute of the UIS experience.

An important part of our growth strategy is also to create an increasingly diverse academic community, one that reflects the changing demographics of our state at the same time it provides opportunities for students from all backgrounds to grow in their abilities to live and work in diverse settings and to more deeply understand cultures and customs different from their own.

All you need do is look around to see our progress in that regard.

As you know, we've already implemented several strategies that are showing positive results in this priority area:

- With the Leadership lived campaign, we have become much more visible in the region. Increasing our visibility to prospective students, both undergraduate and graduate, is an essential element for growth. (It certainly helps that we are one of three campuses of the University of Illinois and that we are the top-ranked regional public university in the state. Thanks to your efforts, we're also growing in reputation and nothing speaks louder than that to prospective students.)
- With the cost of higher education becoming more and more challenging for Illinois families, we must be as affordable as possible. In a major speech this morning at the University of Buffalo on College Affordability, President Obama challenged colleges and universities to adopt promising practices that offer break-throughs on cost while maintaining quality; part of an proposed ambitious agenda the make college affordable for American families. We've improved our financial aid for both 4-year students and transfer students and are raising more scholarship funds through our development efforts. Fundraising for student support and other institutional priorities is becoming more and more important and it is tremendously heartening to me that nearly 50% of UIS faculty and staff this past year contributed to our faculty/staff campaign.
- We must be relevant in the region, providing undergraduate and graduate programs that are in high demand. As a young institution, our undergraduate offerings, in particular, are far too limited. In fact, because we're young, we have fewer undergraduate majors than any other public university in the state. I'm very grateful for the good work this past year of the New Academic Programs Task Force under the leadership of Provost Lynn Pardie;

and with the leadership provided by several academic departments and our Campus Senate, we'll be adding several new, high-demand academic programs in the next three years.

- We must also make the UI degree accessible to an increasing number of students; and here is where our strength in online education is vital to our continued growth. Did you know that we have about 1500 students who are purely online majors? We are the envy of other institutions when it comes to online education, thanks to the leadership of UIS faculty and staff who are not only teaching and providing support for online programs, but who are also constantly innovating; developing best practices and new ideas in this ever expanding segment of higher education.

And here is the good news:

- Though counts are unofficial at this point and will surely fluctuate before final census, I can say with confidence that we will have the largest freshman class in university history when we start classes on Monday. Granted, at about 325 students, that is still a relatively small freshman class, but it is a very, very positive number for our campus at this particular moment in our history.
- We will also have a strong honors class – with 116 students – and it's a class with outstanding academic credentials.
- The number of international students enrolled as of yesterday is above 330, another very impressive number – and just over two-thirds of them are graduate students.
- As of this morning (and unofficially) we are 30 students and 800 credit hours above last year.

I want to thank our outstanding Admissions staff for all of their hard work this year in recruiting. My sincere thanks also to all faculty, staff and administrators who have played significant roles in recruitment this past year.

However, one area of significant concern continues to be retention. Within the growth priority, our ability to retain students once they've enrolled continues to present challenges. We all know that students leave for a variety of reasons – some are academic, some are related to what students perceive as a lack of student life on campus, some are financial. We're going to need to redouble our efforts this year to recruit students who have a strong likelihood of success, to provide academic support that will improve retention, particularly for students with risk factors, to work with students in their financial planning, and continue to improve campus life.

And let me mention here one new initiative that will be implemented this year. I've asked Associate Provost for Budget (Aaron Shures) and Director of Financial Assistance (Jerry Joseph) to take the lead on developing a new student employment initiative for the campus. Student employment, as many of you know, is a very important element of financial aid for many students. I've been concerned for the past two years that we have so few jobs for students on campus compared to other

campuses; especially when research shows that students who have an on-campus job tend to be more successful academically than students who do not work or who work off campus. Our goal is to create one hundred new part-time jobs and internships on campus for students and I am confident that this effort will help some students stay in school.

Priority #2: Talent Acquisition and Retention

Our second priority is to recruit and retain a highly qualified, talented and diverse faculty, staff and leadership team;

Those who know me well know that I am very, very fond of talking about the bus. Research on successful organizations, including universities, confirms again and again that “you have to get the right people on the bus and you have to get them in the right seats” in order to achieve success.

If you’ve been part of this campus or any other organization for any length of time, you have seen this proved true; in fact you’ve seen it proved true for both good and ill. Sometimes you have to get someone off the bus or in a different seat.

The adage “First who, then what” is also exquisitely true. First you have to hire the right person and it’s only after you do that, that you can do the “what,” whatever that might be.

I’m very pleased that, at the leadership level, and thanks to the participation of many of you on important search committees, we’ve made some very, very good hires in the past several months. Among them are two new deans who we welcomed this summer to our campus: Dr. Mark Wrighton is Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration and Dr. Hanfu Mi is the new Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

With every leadership position, we’ve added talented individuals who bring valuable experience and a strong record of achievement to their new assignment.

Dennis and I had an opportunity to welcome new faculty in our home earlier this week (for our version of the Illinois State Fair) and I’m impressed not only with their credentials, but also with their curiosity and enthusiasm. If you served on a faculty search committee this past year – well done!

We are getting the right people on the bus!

Within this priority, we must increase our success with hiring not only talented faculty and staff, but hiring a more diverse faculty and staff. We’ve been very successful, as you know, in recruiting a more diverse student body, but that same diversity is not reflected in our faculty and staff. With the help of UI Human Resources, we expect to have a detailed affirmative action plan by midyear that will better guide our collective efforts. If you are asked to serve on a search committee in the coming year, please do so and understand that your contribution to “getting the right person on the bus” for UIS is very, very important work.

I'm extremely pleased that we were able to provide a salary program this year for the second year in a row. (Has anyone noticed that the raises started immediately after my arrival? – I just want you to know that I am taking full credit! – that's a joke)

Hiring talented people is not enough. We also need to retain them; and appropriate and competitive compensation is a very important part of retention efforts. I want to assure you today that I am aware of the compensation levels throughout our organization. I understand the importance of competitive salaries and I believe exceptional performance should be rewarded.

Compensation in any area where we are not competitive will continue to be a high priority on our campus in the coming year and beyond.

And finally, under that heading of "talent acquisition and retention," I want to acknowledge that we often decide to continue our employment with an organization for factors other than money. One of the six goals in our 2006 strategic plan is to strengthen campus culture.

I don't know about you, but I want to work on a campus with a vibrant intellectual environment, where colleagues support and respect each other including when they disagree, and where there is a collective focus on excellence. I want to look forward to coming to work every day – even on Monday. (I think you do, too.)

We've made progress in strengthening campus culture; but there is lots more to do and we all have responsibility to create the culture that we want for ourselves and for our students. So my question for you is: what will you do to strengthen our campus culture this year?

Priority #3: Facilities

Finally, as we continue grow this very young institution, we must provide the facilities needed to support a comprehensive student experience (for both undergraduate and graduate students) – facilities that reflect the expectations and the standards of the University of Illinois.

We have a really beautiful campus, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our grounds-keeping staff, and we have some nice facilities that are serving our campus and the community well.

But more than any other facility right now, we need a student union. It is an absolute necessity for this campus.

First, it is critically important for enrollment growth for all types of students, full time and part time, residential and commuter, freshman and transfers, undergraduate and graduate.

When I met with our admissions staff this past week, I asked them, “What is the single most important thing we need to do to increase your recruitment success?” They answered with one voice – create a more vibrant campus life.

The student union will be the heart of that “vibrant campus life” for all of us – students, faculty, and staff – just like the Illini Union is in Urbana. The UIS Student Union will also be a vibrant intersection between the campus and the larger community, a destination for events of all kinds for students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, visitors and members of the Springfield community.

I am delighted to tell you today that we are making excellent progress!

If you haven’t seen the sign that was erected on the building site a few days ago (thank you Chuck Coderko), please go take a look ... at both sides ... stand at the site and imagine for a moment what this campus will be like when the UIS Student Union has been completed! It will be a transformative building.

Some of you have been involved for the past six months in the exciting conceptual design and programming process – creating the architectural and functional narrative that will become a reality during the next couple of years.

Architects Jan van den Kieboom from Workshop Architects and Tom Seymour from Dewberry are leading a talented and creative architectural design team and have been working with our Student Union Committee and, for the first time this week, we’re unveiling the conceptual drawings – they’re right over there – I hope you’ll take a look.

Our students, as you know, have already approved a student fee to support the Student Union. Our fundraising campaign, with the leadership of Vice Chancellor Jeff Lorber and his staff, is now under way and President Easter and our Board of Trustees are enthusiastic and supportive. You’ll hear a lot more details in the coming months.

There are other important facilities priorities on our agenda as well. Our number one capital project remains the renovation of the Brookens Library building, even though the state has not provided any new funding for capital projects for the past three years. We’ll start construction on a small, but important, Public Safety Building this year with funds that have already been secured.

We’ll also continue to steadily renovate and improve various spaces on campus that will improve our functionality, enhance safety and improve the quality of the student experience – and our facilities professionals do such a great job with that work. Finally, we’re going to need to start preliminary planning for the next academic building – because we’re going to need it before too long.

So to summarize our three priorities one last time:

1. We need to grow our campus;

2. We need to recruit and retain a highly qualified, talented and diverse faculty, staff and leadership team;
3. And we must provide the facilities needed to support a comprehensive and high-quality student experience.

We're making progress with all three of these priorities and I am confident that, as long as we stay focused and united in our efforts, we'll continue to progress.

Let me close these thoughts by going back to the beginning of my comments and to that concept of shared governance. I want to leave you with something that our colleague, UIUC Professor Nick Burbules, said when he addressed our Board of Trustees a few weeks ago. Nick, as many of you know, is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Education Policy, Organization and Leadership at the Urbana campus and a longtime faculty leader both on the UIUC campus and within the University-wide Senates Conference. Nick is a highly respected member of our academic community.

This is what he had to say about shared governance:

“Shared governance is, at heart, a matter of relationships; relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and a presumption of shared commitment to the well-being of the institution.”

My request to each of you today is to share in that commitment to the well-being of our institution, the University of Illinois at Springfield.

I'm asking you to make a personal commitment to build stronger relationships in your department or unit and across the campus; relationships based on mutual respect and trust.

I'm asking you be committed to a future for our campus that is consistent with our history; that builds on the innovation mandate that drove the founders and the first faculty and staff of this institution; and that is worthy of a campus of the University of Illinois.

Thank you for the leadership that you live every day, whatever your role may be here at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. I want you to know that I am proud to be part of this community and I appreciate your contributions.

Best wishes for a successful and satisfying year.

Thank you.

**SJR Column - In My View: An
Ancestor's Diary Full of Life's Lessons**

As new residents of Illinois, my husband and I have found numerous reasons to appreciate our new surroundings. But this move, to assume the Chancellorship at the University of Illinois Springfield, is really a homecoming for me. My father grew up in Peru and my great-grandfather was a coal miner in Spring Valley.

With 5,000 acres in the heart of Illinois coal country, the Spring Valley Coal Company's intent was to sink four shafts and build a "Magic City" that would employ up to 4,000 miners. An Irishman, my great-grandfather was one of them. His eldest, Mary, passed along to us her father's diary, a narrative titled, "Solid Facts." He made brief entries into this spiral-bound notebook from 1894 to 1902.

It is obvious from my grandfather's accountings that promises of steady employment and good pay were promises not kept. September 1st, 1894: "Payday, I got 70 cents for a car that stood in the shaft since April ... gave 35 cents of it to my butty, Jack Ayre." On December 29, 1894 he writes: "In the year 1894, I made by work in the shaft \$220.40, about 82 cents each work day; coal cost is \$16.25." July 4, 1895: "Ain't got a cent." May 23, 1901: "Worked half day ... came home ... went to confession ... earned \$36.65 in May."

With subsistence difficult on such uncertain wages, "Solid Facts" provide glimpses of a precarious family existence. When work in the mines was slow, my great-grandfather "jobbed out"; digging ditches and doing anything else he could to provide for his family. But the children, were surely undernourished and susceptible to the many diseases for which immunizations were not yet available. August 29, 1894: "Madeline died last night at 12 o'clock midnight. April 9, 1895: "Went out to Guenther's Wood and got some little cedar trees and planted them on the graves of Virgil and Madeline." December 8, 1895: "Our children have the whooping cough." December 20, 1898: "Our baby, Ursula, had a spasm at 8:30 pm. We thought she would die."

As all mining families knew then (and still know now) mining was and is dangerous work. Miners in Spring Valley worked 300-450 feet below ground in utter darkness – except for light from lanterns on their helmets. They worked 10-hour days in spaces about 3 1/2 feet high – stooped low, on their knees or lying on their backs. In winter, if they were lucky enough to have work, they saw daylight only on Sundays. The likelihood of death or injury was ever-present and my great-grandfather chronicled those events faithfully. March 11, 1895; "Man killed in No. 4 by fall of coal." May 30, 1895: "Fred Ackeyson killed by cars on I.V. & N." December 5, 1895: "Joseph Guest killed this morning about 5:30 o'clock ... fell down No. 2 shaft." April 10, 1896: "Italian George Rorvoka killed in No. 2 ... got his head smashed by pit cars at the bottom of the pit."

In Fall, 1902, my great-grandfather got a speck of coal lodged in his eye. In pain for several days, he had surgery on October 11th a procedure that left him blind in that eye. He reports on December 5th, 1902: "Still laid up with bad eyes and it bothers me a great deal." The final entry in the diary is an obituary: "James Craven died on Wednesday afternoon while being operated on for the purpose of having a

diseased eye removed. Dr. Covney administered the chloroform; but before the operation was barely commenced the patient was dead. No blame whatever is attached to the doctor as it was a case where the patient was not a fit subject for an anesthetic. Deceased leaves a wife and several children.”

My great-grandfather was buried in the cemetery of the Immaculate Conception Church in Spring Valley, Illinois alongside three of his children; Virgil, Madeline and Ursula. He left a wife and five children and he left a diary full of lessons about the value of family, of community, of work, of faith. Those lessons live on in his descendants, now numbered in the hundreds and spread across Illinois and around the world. And as my husband and I sink our roots deep here in Illinois, we'll honor and appreciate my great-grandfather's story and the stories of our new neighbors here in Springfield, so much like his. It's good to be home.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Announcement of Provost for UIS

April 17, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

I am delighted to announce the appointment of Dr. Lynn Pardie as Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost at the University of Illinois Springfield, pending University of Illinois Board of Trustees approval.

A native of Muscatine, Iowa, Dr. Pardie is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Iowa where she was awarded a degree in Psychology with Highest Distinction and received the Ernest R. Johnson Memorial Prize for Academic Standing. She holds a Ph.D. in Psychology from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and is a licensed clinical psychologist. Dr. Pardie joined the faculty of the University of Illinois Springfield in 1989 and holds the rank of Full Professor in the Psychology Department. She has published work on stress-illness relationships, sex bias in psychological research, and sexual orientation issues, and has also conducted sponsored research on specialized sex offender probation programs. A longtime member of our university community, Dr. Pardie has received a number of university awards, including the UIS Faculty Excellence Award, which is given to faculty members who best exemplify the ideal of the teacher-scholar model and who are recognized as role models by their peers.

Dr. Pardie's administrative career encompasses ten years of progressively responsible appointments, including Chair of the Psychology Department, Interim Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education & Research and Interim Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost.

In this robust search process, the search committee reviewed 72 candidates for the position before recommending the four finalists who recently made campus visits. I am deeply grateful to committee chair, Professor Mike Miller and to all twenty-one search committee members who fulfilled their charge to provide an outstanding pool of finalists.

In their assessment of Dr. Pardie's candidacy, the search committee noted among many positive attributes, her high level of respect in the campus community, her long record of integrity and fair-mindedness, her ability to get up to speed quickly on complicated issues and her ability to research problems and bring data to bear on difficult decisions. Having worked with Dr. Pardie as Interim Provost for the past several months, I certainly agree with the search committee's assessment. Though we were fortunate to have four excellent finalists each of whom brought robust records of achievement to their candidacy, Lynn emerged through this search process as the best choice for this critical leadership position at this particular time and I am delighted that she has accepted the position.

I have developed an excellent working relationship with Dr. Pardie since my arrival last summer. As Interim Provost she has navigated some difficult challenges with great professionalism and has proved to be a quick study on every issue. She has conducted more than sixty promotion, tenure, and reappointment reviews; garnered additional resources in support of student and faculty diversity initiatives on campus; become well-informed on complicated budgetary issues; commissioned an external review of lower-division curricula to ensure the maintenance of high quality and use of best practices; and continued to provide leadership and oversight for research administration functions on campus. She has also earned the respect of her peers and colleagues within the UI administration. To put it simply, she has done a magnificent job.

Dr. Pardie will assume the permanent position of Vice Chancellor and Provost on July 1, 2012.

I hope you will join me in congratulating Dr. Pardie and wishing her all the best as she assumes this important leadership appointment.

Sincerely,

Susan Koch, Chancellor
University of Illinois Springfield

Budget Planning

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
Tuesday, November 1, 2011

To Members of the Campus Community:

With this letter I am initiating what I expect to be regular letters to the campus community on issues of importance to the University and to our overall goals and mission. The topic of this particular letter is budget planning, specifically the necessary budget reduction contingency planning that we are initiating in order to plan effectively and responsibly for the coming year and beyond as we face the possibility of state budget cuts or rescissions.

As I am writing to you, the State of Illinois is behind approximately \$350 million in payments to the University of Illinois, including over \$200 million for expenses incurred in the last fiscal year. I met with Governor Quinn this past week and, while I am cautiously optimistic that our governor and legislative leaders will do everything within their power to eventually deliver the promised appropriations and continue support for higher education, we must also recognize the economic realities.

According to analyses by the University of Illinois's Institute of Government and Public Affairs, the Illinois economy is improving but has not fully recovered. Moreover, there is some concern that the national economy continues to be vulnerable. Under these circumstances, we cannot ignore the possibility of cuts in state support for higher education.

UIS is more dependent on state funds than are our sister campuses within the University of Illinois organization. For this fiscal year, FY12, UIS was scheduled to receive 40.7% of its unrestricted funds from the State of Illinois. The percentage for the University as a whole is 35.4%. More telling is the percentage of state support as a percent of total funds. UIS receives 24.3% of its entire budget from the state, while the university percentage is 13.8%. Thus, the impact of any state budget reductions will be proportionally greater at UIS than at the other two campuses.

In the last fiscal year, the University of Illinois strategically made advance plans to deal with a potential \$100 million state fund shortfall, which would have amounted to a 13.5% reduction of state support. The UIS share of that reduction would have been just under \$3 million. Even with the tuition increase last year, a budgetary rescission of this magnitude would have forced us to reduce the overall UIS operating budget by 5.2%.

Thankfully, the anticipated budget reduction was significantly smaller than expected and it was not necessary to fully implement the budget reduction plans last year. However, we continue to face the possibility of significant reductions in state support, and we must continue to be prepared. As painful as such planning can be, by engaging in advance planning, good stewardship of our resources, and careful control of costs in the last year, UIS managed to conserve some reserve funds to help protect our core functions in the event of a modest rescission. For now, our reserves will help us to protect our core academic functions and operations. But our reserves are one-time funds only and cannot carry the campus

through a permanent budget shortfall, so our planning must also involve more proactive efforts.

Thus, in preparation for the possibility of budgetary reductions, I will be working with UIS senior leadership to develop contingency plans, even as we hope that such plans will not be needed. These contingency plans will be developed in consultation with departments and units affected by them. We will keep the campus community informed by providing updates on the budget situation to the Campus Planning and Budget Committee and the Campus Senate.

At the same time that we make short-term contingency plans, we also need to be looking ahead at our proactive longer-term strategies. As I stated in my convocation remarks several weeks ago, how we interpret our university's original "innovation mandate" and our continued focus on our vision to be a "premier public university" provide the launching pad for the next decade of growth. I invited you at convocation to "engage with me" in determining how we can be, as our Board of Trustees Chair, Chris Kennedy, is fond of saying, "... the best at what we do in everything that we do." I very much appreciated our discussions at the recent campus forums and look forward your continued input.

Although the state of Illinois will continue to face budgetary uncertainty, I am confident that, working together as an academic community, we will be able to build on our strengths and overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you for everything you do every day to provide our students with an outstanding educational experience. I deeply appreciate your efforts.

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2011

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 18, 2011

Thank you all for coming to this University of Illinois Springfield Fall 2011 Convocation. I want to offer a special welcome today to all of our faculty and staff who are new to the UIS community. I hope you feel, as I do, that you have made a brilliant decision in becoming part of this very fine institution as we begin our fifth decade of enriching the lives of our students and making a difference in the world.

Today I want to reflect on our history, our mission, and our future. In a few minutes, I'd also like to recognize some special guests, but first I'd like to tell you one brief story that may help explain (in part) how I got from the Dakota prairie of my childhood to this liberal arts university here in Illinois.

As was my mother, my father was the first and only member of his family to attend college. He was one of five children of an electrician and a homemaker and the grandson of a coal miner from Spring Valley, Illinois. He joyously embraced the liberal education that he was fortunate to receive in the 1930s at a public university here in our state. (And by the way, the only reason he was able to attend college was that he was very good at sports!) That opportunity changed his life and the lives of his entire family forever. He went on to become a college professor, and he insisted on a university education for his own five children. He wanted each of us to achieve, as Wendell Berry describes in his book, *Home Economics*, the mandate of a university education, “becoming responsible heirs and members of human culture.”

My liberal education, and that of my brothers and sisters, however, began long before our university experiences; with books and musical instruments and dinner table conversations and travels from our small-town home in South Dakota to the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago and Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. My father was our intellectual mentor and, though we lived far out on the Dakota prairies—the very prairies that Meridel LeSueur referred to as “the waste and ashes of pioneerin”—he expected us to THINK and to have IDEAS and above all, to USE OUR IMAGINATIONS.

But for me, a turning point in my early intellectual life was provided not by my father, but by a neighbor whose name was John Vaughn. John and I shared the steps at the Carnegie Library every Saturday morning, a man of about 30, a girl of nine; waiting to trade in our books for the next week’s worth of fantasy. John was unusual. Even on the hottest summer days, he wore the same clothing: a tired brown plaid wool shirt under bib overalls, tattered boots inside five-buckle galoshes, and a canvas hunting cap with earflaps and a string. With his grizzled beard and shaggy hair, it was no wonder that local boys made fun of him as he walked alone around our small town, mimicking his hulking steps, a burlesque behind his back.

My mother instructed me firmly to “Be polite” and said that “John had a hard life.” So I always said “Good morning,” and when the library door was opened he held the door for me in a courtly manner before proceeding to the large oak table near the newspapers. He would still be sitting there reading when I later checked out my books for the following week.

Our weekly convenings on the steps of the library went on for a very long time, and I began to wonder what it was about those newspapers that held such fascination for my unusual “library companion.” So one day (and I don’t remember how old I was by then) instead of checking out my books, I sat down at the table across from John. He looked up with kind eyes and then pushed a section of the paper across the table. It was the travel section of the *New York Times*.

So much for the “waste and ashes of pioneering!” The Travel Section of the *New York Times*, along with the Science, Arts, Style, Opinion, Business and, yes, the

news sections became the fuel that fired my imagination and provided the threads that connected me to innovations beyond anything I could ever have imagined.

Though we never had a conversation, from that Saturday onward, my neighbor John and I connected weekly across that broad oak table at the Carnegie Library, sliding sections of the *New York Times* back and forth until all had been consumed. I remain a devoted fan of the NYT today (though I read more of it online than in print) and I will be forever grateful to my strange neighbor, John Vaughn, for introducing me to ideas and innovations so far beyond the boundaries of my own geography. This was my introduction to a liberal education—in a small-town library in South Dakota, no waste or ashes in sight.

As I stand here today, deeply honored to serve as chancellor of the University of Illinois Springfield, I feel as if I have arisen from that chair in the library still very much energized by the power of ideas, imagination and innovation. I'll come back to that a little later.

Since this is my first convocation at UIS, I want to recognize the service and the achievements of the presidents and chancellors who have come before me, especially Dr. Harry Berman, who served so ably as interim chancellor this past year; Dr. Richard Ringeisen, chancellor the past ten years who was kind enough to stop by for a visit a few weeks ago; and Dr. Naomi Lynn, who left a legacy of outstanding leadership and careful stewardship here on our campus.

I also want to welcome some special guests who have joined us today:

- Member of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees, UIS alumna and great friend to our university, Karen Hasara;
- Dean and provost of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, Dr. Kevin Dorsey;
- President and CEO, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Gary Plummer;
- President of Lincoln Land Community College, Dr. Charlotte Warren;
- Dr. Tih-Fen Ting, chair of the Campus Senate;
- Jerry Burkhart, chair of the Academic Professional Advisory Committee;
- Bobbi Fults, Chair of the Civil Service Advisory Council; and
- UIS' Student Government Association President, Erin Wilson.

Please join me in welcoming these special guests to our convocation.

And I am delighted to welcome some special international partners who are with us today from the University of The Gambia:

- Professor Kah, president of the University of The Gambia;
- Dr. Kuye, head of the Department of Public and Environmental Health;
- Mr. Maneh, University Secretary; and
- Mr. Ofosuhene, Director of Finance.

I'd also like to welcome my "personal" special guest, my husband, Dennis Koch.

I also want to offer a special welcome to any faculty emeriti, university retirees and alums who may be with us today. As I have read the founding documents of our university during the past few weeks, I have developed a deep appreciation for your contributions as past faculty, staff and students. These contributions are part of your legacy and our history. I want you to know that we appreciate what you have done, and I am grateful for your continued interest and commitment.

I also need to take a moment to thank so many of you who talked with me about the university during my candidacy, who have so warmly welcomed Dennis and me to the campus and to the community, and who have worked so diligently to insure a smooth transition of leadership during the past several months. That includes:

- the members of the Chancellor Search Committee, especially Search Committee Chair, Dr. Tih-Fen Ting,
- President Mike Hogan, Board of Trustees Chair Chris Kennedy,
- Trustee Hasara and other members of the board,
- members of the Chancellor's Office staff, Interim Provost Lynn Pardie, Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Tim Barnett, and the other members of the UIS leadership team,
- so many of you who have provided guided orientations of your particular area of the campus, (My goal is to get into every building on campus, so don't worry, if I have not been to your location yet, it will happen soon.)
- and those of you who have kindly tolerated my unexpectedly joining you for lunch in the cafeteria.

Thank you all

During my first week on campus, two students took my husband and me around, and I asked them to give us not only the usual campus tour, but also to take us to some of their favorite places. Guess what? I'll bet I saw some things that those of you who've been here for many years have yet to see! So a special thanks to Dan and Brandon for the inside story on our campus!

I must tell you that in all these interactions these past few weeks; my earliest impressions of the University of Illinois Springfield have proved consistent and true. This is a university that lives its commitment every day to provide an intellectually rich and collaborative learning environment for students as well as for faculty and staff, and it is a university that is serving its communities from local to global. It's great to be here, and I look forward to our work together in the coming years.

Part of my self-assigned work as your new chancellor has been to understand our history. I have read our founding documents from the 1960s and early 1970s, and one in particular was a memorandum written just three months after we first opened our doors in a downtown church in the fall of 1970. It was President Robert C.

Spencer writing to the Academic Vice President regarding “considerations in appointing new faculty.”

One word from that memo already has made a lasting impression on me. That word is innovation. The first president of then-Sangamon State University framed the university’s commitment to students, to teaching, to research, to shared governance, and to “a respect for an involvement with the world of work” as “contributing to the university’s mandate to be an innovative institution.”

As I have been reflecting on those founding documents and more importantly, on the road ahead, it seems to me that there is no better word to frame this particular moment in time and this Convocation 2011 than the word that was actually the original mandate of this university: innovation.

Innovation is most certainly going to be required of us if we are to live up to the mission and vision of our own campus and of the University of Illinois, one of the preeminent public universities in our nation.

We’ve already come a long way since 1970!

- From 45 faculty then to 209 as of yesterday.
- From 811 students to about 5,200 this fall – if our projections hold true.
- From 12 academic programs to a total of 44 different degrees.
- From a campus with those few small metal buildings on the east side (I’ve heard them called “temporary”; but that appears to be a relative term), to a campus growing so much that every building west of where I am now standing – the residence halls and the townhouses – as well as the two major facilities south of us – University Hall and The Recreation and Athletic Center – have all been built in the past 10 years.
- From a university where the Internet did not exist to one where online and blended education have become so important that one-third of our enrollments this fall will be from students who are totally online.

The excellence and success of our online programs is the envy of higher education institutions around the world; thanks to the innovative efforts of many of you faculty and staff who are contributing to that effort!

Our public affairs emphasis here in the state capital of Illinois is providing a unique and high-caliber educational experience for future leaders — innovation again!

And don’t even get me started listing all of the achievements of our faculty, staff, students and alums (though I wish I had time to do it). I am just beginning to know those achievements myself, but I think we can probably agree that we’ve taken that “innovation” charge pretty darned seriously in our first forty-one years!

But as we look ahead, perhaps the appropriate question is: “How will we interpret that original innovation mandate for the coming decade? How will we continue to create that “brilliant future” for our students that was promised in our 2006 Strategic Plan? How will we employ our innovation mandate to deliver on our

mission and provide every undergraduate and graduate student an intellectually rich, collaborative and intimate learning experience while we serving our local, regional, state, national and international communities?"

With that "innovation mandate" in mind today, I'd like to suggest that, at least for starters, we need go no further for inspiration than that 2006 strategic plan! Let me be clear: I might be able to provide comfort to many in this audience today (though I reserve the right to change my mind if needed) by not calling for a new strategic plan.

But I do think it's time for us to re-examine that document, to refresh it as needed and to imbed into it even more fully the innovation mandate so necessary for our university's continued advancement; particularly given the changes in the higher education environment in our country and in our state that have occurred since the plan was first developed in 2006.

Just over a year ago in our 2010 Strategic Plan Progress Report to the Board of Trustees, we described many areas of progress. To name a few:

- Under Goal 1 –Academic Excellence – we were named the best public university at the Masters Level in the state of Illinois!
- Under Goal 2 – Enriching Individual Lives — we reported the largest number of students ever participating in Study Abroad programs.
- Under Goal 5 – Enrollment and Retention – we reported record enrollments, topping 5,000 students for the first time, including strong upward trends in minority student enrollments.

But much remains to be done! I am aware that all of the colleges have created their own strategic plans in accord with the UIS plan, and so did many divisions and units such as Student Affairs. It's going to take a little time for us to sort out exactly where we are, what we need to refresh, what we need to add, and how we will do that. I will have more to say about the process in the weeks to come, after consulting with campus leadership.

In the meantime, we must continue to vigorously pursue academic excellence, enriching individual lives, making a difference in the world, strengthening our campus culture, pushing forward on enrollment and retention, and developing the necessary resources and infrastructure to support our educational endeavors. These are the six goals in our strategic plan and they are worthy ones.

We have to act energetically and creatively even as we continue our careful planning. We can't afford to wait, because our students have needs right now, our faculty and staff have needs right now and the higher education environment in Illinois and in the nation is becoming more challenging and competitive.

To our credit, we have documented many successes in implementing the strategic plan of 2006. But in re-examining that plan we will surely find important goals and dreams yet to be implemented. That's why a campus dialogue is so necessary.

What I am so hopeful about is that our strategic plan will continue to provide a launching pad for us to be innovative, because that is what we need it to do.

And I want to take a few moments today to talk specifically about enrollment. The fifth goal in our strategic plan, “Enrollment and Retention,” says that we will improve access and opportunity and that we will enroll, retain and graduate a larger and more diverse student body engaged in both classroom and technology-enhanced education. We set a goal of having 6,000 on-campus students, and I want you to know that I endorse this goal. I believe we need to grow the number of students on campus if we are to be successful in implementing our mission more fully. We also need to increase our on-campus enrollment because our community and our state need more college-educated citizens.

And because it’s clear that we are so successful with online classes and programs, we need to have a serious conversation about the growth of both on-campus and online programs. This combination of online and on-ground programs may be the wave of the future at other universities; but at UIS it is the present. Students have embraced online and blended learning. For many of our students, it is the essential key to access to a college degree. Our faculty (with the support of talented staff) do it very, very well, and a conversation about the “what next” is important for us to continue in our international leadership role.

There are at least two other reasons regarding enrollment that we need to focus on:

One has to do with our vision and mission of being a diverse community. Again, we can document significant progress and success in this area. Our minority student enrollments have grown significantly, and we are doing a better job of supporting our minority and LGBTQ communities with professional staff and student services. But we can and must do better. I am not satisfied, for example, with the diversity of our workforce. We need a more diverse faculty and staff, and I am pleased that President Michael Hogan agrees. We will be participating in the coming year in a university-wide effort to increase the diversity of the faculty in our community, and we need to have a conversation about expanding that effort across all aspects of our community. Diversity matters to all of us, it matters to our board and it matters to our state. It must be a priority.

Living in a global community requires us to increase our international outreach – bringing more international students to UIS, having more of our students benefiting from global experiences and integrating a global perspective throughout our curriculum. I am pleased that we are engaging colleagues and students from China, India, Vietnam, Poland, Mongolia and now Gambia. The more internationally diverse we become, the richer the educational experience that we provide will be.

Another thing I want to say about enrollment: In order to continue to grow and provide a continuously rich intellectual environment, our efforts at innovation must also include examination of the programs we offer and new programs that we ought to offer to meet the demands of our times and our students. This is the approach

that our charter faculty members and administrators took in designing innovative programs in the past. We have the same chance to be innovative and forward-looking, but in a competitive higher education environment where resources must be carefully allocated and re-allocated, we will need to be both strategic and decisive. So I am calling on the university community to look at your strategic plans and goals, listen to your advisory board and alums, consider national trends and other relevant data – and see where that might lead us.

Our founding documents mandated that we should be a public affairs university as well as one focused on the liberal arts. That public affairs mandate has taken some twists and turns during our first four decades. While there has been some shift toward a stronger liberal arts emphasis (and our COPLAC membership is evidence of that), I want to acknowledge that I am pleased that UIS has never lost its public affairs emphasis. This is a terrific example of our university asking itself that very important question so central to, as Jim Collins says, moving from “good to great.” That question is: “What can we be best at in the world?” Given our location in the state capital of Illinois and the home of Abraham Lincoln, we certainly can and should be “best at” public affairs. We have always said that we can do public affairs within the scope of a liberal arts institution, and we have done that well.

There is another topic from our founding documents, however, that over the years, seems almost to have been forgotten. I haven’t been here long enough to know the whole story, but I find it worthy of bringing to your attention today. Originally, the Illinois Board of Higher Education also called on this university to – and I quote–“take advantage of the existing medical facilities in Springfield as [we] plan programs in the allied health fields.” Look around. In central Illinois, state government as an industry is slightly shrinking while still critically important, and medicine and health care are expanding exponentially – health care may soon overtake state government as the biggest local employer.

According to a recent article in the State Journal-Register, the health-care industry in the Springfield area generates almost \$2.5 billion a year in direct and indirect economic activity and shows great potential for the future. According to an analysis by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, despite the nationwide recession, the health care industry in our area will continue to grow and provide employment opportunities in a wide variety of professions.

So as we refresh our strategic plans, I am asking the university community to be mindful of what might have been prophetic wisdom from the IBHE forty years ago when it asked us to serve the needs of the health care industry in this region. Perhaps we have not been innovative enough in these areas.

And finally, I cannot leave the issue of enrollment without saying a few words about the cost of higher education for our students and their families. When I attended undergraduate school at a public liberal arts college in South Dakota, the cost of attendance was about \$250 per semester, the state provided about 90 percent of the cost of my education and I completed my undergraduate degree with no debt. Today, that \$250 would not even cover a single credit hour at the University of

Illinois Springfield. This fall, a freshman in-state undergraduate student will pay over \$4,000 for a full slate of courses. State support for higher education now covers less than half of the costs, and the average student debt for an Illinois undergraduate upon degree completion is \$18,500! We need more scholarships to help provide access to a University of Illinois degree for qualified students. We need more scholarships to help us be competitive. And with the expertise of our development staff working with me and with our deans and others, with the commitment of our alumni and friends of the university in Springfield and beyond, and with your support, we will increase the number and size of our need and merit-based scholarships provided for our students. I intend to lead by example, and I can assure you I will not be shy about asking for support for our students.

I hope you can see that the theme of innovation is intertwined and inseparable from the need to refresh and revise our strategic plan, and that planning strategically for growth is central to our discussions.

Before I bring my remarks to a close today, I want to raise one more strategic issue that has been on my mind these first weeks as I have been getting to know the campus. That issue is Goal Four of our strategic plan – “Strengthening our Campus Culture.” This goal describes the need for us to provide an intellectual rich and culturally diverse campus environment that will enhance our students’ educational experience and that will also serve as a social, cultural and educational resource for the community. I don’t have a full understanding yet of the progress we have been making in that regard; but I can tell you from my own past experience on two other university campuses, opportunities for students to participate in and be exposed to music and theater, the visual arts, intercollegiate athletics, service learning, volunteering, student organizations and intercultural experiences are very important elements of the university experience.

I am reminded of my own oldest daughter, who attended a very fine liberal arts institution and is now the Senior Advisor for Peacekeeping for the United Nations. When asked what elements of her college experience have meant the most to her success she always says that while in college:

- 1) she learned to write very well,
- 2) she learning languages,
- 3) she volunteered, and
- 4) she was a collegiate athlete — a competitive swimmer.

The first two elements were clearly academic and provided her with the basic intellectual skills of her professional life; the volunteering gave her a broader experience of the world (and caused her to meet Madeline Albright who offered her first job), and the collegiate athletics provided the discipline, the competitiveness, the time-management and a set of lifelong friends.

Each of you plays an important role in strengthening our campus culture. One simple but effective way to do this is to connect your work, whatever that work is, to our mission. If you are a supervisor, make connections for your staff every day between the importance of their work and that bigger mission of providing a rich, collaborative and intimate learning environment for our students. Martin Luther King once said: If you are street sweeper, your should sweep the streets like

Michelangelo painted or Beethoven wrote music. You should sweep the streets so well that the heavens will rise up and say, “Here is a street sweeper who does his or her job very well.”

If we all connect our tasks to our mission, we will deliver on that mission for our students, UIS will be a more enriching place to work and we will be visible and more appreciated in the communities beyond our campus.

Let me close today with a favorite saying of someone near and dear to our academic community. He taught journalism at our university in the early 1970s, and he also created one of our most successful programs, the Master’s Program in Public Affairs Reporting, which provides students the unique opportunity to work alongside professional journalists in the state capitol while pursuing their degrees. I am referring to the late Paul Simon, who left UIS to run successfully for Congress and then became a United States senator. One of Simon’s favorite sayings was very simple, but profound: “We can do better.” He wrote a book with that title and he believed with all his heart and all his passion that every citizen and society as a whole could do better in every imaginable way. He spent his life trying to do just that. He challenged his colleagues in Congress to do better, and he taught his students the same thing.

Our Board of Trustees Chair, Chris Kennedy, echoed this sentiment at our July board retreat when he said: “We want our university to be the best at what it does in everything that it does.”

We are justifiably proud of many aspects of our university: we share a deep commitment to the ideas and the ideals of the liberal arts, because we understand that these are the underpinnings of an educated and productive citizen; our faculty and staff take a personal interest in students both within the classroom and beyond in student life, in athletics, in the arts, and in the community. I have been impressed in the short time I have been on campus with the dedication of our faculty to excellence in teaching and with the quality of the scholarship that we produce. I have become aware of the many important functions that our Academic Professionals serve throughout our organization and also of the many contributions of our Civil Service staff.

The depth and breadth of our engagement with public affairs and with the preparation of professionals to serve in leadership positions in both the public and private sectors is well known, and the excellence of our online learning initiatives are the envy of the rest of the country. But if our former colleague were here today, I believe he would say to us, as I say to you now: we can do better.

As we begin this academic year, 2011; I invite you to engage with me in determining how we can best do better.

- What are we passionate about?
- What can we be “best at in the world?”
- How can we build on our strengths and create new ones?

- How can we better serve the needs of our students?
- How can we better serve the needs of our communities and the needs of the state of Illinois and beyond?
- How can we best create a campus culture that contributes to the intellectual, cultural, social and personal enrichment of every member of our community?
- How can we make that valuable University of Illinois diploma even more valuable?

I will be listening to you in the coming months because one thing I have learned in nearly 30 years in higher education is that leadership is about collective wisdom used strategically.

If my old “friend” John Vaughn were on our campus today, I think he might be on the third floor of Brookens Library, still reading newspapers. And if he were, I might join him from time to time, sit across the table from him and slide a few sections of the *New York Times* back and forth. I also like to think we would have a conversation (something we never did at the Carnegie Library), a conversation not only about what was newsworthy that particular day; but also about things that matter, taking advantage of our collective wisdom and experience.

I invite you to join me at that table. Let’s light the fires of our imagination. Let’s reinvent together that innovation mandate that drove the founders of our university. Innovation is critical for us, and I am very confident that our collective wisdom will guide our university to a brilliant future; a future that will deliver on the promise that we have made to our students and to the citizens of Illinois.

Thank you for what you do every day to deliver on that promise to our students. I want you to know that I appreciate your contributions and I value your input.

Best wishes for a wonderfully successful and satisfying year.

Prepared Remarks for Convocation 2012

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 23, 2012

Good afternoon!

Thank you all so much for coming to this University of Illinois Springfield Fall 2012 Convocation. It’s great to see all of you here!

I want to begin today by offering a special welcome to all of our faculty and staff who are new to the UIS community. Congratulations on your appointment! I hope

you feel, as I most certainly do beginning my second year as your Chancellor, that you have made a brilliant decision in becoming part of this very fine institution.

I look forward to the many contributions you will make to our university in the coming years.

I also want to welcome some special guests who have joined us for Convocation today:

- UIS Chancellor Emeritus and still wonderful advocate for our university, Naomi Lynn; and her husband, Bob;
- Representing the Office of the Mayor of Springfield: Willis Logan, Mayor Houston's Executive Assistant.
- Our newly appointed President and CEO of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Steward Sandstrom;
- Standing in for Professor Lynn Fisher, Chair of our UIS Campus Senate is Vice Chair of the Campus Senate, Dr. Kathy Jamison;
- Chair of the UIS Academic Professional Advisory Committee, Teresa Szabo;
- President of the UIS Civil Service Advisory Council, Bobbie Fults;

And I'm pleased to welcome some special international guests from Japan who are here working with our faculty and staff on a partnership for science education:

- Mr. Hiroshi Ohkawara, Mathematics Teacher, Ashikaga Boys High School;
- Hirofumi Arai, Science Teacher, Ashikaga Boys High School;
- Hirakoba Eri, English Teacher, Ashikaga Boys High School;
- and Professor Masuda Shinji, Ashikaga Institute of Technology (I'm delighted you could join us today).

And I'd also like to welcome my "personal" special guest, my husband, Dennis Koch, who, though he has a busy career in agriculture, is himself a wonderful supporter and advocate for our university.

Please join me in welcoming all of these special guests to our convocation.

Preview

In my convocation speech a year ago, I told you that I would do a lot of listening during my first year as your Chancellor. I want to thank all of you who have been so willing to share your thoughts with me about our university and its future during these past 12 months.

I've been listening (and learning) at all levels –

- throughout the University of Illinois organization, with my fellow Chancellors, Paula Allen-Meares in Chicago and Phyllis Wise in Urbana, with President Bob Easter (who you will meet at our Welcome Picnic next week if you have not met him already), and with our Board Chair, Chris Kennedy, and members of our Board of Trustees;

- engaging with UIS faculty, staff and students with departmental and unit visits, student events and other campus activities;
- I've gotten to know Governor Quinn, many of our Illinois legislators and members of our Illinois Congressional delegation in Washington;
- and I've spent time with UIS alums, donors, friends, community leaders and others.

To say I've learned a lot would be an understatement, but of course, that listening and dialogue will continue this year and every year because your ideas, perspectives and criticisms are essential input to the process of shared governance that is fundamental to our success and to our future.

And speaking of our future, in our brief time together today, I'd like to look ahead with you at the future of the University of Illinois Springfield. In doing that, I want to first talk briefly about the UIS identity – who we are and what we aspire to be. Then, I'd like to talk about the priorities that must be our focus in the next few years in order for us to achieve our aspirations.

The UIS Identity

Since the first of July this past year, I've heard a lot of discussion about what our institution was, is, can and should be. We're a young university (founded as I reminded you a year ago on a commitment to innovation) and we've had several major transitions in our 40+ years. Questions and debates about our identity are normal and healthy and are not at all surprising given our youth and the continued evolution of our institution.

So let me clarify today, from the Chancellor's point of view, what I believe our vision and aspiration can best be, based in part on what I have heard from you, as well as on the evidence I have seen in the past year, and on what I am confident is the best possible alignment with the UI as a whole and the broader higher education landscape in our region at this particular time.

First, I am convinced that those essential elements of what this community has already declared about the UIS vision ring true even more so today and I want to enthusiastically affirm those elements:

The vision of the University of Illinois Springfield is to be a premier public university – and we are well on our way to achieving that aspiration.

Within that vision, we are focused on three areas of excellence:

- First – a high-quality liberal arts foundation that prepares all graduates to be critical thinkers, lifelong learners and engaged citizens. To quote from the AAC&U's "Statement on Liberal Learning," a document I have turned to again and again to explain the importance of liberal learning: "A liberal education embraces the diversity of ideas and experiences that characterize the social, natural and intellectual world; it prepares us to live responsible,

productive and creative lives in a dramatically changing world. Liberal learning is society's best investment in our shared future.”

- Our second area of excellence is exceptional public affairs opportunities that take full advantage of the UIS location in the state capital of Illinois and the home of Abraham Lincoln. Teaching, scholarship and service that connect to public affairs provide a powerful example, I am convinced, of what UIS can uniquely be “best at in the world,” (to paraphrase researcher, Jim Collin’s landmark book, *Good to Great*) and I will continue to challenge our community to create areas of excellence that build on this unique feature of our university.
- And finally our third area of excellence – outstanding professional preparation programs that prepare graduates for meaningful and successful careers (and I’ll say more about that later)..

A premier public university:

- with a commitment to liberal learning,
- with exceptional public affairs opportunities,
- and will outstanding professional programs.

That, to me, describes pretty succinctly the identity and the aspirations of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois!

Within the landscape of higher education in the United States, I am pleased to say that an important part of our UIS identity is being an active member of the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges, COPLAC, an organization of 26 public colleges and universities from across the US that works to support and promote the value of high-quality, liberal arts education.

I am equally proud to say that UIS (like many other COPLAC institutions) is also an AASCU institution, a member of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, an association of about 420 regional public universities that serve over 4 million students each year. AASCU institutions, like the historic land-grant universities that include the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois, are institutions of access and opportunity. AASCU institutions are student-centered campuses and are “stewards of place,” engaging with their communities and the regions they serve.

Being active members of both COPLAC and AASCU is part of who we are – and that’s a good thing.

And I want to remind you that, whatever you may think about US News and World Report rankings, it is no small achievement that we are ranked higher than any other regional public university in Illinois. At the same time, we are the only regional public university that is part of the world-class University of Illinois. It seems to me that that is not a coincidence.

It’s clear to me from all I’ve heard and experienced in my nearly 30 years in higher education, and from learning about our own traditions and history, that holding fast

to this high aspiration, to be a premier public university, is the right direction for us at this time in our history.

With that vision always ahead of us, and recognizing the challenges we face, I'm very optimistic about our future (primarily because of the collective talents of all of you) and I hope you join me in looking ahead to the coming year with a sense of optimism and confidence.

Before I drill into what I see as our three priorities, I want to tell a brief story about one of many conversations I had with students this past year.

One of my most powerful listening experiences occurred in February when I met with four students who talked to me about their dreams and aspirations and why they were in college.

One is politically active and transferred here because he thinks UIS has the best possible location, here in the capital city, to get an education and prepare for a career in public service. Another student also transferred to UIS, but she did so because she wanted a smaller school setting than the one she had in Chicago and we were more affordable for her. Another was the President of the Black Male Collegiate Society and in May, the youngest of seven children, became the first person in his family to graduate from college (and I can tell you that shaking this young man's hand on the stage at Commencement was a thrill for both of us!) The fourth student was from a local high school and her mother didn't think it would be worthwhile for her to attend a college. But she came on her own anyway, a bit scared and without knowing what to expect. She plans to be an elementary teacher.

Each was a classic UIS story, to be sure; but my bigger point is this: These four students had something important in common. None of them came from families that could afford to send their children to college. All were attending UIS with the assistance of financial aid including a state of Illinois Monetary Award Program grant, commonly called a MAP grant. Without the MAP grants and other forms of financial aid, these four young people would not have been college students anywhere and I can tell you that our society, state and nation will be worse off if young people like this cannot receive a college education.

This conversation was a poignant reminder for me of the data that I see almost every day that tells me that access to a college education has become a critical issue in the United States – and a compelling challenge for families. That kind of data feels a lot more powerful to me when I come face to face with the reality encountered by our own students.

Like all of you, I see such potential and big dreams in these students. They are a perfect match for UIS where they get so much personal attention from faculty who really take the time to know them.

How crushing it will be for our state and for the larger society if we don't find a way in the next decade to continue to make college affordable and accessible in Illinois, and then to educate these students with our full energy and our best efforts

right here where our faculty and staff are so passionate about students and their education.

Priorities

This story leads me to talk about the first of three priorities that I spoke to already at the University of Illinois Board of Trustees retreat this past month.

This is not a priority that will surprise you: Our first priority is to continue to grow our enrollment.

As you know, UIS enrollment has exceeded 5,000 students in the past two years and we'll be close to that again this year. We need to keep growing if we are to achieve our vision and serve our students effectively. The number of new first time, full time freshmen will be up this year and I am delighted that we will see increases in the numbers of Latino students, African American students and international students. But the number of returning students is down somewhat and we may also have fewer graduate students (depending on final counts). I am concerned about that.

Recruitment and retention is not only the job of our colleagues in Admissions, Financial Aid and Student Support; it is everybody's job. We need to do everything we can to insure the success of our students at the same time we insure that our students can afford to stay in school.

Enrollment – recruiting students and then retaining them – is good not only for those students; but also for our institution because it is now enrollment (given the steep decline in state support for higher education), more than any other factor, that drives our “revenue engine.”

So how can we grow?

One of the first things we have to do in order to grow is increase our visibility. We employed a nationally known consulting firm this past year and their research demonstrated conclusively that one of our recruiting challenges is that we are just not as well known in the region as we need to be.

You may recall that the Stamats consultants spent two days on campus last year and talked with many of you as well as with students, and they followed up with a survey of our entire campus community and 10,000 alumni. I want to thank all of you who participated in that important research.

Stamats helped us understand that, for marketing purposes, we have four core strengths.

One, we are **teaching-focused**. It's our heritage. Teaching comes first at UIS. We've been proud of that for a long time and we have high expectations for faculty in that regard.

Two, we have a **supportive community**. That's what you might expect at a smaller campus but, as you know, creating a truly supportive community doesn't happen unless you work at it. And we have.

Three, we have an **abundance of opportunities** for students and faculty and staff to **collaborate**. We're really good at collaboration and we have an environment where innovation, inquiry, and creativity all thrive.

Four, we have a **tradition of educating public servants and leaders**. We have some of the best government and public service internship programs in the nation. But when I say we educate leaders, I am also referring to our strong professional programs in Business, Computer Science, Education and other areas so that we're educating leaders in many sectors in our region and far beyond.

With these four core strengths in mind, you're seeing, starting today, the launch of a new campaign that is designed to increase UIS's visibility in Springfield, in the region ... and beyond.

The campaign has a new tagline for UIS: "Leadership lived" and I want to share with you [a very short video](#) that talks a little more about "Leadership lived" and our four core attributes.

Leadership lived.

I hope those two words are already growing on you – as they have on me.

This new campaign will involve external and internal messaging and strategies.

As you leave today after our program concludes, staff will provide you with this packet. It contains a summary of the information I just discussed; but more importantly, it includes a copy of the new UIS viewbook that is used in recruiting new students.

I ask that you carefully review this viewbook – it is a wonderful document that really "nails", in my view, who we are as an institution. It represents each of you and there is no better ambassador for this university than you.

I am very, very certain that the images and text in this booklet will make you proud, as I am, to be a part of the mission and vision of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. (And by the way, after you've read the viewbook, I hope you will pass it along to a prospective student along with some encouragement from you to make a campus visit.)

Announcing a marketing campaign is not the purpose of my remarks today; but increasing our visibility is part of our enrollment growth priority and I want you to be not only aware of what we are doing, but also knowledgeable about this effort.

I think Leadership Lived describes us very well and you'll be hearing and seeing more about all of this in the weeks ahead.

Increasing our visibility is one thing we need to do in order to grow.

Another priority for enrollment growth is for UIS to be more affordable and accessible. I alluded to this in my story about the four students.

Affordability and accessibility are more than buzzwords to UIS and to the University of Illinois. Just a few weeks ago all three UI Chancellors and President Easter signed on to a document titled "A Commitment to the Future" authored jointly by AASCU and the APLU – the Association of Public Land Grant Universities – that calls for an increase in educational attainment in the United States so that 60 percent of Americans have a post-secondary credential by the year 2025. That is a bold commitment, but is part of our responsibility to make higher education more accessible.

We've already made several changes in the past few months in our financial aid strategies. We're improving the awarding of all types of aid and it is helping us to be more affordable ... and competitive.

The UIS Access Illinois scholarship campaign is a very high priority for me as Chancellor (and for our Office of Development) because we need to offer more and larger scholarships. You'll be pleased to know that the UIS Access Illinois campaign is going very well and we are well ahead of our campaign projections. I am absolutely confident that we will have many more scholarships to offer prospective students in the future.

I am deeply grateful to the almost 300 UIS employees, many of whom are in this audience, who contributed to our faculty/staff campaign this last year and I hope you will consider supporting our UIS scholarship campaign (if you are able) in the coming year.

The third essential element of our growth strategy is to strategically add new academic programs. One reason that prospective students don't choose UIS is that we have only 24 undergraduate programs, which is not surprising given that we are a very young university. We simply don't offer the program that some prospective students need and want and the choices of major are limited compared to options at many other campuses.

If we are going to be a premier public university, we need to be steadily assessing need and adding academic programs that fit within the framework of our three areas of excellence, starting with those in high-demand areas that will achieve robust enrollments and graduate students into professions where need exists.

I have charged our new Provost, Dr. Lynn Pardie, to work with faculty, appropriate consultants and others to identify and bring forward proposals for a small number of new academic programs that are in high demand in our part of the state and

beyond; innovative programs that will be characterized by student demand and occupational viability for the foreseeable future.

Part of our enrollment growth strategy is to determine how we can help to meet important regional needs; needs in health care as well as in other areas that are of high interest to prospective students.

Another part of our growth strategy is certainly our nationally recognized expertise in online education. Online programs provide flexibility and make college more accessible and, in some cases, more affordable.

As we all know, UIS faculty have developed a high level of expertise in teaching online and we should take pride that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation recognizes UIS as a leader in online education. Gates is working aggressively with a small number of universities – Harvard, MIT, Penn State, the University of Massachusetts, a few others – AND UIS! – [Can I say that one more time just for fun?]

Gates is working aggressively with a small number of universities – Harvard, MIT, Penn State, the University of Massachusetts, a few others – AND UIS! – to test new delivery methods online. We are very pleased to be in such company.

Online education is an important part of that “revenue engine” that drives us forward. It is part of our institutional identity and a point of pride for our university. I appreciate the leadership of all of you who have been innovators and contributors in that effort.

The final critical factor that I want to mention under the priority of enrollment growth is the construction of our new Student Union. Though you may not think about this often, the fact is that when prospective students visit our campus, they constantly ask us where the student union is because they know the union is the center of campus life on any campus. They are disappointed when they hear we do not have one.

Most people would take it for granted that every university campus has a student union. But we don’t yet and we need one in order to provide our current and future students the student experience that they deserve and want.

A student union is like the campus living room, family room and study center all in one. It promotes a positive campus life, it creates community and it contributes to the intellectual climate of a university – all critical elements for both the recruitment and retention of students and for the achievement of our aspiration to be a premier public university. It is important not only for residential students, but also for commuting students who need a place to gather between classes and experience campus life.

Thanks to outstanding student leadership on this issue, our students voted overwhelmingly this past spring to impose a new fee on themselves to help build this building. At the Board of Trustees retreat in July, I showed a slide with three

photographs – one of the historic Illini Union at UIUC, one of one of two student unions on the UIC campus, and the third one – well, I just had a blank square with the letters UIS underneath. Everybody got it immediately and I know I can count on the Board’s support as well as President Easter’s as we move forward with this important initiative.

We are working closely with central administration on this project and the Board will approve the site for the Student Union at the September Board meeting. We’re still several critical steps away from making it a reality—including raising private funds to defray some of the cost .

A Student Union is a top priority because it advances the larger priority of enrollment growth. It is a facility we need and we’re going to get the shovel into the ground on this project as soon as we possibly can.

All of those issues that I’ve just talked about are related to our enrollment and growth priorities. No priority is higher. Enrollment growth at UIS is about increasing our visibility, improving affordability, providing the right mix of academic programs, continuing to take advantage of our online expertise and completing the student union project to enhance student life as soon as possible.

But before I move on to talking about two other priorities I want to say one more thing about enrollment growth and it is something that connects to almost every person in this room. I spent about an hour with new freshmen and their parents yesterday during “Move In Day” and I heard it again and again.

Students choose the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois (and their parents encourage them to come to UIS) first and foremost because of the personalized, high-quality experience that we provide for students every day. What makes all the difference is your commitment to our students; whether that shows itself in the excellent teaching, advising and research opportunities that you provide for students every day, in the exemplary customer service you extend in various service areas, in the enthusiasm I see flowing between coaches and student-athletes, in assistance to students provided regularly by members of our police force, in the wonderfully maintained buildings and grounds or in the remarkably good and creative food service. YOU ARE UIS and the excellence of every employee is important for enrollment growth.

Our second priority has to do with hiring and retaining the talent we need to fulfill our vision to be a premier public university.

We have more than 700 full-time employees at UIS and many part-time employees as well. Like the two other campuses, we’ve lost a lot of talent in the past year through retirements—representing almost 5 percent of our workforce.

I recognize that one of our most compelling needs, particularly in the face of the increasing number of retirements, is to improve and streamline the hiring processes at UIS. I have asked some of our top people to look at this in collaboration with UI

and UIS Human Resources and I think we'll begin to see some significant improvements in our processes this year.

Like all universities, our reputation rests on our ability to hire and retain outstanding faculty—teacher-scholars who will contribute to our students' and our university's success. I had the opportunity to host our new faculty for an event this past week and I have to say, I am impressed!

I'm so pleased that we have been able to provide a package of salary increases for faculty and staff this year despite our serious budget challenges. I want to assure you that providing competitive salaries, particularly for faculty and key staff, is a high priority for me in the coming years.

Obviously, as the university grows, our faculty and staff will also grow and we need to be competitive so that we can recruit the "best and the brightest" to become part of our academic community.

We also have challenges when it comes to the diversity of our faculty and staff. We are doing much, much better with the diversity of our student body but I will repeat what I said last year at Convocation: I am not satisfied with the diversity of our faculty and staff.

All of our students need to have more opportunities to work with and learn with a diverse faculty and staff who provide models of success that they can emulate and who provide diverse experiences and perspectives.

It is a compelling priority for us to put in place the appropriate infrastructure that will enhance understanding of and appreciation for diversity on campus and that will help us to increase the diversity of faculty and staff. We are in the process of accessing additional UI resources to assist us in those efforts.

Finally, under that priority of talent acquisition, I want to mention one more issue regarding talent—and that is leadership. Time and again in my career in higher education at three universities, I have seen Jim Collin's research on leadership (the research mentioned earlier in this presentation) prove true. That research is summarized in the axiom: "First who, then what." It means that you have to get a great leader in place first, before you can accomplish what needs to be done. "First who, then what." (We have wonderful examples of this truth right here on our campus.)

We have had opportunities already to fill some critically important positions with national searches: Kim Pate as Director of Athletics joined us almost exactly a year ago, and Dr. Lynn Pardie became our permanent Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs starting last month.

Kim is now building her team in UIS Athletics and we are creating a first-rate NCAA Division II athletics program with excellent student-athletes that will be

particularly important in increasing our visibility and enhancing our relationship with the Springfield community.

I have full confidence that Dr. Pardie will lead our academic enterprise very successfully and she is already a strong voice for UIS in the larger UI organization and my full partner in campus leadership. We're already demonstrating "First who, then what" and I am very pleased with the outcomes so far.

Right now we have four more national leadership searches under way. The Vice Chancellor for Development is a critical position, the leader of our development efforts, and a position shared with the University of Illinois Foundation. I am pleased to tell you that we will soon have three finalists for the position visiting campus and I am hopeful this search will be successfully concluded very soon.

Searches are also beginning for the Dean of the College of Education and Human Services, the Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration and the Director of International Student Services.

"First who, then what."

All four of these leadership searches are important to our future and I greatly appreciate your participation as members of search committees and in meeting when finalists come to campus. I am reminded that being collaborative is one of our core strengths and I am confident that we'll see that demonstrated in your active participation in these important search processes.

Before I leave the topic of talent, I want to remind us that with state funding continuing to challenge us, we can grow only if we are smart about how we use our resources – especially those human resources that provide so much creativity and innovation.

We are fortunate to have a strong core of tenured and tenure-earning faculty, as well as talented and dedicated instructors, clinical faculty, visiting faculty, adjuncts, Academic Professionals and Civil Service staff. But we need to be innovative in our design and delivery of curricula, services and programming to ensure that we are making the most effective use of all faculty, staff and student time and resources.

Our online and blended courses are a wonderful reflection of faculty innovation and leadership. Leadership also needs to be lived at the faculty level, because faculty leadership is vital to insure that our curricula are cutting edge and effective and to insure that shared governance is, as Larry Faulkner, President Emeritus of University of Texas Austin, said at our July Board retreat, "an indispensable arrangement."

I've talked about the first two priorities of enrollment growth and talent acquisition; the last priority I want to mention today is facilities.

I've already mentioned the Student Union under the enrollment growth priority because it is an essential element to both recruitment and retention of students.

Another facilities priority and our top priority with state-funded facilities continues to be the renovation of Brookens Library. This project has been on the University of Illinois's capital list for several years and we are still waiting for state funding to make it happen. As we all know, the Brookens building needs extensive renovation for it to become the kind of intellectual high-tech hub that university libraries are today and will be tomorrow. The renovation is important not only for the library but also for the academic units located in Brookens. So we're working on it (and our patience is being sorely tested) and it's a priority for the University of Illinois the next time the state has a major capital program.

We're also looking down the road at other facility needs. The UIS Master Plan identifies the location for the next state-funded academic building to the south of the Health and Sciences Building on our Quad. Though funding is still some years away, we will begin planning for that building this year and we will need it as we continue to grow and expand.

I can't end this section about facilities without mentioning the renovation of our apartments that has occurred during the past several months on the east side of campus. We've been planning for this much-needed upgrade for some time and I had a chance to tour the renovated buildings a few days ago.

They are very, very nice and are sure to become the preferred choice for student residents. Our housing units, our residence halls, apartments and townhouses are a major "selling point" for 21st century students (who have much higher standards than I did in college) and now we're even better off because of the recent renovation project. I congratulate everyone who worked so hard to get this project done in time for the start of classes this Fall.

I should mention, too, that planning is well under way for the new Public Safety Building for which \$4 million has already been appropriated. It will replace our police station in the old farmhouse and it is important because it will allow our Public Safety operations to meet higher standards and serve our students more effectively. We will likely break ground on that building in the fall of 2013. It will be located across the street from the TRAC parking lot at the corner of University Drive and Eliza Farnham Drive.

Conclusion

So to summarize our three priorities:

1. We're going to focus on growing our enrollment and we'll do that by increasing visibility, improving affordability, studying and moving forward with the expansion of academic opportunities and building the student union to enhance student life. And we'll continue to provide and improve the

personalized, high-quality education experience so much a part of who we are.

2. We must recruit and retain a highly qualified, talented and diverse faculty, staff and leadership team.
3. We must provide the facilities that will insure that our students have the best university experience possible.

If we can do these things, we will be a premier public university. I want to close today with something that our new President, Bob Easter, said when he made his first public comments on July 2 of this year, his first day on the job as President of the University of Illinois.

He said that, in the face of the many challenges in public university education today, we could allow ourselves to drift to mediocrity, blaming our decline on a host of outside forces.

Or, he said, "... we can define a future that is consistent with our history and our core values".

My challenge to you today, as we begin the 2012 academic year, is to do the latter!

Let's define a future that is consistent with our history; that builds on the innovation mandate that drove the founders and the first faculty of our university.

Let's define a future that is consistent with our university's core values, which will most certainly contribute to our becoming a premier public university.

Thank you for the leadership that you live every day, whatever your role may be here at the University of Illinois Springfield. I want you to know that I appreciate your contributions and I value your input.

I look forward to working with all of you this year in implementing our priorities. Best wishes for a wonderfully successful and satisfying year.

Thank you.

Message from the Chancellor, December 2011

Statement by Chancellor Susan J. Koch
December 12, 2011

This December, 2011, letter continues an ongoing series of regular letters to the campus community on issues of importance to the University and to our overall goals and mission.

First, I have some very good news! The Governor's office recently released \$4 million in state capital funds for UIS's new Public Safety Building. It will replace and enhance our outdated police department headquarters in an old farmhouse on campus. The legislature included the funding in a large capital bill in the spring of 2009, and we've been awaiting release of the funding since then. We are grateful to the Governor's office and to our local representatives for continuing to move this important project forward. We don't yet have the precise timetable for design and construction, but I will keep you posted.

My sincere thanks to everyone involved in hosting the University of Illinois Board of Trustees at UIS for its December meeting. A highlight for the Board occurred when two of our Theatre students, Jennica Danner and Lindsey Ninmer, performed sketches they have been preparing for an upcoming theatre festival. I heard rave reviews about these students' talent from trustees and colleagues from the other campuses. Another highlight for UIS occurred at a dinner in downtown Springfield on Thursday evening. We had arranged for our trustees to interact with a diverse group of Springfield community leaders and Mayor Mike Houston affirmed, in his welcoming remarks, how important UIS is to the Springfield community. Board of Trustees Chair, Chris Kennedy, was so pleased with the evening that he has requested that it become an annual event.

I am grateful to Associate Professor Mike Miller of the Visual Arts Department for his willingness to chair the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs search committee. I'm very pleased with the committee's early work. Advertisements for the position were placed this month and, for the next couple of months, the important work of building an excellent and diverse pool of candidates will be under way. If the search goes well, we anticipate the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will begin in the summer of 2012.

It was a pleasure meeting Washington-area alums and friends of UIS at our DC event last month. Our director of federal relations, Jon Pyatt, planned a great schedule for me, including visits with Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood (who is from Peoria and knows UIS well); Senators Kirk and Durbin as well as members of Congress, Aaron Schock, John Shimkus, Tim Johnson and Bobby Schilling. With the support of our governmental relations and the new UI Washington office, I expect our opportunities for federal interaction and federal funding to increase in the next few years.

Our Brilliant Futures Capital Campaign will come to a close at the end of this month. Reaching our \$28 million goal, a real "stretch" goal for UIS, has been a high priority for me during my first five months and I have been working very intensively with our development staff to achieve our goal. I am delighted to inform you that, though we have not reached the goal as of today, it is "in sight"

and we are cautiously optimistic that we will pass the \$28 million mark very soon. My sincere thanks to all members of the UIS community who have donated to the Brilliant Futures Campaign, and, if you haven't had an opportunity to do so yet, please know that your gift (no matter how small) will make a real positive difference in the support of our students...and in reaching our goal. I hope to have some very positive (and conclusive) news about our Capital Campaign soon.

I promised in my Convocation speech to spend time listening to students, faculty, staff, alums and others who are invested in our university. So far, so good! I've already met many UIS faculty who are successfully weaving together the strands of their careers – outstanding teaching, scholarly contributions, and a commitment to being a contributing member of our academic community. Thanks to their efforts, our reputation is strong and continues to grow. I've also been to the Campus Senate and met with leaders of the Student Government Association, Academic Professional Advisory Committee and Civil Service Advisory Council, among many groups. I'm impressed with the talent that we have. I plan to meet with academic departments next semester as well as host several "coffees" for various groups, with the intent to continue to listen and learn.

With the co-sponsorship of student government, I also had a two-hour late-night "Chocolate with the Chancellor" for students this month; an opportunity for students to share their UIS experience with the Chancellor. It was way past my bedtime; but it was very well-attended and very informative! In February I look forward to "Chili with the Chancellor", which will be cosponsored and promoted by the SGA, the Black Student Union and the Organization of Latin American Students.

I have been talking to President Mike Hogan about my own goals for my first year to eighteen months. Those goals have been informed already by many of you and I will be sharing them with the campus community early next semester. A Chancellor's goals can only be achieved with the support and collaboration of the campus community and sharing my goals is one more way that we can work together and that I can be transparent.

Many of you know and have worked with my executive assistant, Charlene Lambert, who will be retiring at the end of this year after 24.5 years of service to UIS, twenty at Illinois Issues magazine and the last several in the Chancellor's Office. Charlene has been more help to me in the past six months than I could ever describe in detail. Her institutional knowledge (she knows everybody!), her connections with the President's Office and Board of Trustees and her outstanding communication skills have helped to make my transition into the Chancellor role smooth and enjoyable. Charlene presents to the campus community and beyond exactly the kind of respect and concern that I want the Chancellor's Office to have for everyone. I wish Charlene all the best in her retirement and I encourage you to express your appreciation to her in your own way in the next couple of weeks.

As you finish up the semester, I want to thank you again for welcoming me so warmly. I feel at home both on campus and in the community, and I know that

doesn't happen automatically. I wish all of you good times with friends and family during the break and during the holiday season, and a happy and healthy 2012. I am eagerly anticipating what we will be able to do and accomplish together in the coming year.

Thank you for everything you do every day to provide our students with the academic excellence that is so central to what we do.

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

New Director of Athletics Named

Statement by Chancellor Susan J. Koch
July 10, 2011



I am pleased to announce the appointment of Kimberly Pate as University of Illinois Springfield Director of Athletics, pending approval by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees at its July 21 meeting. A summa cum laude graduate of Brevard College in North Carolina, Pate also has an M.B.A. from Western Carolina University and has been the Athletic Director at Brevard College for the past four years.

Pate was promoted to Director of Athletics at Brevard College after she was the assistant athletic director for compliance and business and senior woman administrator. As a student at Brevard, now an NCAA Division II university, Pate was a two-time NAIA Academic All-American athlete and a four-year starter for the softball team. She also was Assistant Varsity Intercollegiate Softball Coach. She has been active in NCAA Division II at the national level and is currently vice chair of the NCAA Division II Membership Committee.

While she was interviewing, Pate demonstrated a strong understanding of UIS's mission and in her experience has demonstrated support for the "student" in "student-athlete." Her strong business background will be very helpful in creating a strategic plan, setting goals and managing the Athletics budget and fundraising initiatives.

Pate will be a wonderful ambassador for our students and coaches on campus and in the local community. She is a proven leader with a strong passion for the role of academics, athletics and community engagement at a Division II university. With 11 athletic programs and 39 student-athletes recently named to the Great Lakes Valley Conference All-Academic Team, UIS Athletics is poised to go to a higher level of success, and I am confident that Kim and our athletics staff and coaches will take us there.

Kim and her husband Rick have one child, Carsen, who is four months old.

I want to thank the Search Committee for its diligence in attracting more than 90 applications for this position and working to reduce the pool of outstanding candidates. I also want to thank Dr. Rodger Jehlicka for more than five years of

service and for leading the successful transition of UIS from the NAIA into the NCAA Division II and the Great Lakes Valley Conference.

Pate will become the full-time acting athletic director at UIS on July 26 and the permanent Director of Athletics on August 16.

End-of-year Message, May 2013

Wednesday, May 8, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

As we approach commencement just a few days away, the purpose of this letter is to share some reflections on the past year and provide a look ahead to the next few months. At the end of my second year serving as UIS Chancellor, I am pleased with our positive momentum and with the progress we continue to make toward achieving our vision to be a premier public university.

Vice Chancellor for Development Jeff Lorber, who joined us in October, has moved quickly and effectively to become familiar with the campus and the community; assessing capabilities, challenges and opportunities. I'm pleased to announce that, in April, we surpassed the million-dollar mark for the Access Illinois Scholarship campaign, with more than 1,000 donors contributing new funds to support our students!

Laura Alexander, Senior Director of Human Resources, joined UIS this semester and we're already appreciating the expertise she brings to her important leadership role. Congratulations to Provost Lynn Pardie and the Colleges of Education and Human Services and Public Affairs and Administration for the successful completion of two very important dean searches. Dr. Hanfu Mi and Dr. Mark Wrighton, both of whom bring strong records of success to their appointments, will be joining our campus community this summer. I have set high expectations for all of the members of our leadership team to work proactively and strategically with faculty and staff colleagues to contribute in positive ways to our university priorities.

As we discussed at the March 28 Campus Forum, the budget environment for the state and the university continues to be challenging. In the coming weeks, we will continue careful planning, utilizing input from the Campus Planning and Budget Committee. As you know, enrollment, with its associated tuition, is now the most important element of the UIS budget. I'm pleased that freshmen enrollment estimates for fall, 2013 are promising; but retention continues to be a concern. I ask that all members of the campus community contribute to assisting and encouraging students to continue their education at UIS. I am confident that with our careful planning and budgeting and with continuing focus on our priorities, we will

continue to move forward. Despite the challenges ahead, we are well positioned for success and we must not stop our forward momentum.

As you know, that forward momentum is centered on three priorities: growth (in both enrollment and reputation), talent acquisition (both faculty and staff), and facilities (that will best serve our students). We're engaged in several strategies that focus on those priorities and I've been particularly appreciative of the success of two of those strategies this year. First, the concept of "Leadership lived" resonates exceedingly well with our community and with prospective students and their parents and has greatly increased the visibility of UIS in the region and beyond. Second, the Academic Programs Task Force has worked hard to identify several new academic programs that will help us grow both on campus and online and that will enhance our relevance in the region. These and other efforts will keep us focused on our priorities in the coming year and I appreciate the ongoing contributions of so many members of our campus community in these efforts.

You have received periodic communications about the ongoing pension debates and we've been informed that the next steps on pension reform are likely to unfold rapidly during the next few weeks. To the extent possible, the UI governmental relations staff is continuing to work with key Illinois legislators and government leaders to contribute to a reasonable resolution to the pension crisis at the same time we seek the most favorable outcome possible for our current employees, retirees and the university. We will keep you informed of all relevant legislation.

On a brighter note, it has been a pleasure to share in celebrating the contributions of several exceptional staff members this year.

- Sheryl Murray (PAA) was recognized with the CARE Award for excellence in Civil Service,
- Emily Boles (COLRS) has received the CAPE Award for outstanding performance by an Academic Professional and
- Randy Williams (Food Service) was named UIS Employee of the Year.

At the Faculty Honors Reception this past week:

- Dr. Donald Morris (Accountancy) received the Faculty Excellence Award,
- Dr. Carrie Switzer (Psychology) was announced as winner of the Pearson Award for outstanding teaching,
- Dr. Marcel Yoder (Psychology) received the Spencer Award for exemplary service, and
- Dr. Denise Sommers (Human Services) was honored with the Oakley Distinguished Online Teaching Award.
- Professor Mike Miller (Visual Arts) was recognized as the China Faculty Exchange Scholar for 2013 and will be getting a stamp in his passport this summer as Scholar in Residence at Heilongjiang University.

My congratulations and sincere thanks to each of our award winners for all that you contribute to our campus.

Professor Miller is not the only member of our campus community who will be using his passport this summer. We will have nearly 40 students using their passports, too, with study abroad destinations including Italy, Japan, The Gambia, Ireland, Argentina, Australia, China and Korea.

Speaking of passports, I traveled to China over Spring Break this year and visited several universities, advancing existing partnerships and discussing new ones. The growth of university campuses in China is impressive and every Chinese university is eager to establish mutually beneficial relationships with U.S. universities. The long-standing and exceptional reputation that the University of Illinois enjoys in China is a decided advantage for us and I am confident that with careful planning we can significantly increase the enrollment of highly qualified students from China during the next two years. My thanks to CBM Dean Ron McNeil and several other knowledgeable faculty and staff who are contributing to growing our international connections – so essential to providing a global education for our students.

UIS student leaders played a central role this year in advocating for our campus and in developing a more vibrant community, which is so critical to our continued growth in both reputation and enrollment.

- SGA President, Ryan Bouray, received the Donovan Pepper Award for Outstanding Student Leadership this past weekend and he has earned it!
- Student trustee, John Tienken, will graduate this Saturday. I am grateful to John for representing the university and our students exceptionally well on the Board of Trustees, on campus and in the community these past two years.
- Jamaal Hollins, a UIS Computer Science major, has been elected student trustee and will join the Board this summer.

There were so many exceptional student leaders this year and I am especially grateful to Ashley Scott (Black Student Union), Jaime Cruz (OLAS) and Zehra Ozkan Shahidi (International Students Organization) who each led their student organization with great skill and commitment. That's what I call Leadership lived!

Thanks in part to the Student Government Association's strong leadership, plans for the new UIS Student Union are well underway. We are thrilled to have selected the team of Dewberry Architects (from Peoria, Illinois) and Workshop Architects (from Milwaukee, Wisconsin) from among 28 proposals to design and build this very important campus building. The architects spent this past week working with students, faculty and staff to begin the design process. Design work will continue through the summer and architectural drawings will be completed by early fall. The student union will be the central gathering place for our campus – a “thick space” as the architects say – that will create a warm and welcoming destination for students, faculty, staff and visitors. It will also be an architectural landmark that the entire Springfield community will appreciate.

On a personal note, after meeting UIS Public Affairs Reporting program alum Nina Burleigh, when she was inducted into our PAR Hall of Fame in January, I have greatly enjoyed reading her terrific non-fiction books: NYT bestseller *The Fatal Gift of Beauty* (a thoughtful accounting of the Amanda Knox trial), *Unholy Business* (an investigation of the forgery of religious artifacts in Israel) and *Mirage* (the story of Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt). I'm hoping to meet her for a coffee in New York City next week before I launch into her next book as part of my summer reading.

This Saturday, May 11th, it will be my privilege to shake the hands of 777 new graduates of the University of Illinois at Springfield. Our commencement ceremony includes an address by distinguished alum Kathy Best, Pulitzer Prize winner and Managing Editor of *The Seattle Times*. To our students both on ground and online who are graduating, I send you all my best wishes for a future bright with possibilities. We are proud to call you our alumni. You are our legacy and we look forward to your continuing participation in the life of your university.

Have a great summer, everyone!

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

End-of-Year Message, May 2012

May 8, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

This letter continues a series of regular communications to the campus community. With commencement just a few days away, I want to share some reflections on the past year and look ahead to the next few months.

In my convocation remarks last Fall I mentioned that I would spend the year listening ... to students, faculty, staff, alums and friends of the university, and members of the Springfield community. I have spent a great deal of time doing just that and I have especially enjoyed conversing candidly with faculty and staff about what's on their minds. I'll continue in the fall so that I can reach my goal of spending time in every department and unit on campus. I have also embraced every opportunity to be visible on campus, taking as much time as possible to listen to students as well as participate in many campus/student events. Thanks to all for those invitations! Every conversation and event has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of our university for me and I am grateful for each opportunity.

Since my last letter, Robert Easter has become President-Designate of the University of Illinois and will officially become the university's 19th president on July 1. As I'm sure you know, Dr. Easter has been part of the University of Illinois for 36 years – a highly regarded agricultural researcher and deeply respected academic leader. Bob has made getting to know the UIS and Chicago campuses his top priority and he has already visited our campus several times. It has been delightful to work with Dr. Easter in the past several weeks and it is clear to me that he will be a strong supporter of UIS. I am confident that the presidential leadership transition will continue to progress smoothly.

You will not be surprised to hear that the budget environment for the state and for the university continues to be very challenging. In our May 3 budget meeting with President Easter and members of the UA finance team, we were informed that we should anticipate a budget reduction. The good news is that we have already been planning for it. Our focus in any reduction will be on preserving the core academic functions of our work and on the careful management of our resources. You have already received university-wide communications about the ongoing pension debate. The University of Illinois will continue to work with legislators to contribute positively to that discussion and periodic updates will keep you informed.

Now that the search process for the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost has been successfully concluded with the appointment of Dr. Lynn Pardie, the Provost's Office is moving ahead to plan national searches for two more critical leadership positions, the Dean of Education and Human Services and the Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Administration. A national search for the new UIS Vice Chancellor for Development is also under way in collaboration with the University of Illinois Foundation. Building a superior leadership team is essential to our advancement toward our vision to be a premier public liberal arts university and each of these searches presents an opportunity for us to recruit the talent that we need to continue in that direction. Many of you are being asked to serve on these important search committees and I will greatly appreciate your contributions to their successful conclusion.

I discovered in April that Springfest is one of the most energizing events of the year! There were hundreds of students competing with great enthusiasm in a variety of events including a very muddy Tug-of-War. One of the items to be found on the Scavenger Hunt was ... the Chancellor ... and I commend the well over 150 students who found me in my office late that night and got a photo to prove it. (If you have one of those pictures, could you please share it with me?)

The second Chancellor/student dialogue, "Chili with the Chancellor" was cosponsored by Student Government, the Black Student Union and the Organization of Latin American Students. It was a great success and another good opportunity for me to hear from students. Rumor has it that "Chimichangas with the Chancellor" is on deck for next Fall. Que' guay!

I really enjoyed the recent events where we honored outstanding faculty, staff and students. We had exceptional SGA leadership this year, culminating in a successful push to pass the referendum for a new student union, a gift to our campus that will last for decades. I want to especially recognize Erin Wilson for her excellent leadership as SGA President. Congratulations, Erin, on receiving the Donovan Pepper Award for outstanding student leadership this year. I also want to recognize Evan Stanley, from the Office of Records and Registration, who has received the CAPE Award for his professional excellence. Recognizing our accomplished faculty is also a very important ritual at our university. My congratulations to Professor Lan Dong in English, who is the recipient of the 2012 Pearson Award for outstanding teaching; Professor Mike Lemke in Biology for being awarded the Spencer Award for exemplary public service; and Professor Elizabeth Kosmetatou from History who has received the 2012 Oakley Distinguished Online Teaching Award. It is deeply satisfying to hear stories about the great students, staff and faculty that make us who we are.

The women's softball team's season came to an end this week and what a season it was! These talented student-athletes won the West Division of the GLVC and then made it to the championship round of the conference tournament. The team was the first in UIS history to advance to the NCAA Division II national championship and eventually lost 4-3 to Northern Kentucky in the championship round of the Midwest Regional this past Sunday. Congratulations ladies and coaches for your grit and determination during a historic season.

It has been a great pleasure this past few weeks to attend many end-of-year events and celebrations. The Senior Art Show, Epilog, is a great example. I want to congratulate senior Visual Arts major, Karen Boerema, for winning the Chancellor's Award for the outstanding artwork in the show. Karen is one of Professor Shane Harris's ceramics students and her work is truly exceptional. A generous gift from Polly Roesch, Springfield philanthropist, that will allow us to renovate our choral rehearsal room this summer will contribute to our growth in our Music program. The visible presence of high quality fine and performing arts on our campus is an essential element of the intellectual climate of a premier liberal arts university and I am looking forward to growth in these areas with the leadership of our new Department of Art, Music and Theatre.

This summer UIS has 32 students studying abroad in Japan, Peru and The Gambia. We'll also have students studying in Australia and Northern Ireland. We are anticipating a significant increase in the number of international students who will come to UIS in the fall. I reflected on this progress this past week when I was a participant in the 5th Global University Summit, a gathering in Chicago, co-sponsored by the University of Illinois, of over 60 university presidents, rectors and chancellors from 35 countries. One of our speakers was Sam Pitroda, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India on Public Information, Infrastructure and Innovation. Dr. Pitroda challenged our universities to be "incubators of global discourse" where "every student is an international student." I am encouraged by our growing

international connections, which are so essential to providing a global education for our students.

Though I won't be using my passport this summer, I will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to visit with some key officials and friends of UIS and to serve as a member of the faculty for the AASCU Millennium Leadership Institute. We have a Board of Trustees retreat coming up in July. If time allows I'll also be working on my applesauce recipe for the Illinois State Fair competition in August. (My husband says I'm out of my league, but what does he know?) Regardless of the outcome, by the time the fair ends we'll be launching the next academic year!

This Saturday we will celebrate commencement with about 770 graduates and their families and friends. The ceremony includes an address by SSU graduate, Wen Huang, whose family memoir has just been published to wonderful reviews. To our students who are graduating, I send you all my good wishes for the future. We are proud to call you our alumni. You are our legacy and we look forward to your continuing participation in the life of our university.

Have a great summer everyone and I look forward to our work together next fall.

In gratitude,

Susan J. Koch
Chancellor

Remarks at Faculty Scholarship Luncheon

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
October 13, 2011

I'm delighted to make some opening remarks for this University of Illinois Springfield Faculty Scholarship Recognition Luncheon.

This is the event where we present the University of Illinois's highest honor for scholarship, the University Scholar Award and I want to be among the many today who congratulates Dr. John Martin, Assistant Professor of Astronomy and Physics on receiving this prestigious honor.

John, congratulations! I'm looking forward to learning more about your work today.

I think of this event, also, as an opportunity for us to celebrate the importance of scholarship in our academic community and I'd like to take just a few minutes with these opening remarks to do that.

Anticipating this event for the past few weeks, I've been thinking about my own academic career and the careers of so many outstanding teacher-scholars whom I have known over nearly three decades. And oddly enough, the image that has come to mind for me again and again is the image of braids.

Specifically, the image is a painting titled "The Hair is Being Braided," by Norwegian artist Christian Krohg. My older daughter sent this image to me years ago after she visited the National Gallery in Norway because it reminded her of the countless times I had French braided her hair when she was a little girl. I still have a copy of this beautiful painting sitting on a bookshelf at home.

Have any of you French braided anyone's hair?

If you have you know that you have three strands and as you very carefully braid, you have to balance each strand, hold all three in your fingers and weave them evenly and tightly to the head all the way from beginning to end. It's hard to do! You have to be very focused! It takes practice! There are lots of failures along the way. And the result when you get good at it is really a thing of beauty.

What does this have to do with scholarship in our lives as faculty members? Well when I think of the many wonderful teacher-scholars I have known, what I see in them is this practiced ability to carefully braid together the strands of their careers – outstanding teaching based on their genuine interest in students, a scholarly agenda based on their training and intellectual passion, and a commitment to being contributing member of their academic community and their discipline. It's hard to do! It takes practice! There are failures along the way. And the result when you get good at it is really a thing of beauty.

For these outstanding faculty members, and we all know them, there is no bright line separating or dividing teaching, scholarship and service; they interweave these endeavors into one beautiful braid ... and that is what success looks like in our world of academia. It's what we do. It's what we love.

When I met with our new faculty several weeks ago, I told them about an outstanding faculty member at Northern Iowa that I long admired. A well-known Economist, winner of the College Outstanding Teaching Award and a widely published scholar, she explained to each of her classes at the beginning of the semester what a "professor" is. She told them about her teaching, she explained her research and the impact it was having on her field, and she talked about her role as a member of the university community.

For students, many of whom were fresh out of high school and whose only context of education was their high school teacher, Dr. Rives understood it was important for students to understand that she and they were part of a university; a place that

not only provides knowledge, but a place that creates it. She wanted them to understand that, though teaching was exceedingly important to her and central to her work as a professor, scholarship and service were also part of her responsibilities and part of her passion for her work.

As your new Chancellor, I was attracted to UIS, in part, because of it's mission:

We promise that we will provide an intellectually rich, collaborative, and intimate learning environment for our students and for ourselves.

Every member of our UIS community helps deliver on that promise every day; but the role of the faculty, as teachers and scholars, is central to the mission of this Springfield campus of the University of Illinois.

It is the faculty who do the teaching and research that makes us who we are.

As I perused the list of faculty achievements that has been prepared for this event, it is obvious that we are very much engaged in what Boyer referred to as the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of application, the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of integration.

All of these forms of scholarship, including creative activity like art, music and theatre, contribute to providing that intellectually rich environment for our students.

Scholarship is important. As your Chancellor, I want you to know that I appreciate and respect your scholarly contributions and I look forward to learning much more in the coming weeks about the scholarship of our faculty.

... and if anyone wants your hair braided, please see me after lunch today.

Remarks at Faculty Scholarship Luncheon 2012

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
October 4, 2012

I'm delighted to make some opening remarks for this 2012 University of Illinois Springfield Faculty Scholarship Recognition Luncheon.

This is the event where we present the University of Illinois's highest honor for scholarship, the University Scholar Award and I want to be among the many today who congratulate Dr. Lan Dong, Assistant Professor of English on receiving this prestigious honor.

Dr. Dong, congratulations! I'm looking forward to learning more about your work today.

This event is an opportunity for us to celebrate Dr. Dong's achievement in scholarship; but of course its also an opportunity for us to celebrate the importance of scholarship in our academic community and, as Chancellor of your university, I appreciate this pause in our busy semester to do that.

A year ago I mentioned at this event that the image that came to mind for me as I thought about our individual and collective faculty careers and the role of scholarship in our careers was the image of braids.

Some of you may remember that I described a favorite painting titled "The Hair is Being Braided," by Norwegian artist Christian Krohg. My older daughter had sent this image, that depicted a mother braiding her daughter's long blond hair, to me years ago when she was studying at the University of Oslo because it reminded her of the countless times I had French braided her hair when she was a little girl.

Dr. Dong, I don't know whether you are very good at braiding hair; but what is very clear to all of us is that you are very, very good at weaving together those three essential elements of any faculty career – outstanding teaching based on a genuine interest in students, a productive scholarly agenda based on your training and intellectual passion, and a commitment to being contributor to your academic community.

In fact, you are so good at balancing these elements, that you are receiving the University Scholar Award in the same year that you are receiving the UIS Pearson Award for Outstanding Teaching. That is pretty amazing!

As someone who has been a member of the academic community for nearly 30 years, what I appreciate most about the outstanding faculty members that I've known over the years, and we all know them, is that there is no bright line separating or dividing teaching, scholarship and service; the true teacher-scholars interweave these endeavors into one beautiful braid ... and that is what success looks like in our world of academia.

It's an ever-changing landscape with new discoveries, new ways of learning and new technologies to support our scholarship and our teaching.

It is work that we do very, very well at the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, a campus that is the top-ranked regional public university in the state and the second-ranked regional public university in the Midwest.

Our mission is to provide an intellectually rich, collaborative, and intimate learning environment for our students and for ourselves – whether that environment is here on the campus or in the virtual spaces online, where our national and international

reputation, including the important scholarship that our faculty conduct related to online learning places us alongside the most innovative institutions in the world.

The role of the faculty, as teachers and scholars, is central to the mission of this university. It is all of you who do the teaching and research that makes us who we are.

You, and often your students with you, are engaged in the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of application, the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of integration.

All of these forms of scholarship, including creative activity like art, music and theatre, contribute to the advancement of knowledge as well as to providing that intellectually rich environment that is so important in a university and so important to our students.

Scholarship is important. As your Chancellor, I want you to know that I appreciate and respect your scholarly contributions.

First Day at UIS

Susan J. Koch
University of Illinois Springfield
July 1, 2011

Dear Members of the University of Illinois Springfield community,

I am delighted to be starting my first day today as Chancellor of UIS and Vice President of the University of Illinois. My husband Dennis and I have so appreciated the welcoming messages we have received from so many members of the UIS and Springfield community since my appointment was announced. I very much appreciate your good wishes and am looking forward to our work together.

I am grateful to University of Illinois President Michael Hogan and to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees for the confidence they have placed in me. I appreciate the work of my predecessor, Richard Ringeisen, whose leadership has positioned UIS well, and I am grateful to Harry Berman, who has done an outstanding job as Interim Chancellor for the past eight months and who has worked so diligently with me for the past several weeks to insure a smooth leadership transition.

Though I have only spent a few days on campus, I have already experienced for myself what others have told me: that there is a wealth of talent and an extraordinary commitment to excellence among faculty, staff and students at UIS. A group of community leaders dreamed of this institution five decades ago and, since then, the University of Illinois Springfield has become a valuable asset for

Springfield and for the state of Illinois. I am confident that, despite significant challenges, our university has a brilliant future ahead.

Starting today and for several months to come, I'll be listening. Please don't be surprised (or alarmed) when I drop by your building or office or join you at a table in the cafeteria, at a concert, a lecture or an athletic event. I'd like to meet as many members of our community as possible so that I can hear your ideas, thoughts and suggestions. I understand that success comes with fruitful consultation and with thoughtful leadership, not only from administration, but from faculty and staff as well.

My great-grandfather was a coal miner at Cherry, Illinois and Dennis' family goes back for generations on the Midwestern farm. We are thrilled to be back home and proud to be among the newest members of the University of Illinois family.

Have a great summer. It is good to be here.

Sincerely,

Susan Koch

SJR Column: What Does the Flag Mean to Me?, July 2012

What does the flag mean to me? Any other year but this year I might have answered this question by discussing, as a university's Chancellor probably should, that important purpose of a university education – the preparation of citizens in a country that needs citizenship.

But this year when I think about what the flag means to me, all I can think about is a woman I know who, like me, is a mother of four. We were once neighbors on 19th Street near the university in Cedar Falls, Iowa. My youngest daughter, Rachel, was the Morris family babysitter for several years. She often brought the children, Molly, Taylor, Riley and toddler Clare to play at our house. I always thought the kids looked like little ducklings following along in single file behind her and I was grateful to their mother, Juli, for the positive role model she provided for my rambunctious daughter.

After the kids outgrew the need for babysitting, we saw the Morris kids and their parents less often; but we stayed in touch, crossing paths at community events and basketball games and following news of our kids' high school exploits in the local paper. I still smile when I think of Juli's much-anticipated holiday letters – they arrived in a bulging envelope each December – pages and pages of photos and

stories catching us up with great enthusiasm on the latest adventures of each member of the family.

Juli is too busy now to know this, but we are in touch once again and I am thinking about her every day. She is at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Taylor's girlfriend, Danielle, is sharing with her the writing of daily updates about Taylor on his Caring Bridge web page.

On May 3, Taylor, a 23-year old Navy EOD – explosives ordinance demolition technician – stepped on a bomb in Kandahar province, Afghanistan while on patrol. He lost his right leg at the knee, his left leg at mid-thigh, his right arm at the wrist and his left arm at the elbow. Taylor is one of five members of the American military thus far who have survived the loss of four limbs in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Now like many others I look forward anxiously to a post every day with news from Juli or Danielle about Taylor. Surrounded by his family, his Navy friends and a team of dedicated medical specialists; he is making amazing progress. I am in awe at his courage and determination.

A few weeks ago on Mother's Day, Juli posted this message: "Today is Mother's Day and I am blessed. I am blessed because my children are safe." So on this 4th of July when I think about what the flag means to me, I'll think about my former neighbor, Taylor's mom. I'll be grateful for the service of men and women like Taylor and for the sacrifices of their families. I'll send lots of positive energy Taylor's way as Juli has requested and I'll, too, be grateful that Juli's son is safe.

[\[Read more about Taylor Morris\]](#)

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Highlights of Inaugural Convocation 2011 Speech

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
August 18, 2011

I have read our founding documents. One word from President Spencer's "blue memo" in December 1970 has made a lasting impression on me: **innovation**.

Starting in the 1960s, the IBHE did comprehensive master planning for higher education in Illinois. One of its mandates for SSU was to be an innovative institution.

Another mandate was for SSU to be a public affairs institution, while emphasizing the liberal arts.

The excellence and success of our online programs is the envy of higher education institutions around the world.

How will we interpret that original innovation mandate for the coming decade? We need go no further for inspiration than the UIS 2006 strategic plan.

But I do think it's time for us to re-examine that document, to refresh it as needed and to embed into it even more fully the innovation mandate so necessary for our university's continued advancement. I will have more to say about the process in the weeks to come.

We must continue to vigorously pursue academic excellence, enriching individual lives, making a difference in the world, strengthening our campus culture, pushing forward on enrollment and retention, and developing the necessary resources and infrastructure to support our educational endeavors. These are the six goals in our strategic plan and they are worthy ones.

I endorse the goal of 6,000 on-campus students.

We need to have a serious conversation about the growth of both on-campus and online programs.

I am not satisfied with the diversity of our workforce. We need a more diverse faculty and staff, and I am pleased that President Michael Hogan agrees. We will be participating in the coming year in a university-wide effort to increase the diversity of the faculty in our community, and we need to have a conversation about expanding that effort across all aspects of our community.

Living in a global community requires us to increase our international outreach – bringing more international students to UIS, having more of our students benefiting from global experiences.

Our efforts at innovation must also include examination of the programs we offer and new programs that we ought to offer to meet the demands of our times and our students.

Originally, the Illinois Board of Higher Education also called on this university to – and I quote–“take advantage of the existing medical facilities in Springfield as [we] plan programs in the allied health fields.” ... I am asking the university community to be mindful of this. Perhaps we have not been innovative enough in this area.

We must increase the number and size of our need- and merit-based scholarships provided for our students.

Let's take a look at our campus culture. We need to provide opportunities for students to participate in and be exposed to music and theater, the visual arts, intercollegiate athletics, service learning, volunteering, student organizations and intercultural experiences are very important elements of the university experience.

As we begin this academic year, 2011, I invite you to engage with me in determining how we can best do better.

- What are we passionate about?
- What can we be "best at in the world?"
- How can we build on our strengths and create new ones?
- How can we better serve the needs of our students?
- How can we better serve the needs of our communities and the needs of the state of Illinois and beyond?
- How can we best create a campus culture that contributes to the intellectual, cultural, social and personal enrichment of every member of our community?
- How can we make that valuable University of Illinois diploma even more valuable?

Message from the Chancellor, March 2012

Statement by Chancellor Susan J. Koch
March 8, 2012

As we move toward the midpoint of the Spring semester and a welcome Spring Break for many in our UIS community, this letter continues a series of regular communications to the campus community on issues of importance to the University and to our overall goals and mission.

Though budget challenges in our state continue to affect the university, I was gratified that Governor Quinn called for increased funding for the Monetary Award Program in his recent budget address. At UIS, more than 800 students receive MAP funding. I met with several of them recently and each described personal circumstances that make it very clear that the MAP grants are an essential element of our financial aid funding. Under the Governor's proposed budget, higher education funding would be essentially level. Our governmental relations staff is closely monitoring budget developments as the budget process moves forward in the legislature.

With budgetary reductions in mind should they be necessary, each of the University of Illinois campuses is preparing plans for reductions at the 3% and 6% levels. I have engaged the senior leadership in preparing these plans in consultation with faculty and staff at the unit level. Your contributions to these discussions are

important and appreciated. I will be working with our executive team to prepare campus level plans building on that input. Please be assured that we will work to protect the core academic functions and operations of the campus and we will continue to focus on our vision to be a premier public university.

Speaking of politics, you are probably also aware that a bill has recently been introduced in the Illinois legislature that would eliminate the 50% tuition benefit currently provided to children of public university employees. The families of many UIS employees have benefitted greatly from this waiver over the years and it is an important aspect of our ability to recruit and retain excellent staff and faculty. I want you to know that I fully support the continuation of the tuition benefit. Just yesterday the University of Illinois formally registered its opposition to this proposed legislation and the University is working vigorously to retain this important benefit for our employees.

Of course, enrollment is an essential part of our planning for the future and we continue to focus on achieving our goal of 6,000 students. A competitive level of financial aid is an essential element and, with that in mind, I authorized Student Affairs to work this year with a consulting firm to review our current financial aid policies and use of scholarship dollars. Some changes have already been made based on the consultants' campus visit and, when their final report is available, Dr. Barnett will provide the university with a summary of the results. We have also been working with consultants to refresh our UIS brand and develop more effective messaging for use in student recruitment, positioning and image building. We are about to enter a testing phase for that messaging that will involve a survey of UIS faculty, staff, students and alums. Your input will be very valuable in this exercise and I hope you will participate.

I have heard continuously from UIS students this year that building a Student Union is important to them. The Student Government Association has made this a top priority. The SGA has completed an online survey to assess student needs and expects to hold a referendum in mid-April seeking student support. Keep in mind that the funding model for a union differs from that of most other university buildings in that state funds cannot be used. I very much appreciate the leadership of our SGA in this effort and, knowing the value that this important facility would bring to campus life for all members of our university community, I support their efforts.

Many of us are occupied with important searches at this time of year and that is certainly true for the Chancellor's Office! We have a robust pool of candidates for the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost position. The search committee, under the very able leadership of Professor Mike Miller, will soon be conducting "airport interviews" in St. Louis and I am anticipating that finalists will be on campus in April, at which time your feedback will be very important. Hiring the right people to join our academic community, whether they are faculty or staff, is one of the most important things that we do and I deeply appreciate the

investment of time and energy that so many of you make in this exceedingly important task.

I'm continuing meetings throughout the Spring semester with various groups of faculty at the college and departmental levels and am appreciating the opportunity to learn more about individual teaching and research assignments, interests and achievements. It is heartening to me, as your Chancellor, to hear consistent themes in each of those meetings – a passionate commitment to our students and their educational experience, an intellectual curiosity that fuels high-quality scholarship and an understanding that each of us contributes every day to the reputation of our academic community. Thank you to all those who have so generously participated in those meetings and I look forward to many more during the next several weeks.

There are so many great things happening on our campus, it is a challenge for anyone to keep up with all of them; but a few that have caught my attention this semester have been:

- Ann Strahle, UIS assistant professor of communications, took 22 students from her Introduction to Public Relations course to Indianapolis in January for a behind-the-scenes look at preparations for Super Bowl XLVI. Thanks to Ann's Indianapolis connections, students met with the Indianapolis Super Bowl Committee that spent the past four years preparing their city for this massive event. What an excellent bridge between the classroom and real life!
- The wonderful new book, *Abraham Lincoln Traveled This Way — The America Lincoln Knew*, a collaboration between our renowned Lincoln historian, Michael Burlingame, and acclaimed landscape photographer Robert Shaw. In this fascinating book, Burlingame's writing and Shaw's photographs are artfully woven together with Lincoln's own words to tell Lincoln's life story. I've shared the book with many visiting dignitaries and friends of the university as a terrific example of our faculty scholarship.
- The UIS Sangamon Auditorium, along with the Chancellor's Office and our friends at the *State Journal Register*, hosted a capacity crowd for a free performance this past weekend of the United States Army Field Band and Chorus. It was a wonderful performance and a great opportunity for us to reach out to the community and the region in a way that brought many people to our campus who might not otherwise visit. It was especially satisfying to see several of our own UIS Music students perform with these professionals. Bob Vaughn gets all the credit for this idea and I hope we can make it an annual event!

I want to close this letter with a brief story about our community that I think you will appreciate. UIS hosted a group of prospective students from China on campus several weeks ago. One of the visiting students lost a wallet, the contents of which included \$4,000 in U.S. currency. You can imagine this student's panic. The wallet was found by several UIS students on a classroom floor and one student took it directly to the UIS Parking Operations Office. Student and wallet (including the

\$4,000) were reunited the next day. This incident says something pretty special about our students and our community, don't you agree?

Whatever your role at UIS, thank you for all that you do to provide our students with the excellence that is so central to what we do. I appreciate working with you.

With all best wishes,

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor

P.S. Sneak preview: We have heard lots of interest in a mobile web site for people with smartphones. Web Services has developed one and is testing it; it should be available for widespread use by summer.

Presidential Transition

Statement by Chancellor Susan J. Koch
March 23, 2012

Dear Colleagues:

As you learned from yesterday's announcement by Board of Trustees Chairman Christopher Kennedy, University of Illinois President Michael Hogan has resigned effective July 1, 2012. Since my appointment as Chancellor this past July, I have valued the opportunity to work with President Hogan. I have especially appreciated his support for the Springfield campus and his commitment to our continued advancement as one of the three campuses of the University of Illinois. I wish Mike and his wife, Virginia all the best in the future.

I am pleased that Bob Easter will be stepping into the UI Presidency for the next two years. He is, as you know, a highly regarded leader who is deeply respected by UI faculty, staff, students and alumni. Bob and I have become well acquainted during the past several months and he called me yesterday afternoon to express his enthusiasm for this new appointment and to convey his confidence in the UIS leadership and in the continued advancement of our campus. I have invited President-designate Easter to campus and he will be visiting soon.

I am confident that the leadership transition at the UI central administration will go smoothly and, in the meantime, we will continue to move forward here at UIS. As I mentioned in my recent campus letter, in dozens of conversations with many faculty and staff this year I have been heartened by consistent themes: a passionate commitment to our students and their educational experience, an intellectual curiosity that fuels high-quality scholarship and an understanding that each of us contributes every day to the reputation of our academic community.

Those are the themes that will continue to enable us to achieve our university's mission and aspirations. I deeply appreciate the important part that you play in that regard.

Sincerely,

Susan Koch, Chancellor

Remembering 9-11

Chancellor Susan J. Koch
Thursday, September 8, 2011

Dear Members of the University of Illinois Springfield Campus Community:

Ten years and three weeks ago, in August 2001, the first freshman class at UIS moved into the brand new Lincoln Residence Hall. Three weeks later, we all watched the horrible events on the morning of September 11. Like you, I remember where I was and how I heard the news.

As the enormity of 9-11 unfolded that day, the UIS community joined the world in what became a period of both mourning and resolve. Our community assembled on the lawn just west of Brookens Library for a brief but inspirational ceremony of remembrance. It was important how we responded then; it is just as important that we remember and reflect now on the tenth anniversary of those events that have changed the world so profoundly.

As I reflect today on the tragedy of 9-11, I am reminded of three powerful lessons. First, that we are capable of setting aside differences and coming together as community, especially in times of crisis; second, that we are able to attach ourselves to needs larger than ourselves, sometimes with great heroism and at great sacrifice; and third, that service to others is part of our responsibility as citizens. As crises fade, we may forget or neglect those lessons. That's why remembering is so important. It's why September 11 is now, officially, a [National Day of Service and Remembrance](#).

It's also why I am so pleased that our UIS students, staff and faculty are commemorating the tenth anniversary of 9-11 in significant ways this week. Some of our students are going to Joplin, Mo., this weekend to assist with cleanup after the tornado there. Professor Steve Schwark is hosting a brownbag lunch and discussion on Tuesday, September 13. A complete list of activities can be found on the [UIS newsroom](#) page. Also, a [video of people](#) from the UIS community remembering 9-11 was produced in recent days and is worth watching.

I especially invite you to a campus-wide gathering, led by Student Life, for a moment of silence at 9:50 a.m. Friday, September 9, at the Colonnade on the Quad. I am sorry that I must be out of town that day for a University of Illinois Board of Trustees meeting in Urbana, but I will be with you in spirit.

I encourage all of us to honor the memories of the victims who lost their lives on September 11. I encourage us also to be inspired by the heroes of 9-11, the police officers, firefighters and ordinary citizens who responded in service to their neighbors. I commend the UIS community for being a leader in service and civic engagement, especially at this somber time.

SJR Column: College is Worthy Investment, October 2012

As I walked through Chicago's Union Station several days ago, this Newsweek headline caught my eye: "Is college a lousy investment?" The article, by a Washington, D.C.-based journalist and blogger, cites familiar data. "The price of a college education has doubled since 1995." "The amount of student loan debt has more than quintupled since 1999." The author concludes that investing in a college education may not be worth it for an increasing number of young people today.

As a university Chancellor, I share the author's concern about increasing college costs and we're providing more financial aid and scholarships at UIS to make college more affordable; but despite our shared concerns I am moved to a conclusion that differs from the Newsweek writer.

According to the College Board, a non-profit organization committed to excellence and equity in education, college graduates continue to earn significantly more than people with only a high school education regardless of ups and downs in the economy. They also are more likely to have jobs with employee-provided health insurance and have higher job satisfaction.

Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics confirm that people with a bachelor's or graduate degree have higher earnings and lower unemployment than those with less education. The College Board also reports that college graduates are more likely than those with only a high school diploma to exercise regularly and to vote and volunteer. College graduates are also less likely to smoke or be obese.

But in addition to those advantages, in my nearly three decades in higher education I've also seen the less measurable, but deeply transformative power of the college experience. I've seen students learning to be critical thinkers, actively evaluating information and drawing conclusions based on reasoning and reflection. I've seen students taking risks, stretching far beyond their own expectations; experiencing both failure and success and the valuable lessons learned from both. I've seen

students developing lifelong friendships across cultural boundaries that would have been unheard of in their parents' generation. I've seen students honing communication and collaboration skills by volunteering in the community – at the same time they are balancing a full load of courses and a part-time job. Again and again I've seen students come to realize that, though gaining the credential is important, becoming an educated person is the real purpose and the real benefit of attending college.

So my answer to the question, “Is college a worthwhile investment?” is a resounding “Yes;” but I'll add a couple of qualifiers to make this a little more complicated. Experience has taught me that college works best for students who are motivated to be there. That sounds obvious; but the fact is that some students aren't and an unfortunate transcript of D's and F's is often the result. A 2009 New York Times article reported that, though few make the choice, students who had taken a “gap” year between high school and college arrived on campus “wiser and more mature.” Sometimes a year or so of growing up before starting college does wonders.

Experience has also taught me that finding the right institution, the one that matches your particular preferences and circumstances (including financial ones) make a big difference. UIS, for example, is the smallest of the three campuses of the University of Illinois, with a teaching-focused environment, high expectations for student engagement and a tradition of educating public servants and leaders. UIS is also one of only two universities in Illinois ranked by Kiplinger's Personal Finance as a top 100 best value –an important measure of affordability. Just right for some, but not necessarily for all.

Some students start their college studies at a community college and that may make sense for them. The Springfield area benefits greatly from the presence of both the University of Illinois and Lincoln Land Community College and we need to collaborate effectively with each other to provide students with the richest possible educational options and a smooth transition from one institution to the other.

For prospective students of any age, visiting a variety of campuses and having thoughtful conversations with current students, counselors and other advisors is an important step in finding the right college match.

I am confident that the vast majority of the 30,000+ graduates of UIS would agree that earning a university degree has most definitely been a worthwhile investment and we're committed to making that experience accessible for many more students in the future.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Division II Athletics, November 2012

Several years ago, Indiana University professor Murray Sperber published a fascinating book titled, *Beer and Circus*. Considered the country's leading authority on college sports, Sperber argued that big-time intercollegiate athletics has had a profound and tragic impact on higher education, depriving students of the education they deserved.

Beer and Circus has become a "must-read" for every college president and chancellor. As chancellor of one of the 300 NCAA Division II schools in the U.S. and Canada, however, I can tell you that the "beer and circus" scenario is a world away from what I see every day on the UIS campus.

Division II Athletics is based on an institutional commitment to providing a balanced educational experience for student-athletes. According to the Division II philosophy, students who participate in athletics are students first, with the same opportunities and expectations for academic achievement as other students. Division II Athletics offers high-level and exciting competition. This is especially true in UIS's Great Lakes Valley Conference, which was named this month as one of the nation's top NCAA Division II conferences in terms of both academic and athletic success. Community service is also an essential element of Division II and all DII athletes contribute to their communities via team-based activities in local schools and organizations. Academics, athletics and service is a winning combination that provides a path to graduation and future success for thousands of Division II student-athletes each year.

So let me introduce you to a few UIS Division II student-athletes:

Sarah Gray is a senior softball player from Decatur majoring in Liberal Studies. Like over 50% of UIS student-athletes, Sarah was named to the UIS Athletic Director's Academic Honor Roll last semester which means her grade point average is above 3.0. She earned this academic distinction at the same time she started at second base for 57 games, led the conference with 47 stolen bases and helped her team win the GLVC West Division title and advance to the university's first-ever appearance in an NCAA national tournament. Sarah also has a part-time job and has volunteered in the Springfield community with Toys for Tots, canned goods drives and the annual Washington Park Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular fundraiser for the Rees Carillon.

Kyle Gupton is majoring in Social Work and plays on the UIS men's basketball team. Kyle is a senior who transferred last year from a community college in Michigan. He is also on the AD's Academic Honor Roll. I remember Kyle best from this past basketball season for his "dead-eye aim" from the three-point line. He drained 56 three-pointers on his way to scoring a season total of 288 points and

providing basketball fans, including me, with a whole lot of thrilling moments in the UIS basketball arena. Off the court and off campus, Kyle has participated in a mentoring program at local elementary schools and he was nominated this last year by his teammates for the GLVC Conference Sportsmanship Award.

Erin Egolf is another senior – a midfielder on the UIS women’s soccer team who graduated from Chatham Glenwood High School. Erin is an outstanding student majoring in Business Management and her academic achievements include the Chancellor’s Academic Honor Roll (GPA above 3.5), the Division II Athletic Directors’ Association Academic Achievement Award and the Academic All-Great Lakes Valley Conference Team. Erin led the team in goals last season while serving as team captain. She is currently an officer on the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee.

Sarah, Kyle and Erin are just a few of the nearly 200 UIS student-athletes and the 100,000 student-athletes who compete in Division II intercollegiate sports every year across the country. More importantly, they are among the over 70% of student-athletes who earn their college degrees at the same time they are competing successfully in Division II athletics. I am looking forward to shaking their hands at commencement next spring.

With basketball season just around the corner, I encourage sports fans in our community to come to campus and check out the UIS Division II men’s and women’s basketball teams. Springfield is our town, and these are your teams. I’m very confident that Kyle Gupton is again going to be dropping them in from beyond the three-point line and, at half-time, the Chancellor will buy you a popcorn!

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: International Students, December 2012

Many members of the Springfield community came to the UIS campus recently to enjoy the annual International Festival, an evening of performances, exhibits and cuisine that celebrates the cultural diversity of our campus. International students, who this year come to UIS from 38 different countries, are the heart of this celebration. They reflect a strong increase in international student enrollment across the United States, a trend that signals the continued conviction on the part of international students and their parents that a U.S. degree is an important investment in their future. But what do international enrollments actually contribute to our campus?

I spent some time with three exceptional international students this past week and their stories provide part of the multi-dimensional answer to that question. Archana,

Yiman and Zehra are among 242 international students at UIS and among the approximately 36,000 students who made Illinois their destination for college this year, ranking Illinois 5th in the country for hosting international students (according to the Institute for International Education's just released annual Open Doors Report).

Archana is from Chennai on the Bay of Bengal, a major economic and cultural hub in South India. India is the second highest country of origin (behind only China) for international students studying in the U.S. Archana is part of a "pipeline" of students from India who have been coming to UIS for several years to earn their degrees in our strong Computer Science program. She followed her cousin, now a UIS alum, and she will complete her degree in just a few weeks. Archana is one of many international students who appreciate the teaching-focused academic experience at UIS. "My Computer Science professors are so good," she says. "If you want help, you can get it – and usually immediately." Archana plans to stay in the U.S. for an additional year of what is known as practical training before she returns home to pursue her career.

Yiman is one of 72 UIS students from China, most of whom are participating in institutional partnerships that UIS's College of Business and Management has formed with several Chinese universities. Both of her parents are business professionals and Yiman is following in their footsteps, pursuing an undergraduate degree in Accounting. She has been studying English since the age of five, which she tells me has greatly eased her transition to challenging college classes taught in a second language. Yiman lives in UIS's new International House with roommates from Jamaica, the U.S. and China and is embracing every opportunity to grow and expand her intercultural horizons.

Zehra is from one of my favorite destinations in the world – Istanbul – straddling the Bosphorus – the historic heart of the Ottoman Empire. How does a student from Istanbul end up in Springfield, Illinois? Via Fort Hays State University in Kansas and then marriage to a physician employed at our SUI School of Medicine, of course. Zehra is pursuing a Master's degree in Communication at UIS and she is also a great example of that UIS theme: Leadership lived. She is President of the UIS International Students Association, an organization open to all students who are interested in other cultures. Among many positive attributes of the UIS experience, Zehara loves the "right-sized" community of Springfield. "Coming from a large city," she says, "I really enjoy the small community where I can feel comfortable and get places easily." As a student leader, Zehra has been active in promoting programs like the International Festival that bring together and develop relationships among international students, U. S. students and members of the community.

To be sure, Archana, Yiman and Zehra are receiving a valuable university education at UIS; but to answer my earlier question, their contributions to our campus are also significant. First, of course, international students contribute to the university's budget, paying out-of-state tuition that is significantly more than in-state. They also support local businesses and communities with their spending on

rent, transportation and other living expenses. In fact, according to a recent study conducted by the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA), international students' net contribution to Illinois' economy in 2011-12 was slightly more than a billion dollars.

More importantly, students from around the world bring valuable international perspectives into our classrooms and on to our campuses; helping to prepare American students for global professions and contributing to the preparation of the next generation of our country's global citizens.

They also create enduring bridges between the U.S. and other countries, bridges that fuel intellectual exchange, long-term business relationships and ongoing intercultural understanding.

As our international enrollment grows, the UIS campus may look a little less like Illinois; but it will look more like the world ... and that is a good thing for all students regardless of where they come from.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Online Learning, January 2013

A headline in the New York Times just a few days ago, *Students Rush to Web Classes*, highlights a major trend that has been growing at warp speed. Universities large and small; public, private and for-profit, are increasing their online offerings via digital technologies that did not even exist a few years ago.

The Springfield campus of the University of Illinois, with our [Center for Online Learning, Research and Service](#) (COLRS), is a national leader in online learning. In addition to high-quality on-campus academic programs, UIS offers 26 undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates entirely online, providing access to a university education to many who might not otherwise be able to attend college. In the Fall, 2012 semester, 61% of our students were enrolled in at least one online course, part of a worldwide trend that has now, according to a recent Sloan Consortium study, surpassed 6.7 million students online last year.

Building on the expertise of exceptional faculty, many of whom have received national recognition for their success in online learning, UIS is currently partnering with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the American Council on Education (ACE) and others in several projects that are examining the academic potential of these new modes of learning and that will increase access and improve student success online.

Dr. Karen Swan, the UIS Stukel Distinguished Professor of Educational Leadership, is one of those award-winning professors. She has been teaching online for over a decade and is known for her research on learning effectiveness and interactivity in the online environment. In a presentation to the University of Illinois Board of Trustees this past Fall, I was intrigued when Dr. Swan referred to the intimacy of the online classroom experience. “In my opinion,” says Dr. Swan, “online learning is more democratic and more reflective than face to face classes.” She describes developing “social presence” among participants, the ability to project oneself and perceive others as real people, and providing structured opportunities and encouragement for interaction as part of the formula for success.

Dr. Laurel Newman, a professor in the College of Business and Management, serves as Director of Online Learning for the College and is another of the 200+ UIS faculty who regularly teach online. She explains that key elements UIS has developed to insure the high quality of online education include; dedicated faculty who work hard to create a meaningful student experience in the online environment, outstanding technical support and resources for both faculty and students, and exceptional leadership in the online arena that has provided a vision for what can be accomplished in this rapidly expanding area of higher education.

Recognizing the transformative potential of digital technologies, the University of Illinois Board of Trustees will be having a retreat in Chicago later this month to examine this topic with key university leaders. UIS Associate Vice Chancellor for Online Learning, Ray Schroeder, who has been the visionary behind our success, will be one of the key national experts speaking at this event.

There is no better way to experience the digital knowledge revolution than to participate; so please consider this an invitation to readers of this UIS Perspectives column. Following on the success of our first MOOC (massive open online course), which had participants from 70 countries, we’re turning to Abraham Lincoln for our second such offering. The spring, 2013 MOOC begins Jan. 28 and will explore the importance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Titled “The Emancipation Proclamation: What Came Before, How It Worked, and What Followed,” the course is taught by UIS Professors Matthew Holden and Gwen Jordan and takes advantage of this year’s sesquicentennial of President Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. The free, eight-week course is open to anyone worldwide who wants to join. I’ve already enrolled and you can too by visiting: <https://uis.coursesites.com/>.

Online learning isn’t the wave of the future; it’s here and it is very, very good at the University of Illinois Springfield. More and more students are taking advantage of opportunities to learn at UIS online as well as on campus.

They are earning their degrees with gifted UIS professors who are leading the way as new digital technologies continue to emerge; ultimately setting the stage for the

many positive contributions that UIS graduates make to their professions and to their communities.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Black History Month, February 2013

Gumbo, grits, collard greens, banana pudding, fried chicken, okra – these and many other foods that reflect the culinary foodways of traditional African American culture are the subject of the documentary film, *Soul Food Junkies*, by award-winning filmmaker Byron Hurt. The film (and the food) was also the subject of a rich intercultural dialogue held just a few days ago on the UIS campus as we kicked off our annual celebration of Black History Month.

Since its beginnings in 1926, Black History Month, celebrated in February because the month marks the birthdays of both abolitionist Frederick Douglass and President Abraham Lincoln, has evolved to become an annual observance in the U.S. It provides an important opportunity to raise awareness and honor the contributions of African Americans among people of all backgrounds and it provides a platform for educational opportunities on university campuses across the country.

Thanks to the leadership of the Diversity Center and some exceptional student leaders, Black History Month at UIS is a month brimming with opportunities for students, faculty, staff and visitors. One of those exceptional student leaders is Ashley Scott. Ashley is a senior majoring in Criminal Justice. She is the founder of the Legacy Dance team and is serving as president this year of the UIS Black Student Union. Ashley is leading by example, mentoring other students every week with the goal, as she proudly says, “... of making sure they get across the stage” [students, that is, at commencement]. “Black History Month reminds us,” says Ashley wisely, “that experiences of the past impact us today.”

Another student leader who has contributed to organizing Black History Month is Blake Johnson. Blake graduated from Springfield’s Southeast High School and refers to his time at UIS as “... an unbelievable collective effort of support and encouragement.” He is now a senior and, in addition to being a fulltime student, Blake has a passion for providing that same support and encouragement to youth. He serves as a volunteer in a Springfield elementary school and, when he graduates in May, Blake will be the first member of his family to earn a bachelor’s degree. He plans to become a middle school teacher someday. Blake has worked hard this year to insure that Black History Month is educational; but he also appreciates the “sense of encouragement” that Black History Month provides to African American students at UIS.

Ashley Harris, a senior Psychology major, is vice president of BSU and president of the Voices of Praise Gospel Choir at UIS. She'll be back with us next year as a graduate student with plans to become a counselor; but this month Ashley says: "I am looking forward to all of the wonderful events we have planned for the month of February because they will educate, inspire, and uplift the students, faculty, and staff on the UIS campus and beyond."

Vernon Gair is another student-leader who followed his older sister, Verneisha, to UIS from Chicago. They will both graduate in May – Vernon with a triple major in Accounting, Business Management and Business Administration. Vernon has already completed an internship at Crowe Horwath Accounting and plans to earn his CPA credential along with a masters degree. Active in multiple student organizations including BSU and the Student Accounting Society, Vernon told me that Black History Month can also help to dispel preconceived ideas and stereotypes and prepare students for future success in an increasingly diverse workforce, something he has already experienced firsthand.

Black History Month, of course, is part of a larger imperative at the University of Illinois and at the Springfield campus. If we're going to "transform lives and serve society," we must prepare all students, whatever their backgrounds, to live and work productively in an increasingly multicultural world. Diversity is both a social imperative and a business one.

As Chancellor of UIS, I'm grateful for student leaders like Ashley Scott, Blake Johnson, Ashley Harris, Vernon Gair and many other students, faculty and staff who understand why diversity matters and who are leading the way on campus creating opportunities for all. I'm also grateful to Dr. Clarice Ford, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Services and executive director of the UIS Diversity Center, who provides such exceptional leadership on our campus.

The theme of this year's UIS Black History Month celebration is, "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington." If you're reading this column, you're invited! Check out the [schedule of events](#) posted on the UIS website. I look forward to meeting you at an upcoming event.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Public Affairs Reporting, March 2013

When I accepted SJR Editor Bob Heisse’s invitation to write this *UIS Perspectives* column, I didn’t expect the word “murder” to appear in this space. But with a nod to UIS alum Nina Burleigh, it does today. Let me explain.

Burleigh is a journalist and author, and a graduate of the Public Affairs Reporting Program at UIS. The PAR program, an intensive one-year master’s degree, has a goal to prepare students to become working hard-news journalists covering issues of importance in their communities. What sets this program apart from the many other journalism programs across the country is a six-month internship covering Illinois politics as a fulltime reporter – essentially placing students alongside journalism professionals and “on the firing line” of public affairs reporting every day. It’s a formula that works exceptionally well and one that has produced a long list of award-winning UIS alums, including Nina Burleigh.

Thanks to PAR program director Professor Charlie Wheeler, who is himself a veteran newsman, I had the good fortune to meet Ms. Burleigh several weeks ago when she was visiting Springfield to spend time with our PAR students and to be inducted into our Bill Miller PAR Hall of Fame.

I’ve just finished reading Burleigh’s most recent book, New York Times bestseller *The Fatal Gift of Beauty*. Described as “clear-eyed, sweeping, compelling, stirring, lucid, and propulsive”, the book is essentially an “autopsy” of the trial (and the trials) of Amanda Knox, the American college student who was convicted on December 4, 2009 in Perugia, Italy of the brutal and sensational murder of her British roommate, Meredith Kirschner.

To research this book, Burleigh lived in Perugia, attending trial hearings and interviewing Perugian authorities, lawyers, friends and family members of the defendants. She also corresponded with Knox and Raffael Sollecito, Knox’s then-boyfriend and co-defendant, and dug deep into the evidence that was used first to convict and later to acquit.

What I found most fascinating about Burleigh’s reporting is not her account of the trial but her analysis of the complex cultural misunderstandings that contributed to the conviction of this young American woman, who the Italian media dubbed “Foxy Knoxy”, when there was, in the end, no evidence to support such a conclusion. What a fascinating piece of investigative reporting!

UIS alum Nina Burleigh is one of about 500 PAR graduates so far and she is in excellent company. Graduates include Dana Perino, who was press secretary to George W. Bush and is now at Fox News; Patty Culhane, who is the White House correspondent for Al-Jazeera; and Jim Webb, an editor for the *Chicago Tribune* who was also inducted into the PAR Hall of Fame this year.

As Chancellor of UIS, I’m proud that PAR alums have been recognized for the quality of their work with a wide array of awards, including 67 awards over the history of the Statehouse reporting contest sponsored by the Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors. PAR alums have also won two Pulitzer prizes! SJR readers

will learn more about one of those alums this May when Kathy Best, managing Editor of the Seattle Times who won the Pulitzer in 2010, visits Springfield to deliver our commencement address.

On that day, our PAR students will be among hundreds of graduates who walk across the stage to receive their University of Illinois diplomas, continuing the proud tradition of the Springfield campus – graduating outstanding leaders in journalism and many other fields of study. We know that many of these alums, like Nina Burleigh and Patti Culhane and Jim Webb, will be influential in the years to come, contributing in countless ways to the betterment of their communities across Illinois and beyond. It's another reason that we say that, at UIS, leadership is lived...every day.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Student Research, April 2013

Educating students, of course, lies at the heart of our work at the world-class University of Illinois. Creating new knowledge and putting that knowledge to work is also central to our mission and the UI has been on the cutting edge of discovery since 1867 when the Urbana-Champaign campus was founded.

In fact, research and creative activity play an essential role on all three campuses of the University of Illinois;

Faculty at UIUC, UIC and UIS are not only generating new knowledge of great value to our state and to society, but also providing students with valuable opportunities to enrich their educational experiences.

Providing an abundance of opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty is a particularly strong feature of the UIS student experience and the results of these opportunities were on prominent display on the Springfield campus just a few days ago at the [StARS Symposium](#). StARS stands for Student Arts and Research Symposium and this annual event offers a rich array of presentations and performances by UIS students, each of whom has collaborated throughout the year with a faculty mentor to complete an individual research or creative project.

A glance at this year's Symposium program provides a preview of nearly 70 projects, starting with an intriguing program cover photo by art student Tyler Phibbs, whose mentor for his photography project was UIS art professor Dave Kube. As I peruse the program, I am intrigued by project titles like: "War Widows and Black Bombazine" (a History project by student Laura Weiss), "Small Mammal Population Monitoring in the Tallgrass Prairie" (a study conducted at our

Emiquon research facility on the Illinois River by Biology students JoAnn Morgando and Kyle Peecher), and “Enhancing Bacterial Denitrification Rates By Using Zero Valent Iron Nanoparticles (nZVI)” (work done by a team of Chemistry students mentored by professor Keenan Dungey). That last title, by the way, may sound pretty complicated but the project has to do with agricultural soils and results may have important implications for Illinois farmers in the future.

UIS music students also contributed to the Symposium, performing in a variety of musical genres and ensembles. Keynote speakers Ryan Swing, a researcher who is a member of the NASA Curiosity Team currently exploring the surface of Mars, and Mary Jo Bang, the author of six books of poetry and winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award, were also on the program contributing to the intellectual dialogue.

According to the U.S. Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), research and creative projects like those showcased at the UIS StARS Symposium develop critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving and intellectual independence and promote an innovation-oriented culture on the university campus. Dr. Carrie Switzer, a UIS professor who helped plan this year’s symposium, adds: “I think the value for students who participate in the research or creative works process is in learning the tools of their trade; experiencing first hand what knowledge and skills are needed to be successful in their given disciplines.”

UIS professor Michael Lemke, a biologist who has mentored many students, says: “What the research project offers a student is the chance to work on a “hand-crafted” topic, almost like a course written for that individual or group of individuals (if a group topic). A research project represents one of the highest levels of intellectual achievement and an indispensable part of an advanced education – accurate interpretation of observation put in perspective through the findings of others.”

When it comes to the experience of discovery at UIS, it may be that students describe it best. Dyllan Tiburzi, a pre-med Junior from Benld, Illinois who is president of the UIS Chemistry Club, had this to say about his chemistry research: “The main value for me in doing this project [an application of green chemistry techniques] is that it represents time, patience, exploration, creativity, diligence, and a part of myself. Once one sees things that are potentially being seen for the first time by anyone, he/she yearns for more and wants to delve further into the newly found areas. I would say that this project has been one of the most important parts of my educational experience here at UIS.”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Community Engagement, May 2013

Yesterday was a very big day for the students, faculty and staff of the Springfield campus of the University of Illinois. Commencement! For the 777 graduates who walked across the stage to shake hands with the Chancellor, the [2013 commencement](#) was the culmination of dozens of classes taken, hundreds of assignments submitted, and most likely significant financial resources invested in an exceedingly valuable credential.

For a large number of our graduates, commencement also represents hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of hours of civic engagement. A core element in the mission of our university is to serve our community – and UIS students do so in dozens of ways. Our goal is to make civic engagement a part of the educational experience for every student, preparing students to do the “work” of citizenship wherever they may go after graduation. I recently had the opportunity to meet three UIS students who are doing just that.

LaNee Wood, a Criminal Justice major just finishing her freshman year, is already engaged in the Springfield community. LaNee chose to live in the Leadership for Life Wing (L4L) in Lincoln Residence Hall this year. Students admitted to L4L live together, take a service learning class together and commit to doing service together during the year. LaNee has been heavily involved with Habitat for Humanity and will be President of the UIS Habitat for Humanity Club next year. She’ll be volunteering for a week this month along with several other UIS students rebuilding homes that were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy. LaNee is also one of the founders of a student organization called “Sassy Intellectual Sisters,” a mentoring group working with high school students. “My mother and stepfather have been a great influence on me,” says LaNee; “We do service as a family, so being involved with service at UIS was a natural for me.”

Sean Vaughan is a first-generation college student from Chicago with three younger siblings. A sophomore, Sean tells me he “accidentally” signed up for L4L his freshman year and “...it was the best mistake ever!” Sean served as an L4L mentor this year and has also been volunteering in the Making the Grade program – meeting with students at Lanphier High School to provide mentoring, encouragement and academic support. He will be a Leadership for Life resident assistant next year. Sean’s career goals include creating a business to rehabilitate buildings in his community and making the community a better place.

Angela Staten is a senior Biology major from the Springfield area who has a passion for sustainability and ecology and is just back from the UIS Alternative Spring Break trip. She is one of nearly 30 students who spent a week in the Florida Everglades helping to remove invasive plants species from fragile areas. “I made a lot of lasting bonds with the kids that were involved and you learn a lot about yourself in the process,” says Angela. “My time spent volunteering was life-altering.”

Dr. Mark Dochterman is the Director of the UIS Volunteer & Civic Engagement Center – our point person for civic engagement. Mark is quick to point out that

opportunities for service and civic engagement are really valuable leadership opportunities that help students develop skills that transfer directly to their future profession at the same time they develop awareness of important social issues and contribute to solving community problems

A few weeks ago the University of Illinois Springfield was named to the President's Community Service Honor Roll – one of the highest national recognitions a college or university can receive for its commitment to civic engagement. We are on the leading edge of a much larger movement in higher education that last year included 3.1 million student volunteers and 118 million hours of community service valued at \$2.5 billion. UIS students contributed about 65,000 hours, the equivalent of over \$1 million, to those totals.

As Chancellor at UIS, I'm proud of the role that our students, faculty and staff play in solving community problems.

I'm equally proud that we are placing students on a lifelong path of active citizenship.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Study Abroad, June 2013

Lucius Seneca, the ancient Roman philosopher and statesman, said: "*Travel and change of place impart new vigor to the mind.*" If conversations I had recently are any indication, many UIS students will return to the Springfield campus next fall with more vigorous minds indeed, along with some interesting stamps in their passports! These students are part of a larger trend of increasing global student mobility. In fact, according to UNESCO, there are 3.4 million students on the move every year all over the world.

UIS History major Caitlin Osborn is one of those 3.4 million this year. A senior from Edwardsville who is on the women's golf team, Caitlin is spending much of this month in Rome studying the Eternal City with Professor of Comparative Religion David Bertaina. The class is titled "Empire and Faith in Rome" and Caitlin tells me she is especially looking forward to visiting the ruins of the Coliseum and participating in a papal visit that is part of the course. The goal of the class, according to Professor Bertaina, is "to evaluate the history of Rome through material artifacts, architecture, literature, religious movements, and artistic endeavors" – what he calls developing a *historical imagination*. Caitlin's grandparents have also visited Rome and she is planning to compare her travel experiences with theirs when she returns home. What a wonderful opportunity for someone who plans to be a high school History teacher some day!

As this column goes to print, UIS Global Studies major and Springfield native Bridget Donley is in The Gambia, West Africa – for the second time! Bridget was inspired to study abroad after working in her father’s law firm helping immigrant families with citizenship issues. A year ago, Bridget was part of a UIS study abroad program in The Gambia that included a volunteer experience in a rural village school where she observed first-hand some of the educational and public health challenges in the developing world. She returns to that same village this month with supplies to add screens to the windows of the school and is taking along a suitcase full of books and school supplies that will become a small learning library for the children she worked with a year ago. Bridget’s study abroad experience is possible thanks to a generous study abroad scholarship fund that was established at UIS by Evelyn Zimmerman. What a terrific investment in the future of a student with aspirations to make a difference in the world.

Unlike many American students who study abroad, Adam Buck, a junior from Riverton, has a special advantage. He already has two years of Chinese language study at UIS – great preparation for his summer course in China, Korea and Japan. Interest in studying in China has been growing among American college students for several years and China is now the fifth-ranked destination (behind the UK, Italy, Spain and France) for U.S. students studying abroad. Adam is looking forward to hiking the Great Wall, seeing the cultural sights of Beijing and, of course, practicing his Chinese. Adam tells me that a key to his being able to study abroad was the availability of financial aid that can be applied to the costs. The UIS Office of Financial Assistance works with students early in their study abroad planning process, realizing that both real and perceived financial limitations are the major reasons that more students do not seek out overseas study opportunities.

In a world of growing interconnectedness, studying abroad is becoming an increasingly important part of the university experience.

A number of studies on the impact of study abroad have shown benefits, including improved academic performance and higher graduation rates. A recent University of Minnesota study indicated that students who study abroad are much more likely to become globally engaged citizens. Employers view job candidates who have studied abroad as self-motivated, adaptable and more likely to thrive in our increasingly multicultural workplaces – giving them an edge in the highly competitive job market.

Though about 56% of American students say they would like to study abroad while in college, only about 1% actually do during any given academic year (compared to 10% of European students). Thanks in part to an increasing number of faculty who are integrating study abroad opportunities into the student experience, we are expanding our study abroad capacity at UIS. I’m looking forward to talking with Caitlin, Bridget and Adam about their overseas experiences when they return; but I’m looking forward even more to increasing the number of UIS students for whom study abroad becomes a reality instead of only a dream.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Introduction, September 2012

Fall is the perfect time to inaugurate this new SJR column, *UIS Perspectives*. The start of a new academic year, with students arriving and classes beginning, brings energy and anticipation that you can feel throughout the entire campus. When I became Chancellor of UIS last summer I said that I'd spend my first year listening and, in the spirit of enriching our town and gown relationship, I want to reveal some of the lessons I've learned.

UIS, known first as Sangamon State University, is deeply rooted here in central Illinois and we're proud to have provided opportunities for thousands of individuals to achieve their educational dreams.

We are Springfield's public university – one of three campuses of the University of Illinois, a source of community pride and an asset that is vital to the economic and cultural advancement of the region.

Interest in UIS is growing, and more than 1,600 prospective students applied to join our freshmen class this year. Along with their parents and lots of student-volunteers, I helped several of those freshmen move into their residence halls a few days ago.

One thing I heard again and again from students and their parents was this: Students choose UIS because of the personalized, high-quality education they are confident they will experience, both in and outside of the classroom. Having been on campus for a year now; I've observed that supportive community every day and everywhere.

Something else I've heard and seen just as often is that the price of a college education has become a critical issue not just in Illinois, but across the U.S. For many Illinois residents, whether high school seniors or adults seeking long-delayed educational opportunities, higher education is about affordability. To put it bluntly, you're not going to college if you can't afford it and many families simply can't in the current economic environment.

Though UIS remains a bargain comparatively speaking, we've made several changes in our financial aid strategies that are making UIS even more affordable. And thanks to the generosity of SSU/UIS alums and many other strong supporters in this community, we are also increasing scholarship support for many deserving students. We're doing all we can to address the college affordability challenge because we know there is no better investment in the future of our state and our nation.

One other thing I've heard a lot in the past year is that UIS is a wonderful institution, but that it should be more visible in the community and across the state.

Well, in the coming weeks you're going to see more of UIS. You'll see images of our students on billboards and in social media with the tagline – "[Leadership lived](#)." We're using those words to describe the UIS experience because that's what happens on our campus – leadership is lived. Those of you who are alumni are living this message too and we are proud of that.

You'll also see UIS students volunteering, interning and working throughout all sectors of state government and the Springfield community; contributing their time and talent at the same time they are gaining valuable experience. You'll see them in local restaurants, shops, gas stations and stores; because whether they are among the 1,100 students living on campus or commuting, UIS students enjoy our community and are contributing to its economy. You'll also see our faculty and staff, as I have this past year, involved in local organizations and engaged in the community – leadership lived again.

What Athletic Director Kim Pate says about our rising Division II sports program, – "Our Town, Your Team" – actually applies to the whole university. So we'll come to you and I invite you to join us this fall for some of the many events that help make UIS Springfield's hometown university. I'll see you on campus.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message - Fall 2012

To students, faculty and staff:

Welcome to the start of the 2012-13 academic year – the 43rd academic year in UIS history! For those of you who are returning, we are pleased to have you back. To those of you new to the campus, a warm welcome. I'm looking forward to a great year!

I really enjoy the First Week activities at UIS, with so many events perfectly designed for reconnecting with and meeting new colleagues and friends, getting information about programs, events and organizations and just feeling the positive anticipation for the upcoming year. One of those special events is Tuesday – the annual Chancellor's Picnic – and this is my personal invitation to you for that event. All students, faculty and staff (along with family members) are invited! Please join us at the Colonnade from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. The weather is going to be superb, the atmosphere exciting and there will be plenty of food, beverages and music for our enjoyment. We'll also have two special guests with us this year – our new University of Illinois President Robert Easter and his wife, Cheryl.

Hope to see you there!

Chancellor Koch

Nickname Message – January 2014

January 28, 2014

Dear students, faculty, staff, alums and friends of UIS:

You may be aware that the UIS campus has been engaged in discussions for several months regarding the university's nickname – the Prairie Stars. This has been a student-led initiative and the Student Government Association, via a task force that included representatives from the student body, faculty, staff, UIS Athletics and alumni, has thoughtfully considered the question of whether or not the university's nickname should be changed. As part of its work, the task force used surveys, public forums and social media to obtain input from the campus, alumni and the community. A consultant with expertise in sports brand identity development has also provided advice and recommendations. The task force provided me with a final report at the end of the Fall 2013 semester.

I have very much appreciated the able leadership that SGA President Aaron Mulvey has provided for these discussions and I am particularly grateful for the many thoughts on this issue conveyed by so many current students, staff and alums of the university. In addition to reviewing the task force report, I have met with the UIS Alumni Advisory Board and with representatives of a substantial group of relatively recent UIS alums who presented a petition with nearly 500 signatures advising that the Prairie Stars nickname be retained.

Though the final report of the task force does not offer a consensus on a single recommendation, the collective input that has been provided has led me to a conclusion that I am confident is in the best interests of our campus now and in the years ahead. That conclusion is that the name Prairie Stars is more than an athletics team name. It is also an important part of campus identity at this relatively young university. It is a name that was chosen in part because it provides a sense of place and it resonates deeply with many of our 33,000+ alumni regardless of whether they graduated with Sangamon State University or the University of Illinois on their diploma. It is a name that is part of our heritage, a heritage that includes a reputation that continues to grow in positive ways along with the increasing size of our university community. It is a name worth keeping ... and embracing.

A strong campus identity is very important. Along with excellent academic programs, it helps attract new students -including student-athletes. It fosters involvement in campus activities and it contributes to campus pride. I'm confident that our campus marketing team and UIS Athletics will develop new and creative opportunities that will refresh and strengthen our Prairie Stars name at the same time they retain its proud heritage.

Thank you to all who participated in this vibrant dialogue. I appreciate the loyalty that you have for our university and I hope that you will continue your interest and support in the coming months and years. **Go STARS!**

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

SJR Column: Graduate Education, July 2013

A view from the podium at any commencement is a glorious sight and, if you had been standing beside me on the UIS commencement stage this past May, you would have noticed an important new trend in higher education. The number of people earning graduate degrees has significantly increased. In fact, federal data show the annual production of master's degrees in the U.S. jumped 63% between 2000 and 2012. That trend is clear at the University of Illinois at Springfield where 675 – about 40% – of the 1,416 degrees awarded this year were graduate degrees.

What is driving the increased demand for graduate credentials? What are the benefits of earning a master's degree? I recently asked several UIS graduates to answer these questions and got some informative responses.

Jack Reynolds is a member of the management team at Horace Mann Insurance, the national multiline insurance company headquartered in Springfield. According to Jack, earning his master's degree in Computer Science from UIS was one of the best career decisions he has made.

“A master's degree differentiates you as a candidate for promotion,” he says, “and helps to develop critical thinking, problem solving and leadership skills.”

Jack recalls from his graduate experience the exceptional mentoring provided by Dr. Ted Mims, UIS Department Head in Computer Science, as well as the team-based nature of the graduate curriculum that mirrored so effectively the IT environment that he experiences every day.

Like so many other UIS graduates, Nina Harris earned her master's degree in Public Administration (MPA) as a working adult – balancing graduate courses with a fulltime job. Ms. Harris is now a highly respected community leader and President and CEO of the Springfield Urban League, Inc., a nonprofit organization that provides services for thousands of families each year. Nina credits her master's degree as being essential for advancement to the top leadership position in her organization. She sees a graduate degree as a “sign of determination” and, among the benefits of her graduate experience, recalls the use of relevant, real-world case studies, as well as courses that increased her knowledge of

organizational dynamics, crisis management and team-building techniques – all of which have contributed to her effectiveness in leadership roles.

UIS graduate Ann Schneider is Secretary of the Illinois Department of Transportation, leading a complex organization with thousands of employees and billions of dollars in projects that span the entire state. Ann participated in the Graduate Public Service Internship Program (GPSI) while studying for her master's degree at UIS and says her career in public service has been a "direct result" of earning her graduate degree.

"Graduate school is where I developed proficiency in public speaking," says Ann, "and where I gained the analytical tools and decision-making skills necessary for success in a public sector job."

She credits Professor Beverly Bunch with teaching, by example, the importance of being respectful of every point of view and with providing the people skills so important in management and leadership.

The Masters in Business Administration is one of the most sought-after degrees in the U.S. and is, perhaps, the most versatile graduate degree in the world. According to UIS Business Dean Ron McNeil, "Earning an MBA from an AACSB accredited college, like the UIS College of Business and Management, is an important career-building step, providing a competitive edge for more advanced positions in today's work environment." UIS MBA grads hold management positions in many companies and organizations across the region and beyond, including at Bunn-O-Matic, Caterpillar, Memorial Health Systems, State Farm Insurance, Archer Daniels Midland Company, Illinois National Bank, and the State of Illinois – to name a few.

Though it varies widely by the degree earned, educational attainment is strongly correlated with income across every discipline. In general, a graduate degree is well worth the investment, with lifetime earnings being significantly higher when compared with bachelor's degree holders. Studies also show that the unemployment rate for people with master's degrees is lower than that of individuals with a bachelor's degree or less.

Just a few days ago, UIS hosted a reception honoring Springfield's 2013 "Forty under 40," a group of 40 young professionals who are among our community's best and brightest. Forty-five percent of this year's class have at least one advanced degree and several others are currently attending graduate school. It seems clear that earning a graduate credential is a worthwhile effort. With over 30 graduate degrees and certificates offered on the Springfield campus, in Peoria and online, UIS provides an important pathway to advancement for area professionals, strengthening leadership throughout the central Illinois region.

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Welcome Message – Fall 2014

To students, faculty and staff:

Welcome to the start of the 2014-15 academic year at this Springfield campus of the University of Illinois! This our campus's 45th academic year and, for those of you who are returning to UIS, we are pleased to have you back. If you are new to the campus, a warm welcome. I'm looking forward to another productive, rewarding and enjoyable year.

Like many members of our community, I especially enjoy the Welcome Week activities at UIS, with so many events perfectly designed for reconnecting with and meeting new colleagues and friends, getting information about programs, events and organizations on campus and in the community, and just feeling the positive anticipation for the upcoming year. One of those special events is coming up tomorrow, **August 26th – the annual Chancellor's Welcome Picnic** – and this is my personal invitation to you for that event.

All students, faculty and staff (along with family members) are invited!

Please join us at the Colonnade from **4:30 to 6:00 pm**. The weather is going to be superb (OK, maybe just a little warm!), the atmosphere exciting and there will be plenty of great food, beverages and music for our enjoyment.

I also invite you to put your school pride on display and sport your favorite UIS or Prairie Star apparel on **Friday, August 29**, for our first spirit day of the year!

Hope to see you at the Welcome Picnic!

Chancellor Koch

SJR Column: Mobile Devices, August 2013

Students will soon be arriving for the Fall semester on the UIS campus and the image of this annual rite of passage is often one of students (with the help of their parents) hauling all manner of “essentials” into campus housing. That image will most certainly be part of the scene when our residence halls open on August 21st; but for increasing numbers of students, whether residential or commuter, undergraduate or graduate; the most important item they bring to college this year may be one that weighs only a few ounces and fits handily into their pocket – it's their mobile device – their smartphone.

Estimates are that over 1.45 million mobile devices are being sold or activated worldwide every day and the digital natives arriving on college campuses this fall know, far better than most of their elders, that their mobile devices aren't just phones. They are highly capable tools that enable users to always be connected and to have instant access to information and social networks anywhere at any time. Like digital natives everywhere, most traditional-aged UIS students have grown up with digital technologies integrated into their lives and, according to the Pew Research Center's recent study of Internet and American Life, they are using mobile devices on a daily basis to access the internet and engage socially via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, and YouTube – to name just a few of the more popular social media networks.

The fact is, mobile device usage influences the college experience even before students arrive on campus, playing a significant role in the college decision process. The 2013 E-Expectations Report, a survey of college-bound high school students, showed that the vast majority of prospective students have access to mobile devices and that they use those devices extensively in their college search. According to Munindra Khaund, Director of UIS Web Services, "Mobile devices are now ubiquitous and mobile computing is part of a wider integrated strategy for UIS – an opportunity to tell the stories of our campus and its students, faculty and staff to multiple audiences, including prospective students."

Thanks to an exceptionally talented Web Services team, UIS is on the leading edge of mobile applications technology, designing in-house and then launching its own UIS mobile app in October, 2012. Over 3,000 users have installed the user-friendly UIS mobile app and students are using the app to access information as well as to participate in various forms of social media like Facebook and Twitter. In addition, with Responsive Web Design the browsing experience for UIS websites is optimized for visitors with mobile devices. The goal is to provide the same content-rich, high-quality experience regardless of the size of the screen.

Though studies continue to show that students have a preference for face-to-face communication with their professors, the "BYOD" ("Bring Your Own Device") explosion is also changing the learning experience of university students. Most UIS faculty, for instance, post their course materials on Blackboard – a course management system that provides a communication hub, providing students online access 24/7 to assignments, readings, quizzes and discussions as well as to a variety of resources off-campus that would otherwise not be available. Faculty also communicate regularly with their students via email, with mobile devices constantly in use by both students and faculty for those communications. Students believe that technology is critical to their academic success and that it helps prepare them for the future and they have high expectations that their university will provide the technologies that will have the greatest impact on their success.

Though mobile devices won't replace that "essential" dorm room mini-fridge or microwave, mobile does matter ... and it matters more every day in the university environment. As Director Khaund says: "The rapid rate of technological change

comes with its own set of challenges and universities must adapt to those challenges quickly in order best serve their students, whatever technology they may use in the future.”

Susan J. Koch, Chancellor of University of Illinois Springfield

Susan J. Koch Announcement

Subject: Announcement of VP/Chancellor at UIS

April 4, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

High quality leaders across our three campuses, motivated to nurture environments where our talented faculty and students can excel, are essential to the continued greatness of the University of Illinois.

I am pleased to inform you today that such a leader, **Susan J. Koch**, provost and vice president for academic affairs at Northern Michigan University, has been selected to serve as the next Vice President and Chancellor of the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Dr. Koch will join UIS **effective July 1**, pending Board of Trustees approval. Susan’s quarter-century record at two regional public universities in the Midwest reflects a proven appreciation for the value of a strong liberal arts education and a deep commitment to civic engagement, both of which are hallmarks of the strong reputation our UIS campus has earned in its 40-year history.

Dr. Koch has served as provost and vice president for academic affairs at NMU since 2007. She was the associate provost and dean of the graduate college at the University of Northern Iowa. A South Dakota native, Dr. Koch earned her bachelor’s degree at Dakota State University and her master’s and doctorate degrees at the University of Northern Iowa, where she joined the faculty in 1985. Her field is health education. Additional information about Dr. Koch and this announcement can be found at <http://www.uillinois.edu/UISChancellorSearch/>.

A welcome reception for Dr. Koch will take place from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. next Monday, April 11, in the Sangamon Auditorium of the Public Affairs Center at UIS.

The successful search that led us to Susan Koch is credited to our UIS search advisory committee, led by Professor Tih-Fen Ting. The committee recruited an outstanding pool of candidates, and I am grateful for their work and advice.

Finally, the UIS campus and the entire University of Illinois owe our gratitude to [Interim Vice President and Chancellor Harry Berman](#) for his leadership during this

nine-month interim period. Harry has played an integral role for 35 years in the transformation and growth of the campus. Although he plans to retire soon, we look forward to his continued engagement with the UIS community.

Please join me in welcoming Susan Koch to UIS.

Mike Hogan
President, University of Illinois
