

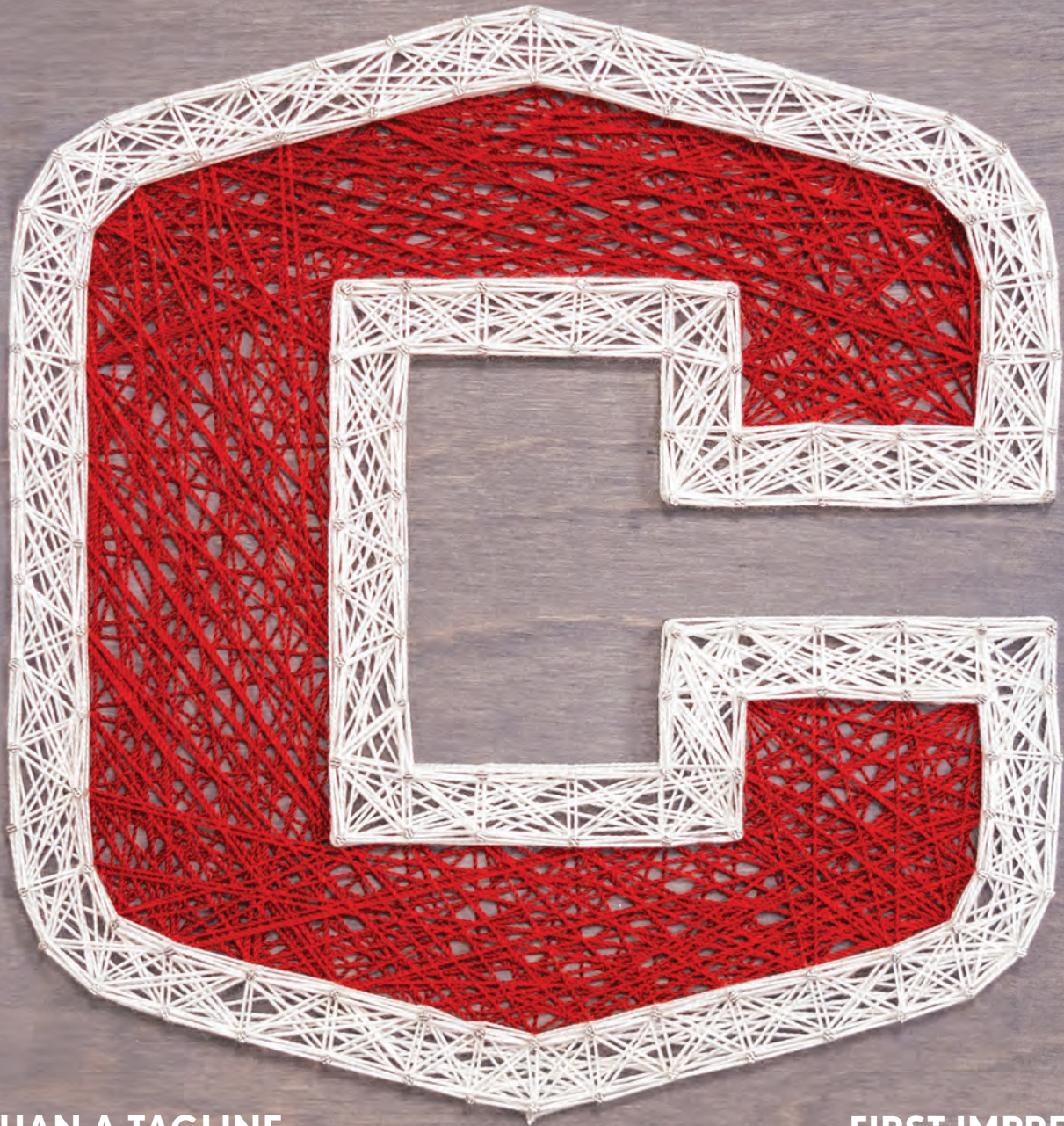
SUMMER 2021

# CENTRAL

CENTRAL COLLEGE

CIVITAS

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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## HOPE FOR THE BEST

CENTRAL'S CLASS OF 2021 CLINGS TO A  
FEELING OF EXPECTANCY FOR THE FUTURE





The Central Dutch advance the college's mission and bring the community together. Representing the college's 600 student-athletes are, *left to right*: **Sheila Horstmann '23** (soccer), **Cody Wonderlich '21** (football), **Landry Luhning '21** (volleyball), President **Mark Putnam**, **Stevette Perez '23** (cross country/track), **Maddie Hartley '22** (tennis) and **Christian Wilson '23** (wrestling).

# CHAMPIONS IN LIFE

BY: MARK PUTNAM  
CENTRAL COLLEGE PRESIDENT

During a recent conversation with our director of athletics, **Eric Van Kley**, I was reminded about the deepest values we hold with respect to intercollegiate athletics. We noted together the many challenges we have encountered during the pandemic with season delays, testing protocols, disrupted events and many, many adaptations.

I came away from the discussion with a sense of accomplishment for our ability to provide worthwhile and meaningful experiences for our student-athletes despite the complexities of the moment.

Central's athletics department has a compelling philosophy that seeks to align the inherent drive for success in competition within a broader framework of understanding. Becoming a champion is our athletes' aim, both individually and collectively. That impulse contributes to wider life ambitions as well.

Our student-athletes certainly want to be champions athletically. Most of our students cultivate these skills and ambitions from a very early age. The

athletics experience contributes in part to a sense of personal identity. At its very best, that competitive spirit and team collaboration is developmentally rich and helps nurture life skills such as teamwork, self-discipline, sustained commitment and resilience. This setting is where many learn a greater sense of interdependence as they support one another, learn to play a role and remain teachable or coachable in the presence of others.

Central's student-athletes also seek to be champions academically. I find it impressive to see many of our teams win awards for academic performance year after year. They take considerable pride in this. The sense of mutual support drives athletic achievement and informs academic performance. Our coaches press for academic success for individuals and teams, ensuring we always remember a successful student-athlete begins with being a student first.

Our student-athletes also endeavor to be champions professionally. To be sure, this is rooted in the expertise and competence

gained through academic pursuits, but also emerges as a respectful and professional demeanor forged through interactions with coaches, teammates, opponents and officials. The sense of responsibility and completion of tasks are reinforced by the rigors of discipline and shared purpose. Being poised under pressure and controlling reactions to adverse situations fosters solution-focused thinking and adaptation on and off the field of competition.

When properly understood and organized, intercollegiate athletics is a compelling form of experiential learning that extends the reach of the classroom, studio and lab. It helps to bridge the student to professional settings and blends with other practice settings, including internships, service learning, undergraduate research and study abroad.

The collective benefits extend for many years beyond the college experience and, through time, yield champions in life. Go Dutch! ■

CENTRAL COLLEGE  
**CIVITAS**  
ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2021 | ISSUE 1

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SUMMER 2021

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Becky Hedges Pospisal '04 in her store The Knotty Nail.

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800-447-0287



Civitas is published by the Central communications office for alumni, parents and  
friends of Central College. For information on the Civitas mission, visit [civitas.central.edu](http://civitas.central.edu).

Civitas (USPS 096-840) is published quarterly by Central College, 812 University St., Pella, IA 50219-1999.  
Periodicals postage paid at Pella, Iowa, and additional offices.

Postmaster: Send address changes (PS 3579) to Civitas, 812 University St., Pella, IA 50219-1999.  
Address changes also may be sent to [alumni@central.edu](mailto:alumni@central.edu).



10% Post-Consumer Fiber

Production notes: Civitas is printed with a vegetable-based ink by Town Crier, Pella, Iowa.



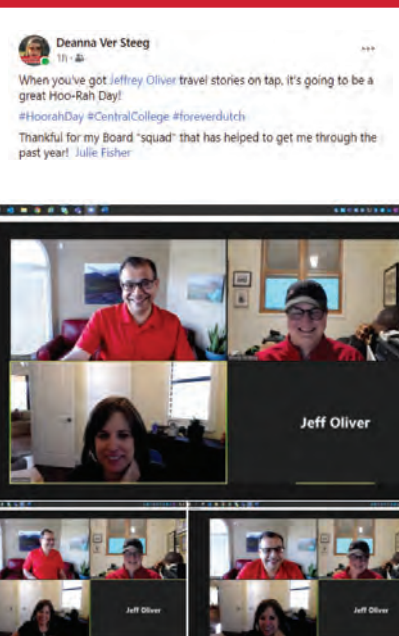
# CELEBRATING HOO-RAH! DAY

## AND A 53-MILE CHALLENGE

Central set a fundraising record during its fifth-annual Hoo-Rah Day on April 13. In total, the college raised \$343,217 to help support scholarships and programs. There were 384 gifts this year, including those made by alumni, parents of alumni or students, faculty and staff and students. Together, donors raised \$317,376 for the Journey Scholarship Fund and more than \$25,000 toward 51 additional campus programs and designations. Gifts came from 37 states and the District of Columbia.

In the days leading up to Hoo-Rah Day, 250 Central students, employees, alumni, family and friends participated in the college's first 53-Mile Challenge from March 1 to April 13. The challenge's goal was to encourage the Central community to practice a healthy lifestyle through movement in anticipation of Hoo-Rah Day. Participants logged more than 13,250 miles together. Go Dutch!

**Thank you to everyone who helped make this Hoo-Rah Day so successful.**

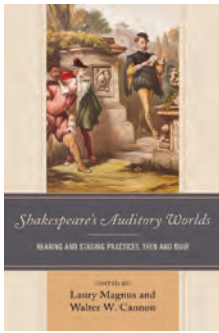


**384  
GIFTS**

**\$343,217  
RAISED**

**50,000+  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
IMPRESSIONS**





## ▲ CANNON CO-EDITS NEW BOOK

**Walter Cannon**, professor emeritus of English, has co-edited a new book titled “Shakespeare’s Auditory Worlds: Hearing and Staging Practices, Then and Now.”

Inspired by all that can be heard by audiences both on and off Shakespeare’s stages, the book breaks new ground by exploring complex relationships between sound and sight, dialogue and blocking, dialects and other languages, re-voicings and nonverbal relationships essential to noise, sounds and music.



## ▲ CAREER KICKSTARTER

A total of 47 students participated in Central’s second Career Kickstarter. This weeklong program during winter break brought students back to campus to think about preparation for potential careers. **Delaney Underwood ’23** joined **Dr. Christopher Huston ’98** at Whylic Eye Care in Pella and learned what it’s like to be an optometrist. Underwood says her experience makes her want to continue to explore a career in optometry.

## CENTRAL HONORED FOR COMMUNICATIONS, FUNDRAISING INITIATIVES

Central received honorable mentions for key communications and fundraising initiatives from District VI of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. The District VI Institutional Awards showcase best practices in alumni relations, fundraising, advancement services, special events and marketing and communications. Central received Platinum Award Honorable Mentions for:

- + Best Practices in Communications and Marketing: “Central College Tuition Announcement”
- + Best Practices in Digital Communications: “Central College Journey Scholarship”
- + Best Practices in Fundraising: “Central College Hoo-Rah Day”

## BEST OF RED ROCK

Central was named Best Caterer and Best Conference Venue in the Best of Red Rock 2020. Pella Cinemas, which is owned by Central, also was one of the local spots included in the Top 10 After 5 p.m. **Colin Van Kooten ’09** was named as one of Red Rock Area’s Top 10 Under 40. The Best of Red Rock Awards honor businesses and organizations throughout Marion County in 55 categories, based on votes from area residents.

## BLACK AND BROWN BUSINESS SUMMIT

Central sponsored the West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce’s first annual Black and Brown Business Summit, presented by Principal Financial Group, in April at Athene in West Des Moines. The two-day conference was created by the chamber’s diversity, equity and inclusion committee with the goals of elevating ethnic minorities; bringing BIPOC businesses together to assist with connection building, programming, promotion and training; and providing resources to help businesses grow and prosper.



## ▲ WEERS PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF ITS DEPARTMENT

**Lee Weers** was promoted to director of information technology services at Central following **Deb Bruxvoort’s** retirement in December 2020. In his new role, Weers’ responsibilities include overseeing and setting strategic direction of the department to support the college’s mission. The department supports more than 450 employees and 1,150 students on campus. Weers has been employed at Central since 2004.



## ▲ DIRKSEN GIFT BACKS COVID-19 TESTING

Central completed a \$30,000 fundraising project for COVID-19 test kits for student-athletes with the help of **Gary Dirksen ’69**.

Before his death on April 27, Dirksen got the project started with a \$15,000 gift, which was matched by a combined 23 donors. The “Gary Dirksen Challenge” raised \$30,000 by the end of February 2021. Nearly \$45,000 was raised by generous alumni and donors in support of campus safety and COVID-19 testing needs for all students.

Student-athletes at Central and throughout all divisions of the NCAA were tested regularly for COVID-19 in order to participate during the 2020-21 season. The American Rivers Conference, of which Central is a member, required weekly testing.

Dirksen joined the admission staff at Central after graduation. In 1973, he was named associate director of admission and four years later was appointed director of financial aid. He served in that role at Central until 1993. Dirksen then was coordinator of institutional research from 1993-97.

In 2001, Dirksen established the Gary Dirksen Achievement Award to honor a varsity men’s basketball player who has achieved success on and off the court. In 2004, Dirksen was honored during Heritage Day with the Central College Presidential Service Award.



## PRECISION, INC., GIFT

Central received a generous gift from Precision, Inc., of Pella that will be made over the course of three years to support athletics and student scholarships.

The majority of the gift supports key athletics initiatives on the heels of a recent \$18 million expansion and renovation of P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium called Forever Dutch®. Construction on that project is planned for this summer and will be celebrated by the community this fall.

Precision's gift also supports the Journey Scholarship Fund, which is celebrating its 10th year and has awarded thousands of scholarships to students from around the country. Journey Scholarships are 100% donor funded and all gifts directly support students.



## ▲ GRUBB'S PREMIUM POPPING CORN AT PELLA CINEMAS

Whether it's on a date or a family outing, movie-goers can now savor the unique, quality taste of Bill and Ginger Grubb's popcorn at Pella Cinemas, owned and operated by Central. Since 1989, Bill and Ginger Grubb have grown popcorn on the Grubb family's century farm, located in Barnes City, Iowa.

Bill attended Central from 1964-65 until he was drafted into the Army during the Vietnam War. Daughters **Deanna Grubb Arkema '99** and the late **Melissa Grubb '95** also attended Central. The Melissa Grubb Scholarship was created in Melissa's memory after she passed away unexpectedly while attending Central in 1995.

## STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING PARTNERSHIP

Central partnered with Pella Community High School to offer a strength and conditioning program for student-athletes that began this summer.

Central hired **Monica Ruiz '16** to serve as the assistant strength and conditioning coach for Pella High School students. Ruiz most recently served as assistant strength and conditioning coach at the University of New Haven in Connecticut, where she received a master's degree in sport management. She joined a Central staff led by **Kyle Johnson '02**, head strength and conditioning coordinator, and assistant **Charles Friday '12**.

The program will be offered year-round for all high school athletics and will include training and education in physical health, nutrition and mental health. Central also will offer its students the opportunity to participate in internships within the program to gain real-life experience to prepare them for future careers.

The partnership was made possible with generous support from Pella Corporation, the shareholder family and the Pella Booster Club.



## ▲ 2021 GOLDWATER SCHOLAR

**Cameron Coles '22** is the second Central student to win the competitive Goldwater Scholarship since it was founded. The prestigious national competition recognizes undergraduates for outstanding achievements in the fields of mathematics, science and engineering.

In 2021, a total of 410 Goldwater scholars were selected from a field of approximately 5,000 nominees representing 438 institutions. This year, the number of nominees nearly quadrupled compared to last year (1,300).

Coles is a double major in biology and mathematics from Farley, Iowa. As a sophomore, Coles also was awarded the Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad.

After graduating from Central, Coles' goal is to obtain a Ph.D. in ecology to conduct research in mathematical ecology or evolutionary biology and teach at the university level.

## TOMMI BOEDER ESTATE GIFT

Central received a generous gift of more than \$100,000 from the estate of **Tommi Hay Boeder '74**, a former employee and graduate of the college who went on to become an ordained minister.

Boeder, an English major, worked at Central in admissions for 10 years. She also worked at Coe College, Teleconnect and McLeod Foundation before becoming executive director of Cedar Valley Habitat for Humanity in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She worked there from 1996 to 2009, but it was through serving God that Boeder found her true calling.

She graduated from Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, with a masters in divinity. Boeder served as interim pastor in Bennett, Clarence and Tipton (all in Iowa). She died Oct. 26, 2018, in Cedar Rapids.

## WRITE US!

Civitas welcomes letters and emails from readers concerning the contents of the magazine or issues relating to Central College. Please include the author's name, city and state; anonymous communications will be discarded. Letters selected for publication may be edited for length, content, clarity and style. Address letters to Civitas, Central Communications, Central College, 812 University St., Pella, Iowa 50219 or email Cyvannah Vecchio, Civitas assistant editor, at [vecchioc@central.edu](mailto:vecchioc@central.edu).





### ▲ 2021 IOWA CAMPUS COMPACT AWARDS

Dean Furness '94 (*above*) and Central's Building a Culture of Inclusion initiative were recognized by Iowa Campus Compact for the 2021 Engaged Campus Awards. Furness received the Alumni Leadership Award, and Central's Building a Culture of Inclusion initiative received the Presidents' Student Leadership Award.

Furness harnessed the power of positive thinking and a can-do attitude to turn a tragic accident into a triumphant life. Despite a bleak outlook, Furness' resilience has been on full display the past nine-plus years, whether as a husband and father,

a high school coach at Martensdale-St. Marys, with his job at Wells Fargo in West Des Moines, as an inspirational speaker giving TED Talks or in his wheelchair completing marathons.



The Building a Culture of Inclusion initiative is a partnership between Central students and employees. Central students Yana Rouse '21 (*above, left*) and Marin Harrington '21 (*above, right*) led 28 of their peers and 31 faculty and staff members in collaboration to educate, program and recommend policy centered around inclusivity and celebrating cultural diversity.

### SCHOLARSHIP CELEBRATION

Central's annual Scholarship Celebration was scheduled for Thursday, April 22, but was canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event gives student scholarship recipients the opportunity to personally thank and share dinner with donors who help make their Central education possible. More than 800 students would have been recognized this year in P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium.

As a substitute to the traditional event, the college invited 10 alumni scholarship recipients to share the impact the scholarship had on their lives. Jeremy Caracci '18, Susan Elder '16, Dirk Lindaman '13, Kristin Look '13, Zach Moss '17, Austin Pfiffner '20, Josh Prokupek '18, Catherine Pearce Vande Voort '18, Madi Gause Wiese '16 and Nicole Williams '19 were interviewed by Brooke Bouma Kohlsdorf '96 about how the scholarship helped give them access to a Central education. Check it out at [central.edu/journey](https://central.edu/journey).

## SAVE THE DATE

# FOREVER DUTCH<sup>®</sup> CELEBRATION

Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021 • A.N. Kuyper Athletics Complex

Join us as we celebrate the completion of our renovated athletics facilities and the generous donors who made it possible!



# 'UNREALISTIC' DREAMS

## LEAD O'BRIEN TO OLYMPIC TRIALS

STORY BY: LARRY HAPPEL '81



**Austin O'Brien '14** was the Iowa Conference men's cross country MVP in 2013, placing 11th at the NCAA Division III Championships. He then won an indoor track and field national title in the distance medley relay.

The Olympic dreams of **Austin O'Brien '14** are as improbable as where they were spawned — on a couch in front of a television.

In 2016, his all-America cross country and track and field performances at Central College were behind him. But seeing Olympic distance runners dance across his television screen lit a spark.

"That's kind of when the first thought of, 'What does it take to qualify for the Olympic Trials in something?' came up," he says. "Truthfully, I was geared more toward

track. I thought, 'Oh, man, it would be great to get in the 5,000 meters or 10,000 meters for the 2020 Olympic Trials.'"

Then the hard numbers slapped him with a bracing jolt.

"They released the standards of what it takes to qualify," he says. "And even as much as I had improved, the 5K and 10K times just seemed outrageous. And then I looked at the marathon time. From a pure fitness standpoint, it seemed like the marathon time was easier."

### MARATHON MAN

There was one small complication with the 26.2-mile marathon, however. O'Brien had never run one.

Yet there he stood less than four years later, his tightly laced green and black Nike Air Zoom Alphafly Nexts resting on the Atlanta pavement at the start of the U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in February 2020.

He was among 112 contenders for three U.S. team spots. While there was no fairy tale ending in Atlanta that day, O'Brien has never





Obsessed with basketball as a youth, **Austin O'Brien '14** didn't run his first marathon until 2019 before reaching the U.S. Olympic Trials in the event in 2020.

let reality get in the way of a good dream, the latest of which is labeled 2024.

"I always have thoughts, I call them dreams, and for me these are things that aren't tangible, aren't realistic," he says. "They don't have to be, right? I'm dreaming. And for 2024, that dream is to be an Olympic contender. I want to show up to the line of the Trials for the marathon and be a true contender for making the team. Whether that's realistic or not doesn't matter right now. That's my dream."

It doesn't bother him that it appears there's little chance he's right.

"Obviously, right now it's not realistic," O'Brien says. "But now I get to have fun because now I have three years of, 'How do I get to that level? What do I have to do to make that happen?' I'm going to be sticking with my coach and following that plan."

### A RUNNING START

His early running career was more a product of accident than imagination. While still harboring adolescent visions of a lengthy

NBA career, O'Brien went out for junior high cross country in Bettendorf, Iowa, to train for basketball. The results were startling.

"I actually ended up winning state (for seventh graders), setting the state record," O'Brien says. "Over time I kind of discovered I was better at running than basketball."

O'Brien was at the forefront of a groundbreaking era in Central cross country, helping take the program from seventh in the Iowa Conference in 2010 to its first league titles in 2012 and 2013. The Dutch were 12th at the 2012 NCAA Division III Championships, during which O'Brien was 146th in 26 minutes over 8,000 meters. It was viewed as a successful showing, except by O'Brien.

"Truthfully, I was just so mad at that," he says. "I was the first guy in the race to not break 26 minutes. And that just ate at me, just drove me insane. I made a goal, and at the time it was super unrealistic. I wanted to be an all-American my senior year, and that's top 35."

## ATHLETICS UPDATES

**MEN'S GOLF:** A young Central squad placed third in the American Rivers Conference as freshman **Harold Dobernecker '24** earned all-league honors.

**FOOTBALL:** An unusual two-game spring schedule, the shortest in the program's storied 130-year history, yielded a familiar result as Central rolled to a 2-0 mark with a pair of lopsided wins over Simpson and Nebraska Wesleyan.

**WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:** **Mary Gray '21** is the first league athlete to score a career multi-events sweep with three outdoor heptathlon titles and four indoor pentathlon crowns (the 2020 outdoor meet was not held). She and classmate **Kiki Pingel '21** qualified for the NCAA Division III Championships along with discus throwers **Gillian Streit '21** and **Kennedy Morris '21**. The Dutch finished fifth in the conference.

**MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD:** Long jumper **Brock Lewis '22**, high jumper **Sam Beatty '23** and steeplechase runner **Caleb Silver '23** were qualifiers for the national meet in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Dutch placed fourth in the conference.

**VOLLEYBALL:** Utility hitter **Kayleigh Fite '21** and libero **Landry Luhning '22** were all-conference picks as Central finished 4-4 for fifth place in the spring campaign.

**SOFTBALL:** Hindered by a 33-day early season layoff due to health concerns, Central was third in the league and finished 20-14 overall. Rookie right fielder **Frannie Burnett '24** was a second-team all-region honoree.

**MEN'S TENNIS:** Central was third in the conference and 7-3 overall as **William Isiminger '21** was an all-conference pick in both singles and doubles, while **David Boschma '21** was cited in singles.

**WOMEN'S SOCCER:** **Abby Frey '24** burst onto the scene, scoring four goals in an abbreviated seven-game spring season and receiving all-conference distinction. Central was 3-4, taking sixth place.

**MEN'S SOCCER:** Playing a modified schedule with a young lineup, the Dutch were 3-4-1, sixth place in the conference.

**BASEBALL:** Central survived a play-in game to earn a spot in the conference tournament but finished eighth and closed at 14-27 overall. The lone collegiate at-bat by two-time cancer survivor **Jake Wegner '21** on Senior Day on May 16 provided an emotional highlight.

**FOR UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS ON CENTRAL ATHLETICS:**  
**ATHLETICS.CENTRAL.EDU.**





**Austin O'Brien '14 set an 8,000-meter record of 29:19 for the Runablaze Club in Des Moines on April 11.**

It turns out the genesis for a faster 8,000-meter run was a 4,000-mile flight. He spent the spring semester at Central's study abroad program in Bangor, Wales.

"I took that as an opportunity to just run a bunch of miles," he says. "I think mentally I needed a break from competing all the time. I went over there and was probably running 60-90 miles a week, some harder workouts, but a lot of just long, easy running."

The Snowdonia mountain range was a training upgrade over a bike trail to Lake Red Rock.

"It's just a really beautiful place to run," he says. "I remember I had one long run, probably 15 or 16 miles, and it went past three different castles."

A revitalized O'Brien took league MVP honors in 2013 and soared beyond his all-America goal with an 11th-place Division III finish in 25:02 — nearly a minute faster than 2012 — helping Central take a best-ever sixth place.

An NCAA Division III indoor championship performance in the distance medley relay followed, with an eighth-place finish in the mile.

O'Brien gives much credit to Coach **Joe Dunham**.

"He always saw our potential," O'Brien says. "When I talk about our culture of never being content and always wanting to get better, I think that started with him. He brought that mindset."

### **THEN THE OLYMPICS HAPPENED**

Pursuing a master's degree in sports psychology at Minnesota State University, Mankato, the academic passion O'Brien developed at Central blossomed. Yet something wasn't right.

"I wasn't clinically depressed or anything, but I was just down, and I was not fun to be around," he says.

"I went and talked to a counselor, and it was so funny. It was just this giant light

bulb moment. She said, 'Well, it seems like running is what you're missing.' And I thought, 'You're absolutely right. Why haven't I thought of this?'"

And he began to run again. Slowly, at first. Not far. But running.

"That's when the Olympics happened," O'Brien says. "Just seeing that is enough to get people motivated and excited about sports."

O'Brien began training to become world-class in an event he'd never run.

He tried a half marathon, then hired a coach, Tom Schwartz, of Boulder, Colorado, who was recommended by a friend. Still unprepared, in January 2019 he finished a marathon in Houston in two hours and 31 minutes.

"It was a rough, rough first experience of a marathon," O'Brien says.

He needed to get to 2:19 or faster to get into the Trials. In June he finished in 2:22 at Grandma's Marathon in Duluth, Minnesota.

"I'm only four minutes away, but that's still a good 10 to 15 seconds a mile that I need to drop," O'Brien says. "The lay person might see four minutes and think that's so close. As a runner, you know that's a big difference."

He discovered he had an iron deficiency just six weeks before a final attempt in November in Indianapolis, Indiana, but an iron supplement and radical diet changes sparked a successful Hail Mary surge in his training.

After 20 miles at Indianapolis, O'Brien was 30 seconds in front of the needed pace.

"What's funny was I was still feeling pretty good at mile 20," he says, a sensation hard to fathom for most clear-thinking humans. A mile straight into the wind caused a bit of a stopwatch tumble, but when O'Brien reached the final half mile, the internal celebration began.

"That was fun coming into the finish line, seeing 2:18 on the board and knowing I had done it," he says.

Officially, two hours, 18 minutes and 43 seconds earned him a trip to the Olympic Trials in Atlanta.

The Atlanta experience was memorable, the race was not.

"That was extremely underwhelming," O'Brien says. "I don't know exactly what it was, but there was something I ate that morning that didn't agree with me and I had a really rough day."

He faded quickly.

"I hung in through mile 16 or 17 but then finally it just hit me. This is going to be a brutal last nine miles. And I thought, well,





**Austin O'Brien '14** of West Des Moines is eyeing a spot in the 2024 U.S. Olympic Trials in the marathon.

if I stop now, I won't have beaten up my body too bad so I can recover quickly and then start training for the next race."

He stopped. But as it did for the rest of the planet, COVID-19 foiled the master plan.

"I dropped out thinking that I'm doing myself a favor so I can get ready for other races quicker, and then they all get canceled," he says. "I entered this pandemic on a DNF (did not finish) race, which was probably the best thing to happen to me, honestly."

## 2024 HOPES

Failure doesn't frustrate O'Brien. He feeds off it. Just like his disappointing NCAA race in his junior season at Central led to an elite senior year performance.

"I've never confronted frustration with giving up and shutting down," he says. "I've

confronted it with, 'What do I need to do to get better to redeem myself?'"

"For me the failures — or disappointments is what I call them — fuel my training," he says. "I wake up every day and I think about that DNF at the Trials. It excites me and gets me just angry enough to get out there to do the work and get better. But on race day, I don't think about any of that. It's all about the present moment and what I have to do now to be successful."

"It's something you train your brain to do. It's an attention thing and one way I do that is through daily meditation, just focusing on the breath for a prolonged period, whether it's 10, 20 or 30 minutes."

Distractions are the enemy of performance. "Part of it is processing whether I can hold this pace for the next however long. But then

it's just focusing on that next step, every time, one step forward."

And another step forward toward his Olympic dream. Sure, it's a fantasy. But he doesn't need to be an Olympic team contender until 2024.

Today he just needs to be better than yesterday.

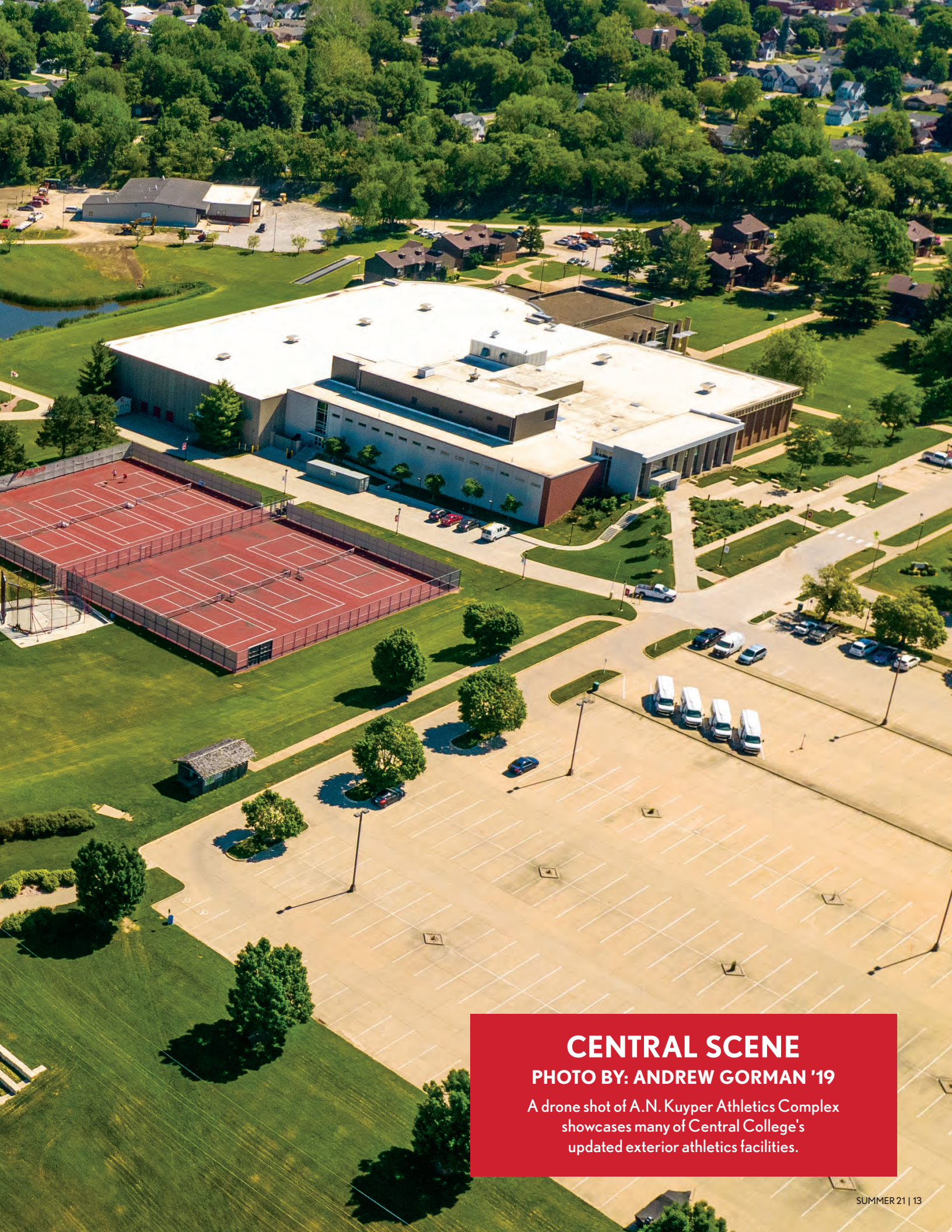
Early indicators are promising. He blew past his personal-best time by 57 seconds in winning the Blazing 8K in a record 23:28 in Davenport, Iowa, on March 21, then his 29:19 effort shattered his club team's mark in the Blazing 10K in Des Moines, Iowa, on April 11. ■

For an up-to-date schedule of all sports, visit [athletics.central.edu/calendar](https://athletics.central.edu/calendar).









## CENTRAL SCENE

PHOTO BY: ANDREW GORMAN '19

A drone shot of A.N. Kuyper Athletics Complex showcases many of Central College's updated exterior athletics facilities.



FOR A

*Lifetime*

Central alumni share what it  
means to be Forever Dutch®.

STORY BY: **EMILY HAWK**

## I AM FOREVER DUTCH®

You see it peppered across Central College's campus — on posters, apparel and student IDs. You see it on social media as a hashtag, on yard signs and as Central athletics' most ambitious fundraising campaign to date.

But being Forever Dutch® is more than just a tagline.

Being Forever Dutch means being a part of a tradition of excellence in academics, athletics and professionalism beyond your time in college. It means forming deep and meaningful connections that thread their way through your life, creating memories and relationships that truly last a lifetime. It means you will always be a member of the Central community.

Take a glimpse at the lives of several alumni as they share how Central helped shape their meaning of what it means to be Forever Dutch — on and off the playing fields.



### ▲ CRAFTING SUCCESS

Becky Hedges Pospisal '04 doesn't consider herself an artist. She would even go so far as to say she isn't "the crafty type." And after more than a decade in social and nonprofit work, she had no idea how to manage and operate a business. But Pospisal was ready to learn something new, to be her own boss.

To achieve her new career goal of owning a business, she applied a lifelong lesson she learned from Softball Coach **George Wares** during her time as a member of the Central softball team: Fake it 'til you make it.

And in 2016, Pospisal debuted The Knotty Nail.

"I know that's something not a lot of people say to themselves, but that's something coach said to us," Pospisal says. "Even if you don't understand something, buy into it like you do, and then you eventually will. When I first opened my own business, I had no idea what I was doing. But if you create that level of confidence, you'll find success."

The Knotty Nail, located in West Des Moines, Iowa, is Central Iowa's original string art and laser cut design studio. The shop offers DIY art workshops for those who want to flex their creativity while socializing with family and friends — and sharing a glass (or two) of their favorite wine. The store front also has witty gifts, chic home décor and do-it-yourself craft kits.

The Knotty Nail is now among the Des Moines area's well-established businesses in the greater Central Iowa community, but it took Pospisal a lot of work to get there. She started the business out of her home while being a mom and working a full-time job.

"I had no money for The Knotty Nail when I first started," she says. "I 100% poured myself into it, and there were a lot of sacrifices I had to make. But about eight months later, I quit my job and moved into my first studio in downtown Des Moines and was there for two years. Now, I have my own brick-and-mortar." (continued on page 16)





**Becky Hedges Pospisal '04** (center) celebrates Central's 2003 softball national championship.

## ◀ FOREVER GRATEFUL, FOREVER DUTCH®

Pospisal learned invaluable lessons as a student and teammate on Central's softball team that continue to thread their way through her personal and professional life.

In 2003, the softball team won the fourth NCAA Division III national championship in the program's history. But before Pospisal was part of a championship team, the Dutch came in second place on the national stage in 2001.

"I remember the disappointment of how hard the team had worked all year and then to not win. It was really difficult," Pospisal says. "But I remember learning a lot about how important it is to really commit yourself and persevere. It was really engrained in me that I had not experienced that level of success before, and I wanted to get to that point again, but win. I really fell in love with the program after that."

After hundreds of practices, tough games, taking tests on buses and faxing finals back to campus, Pospisal and her teammates finally experienced that level of success.

"Knowing when you work hard and everyone on your team works hard — and you spend all of this time together and travel together and basically live together — that you can have all of these great successes is something I will never forget."

But what's more important than the success she found on the softball field and with her own business? The memories and lasting friendships that are forever engrained in her life.

"Being Forever Dutch means looking back at my experience at Central and being appreciative of the lessons I learned," Pospisal says. "I learned so much about life. And to this day, I'm close friends with a lot of my teammates. Who would have thought playing softball at Central would have shaped my life like it has? But it did. And I am forever grateful to be Forever Dutch."



**Zachary Steward '17** (second row, far right) with the Central A Cappella Choir at the Colorado State Capitol.

## ◀ LARGER THAN LIFE

For Zachary Steward '17, being a part of something larger than yourself is a life-changing experience. Steward participated in many organizations at Central, including A Cappella Choir, Theatre Central, Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Theta Kappa Alpha.

"Central allowed me to be a part of many organizations where I was only a small part of the end result," Steward says. "With these groups, we were able to create moments of good in our darkened world."

While on tour in Colorado, Steward and a group of choir members visited the Colorado State Capitol. They found their way into the rotunda and sang their benediction "The Lord Bless You" just for fun. People peeked over the railing from three floors and listened.

"To hear that echoing around the dome was such a special moment," Steward says. "Everyone in that dome was sharing a moment together, and I won't forget it any time soon. Forever is a long time, but I know that any time I need someone, I can rely on those chosen family members to be there."

Steward lives with three other Central alumni he met during his four years on campus, and the amount of jokes and stories they share daily from their time on campus shows their heartfelt experience.

"All four of us were involved in theatre productions and keep in contact with professors who have now become our friends. Time after time, the relationships I made at Central keep my heart full. I will proudly be Forever Dutch."

## PART OF THE FAMILY ▶

Sixty years ago I graduated from Central College, and I will always be grateful for what I learned there. My memories continue to bring a smile to my face. In 1957, as a freshman, the enrollment was less than 500, so it allowed for close-knit experiences with students and professors. We were not just a number. I met my life partner there (**Dallas Wassink '61**), and we were thrilled to be able to send all three of our children to Central as well. Presently, and with great delight, I am observing one of my grandchildren make preparation to attend this coming fall. She will be the fourth generation to attend. Being Forever Dutch means being part of Central's family for life.

— **Virginia (Ginny) Weeks Wassink '61**, Grants Pass, Oregon



**Virginia (Ginny) Weeks Wassink '61**  
photographed the 1957-1961 graduates in Graham Hall.

## CENTRAL CARES ▶

**Harriet Wolbrink '71** says she literally owes her life to Central College.

"My parents, **Rev. Gideon Wolbrink '42** and **Lorraine Barickman Wolbrink '43** met at Central during my mother's second year," Wolbrink says. "My father only attended Central one year (1941-42) before enlisting in the Army in World War II. And Central was not on my mother's radar when she was considering college."

Lorraine chose Central because of **Vernon Bobbit**, a former art professor who also worked in admissions from 1937-42. Bobbit went out of his way to make her feel welcome. After a hesitant visit to campus, Lorraine received a special visitor.

"Mom said she and Bobbit sat on the porch swing for an hour and discussed the benefits of attending Central. She visited other colleges that spring, but no one else sent out a rep to follow up. That convinced her Central really cared about their students, and Bobbit convinced her she'd get a good education there."

Wolbrink, along with her three siblings, also received their education at Central: **Janie Wolbrink Koopmans '67**, **Paul Wolbrink '68** and **Martha Wolbrink Schultz '73**.



## FRIENDS FOR LIFE ▶

I first met **Art Alt**, former director of student activities, my freshman year when registering and buying a student union activity pass. Over the years, I worked for Art as part of the student union, paid for extracurricular activities, became part of the Gator Ski Club and continued skiing at Breckenridge, Colorado, even after college while staying with my good friend **Kim Dykstra '83**. I was also fortunate to get to know **Diane Alt**, former media center coordinator; what a sweetheart!

Art and Diane were terrific role models for me, great friends and, at times, a mom and dad for me away from home. They equaled the love I had for Track and Field Coach **Bill Hinga '07H** and helped make Central a very special place for me. We are friends for life, and I continue to visit with them almost every year since they relocated to central Florida.

— **Brad Depke '82**, Third Lake, Illinois



**Brad Depke '82** (left) and wife **Jan** (second from left) with **Art** (right) and **Diane Alt** (second from right) in Florida in February 2021.





**Justin '02 and Amanda Hansen Fletcher '00** in Gaass Hall.

### ◀ THE BEST DECISION EVER

Aside from marrying my husband, **Justin Fletcher '02**, choosing Central College is the best decision I have ever made. It became the place where I met my best friends. Some of my favorite Central memories are studying in Leiden, Netherlands, the fall semester of my senior year; living in third floor Gaass three of my four years at Central; being an RA to the most amazing girls ever; late nights studying with Justin and friends in Weller Center; Symphonic Wind Ensemble and the awesome trips we took; Tulip Time; working in the alumni office; being thrown in the pond three out of four of my birthdays; walks and picnics at Lake Red Rock; Dutch letters; and so much more!

Justin and I have donated to Central each year since we graduated. I have spoken on panels for scholarship days on campus. I have served as a mentor to students. I have hired Central students. I have offered internships to students. I serve on the Economics, Accounting and Management Alumni Advisory Council. I am a member of the National Advisory Council. Justin and I have both made Central a beneficiary of our retirement plans. I adopt current seniors and touch base with them throughout the year to encourage them to make the best decision ever: to choose Central College as their home the next four years. I simply love Central and am so proud to be an alumna. So grateful for making the best decision ever 25 years ago!

— **Amanda Hansen Fletcher '00**, Norwalk, Iowa



**Ann Klann Phillips '81** and daughter **Katie Phillips '19** celebrate as Central alumni.

### ◀ WHAT FOREVER DUTCH® MEANS TO ME

- + Maintaining friendships since I moved into Graham Hall in Fall 1977. I was a shy, timid little freshman. I found lots of company. Muddled my way through that first college exam: Protestant, Catholic and Jew. Terrifying. Then there was that first-ever Lemming Race. Wish I had saved that historic T-shirt!
- + Having one of my best Third North Graham friends officiate my mom's memorial service in 2019.
- + When that Jaarsma aroma blankets my senses as I walk in that bakery door, I'm young again.
- + Remembering with joy my all-time favorite teacher, **Bette Brunsting '56**. We're talking favorite teacher since kindergarten. Still can't pinpoint that elusive quality that set her above the rest. But I would have moved mountains for that woman.
- + Having my daughter fall in love with Central after a campus visit, even though she was determined not to go there.
- + My daughter, **Katie Phillips '19**, will be getting married in the Central Chapel this July to **Nathan Manchester '18**. I am looking forward to it!
- + Life is grand. I am Forever Dutch!

— **Ann Klann Phillips '81**, Muscatine, Iowa ■

## ENTER TO WIN

**LIKE WHAT YOU SEE ON THE COVER?** It could be yours!

We are giving away the Central athletics "C" designed by **Becky Hedges Pospisal '04** in her store, The Knotty Nail, which opened in 2016 in West Des Moines, Iowa.

To enter the drawing for this one-of-a-kind memory, please visit [central.edu/stringart](http://central.edu/stringart) before Aug. 15, 2021. Or send this form to: Central College, Alumni Office, 812 University St., Box 5200, Pella, Iowa, 50219.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (so we can send you your prize) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



# —FOREVER— DUTCH®

## MAKING AN IMPRESSION

New facilities showcase the best of what Central athletics have to offer.

STORY BY: JEFF BERSCH





Pictured above are, left to right, former Board of Trustees chair **Jack Boatsma**, President Emeritus **Ken Weller**, **P.H. Kuyper** and former board secretary **Paul Farver**.

First impressions can last forever. Central College Football Coach **Jeff McMartin '90** knows this.

"Your facilities are the front porch of your program," he says. "It starts to tell a story."

That story with Central athletics now begins with state-of-the-art facilities that certainly leave a lasting impression.

Central just wrapped up a project that transformed A.N. Kuyper Athletics Complex and changed the face of Dutch athletics forever. It began with outdoor field enhancements and finished with the expansion and renovation of P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium.

The Forever Dutch® initiative, the most ambitious athletics capital initiative in the college's history, wrapped up fundraising in November 2020, and construction was completed this spring. A record 2,712 Central alumni and friends provided support for the completely donor-funded project.

### A GAME CHANGER

"Completing this phase of Forever Dutch with the Kuyper Athletic Complex is a game changer for us," says **Eric Van Kley**, Central's athletics director. "The upgraded facilities allow us to more efficiently recruit, enhance our student-athletes' experiences and, most importantly, better impact the young women and men we serve."

"We couldn't be more grateful to each donor who has made this possible. These first-class facilities raise the bar for us among our conference and regional peers, along with making a tremendous impression for recruits' families locally and nationally."

The project officially kicked off with a celebration in January 2016, although a few projects already had been completed.

Some of the first noticeable improvements were new baseball and softball seating areas; hillside soccer seating; new scoreboards for baseball, softball and soccer; and the videoboard in Ron and Joyce Schipper Stadium, which also received improvements that included the Heritage Plaza leading to the playing field and stands.

Significant changes to P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium, which originally opened in 1970, were the bulk of Forever Dutch.

Major infrastructure improvements were needed, and a new entrance welcomes visitors into the M. Joan Kuyper Farver Atrium where Central's 11 team national champion trophies are housed. That phase also included the new lower-level Pacha Family Lobby, which includes a new athletics hall of honor. A new men's varsity locker room was completed, as was a new wrestling room.

Improvements completed in September 2020 included a new women's locker room, a new equipment room, renovated coaches' offices and a renovated athletic training room. The final phase, completed in May, added team video rooms, new coaches' offices, recruiting suites and the Sikkink-Dykstra Welcome Center.

### PRIDE ON OUR SIDE

"These new facilities give pride to Dutch athletics and show what we're all about," says **Sydney Canney '22**, a defender on Central's women's soccer team from Adel, Iowa. "These facilities represent the confidence and pride our alumni and fans have in us."

**Thomas Spoehr '22** came to Central in Fall 2018, shortly after the first phase had been completed. Spoehr, from Bennington, Nebraska, played basketball and now competes in throws for the Dutch track and field team.

He had heard about the additional planned improvements, not knowing for sure if they'd be completed before he graduated.

"To see it come to fruition is pretty cool, knowing they did it while I was here," Spoehr says. "It's an environment you want to be in, a place you want to go and are proud to call your own. That's what you come to Central for."

Spoehr also says he's impressed by the breadth of the improvements.

"It never felt like one team was valued more than another," he says. "Everyone uses it. No matter what sport you compete in or what gender you are, it's for everyone. It speaks volumes about Central and how much they care."

**Danae Greig '23** also found that feeling of caring during her visit to Central. It was part of her decision to come all the way from Albany, Oregon, to play basketball. Like Spoehr, she was curious about the timeline of the facilities improvements.

"To see it in motion was encouraging," she says. "I knew when it was done it was going to be a heck of a lot better than it was. The project is even better than I thought it would be."

**Griffen McBride '21**, a wrestler from nearby Pleasantville, Iowa, remembers his first visit and recruiting trip to Central.

"I was sweating profusely just watching the wrestling practice due to the small size of the wrestling room and large size of the team," he recalls. "Luckily, I was the first class to be able to use the new wrestling room. Our (facilities) can compete with anybody, and they'll absolutely give the Dutch an advantage over our competition." (continued on page 22)



A crowd gathered for the opening and dedication of P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium in 1970.



Kuyper Field on Central's campus in the 1970s.





Assistant athletics coaches upgraded to a Central-branded office space.



Bold, red lockers featuring the athletics logo greet women Dutch athletes in the locker rooms.



The M. Joan Kuyper Farver Atrium received a radical facelift with a display of Dutch athlete's and a backlit Central athletics logo.



The original Kuyper Stadium was located in the space now occupied by Vermeer Science Center and Kruidenier Center. Geisler Library sits behind the home bleachers.

## FACILITIES MATTER

No doubt one of the biggest benefits with the new facilities lay in recruiting. Coaches have sparkling new facilities to show off, certain to get the attention of a high school senior. It allows Central to attract top talent from across Iowa and the country.

“On my visit, I remember being very impressed by the quality of the facilities. They were already the nicest of any of the colleges I visited,” says **Amanda Smith '23**, a volleyball player from Tipton, Iowa. “I love the new facilities! Seeing the progress and renovations motivates me and my team to continue to work hard for our school. They have put money and time into setting us up for success.”

Adds **Kole Tupa '24**, a men’s basketball player from Center Point, Iowa: “When I have had something nice, I tend to take care of it and take great pride in it. When something is

high class, like our facilities, student-athletes will be much more inclined and motivated to take advantage and use them. I definitely think the facilities will only have positive impacts on Central College athletics.”

The upgrades serve the biggest areas of need for Central athletics. In addition to appealing to recruits, it allows current student-athletes to see they are supported.

Almost 70 percent of first-year students compete in a sport at Central. But it goes beyond athletics, too. The Kuyper facilities are used by nearly everyone on campus in some capacity.

“You can see Central is investing in its athletes and students,” Spoehr says. “They’re taking it seriously. Central cares about you — not just in athletics, but beyond and as a person. It really shows.”

That’s the feeling McMartin has gotten

from student-athletes he’s recruiting and those he’s coaching. Both, he hopes, leave here impressed.

“These facilities make a big impact. They help create a great atmosphere, which can lead to future visits and ultimately result in commitments,” McMartin says. “You want people to come in, feel comfortable, get excited and create an impression of who we are as an athletics department. When they commit to Central, you want them to know they’re supported and have the facilities to develop and get better.

“These changes reinforce who we are, what we expect and how we want to compete. Throughout all levels of college athletics, it’s an arms race. Everyone is looking to improve, to be better. You can’t stand still. You must always be looking for ways to improve,” he adds. “This is us.” ■





Former Central presidents **David Roe** (left) and President Emeritus **Ken Weller** (center) join current President **Mark Putnam** at the 2013 NCAA Division III softball championships in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

# WELLER'S WISDOM

STORY BY:  
**LARRY HAPPEL '81**

President Emeritus **Ken Weller** authored original Division III philosophy, believed strongly in prioritizing athletics as complementary part of education.

**Ken Weller** speaks about Division III athletics with the fervor of an evangelist.

He preaches that intercollegiate athletics aren't just an excessively financed university sideshow that serious academicians begrudgingly tolerate, but that participation actually enhances a student's educational development.

It's a perspective often gained in hindsight, as it was for Weller, now 95, who was a modestly talented lineman at Hope College in Michigan long before serving as Central College president from 1969-90.

"In college I kind of snickered at people who

talk philosophically about how playing football is good for your education," Central's president emeritus said in a 2018 interview. "That wasn't what I had in mind at all. I played because I enjoyed it."

But the more he experienced life beyond blocking sleds, he began thinking differently. He started seeing connections he previously viewed as contrived or theoretical.

"I grew to appreciate the role of athletics as complementary to academics," Weller said, noting the concept is actively demonstrated by the 446 colleges and universities that

comprise Division III, the NCAA's largest division.

When he was asked to return to Hope in 1958 to speak at a banquet honoring the school's conference champion men's basketball team, he outlined what he saw as the distinctions between major college athletics programs and those at smaller schools like Hope and Central. He didn't realize he was, for the first time, articulating thoughts that would ultimately emerge as core tenets of the visionary NCAA Division III philosophy he authored in 1978.





President Emeritus **Ken Weller** leans his motorcycle against the fence while watching a softball game following his retirement.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STUDENT-ATHLETE

"At the time of that speech, having taught for a number of years since (playing football), I did sit down and have a real feel for the fact that (athletics) was a contributing factor in a good education," Weller said. "They're helping, not hurting, the objectives of good students. You're better able to develop yourself as a person if you're involved in athletics, theatre or music."

More than 60 years later, reviewing the scribbled edits of the yellowed typewritten text from that speech still tucked away among his personal papers, one can almost visualize the gears churning in his mind back then.

"It was the origination of the realization that big-time programs do have an objective that is a legitimate one in serving society, serving the people of Iowa or Michigan," he said. "But in a smaller college, it's quite the opposite. Decisions are made based upon the supremacy of the individual participant, rather than the spectator."

Participation.

Providing opportunities for student participation in athletics was fundamental to the Division III philosophy but even more so to the nationally prominent athletics program that then-athletics director **Ron Schipper** built on Weller's watch at Central. That focus is mirrored in the recently completed

\$18 million Forever Dutch® initiative, which centered on student priorities rather than the fan experience.

## HOW WE GOT HERE

When Weller presided as a first-year president at the ribbon-cutting for P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium in 1970, Central had eight men's sports and 202 athletes. A half-century later, more than 700 Dutch athletes compete in 20 men's and women's sports, and countless other students pursue fitness-based lifestyles. The building anchors the expansive A.N. Kuyper Athletics Complex, which provides acres of outdoor practice and competition spaces, but prior to the expansion/renovation, Kuyper Gym's walls were stretched beyond their limits. Not only was the space insufficient, an aging infrastructure made building inspectors concerned.

The new construction doesn't resolve all of the space concerns, but it allows Central to better serve a mushrooming student-athlete population that embodies the kind of program Weller envisioned even before he arrived on Central's campus.

Providing opportunities for all students also was what drove Weller and Schipper to embrace the groundbreaking notion championed by Coach **Gary Boeyink '59** of launching a women's intercollegiate athletics program at Central in 1973. Weller is

justifiably proud of the critical role Central later played in integrating women's athletics into the NCAA in 1982.

Also in 1973, the NCAA created Division III, what was initially seen as a home for schools that didn't provide athletics scholarships. Weller and others saw it as much more, celebrating all that Division III did offer athletes, not what it didn't.

## IN THE NEWS

The opportunity to give their vision a voice developed as a result of Central's surprising run to the 1974 NCAA football crown, shining a spotlight on the college. Weller even appeared as a halftime guest on ABC's national telecast of the title game in Phenix City, Alabama, with commentator Duffy Daugherty, retired Michigan State University coach. It was the 1974 equivalent of a sit-down with omnipresent ESPN college football talking head Kirk Herbstreit today.

The NCAA's representative at the game, Ed Sherman, was athletics director and football coach at Muskingum College in Ohio. Sherman also held a post as the NCAA's secretary-treasurer and needed to appoint a president to assist with a cost control project. He quickly thought of Weller.

"He was impressed and surprised that here was a college president that knew quite a bit about football," Weller said. "Coaches who



President Emeritus **Ken Weller** is joined by his wife, Shirely, at the NCAA headquarters in Indianapolis in 2013.

become presidents are very rare.”

Weller was later appointed to the Division III Steering Committee and ascended to chair as the committee grappled with identifying the division’s role in the NCAA. Coincidentally, also serving on the committee was the Hope athletics director Gordon Brewer, who was part of the audience when Weller made that basketball banquet speech in 1958.

“He said to the steering committee, ‘Well, Ken has done a lot of thinking and writing about this area,’” Weller said. “‘We should have him do a presentation.’ Which I did in the evening for the next day. And they liked it, they put it into the (Division III) annual meeting, and they liked it. And so, I was commissioned to write it. So, I took all these conversations within the committee and put them together and wrote the Division III Philosophy, which remained in effect for many, many years.”

Weller resists the notion that it was a solo venture, noting that the philosophy had significant input from many leaders within Division III. The philosophy appeared in the “NCAA News” in 1978.

### THE DIVISION III ADVANTAGE

Weller, who eventually served as an NCAA vice president and was chair of the association’s first Presidents’ Commission,

didn’t demonize Division I athletics as many did but saw a distinct and integral role for Division III.

“I think it is a mistake to regard big-time programs strictly as money-making affairs,” he said. “I think they’re really a response to what the public wants. And they’re willing to pay for it. It’s like research. I think that’s a very good metaphor. Research to a university is money that comes from outside. There are (faculty members) who never see a student, and they actually have separate research budgets, and that’s in response to the public’s need. (Division I) programs can be viewed in those terms.”

The stifling pressures coaches and athletes face in Division I differ from those within Division III. Yet it’s a mistake to view Division III, as many popularly do, as intramurals on steroids. Division III athletes are just as passionate as those seen choreographing end zone celebrations on television.

“(Division I athletes) may weigh a few pounds more and run a little faster, but the desire to win and the desire to become better as a team in Division III is very real,” Weller said. “In fact, many big-time athletes are thinking about playing professionally, and participation in college athletics is less emotional and less tied to the team than the small college. I truly believe that the quality

of the athletics experience in the small college is much better than it is in the big college.”

And there’s nothing inherently wrong with the pursuit of victory, Weller said. He and his wife, Shirely, exuberantly witnessed the Dutch winning 10 of the 11 school’s national championships. But he sees a distinction others miss.

“If a job is worth doing it should be done well, and the only time that losing should be looked at as tolerable is after it has taken place; until then you must try to win,” Weller said in 1958. “Afterwards, the loss should not be the occasion for brooding and sorrow but as the raw material for renewed efforts to win the next game.

“If a player wants to keep the fans happy, save the coach’s job, pay for the fieldhouse or keep his scholarship, it’s wrong. But if winning enhances the meaning and value of the sport in developing the players as individuals and as a loyal group, if it helps the school in its educational program, then nothing could be healthier.”

To read the Division III philosophy, visit: [www.ncaa.org/governance/division-iii-philosophy-statement](http://www.ncaa.org/governance/division-iii-philosophy-statement). ■





# Hope

## FOR THE BEST

STORY BY:  
CYVANNAH VECCHIO

Hope. It's all anyone has really wanted the past 15-ish months. And it's all **James Boatright '21's** family has clung to the past five years.





**James Boatright '21** (center) celebrated his graduation from Central with family and friends. Pictured, left to right, Paige Skinner, Boatright's girlfriend; Lauri Auxier, Boatright's mother; and James and Pat Auxier, Boatright's grandparents. Also in attendance, Rick and Amanda Boatright, James Boatright's father and sister, and Jesse Evans, friend.

Five years ago, James Boatright '21 was in a traumatic car accident. He pulled out at a stop sign in his tiny, blue Chevy Cavalier, and was T-boned by a pickup truck. The impact left an unconscious Boatright wedged in the driver's seat. The then-16-year-old Boatright was in a coma for 10 days, and doctors gave his family a grim prognosis: Boatright was not only in critical condition, but medical professionals predicted he would not walk, talk or even know who he was again.

There was nothing left for his family to do than hope for the best.

### WALKING ON CLOUD NINE

Naturally, it was hope that filled Lauri Auxier's, Boatright's mother, eyes as she described the implications of her son graduating during Central College's Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 15, 2021.

"He's the first one to graduate," Auxier says. "He came with the odds stacked against him — low-income family, single-parent household, no one had ever been to college before and he had a traumatic brain injury when he was 16. So, for him to graduate high school on time and graduate college with the grade point average he has is absolutely a miracle."

Boatright spent a month in the hospital after his accident relearning how to talk and walk. A skill he used to cross the Commencement stage and accept his much anticipated and well-deserved Dutch diploma.

"It's hard for me to even put into words, but I'm beyond amazed that he did everything he did," Auxier says.

It was hope — and fatherly pride — that thickened Rick Boatright's voice as he, too, shared joy in his son's accomplishments.

"I couldn't be prouder of him," Rick says. "I think he chose the right school; it's been really good for him."

### UPWARD BOUND

Even his grandparents, James and Pat Auxier, believe Boatright's success at Central was paved on campus ... before he was ever a student here.

"He went to Upward Bound before he ever started college," James Auxier says. "So, he calls this place his home."

Upward Bound is a program hosted on Central's campus that supports low-income and/or first-generation students from participating high schools in developing the skills and motivation needed to successfully complete high school and enroll in and complete a program of postsecondary education.

"It's been an experience to enjoy with him, as much as he has enjoyed being here at Central," Auxier says.

### THE FUTURE IS NOW

Boatright, a native of Des Moines, Iowa, is excited for life after Central. He secured a job at Soil-Tek in Grimes at the beginning of April; although he accepted the position on April Fool's Day, this job is no joke.

"I'll essentially be making sure that construction sites are being environmentally friendly," Boatright says. "I'm super excited about it."

With classes and Commencement over, Boatright's future is now. However, it was his satirical wit as a Central student that made him a campus favorite.

### YOLK'S ON YOU

Boatright also is known as Egg Guy. What started as a small yolk — or joke, rather — during Boatright's junior year at Central became a campus hit.

"I started scrambled egg reviews second semester of junior year because I thought it was kind of funny," Boatright says. "The last couple

of months, I had kind of fallen off because I got bored of doing it."

Then he received word that his adoring public was hoping for one last egg review.

"My friend is a resident advisor, and she overheard some first-year students saying they hoped I would do one more for the end of the year because they look forward to it," Boatright says. "A ton of faculty and staff have told me they look forward to the egg reviews. So, it seems that the demand didn't fall off as steeply as I thought it did."

Boatright was even approached at senior events by professors he didn't really know, but they knew him — the Egg Guy! Given his unprecedented popularity, Boatright planned for one last scrambled egg review.

The Thursday before Commencement, he planned to give his parting review. Except he couldn't.

"There were no scrambled eggs on Thursday," Boatright says. "I was a little disappointed. I had to rate a fried egg."

### HOPE FOR THE BEST

Much like Boatright's medical prognosis post-accident, there hasn't been much for the Central family, and the entire globe, to do in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic but hope for the best. Each of us is responsible for extending the care and compassion that is so desperately needed.

In the coming days of transition, there will be opportunities to be kind in the midst of cruelty; to be empathetic despite disunity; and to be a light in encroaching darkness. Until the weight of the pandemic has lifted, and even long after it's in hindsight, take every opportunity to show love, advocate for change and lend your light. It's our only hope as a community — and we hope for the best. As President Mark Putnam told the Class of 2021, "Go and do great things!"



Commencement for the Class of 2021 was held at Ron and Joyce Schipper Stadium for the second semester in a row. And, for the second time, the weather threatened to unleash on the graduating class and their loved ones.

Kelly Yeager of Center Point, Iowa, was grateful to be at Central – sans rain – to celebrate her daughter.

“We’re here to support our daughter, **Cassidy Yeager '21**,” Yeager says.

Cassidy, a sociology major and psychology minor, graduated magna cum laude.

“She’s going to be working in Des Moines at NeuroRehab,” Yeager says.



## 256 GRADUATES FROM 17 STATES



**Xavier Bryant '21** of Des Moines, Iowa, performed the national anthem during the 2021 Commencement ceremony. As a music performance major, Bryant was a logical choice. But that didn’t dull his shock at being selected.

“**Sean Stephenson** (lecturer of music) contacted me,” Bryant says. “I was kind of surprised I was picked. But I think his faith in me really instilled my confidence in myself.”

Bryant’s clear voice delivered a classic rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner,” which filled the stadium at the beginning of the ceremony.

His next adventure involves a move for a job that moves him. Bryant is transitioning to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and starting a job at Silver Sage Development. The marketing agency works selectively with organizations that promote positive and timely causes.

“Their main initiative is to help prevent child suicide,” Bryant says. “So, I’m really excited about jumping into that process with them.”



## 29,091 CREDITS COMPLETED







## 29 GRADUATES ARE CHILDREN OF ALUMNI



## 50% OF THE CLASS OF 2021 COMPLETED AT LEAST ONE SEASON OF DUTCH ATHLETICS



**Erica Shumaker '21** of Tipton, Iowa, graduated cum laude with a physics major and math and environmental studies minors. Her post-graduation plans are equally as impressive.

"I have a full-time job working for Central Iowa Power Cooperative based out of Cedar Rapids," Shumaker says. "I will be an energy resource planner."

Shumaker is leaving Central with a full heart.

"It made me a more well-rounded person to enter society," Shumaker says. "I really enjoyed my time here."



**Sarahi Ledesma-Ruiz '21** (left), of Round Lake, Illinois, and **Maggie Langenfeld '21**, of Earling, Iowa, stood next to one another in line to receive their Central diplomas.

Ledesma-Ruiz, a Spanish and art double-major, is a first-generation college student.

"I'm really proud of myself," Ledesma-Ruiz says.

Langenfeld, a communication studies major, transferred to Central.

"I'm really sad to leave my friends," Langenfeld says. "I transferred, so I feel like I just haven't had enough time here. But I've loved every second of it." ■



# NEWSNOTES

## THE '60s



▲ **Marvin Hackert '66** is the William Shive Centennial Professor in Biochemistry and Associate dean of graduate studies at the University of Texas at Austin. He was elected Fellow of the American Crystallographic Association in 2020. Hackert was invited to write a "Living History" article about his experiences of 50-plus years in x-ray crystallography. It was published in the ACAReflecXions newsletter and now is part of the ACA History Portal and American Institute of Physics archives. He lives in Austin with his wife, Bretna. He also experienced unusual weather in Texas this winter. He was without power for 58 hours and spent 144 hours at or below freezing temperatures in Austin.



▲ **Grace Reed '67** retired from a lifelong career in medical sales and became the proprietor of The Irish Gift Shop in St. Augustine, Florida, in 2015. She is acting occasionally, having learned the craft at Central under the tutelage of **Maurice Birdsall**. Reed most recently appeared in "Calendar Girls."

Rosemarie Anderson '69 recently published a translation of the Tao Te Ching titled "The Divine Feminine Tao Te Ching: A New Translation & Commentary." The publisher is Inner Traditions/Bear & Company, and the translation is available on Amazon. Rosemarie currently lives in southern Oregon and is professor emerita of psychology at Sofia University USA and an Episcopal priest.

## THE '70s

David Vander Meulen '70 retired after nine years of quality control service with Vanguard Labs of CVS Health. David and wife, Carol, reside in Smiths Grove, Kentucky.

Marian Ann Matwiejczyk Montgomery '77 wrote "Sumptuous Stitches and Tiny Treasures: Needlework and Needlework Tools from the Museum of Texas Tech University Collection" to accompany an exhibit of the same name May 1 to Dec. 19, 2021. The book is available on Amazon.

David Merriman '79 of Schaumburg, Illinois, was promoted to assistant vice president for claim operations at American Guardian Warranty Services, Inc., in Warrenville, Illinois.

Greg Tracy '79 of Mason City, Iowa, is semi-retired and works as a surveillance agent at Diamond Jo Casino in Northwood, Iowa.



▲ **Kim Harders '74** completed the hike to Machu Picchu in Peru.

## SHARE YOUR NEWS

Talk to us! Did you get a graduate degree? A promotion or a new job? Get married or have a baby? We want to hear from our alumni. Share your updates and your news will be included in the Newsnotes section of Civitas and online. It's easy! Just fill out the form at [civitas.central.edu/newsnotes](http://civitas.central.edu/newsnotes).



## THE '70s (continued)



▲ **Kris Samuelson Van Wyk '78** is excited to share that her granddaughter, Emma Lenox, has signed to play softball at Central starting Fall 2021. Emma currently plays for Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont Junior/Senior High School. *Front row, left to right: Eric Lenox, Emma Lenox '25, Sara Van Wyk Lenox '04; Second row, left to right: Donna Lenox, Jerry Lenox, Coach Curt Fenton, Kristine Samuelson Van Wyk '78, Athletics Director Curt Johnston '97, and Cael Lenox.*

## THE '80s

**Daniel Whitehead '81** is the chief operations officer of Mission Aviation Fellowship in Nampa, Idaho.

**Rita Daniels Davenport '85** retired from Des Moines Area Community College where she spent 18 years as a professional counselor at the campus in Boone, Iowa.

**Eric Glendening '85** has been selected as a recipient of the President's Medal, Indiana State University's highest award for faculty. Eric is a chemistry professor at Indiana State in Terre Haute.

**Joane Smith Clark '86** has retired after working 35 years for Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Kirk Sadilek '87** is a senior wealth advisor at Basepoint Wealth, LLC, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Paul Montague '87** of Austin, Texas, is working remotely as vice president for NS BlueScope in Sacramento, California.

**Mike Sander '88** retired from the Newton Fire Department after 28 years of service. He is now a first grade teacher at Newton Christian School in Newton, Iowa.

**Jeff Van Ekeren '89** is the vice president of commercial lending at Wolf River Community Bank in Greenville, Wisconsin.

## THE '90s

**John Crandall '90** is a K-5 English as a second language teacher at West Clermont Local School District in Cincinnati, Ohio. John and husband, Michael Hentges, live in Cincinnati.

**Trent Vaughn '90** is the vice president of pricing at GuideOne Insurance Company in West Des Moines, Iowa. Trent and wife, Kris Brandt Vaughn '90,

live in West Des Moines. Kris works remotely as the training and client service coordinator for Grace Hill, which is based out of South Carolina.

**Dean Pape '94** is the director of curriculum, as well as speech, debate and communications teacher at High Elites Education Group in Minnesota.

**Jeannette Juricic '96** is the director of the New York regional office of The Office of Foreign Missions.

**Heidi Johnson Gunderson '97** is a teacher for the Absarokee School District in Absarokee, Montana. She received the Montana Educator of the Year award from the National Center

for Women and Information Technology for 2021. Heidi and husband, **Christopher Gunderson '99**, reside in Absarokee with their two children.

**Spencer Cox '98** is a financial advisor at Alpha Wealth Consulting Group in West Des Moines, Iowa. Spencer and wife, **Stephanie Allison Cox '99**, reside in Urbandale, Iowa, with their four children.

**Ryan Rumery '99** is a musician, composer and music producer. His music has been featured in many films, including the recently released documentary "Ottolenghi and the Cakes of Versailles."



▲ **David Eilderts '90** recently celebrated 30 years with Hydrite Chemical Company in Waterloo, Iowa. He started as a chemist, then lab manager, production supervisor, warehouse and transportation manager, and is currently a process trainer working with newly hired employees. David and wife, Diane, live in Dike, Iowa, with their three children.



▲ **Julie Schanke Lyford '90** wrote a book with her father, Professor Emeritus of Theatre **Robert Schanke**, titled "Katy Has Two Grampas." It is available as a hardback at bookstores, or e-book at [www.katyhastwogrampas.com](http://www.katyhastwogrampas.com).



## THE '00s

**Ben Nunnikhoven '01** is a remarketing inventory strategy and development team lead at DLL in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Brad Newcomb '02** is a sales development director at Guaranty Income Life Insurance Company in Naperville, Illinois.

**Mathew Petty '02** is a director of research at Charles Schwab. Mat and wife, Katie, live in Lone Tree, Colorado, with their two children.

**Randy Jarzombek '04** is the owner of Randall Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Kimberly Henle '05** is a transplant coordinator at Iowa Methodist Transplant Center with Unity Point in Des Moines, Iowa. Kimberly lives in Des Moines with her daughter.

**Cale Van Genderen '05** was promoted to senior vice president, marketing and facilities, at Vibrant Credit Union in Moline, Illinois.

**Justin Tiarks '06** is the primary and middle school principal at St. Paul City School in St. Paul, Minnesota. Justin was nominated to be a senior fellow at the Minnesota Institute for Trauma-Informed Education. He and wife, Brigitte, live in St. Paul with their two children.

**Scott Paja '08** is an assistant vice president of partner success at the University of Cincinnati's Office of Innovation in Cincinnati, Ohio.



▲ **Krista Bradt Raatjes '06** is a licensed clinical social worker in Joliet, Illinois, and recently became a registered play therapist through the association for play therapy. Krista and husband, Aaron, reside in New Lenox, Illinois.

**Jared Fritz-McCarty '09** is the director of development and strategic fundraising at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois.

**Rachel Jones Kampling '09** is the owner of Enfluent, which provides English language coaching for international doctors in the United States.

## THE '10s

**Joseph Shoemaker '11** is the director of online lending at Guaranteed Rate in Chicago, Illinois.

**Lucas Fillmore '12** of Shenandoah, Iowa, is a United Methodist Church pastor serving congregations in Shenandoah and Hamburg, Iowa. CNN recently featured Fillmore in an article: [central.edu/cnn2020](http://central.edu/cnn2020).

**Allison Miller '12** is the manager of training and curriculum at First Tee in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Liberty Wickman '12** works as the chief training officer of the center for global health of Socios En Salud Partners in Health Peru.

**Zach Jensen '13** is the owner of Earthwise Pet in Pella and Newton, Iowa.

**Tyler Mason '14** is a program manager for Pi515 in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jack Shipley '14** is a commercial sales representative at Hopkins Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Abby Thomas '14** is an engagement manager at Surgical Directions in Chicago, Illinois.



▲ **Justine Jackovich '13** of North Liberty, Iowa, and Jon Hines married Jan. 2, 2021. Justine is the student conduct manager at Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



▲ **Kevin Sheldon '15** was ordained as a pastor in the Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Laguna Woods, California. He now serves as campus pastor for the Aliso Viejo campus of Lutheran Church of the Cross. Kevin and wife, Sheena, reside in Aliso Viejo, California.

**Molly Ward Ernst '15** is a marketing coordinator at Wesley Life in Johnston, Iowa.

**Annette Dean '15** is a postdoctoral fellow at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

**Nathan Van Zante '15**, eighth grade science teacher at Lewis Central Middle School in Council Bluffs, Iowa, has been named as a recipient of the 2021 Iowa STEM Teacher Award by the Iowa Governor's STEM Advisory Council, sponsored by Kemin Industries. The award is given to six teachers each year who go above and beyond to inspire student interest in and awareness of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

**Richard Williamson '15** was promoted to senior graphic designer at TwoTone Creative in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Alex Bleadorn '16** is a catastrophe claims representative at Farm Bureau Financial

Services in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Ashley Oblander '16** is a prescribed fire technician at The Nature Conservancy in Nebraska in Johnstown, Nebraska.

**Francisco Ruiz '16** is a store director at Target in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Emma Simmons Curtis '17** teaches cultural anthropology at Des Moines Area Community College.

**Hannah Scotton '19** is a first grade teacher at Newton Community School District in Newton, Iowa, and received a 2021 Newton Community Educational Foundation Excellence in Education award.

**Emma Skahill '19** of Knoxville, Iowa, is the director of the Knoxville Chamber of Commerce.



▲ **Hannah Cross '19** of London, England, and Peter Dawson married Dec. 19, 2020.



▲ **Janae Hannemann '19** and **Collin Erickson '19** married Oct. 17, 2020. Janae is an educational talent search student records and event coordinator at Central College. Collin is an accounts receivable specialist at Brownells in Grinnell, Iowa, and a volunteer outside linebackers football coach at Central.

Pictured are, *first row, left to right:* **Bethany Berkenbosch Thompson '05**, **Julie Hunt Hannemann '91**, **Jeff Hannemann '90**, **Tabitha Taylor Jansen '18**, **Anna Kozal '19**, **Collin Erickson '19**, **Janae Hannemann Erickson '19**, **Paige Shanno '19**, **DaLana Kron '21**, **Kendra Miller '18**, **Jessica DeWaard '19**, **Erica Abell Tamerius '19**, **McKenna Fiebelkorn '20** and **Jake Poster '19**. *Second row, left to right:* **Nichole McGrew Baethke '11**, **Jodi Edwards Shanno '93**, **Miguel Piña '19**, **Kylie Gerstein '18**, **Taylor Kooker '19**, **Christian Escobar '20**, **Delanie Donovan '19** and **Alex Tamerius '19**. *Third row, left to right:* **Nick Mulder '07**, **Cody Baethke '10**, **Ryan Thompson '02**, **Shawn Shanno '92**, **Trevor Smith '19**, **Josiah Soderstrum '19**, **Daniel Coovert '19**, **Jordan Fox '18**, **Thomas Fox '19**, **Dylan Tuttle '19**, **Cody Tuttle '19** and **Drew Kithcart '19**.



▲ **Taylor Cox '16** is a resident physician at the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics in the department of internal medicine in Iowa City, Iowa. Taylor and wife, **Michala Brand Cox '18**, reside in West Branch, Iowa, with their son. Michala is finishing her third year of Ph.D. study at the University of Iowa in educational psychology and learning sciences.



## THE '20s

**Adrienne Bergman '20** is the social media and communications coordinator for Polk County Health Department in Des Moines, Iowa.

## ADVANCED DEGREES

**Kimberly Henle '05**, master's in nursing education from Grandview University, Des Moines, Iowa, 2017.

**Taylor Cox '16**, medical degree from University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, May 2020.

**Emma Simmons Curtis '17**, Master of Arts in cultural anthropology from the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen, Scotland.

**Hannah Cross Dawson '19**, Master of Arts from University of Lincoln, Lincoln, England, 2020.

## NEW ARRIVALS

**Andrew and Jenn Steger Ignash '98**, son Isaiah Benjamin, Feb. 9, 2021.

**Lyndsay DeNooy '02**, son Colin Jay, Jan. 18, 2021.

**Michielsen and Becky Linacre Tenckinck '04**, daughter Lucia Joyce, Feb. 18, 2021.

**Bill and Lisa Kelderhouse Carroll '05**, son Ryland Glen, March 4, 2021.

**Kimberly Henle '05**, daughter Josephine Betty, Sept. 9, 2019.

**Jessie and Trenton Blythe '08**, daughter Scarlett Nash, March 4, 2021.

**Joe and Jen Schooley Ries '09**, son Ross Lee, Feb. 22, 2021.

**Lucas and Leanna McBride Showman '09**, daughter Celia Lyn, Sept. 16, 2020.

**Greg and Sara Mouw O'Brien '10**, daughter Natalie Ann, Dec. 16, 2020.

**Lara and Peter Fegley '11**, daughter Nora Sue, Jan. 27, 2021.

**Rishi and Ginnie Norrgard Oad '12**, daughter Sonia Marie, Aug. 31, 2020.

**Derek and Meghan Cain Newton '13**, daughter Cain Marie, Feb. 19, 2021.

**Ryan '13 and Jessica Chaney Verwers '14**, daughter Charlotte Joan, Nov. 2, 2020.

**Jake '14 and Molly Ammerman Mollman '14**, son Bodie Daniel, Dec. 23, 2020.

**Richard and Libby Larson Russell '14**, daughter Harper Lee Ann, Feb. 7, 2020.

**Ryan '15 and Sara Snead Blumer '15**, daughter Tatum Lyn, Jan. 5, 2021.

**Larissa and Ethan Van Kooten '15**, daughter Ivory Dolores, March 1, 2021.

**Zach '16 and Katelyn Fry May '16**, son Maddox May, March 5, 2021.

**Jaime '17 and Emily McDonald Miranda '18**, daughter Ramona Lucia, Nov. 18, 2020.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Edna Boot Van Zee '31**, Ames, Iowa, Jan. 11, 2021.

**Ermina Dunn Dykstra '35**, San Francisco, California, Nov. 3, 2020.

**Leona "Lee" Schilder Zylstra '42**, Pella, Iowa, March 28, 2021.

**Maynard Smith '43**, Windsor, California, Dec. 12, 2020.

**Kenneth Ebberts '44**, Columbus, Wisconsin, Dec. 25, 2020.

**Dries Bosch '48**, Scottsdale, Arizona, March 26, 2021.

**Verla Vander Streek Wehde-Caufield '49**, Crystal Lake, Illinois, March 30, 2021.

**Betty Brands Huitsing '49**, Tucson, Arizona, Jan. 12, 2021.

**Harlan Nyhof '55**, Warwick, New York, Jan. 11, 2021.

**Richard Vander Voet '55**, Mount Vernon, Washington, Feb. 16, 2021.

**Larry Sedrel '59**, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Jan. 25, 2021.

**Elton Sikkink '59**, Wykoff, Minnesota, March 3, 2021.

**Robert "Bob" Johnson '60**, Erie, Pennsylvania, April 24, 2019.

**Don "Butch" Verdoorn '60**, Rochester, Minnesota, Jan. 30, 2021.

**Alvin Huenink '62**, Lincoln, Nebraska, Jan. 10, 2021.

**Elmer Veldhuizen '63**, Oskaloosa, Iowa, Jan. 13, 2021.

**Marnette Requa Ver Hoef '63**, Sioux Center, Iowa, Nov. 3, 2020.

**Anna "Ann" Stamper Smalley '69**, Albany, New York, Jan. 10, 2021.

**Gary Whitman '69**, Marion, Iowa, Jan. 12, 2021.

**Thomas "Tom" Poole '71**, Marshfield, Wisconsin, April 9, 2021.

**Harriet Nikkel Zylstra '72**, Pella, Iowa, March 15, 2021.

**Walter Holm '74**, Berkeley Township, New Jersey, Dec. 22, 2020.

**Rowena Miller Cowles '76**, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Aug. 22, 2020.

**Polita Flemming '76**, Irving, Texas, Nov. 17, 2020.

**Kristin Moorman '77**, Ames, Iowa, Nov. 28, 2020.

**Larry Fish '78**, Red Bluff, California, Jan. 20, 2021.

**Kelly Summy '79**, De Soto, Iowa, Jan. 24, 2021.

**Hughley Prince '80**, Inwood, West Virginia, Jan. 12, 2021.

**Randy Jones '81**, Stillwater, Minnesota, Feb. 7, 2021.

**David Klimes '84**, Watertown, Minnesota, Nov. 14, 2019.

**Julie Plagge Castillo '87**, Brooklyn Park, Minnesota, March 26, 2019.

**Chad Westra '91**, Rock Valley, Iowa, March 6, 2020.

**Marci Tooman '92**, West Des Moines, Iowa, Jan. 1, 2021.

**Todd Mahoney '03**, Madison, Wisconsin, June 11, 2019.

**Jesse Hoefling '14**, Louisville, Colorado, Sept. 15, 2019.

## IN MEMORIAM

**MANFORD "MANNY" BYRD '49**

**Manford "Manny" Byrd '49**, a lifelong educator and distinguished alumnus from Central College, died Jan. 17, 2021, in Chicago, Illinois. He was 93.

A native of Brewton, Alabama, Byrd earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics with an emphasis in education from Central. After graduating, he earned a master's degree in educational psychology from Atlanta University in 1954. Later in life, Byrd also received a Ph.D. in educational administration from Northwestern University in 1978.

Byrd began his career teaching in Quincy, Illinois, from 1949-54. From 1954-67, he worked as a teacher, assistant principal, elementary and high school principal and assistant to the general superintendent of Chicago Public Schools. In 1968, Byrd was appointed deputy superintendent and chief operating officer of Chicago Public Schools. The appointment made him one of the highest-ranking African American public sector leaders in the nation. He then served as general superintendent from 1985 until his retirement in 1990.

Byrd served on the Board of Trustees at Central from 1986-97 and the National Advisory Council from 1997-2001. He was a member of more than 70 professional boards, including the Chicago State University Foundation, Joint Negro Appeal, Mid-America Chapter of the American Red Cross, Chicago NAACP and Board of Trustees of the Adler Planetarium in Chicago.

Byrd also was the recipient of more than 150 awards and commendations for excellence in teaching and academic administration, including an Honorary Doctor of Humanities Degree (1969) and Distinguished Alumni Award (1964) from Central.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Cheribelle; sons Carl, Bradley and Donald; eight grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.



# 'I LOVE THIS COLLEGE'

Even as he was coaching elsewhere, Central College wasn't far from the mind of **Jeff McMartin '90**.

It remained a special place to him and his wife, **Laurie Rieken McMartin '90**, as the couple bounced from place to place along their career path.

It meant stops in North Carolina, Illinois, New York, Wisconsin and Indiana. As they settled into their lives away from Pella and Central, they still felt the need to give back to the place that had given them so much.

"As alums, we both benefitted from this place. It guided us toward careers we are passionate about, and it's connected us to people who really helped us along the way," Jeff McMartin says. "Central has given us a lot, and we feel it's important to give back and be good stewards toward the college."

The couple first gave to Central prior to returning to Pella and the college. McMartin was named the Dutch's head football coach in January 2004.

The McMartins are members of the Central Club, which has supported Central's student-athletes since 1959, and the Cornerstone Society, which honors the tradition of private support through the recognition of cumulative giving.

Laurie works as a design assistant for Jane Smith Design in Pella. She was a three-time varsity letterwinner in track and field. The couple supports both athletics and academics, having given both toward student scholarships and athletics initiatives. Not surprisingly, the McMartins supported the Forever Dutch® initiative, an \$18 million project to renovate and expand Central's athletics facilities.

Fundraising wrapped up in November 2020, and the construction completed in 2021.

"The Forever Dutch program was very important, and we were excited to be part of that," McMartin says. "As coaches, we really appreciate the people who made an impact and supported this initiative."

After leaving Central, McMartin coached football at Wake Forest University (graduate assistant), Illinois Wesleyan University (defensive line), University of Rochester in New York (defensive line), Beloit



**Jeff McMartin '90, (left), along with his daughters, Emily and Caroline '24, and wife Laurie Rieken McMartin '90.**

College in Wisconsin (offensive line/special teams) and DePauw University in Indiana (offensive coordinator).

He has coached at Central since 2004, compiling a 128-42 record in 17 seasons. Under his leadership, the Dutch have won five conference titles and reached the NCAA Division III postseason five times.

Central won its 31st league title and made its 21st playoff appearance in 2019. McMartin certainly has done his part to uphold the tradition of a program that hasn't had a losing season since 1960.

"I've enjoyed the challenge. I love this college. I love the team," McMartin says. "I very much respect and care for the legacy of this program and the guys who played before. I want them to feel proud of the team, the school and the program."

McMartin was part of the football tradition at Central, having played for **Ron Schipper**, the legendary coach and member of the College Football Hall of Fame. Schipper coached the Dutch from 1961-96, compiling a 287-67-3 record. His teams won 18 Iowa Conference championships and the 1974 NCAA Division III national championship.

As a student, McMartin broke his arm in the final two years of his career. Schipper allowed him to become a student assistant coach, helping with scouting and recruiting. Through that, McMartin's desire to coach was born.

"You start to ask yourself, 'Is this something I want to do the rest of my life? Is this something I'm passionate about?' he says. "For me, it was."

McMartin credits Schipper and the coaching staff for connecting him to the right people as he moved up the coaching ranks. He's more than thrilled it led back to

Central, a place that truly supports students and athletics.

"You have to be supported throughout. It's an institutional commitment," McMartin says. "Central has committed to being successful and has done a lot of great things along the way to put itself in the best possible position to help our students — athletically, academically and as people."

McMartin strives to do the same for every player he coaches and sees it in so many areas across campus. He also now has another perspective — his daughter, **Caroline McMartin '24**, just wrapped up her first year as a student at Central.

Caroline is a biology/pre-dental major but has thrown herself into the Central community, serving as a tour guide with the admissions office and competing in track and field and cross country.

"Because of my career, both of our girls (Emily is still in high school) have gone to Central activities and been on campus since they were little. This place is very familiar to them," McMartin says. "With Caroline, as she was able to visit other colleges and compare, she got to a point where she felt this was the best fit and offered her the best opportunities."

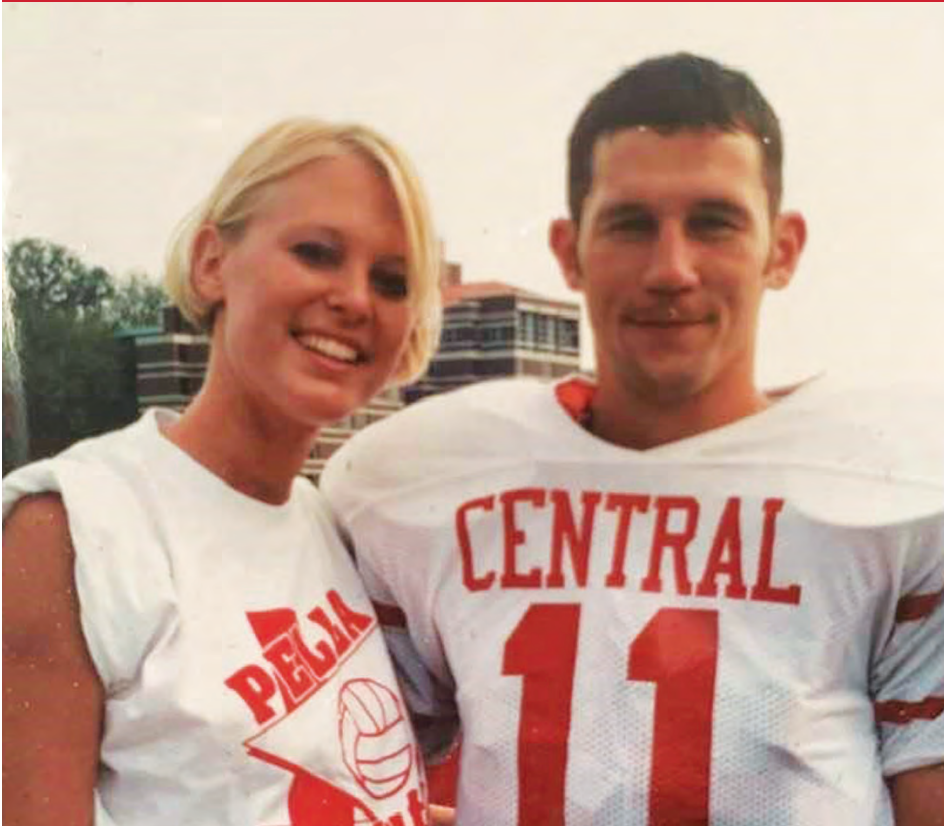
"She's connected with some really good people and has been challenged but also supported. It's been nice to watch Caroline grow academically, athletically and as a person here."

The past, present and future have all come together at Central for the McMartin family. Perhaps it's something Jeff and Laurie envisioned all those years ago when they made their first donation to their alma mater, long before coming back.

"We love this place," McMartin says. "It's had such a special impact on our lives." ■

# THANK YOU FOR BEING FOREVER DUTCH®

STORY BY: **SUNNY GONZALES EIGHMY '99**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADVANCEMENT



**Sunny Gonzales Eighmy '99** and husband **Nathan Eighmy '99** during their time at Central.  
Photo supplied by the Eighmys.

My mom used to tell stories of walks downtown from our family home on Brown Street in Guthrie Center, Iowa.

On occasion, she brought a toddler — me — along on the two-mile journey. Once, a caring townspeople stopped my mother and asked, “How could you make your young child walk so far?” To which she laughed and said, “I don’t make her do anything. In fact, she walks farther than I do because she trots up and down the sidewalks to each front door of all the houses we pass along the way.”

I like that story for a variety of reasons. It makes me think of my mom, **Bonna Evers**

**Gonzales '73**, who passed away in 2013, and my dad, **Scott Gonzales '71**, who I visited on those walks downtown. It reminds me of my love to be active and outside. And the mindset instilled in me to walk my own path, knowing sometimes it’s a greater distance than the paths of others, and to do more than others expect.

I loved my hometown and all the opportunities growing up in a small town afforded me. People genuinely cared about me. Our school was filled with Iowa private college educators (yes, Central teachers!). And participation in everything was encouraged. I was able to play volleyball,

basketball and softball, swim and run track with my very best friends and teammates.

Doesn’t that sound like a Central College student today? The ones who say, “I can’t believe I get to do so many things!” The ones walking through every open door to seize opportunities? The ones who know Central is home and friends become family?

The rich traditions of Central athletics, legendary coaches, national championship triumphs, team perseverance and astounding athletic performances get the juices flowing for all who bleed Central red. If you’ve been on campus, you know instantly you’ll be Forever Dutch®. We love to relive the past, celebrate the present and ensure the success of our future.

And the Forever Dutch initiative — at first a dream of a half a dozen trustees, former athletes and tri-chairs — produced yet another Central victory.

The total team effort by the most donors in college history to any one project (2,712) successfully translated into an \$18 million expansion and renovation of P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium. Construction has reached the finish line and our team win, of course, will be celebrated by the Central community this fall.

I’m so proud to have been a part of this Forever Dutch moment in time in our college’s history, where all members of the Central family helped secure its success. To see a list of our lead donors, our loyal donors, the community and corporate support, and the incredible levels of participation from our alumni around the world to support our student-athletes and coaches, visit [central.edu/FDsupport](http://central.edu/FDsupport). It’s just as emotional as a hard fought, gut wrenching win for the Dutch!

Between us, my husband **Nathan '99** and I wore three Central Dutch uniforms. Athletics connected us to some of our closest friends — friends who competed; grew up and lived together; traveled across the globe to learn; and journeyed across the Midwest to support one another.

Athletics holds a special place in my heart. I’ve been an athlete, coach and fan at Central and loved every role. The stories that inspire me happen both on and off the court.

YOU, my Central friends and family, have accomplished so much. Thank you for supporting our students and their experiences. Thank you for being FOREVER DUTCH. ■





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Summer 2021 Vol. 36 No. 2USPS096-840



# HOMECOMING

**WE HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE!**

**OCT. 1-3, 2021**

Plan to join us for special cluster reunions as we celebrate alumni from class years ending in 0, 1, 5 and 6.

**[central.edu/homecoming](https://central.edu/homecoming)**