

WINTER 2023

# CENTRAL

CENTRAL COLLEGE

CIVITAS

ALUMNI MAGAZINE

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# CALLED TO **SERVE**

STORY BY: **MARK PUTNAM**, CENTRAL COLLEGE PRESIDENT



President **Mark Putnam** checked in with Central students working in Pella on Service Day 2022.

Service has been a hallmark of Central College for generations. The manifestations of this commitment range widely through time but are seen consistently in the volunteer work of our student organizations, athletics teams, campus ministries and service-learning courses. It's an impressive tradition and sufficiently robust to be an attraction to students, faculty and staff as a value inherent in our shared campus life.

One of the most concrete expressions of this value is the new core curriculum recently adopted by our faculty called "Engaged Citizenship." The carefully designed courses that will be required of all students are being developed now and implementation of this curricular program will unfold gradually beginning in Fall 2023.

This is an exciting opportunity for our entire campus community to embrace a fresh articulation of our deepest-held values. As I survey the history of Central, the idea of citizenship has been a longstanding core tenet of our educational philosophy and cultural milieu.

When I listened to the deliberations of the faculty on this new approach, my mind consistently returned to a best-selling book from 1985 entitled "Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life." The lead author, Robert Bellah, along with his colleagues, reviews the benefits and risks associated with our historic sense of individualism. This was first described in detail by the French political philosopher and historian Alexis de Tocqueville in his seminal work, "Democracy in America," which was published in two volumes in 1835 and 1840.

"Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life" argues through analysis and descriptive vignettes the need for our inheritance of individualism to be tempered by and blended with a wider sense of community by creating an overarching "social ecology."

The authors write:

"The American dream is often a very private dream of being the star, the uniquely successful and admirable one, the one who stands out from the crowd of ordinary folk who don't know how. And since we have believed in that dream for a long time and worked very hard to make it come true, it is hard for us to give it up, even though it contradicts another dream that we have — that of living in a society that would really be worth living in."

This duality of purpose is important for us to consider carefully. The authors also note:

"What we find hard to see is that it is the extreme fragmentation of the modern world that really threatens our individuation; that what is best in our separation and individuation, our sense of dignity and autonomy as persons, requires a new integration if it is to be sustained."

Nearly 40 years later, developing our own sense of citizenship — our habits of the heart — remains a compelling mandate. On campus and around the world, the reach of the Central community extends to declare that we are citizens who seek to become the absolute best we can be to, in turn, serve society and the greater public good.

The future depends on it. ■

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WINTER 2023

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### "REMEMBERING CENTRAL PRESIDENT EMERITUS KENNETH WELLER"

"Thanks for sharing this deeply personal reflection on President Weller and his legacy (Civitas, Summer 2022). As a newly minted African American freshman from Georgia, my arrival at Central in September 1970 was not without anxiety and questions about my selection of Central as my college home. However, one of my first encounters with campus leaders was with President Weller at his home as he welcomed new students. He was warm, curious about my experiences prior to arriving at Central and seemed genuine about my prospects for success. I recalled expressing some reluctance to him about finding my place so far away from my home. I will always remember his comments to me. He said, 'You are here to learn. We can learn from you, and I know you'll learn from us as well.' That encounter stuck with me throughout my four years at Central and well into my academic experiences over the course of my career. I did get a chance to thank President Weller in person several years ago when I returned to campus for one of my class reunions. I am happy that I took up President Weller's challenge 'to learn and to teach.' President Weller's legacy lives on ..."

— **Randy Gunter '74**  
Statesboro, Georgia

## 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 **Brittany Carlson Prokupek '16**, Civitas assistant editor, at [carlsonb@central.edu](mailto:carlsonb@central.edu).



## REFER A STUDENT!

You're the college's best ambassador. As a friend of the college, you're in a position to make a transformative difference in the lives of deserving students by connecting them with Central. We make it easy — just scan the QR code above and fill out the form online. You can refer up to two students at a time. And come back often — there's no limit to the number of students you can refer. We'll send you some Central gear as a thank you — first when you refer a student and a second time if a student you refer enrolls.

We welcome nominations of students at any point during high school. The earlier you refer them, the more consideration they can give to Central!

# SAVE THE DATE!

# LEGACY VISIT DAY

## APRIL 28, 2023

Central College alums and your high school students in grades 9-12 may join us for our Legacy Visit Day!

### MAKE PLANS TO:

- + Eat in Central Market – our treat! (Seriously, lunch is on us!)
- + Stay the night in Pella and snag some Dutch pastries for the road.
- + Meet up with friends from your college days as you introduce your children to future lifelong friends.

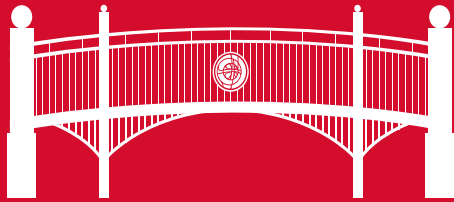
# SAVE THE DATE!

# THE **53** MILE CHALLENGE RETURNS

## MARCH 1 – APRIL 11, 2023

Run, walk, bike and move 53 miles leading up to Hoo-Rah Day.  
Stay tuned for more information!

# AROUND THE POND



## ▲ ENGINEERING PROGRAM EARNS ABET ACCREDITATION

Central's engineering program has received accreditation by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.

The ABET accreditation means that Central's program meets global standards in engineering education. It is a stamp of approval that makes the degree trustworthy. Many government and industry jobs in engineering seek employees with degrees from ABET-accredited programs. This accreditation will benefit Central students in job placements. Central has graduated 28 students in engineering, including its first two female engineers in 2022.



## ▲ TWO FULBRIGHT GRANTEES

**Olivia Svoboda '22** received a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant grant award to teach English in Spain for the 2022-23 academic year. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program of the United States. Central also welcomed **Zaira Doñoro Gallardo**, a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant in Spanish, to campus for the 2022-23 academic year to work with Spanish languages and students.



## ▲ NASA ASTRONAUT RAJA CHARI LANDS AT CENTRAL

**Holly Schaffter Chari '99** and husband, Raja Chari, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut and commander of the NASA SpaceX Crew-3 mission, spent the day on Central's campus meeting with students and sharing a program for the public. Download the Central Dutch Connect app to view an archived copy of the presentation explaining this amazing program.





### ▲ FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR KLEVEN RECEIVES EXTENSION

**Terence Kleven**, Dr. Jacob and Gela Schnucker Sessler Endowed Chair of Philosophy and Religion and professor of religious studies, was granted an extension of the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program award he received to conduct research in Arabic political philosophy at the University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan.

Kleven has received more than two dozen international, national and regional awards, fellowships and grants. He has received two Fulbright awards.

### NEW BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN CHEMISTRY AND BIOCHEMISTRY

Central began offering a new Bachelor of Science in biochemistry and a Bachelor of Science in chemistry for the Fall 2022 semester. The B.S. curriculum is certified by the American Chemical Society. The B.S. degree, which includes a substantive research or internship component, supports students looking for rigorous study of biochemistry and chemistry in preparation for a career in industry or who are looking to enter graduate school.

### STRENGTH AND CONDITIONING MAJOR EARNS FIRST IN STATE ACCREDITATION

A newly launched strength and conditioning major focuses on changes in the health and wellness industry.

“The strength and conditioning major is important for Central students. We are really good at getting students ready to coach at the collegiate level,” says **Dave Pavlat**, associate professor of kinesiology.

Pavlat worked with department members to secure accreditation from the Council on Accreditation of Strength and Conditioning Programs. Central became the first college in Iowa — and one of just four in the nation — to earn this accreditation.



**Jen Diers**, director of Central's education program, front left, and the 2022 Geisler Penquite scholars from Central's class of 2024, front row from left: **Kate Hoogensen**, **Lindsey Davidson**, **Savannah Neil**, **Shanna Hudson** and **Sophia Egli**. Back row, from left: **Nolan Brand**, **Blake Recker**, **Kole Tupa**, **Taryn Hintz** and **Addison Six**.

### ▲ GEISLER PENQUITE SCHOLARS ANNOUNCED

Central College's education program announced its 2022 Geisler Penquite Scholars.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| + <b>Nolan Brand</b> of Mount Vernon, Iowa | + <b>Lindsey Davidson</b> of Northwood, Iowa |
| + <b>Sophia Egli</b> of St. Charles, Iowa  | + <b>Taryn Hintz</b> of Primghar, Iowa       |
| + <b>Kate Hoogensen</b> of Ankeny, Iowa    | + <b>Shanna Hudson</b> of Morrison, Illinois |
| + <b>Savannah Neil</b> of Pella, Iowa      | + <b>Blake Recker</b> of Pella, Iowa         |
| + <b>Addison Six</b> of Washington, Iowa   | + <b>Kole Tupa</b> of Center Point, Iowa     |

Each of this year's 10 scholars are from the Class of 2024. They join 13 previously awarded Geisler Penquite Scholars currently at Central.

### BUILDING CENTRAL'S CULTURE OF INCLUSION

Welcome Week 2022 featured new programs to nurture and build upon Central's culture of caring for others, engaged citizenship and inclusion. It introduced students to campus services, resources, academic advising, fun and socializing opportunities along with the Step into Central gathering and the special ceremony Turning Over the Class with **Mark Putnam**, Central president, and **Quinn Deahl '23**, 2022-23 student body president.

The Student Leader Fall Training focused on the campus-wide theme Engaged Citizenship and the importance of diversity, equity and inclusion. It highlighted the need to acknowledge biases and to be culturally competent and have trauma-informed care.

Guest speakers included:

- + **Romonda D. Belcher**, a District Associate Judge and the first African American female judge in the State of Iowa in 2010.
- + **Peggy Fitch**, Central's Title IX coordinator, equity officer and professor emeritus of psychology, who presented “Title IX: It's on All of Us.”

Campus was invited to the film screening of “Race to be Human,” a documentary that explores ways to teach about racism. Students were invited to a BIPOC+ (Black, Indigenous, people of color and white allies) Meet and Greet to foster respect and inclusion on campus.

Breakout sessions by classes were planned. First-year students participated in a Mentors in Violence Prevention workshop, which empowered students to take an active role as a bystander by intervening in situations that include bullying, harassment and sexual assault.

Second-year students met with Breanne Ward, a licensed mental health counselor and a certified rehabilitation counselor, who continued a discussion from last year about Mentors in Violence Prevention.

Third-year students joined Kimberly Fitten, founder of ReSet Consulting LLC, for a discussion about the Junior Journey. She focused on creating and taking ownership of the culture they want and the leader they want to be.



### ▲ NEW BUSINESS ANALYTICS AND BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAM

The business management program will expand its offerings with business analytics and teacher education options as it prepares students for high-demand jobs of the future.

**Maggie Fisher Schlerman '02**, associate professor of accounting, explains that business analytics prepares students to analyze large and complex data sets and, most importantly, to use written, oral and visual communication skills to clearly communicate results. Courses enhance student exposure to complex data sets and the technological tools available to process them into usable information that will help make informed, data-driven decisions to improve businesses. Students will learn both applied business and computer science to assist management in using data to improve bottom line. The secondary education track of the business management major is intended for students who wish to teach business courses at the high-school level.

### 2022 TOP SCHOLARS ANNOUNCED

Central announced the 2022-23 recipients of full-tuition Kuyper Scholarships, Rolscreen Foundation Scholarships and the Thomas Ross Smith Scholarship, the most prestigious awards granted at the college.

Top scholars are selected from students who participate in Central's Scholar Days held throughout the academic year. The selection process includes a thorough review of the students' transcripts, academic rigor and their involvement in the community and school as well as their Scholar Day visit. Full-tuition recipients this year averaged a 3.99 GPA.

The following incoming Fall 2022 students received full tuition.

- + **Grace Benson '26**, Newton, Iowa, recipient of the H.S. Kuyper Scholarship
- + **Madison Craig '26**, Solon, Iowa, recipient of the Thomas Ross Smith Scholarship
- + **Katelyn Freeman '26**, Castle Rock, Colorado, recipient of the P.H. Kuyper Scholarship
- + **Sophia Fritz '26**, Brighton, Iowa, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Alex Gast '26**, Council Bluffs, Iowa, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Ashli Harn '26**, Waverly, Iowa, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Emmy Holthe '26**, Muscatine, Iowa, recipient of the Pella Rolscreen Scholarship
- + **Katherine Morrison '26**, Waukee, Iowa, recipient of the Joan Farver Scholarship

In addition to these top scholarships, Central offers many other scholarships to students each year. Beginning in Fall 2022, every new incoming student received a Journey Scholarship. All scholarships were made possible by the generosity of donors.



### ▲ NEW DATA SCIENCE TRACK ADDED

Central added two new data science areas of emphasis beginning Fall 2022 — one with a focus in mathematics and the other in computer science. The new interdisciplinary data science tracks at Central teach students skills in programming, modeling, machine learning, data visualization and statistics as well as how to assess the ways data can be used to solve novel problems.

"Big data collection and interpretation infiltrates every industry," says **Wendy Weber**, professor of mathematics. "Our students will learn a variety of statistical and data tools, such as Python, R and advanced spreadsheet skills, applied statistics, data visualization and machine learning, to name a few."

Left to right: Mary Donato, Mary Ross, Lance Dyzak, Erin Durlfänger, Sean Stephenson, Taylor Welden and Brad Lampe.



### ◀ NEW FACULTY WELCOMED

Seven new faculty members joined the Central community.

- + **Mary Donato** — lecturer of communication studies
- + **Erin Durlfänger** — lecturer of education
- + **Lance Dyzak** — lecturer of English
- + **Brad Lampe** — lecturer of music
- + **Mary Ross** — lecturer of chemistry
- + **Sean Stephenson** — assistant professor of music
- + **Taylor Welden** — lecturer of education

In addition, two assistant professors have earned tenure and promotion to associate professor: **Tim Olin** — history and **Sarah Van Waardhuizen** — music. One professor has earned tenure: **Ian Moschenross** — music. One associate professor was promoted to professor: **Mat Kelly** — art.



## GRANT AWARDS ELEVATE PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Education announced Central will receive two Upward Bound grants totaling \$992,155. The grants will help income-eligible students, who would be the first members of their families to earn degrees, prepare for and enroll in college.

Central also was awarded a \$35,000 grant from the U.S. Department of State's Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students Program. Central is the only college in Iowa to receive the IDEAS grant to create, expand and/or diversify American student mobility overseas in support of U.S. foreign policy goals.



## ◀ REV. CHARLES MORRIS NAMED TRUSTEE EMERITUS

**Rev. Charles Morris '70**, retired Reformed Church in America minister, has been granted trustee emeritus status after serving the Central Board of Trustees with distinction across various leadership roles since 1999. In 2004, he was appointed to the finance committee and the executive committee. Over his years on the board, Morris also served as vice chair of the board, chair of the admissions committee, on the committee on trusteeship, the finance and executive committees, and on the board chair nominating committee.

"Charlie is a thoughtful listener, asks good questions, is a champion of inclusivity and always supports the mission of Central College," says **Mark Putnam**, Central's president. "We are so grateful for his many years of trustee leadership."

## RESEARCH PUBLISHED

**Sara Shuger Fox**, associate professor of kinesiology, worked with a team including **Andrea Arthofer '17**, M.D., to research and publish an article in the International Journal of MS Care. "Facilitators of and Barriers to Adherence to Dietary Interventions Perceived by Women with Multiple Sclerosis and Their Support Persons" identifies five themes for MS care as well as drivers and barriers to following diet recommendations. This research will support methods to enhance motivation and positive support systems for women with MS. It supports the goal to improve diet adherence and overall well-being.



Central College Bosch Undergraduate Research Fellows, from left: **Summer Sterrenberg '24**, **Rachel Daniels '23**, **Gabriella Petruzzello '24** and **Layken Bytnar '24**. Not pictured: **Bradon Annegers '23** and **Alora Nowlin '23**.

## ▲ UNDERGRADUATE SUMMER RESEARCH

The Arthur J. Bosch Endowment provided six Central students the opportunity to undertake summer research projects as Bosch Undergraduate Summer Research Fellows.

+ **Bradon Annegers '23**, a biology major and chemistry minor, researched the source of white-nose syndrome in bats and how the population has decreased across the state of Iowa because of this disease.

+ **Layken Bytnar '24**, a biology major, conducted a survey of native bees in Big Rock Park, Pella. The findings will allow researchers to expand their understanding of the species of bees found there.

+ **Rachel Daniels '23**, an exercise science major, delved into Blue Zone research in Costa Rica, specifically in the region of San Vito. She compared health markers in this region with those identified in prior research in the Nicoya region.

+ **Alora Nowlin '23**, an international and global studies major (with additional majors in French and Spanish), began her honors research into the sense of identity among French Catalonians. Her work included conducting a literature review, personal interviews and content analysis.

+ **Gabriella Petruzzello '24**, a psychology and French double-major and sociology minor, conducted research in social psychology exploring the moral framing among liberals and conservatives on sociopolitical issues.

+ **Summer Sterrenberg '24**, a chemistry major continued research on indirubin, specifically exploring how indirubin interacts with phosphate and other anions.





### ▲ SERVICE DAY 2022

Central College held its annual Service Day on Tuesday, Oct. 4. Service Day demonstrates Central's commitment to empowering its students, staff and faculty to be engaged in their communities. It integrates learning through service and provides opportunities for the entire campus to connect, support and invest in their local, national and international communities. The alternative education day gave faculty the opportunity to turn the class experience into a service project. More than 700 students, faculty and staff participated in 45 service projects around Central Iowa.



### ▲ LAMPHIER PROMOTED

Central promoted **Denise Lamphier** to the role of executive director of communications and marketing. In her role, Lamphier will continue to oversee marketing, communications and media relations for Central. She has led the department and college through a branding update, the tuition pricing strategy roll out, marketing strategy plan for a dynamic and nimble enrollment environment and communication for fundraising to complete the Forever Dutch® campaign. Since joining the college in 2017, her role has expanded with the addition of internal communications, health/COVID-19/crisis communications and livestreaming, to name a few of many changes and additions.



### ▲ COMMUNICATIONS RECOGNIZED FOR ADMISSIONS INITIATIVE

Central received silver recognition in the Council for Advancement and Support of Education's annual Circle of Excellence awards. The national higher education group recognized Central for its work on student recruitment publications.

Central designed a suite of viewbooks to educate prospective students and their families on various aspects of the Central experience. The viewbooks are sent to specific audiences on a cyclical annual basis. Viewbook categories included athletics, family, financial aid, leadership and transfer.

The judges wrote, "Good effort went into creating multiple, targeted publications for prospects. Financial aid piece contains rich, actionable content that will surely connect with budget-minded students."



# DUBIT

# DID A LOT

Sometimes “doing a little bit” turns into a lifetime of doing a lot.

STORY BY:  
LARRY HAPPEL '81

The back door to Max Vander Pol's two-story brick home on Pella's Idaho Drive is still unlocked.

The house isn't part of Central's campus. Vander Pol isn't a Central staff member or even a grad. In fact, in 1958, nine months after enrolling, he was asked to leave.

But to a generation of Central football players and wrestlers, Max and his late wife Judy were friends and sometimes even surrogate parents. And to countless other Central grads from the 1960s-80s, the two establishments they operated, Dubit's Steak House and, later, the near-iconic Cleats and Spikes, were as much a part of their Central existence as reading their mail each morning while perched on the steps to the snack bar in the old student union.

Vander Pol — call him Dubit, everyone else does — is a passionate Central fan. For 50 years, nothing kept Max and Judy from a Central football game, home or away. Declining health finally did. He got to know Central students because he employed so many of them. By 1969, he claimed to know every player on the football team. But he wasn't some deep-pocketed booster. He connected with the athletes because he cared about them. Vander Pol was there for any Central student who needed a hamburger or a place to spend the night — or even a month.

“My house is always open to everybody,” Vander Pol says. “I haven't locked that door in 55 years. I always say if I don't know you, knock on the front door and if you do know me, come in the back.”

**Tom Hall '61** of Des Moines met Vander Pol as a freshman. Close friends ever since, each stood up in the other's wedding.

“Kids just felt at home there and Dubit and Judy just treated them like their own kids,” Hall says. “They were always welcome there and they knew they were going to be safe.”

He was tagged “Dubit” as a toddler in Pella when he tried helping a neighbor mowing grass by “doing a little bit”: picking up sticks that might get caught in the mower. But it was a little bit of youthful stubbornness that ended his own Central career after his freshman year.

## A WAR OF WILLS

“We had chapel we had to go to back then,” he explains. “And I refused to go to chapel because I didn't like being told to do something.”

College leaders had a different opinion.

“I was asked by the dean of men to find a new school,” Vander Pol says.

So, he transferred to what was then Northwest Missouri State College, graduating in 1961 with a business degree. But his heart was still at Central. He worked as a cost accountant for an electronics company in Columbus, Nebraska, before happily returning to Pella in 1965, when Judy convinced him to buy a small steakhouse on Oskaloosa Street, a few blocks from campus.

He changed the name to Dubit's Steak House. Business was great, as was the food. The ambience, not so much.

“There were maybe four or five small booths in there, that's about it,” says former Dutch Athletics Director **Al Dorenkamp '75** of Polk City, Iowa.

But it quickly developed a reputation for made-from-scratch pizza and grinders, an Italian sausage and cheese sandwich Vander Pol first encountered in Des Moines when visiting Hall.

“Dubit's was famous for their pizza, which I still think is one of the greatest pizzas I've ever had,” says **Jason Vines '82**, now living in Mesa, Arizona.

Vander Pol had a special recipe for the spicy grinders as well.

“**Bob Gray '69** said if it took two 7-Ups to eat one, it was just the right amount of heat,” Vander Pol says.

“I think a lot of people went there just because of Dubit,” Hall says. “He was like a young Babe Bisignano (longtime Des Moines restaurateur). People went there and he was always talking to everybody. You went there hoping you could talk to him. He was interested in everybody. He knew their family, he knew their kids.”

Carry-out and delivery business were brisk, especially with Central students on Sunday nights when dining hall options were sparse, but, unfortunately, also with those who viewed the delivery vehicles as open buffets. They waited for drivers to enter dorms with a delivery, then swiped pizzas and grinders from the back.

Dorenkamp, then a muscular linebacker for the Dutch with an intimidating presence, was summoned.



**Cleats and Spikes, an athletics-themed restaurant and disco bar west of campus, was operated by Max and Judy Vander Pol from 1978-91 and was a popular hangout for Central students.**

## END OF AN ERA

A Central era ended with Cleats and Spikes' closing in 1991. Judy took a job with a local printer while Max became a card dealer at a casino in Tama, Iowa. But their support was never forgotten. Judy died in 2016 and, in her final days, she was showered with cards from former Dutch wrestlers scattered across the country, many of whom attended her funeral.

Former employees speak fondly of Max as well.

"He was a teddy bear," Vines says. "But a teddy bear who knew how to run a restaurant."

Vander Pol's health keeps him home alone most of the time now. The Volksweg bicycle trail crosses his front yard, but Vander Pol prefers sitting at his kitchen table and gazing out his back window at the pond and thousands of pines once destined to be Christmas trees. It's one of his favorite patches of land on the planet, second only to the 120 yards of green turf at the center of Ron and Joyce Schipper Stadium.

He's no longer able to attend the games, yet the Central connections endure. Descoteau lives just down the road and other longtime friends often visit, like Hall and former basketball scoring record-setter **John Carle '60** of Des Moines.

"I've known John since I was in junior high," Vander Pol says. "He used to ride a bicycle all the way from Knoxville to see me."

He talks by phone with so many others, such as **Brian O'Donnell '69** of Madison, Wisconsin, and **Vern Den Herder '71** of Sioux Center, Iowa.

And one sunny morning last June, **Alex Glann '69** of Runnells, Iowa, rounded up more than a dozen grads, showing up at Vander Pol's back door to salute the boss who became their friend.

"Dubit is so unassuming," Hall says. "But that meant quite a lot to him. It was quite an honor."

Vander Pol's daughter, Terry, even fixed grinders. After decades of preparing them, Vander Pol claims he can't even stand looking at them, although he did notice that Glann ate three.

"You smell 20 pounds of sausage cooking, it just permeates the room," Vander Pol says with a wince.

Yet to Vander Pol, the familiar aroma also provides a whiff packed with Central memories. Memories that bind him forever with the school he was long ago asked to leave, but whose students and graduates he'll always love. ■

"Max wants to talk to you," he was told.

Vander Pol figured with Dorenkamp as a delivery driver, his food was secure. He offered 30 cents a delivery, with as many as 100 deliveries in one night.

"I did the math and I made 30-35 bucks on just a Sunday night," Dorenkamp says, in an era when minimum wage was \$2 an hour. "The first few times, I saw somebody kind of peeking out from behind the trees. And I just said, 'Hey, I wouldn't even try it. You don't want to get hurt.' After a couple of Sunday nights, I never had anyone try to steal pizzas from me."

Vander Pol also partnered with former Central All-American running back **Dennis Descoteau '68** in starting a Christmas tree farm on land south of Vander Pol's home. Over 25 years they grew 35,000 trees. It was a labor-intensive business that broadened Vander Pol's Central network even further.

"We had 20 kids a year planting trees for us," he says.

Current football coach **Jeff McMartin '90** was among the students hired.

"I enjoyed working there," he says. "You knew he loved Central and athletics and he talked to us about that a lot. He was a really good person to work for. He treated his employees really well."

## THE BUSINESS OF SUCCESS

In 1978, former Central offensive lineman **Doug Clapp '73**, now living in Montgomery, Alabama, convinced the Vander Pols to open Cleats and Spikes with an athletics-themed restaurant upstairs — grinders remained on the menu — and a disco bar downstairs. Max stayed in the kitchen and cooked while Judy managed the downstairs.

Cleats, as it was known, quickly morphed into Central students' top off-campus gathering

place. For many 1980s grads, the Central stories they now retell typically begin with the same five words: "We were at Cleats and ..."

Vines worked there as a DJ and said it was the go-to spot even for students who consumed nothing stronger than orange juice.

"There was no peer pressure, it was just a place to have fun," he says. "When I was there, it was near the end of the disco era, and it was a disco place. There was even a disco ball hanging from the ceiling. That dance floor was always full."

Cleats even got the green light for football players from teetotaling Coach **Ron Schipper**, who knew Vander Pol would keep an eye on them.

"I said, Coach, if I see them drinking, I'll tell them no," Vander Pol says. "He respected that. He let them come out there, so they'd have a place to go. And my wife hired all the wrestlers to bartend for her, so we'd never have any trouble with fights or anything. She didn't have one fight out there."

It was a rendezvous spot for returning alumni, with crowds so thick on Homecoming weekend that it was easier to get to the back room by going outside and entering through the back door than trying to wriggle through the mob inside.

The wrestlers working there had one request.

"They told Judy if we're going to work for you, we think you should go to wrestling matches," Vander Pol says. "She'd never seen a wrestling match in her life. She started going and she ended up going to three national tournaments. She even went out to one in upstate New York."





Several of Max “Dubit” Vander Pol’s friends and some former Central student employees at Dubit’s Steak House in the 1960s-70s dropped in to his Pella home in June. Seated, *left to right: John Carle ’60, John Danks ’69, Steve Paris ’73, Tom Hall ’61, Herb Blom ’61, Max Vander Pol and Cliff Marlow ’75.* Standing: *John Goode ’79, Steve Bancroft ’70, Alex Glann ’69, Del Miller ’72, Al Dorenkamp ’75 and Al Paris ’77.*



Lifetime Central fan Max Vander Pol, *left*, at the kitchen table of his Pella home during a visit with **Dave Sutphen ’61**. They were classmates as freshmen at Central 1957-58.



## WOMEN’S WRESTLING TAKES THE MAT

Further enhancing its reputation of leadership in providing athletics opportunities for women, Central College is adding women’s wrestling as its 21st intercollegiate sport.

**Eric Van Kley**, director of athletics and head men’s wrestling coach, named former Women’s Collegiate Wrestling Association and NAIA national champion **Paige Baynes** as head women’s wrestling coach, launching the program with a limited schedule in 2023-24.

The late **Kenneth J. Weller**, Central’s president from 1969-90, was instrumental in helping integrate women’s championships into the NCAA in 1981. Central won the first NCAA women’s championship ever staged: the 1981 Division III women’s cross-country championship. Ten of Central’s 11 national championships are from women’s sports. As the nation observes the 50th anniversary of the enactment of Title IX, which prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity receiving federal assistance, wrestling becomes Central’s 11th women’s sport.

“The time is right,” says Van Kley, who also is the former chair of the NCAA Division III Wrestling Committee as well as past president of the National Wrestling Coaches Association. “Interest in girls high school wrestling is exploding, and we’re certainly seeing that in Iowa.

“We want to be at the forefront in helping provide more opportunities for our student-athletes to compete, but we also want to make sure we’re fully prepared to provide them the kind of meaningful experience they deserve. With the vision President **Mark Putnam** has for the program, the commitment the college is making and an energetic head coach like Paige Baynes in place, we’re excited to move forward.”



# Growing Up The Central Way

**Beatriz Mate-Kodjo '11** advises employees and students to act as positive change agents by calling attention to workplace and education disparities without litigation.

STORY BY:  
**JEANETTE BUDDING**

PHOTOS BY:  
**PAUL JOY**





“The nature of being a civil rights attorney is very much, in its natural state, pro bono work,” says **Beatriz Mate-Kodjo ’11**, civil rights attorney at BMK Law in Pella, Iowa. “There’s no guarantee of payment. I don’t charge clients by the hour. I can work on a case for years and not see a dime. But the risk reward is that, in many cases, you’re able to achieve some sort of settlement or resolution either before filing a lawsuit or some time thereafter.”

Mate-Kodjo primarily practices in education and employment discrimination. She transitioned from earning her undergraduate degree in international studies with emphasis on African studies at Central College to law school at Drake University. In her third year of law school, she dual-enrolled in Drake’s College of Business and Public Administration — which meant her first year of practicing law was in tandem with finishing her M.B.A.

“I’ve been a civil rights attorney my entire legal career,” Mate-Kodjo says. “I started clerking at my first civil rights law firm while I was in law school. I got a lot of firsthand, on-the-job experience as a law student, and I probably worked more than I studied during law school!”

Part of her role is to identify the laws, system policies and practices — whether it’s employment practices or the practices of an educational institution — that lead to legal conflict.

## THE NEED TO BE HEARD

People want to be heard and to take agency in their own lives. When a situation arises that may not have the outcome a person expects, civil rights attorneys work to achieve personal resolution.

“The first thing I do is when someone calls me, or I meet with someone, is listen,” Mate-Kodjo says. “I want them to feel seen and heard. I want to validate the experiences for those I believe have meritorious claims. I spend a lot of time getting to know my clients and building trust with them. I encourage them to take care of the emotional trauma that results from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and assault.”

Mate-Kodjo’s practice serves to alleviate concerns for those who have experienced gaslighting and feel unseen. Friends, family or employers may not see how their circumstances are shrouded by discrimination. They are often unable to see the situation as clearly as Mate-Kodjo sees it from the outside.

She bridges the communication gap between a client’s experience while recognizing that the employer or the school doesn’t perceive the facts or the decisions the way the client has perceived them.

“Sometimes it’s a matter of saying, ‘Let’s file your lawsuit. Let’s get your story out there. Let’s file a detailed petition that lays out for the public to see what this employer or school did to you.’ People are willing to fight until the end, knowing that they may lose — and sometimes that’s what we do. It’s just for the principle of it,” Mate-Kodjo says.

She initially contacts the institutions or organizations to address holes in their policies and procedures — or how those policies and procedures were applied to her clients — from an advocacy reference point.

“I can look back at schools or employers I’ve sued before — some who are repeat offenders — and I can identify what’s improved since I last investigated them,” Mate-Kodjo says.

She represented sexual assault survivors who reported to their schools, colleges and universities and felt they were retaliated against.

“I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of people who have suffered discrimination or sexual harassment at work,” Mate-Kodjo laments. “I identify very strongly with people who fight systems. I have always understood and recognized that this country has a long way to go — even the State of Iowa, despite our many civil rights accomplishments. Historically, Iowa has made a lot of progress, but it has a long way to go in terms of ensuring equitable and fair access to the justice system.”

When it comes to pursuing justice, her passion keeps her energized.

“I don’t think I’ll ever run out of energy to fight those battles. We all play a role in advancing the common good in our personal lives within our communities, within our states, within our country and in the world,” Mate-Kodjo says. “I think in the perfect world, I’d be out of business! Wouldn’t that be great?”

## IT’S ABOUT PEOPLE

Mate-Kodjo gives defense attorneys credit: “While it’s their job to defend their clients, they’re also empowering them with new information and better advice. They can advise on ‘Here’s how to do better and avoid Beatriz next time,’” she says, smiling.

Mentally processing and anticipating cases can be beneficial in saving time, resources

energy and allowing people to achieve some kind of personal resolution with a situation that may not have ended the way they thought it would. It gives Mate-Kodjo’s clients the opportunity to move on with life as opposed to dwelling in the negativity — and sometimes trauma — they’re dealing with.

Many of the defense attorneys Mate-Kodjo faces get paid by the hour to defend cases in court or arbitration. Civil rights attorneys like Mate-Kodjo are incentivized differently because of the nature of the work.

“I joke with defense attorneys,” she says. “There’s nothing wrong with the way they do it. Everyone — regardless of who you are, what you’ve done or what has been done to you — should have a good lawyer and good representation. The risk reward is worth it.”

## IT ALL BEGAN AT CENTRAL

As a child of immigrants living in a small town in Iowa, Mate-Kodjo loves to say she’s a small-town Iowa girl. Her father, **Samuel Mate-Kodjo**, professor of Spanish at Central since 1995, gets a lot of credit for his daughter’s decision to become a lawyer.

During her childhood, the family would get together with the language department professors and other faculty members. That was such a formative part of Mate-Kodjo’s life — wanting to see the world and to meet people from other places and cultures.

“I grew up around people from different countries. I was always around the language assistants from different countries, hearing the languages, being exposed to people from different places, even though we’re here, nestled away in Marion County,” Mate-Kodjo reflects.

When it came time to head to college, she wanted to get away from Pella and Central. She went to the University of Iowa for three years. But after leaving an abusive relationship and dropping out of college, Mate-Kodjo returned to Pella as a pregnant college dropout.

“I had decided to have the baby by myself and move home. My dad took me to the registrar’s office, and I was enrolled at Central as a nontraditional, transfer student,” Mate-Kodjo says.

She took classes with her dad; his modern feminist literature courses were impactful for her.

“My time at Central and in his classes were part of the healing process,” Mate-Kodjo says. “Reading about the nonlinear trajectories of other women’s lives was healing.”



**Beatriz Mate-Kodjo '11**, right, takes a playful break from work with her father, **Samuel Mate-Kodjo**, associate professor of Spanish, in the Weller Center for International Studies on Central's campus.

She graduated with degrees in Spanish and international studies with emphasis in African Studies. She spent much of her time in the Weller Center for Business and International Studies.

"Central was a mediating place — the petri dish for us to reconcile where we were," Mate-Kodjo reflects. "I don't think I've given

my father enough credit for the healing that took place while I was at Central. Spending time in his classes and with his colleagues, learning from them, and sitting with him in the Weller Center in his office, planning my future was important. It was in the Weller Center where I manifested into the person I am today."

Mate-Kodjo had no plans to be a lawyer. In fact, she didn't know who she wanted to be or what she wanted to do.

"I was just trying to get done with school and transition into being a mom and a working professional," she admits. "I spent a lot of time in my dad's office. One day I was in his office contemplating life and asking, 'What am I going to do?'"

"He said, 'You should go to law school.'"

"Like most things my dad has advised me to do over the years, my initial reaction was no," Mate-Kodjo laughs. "But then I did start looking at the Drake Law School website and doing my applications. I studied for the LSAT at Weller, which came full circle because three years later when I was studying for the bar exam, it was me and the Weller Center in the summer. I was in a dark little room with my bar prep materials; the Weller Center is very much part of my experience at Central."

Mate-Kodjo came to Central at a time when she felt lost.

"I'd lost my sense of self and drive," she says. "I had a nontraditional experience, but I made lifelong friends. I met some of my best friends here."

"My Central experience built the foundation for who I am today. I honestly think it was an important time for rebuilding my connections with my family — the familial relationships that I had neglected while I was struggling at the University of Iowa, unbeknownst to them."

Mate-Kodjo attributes much of her personal growth during that time to Central's modern languages department. "Taking language courses — Spanish, for my major, and also German — and being in that department with the professors, language assistants and studying culture, countries, people and the humanities — was a healing process for me," she reflects. "I was getting back to the things that I am passionate about."

Now that Mate-Kodjo has become the lawyer she manifested in the Weller Center 12 years ago, she plans to reinvest in Central by serving on the National Advisory Council and encouraging students to embody the Central way, so they also can channel their passions and achieve their personal and professional goals. ■



**Beatriz Mate-Kodjo '11** celebrated graduation from Central, with her daughter, Aurelia, in May 2011.





# FOR THE KIDS

Central College sparked a dream to help vulnerable children — a spark that caught and is spreading like wildfire across the region.



**Jen Diers**, director of the education program at Central College, and **Kinsley Parrott '21**, founder and president of Packs for a Purpose, Inc., proudly present one of the nonprofit's packs.

STORY BY:  
**BRITTANY CARLSON PROKUPEK '16**

PHOTOS BY:  
**PAUL JOY AND KINSLEY PARROTT '21**



**Kinsley Parrott '21** came to Central College excited and ready to prepare for a career as a teacher. While working with kids had always been a passion of hers, Parrott realized that teaching wasn't going to fulfill everything she was looking for — just in time for major declaration day in her sophomore year.

### MAJOR OVERHAUL

Parrott panicked in the days leading up to declaring her major in education. "I thought teaching was what you did when you loved kids, but even after completing my observation hours and a practicum experience and getting into the Central Teaching Academy, it just wasn't enough for me," Parrott says. "I needed some excitement and adrenaline that I was likely never going to see in a lower-level elementary classroom."

After extensive research and long talks with her mentor and advisor, **Jen Diers**, director of the education program at Central, the pair landed on an unrealized dream: the child life specialist profession. This was a new discovery for both Parrott and Diers — a profession they had both likely encountered but the career path hadn't crossed their minds.

Child life specialists are an integral part of multidisciplinary medical teams within pediatric healthcare. These professionals work with children and their families to help them understand what to expect, what processes and procedures entail and ensure the whole family has a positive hospital experience overall.

### THE PATH THERE

Like most schools, Central does not have a child life specialist undergraduate program. But unlike many schools, Central has a self-designed studies major, formerly known as integrated studies. The self-designed, interdisciplinary major allows students to map out their own education at Central. So, Parrott had the freedom to build out a custom academic plan to meet the graduation requirements while also setting her up for success when it came time to apply for graduate programs.

The major is intended for students whose academic interests and goals can be best met by combining and integrating the work of two or more academic departments, making the 2021 graduate a perfect candidate.

Parrott's custom major focused on three academic areas: education, exercise science and sociology. "Education made sense to include, of course," Parrott says. "I loved



**Packs for a Purpose, Inc.**, serves four main populations of vulnerable children: children in hospitals, foster care, adoption agencies and homeless shelters or facing homelessness. Each pack contains developmentally appropriate and beneficial items for specific needs.

the content and knew it would be a great help, especially on the developmental side of things. Now I use that information every single day.

"I chose exercise science because you learn a lot about the body and the way it moves, which is incredibly valuable when you're in the hospital working with a child. You won't know every single procedure or what every medical term means, but having the background goes a long way.

"Including sociology made a lot of sense to me, too. I knew learning how people interact, how to interact with others and why people interact the way they do would come in handy when in the hospital setting."

From there, Diers and Parrott lined up her course schedule for the remainder of her time at Central as well as advisors in the other two pieces of Parrott's unique-to-her major.

### THE LATER YEARS

"As we prepared for her final year at Central, we knew she'd need to complete a capstone for her integrated studies major," Diers says. Parrott opted for a project over an internship, thus preparing the kindling for yet another dream.

She knew she wanted her capstone to focus on children — caring for their needs, whether they were in the hospital or another vulnerable situation. "When the audience and the focus became clear, so did my project," Parrott says. "I decided to create a hypothetical nonprofit that would provide kids with backpacks containing items just for them.

"As I got going, I remember thinking to myself, 'What if I did this for real?'" The thought consumed her. With the enthusiastic support of her parents and her academic advisor, Parrott rolled up her sleeves and got to work.

For those keeping track, Parrott was not only finishing up her senior year, she also was knee-deep in the graduate school application and interview process, working on the largest project of her academic career and making that project happen in real life. (Spoiler alert: Parrott chose the University of Iowa's Master of Health and Human Physiology with a sub-track in child life.) "It was a lot, for sure, but I knew it was the right thing to do," she says. "I was just too excited to let up on any one thing."

Parrott formed partnerships with previously held connections to kick things off. "I had great help from a lawyer in my hometown of

## FULL CIRCLE

By Degrees Foundation in Des Moines, Iowa, works to provide all K-12 students with resources, educational programming and the support they need to graduate high school on time and be prepared for their post-secondary paths. The foundation partners with Findley Elementary, Harding Middle School and North High School.

**Heather Burr Isaacson '97**, director of programs, and **Billy Kirby '00**, Findley Elementary program manager, are both Des Moines natives who have worked with kids — and in the realm of college access — for most of their professional lives. Both come from low-income, first-generation college student backgrounds, so the pair strongly relates to the population they serve.

Their Central journeys began with Upward Bound. The things they learned through Upward Bound, during their time at Central and in their professional lives empower them to help others. By Degrees Foundation begins talking about college, careers, financial literacy and the future from the very beginning of their program. They even establish 529 college savings plans for the students while they're in elementary school.

"We're helping students earn scholarships and navigate the sometimes foreign and scary process of making their dreams come to fruition," Isaacson says. "Students thrive because they know they have support systems, and it was the same for us. We had amazing support systems at Central in our professors, the Upward Bound family and all over the Pella and campus communities."

In many ways, the pair has come full circle, and because of Central's partnership, they still get to be part of the campus community and visit often.

"Upward Bound planted the seed for the work we're doing today," Kirby says. "It absolutely changed the trajectory for me as a low-income, first-generation college student. It's the enthusiasm for learning, discovery and caring for others that happens at Central that makes it so unique. And that's the stuff that still inspires me to do my work. We love that we get to pay it forward for these students. Who knows how far that Central ripple effect will go!"

Isaacson and Kirby encourage all to get involved in their communities, to give of their time, talent and/or treasure to causes that speak to them. To get involved or learn more about By Degrees Foundation, visit [bydegreesfoundation.org](https://bydegreesfoundation.org) or contact Isaacson at [heather@bydegreesfoundation.org](mailto:heather@bydegreesfoundation.org) or Kirby at [billy@bydegreesfoundation.org](mailto:billy@bydegreesfoundation.org).



Packs for a Purpose, Inc., works with newborns to youth through 18 years old and may provide anything from necessities like toothbrushes and toothpaste to comfort items like blankets and teddy bears.

Danville, Iowa," Parrott says. "She does pro bono work on the side and, with her help, Packs for a Purpose, Inc. was officially established as a registered nonprofit organization in the State of Iowa in May 2021. I couldn't have done this without her and her expertise."

## PACKS FOR A PURPOSE, INC.

Packs for a Purpose, Inc. is working to address the need for more activities, games and educational materials for children — newborns through 18 years old — in vulnerable situations. And Parrott's nonprofit is doing exactly what she hoped. Each pack contains developmentally appropriate and beneficial activities specific to each child or group. The organization considers the child's age, gender and the condition of their environment when creating each pack.

The perfect pack formula:

- + One necessity item
- + One comfort item
- + One thing they can do by themselves
- + One thing they can do with others

"More than anything, we want to enhance the child's well-being," Parrott says. "So, we include things they can do while they're in bed, but also provide them with necessary items like toothbrushes, body wash and

things like that. I love that we're able to provide them with support to fill in the gaps and bring them some of the comforts of home while in an extraordinary circumstance.

"A lot of the packs we deliver to schools focus on different self-care needs or things to help promote self-regulation. So, including fidget toys in a pack can help kids work toward controlling their emotions and behaviors during the school day. There really is a lot of thought on the developmental side of things."

Since launching in May 2021, more than 300 packs have been distributed to hospitals, schools, churches, orphanages, foster care facilities and youth organizations in Iowa.

## CLOSE TO HOME

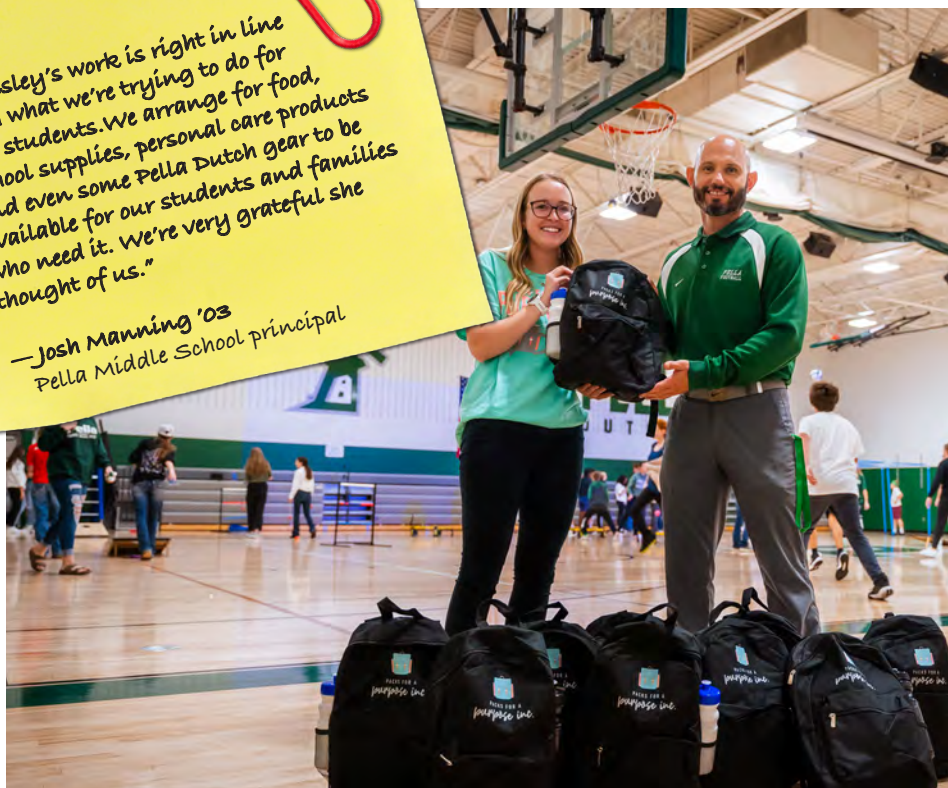
There's certainly a lot of excitement and variety in hospitals but choosing to become a child life specialist wasn't just about the adrenaline for Parrott. She's grateful to be able to help kids like her. As a child, she was diagnosed with cancer and spent a good deal of time in the hospital.

"I'm so glad to be here: I feel like this is what I was made to do," she says. "I had a positive experience in the hospital and that time influenced me and my path to a child life career and Packs for a Purpose.



*"Kinsley's work is right in line with what we're trying to do for our students. We arrange for food, school supplies, personal care products and even some Pella Dutch gear to be available for our students and families who need it. We're very grateful she thought of us."*

*—Josh Manning '03  
Pella Middle School principal*



**Kinsley Parrott '21**, founder and president of Packs for a Purpose, Inc., delivers packs to **Josh Manning '03**, Pella Middle School principal.

"It's an honor to serve these kids, just as my amazing medical teams helped me over the years. If I can be even just a small source of light in their experience, I'll have done my job well."

## BETTER TOGETHER

Parrott's team is packed with members of the Central family, including board members **Jen Diers**, **Karleigh Schilling '21**, **Megan Van Brocklin '21**, **Morgan Van Maanen '21** and **Sydney Rants '21**, who also serves as vice president. The board also includes friends from her graduate program, Rhini Angel and Katie Freund, as well as Parrott's supportive parents: Karie, who also serves as treasurer, and Adam Parrott.

"I couldn't have done this or continue to do this without the help and support of my amazing board," Parrott says. "They help make everything happen — product purchases, events and fundraisers, packing parties, pack drop-offs, etc."

"I'm excited for where we're headed. I hope to expand Packs for a Purpose, Inc. to some day have a presence in every state, so we can help more kids and their families."

## THE CENTRAL JOURNEY

Here at Central, students are challenged to be their best. The Central experience is an

epic journey of self-discovery. Students may come in knowing exactly what they want to do or may change their major multiple times. But here students have the freedom and support to follow their dreams — even if it's never been done before.

"Central has truly amazing professors who deeply care about you and your education," Parrott says. "You're able to really throw yourself into your work and your classes and you know they'll be there for you through your whole Central journey — just like Jen has been for me."

"Kinsley's Central journey is the epitome of a liberal arts education," Diers says. "She was able to make it her own, and she's using what she learned here at Central every single day. It's awesome."

Like so many before her, Parrott forged a path all her own with a network of supporters cheering her on and guiding her along the way.

"I did everything I wanted to and more: Dance Marathon, mission trips, volunteer work and service learning. I even got to work in the admission office and education departments," Parrott says. "My plans changed along the way, but I wouldn't trade my experience for anything."

Interested in learning more? Visit [packsforapurposeinc.squarespace.com](https://packsforapurposeinc.squarespace.com). ■

## THE PERFECT FIT

In August 2021, Youth Homes of Mid-America and Youth Emergency Services and Shelter merged to create Ellipsis. This merger brought two strong youth and family service nonprofits together to create a powerhouse organization — and brought two Central College alumni together to do amazing work for the youth and families in Central Iowa.

Serving people, especially adolescents, has always been a passion for **Chris Koepplin '96**, CEO of Ellipsis, and **Rusty Johnson '03**, training manager at Ellipsis. Ellipsis provides access for youth and families to counseling and therapy, social workers, residential programs, community programs, behavioral health intervention services, care coordinators and much more.

"We help kids and families sit in the space between what their life is like and what their life can be like, then we help them figure out how to get there," she says.

Johnson came up in the foster care system and knowing the continuum of care the kids receive means the world to him. "In the foster system, you age out," he says. "So, at some point, the services and resources available to you stop. At Ellipsis, we don't just want to get our kids on their feet, we want to get them on their feet and running — and keep them running."

The pair recognize their journeys at Central laid the groundwork for where they are and where they'll continue to go in their professional lives.

"The support and caring relationships I found at Central are a large part of the person I am and the work that I do," Johnson says. "I absolutely love Central College, and I was thrilled to see Chris was a Central alum when I was applying to work here!"

Johnson's and Koepplin's experiences also taught them to set goals but to dream, too.

"My dream for Ellipsis is that some day we can cease to exist," Koepplin says. "And that sounds kind of crazy coming from me. But the reality is, if we're not working toward that, then we're really not serving our mission."

The duo knows it likely won't happen in their lifetime, but they're thrilled about the potential and the future of Ellipsis. "We couldn't do what we do without help from our communities," Koepplin says.

With Johnson training the direct care staff on the frontline and Koepplin leading the way, the future indeed looks bright.

To learn more about the organization or to get involved, visit [ellipsisiowa.org](https://ellipsisiowa.org) or contact Koepplin at [chris.koepplin@ellipsisiowa.org](mailto:chris.koepplin@ellipsisiowa.org) or Johnson at [rusty.johnson@ellipsisiowa.org](mailto:rusty.johnson@ellipsisiowa.org).









## CENTRAL SCENE

PHOTO BY: PAUL JOY

Central College hosted its annual Service Day on Tuesday, Oct. 4, 2022. On Service Day, students, faculty and staff go to area communities and serve local organizations doing half-day projects. Central has held an annual Service Day since 2006.



Kat De Penning '11, third from left, poses on campus with students from Greek Bible College.



# GO UNTO ALL THE WORLD

*"And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'" – Isaiah 6:8, English Standard Version*

STORY BY: **CYVANNAH VECCHIO**





**Kat De Penning '11** snapped a photo of students she hosted in her apartment in Greece for Bible studies and prayer meetings during March 2022.

Small town. Middle of nowhere. That's how **Kat De Penning '11** describes her hometown of Sully, Iowa. And not without cause: The quaint town, coined "little Pella" for its large collection of Dutch descendants and its close proximity to its sister city, has a population of 962 and just a few — mostly small — businesses making up all of its industry.

De Penning was intimately familiar with her hometown's sister city as her mother, **Darlys De Penning**, worked at Central College for 18 years.

"I pretty much grew up on campus," De Penning recalls. "Mom was a custodian in the music building, so I was always there meeting college students and things like that. Central has always felt like a second family."

De Penning assumed she would attend Central, and it was the former study abroad program — now known as off-campus experiences — that caught her attention.

"I remember growing up, being at my grandparents' house and having coffee with them. They had international students and missionaries come to their house, and I would sit there wondering, 'Why did they choose to live in this country?' or 'Why do they believe what they believe?'" she reminisces. "It sparked an interest in getting to know people from other cultures."

### HERE AS IN HEAVEN

When De Penning was a junior communication studies major at Central, she studied abroad in the Netherlands and had the opportunity to meet people from all over the world while attending an international church in Leiden.

"I remember worshipping there. There were people from all over, and I thought, 'This is amazing,'" she breathes. "It was like Heaven."

While in the Netherlands, De Penning hosted a small-group Bible study for

university students in her less-than-roomy dorm room. It was then, she believes, her walk with God really began. In fact, a prayer meeting changed everything for her when a leader spoke up and said, "Kat, I see a picture of God with His arms wide open saying, 'Come back. I forgive you. I love you.'"

"I was just like, 'Holy Spirit, how did you know?' I'd never experienced something like that," she says. "I became a true follower of Jesus."

Upon her arrival to the Netherlands, De Penning was surprised by the lack of Christianity in her Dutch counterparts.

"I gave my life to Christ in the Netherlands, and I also saw the need for the gospel there," she remembers. "It was eye-opening."

And just like that, the girl who had always been involved with InterVarsity at Central immersed herself in that ministry in her final year. She knew ministering to the nations was what she wanted to do — more than that, she felt called to work with international university students and to be a missionary in Europe. But ... what came next?

### GOING TO AFRICA

As a communication studies major, practicums and internships were required. De Penning interned with a church in Pella doing youth ministry to see if that was the best fit for her future. The youth pastor was leading a mission trip to Tanzania, East Africa. And De Penning wanted to go.

"Two days after I graduated from Central, I was on a plane to Tanzania," she says. "We did outreach all over."

"One day we were sitting in a grass hut with some Muslim men drinking tiny cups of coffee and they asked, 'Why would you come halfway across the world to tell us about a guy named Jesus?' Growing up in a place where people identify as Christians, I never had to justify or explain my faith before."

"It made me think, 'Okay, I want to be a missionary and work in ministry. I need to be able to have conversations like this.'"

Since De Penning had known most of her life that she would attend Central, there was no college search to take part in. After her experience in East Africa, she determined attending a seminary or Bible college would be the wisest choice — even if she dreaded prolonging her academic career.

"I didn't want to pick up another book and study ever again," she shares. Then De Penning remembered a young woman who had lived across the street from her grandparents: She had gone on a mission



**John Roslien**, associate professor of kinesiology, far right, hosted Central's international students at his cabins in northeast Iowa with the assistance of **Kat De Penning '11**, front middle. The annual trip, generally hosted in the fall, allowed students to see historical sites, do tourist activities and cheer on Central's football team at an away game.

trip to Greece, fell in love with the country and went back as a missionary. So, De Penning met with her, and she encouraged De Penning to attend Greek Bible College in Pikermi, Greece.

From September 2012 to September 2013, she was a student at Greek Bible College. During that time, De Penning was required to do ministry. She opted for a sailing ministry, which boated to many of Greece's 227 inhabited islands to encourage believers or bring the gospel. (Thankfully, De Penning didn't experience seasickness on those voyages, despite growing up in a landlocked state.) She also worked with The Hope Center, a nonprofit ministry that exists to promote healing and be a safe space for women to find shelter, support and care in a family environment during an unexpected pregnancy.

### A FOOT IN THE DOOR

Once her program concluded, De Penning unhappily headed back to Iowa.

"I came back to the states kicking and screaming," she says. "I was living with my parents again as a 25-year-old woman trying to find a job, but I just wasn't finding anything."

Out of the blue, her mom's former boss at Central called her up. After establishing she'd heard De Penning was looking for a job, she offered her a position on her custodial staff — an offer De Penning was thrilled to accept. Then, on a random Sunday in July 2014, De Penning was checking

her email and found one addressed directly to her.

"On the custodial team, you're not usually called or written personally," she explains. "This email said, 'Hey, Kat, you know nothing about me, but I've heard a lot about you. We have a position to work with international students opening up. Would you want to come into my office on Monday to talk about it?' I called my mom like, 'Is this real life?'"

The email was from **Lyn Isaacson**, now-retired associate dean for global education, who ended up hiring De Penning just two weeks before international students arrived on Central's campus in Fall 2014.

"I knew nothing, but I saw it as a way of God bringing the nations to me before I could go to the nations," De Penning shares. "I loved it. I learned a lot of hard lessons, but I wouldn't trade that."

**John Roslien**, associate professor of kinesiology, always hosted Central's international students in two cabins on the Mississippi River for a long weekend. "We loaded them up on minibuses and brought them there," De Penning says. "We'd usually try to find a Central game to go cheer at, which resulted in dressing in Central attire, lessons about American football and great memories."

### SHE'S A GEM

By April 2017, De Penning had paid off her loans from her off-campus study

experience, which financially freed her up to pursue her mission goals. She researched different mission organizations to see what resonated with her. The Greek Bible College had been founded by Great Europe Mission missionaries in the early 1970s, so De Penning applied there and became a G.E.M. partner. (It didn't escape her notice that she grew up in Girls Everywhere Meeting the Savior (GEMS) classes.)

After a challenging period of indecision on where in the world to go, De Penning received a wise word: "God doesn't make decisions hard — people do." A significant amount of time was spent in prayer before she decided God was calling her back to Greece to pour into and mobilize university students.

In her role, De Penning helped plan a lot of trips for their international program; taught student body leaders about leadership (and other topics); went to a church plant in Kypseli — an area with more migrants than Greeks; assisted with Bible studies; did outreach on the plateia (square) for children; assisted with food programs during the COVID-19 lockdown to ensure people were getting the food they needed; and more.

One of De Penning's favorite places to take students was the island of Patmos, where Apostle John received the visions found in the biblical book of Revelation after he was exiled by the Roman Emperor Titus Flavius Domitianus in 95 A.D. It's the only book in the New Testament where the location is given.



“We were able to go to the prison where John was held and sit; we could see the seven churches that John’s letter was written to; and we read through Revelation, imagining walking around in that time,” she shares.

In November 2021, De Penning’s visa expired. “It’s difficult to get a visa in Greece if you’re not Orthodox — it raises red flags for them,” she explains. “I had been on a student visa for three and a half years, and I had been looking for something a little bit more than that, but I felt like God was telling me my time in Greece was going to be done.

“When I moved back to Greece, I was thinking I could be there for the rest of my life. So, when I had to come back to the States, I was trying to figure out the next step.”

### HERE I AM! SEND ME.

De Penning was in Greece saying her goodbyes when the war in Ukraine broke out. Her heart was gripped for the Ukrainian people, which caused her to question what her involvement should be.

“At that time, I was having conversations with field leaders up in the U.K. to help out with a church plant there with a majority of university students, but nothing was gaining traction,” she says. “A friend and colleague of mine called me a couple of weeks after the war began and explained that she was asked to move from Germany to Prague, Czech Republic, to open a center for displaced Ukrainians. She asked if it was something I wanted to be part of.”

De Penning was distracted by her work and the notion that she knew nothing about the Czech Republic but committed to praying about it. She had a video call with Czech leaders after she arrived back in the States in May 2022. They explained they do hospitality ministry, discipleship and house church plants — and they were looking for someone to work with university students in Brno, Czech Republic. Confirmation of the call on her life pinged in De Penning’s spirit and she asked the hard question: “Can I work with displaced Ukrainians *and* university students?”

The short answer: Of course! She was given the flexibility to be based in Brno, working with university students, while traveling to Prague once or twice per month to work with Ukrainian refugees. De Penning will soon begin her next journey of walking by faith to reach the outermost parts of the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To learn more about De Penning’s ministry call, visit [gemission.org/kat-de-penning](https://gemission.org/kat-de-penning). ■

### VICTORY IN JESUS

*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

— Ephesians 2:10, English Standard Version



Victory Bible Camp volunteers spend up to eight weeks of their summer hosting weekly camps for up to 300 people per week in Glacier View, Alaska — about 45 miles from one of the nearest small towns, Palmer, and 95 miles from Anchorage.

Thirty-six years separate **Diana Vollmar '85** and **Liam Mock '21**. It was Victory Bible Camp, a nonprofit, Christian camp in Glacier View, Alaska — an impressive 3,344 miles from Pella, Iowa — that brought them together.

Vollmar was a legacy student who was naturally connected to Central through the Reformed Church in Illinois. She graduated with a degree in elementary education with reading and special education endorsements.

“I started teaching special ed right after graduation and then I moved into first grade,” Vollmar says. “I taught in Manning, Iowa, for 10 years. I began really seeking the Lord more.”

An acquaintance was a nurse at VBC. On furlough in 1992, she spoke at Vollmar’s home church about the camp. Her parents called Vollmar afterward to suggest she investigate it.

“People thought I was crazy,” she chuckles. “I was going up there during the summer and working for nothing; I had my teacher salary, so I didn’t ask for any money. People thought, ‘You’re giving up your whole summer and you’re not getting paid. That’s ridiculous.’ But when I came home, they saw I had changed. The Lord really worked on me that summer.”

Vollmar taught in Anchorage for 24 years before her retirement. She now lives near VBC, where she volunteers as a cook.

Mock grew up in Pella, going to a Reformed Church in town, until his family moved to Alaska when he was 14, where he was first introduced to VBC.

“My parents started to take their walk with Jesus Christ really seriously when I was about 11,” Mock remembers. “They had friends who had moved to a camp in Alaska to do ministry there, and it was something my parents wanted to do as well.”

Mock grew up in ministry and somewhere along the way, it became the cry of his heart. “I wanted to go to seminary to be able to preach and teach the Word of God — the Bible — and I needed an undergraduate degree to do that.”

He began at a community college then transferred to Central for his last two years. He landed on a combination of utility and intrigue and chose a business management major and philosophy minor — all with the goal of going into full-time ministry.

Mock remembers explaining the book of Ephesians to campers in summer 2022 and having their hearts be transformed as they were “washing of water with the word,” as expressed in Ephesians 5.

“The whole reason I’m at seminary — or doing any ministry at all — is because of the experiences I’ve had at Victory,” Mock explains. “Seeing other kids hear the gospel for the first time, realizing they were sinners saved by the grace of Christ and then responding to it and seeking their counselor in tears of joy because they know they’re forgiven ... it’s amazing. It fires me up!”

Vollmar, who originally crossed paths with Mock at VBC nearly 10 years ago, agrees wholeheartedly. “The work the Lord has done in campers and volunteers brings healing, encouragement and allows them to build lives worth living. Their lives are changed by what the Lord does in and through them at Victory.”

The camp, which exists with the purpose of “seeing people come to Christ and others dedicating their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ,” recently celebrated its 75th anniversary — a testament to how the Lord continues to impact lives through VBC. It hosted more than 800 campers over the course of seven weeks during summer 2022. To learn more about Victory Bible Camp, visit [vbc.alaska.org](https://vbc.alaska.org).





ON A

MEANINGFUL

COURSE

Central College curriculum gives students access to nonprofit collaboration and connection, as Mattie Francis '23 (pictured right) learned in a course with Kate Nesbit, assistant professor of English (pictured left).

STORY BY: MATTIE FRANCIS '23

PHOTO BY: PAUL JOY



## THE POWER OF ONE

How do we enact change in communities? I always believed that it was by the power of our vote. If we want to see change, then we ought to vote for a politician who will make it happen. In reality, social change is more complex and layered.

Here is where we enter the world of not-for-profit organizations.

## MORE THAN A FLICKER

In Spring 2022, I enrolled in Writing for Nonprofit Organizations with **Kate Nesbit**, assistant professor of English. I thought the class would give me more practical skills as a writer, nothing more nothing less. I gained much more than that.

I chose to partner with the organization Iowa Safe Schools. Their mission is to support LGBTQ+ youth across the state of Iowa and ensure they have a safe learning environment. Iowa Safe Schools does this through advocacy, direct service and education. My role at the organization was to create social media posts. It was inspiring to work with and learn from my supervisor, **Dana Van Renterghem '15**, who enters middle schools and high schools across the state of Iowa and engages youth in classes, presentations and clubs like Gay-Straight Alliance. Support for LGBTQ+

with Iowa Safe Schools for a few weeks, I began to realize that the flicker of interest in nonprofits I had at the beginning of the semester was turning into a passion.

## NOT FINISHED YET

At the end of the class, we all met in Des Moines for a civic dialogue. My class spoke with a panel of nonprofit organizations, including Creative Visions, Latinos Unidos, Children and Families of Iowa and Iowa Safe Schools — just to name a few. Representatives from these organizations offered us deeper insight into the nonprofit world. We discussed gun violence, discrimination, poverty and more, but, we also talked about what these organizations were doing to combat these things in their communities. It was an incredible experience.

I decided to continue my work with nonprofit organizations over the summer. I enrolled in an AmeriCorps partnership with Please Pass the Love, a school mental health nonprofit based in Iowa, and acted as an assistant to their therapeutic programs director.

## MAKING AN IMPACT

Central College gave me an opportunity to make connections with amazing people through the Writing for Nonprofit

**"After working with Iowa Safe Schools for a few weeks, I began to realize that the flicker of interest in nonprofits I had at the beginning of the semester was turning into a passion."**

**— Mattie Francis '23**

youth is vital, as it is a demographic that is at high risk for poor mental health and suicidal thoughts. There is no way to fully measure the work Iowa Safe Schools has done to protect Iowa's youth, but I can confidently say this organization makes a difference.

I've always wanted to do meaningful work. Dana's ability to positively impact youth all over the state of Iowa definitely matches my definition of meaningful work. After working

Organizations class. In just one semester, I found something I was passionate about and could see myself doing after college.

It's not just politicians and our votes that matter. Through nonprofit organizations, anyone can — and everyone should — make a difference. ■

## DIRECT SERVICE COURSES AT CENTRAL

### FALL 2022

**AESTHETICS TO ATHLETICS** — With overarching themes of inclusion and social justice, **Beth McMahon**, associate professor of library science, led this intersections course. The course examined how gender interacts with other forms of diversity. Students interacted with individuals from diverse backgrounds to develop inclusive behaviors and strategies.

**COMMUNICATING HEALTH AND ILLNESS** — **Mary Donato**, lecturer of communication studies, taught the ways in which health, illness and ability affect communication. Students practiced the communication strategies taught in this course by engaging with diverse individuals through service-learning opportunities.

**THE ENGAGED CITIZEN** — Representative of this year's campus theme of engaged citizenship, this course allowed students to complete community service alongside our community partners. This intersections course was taught by **Keith Yanner**, professor of political science.

**WHERE WE LIVE** — Taught by **Alan Hastings**, assistant professor of education, this intersections course examined natural and social environments throughout time to explore what it means to inhabit a place.

### SPRING 2023

**DISABILITY IN AMERICA** — This course deconstructs the idea of disability and works to understand and establish accessible ways of life. **Keith Yanner**, professor of political science, leads this class.

**HUMAN RELATIONS** — Under the leadership of **Alan Hastings**, assistant professor of education, students work with school-aged students to develop education skills with students from a variety of backgrounds.

**INTERMEDIATE SPANISH** — Taught by **Samuel Mate-Kodjo**, associate professor of Spanish, this course will provide opportunities for students to communicate with native-Spanish speakers.

**RAP, HIP-HOP AND DECOLONIZING THE CLASSROOM** — Led by **Sarah Van Waardhuizen**, associate professor of music and Central Music Academy instructor, this course examines social justice discourse within rap and hip-hop music. Students also partner with high school students to further conversations and commitment to intentionally decolonize spaces by examining the role that privilege plays in daily life.



# *CRUISING*

## THROUGH HOMECOMING 2022

STORY BY: ERIC JONES '87



PHOTOS BY: PAUL JOY AND DAN VANDER BEEK



In my delusional mind, I look the same as I did in Fall 1983 when I entered Central College as a first-year student. The gradual evolution (or devolution) of my physical appearance is not noticeable when I am in the routine of looking in the mirror every day. However, when interacting with my classmates at the 2022 Homecoming reunion, I could tell they saw someone who vaguely resembled the person who roamed Central's campus in the 1980s. It was a humbling experience for me, but completely understandable.

Just as I do not always recognize changes in my appearance, I also take for granted the transformation of Central's campus. As an employee of the college, I enjoy walking across campus every day. The trip from my home to my office takes me by Gaass Hall, the island on the pond, Douwstra Auditorium and into Central Hall. Things seem to be the same as they were in the '80s. It takes a fresh set of eyes for me to appreciate the changes our campus has enjoyed. **Linda Johnson Kula '68** and **Joann Harkin Heaberlin '69** provided the fresh eyes I needed. Just like my classmates made me aware of my physical changes over the past 40 years, Linda and Joann gave me a new appreciation of how our campus has progressed through the decades.

Linda and Joann were both music education majors during their years on campus. When they came back during Homecoming week, their goal was to see the renovations of Douwstra Auditorium. They had heard about the improved aesthetics and acoustics and wanted to experience the pristine environment. Seeing the joy in their faces when the doors to Douwstra opened was priceless. They laughed and talked about their performances during their college years. After a few "remember when" stories, Linda looked at Joann with a mischievous grin and said, "Do I dare?" Joann encouraged her to belt something out. Linda spontaneously sang beautiful operatic notes. For a brief moment, they relished reliving their musical days of the late '60s.

I started at Central 14 years after Joann graduated and we shared some similar traditions — and even professors. Even so, many of the things Linda and Joann talked about were foreign to me. While looking around Douwstra, Linda located where she sat during mandatory chapel. Joann then informed me it was not unusual for college students to have attire consisting of coats over their pajamas during the chapel



**A glimmer of sunshine peeks through a darkened sky as a rainbow stretches over a quiet Maytag Student Center and peaceful pond on the east end of Central's campus.**

sessions. I did not experience mandatory chapel as a student, and I was curious about that experience and other activities they had during college. I encouraged them to let me take them on a golf cart tour so I could see campus through their eyes.

We started the tour by cruising over the bridge to get to the north side of the pond. This would have been impossible during the '60s because of the steps needed to ascend before crossing the bridge. We drove by the building that was the library during Linda and Joann's days at Central. When I was in school, their library had become the Arts and Behavior Science building and is now called the Lubbers Center for the Visual Arts. We peeked through the doors and saw students working on their glass blowing projects. Linda and Joann enjoyed watching them work (artists appreciate other artists).

Navigating west on Peace Mall, we drove by the Chapel. This building was not around when Linda and Joann were in school, and Linda wanted to investigate the interior of the building. We drove through the beautiful amphitheater located to the east of the Chapel as we proceeded into the place of worship. Joann stated that she wished she had as many locations to perform as our current students have. Linda expressed her appreciation of the intimacy and warmth of the Chapel.

As we drove around campus, they asked me when certain buildings like Weller Center for Business and International Studies and Roe Center were built. After answering

their questions, I quizzed them about what campus looked like during their years. They informed me the Cox-Snow Music Center was new when they were in school. They also said Vermeer Science Center and the Kruidenier Center did not exist in the '60s. Instead, the football field was in that space. You could see their minds recalibrating the college they knew from 50-plus years ago to the scene in front of them during Homecoming 2022.

At the conclusion of the golf cart tour around campus, Linda and Joann thanked me for my time and effort. Truth be told, I enjoyed the experience more than they did. Taking the tour with Linda and Joann encouraged me to view Central as if I was seeing it for the first time since I walked off the Commencement stage in 1987. I have a newfound appreciation of how campus looks so much different than it did 35 years ago. Even though my appearance and the appearance of campus have evolved, it still feels the same as it did when I matriculated to Central in the 1980s, and when Linda and Joann studied and performed here in the 1960s. I imagine that feeling of nurturing warmth will prevail on campus for generations to come — no matter what physical transformations come about next.

**Please come back to Central for a visit. And when you are back, look me up. I would love to hear your stories as we cruise around campus. Connect with Eric Jones, major gifts officer, at [jonese@central.edu](mailto:jonese@central.edu). ■**





# 2022 HOMECOMING

View all reunion class photos at  
[central.edu/reunions-2022](http://central.edu/reunions-2022).



Row 1: Marcia Fleming Carter, Bev Derksen Raatjes, Mitt Myers, Martha Friskey Van Hemert, Marcia Braskamp Myers, Jody Lorence and Bill Lubach. Row 2: Robert Merkley, Lorna Medd Sopcak, Ken Lamb, James Ellerston, Kathy Verdoorn Dybowski and John Keller.





'82

Row 1: Tim Heuss, Karol Miller Eggers, Marcia Edwards Baumann, Marley Wubbena, Mike Collins, Robin Kellog Wubbena and Pam Simmons Vande Voort. Row 2: Jim Rush, Rhonda McGuire Dyer, Jackie Haus Hoggins, Jeff Beal, Susan Walljaster Johnson and Doug Smith. Row 3: Kevin Smith, Brad Depke, Terry Cooney, Randy Messer and Barbara Boertje DeVries.



'12

Row 1: Libby Sanders Foster, Maggie Wood Snyder, Liz Hasenmiller Sagar, Jen Baxa Marks, Kate Callan, Ashley Kruger Nance, Kailey Short Hanson, Rachel Diaz Crall and AJ Baker Bruns. Row 2: Chelsea Grieger Toppin, Jack Bruns, Sarah Glendening Henman, Samantha Fink Henningsen, Melanie Louis Schmidt, Ryan Schmidt, Jess Emarad Ebener and Mike Furlong. Row 3: Caitlin Kouba Courter, Kiley Meyers, Justin Wyckoff, Abbey Sparks Rock, Kirby Rock, Emily Phillips Johnson, Dana Baker Seeman, son Johnny Seeman and Max Seeman.



'62

John Sikkink, Karen Westerveld Den Adel and Verlan Den Adel



'22

Joe Weber and Zoe Runyon.



'77

Row 1: Kent Fry, Beth Heideman Christman, Jann Freed, Donna Christians Ellis, Sang-Ki (Sammy) Han, Terri Rene DaVar, Steve Rohach, Jo Hansen Rohach, Sue Kirkpatrick McDonald, Micci Woodcock Burling, Julie Burling Kirk and Dave Parthun. Row 2: Tom Swanson, John Halma, Steve Barnett, Jim Bollard, Melissa Crossett Schuerer, Gary Vos, Ina Van Haaften Boeke, Cathie Scholten Howe, Claudia Valovcin Baker, Jeanne Aggen Vander Pluym and Jon Vander Pluym. Row 3: Tony Ciani, Bruce Collins, Al Paris, John Wagner, Beverly Vermeer Wagner, Neal Schuerer, Larry Hook, Chris Samson, Terry Anderson and Dar Pals. Row 4: Doug Soseman, Mark Urbanek, Jim Boeke, Robin Luken, Bruce Crane and Bruce Kempkes. Row 5: Van Turner, Jerry Dreyer and Tim Johnson.



'92

Row 1: Chris Colsch Frana, Kathy Waline Langreck, Becky Hill Oelmann, Amy Breitag Hinton, Debbie Smith Yates, Darrell Barbour, Terri Glandon Petty, Todd Stein, Kristy Schakel Gibbar, Laura Turk Robertson and Sandy De Ruiter Blom. Row 2: Scott Strand, Dan Tomson, Heidi Peterson Munsell, Julie Wilkening Wilbur, Steve Hoekstra, Brian Zylstra, Chandra Hackert Clark, Danette Funk Bontrager, Troy Den Herder, Cory Holland and Jen Greenfield Stoffer. Row 3: Troy Gould, Pip Fisher, Kim Huffman, John Lucas, Doug Williams, Brian Roberts, David Weaver, Tiffany Zoschke Hurt, Noelle Stoyles, Annette Camara Den Herder, Melissa Conde Holland, D'Ann Wilbur and Monica Pakkebie-Bonestroo. Row 4: Marty Chipps, Brad Fuller, Chris Davidson, Cindy Poortinga Foster, Erin Frazier, David Rowan, Brad Dunlap, Curtis Bauer, Kristy Reid Smith, Mark Smith and David Collins.



'97

Row 1: Stacey Sonnek Alberts, Kerry Parsons McEvoy, Maggie Brown Vander Wilt, Jenni Colyer Shaw and Kristi Leonard. Row 2: Chad Huyser, Valerie Roush Huyser, Heather Sandholm Kleis, Jen Foscett DiSessa, Dave Vander Wilt, Ryan Murphy, Blake Shaw and Dan Gabrielson.



'02

Row 1: Stefanie Bresnahan Perkins, Liz McElvogue Evans, Terah Weaver Henson, Abby Gonzales Larson and Joe Ritzert. Row 2: Sara Eggers Huston, Lisa Vanderpluym-Demmer, Kim Campbell Snyder and Amanda Larsen Ritzert.



'87

Row 1: Joel Shields, John Shields, Jim Beaman, Eric Jones, Rhonda Osborn Mont and Matt Diehl. Row 2: Greg Hillman, Ron Fadness, Stephen Fyfe, Lisa Thurman Fyfe, Linda Hietbrink Wilson, Kathy Cashen Thompson and Gary Fischer. Row 3: Jeff DeVries, Brian Fritz, Greg Ray, Keith Schneider, Spencer Sutton, Rob Wilson, Dave Gray and Aaron Barrick.



# NEWSNOTES

## THE '60s

### Charles Dadisman '65

retired after 28 years at Yamaha Corporation of America and received district manager of the year twice in the piano division.

## THE '70s

**Mark Van Hemert '74** won 12 gold medals and was named this year's Top Amateur in the Annual Washington Senior Games Dance Competition with dance partners Sara Macht and Maryl Metheany. Mark is still working as a chiropractor in Hoquiam, Washington.

**Leslie Hook '75** retired as a research scientist from Oak Ridge National Lab.

**Beth Heideman Christman '77** retired from her law practice, Casarino Christman & Shalk, Professional Association, in August 2022.

**Robert Martinez '78** retired from the United States Army as a chief warrant officer. He received an Army Meritorious Medal for serving in both the Army and Texas Army National Guard for 37 years.

## THE '80s

**Fred LaPlante '81** retired from Merrill Lynch-Bank of America after 35+ years. Fred and his wife Sandy reside in Jacksonville, Florida.

**Michael Hoenig '84** retired from the University of Iowa as a program coordinator.

**Ed Ergenbright '85** was inducted into the Iowa Men's Fastpitch Hall of Fame as a coach.

**Brad Havran '85** retired from the FDIC as a field office supervisor.

**Mark Law '85** retired from Berg Middle School in Newton, Iowa, after teaching for 37 years. He will continue to work his "fun" job at the Iowa Speedway, and travel with his wife, Cathy, to Denver to visit their new granddaughter.

**Teresa Wyant DeMol '86** is a tier two paraeducator at Jefferson Elementary School in Holland, Michigan.

**Sam Vande Weerd '86** is now a managing partner and wealth advisor at Carson Wealth.

**Kirk Sadilek '87** was elected to a three-year term on the board of directors for the Society of Financial Service Professionals. He is a senior wealth advisor at Basepoint Wealth, LLC.

**Christi Vrbancic '88** was recently promoted to corporate gerontologist with The Hartford's Center for Mature Market Excellence. She also leads the company's Working Caregivers of Older Adults community and is serving in her second year as the Walk Chair — for the Greater Hartford Walk to End Alzheimer's in Hartford.

**Jeff Staton '88** is the vice president of people development with Renewable Energy Group.

**Steven Wright '88** is a senior financial representative at Principal Financial Group.

**Jeff Bollard '89** is the vice president of information technology at Precision, Inc.

**Brenda Vigness Coldren '89** owns and operates Elite Skills in Marietta, Georgia, where she provides private pitching instruction.

## THE '90s

**Matt Melvin '90** was named the new vice president for enrollment management at Penn State.

**Julia Prather '91** started her own business for freelance digital content writing/copywriting, focusing on the food retail industry.

**Tina Henninger Ries '91** is a flight attendant at Southwest Airlines.

**Cara Dean Miedema '92** is working at Pella Regional Health Center in human resources.

**Angie Leonard Morrow '94** is working as a senior director of exhibitions in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Massachusetts.

**David Bock '95** is working as a risk manager at Valkyrie Trading.

**Bridget Roll Penick '95** has been appointed to serve on the Iowa State Bar Association's Ways and Means committee for the 2022-23 fiscal year. Penick is also the president of the board of directors for Ballet Des Moines for 2022-23.

**Brian Schaneberg '95** started a new position as executive director and industry professor of food science at Illinois Tech, Institute for Food Safety and Health.

**Erin Demichelis Bailey '96** started a new position as vice president, direct store delivery supplier relations at Hy-Vee.

**Michael Caniff '96** was named the new academic program leader at Noble Elementary in Bakersfield, California.

**Randy Patten '96** started a new position as vice president, chief accounting officer at Next Insurance.

**Dan Zimmerman '96** was promoted to vice president, chiropractic insurance programs at NCMIC.

**Jonathan Klaassen '98** joined the lending department at First Citizens Bank as a vice president credit risk relationship officer.

**Lisa Vander Wilt Shileny '98** is a chief operating officer at Hills Bank and Trust.

**Cory Alexander '99** is a choral director at St. Petersburg College.

**Casey Quiggle '99** is Tabor College's new head volleyball coach.



## THE '00s

**Chris Douglass '00** is the director of operations at Landmark Homes in Windsor, Colorado.

**Brian Huinker '00** is Luther College women's golf coach.

**Kristina Stanger '00** retired from the Army National Guard. In 2020, she was appointed commander of the 109th Medical Battalion which made her one of the highest echelons of command. While in the role, she oversaw up to 11 companies. Stanger served in the Iowa Army National Guard for 24 years. In 2017, she was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Kristina works as a litigator at Nyemaster Goode, P.C.

**Jason Button '02** is the director of steep slope sales and operations at Hopkins Roofing.

**Shannon Calvert Mohling '02** recently became an associate principal at Saydel High School. This is her 21st year in education and 17th with Saydel.

**Stefanie Van Wyk '02** is a content marketing coordinator for Phelps Health in Rolla, Missouri. She and her husband, Marlo, live in Salem, Missouri, with their daughter.

**Melissa White Anderson '04** is the Central College talent search assistant director.

**Amanda Johnson '05** is a user experience researcher for Meta.

**Stephanie Van Ommeren Bosgraaf '06** is a graduate records coordinator at Purdue University.



▲ Iowa Lieutenant Governor **Adam Gregg '06** helped kick off the Marshalltown Community School District's Summer Teacher Externship Academy in July 2022. Marshalltown CSD partnered with local businesses and industries to provide educators with firsthand knowledge about the great jobs and careers that exist within the sectors of advanced manufacturing, agriculture, health science/service, building and construction trades and computer science. *Left to right:* Marshall County Treasurer **Jarret Heil '03**, Marshalltown CSD Superintendent **Theron Schutte '85**, Lieutenant Governor **Adam Gregg '06**, and Marshalltown CSD Director of Learning **Shauna Smith '08**.

**Clay Eaton '06** is a physical education teacher at Washington Community School District in Washington, Iowa.

**Scott Paja '08** is the executive director of corporate partnerships at Vanderbilt University.

**Austen Schueler '08** started a new position at Vermeer Corporation as a talent acquisition manager.

**Chris Gales '09** is a business analyst for Andersen Corporation.

**Sarah Nickel '09** is working for the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, as a foreign commercial service officer.



▲ *Left to right:* **Jen Hainley Zasadny '06**, **Kelli Beckel Gould '06**, **Amy Greiser Quam '06**, **Annie Thompson Bjuström '06**, **Meggan Samuelson Jones '06** and **Renae Boeke '06**. Former Stauffer Townhouse roommates and longtime friends reunited in Pella on May 13, 2022.



# NEWSNOTES

## THE '10s

**Chantel Babcock Boyd '11** and her husband, Andrew, launched their own creative agency in 2020 after years of freelancing and working for other creative agencies.

**Zach Elsbecker '11** is the executive director of the Waukeg YMCA.

**Joey Shoemaker '11** and Samantha Daly married on Jan. 1, 2022. Joey works for Molitor Financial Group as a vice president of sales and development in Chicago, Illinois.

**Jenae Jenison Sikkink '11** is working for the Greater Des Moines Partnership as senior vice president of talent development.

**Megan Gray Elsbecker '12** is a manager of finance at One With Life in Ankeny.

**Samantha Fink Henningsen '12** is a special education teacher for Maquoketa Community Schools.

**Michael Kruse '12** has joined the Chicago P.D. cast.

**Nick Vance '12** is a scientist at Carmot Therapeutics in Berkeley, California.

**Tyler Wentworth '12** works for Manscaped as a director of social media and brand engagement.

**Michael Herring '13** is an assistant professor in the physics department at Hillsdale College.

**Kristin Look '13** started a new position as a senior forecasting budget analyst at VineBrook Homes.

**Morgan Baustian '14** works at MidWestOne Bank in talent acquisition.

**Rachel Lehr '14** is a supervisor of assertive community treatment at Association House of Chicago.

**Carly Stratbucker Rodrigues '14** started a new role with Pella Corporation as a retail sales manager in the Chicagoland area.

**Rachel Lindhart Wu-Pong '14** and Jackson Wu-Pong, married July 16, 2022.

**Carson Claypool '15** works for Bank Iowa as an assistant vice president and relationship manager.

**Mike Iseman '15** was named associate head basketball coach at Rockford University in Rockford, Illinois.

**Rachel Evans Kleis '15** is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

**Bryanna Pierce Schuman '15** and John Schuman married July 18, 2022.

**Rachel Cassens '16** is an assistant athletic trainer and assistant director of compliance for Wartburg College.

**Austin Heims '16** is a K-5 music teacher for Carlisle Community School District.

**Emily Fisher Steffensmeier '16** is working for Merschman Tax & Accounting as an accountant. She earned her master's degree in accounting from the University of Northern Iowa in 2017 and passed the CPA exam in 2018. Emily married Nicholas Steffensmeier on Sept. 21, 2019. The couple lives in Donnellson, Iowa, with their son, Leo.

**Sarah Holtz Young '16** is the chief financial officer of Hopkins Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Darius Bradford '17** is working as a chiropractor at Dunham Fritz Chiropractic in Grinnell, Iowa.

**Josh DeWaard '17** is a sales manager for Hopkins Roofing in Pella, Iowa.

**Halie Greenwood '17** works for North Iowa Area Community College in the bookstore and library.

**Tate Handsaker '17** was hired by Availa Bank as vice president/loan officer.

**Morgan Koenigs Marburger '17** is a first-grade teacher at Lincoln Elementary in Pella, Iowa.

**Kora Scotton Skarshaug '17** and Matt Skarshaug married on March 19, 2022.

**Regan Nelson Cairney '18** and Grant Cairney married Aug. 6, 2022.

**Mark Fairley '18** and Adelyn Ackley married July 9, 2022.

**Jenna Jensen '18** is an elementary education administrative assistant at Dubuque Community School District.

**Alex Mandi '18** and **Rachel Heatwole Mandi '18** married July 23, 2022. Rachel is a naturalist for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

**Kathleen Connolly Temple '18** is a marketing and communication specialist at Continental Western Group, a Berkley Company, in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Malik Wildermuth '18** is an admission counselor and assistant basketball coach for Augustana College.

## THE '20s

**Chelsey Barrett Steinbach '20** and Shane Steinbach married June 18, 2022

**Jordy Borman '20** is an assistant athletic trainer for St. Olaf College.

**Mason Muur '20** and Kendra Sanders married July 17, 2021.

**Connor Blair '21** is an internal auditor at Iowa State University.

**Nathan Sanders '21** and Megan Baldwin married June 26, 2021.

**Cheyenne Scholl '21** is a technician at Cornell University.

**Tanner Schminke '21** is working as an assistant football coach and admission liaison at Central College.

**Madilyn Ulrich Capaci '21** and Julian Capaci married Aug. 19, 2022.

## 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](https://civitas.central.edu/newsnotes).





▲ **Lucas '20 and Hannah Reussner Phillips '19** married July 9, 2022. Lucas is a physical education teacher at St. Luke Evangelist Catholic School in Ankeny, Iowa. *Left to right: Ryan Sprain '20, Dustin Haines '23, Stacy Mohr '20, Kiel Pederson '19, Brooke Caves Pederson '20, Hana Edgerton Nussbaum '20, Daniel Nussbaum '20, Hannah Reussner Phillips '19, Lucas Phillips '20, Doug Pepper '22, Alana Curtis '24, Sydney Peterson '20, Monica Powers '18, Emilee Anderson '20, Millie Ratmeyer Meyer '57, Sue Meyer '86, Tim Meyer '85, Matthew Hill '13, Sara Meyer Phillips '88, Lisa Van Maanen Vander Werff '91, Rob Wilson, Linda Heitbrink Wilson '87, Kathy Cashen Thompson '87, Karen Regal-Johnson '86 and Judith Vogel '82.*

**Keegan Overbey '14** earned a Master of Science from the University of Iowa in 2022.

**Rachel Evans Kleis '15** earned a Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Kentucky in rehabilitation sciences.

**Caitlyn Dixon Enoch '18** earned a Master of Business Administration in nonprofit leadership and management from Liberty University in May 2022.

**Patrick Gray '19** completed a Master of Science in aerospace engineering at Notre Dame and is a candidate for a Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame.

**Hannah Reussner Phillips '19** earned a Master of Science in anatomy from Des Moines University in May 2022.

## NEW ARRIVALS

Laura and **Denise Barnard '02**, son Barrett John, Aug. 3, 2022.

Stephen and **Breanne Way Patel '03**, son Cullen Arthur, Aug. 10, 2022.

Kurt and **Cassandra Reiling DeWald '06**, daughter Eleanor, July 1, 2022.

Mike and **Megan Brotherson Stange '07**, daughter Margo Mae, Aug. 8, 2022.

Scott and **Laura Elting Bleything '08**, daughter Avianna Elizabeth, Aug. 21, 2022.

Brandon Townsend and **Traci Dyer-Townsend '08**, daughter Brinleigh Ingram, Aug. 17, 2022.



▲ **Caleb '23 and Elise Visscher Kuiper '23** married July 23, 2022. *First row, left to right: Michelle Rus '20, Erica Van Wyk '23, Joe Pepe '21, Zoe Runyon '22, Madison Zink '23, Mackenzie Biggs '24, Elise Visscher Kuiper '23, Caleb Kuiper '23, Cassi Moss '24 and Eric Visscher '20. Second Row, left to right: Ian Thomson '23, TiAhanna Bryant '23, Kayla Tatz '23, Abigail Lowery '22, Cody Hall '24, Lilly Bracy '23, Bekah Beard Seufferer '22, Brooke Ehrenberg '19, Olivia Boender '21, Josh Kuiper '22 and DelTon Alexander '24. Third Row, left to right: Riley Konrad '24, Evan Collins '23, Bryant Seufferer '20, Jake Schulte '24, Gabby Brown '23, Grace Parrish '23, Bria Holte '23, Cole Kraber '23, Hannah Laflin '16, Jill Podhajsky '22 and Rebakah Cashen '23.*

## ADVANCED DEGREES

**Robert Martinez '78** earned a Master of Business Administration from Grantham University in 2020.

**Carrie Lund Viel '01** received a Master of Arts in education in principalship from the University of Northern Iowa in May 2022.

**Amanda Johnson '05** earned a Ph.D. in industrial engineering from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2020.

**Amelia Giacobelli '13** earned a Master of Arts degree in French language teaching from Southern Oregon University in September 2022.

**Drew Readell '13** earned a Master of Arts in international relations from Norwich University in 2022.



# NEWSNOTES

## NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL



▲ Row 1: Jeff De Vries '87, Casey Quinn McMurray '01 and Al Paris '77. Row 2: Kerry Maynard Vande Kieft '99, Joe Vande Kieft '99 and Amanda Hansen Fletcher '00. Row 3: Ryan Fick '02, Beatriz Mate-Kodjo '11 and Thad Scarrow '80. Row 4: Tony Braida '89, Katie Johnson Hill '85 and Sonia Parras Konrad. Row 5: Kelly Vielmo '99 and Carrie Mc Neese Valster '96. Row 6: Kim Watts '88, Nyla Rozeboom Heerema '63 and Kim Soo Hoo Vann '74. Row 7: Lori Humphrey Fegley '80, Trevor Jones '08 and Annajean De Graaf Goins '70. Row 8: Carrie Hill Romo '06, John Cross '89 and Garrett Hill '09.

## NEW ARRIVALS (continued)

**James '10** and **Adena Schnedler Edgeton '10**, daughter Aviah Grace, Feb. 11, 2022.

**Jameson '11** and **Alex Kleis Rosien '12**, daughter Emerson Jay, July 7, 2022.

Courtney and **Cory Nikkel '12**, son Macklin Jon, June 8, 2022.

**Max '12** and **Dana Baker Seeman '12**, son Johnny Ray, Sept. 27, 2022.

**Greg '13** and **Liz Clancy Oldsen '13**, daughter Ellie Mae, July 15, 2022.

Jeremy Morris and **Morgan Baustian '14**, daughter Emerysn, April 20, 2021.

**BJ '14** and **Elisha Wyckoff Cunningham '14**, son Maddox, May 9, 2022.

**Keegan Overbey '14**, daughter Elliette, Dec. 22, 2021.

Kale and **Carly Stratbucker Rodrigues '14**, son Niko Koa, Aug. 13, 2021.

Richard and **Libby Larson Russell '14**, daughter Hazel Charleen, Feb. 9, 2021.

Betsy and **Tim Wilson '14**, son Josiah, Aug. 4, 2021.

**Brittany Jones '15**, son Dorian, March 3, 2022.

Nicholas and **Emily Fisher Steffensmeier '16**, son Leo Jamison, Sept. 10, 2021.

**Andy '18** and **Rachel Verhun Butts '18**, son Thomas Dean, July 4, 2022.

**Nick '18** and **Lexi Johnson Greteman '18**, daughter Palmer Janette, Aug. 1, 2022.

**Finn Jordan '21**, daughter Everleigh Lynn, Aug. 9, 2022.

**Bonnie Wesselink Van Voorhis '55**, Bakersfield, California, July 25, 2022.

**Anita White Parsil '56**, Tucson, Arizona, April 10, 2022.

**Edwin "Ed" Parsil '56**, Tucson, Arizona, Sept. 14, 2022.

**Reginald "Reg" Empie '59**, Sedona, Arizona, April 14, 2022.

**Charlotte Jasmann Brewer '60**, Tempe, Arizona, May 9, 2022.

**Ronald Harden '61**, New Sharon, Iowa, July 17, 2022.

**Wallace Mealiea Jr. '62**, Gainesville, Florida, June 3, 2022.

**Robert "Bob" Vermeer '66**, Pella, Iowa, Aug. 17, 2022.

**Nancy Tysse Terpstra Gill '69**, Chicago, Illinois, Sept. 1, 2022.

**Gregory "Greg" Wendt '69**, Ava, New York, March 7, 2022.

**Keith Vander Wilt '73**, Sheldon, Iowa, Aug. 19, 2022.

**Murray Barkema '76**, Vienna, Austria, June 29, 2022.

**Michael "Mike" Porter '81**, Springfield, Missouri, June 12, 2021.

**Joseph "Joe" Stuchel '83**, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Feb. 13, 2022.

**Barry Mathes '89**, West Chester, Pennsylvania, Sept. 1, 2022.

**Barry Van Engelenhoven '89**, Oskaloosa, Iowa, Aug. 19, 2022.

**Josh Mick '98**, Pella, Iowa, July 26, 2022.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Mae Reynolds Foster '41**, Rockford, Illinois, Sept. 20, 2022.

**Roderick De Young '51**, Randolph, New Jersey, Sept. 15, 2022.

**Aaron Koskamp '51**, Pella, Iowa, July 24, 2022.

**Helen "Faye" Primus Landhuis '51**, Des Moines, Iowa, Aug. 19, 2022.

**Cecil Martens '51**, Jenison, Michigan, June 25, 2022.

**Logan Vander Leest '51**, Pella, Iowa, Aug. 20, 2022.

**Jack Gibbons '52**, Des Moines, Iowa, June 20, 2022.

**Kenneth "Lee" Arrowsmith '55**, Sarasota, Florida, June 4, 2022.

**James "Jim" Brinkhuis '55**, Little Rock, Iowa, April 23, 2022.



**Mollie Abkes** is working at Central College as an admission representative in Pella, Iowa.

**Riley Albertson** is an auditor at Deloitte in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jacob Alden** is a computer technician at the Ballard Community School District in Huxley, Iowa.

**Jessica Altman** is a marketing and hiring director at Bark Avenue in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Colton Anderson** is working for TA Land and resides in Boone, Iowa.

**Jacob Anderson** is working as a management trainee at Enterprise Holdings in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Brooke Schott Bailey** is a middle school math teacher for West Marshall Community School District in State Center, Iowa, and resides in Ames, Iowa.

**Jenna Bakeris** is an eighth-grade English language arts teacher in Newton, Iowa.

**Colin Baldwin** is an engineer at CAES in San Diego, California.

**Yuan Bank** is a teacher at Anchorage School District in Anchorage, Alaska.

**Devon Batterson** is an on-site supervisor at Grace Family Church in Ottumwa, Iowa.

**Lauren Birt** is a coach at Nick Jarosh Fitness in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Natalie Brader** works for Emmaus Ministries as a community outreach advocate in Chicago, Illinois, where she resides.

**Timothy Brunnert** works as a resource management tech for the Missouri Department of Conservation and lives in Linn, Missouri.

**Sydney Burgardt** is a behavior and mental illness counselor for Orchard Place in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Sydney Canney** is a social media strategist for TwoTone Creative in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Allison Cheatheam** is a science teacher in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Cameron Coles** is attending Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, pursuing a doctorate in ecology and evolutionary biology.

**Mia Condon** is a graduate student at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California.

**Monty Crain** is attending the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, Iowa, for a master's degree in social psychology.

**Mitchell Cross** is a mental health tech at Clive Behavioral Health located in Clive, Iowa.

**Abigail Cusick** is attending Allen College in Waterloo, Iowa, for a nursing degree.

**Rayanne Dally** works for Nyemaster Goode, P.C., as an IT support specialist in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Rachael Danielson** is attending the University of Nevada in Reno, Nevada, for a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling.

**Will DeHaan** is a technology adoption analyst at Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa, where he resides.

**Samantha DePauw** is a revenue examiner for the Iowa Department of Revenue in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Danny DeVenuto** is attending Palmer College in Davenport, Iowa, to obtain a doctorate in chiropractic.

**Alexis De Vries** is a teacher at North Mahaska Community School in New Sharon, Iowa.

**Jared DeVries** is a tax accountant for Welgaard CPAs and Advisors in Pella, Iowa.

**David Disney** is a credit analyst at Collins Community Credit Union, located in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Tyler Doehermann** is pursuing a physical therapy degree at Mercy College of Health Sciences, located in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Zach Doehermann** is a staff auditor at McGowen Hurst Clark Smith in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Alexandra Doepp** is a band and general music teacher at North Mahaska Community School in New Sharon, Iowa.

**Ashley Donohoue** is a sixth-grade science teacher in Denver, Colorado.

**Blade Durbala** is attending Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee, for a master's degree in exercise science, physical education and wellness.

**Owen Durham** is a solar panel installer for One Source Solar in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Brayden Egli** and Delaney Vroom married Aug. 6, 2022.

**Victoria Riewer Elbert** is pursuing a doctorate in occupational therapy at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Sally Evoy** is an office coordinator for KRM Custom Homes in Urbandale, Iowa.

**Lucas Farren** is a mechanical design drafter for Shive-Hattery in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Tanner Finken** is working toward a doctorate in computer science at the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona.

**Cassidy Frana** is a high school math teacher at Lake Mills Community School in Lake Mills, Iowa.

**Maci Gambell** is a nursing student at Allen College in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

**Alexander Garcia** is pursuing a doctorate in economics from Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

**Carl Glockel** is a design engineer for Airlite Plastics Co. in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Zach Goering** is a talent acquisition specialist for Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Bekah Walter Gorkow** is an English teacher at Lynnville-Sully Community School District and resides in Pella, Iowa. She and Patrick Gorkow married Aug. 13, 2022.



**Bronwyn Metcalf Gunnink** is pursuing a master's degree in physics at Des Moines University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Carla Ruiz Gutierrez** is a nursing student at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Blaine Hawkins** is a public finance investment banker for Piper Sandler located in Dever, Colorado.

**Terry Hefel** is working for Principal Financial Group as an associate accountant in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Chloe Hildreth** is pursuing a master's degree in organizational leadership at Clarks Summit University in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania.

**Ace Holst** is an associate at Brown Edwards in Roanoke, Virginia.

**Chloe Howell** is an accounting intern at Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Cade Humphries** is a cost accountant at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Sarah Ingalls** is pursuing a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Chicago, Illinois.

**Cody Jacobson** is a music teacher for Dubuque Community School District in Dubuque, Iowa.

**Madelyn Johnson** is a nursing student at Mercy College of Health Sciences in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Madison Johnson** is an office and finance manager at Single Parent Provision in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Madolyn Clark Johnson** is a dental assistant at Clarinda Family Dentistry in Clarinda, Iowa.

**Jacob Jorgensen** is an operations co-op at Grinnell Mutual in Grinnell, Iowa.

**Kaylie Kaller** is a QC analyst for Frontier Natural Products Co-Op in Norway, Iowa.

**Erik Knaack** is working for Stryker as an onsite specialist in Spencer, Iowa.

**Thatcher Krob** is a cost estimator in Lisbon, Iowa, for Elite Stone Fabrication.

**Averi Kron** is an associate accountant for Principal Financial Group in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Josh Kuiper** works for Pella Corporation as a process engineer and resides in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**Brittney Kuntz** is a certified alcohol and drug counselor at Keys to Success.

**Katie Larson** is pursuing a physical therapy degree at Des Moines University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Ceora LeClaire** is seeking a doctorate degree in chiropractic at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.

**Hollie Loper** is working toward a doctorate in occupational therapy at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

**Abigail Lowry** is an engineer at Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa, where she and husband **Austin Schmolz** live. They married May 29, 2022.

**Luke Lubbers** is a service manager at TrueNorth Companies in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Meredith Mahoney** is pursuing a master's degree in sports management at Illinois State University in Bloomington, Illinois.

**Abby Malecha** is a care coach for Dorothy's House in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Josh Mayhew** is a social studies teacher in the Pella Community School District in Pella, Iowa.

**Nicholas McColgan** is pursuing a doctorate in chiropractic medicine at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.

**Jenna Clark McBride** is a preschool teacher at North Bend Elementary School in North Liberty, Iowa.

**Reece McCaslen** is a finance assistant at MAGNA in Williamsburg, Iowa.

**Crystal McCulloch** teaches fifth grade at New Providence Elementary in Eldora, Iowa.

**Gabrielle Menninga** is a fourth-grade teacher at Norwalk Community School District in Norwalk, Iowa.

**Ashley Millard** is an IT assurance analyst for Grinnell Mutual in Grinnell, Iowa, and resides in Pella, Iowa.

**Quinn Miller** is pursuing a doctorate in chiropractic at Palmer College of Chiropractic in Davenport, Iowa.

**Seth Moeller** teaches fifth grade at Bondurant Farrar Community School District in Bondurant, Iowa.

**Dale Morlan** is a service coordinator at UnityPoint Health in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Erik Murphy** is a design engineer at Ring-O-Matic in Pella, Iowa.

**Winton Neal** is a law student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale School of Law in Carbondale, Illinois.

**Cutler Owens** is a marketing and sales manager for Superstorm Restoration in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Katie Palmer** teaches first grade at Mid-Prairie in Kalona, Iowa.

**Doug Pepper** is a campus ministry intern with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in Pella, Iowa.

**Amy Philavanh** is a FSQ chemist for Cargill in Eddyville, Iowa.

**Chase Poston** is a police officer for the Des Moines Police Department in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Bradley Pregon** works at Cambridge Investment Research in Fairfield, Iowa, as an IT systems analyst.

**Kellie Prince** is a conservation aide for Story County in Ames, Iowa.



**Megan Reem** works as a group home case manager for the Handicapped Development Center in Davenport, Iowa.

**Taylor Rindone** is an athletic trainer for Kinetic Edge Physical Therapy in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Megan Rohr** is an art teacher for Moravia Community Schools in Moravia, Iowa.

**Channing Rucks** is a staff writer for The Oskaloosa Herald in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**Zoe Runyon** is a database coordinator at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

**Easton Sabala** is attending Southwest Baptist University located in Bolivar, Missouri.

**Griffin Sargent** works for Andersen Corporation as an engineering technician in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Sarah Schirm** is a lifestyle coordinator for Wesley Life – Edgewater in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jack Sagan** is a youth pastor at Federated Fellowship Church in Pella, Iowa.

**Bekah Beard Seufferer** is a thrift coordinator at The Well in Knoxville, Iowa.

**Drew Smith** is a police officer for the City of Ankeny in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Peyton Smith** teaches third grade for Des Moines Public Schools in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Madelyn Soupir** is an emergency room technician for MercyOne in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Victoria Sparger** is a project manager at EPIC in Madison, Wisconsin.

**Shawn Spurrier** is a business intelligence developer at Vermeer Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

**Alec Stahl** works at Vincent Construction in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Ryan Stallman** is a wealth retirement actuarial analyst at Mercer in Houston, Texas.

**Timothy Stammeyer** is an elementary special education teacher in the Iowa City Community School District in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Zach Steckly** is an audit associate for KPMG in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Andrew Stevens** is pursuing a Master of Divinity at Lincoln Christian University in Lincoln, Illinois.

**Tyler Steward** owns his own company in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Matthew Strey** works as an account resolution specialist at Wells Fargo in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Allison Stuenkel** is an English and language arts teacher in Waterloo Community School District in Waterloo, Iowa.

**Olivia Svoboda** is a Fulbright foreign language teaching assistant in the Canary Islands of Spain.

**Zach Swart** is a police officer in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Trenton Swartwoudt** is pursuing an associate degree in fire and paramedic sciences at Des Moines Area Community College in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Nicolas Thompson** is a financial analyst at Transamerica in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Anna Tillo** is attending Palmer Chiropractic College in Davenport, Iowa, to obtain a doctorate in chiropractic.

**Carter Tryon** is a high school biology teacher at ADM High School in Adel, Iowa.

**Addison VanDePol** is a clinical lab analyst at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

**Landon Vander Leest** is a client support representative for Intellicents in Pella, Iowa.

**Jordan Van Maanen** teaches fourth grade at Van Allen Elementary in the Chariton Community School District in Chariton, Iowa.

**Mari Stein Vroom** is working at The Identity Group as an account manager in Pella, Iowa.

**Joseph Weber** is pursuing a doctorate degree in chiropractic from Des Moines University in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jacob Wegner** is a teaching assistant for McLean County Unit District in Normal, Illinois.

**Kale Weis** is an assistant auditor for Deloitte in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Jacob Wessel** is a project manager engineer for Clow Valve Company in Oskaloosa, Iowa.

**Hannah Woerner** is pursuing a master's degree in educational psychology at the University of Northern Colorado in Greeley, Colorado.

**Emma Wright** is an occupational therapy graduate student at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Hannah Wright** is an occupational therapy graduate student at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska.

**Skyler Young** is a middle school teacher at Newton Community School District in Newton, Iowa.

**Colton Yount** works for Child Protective Services in Maine.

**Jared Zang** is an EMT for American Medical Response in Santa Rosa, California.

**John Zeitler** teaches sixth grade at Cardinal Community Schools in Eldon, Iowa.

**Jonathan Zohlmann** joined Nebraska Wesleyan's football coaching staff in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Samuel Zook** is a park ranger for the Army Corps of Engineers in Pella, Iowa.



# A Blessing TO OTHERS

STORY BY: JEANETTE BUDDING



**Bob De Smidt '61** was honored with the Alumni Stewardship, Service and Leadership Award in 2009.

Eternal hope — that's the perspective of **Robert "Bob" De Smidt '61**, a retired senior training manager for the Brady Company, who lives in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin.

"When you're blessed — and I have been blessed in so many ways in my life — I have to bless others," De Smidt says.

De Smidt has served Central for decades. It began during his college days when he met **Doris Veldhorst De Smidt '64**. The couple has returned to Pella often. He served on reunion committees and the National

Advisory Council from 2010 to 2018. In 2009, De Smidt was awarded the Alumni Stewardship, Service and Leadership Award.

De Smidt helped the men's wrestling team in a bind in 2008. The team had a meet in Milwaukee and De Smidt thought it would be great to support the team while in Wisconsin. During the meet, **Curtis Hobbs '11** was injured and needed to get to an emergency room but wrestling coach **Eric Van Kley**, now director of athletics and head men's wrestling coach, had to stay with the team. De Smidt offered to take Hobbs to

the emergency room. The "Central Bulletin" recounts the event in the Spring 2009 issue and begins with: "Never underestimate the kindness of a Central alum."

De Smidt says he's just a Central grad with a heart to help when given the opportunity. He also has maintained a connection with Hobbs since then.

## TIME AND TREASURES

The De Smidts' generosity to Central also includes donating over the years.

"One of my biggest and most enjoyable contributions honored **Cheri Trout Doane '98**," De Smidt says. "I just wanted to support her work. I loved what she was doing with a mission of serving others. Service Day last fall was impressive — 700-plus Central students and employees volunteered to help other people. That's cool. It's what I have been trying to do all my life. When I can help someone unconditionally, it does my heart so much good."

Prison ministries provide De Smidt with an outlet for sharing his love and faith. More than 11 years ago, he began working with a juvenile prison ministry program — building relationships, offering hope and sharing his faith. He also is involved in Words of Hope, a Reformed Church in America program, that builds radio stations in countries with limited access — or no access — to God's Word.

"I am grateful for every day I can go into the jail," De Smidt says. "I walked down those dark concrete and steel halls. The doors make a terrible sound when they close around these kids."

He tries to remain humble in his ministry. "It's not about me," De Smidt says. "We're proud of the juvenile jail ministry program, but we're not going to let pride get in the way of the work we have to do yet. Everybody needs to know that they are loved — that's the primary goal."

"I'm humbled to be able to work with prison ministries and Words of Hope," De Smidt says. "My late wife and I feel it's important to be a blessing to others." ■

# EXTREME DEADLINE: AN UNSUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR LOCAL NEWS

STORY AND PHOTO BY: KYLE MUNSON '94



I first dabbled in journalism with my elementary school's "Sixth Grade News Flash." I reviewed prime-time TV and — for whatever reason — picked Lionel Richie in our class poll of favorite pop stars.

In high school I thought I might pursue editorial cartooning. I managed to get one frame published in the local newspaper as the extent of that career.

At Central College in the early '90s, I reported and wrote for the student newspaper "The Ray" under the guidance of the late **Marty Feeney**, former associate professor of communication. I also interned at a free tabloid overseas in London and wrote for this alumni magazine.

Looking for a career where I could write daily and craft narratives, I forged ahead with journalism: I spent 24 years in daily news in a variety of roles with the Des Moines Register. Once I was in the news business, I fell in love with the thrill of chasing a story and the mission to comfort the afflicted. My path wound along

backroads, through city council chambers and all the way to China. The basic premise of journalism is simple: Go out and seek compelling stories and solid facts on behalf of the public good, under the protection of the First Amendment.

In practice, it's a craft full of pitfalls where you sweat every mistake, endure public criticism and always look forward to the next crushing deadline.

It's also a noble calling: If we care about the future of our communities, accurate reporting by professional journalists still wields tremendous cultural power. Numerous studies have shown how quality local journalism promotes voter turnout and other signs of a healthy democracy.

But the business model for local journalism is broken. "Since 2005, the country has lost more than a fourth of its newspapers (2,500) and is on track to lose a third by 2025," writes Penny Abernathy of the Medill Local News Initiative.

A distinguished private liberal arts college, international manufacturers and Dutch tourism qualify Pella as a thriving small town compared to most across the Midwest. Yet in 2020 the Pella Chronicle merged with the Oskaloosa Herald — one of just hundreds of communities to lose their local news source in the pandemic.

The internet and social media have given us dazzling new creative tools. But they also divert local journalism off course with an ultimately empty promise to woo a lucrative, mass digital audience. The revenue from all those extra eyeballs poured into Silicon Valley.

I left the newsroom in 2018 for another fulfilling career in content marketing in financial services for Principal. But news ink never quite leaves the bloodstream, so I joined the board of the Western Iowa Journalism Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to helping pioneer a new, sustainable future for independent local journalism.

Publishers in western Iowa — Doug Burns in Carroll, Art Cullen in Storm Lake and Lorena Lopez in Denison — had the brainstorm for the foundation. An experienced grant writer and trained journalist in rural Breda, Becky Vonnahme forged the founding documents and became our executive director. Our independent board came together in 2020 and received the stamp of approval from the IRS in 2021. In less than two years, we've made significant progress in a region arguably most threatened by encroaching "news deserts": rural and small-town America. If we can build new, sustainable models for community journalism here, we'll learn valuable lessons to apply to all communities.

But we'll need all the help we can get as we escalate our work. In fall 2023 we're launching a specific campaign dedicated to combating misinformation and disinformation as we move through the midterm elections and into the 2024 presidential race. Please visit [westerniowajournalismfoundation.com](https://westerniowajournalismfoundation.com) and sign up for our newsletter.

This looming deadline is existential: the fate of local news itself. ■



# CELEBRATE HOO-RAH DAY

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 11!

Spread your #CentralSpirit loud and proud with Central's fight song!  
Share your school song videos with us on social media for #HoorahDay!

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