LED TO SERVE
CENTRAL GRADS GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH PUBLIC SERVICE

HOO-RAH DAY
THE CENTRAL FAMILY MADE THIS HOO-RAH DAY THE BEST EVER

SCHOLARSHIP DINNER
AN EVENING OF TOGETHERNESS, GRATITUDE AND CENTRAL PRIDE

MORE THAN CAMPAIGN TRAILS
TWO ALUMNAE DO GOOD IN THE WORLD USING THEIR POLITICAL SCIENCE DEGREES

COMMENCEMENT 2023: CONTINUED RESILIENCE
THE CLASS OF 2023 WAS HONORED IN AN UNFORGETTABLE CEREMONY
This is where learning occurs. When we listen, then despite our disagreements, we share one thing in common – we are citizens of the same community.

In this longstanding commitment to discourse is deeply embedded in the life of the college. The spectrum of perspectives expressed across our constituents is vast. I continually marvel at the richness of dialogue I witness every day. This is where I work to live. I am an independent, centrist, moderate, pragmatic, technocrat. Perhaps that makes me an inderepublicatarian. Sure, it sounds like something Dr. Suess would have invented, but it’s perfectly me.

For me, everyone belongs. When I hear and bear each other enough to really listen, then despite our disagreements, we share one thing in common – we are citizens of the same community.
The seventh annual Central College Hoo-Rah Day tallied 420 gifts. In total, the college raised more than $360,316 in support of student scholarships and programs Tuesday, April 11.

Alumni, current and past parents, faculty, staff and students contributed to the success. Together, donors raised $326,217 for the Journey Scholarship Fund. In addition, more than $34,000 was raised for 54 campus programs and other designations. Gifts came from 44 states and the District of Columbia and around the world — including a gift that arrived from Japan. Additionally, EVERY class of Central graduates had at least one donor with the Classes of 1970 and 2001 tiring for the participation challenge.

In the days leading up to Hoo-Rah Day, 337 Central students, employees, alumni, family and friends participated in the college’s third 53-Mile Challenge from March 11 to April 11. There were a great deal of overachievers in this year’s cohort with many participants completing more than double or triple the number of miles for the challenge. Go Dutch!

Thank you to everyone who helped make this Hoo-Rah Day our best one yet!

The 23rd annual Scholarship Celebration Dinner warmed hearts, honored the philanthropic spirit of the Central College family and was all around good for the soul. Smiles — and even some tears — were seen throughout the evening in P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium.

Pianist Hailey Swan ’23 provided a prelude to the evening’s program, Cole Kraber ’23 offered the invocation and student musicians Evan Collins ’23 and Jake Schulte ’24 provided the evening’s entertainment.

Gloria Montiel ’23, a first-generation farm girl from Columbus Junction, Iowa, reflected on her time at Central and how it has opened paths for her future through a moving video. Dave Barnes, loyal friend and donor to the college, spoke about his “adoption” into the Central family and why he and his wife, Mary Barnes, support Central.

Central President Mark Putnam addressed all in attendance saying that “a scholarship is a leap of faith.” Our donors’ investments in our students and their experiences are just that. And because of their leap, our students can do remarkable things. “For those of you who are donors to our scholarships, we are so deeply grateful because we know what it does. Our students’ experiences are made rich because you have faith.”

Watch the video premiered at the dinner: central.edu/scholarship-dinner23.

Every gift does a world of good. Your support directly impacts Central programs and opens doors for Central students. To make a gift, visit central.edu/give or call 641-628-5154 and ask for Michelle Wilkie, director of development.
**VAN DE KIEFT NAMED CENTRAL CIO**

Joe Van de Kieft ’99 was appointed Central College’s chief information officer. He oversees the Information Technology Services department in strategic planning and enhancing the college’s digital network safety and security to support the college’s mission. Van de Kieft returns to campus with more than 20 years of experience in IT software development, security systems and entrepreneurial leadership.

After graduating from Central, Van de Kieft began working at Advanced Technologies Group in Des Moines, Iowa with Teij Dkwan ’91, current chair of Central’s Board of Trustees. Central ties run deep with Van de Kieft. He is the son of Milly Van de Kieft, retired adjunct professor of children’s and young adult literature for 29 years, and Henry Van de Kieft ’53. Van de Kieft is married to Kerry Maynard Van de Kieft ’99.

**TEN NAPEL NAMED VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT**

Karmen Ten Napel was named vice president for student development and dean of students. Ten Napel has served as dean of students at Morningside University in Sioux City, Iowa, since 2014 and as associate vice president for student life and Title IX coordinator since 2019. She began her duties at Central June 1.

“Karmen’s high energy, professional expertise and heart for students are in complete alignment with our vision at Central for leadership, partnerships and relationships necessary for success,” says Mark Putnam, Central president. “Her holistic approach to student development is collaborative, open-minded and originates from a place of empathy.”

Carol Williamson, a 23-year employee of the college and vice president for student development and dean of students, retired from her role May 31. She will stay on for a period of time to help with the transition and also work on some special projects for the college.

**ANDERSON NAMED NEW CHIEF TALENT, EQUITY AND ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

Central welcomes Jill Anderson, chief talent, equity and engagement officer, this spring to head the newly created Office of Talent, Equity and Engagement. This new role combines three key areas at Central: talent acquisition, equity and compliance and employee engagement.

Anderson will direct the core functions of hiring, onboarding, benefits and overall employee well-being. These have been merged with the goal of attracting and sustaining a diverse pool of talent. The equity component addresses Central’s strong desire to have an inclusive work environment. The new role will also ensure college-wide compliance, support employee and student training and development, as well as coordinate campus-wide Title IX responsibilities.

Prior to Central, Anderson worked 15 years at Vermeer Corporation, rising from a recruiting specialist to human resources business partner, to a continuous improvement manager and, most recently, human resources manager. She also held positions at Pella Corporation and Pella Regional Health Center.

**BENEDICT PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT**

Mary Benedict has been named director of engagement in the newly formed engagement and events team for Central’s advancement department. She will oversee planning special on-campus events such as Homecoming, Scholarship Dinner and Hon-Rah Day. In addition, she will organize educational and social alumni events to connect the surrounding area with the Central community.

Benedict began working at Central in 2002 as the campus visit coordinator in the admission office. She met most incoming first-year students for five years. These relationships have served her well as she moved to the advancement office and worked closely with alumni.

**MTX DAY IMMERSED IN SERVICE AND JUSTICE**

Martin Luther King Jr. Day at Central featured artist and writer Bettina Judd, plus 15 concurrent academic sessions and five service projects. This created a day focused solely on a shared vision for justice by students and the community.

Paulina Mena, faculty fellow for diversity and inclusion and associate professor of biology, organized the educational programming. Central honored the Martin Luther King Jr. legacy of equity, justice and peace with a full day of learning and service activities to bring students and community members together.

**FOURTH ANNUAL CAREER KICKSTARTER**

Central students participated in Career Kickstarter, a weeklong program during Winter Break, which gave students career strategy-building workshops, micro-internships and networking opportunities with Central alumni and area business professionals. Participants had in-depth career exploration and experience workshops on networking, building a résumé, finances, how to apply and prepare for an extended internship and more.

Throughout the week, students completed micro-internships in area workplaces. If your business is interested in hosting micro-internships for students, contact Tori Fyde ’20, assistant director of community-based learning at tfyde@central.edu.

**VITA**

Central’s annual Investment Tax Assistance (VITA) program continues to provide tax preparation services at no cost to qualifying individuals. Each year, the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program, students and faculty organized and run this program.

VITA offers low-income, elderly and disabled clients services, including English tax preparation, tax preparation assistance for people with disabilities, and services to limited English-speaking clients. VITA is a free tax preparation service for those with low incomes.

**ACCOUNTING STUDENTS HOSTED FREE TAX SERVICE**

For the fourth year in a row, Central’s accounting faculty and students offered free income tax preparation services for Marion County residents. Students prepared taxes on a volunteer basis under the supervision of accounting faculty through the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Students gained valuable tax preparation experiences and residents received free tax preparation services.
Putnam, PACE ALLIANCE HONORS MARK PUTNAM

“I’ve had the privilege of serving on the executive board with Mark, and what you Putnam served in the role since 2017.

career-readiness programming and student-faculty research while also deepening the community. When you look at the success that PACE has had under his leadership, and director. “Mark has left his legacy on the PACE Alliance. He’s very passionate about the community.”

Freed taught business management at Central for 30 years.

n her new book, Freed challenges readers, no matter what age, to think differently about legacy. She writes, rather than something we

improve physical and mental quality of life for individuals with multiple sclerosis.

he published results state that several interventions may reduce MS-fatigue and other researchers, have published an article in Neurology. The article, “Efficacy of Diet on Fatigue and Quality of Life in Multiple Sclerosis: A Systematic Review and Network of Meta-analysis of Randomized Trials,” assessed the efficacy of different dietary approaches on MS-related fatigue and quality of life. Neurology is the most widely read and highly cited peer-reviewed neuroscience journal.

The published results state that several interventions may reduce MS-fatigue and improve physical and mental quality of life for individuals with multiple sclerosis. Additional large-scale trials can now be conducted to confirm the findings.

PAC E ALIANCE HONORS MARK PUTNAM
The Pella Area Community and Economic Alliance Board of Directors honored Mark Putnam, Central president, on his retirement as the PACE executive board president.

“Mark has left his legacy on the PACE Alliance. He’s very passionate about the community. When you look at the success that PACE has had under his leadership, and director. “Mark has left his legacy on the PACE Alliance. He’s very passionate about the community.”

Central and Pella Public Library welcomed the award-winning author and performer Caleb “The Negro Artist” Rainey for a performance on campus. Made possible by the Leadership Through Equity Fund, An Evening An Evening with Caleb Rainey: The Heart of a Negro Artist showcased Rainey’s poetry and spoken word performance followed by an onstage interview with Dr. Bolí Roberti Leonard, KNASA/KRLS reporter. Rainey was on campus for two days hosting workshops for students, faculty and staff.

Black History Month activities included a cultural cuisine student dinner with discussion by students in the Alliance of Underrepresented People and Paulina Mena, faculty fellow for diversity and inclusion and associate professor of biology; the Global Café served up

MILLS GALLERY FEATURED STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY

“Combining the images stored in my memory and topics learned in biology classes, I strive to capture more meaningful photos,” she says. “My current interest in botany is to find and include native plants that birds rely on. This not only makes it easier to find certain species and habitats, but it can lead to more impactful photos. I see photography as both an artistic expression and a way to share the little details found in the wild places around us.”

Through photography, she captures natural scenes and organisms in a unique, personal way.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH
Central and Pella Public Library welcomed the award-winning author and performer Caleb “The Negro Artist” Rainey for a performance on campus. Made possible by the Leadership Through Equity Fund, An Evening An Evening with Caleb Rainey: The Heart of a Negro Artist showcased Rainey’s poetry and spoken word performance followed by an onstage interview with Dr. Bolí Roberti Leonard, KNASA/KRLS reporter. Rainey was on campus for two days hosting workshops for students, faculty and staff.

Black History Month activities included a cultural cuisine student dinner with discussion by students in the Alliance of Underrepresented People and Paulina Mena, faculty fellow for diversity and inclusion and associate professor of biology; the Global Café served up Civil Rights Coffee Cups featuring rights heroes, facts and inspirations on each beverage cup; students watched “Wakanda Forever” followed by a discussion with Oscar Reynaga, Class Dean for the Class of 2025 and senior lecturer of Spanish; a civil rights transit display presented figures from the civil rights movement; the BIPOC+ Coalition – students from Central, Drake University, Grand View University, Simpson College and William Penn University – gathered for conversation and ice skating; students and employers completed a service-learning project; Griswold Library staff created displays highlighting black authors and literature; and the Student-Athlete Advisory Council created and shared Black History Month video shorts for social media.

FREED PUBLISHES LIVING A LIFE WORTH REMEMBERING

In her new book, Freed challenges readers, no matter what age, to think differently about legacy. She writes, rather than something we start considering at the end of our lives or careers, we can create a life worth remembering, starting today. The book also details actionable tips and strategies one can use to start creating their own breadcrown legacy.

Freed taught business management at Central for 30 years.

New director of communications and marketing. Most recently, Bonnstetter had been serving as a senior content strategist marketing and project management. In her role, Bonnstetter will oversee the college’s marketing, communications and media relations efforts.

“Stettan’s depth of experience with enrollment and communications over her 17 years at Central is critical in leading the marketing work ahead for the college,” says Sunny Gonzales Eighmy ’95, vice president for advancement.

Writ ers Reading Series
The Spring 2023 Writers Reading Series at Central featured Lyndsey Fennelly, a motivational speaker, and author of Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth, a book discussing eco-theology and climate change.

“In much of my writing lately focuses on taking the climate crisis seriously and responding with the resources of faith, mercy and justice,” Rienstra explains. She shares that Refugia Faith “explores how Christian spirituality and practice must adapt to prepare for life on a climate-altered planet.”

The Writers Reading is available on the Central Dutch Network centralduutsch.net.

GOODMAN SELECTED FOR THE MATHEMATICAL ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA BOARD
The Mathematical Association of America has selected Russell Goodman, professor of mathematics at Central, as its new officer-at-large for the national organization.

In addition to this honor, Goodman continues to hold leadership roles in the MAA, including the Committee on the Teaching of Undergraduate Mathematics, the Classroom Resource Materials Board and Project NEXT Forest Dot. He has also held past leadership roles in the Iowa MAA section.

BEST OF RED ROCK 2022
Central earned three Best of Red Rock awards from the Marion County Economic Development Commission. This year’s contest consisted of 10 Top 10 lists and 22 category winners.

In 2022, Central’s red phone booth was a popular location to take photos, ranking fourth in the Top 10 Photo Spots category. Central was also recognized in the Top 10 Attractions, placing ninth, and Top 10 Venues, ranking third.

Winter Goodman, professor of mathematics and Spanish major, and Gloria Montiel ’23, philosophy and English major, ran a workshop open to the more than 600 conference attendees. The Central team has diverse experiences in racial justice, social change and justice, political advocacy and campus advocacy.

“These women are passionate about furthering social justice, diversity, equity and inclusion on and off the college campus and we are fortunate to have their energy and expertise at Central,” says JessiAllyn De NoveHo ’05, associate dean for career development and civic engagement.

The presentation, titled “Mobilizing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice Initiatives at Predominantly White Institutions” provides a brief history of Central’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The necessity of DEIJ and civic engagement at PWIs was also discussed. Presenters examined the development and changes the Alliance of Underrepresented People at Central has adopted since its founding in 2021.

The Spring 2023 Writers Reading Series at Central featured Lyndsey Fennelly, a motivational speaker, and author of Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth, a book discussing eco-theology and climate change.

“In much of my writing lately focuses on taking the climate crisis seriously and responding with the resources of faith, mercy and justice,” Rienstra explains. She shares that Refugia Faith “explores how Christian spirituality and practice must adapt to prepare for life on a climate-altered planet.”

The Writers Reading is available on the Central Dutch Network centralduutsch.net.

To read full articles, go to Central’s news site at central.edu/news.

To read full articles, go to Central’s news site at central.edu/news.

SUMMER 23 | 9

© CNTAS
CENTRAL CLOSED OUT STRONG 2022

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

CENTRAL CLOSED OUT STRONG 2022

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

CENTRAL CLOSED OUT STRONG 2022

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

CENTRAL CLOSED OUT STRONG 2022

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

CENTRAL CLOSED OUT STRONG 2022

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.

Central’s advancement team enjoyed a robust final fundraising month of 2022, continuing its strong support from alumni and friends through the first half of the college’s fiscal year.

Central received more than $1.2 million in gifts in December and ended the calendar year with over $3.3 million in total giving. The college’s fiscal year ends on June 30 each year.
Football can prepare you for a lot in life. Adam Gregg ’06 shares his journey from Schipper Stadium to the Iowa Capitol and how he uses the skills he learned every day.

Sure, advising the governor of Iowa as you try steering the state through a global pandemic is arguably a bigger deal than a football game — even a Central College football game.

But, then again, this was Wartburg. As Adam Gregg ’06 anxiously tried perusing his fingers into the turf while lining up near the outside of Central’s punt return formation, serving as Iowa’s lieutenant governor was more than a decade later was far from his mind. The temperature only reached 53 degrees on Monday night film sessions, Gregg focused intently on the special teams play. He’d talk with the coaches about the opponent’s punt formations. He’d get on the field early for pregame warmups to watch the opposing team’s long snapper warming up.

“I was not the quickest guy, so I needed to find every advantage that I could,” Gregg says. “I would watch that long snapper to see if he had any tells before he would snap. Does he have a butt-hole, right before he snaps? The good ones don’t. Does he maybe reset his feet or regrip the ball in a way that gives you a sense of when he’s about to go, just to give me that extra fraction of a second. That was really the difference for me in being able to get in there or not.”

Gregg slipped past the Wartburg linemen and immediately knew he could get there. “I remember getting in there so fast that he almost didn’t even kick it,” he says. “I almost caught it in my chest. I can see it in slow motion. I almost could see the laces on the ball.”

A muffled thud. The ball squirted free along the turf and Cathy Myers ’05 scooped it up at the 7-yard line and raced into the end zone. The touchdown triggered a 27-point second-half explosion and a 37-20 victory that led to a share of a conference title and an NCAA Division III playoff berth.

This was the underdog reserve safety’s moment. “I remember almost blacking out,” he says. “I remember even after celebrating with Cathy, Myers in the end zone, looking at the crowd and they’re going crazy, but I can’t hear anything. I get to the sideline and guys are congratulating me. They knew that [point blocking] was my thing and that’s the role I wanted to play.”

THE PLAY OF A LIFETIME

The Dutch were trailing 14-10 at the half and coach Jeff Martin ’90 knew if they were going to knock off the heavily favored Knights and make a run at a conference title, they needed a momentum-changing play. So, after the defense got an early third-quarter stop, the bold call was made to take a shot at blocking the punt. That meant either Nate Rasmussen ’06 bursting through one side of the line or Gregg from the other and this time it was set up for Gregg.

Thoughts frantically bounced through Gregg’s mind, with one was flashing in bold red letters: “Don’t screw up!”

But just as the 4.0 student did for every class, Gregg did his homework. During Monday night film sessions, Gregg focused intensely on the special teams play. He’d talk with the coaches about the opponent’s punt formations. He’d get on the field early for pregame warmups to watch the opposing team’s long snapper warming up.

“I was not the quickest guy, so I needed to find every advantage that I could,” Gregg says. “I would watch that long snapper to see if he had any tells before he would snap. Does he have a butt-hole, right before he snaps? The good ones don’t. Does he maybe reset his feet or regrip the ball in a way that gives you a sense of when he’s about to go, just to give me that extra fraction of a second. That was really the difference for me in being able to get in there or not.”

Gregg slipped past the Wartburg linemen and immediately knew he could get there. “I remember getting in there so fast that he almost didn’t even kick it,” he says. “I almost caught it in my chest. I can see it in slow motion. I almost could see the laces on the ball.”

A muffled thud. The ball squirted free along the turf and Cathy Myers ’05 scooped it up at the 7-yard line and raced into the end zone. The touchdown triggered a 27-point second-half explosion and a 37-20 victory that led to a share of a conference title and an NCAA Division III playoff berth.

This was the underdog reserve safety’s moment. “I remember almost blacking out,” he says. “I remember even after celebrating with Cathy, Myers in the end zone, looking at the crowd and they’re going crazy, but I can’t hear anything. I get to the sideline and guys are congratulating me. They knew that [point blocking] was my thing and that’s the role I wanted to play.”

THE BACKUP

But the swift transition occasionally causes even Gregg’s head to twirl. “Back then we would get sort of a daily printout of our schedule for the day,” Gregg says. “And I got mine one day and, in the afternoon, it said I’d be greeting the President of the United States getting off of Air Force One. And I remember thinking, ‘Boy, that never would have been on my agenda three weeks ago.’”

But as a Central football reserve, Gregg said he’s well-equipped to quietly handle his second-string role behind Reynolds. “Having been on a team and having, frankly, been a backup on the team, is certainly something that I think prepared me to be successful in a backup role,” he says. “You don’t know if you’re ever going to get a snap, or if you’re ever going to get a chance. But you still have to prepare as if you’re going to, and you still have to root for your teammate who is the number one and help them be successful. But then if your moment comes, you’ve got to be ready.”

LEADING THOSE WHO LED HIM

There is, however, more to serving as lieutenant governor than smiling and nodding approximately during the governor’s photo ops and public events. Gregg chairs the Governor’s FOCUS Committee on Criminal Justice Reform and co-chairs the Governor’s Empower Rural Iowa initiative. He chaired the Republican Lieutenant Governors Association in 2020 and is chair-elect of the National Lieutenant Governors Association. Most significantly, he’s a member of the governor’s leadership team. In a bit of role reversal, Gregg coached De Waard, now the Pella mayor, through the pandemic.

“We had this whole brouhaha about the tulips and people wanting to come to Pella, so I’m calling him because I knew the challenges they were having trying to manage the whole state,” De Waard recalls. “But there are other projects that involve city and state things and I feel very comfortable contacting one thing I know is when I text him, he responds very quickly. I love that we have that relationship.”

What politics can’t match is the shared emotional release following wins like that pivotal game at Wartburg in 2005. “I’ve said many times that the biggest thing I miss about coaching is the locker room after a game because there’s no feeling to replicate it,” De Waard says. “Watching kids that you know have worked so hard and witness their excitement is a feeling you just can’t replicate anywhere.”

COMPETITIVE NATURE, POSITIVE IMPACT

And that’s no longer the goal for Gregg. “Certainly, politics and campaigns can be an outlet for my competitive nature but it’s not necessarily seeking that moment,” he says. “It’s more about the ability to give back and lead a meaningful life that impacts others in a positive way.”

Yet Gregg says he felt a brief surge of that familiar emotion on election night in 2018. “We, at one point that evening, were down by 30,000 votes. Someone happened to capture a picture of the moment that we found out. It’s probably the closest thing I've
had to that euphoric feeling of victory on the football field after a game.”

Political fortunes can change with the wind, and Gregg is simply trying to savor the opportunity he has to serve, while explaining to his children that they won’t always have a highway patrol officer dropping them off at school in the morning.

“We have a number of meetings where we’ve had the opportunity to be in the West Wing of the White House and those are definitely moments where you do think to yourself, ‘Boy, I’ve sure come a long way from that Political Science 101 class with Jim Zaffiro,’” Gregg chuckles. “You try to appreciate those experiences as much as you can because this is temporary, right? I’m not going to be in this role for the rest of my life.”

And Gregg is convinced he wouldn’t be in it at all, if his four years at Central hadn’t launched him on that path.

“Sometimes it’s a fun exercise to think, well, what if there was a missing link in that chain,” he wonders. “Would I still be here as lieutenant governor if Jim Zaffiro hadn’t said, ‘Yes, Adam should have this opportunity the summer after his freshman year,’ which just strengthened my resume for the next opportunity and the opportunity after that. Ultimately, that led to a great law school experience, which led to a great professional experience, which eventually led to this role. But it all goes back to that decision as an 18-year-old kid from Hannaden (Iowa) to find a place where we were going to win on the football field, and I could accomplish academically what I wanted to accomplish.”

ATHLETICS UPDATES

MEN’S BASKETBALL: Picked for eighth place, the Dutch soared to its 18th conference championship while finishing 18-7 overall. Center Joshua Van Gorp ’24 was named to the NABC All-America team — the first Central player recognized in program history. Van Gorp was also the American Rivers Conference player of the year. Forward Grant Johnson ’24 was a first-team all-conference pick and Joe Steinkamp ’03, head men’s basketball coach, was named the coach of the year.

WOMEN’S BASKETBALL: Guard Kelsea Hurley ’23 became the 13th player in program history to reach the 1,000-point mark for her career as first-year coach Moran Lonning’s squad finished 8-17. Hurley and center Allison Van Gorp ’25 were second team all-conference selections.

MEN’S AND WOMEN’S INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD: Sam Beauty ’23 captured Central’s eighth indoor NCAA Division III men’s title by winning the high jump at six feet, nine inches at the national meet in Birmingham, Alabama. Meanwhile, Megan Johnson ’24, Abbi Roerdink ’24, Peyton Steffen ’26 and Caroline McMartin ’24 gained All-America distinction by finishing fifth in the distance medley relay in a school record 11 minutes, 44.98 seconds. The Central women jumped to third place in the American Rivers Conference meet and the men placed fifth.

WRESTLING: Gage Linahon ’24 was an NCAA Division III tournament qualifier at 197 pounds after placing second at the Lower Midwest Regional. The Dutch were 7-5 in dual action and tied for fifth in the conference.

POLITICAL SCIENCE: Much More than Campaign Trails

Two Central College alumnae share their time working to make the world better with political science degrees.

Erinn Lauterbach ’09 came to Central College focused on becoming an attorney. Her doors of opportunity provided a different career route to becoming an assistant professor of political science at Villanova University.

THE ROAD TO ACADEMIA

Lauterbach uses the great experiences that she benefitted from at Central. She now instills in her own students the knowledge of how the political world impacts them and, equally important, how they can impact the political world.

Lauterbach loves being a professor. “It’s a good mixture of doing research and teaching,” she says. “These are the two things that I really wanted to do when I decided to go to grad school. I like conducting research because I can create knowledge. I basically get to look at the world around us, ask questions about what I observe and then answer those questions.”

She explains that her job is being a lifelong learner. “I learn more about the topics that I teach as I prepare for classes. I also learn tons from the students when I’m in the classroom,” she says.

Lauterbach is grateful her college experiences guided her in a different direction. “Two big influences at Central put me on this path,” she shares. “One is the professors. I was a psychology and political science double major. In my first year, I took a psychology course that sparked my interest in research. I started taking political science courses and I liked those the most.”

The second big influence was Andrew Green, director of institutional research and former professor of political science, who worked with Lauterbach and introduced the idea that being a professor could be a career for her.


“This experience taught me that government could be interesting,” she says. “I grew up in Iowa with political campaigns always coming around. But I didn’t really understand the government. Working in the British Parliament opened my eyes.”

She also spent a semester in Granada, Spain, to challenge herself. “I learned that I could do things outside my comfort zone and even thrive in those situations,” she says.

TEACHING TO MAKE CHANGE

She looked back on her international experiences as she created the learning environment for her students.

“I not only want them to understand the content, but I want them to think about how they can inspire the world around them. They can participate in government,” Lauterbach says.

She wants them to understand the content and to think about how they’ve learned what they’ve learned. Lauterbach inspires them to participate in the system when they see things they don’t like or encourage those things that they feel should continue to happen.

For an up-to-date schedule of all sports, visit athletics.central.edu/calendar.
“Engaging students to be citizens is critical,” she says. “I think American politics and what we talk about in class every day is important for the students. Government affects most aspects of our day-to-day lives in ways we don’t even think about because the government is so ubiquitous. It affects how we do our grocery shopping, whether potholes on the roads are fixed, and the safety of universal pipelines so we can plug our phones into the walls and not worry whether the electricity will fry the device.”

Lauterbach teaches classes about governmental institutions, Congress, bureaucracy, and how decisions are being made in those spaces. Her research focuses on better understanding how policymaking happens. Her classes create a welcoming atmosphere and the students understand that people aren’t judging them, then we can talk about the issues.”

**LIFE-LONG LEARNER**

Lauterbach loves to learn. Following graduation, she completed a one-year AmeriCorps State commitment with the Family and Children’s Council in Waterloo, Iowa, working with a sexual assault prevention program.

She then moved to Washington, D.C., to work for former congressman Bruce Braley, representative of Iowa’s first district. Lauterbach admits, “I was young, working 24/7 on Capitol Hill for barely any pay. It was fun and I learned about how legislators change laws.”

After working on the Hill for two years where Lauterbach learned the delicate intricacies of governing in an institution of representation, she started graduate school at the UC Riverside in 2012. She earned a master’s in 2015 and a Ph.D. in June 2020.

Lauterbach gladly admits that Central prepared her for graduate school and ongoing research. She explains that her graduate classes were similar to classes at Central. She was the only person in her cohort who had attended a private, liberal arts college and had highly interactive classroom experiences. The courses and learning environment at Central were very similar to what Lauterbach experienced in her graduate program at UC Riverside.

From California, she completed a two-year post-doctorate study at the University of Virginia at the Center for Effective Law-making. Lauterbach leaned into her love of research and began a project that’s been ongoing for about three years. She is updating widely used scores and political science research related to Congress, called the Legislative Effectiveness Scores.

These scores are based on 15 metrics regarding bills that each member of Congress sponsors and how far the bill moves through the lawmaking process, as well as other measures. “The biggest thing that I learned at Central was how to learn,” Lauterbach says. “I was very prepared for graduate school and working at the federal level. We are making proposals for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The VA operates 171 medical centers across the country with over 1,000 outpatient clinics serving approximately nine million of the 25 million veterans in America. “The work and our mission is near and dear to my heart,” Chari says. “It’s for my husband, all of the military members serving and the friends, acquaintances and connections that we’ve made over 20-plus years in the military community.”

She’s married to U.S. Air Force Col. Raja Chari, a National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut and commander of the NASA SpaceX Crew-3 mission. The couple has three children. Chari spoke to Central students and guests about his experience when he was stationed at the International Space Station in February 2022. The couple came to campus in September 2022 to talk with students and share their professional and familial journeys.

Her passion for her work comes from the Central vision that service to others is a calling bigger than themselves. People often focus only on their share of the world. Being married to an astronaut gives her life a different perspective.

“Raja said it well when he explained the view from the International Space Station,” Chari says. “When you look down on Earth, you realize how magnificent and fragile it is. We’ve been entrusted to care for it and its people.”

“I always had a strong interest in government,” she says. “I have always believed it is paramount for people to understand their rights and responsibilities, whether at their local, state or federal level.”

“I was attracted to the practice of law by this natural connection with governance and the potential to really affect change in both small- and large-scale ways,” she shares. In her position, Chari focuses on the enactment of laws, regulations and policies. Some of her work includes legislative proposals for the Department of Veterans Affairs to Congress. She works with clients in the Veterans Health Administration writing proposals intended to improve patient care services.

Her office provides technical assistance on proposed bills and is largely responsible for developing regulations. Once a bill becomes law, it is common for the VA to develop rules or regulations. Once the final regulation is published, Chari helps the VA establish national policies and procedures designed to further implement the VA’s authority at the facility level.

“Our team at the VHA is innovating new methods, ideas and approaches,” she says. “That’s what I find so incredible about working at the federal level. We are making a difference in people’s lives on a large scale. That aligns with Central’s mission.”

**FINDING HER PATH THROUGH CENTRAL**

The journey from Central to the Houston, Texas, area where Chari currently lives has taken many twists and turns. She has moved nine times in 14 years.

Chari’s college days were filled with much soul-searching and fun. She considered health sciences her first year on campus. But, after she and her college roommate, Katherine Walstom Bayens ’99, mistakenly melted a rack holding a set of test tubes in the enclave as part of a microbiology lab, she had second thoughts about health care and decided to stick with a political science major. She also spent a year in the education program and says she still has aspirations of teaching someday because of her teachers and professors.

Keith Yanner, professor of political science, had the greatest influence on her
herself in court proceedings, protecting vulnerable adults who were being taken advantage of.

She also represented the clinicians at the VA’s Central Office. The couple welcomed a third child while stationed there.

“Raja went to Florida to train in the F-15A Lightning. He received an assignment to be the director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force and commander of the 461st Flight Test Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base in California,” Chari recollected.

In the military, Chari continued to take a diverse class load that enables you to determine your likes and dislikes as well as your strengths and weaknesses,” she explains. “I figured out how to best use those skills to serve people. That’s what led me to the field of law.”

THE MILITARY WAY OF LIFE AND LEARNING

Chari quickly learned and began living the military family life when she graduated from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School in Patuxent River, Maryland. They packed up and returned to the States where Holly began looking for jobs.

“Quickly learned from our time in England, that as you progress in the military your duty stations become shorter,” she says. “I decided to pursue federal government jobs which would allow me more flexibility.”

“For federal attorney positions, I would only need to be licensed in one state and I had my law licenses in both Iowa and Alaska. In 2008, I accepted a position with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). I was the first person in our office to telework,” Chari recalls. “My supervisor connected me with another attorney, who at the time, was teleworking as part of another law group. I remember her saying to me, ‘Don’t screw this up for us! We’ve got to maintain their trust and demonstrate that telework is valuable and a great solution.’ So, I did.”

While in Florida, the couple welcomed two children. After three years, they moved to Leavenworth, Kansas, for a year where Raja attended the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

“We were in the midst and reasonably close to family,” she says. “It was tremendous, especially with young children. I love the Midwest, but it was short-lived.”

Chari’s resilience was her strength. It became increasingly more challenging to keep up with all the demands of both children and Raja being gone frequently for duty. She decided to shift her employment to part-time.

From Kansas, the family moved to Washington, D.C.; for two and a half years where Raja was assigned to the Rapid Capabilities Office, Rolling Air Force Base. Chari returned in to-person work a few days a week at VA Central Office. The couple welcomed a third child while stationed there.

“In 2017, we both decided to part ways. We each took a step back in our careers and enrolled in graduate school,” Chari says. “I went to Florida to train in the F-15A Lightning. He received an assignment to be the director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force and commander of the 461st Flight Test Squadron at Edwards Air Force Base in California,” Chari recollected.

In 2017, Raja was assigned to California to July 2017, when they moved to the Houston, Texas, area where Raja was selected to be an astronaut.

Chari serves as the current president of the Astronaut Spouses Group.

“Our military and our veterans are a very diverse group of individuals who have lived in and experienced places all over the world,” she says. “When a military family moves within the United States or internationally, they are ambassadors. It’s a responsibility that military members and families have. We are making connections, building community and establishing lasting relationships with our host city, state and country.”

Chari understands and appreciates the sacrifices and hard work of all service members. She uses the skills she learned at Central every day to help people and serve our country in crucial ways — everything she hoped to accomplish when she arrived on campus in the fall of 1995.
(Left to right): Evan Gray ’23, David Bakol ’23, Johnathan Bossou ’23 and Muhumure Nzabakiza ’23 pose for a photo moments before the Commencement ceremony began.
THE EARLY YEARS
Bob Andeweg ’84 grew up in Pella, Iowa. His parents attended Central College, so that played a role in his decision to also attend, and with it being a smaller school, it was a good fit.

Andeweg studied political science and economics at Central. He was a proud member of the A Cappella Choir, a manager for the Central Dutch football team and he also had a job in town.

He built great friendships in his time at Central with students and incredible relationships with his professors.

The late Emeritus Professor of Economics, Don Butler was a tremendous professor,” Andeweg shares. “He was always able to relate with students and his tenure at Central allowed him to impact multiple generations.” Andeweg was one of Butler’s first “grandstudents” having taught his parents before him.

“Each fall, he’d have a gathering at his house with all of his grandstudents. He truly cared for all of us,” Andeweg says.

“The professors at Central were always great,” he says. “They were happy to talk to and work with you. They were accessible, had their doors open, made sure students understood concepts when they had questions.”

THE PATH TO MORE
After creating great memories on campus and on tours with the A Cappella Choir, Andeweg went to law school and was later hired by a firm in Des Moines, Iowa. He’s always been in the Greater Des Moines area and has enjoyed a great career in law. He found himself wanting to do more, though. Andeweg decided he wanted to give back to the community he called home. He knew the mayor of Urbandale, Iowa, at the time, BJ Giovannetti, and made it known he wanted to do what he could to help.

“I think he finally got tired of me and asked me to be on the planning and zoning commission,” Andeweg chuckles.

His next step was to run for Urbandale City Council in 1999. Five people ran for the three open seats and in Urbandale the highest votes fill the seats, rather than being divided by area in the community.

“Five people ran and I came in fourth,” Andeweg says. “So I didn’t get elected. But fate stepped in and one of the newly elected council members had to resign as they were moving out of town.”

As a result, Andeweg was appointed to city council. He ran for council for two more terms until running and being elected mayor of Urbandale in 2005 where he’s been the mayor ever since.

Mr. Mayor
“Being mayor is not a full-time job, but it can certainly take up a lot of time,” Andeweg says. “My role as mayor is being the voice of the city and our council and to be an ambassador for our city in many ways. I think that in itself and our work to bring the community together makes the time more than worth it.”

Andeweg represents Urbandale on several boards and commissions in the greater Des Moines metropolitan area.

“That’s probably where I have a better or greater influence representing Urbandale on those boards and commissions,” Andeweg reflects. “Being the voice of Urbandale, making sure we’re heard and doing what we should be doing as a city throughout the entire area because we’re all in it together. There are almost 20 communities that make up the Des Moines metro, and we need to play our part in that.”

MORE TO DO
“Looking ahead, I still want to practice, be valuable and keep learning,” he says. “I love working with clients. It’s great to see projects come together and see clients happy and successful. And that’s what I want to continue doing. I’m also trying to help and mentor some of our younger lawyers in the firm so they can do the same thing.”

His approach to his work as mayor is similar. “I’m in my fifth term as mayor and I know I won’t be in this role forever, but I’ve been very blessed to be mayor for as long as I have,” Andeweg says. “I want to continue encouraging younger people to get involved as the next generation of leaders in the community. We all need to give back in some way and I think public service is a great way to do it. I want to leave Urbandale better than I found it and I want to make sure that I’m leaving a positive impact on our community.”

As for his time at 812 University St., Andeweg doesn’t shy away from giving credit where credit is due. “Central gave me a great foundation for my future and it was the best experience I could have had.”

As one can imagine, there are many meetings for a mayor to attend. “I can be gone from sunrise to sundown,” Andeweg says. “I try to schedule a lot of breakfast or coffee meetings early in the morning to meet with council members and anyone else I need to visit with. During the day, though, I’m just focused on my day job as an attorney trying to get things done for my clients. Trying to keep my schedule in balance can be pretty difficult. I don’t have a lot of idle time.”

Fortunately for Andeweg, there’s a great deal of flexibility in his schedule. “Being an attorney is probably one of the best jobs to have as a mayor because I can be pretty flexible,” he says. “Most of my work happens from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. but I can flex and get things done earlier in the day or later at night if or when I need to. That flexibility is what helps Andeweg pursue his work in public service. “I’ve been very blessed to be with law firms that are very patient, understanding law partners that know this is part of what we need to do to pay our civic rent back to the community,” he says.

True to his Central roots, the desire to leave the community better than he found it is deeply ingrained within Andeweg.
FOR A LIFETIME
Sarah Hennesy ’91 grew up in Fairfield, Iowa. She didn’t know much about Central until she toured the campus and experienced Central firsthand. Hennesy was taken by how friendly and welcoming everyone was. It just felt right.

Hennesy double majored in religion and Spanish. She was involved in theatre through a musical production early on, studied abroad in Granada her junior year and focused on her religion individual study thereafter.

During the individual study, Hennesy worked closely with Thomas Kopecek and William Herbrechtmeier, professors emeriti of religion.

“One of the most significant and memorable things for me about Central is how the professors took such individual time with me and helped me figure out what I was going to be good at,” Hennesy shares. “They really helped me focus. It’s because of my professors at Central that I ended up going to law school and becoming a judge. I intended to be a minister and sort of had a crisis of faith. It was Herbrechtmeier who really took the time to talk to me through this crisis and pointed me toward law school.”

Because of that relationship, Hennesy’s life was forever changed. To be able to sit a student down and know them well enough to sense when something is off or that another path could lead to better results just goes to show it’s not a tagline — the relationships made at Central and their impact truly last a lifetime.

“I have been thankful ever since I went to law school that I had a teacher who cared so much — not just to get a student, but to help them find direction,” Hennesy shares. “And that’s why I think Central is so significant to me. I’d be hard to get that at a large school or many other places.”

SORTING THINGS OUT
From Pella, Hennesy attended Drake University to study criminal law. Following her graduation, she became a litigator in Des Moines, Iowa. She did this for two years, later moving to Spanish for one year as she was working to sort some things out.

Upon her return to the U.S., she worked as a criminal defense attorney in Washington, D.C., for eight years. “It was a great job and a great criminal defense attorney,” Hennesy says. “It was really exciting!”

When she met her husband, the couple made the move back to the Midwest.

“When we had kids, I thought I was going to be a stay-at-home mom,” she says. “I stayed home for one year and realized that if I focused all of my attention on this poor little being, I was going to drive them insane. I needed to do something else, so I got a job at Legal Aid in St. Cloud, Minnesota.”

While there, another guiding hand stepped in. “One of the judges pulled me aside and said, ‘You know, I think you’d be good at this,’” Hennesy recalls. “There was an opening coming up and she recommended I start the process of applying. She was just one of those special people, who I’ve been fortunate enough to know that care about reaching out and helping younger people.”

Hennesy’s really thought about being a judge and I didn’t know that this judge that well at the time. ’I’ve gotten to know her since, and she consistently reaches out to people to try to help further their careers. She looks to support other women. She saw something in me that made her think this work and she was right.”

A DAY IN THE LIFE
“My role is different than when I started now that I’m a chief judge,” Hennesy shares. “I’m in court pretty much every day but now I’m also part of our State Judicial Council. We set policies for judges in Minnesota, and I really love that.”

“Some of my days are spent doing the administrative portions of the work and I’m almost always in court every day, whether it’s over Zoom or live court,” she says.

During the pandemic, the judicial system had to adjust. “We did everything by Zoom for a while and now we’re hybrid,” Hennesy says.

“Some things can’t really be done well on Zoom like a jury trial, so those are in person, but a large number of things we do now via Zoom don’t involve judges.”

Hennesy has great hopes for the future and plans to make them happen. “I’m focused on helping my district and judges statewide” she says. “We want to keep the efficiency like we’ve had with Zoom but also want to continue to build public trust and confidence in our system by showing continued compassion for the people. So it’s trying to help judiciary strike that balance going forward.”

“Now I’ve had success seeing how to come, Hennesy fondly reflects on her time at Central. “I don’t know where I would be without my professors at Central who were so intelligent and knew how to truly help students see in themselves what they needed to succeed,” she says. “I think that’s a rare gift.”

Central served me more than its fair share of these kinds of teachers who are good at making connections with students and helping them see their own potential.

Campus roommates turned lifelong friends, Dawn Zwart ’91, Sarah Hennesy ’91 and Shari Kerr Miller ’91 still meet up when they can.

THE ROAD TO THE OFFICE
Justin Fletcher ’02 came to Central from Crawfordsville, Iowa. A lifelong Iowa Hawkeye fan, he looked at larger schools at first. But as he started to evaluate his academic needs and desires to be successful, a smaller school seemed to align with what he wanted his experience to look like.

Fletcher connected with coaches at Central in his later years of high school and fell in love with Pella, Central’s smaller campus and class sizes, programs and more. He built some great memories and relationships on campus with coaches and friends from his time on the baseball team, and perhaps most notably, his wife, Amanda Hansen Fletcher ’00.

LIFE IN THE PROFESSIONAL LANE
After Central, the value of a smaller organization was instilled in him. Throughout his career, Fletcher has sought out smaller employers where he could do a variety of tasks and have a larger impact while getting to know and work closely with people. As a professional in the world of finance, Fletcher has learned several different areas in the field. Currently in investment accounting, his work involves finance and security theory, working with investments, solving problems and more.

“I get to do creative things, consistent leader and work with really great people for a great company,” Fletcher says. Fletcher’s first job out of college provided key experiences that planted the seed for his work down the line. In his role, he helped manage a trust for school districts and cities providing Fletcher with countless opportunities to meet with school officials.

Fletcher has had the opportunity to help the Central way. His work certainly has made a difference. Fletcher has taught me a lot of what I can incorporate today in my job and in my work on the school board. The ability to have all the tools in your toolbox is something I’ve found helpful.”

In true Central fashion, Fletcher, Andeweg and Hennesy use the tools and skills they gained from Central to serve their communities in their leadership roles. That’s the Central way.

SUMMER 23 | 25
Continual Resilience

The Central College Class of 2023 was honored Saturday, May 13, in an unforgettable Commencement ceremony.

**STORY BY ERIN KAMP AND BRITTANY CARLSON PROKUPEK ’16**

**PHOTOS BY: CJ BONIFER AND DAN VANDER BEEK**

Central College celebrated the Class of 2023 Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 13. Families, friends, faculty, staff and guests were present to honor the 227 graduates and Heather Burr Isaccson ’97 delivered the keynote speech. Isaccson, program director for By Degrees Foundation in Des Moines, Iowa, received an Honorary Doctor of Public Service honoris causa degree.

Due to the threat of severe weather, exercises were moved indoors to H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse. They processed into the gym along for the culmination of their four years at Central. The excitement and pride were palpable.

Students lined up in H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse in true Midwest fashion, graduates and first responders and the emergency preparedness team, all took shelter not long after

In true Midwest fashion, graduates and first responders and the emergency preparedness team, all took shelter not long after

The weather forced the day to take an interesting turn. No stranger to adversity—their first year on campus, this class was sent home over spring break along with the rest of the student body due to the COVID-19 pandemic—the Class of 2023 handled everything with remarkable grace, patience and even a good sense of humor. The entire Central family was proud to welcome this cohort as the newest members of the alumni community both before and after the events of the day played out.

The Central College Class of 2023 shared one last Hoo-Rah before going their separate ways.

Graduates alike were glad for the change in plans but had no idea just how glad they’d be later on.

As luck would have it, not long after everyone returned to their seats, a second emergency weather alert sounded. While the emergency crew learned more about the storm, the ceremony proceeded until it couldn’t. To keep everyone safe, the gym was evacuated again as everyone took shelter. Unsure how long this threat would persist and if the ceremony would be able to continue, graduates had the option to receive their diploma and a photo with the president from the safety of the athletic training room or hold out the storm and have their moment crossing the stage immediately after moving from shelter.

Following the second all-clear notification, most everyone returned to the gym to hear their name called and receive their diploma (as well as closure).

The Central Family was proud to welcome home. Congratulations Central Class of 2023.

KEATON RODGERS ’23

**HOMETOWN:** Peoria, Arizona

**MAJOR:** Biology

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES:** Men’s basketball, Building a Culture of Inclusion and United Minority Alliance

Keaton Rodgers ‘23 is ready for whatever the world has in store for him. For now, it’s entomology research for the USDA Agricultural Research Services. Rodgers will be in Montana researching for the next four and a half months, which will hopefully open doors for more USDA and national forest jobs.

Paul Welke, associate professor of biology, helped Rodger tap into his love for trees, nature and the like.

“Ecology was the first class I had with him,” Rodgers recounts. “As soon as I had that class, I knew I was going to be a biology major and environmental science minor. I have a lot of love for Welke. He really propelled me to go, so I’m very appreciative of him.”

In his time at Central, Rodgers completed research with Lakeside Labs in Okoboji, Iowa, in Southern Wisconsin and had the opportunity to learn more about the world and that of biology in professor-led trips to Costa Rica and Belize.

“All my professors prepared me well, “ he says. “All my professors made me gain skills and real-world experience.”

Keaton Rodgers ‘23

“Overheard at Commencement

“As a class, we went through a lot. We were the first-year class that went through COVID. And so, we had to work really hard. It’s sad to have to leave but it took a lot of work to get her.” — Erica Van Wyk ‘23

Gannon Oberhauser ‘23 packed a lot into his accelerated three years at Central. “I was a 2020 grad in high school, so I didn’t really have a graduation so to be able to graduate from Central now is amazing. I’m so excited for it.” — Gannon Oberhauser ‘23

“As many people played a part in making the best of a tough situation, this is yet another example of what a special place Central is and how dedicated the faculty and staff are in rising to the occasion when something—planned or unexpected—needs to be done.”

Brian ’80 and Lori Humphrey Fogley ’80

“We’re proud of our graduates every year, but the grace and resilience displayed by this class was moving. To go through all they’ve been through with the pandemic, now bookending with a less than ideal Commencement ceremony due to tornadoes in the area and still come out smiling—that’s tenacious grit I’ve ever seen.” — Mark Putnam, Central president

Leticia Francisco Pascual ’23

**HOMETOWN:** Ottumwa, Iowa

**MAJORS:** Sociology and Spanish

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES:** Organization of Latin American Students, men’s basketball team manager, Dutch Barbell Club and Campus Activities Board

Leticia Francisco Pascual ’23 looks forward to gaining experience in the field of law before going to law school.

“I will be working as a judicial specialist with the Polk County court houses,” Pascual says. “I’ll be in the Justice Center working with a juvenile court judge and I’m hoping in the next five years, I will be in law school. I’m super excited — nervous but excited.”

“My Central experience was really good. I got to meet amazing people and professors and create relationships”, she says. “I came to Central for the academics. In my time here, I completed two internships and two service-learning opportunities, so Central really helped me gain skills and real-world experience.”

Faculty like Shawn Wick, associate professor of sociology, made an impact in Pascual’s journey at Central and in her final weeks on campus. “He invited our senior seminar class to his house, we had food there, talked and shared what was next for all of us,” she shares. It was the closure Pascual was looking for to prepare for walking across the stage.

“It feels surreal knowing that I’m going to graduate as a first-generation student, especially as a Latina woman of color,” Pascual says, beaming. “I’m just so thankful to graduate, for the support of my parents and so thankful for Central.”
THE ‘40s

Wilma Danhof Hoekstra ’45 wrote a children’s book about a Monarch butterfly entitled, “Mona and Me,” when she was 90 years old. She dedicated the book to her late husband, Tony Hoekstra, a longtime employee of Central College, and the Central family. Hoekstra is now 99 and lives in Pella, Iowa.

THE ‘50s

Paul Tambrino ’58 published two books: “Marxology: Past, Present, Future” and “Big Truths for Growing Minds.” Tambrino has directed TGH to pay all royalties from the sale of these books to Central College. In addition, TGH also published three of his study guides. Tambrino resides in Casselberry, Florida.

THE ‘60s


THE ‘70s

Joe Weber ’77 retired from Chatsworth Products as area vice president of sales. During his 24 years with the company, he was responsible for the start-up and management of international sales in Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Canada. Weber resides in Agoura Hills, California.

THE ‘80s

Sandi Lafler ’81 was promoted to the regional director of sales and client relations for To The Rescue.

THE ‘90s

Bonnie Sylkhuis ’90 retired in December 2012 from Des Moines Area Community College after 22 years as a lean consultant. She is an independent consultant, the owner of the Holistic Health & Wellness Center and co-owner of HI Hypnosis in Knoxville, Iowa, offering alternative therapies and certification courses. Sylkhuis resides in Knoxville, Iowa.

THE ‘00s

Maurice Donald and Lyndsay De Nooy ’02 celebrated their love March 4, 2023, in Tampa, Florida.

Justin Brueck ’06 started a new position as system vice president of innovation and research at NorthShore University HealthSystem.

Derek Knuston ’09 was promoted to lieutenant of the Pasco Fire Department in Pasco, Washington, in 2022. Knuston has been an active member of two special rescue teams for the past six years: the swift water rescue swimmer and rescue boat operator and the vehicle and heavy machinery extraction team. He deploys during the summer as a wildland firefighter strike team leader around Washington.

Sarah Vandenberg Van Zee ’09 was promoted within National Center for State Courts and is now a court management consultant. Van Zee resides in Pella, Iowa.

Derek Knuston ’09 was promoted to lieutenant of the Pasco Fire Department in Pasco, Washington, in 2022. Knuston has been an active member of two special rescue teams for the past six years: the swift water rescue swimmer and rescue boat operator and the vehicle and heavy machinery extraction team. He deploys during the summer as a wildland firefighter strike team leader around Washington.

Sarah Vandenberg Van Zee ’09 was promoted within National Center for State Courts and is now a court management consultant. Van Zee resides in Pella, Iowa.

Angela Lowenberg Jones ’04 and Jill Young Whitham ’04 reunited with Esther Streed-Johnson, emeritus professor of education at Central.

THE ‘90s (continued)

Deann Wibersohn Cook ’91 is the president and CEO of the Iowa Women’s Foundation.

Kristin Schakel Gibbar ’92 is the chief human resource officer for Mom’s Meals in Ankeny, Iowa.

Debbie Smith Yates ’92 works for Zonya Health International in Livonia, Michigan, as the director of operations. Yates received the 2023 DEIB Changemaker Award from the Livonia Human Relations Commission.

Beth MacKintosh Milano ’93 is joining MachineQ as an IoT solutions consultant. Milano resides in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Jason Henderson ’94 is the vice president for Iowa State’s extension and outreach programs in Ames, Iowa.

Mandy Bunch Shannon ’95 is the new Prairie City Monroe Community School District’s elementary principal. She has served in the district for 17 years as a classroom teacher, instructional coach and at-risk/early childhood coordinator. Shannon resides in Monroe, Iowa.

Ty Cobb ’07 works for AllTech as a global campaign manager. Cobb resides in Winchester, Kentucky.

Heather Dixon ’07 and Justin Saxfield ’10 met up in the city of Hanoi and toured Ha Long Bay in Vietnam.

Zach Benson ’08 has been accepted as a contributing writer to Business Insider.

Andrew Kinne ’08 was promoted to senior collateral analyst at Wells Fargo.

THE ‘00s

Brad Leighten ’90 was appointed president of AgriSampo/North America by Sampo International.

Jason Henderson ’94 is the director of rehab and return to play at the Green Bay Packers as an associate athletic trainer and vice president of Caterpillar, Inc. in 2022. Thompson plans to be on Central’s campus for the Fall 2023 semester as an executive in residence and will teach a course called Topics in Applied Leadership Leading a Problem-Solving Organization. He and his wife, Amy, also plan to travel extensively in this next chapter.
THE ‘10s


Matthew Barker ’14 is an adjunct professor in the kinesiology department at Central College in Pella, Iowa.

Ryan Dusil ’14 is a research associate at the University of Iowa College of Public Health in Iowa City, Iowa.

Julie Wunder Evans ’14 works for Kindred Rehabilitation as a physical therapist in Davenport, Iowa.

Haylee Sumpter ’14 received two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement medals during her service in the U.S. Navy.

Jordyn Bohr ’15 works at Des Moines University as a web design and marketing specialist in Des Moines, Iowa.

Susan Elder ’16 is a human resources generalist at Equifax in West Des Moines, Iowa.

THE ‘20s

Heidi Heckenberg Gosseen ’16 is the owner and interior designer at Inside Out Creatives. Gosseen and family live in Williams Lake, British Columbia.

Allyson Mann ’16 works in the Advancement Office at Central College as the events coordinator in Pella, Iowa.

Clayton Blythe ’17 works for Amazon as a senior software engineer and resides in Austin, Texas.

Logan Moeller ’17 works remotely for the American Diabetes Association as a senior manager of professional education and engagement. The Moellers live in Riverside, Iowa, with their three sons Grayson, Asher and Merrick.

Ellie Stoukous-Dillik ’18 opened her own chiropractic practice in East Moline, Illinois, called Quad Cities Family Chiropractic.

Caitlyn Dixon Ennoch ’18 works for Dickey Plumbing, Air and Electrical as an operations administrator in Amherst, Virginia.

Josh Prokopuk ’18 was promoted to program specialist in IT Business and Transformation at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

Marie Hakeman Ryerson ’19 is a strategic pricing manager at Pella Corporation in Pella, Iowa.

Paige Shannon ’19 is working at Kinetic Edge Physical Therapy as a physical therapist in Pella, Iowa.

THE ‘20s (continued)

Nathan ’21 and Sarah Casterline Fitzgerald ’20 married October 14, 2022. The couple lives in Pella, Iowa.

Anna Long ’21 started a new position as development coordinator at Tires Forever.

Ian Boline ’22 is an assistant baseball coach for Central College in Pella, Iowa.

Zoe Runyon ’22 was promoted to advancement database manager at Central College in Pella, Iowa, where she resides.

Alex Griggs ’23 is an assistant tennis coach for Central College in Pella, Iowa.

Julie Wunder Evans ’14 earned her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, in December 2022.

Logan Moeller ’17 earned her master’s in health administration from Louisiana State University in 2021.

Marie Hakeman Ryerson ’19 earned her MBA from Northwestern State University in September 2022.

THE ‘20s (continued)


Left to Right: Gretchen Morrison Baldwin ’90, Taunya Van Surksum Wusthoff ’99, Don Brandt ’87, Kris Brandt Vaughn ’90, Trent Vaughn ’90, Grace Vaughn Kratochvil ’20, Evan Kratochvil ’20, Henry Klaassen ’20, Yana Rouse ’21, Ethan Johnson ’21 and Miguel Pilla ’19.

NEW ARRIVALS


Steven and Kevin Bonnstetter’05, son Kal Logan, Feb. 6, 2023.

Tim ’15 and Lauren James Kahl ’16, daughter Landry Helen, March 1, 2023.


Brett ’15 and Mackenzie Harris Schouten ’17, son Cade James, Nov. 30, 2022.


Will ’14 and Sarah Rankin Folkerts ’13, daughters Ada Madson, Dec. 29, 2022.


Spencer ’15 and Ashley Wiersema Beekman ’12, son Merrick Judah, Nov. 17, 2022.

Logan ’17 and Ariissa Marine Moeller ’17, son Merrick James, Feb. 21, 2023.


Ryan and Tabitha Taylor Jansen ’18, daughter Joseph Lynn, Nov. 18, 2022.


IN MEMORIAM

Roger Harmelink '59, Newton, Iowa, March 12, 2023.
Jane Koskamp Ratmeyer '60, Stockbridge, Georgia, March 20, 2023.

Richard Yoder '73, Bakersfield, California, Aug. 10, 2022.

Phil Sprague '64, Lawrenceville, Georgia, March 20, 2023.
Gloria Boudt, former faculty member, Denver, Colorado, Dec. 8, 2022.

ED BANFIELD

Ed Banfield, longtime Central College employee, passed away Jan. 20, 2023 in Sun City West, Arizona. Banfield joined the Central community in 1967 as the assistant director of Upward Bound, director of testing and supervisor for student teachers. In 1991, he was promoted to director of the TRIO program. He served the college in that role until his retirement in 1998.

A colleague and mentor to many, Banfield and his wife, Mary Jane, former assistant director of Upward Bound, have been loyal donors and stayed involved with the college after their 31-year tenure in Pella. His heart for others and hard work awarded him the President’s Award from the National Council of Educational Opportunity Association in 1997 and the Melvin Jones Fellow Award, the highest award in the Lions Club.

DELMAR WICHHART

Delmar Wichhart passed away March 8, 2023, in Pella, Iowa. Wichhart was a carpenter and facilities manager for Central for more than 30 years. He touched many lives during his tenure at the college and built countless relationships with students, faculty and staff.

Wichhart was passionate about his hobbies and his family. He enjoyed caring for his horses and animals — you may have seen him in Tulip Time parades with his horses and carriage. He also enjoyed spending time outdoors, four-wheeling with his brothers and camping at the Iowa State Fair and in Arkansas. He was known for his jokes, dry sense of humor and sharing his opinion.

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!
Joe Pratt '93 wasn’t always certain where life after Central College would take him, but what started as a casual laundry room conversation transformed into an incredible career halfway across the world.

“During my time at Central, I participated in a study abroad program in China during my sophomore year,” Pratt says. “While I had many great experiences at Central, the program in China had a big influence on my life. I’ve spent much of the last 30 years in China and am now translating ancient Chinese texts.”

It all started thanks to an off-hand conversation with one of Pratt’s classmates. Pratt wasn’t feeling certain about his career path and knew he needed a change. So when he learned that a friend from his day at Central was involved in a study abroad program in China, Pratt knew this was the inspiration he was looking for. He got in touch with friends from his time teaching and collaborating with them on his research.

“I hope one day I’ll be able to repay the Central community for my scholarships, for everything it taught me and for all the kindness it showed me,” Pratt says. “I hope to help make Central an even better place.”

For now, his adventures around the world continue. Pratt has plans to travel to Italy this summer for a presentation amongst his research, Pratt can’t say for certain, but he loves what he does every day.

“Central continues to accept gifts of all sizes to help support off-campus experiences. To make a donation, contact Michelle Willie, director of development, at williamc@central.edu or Sunny Gonzales Eighmy ’99, vice president for advancement, at eighmy@central.edu.”

Joe Pratt ’93 during his time teaching at Peking University in Beijing, China.

Joe Eilers ’18 is continuing his education and leadership formation at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

It’s a warm Thursday night in October 2017. Midterms are just around the corner, and there are a million things left to do. Some of my buddies are already at the Peanut Pub, probably with a George’s pizza on the way. But a group of classmates and I are sitting in Vermere 180, discussing something vital to any college student’s life — the student meal plan. Nothing gets people upset quite like messing with their food, and unfortunately, the new meal plan did just that. From student-athletes to student teachers, every member of the student body was affected differently and students were almost all uniformly unhappy.

Thankfully, the administration was receptive to this feedback. They quickly partnered with the Student Senate to engage with student leaders across campus. As student body president, I worked with the rest of the Senate to conduct interviews across the affected stakeholders. By mapping each group’s specific needs to the operational constraints of Central’s food service team, we were able to provide key recommendations for how to change the meal plan for the better. The very next semester, the meal plan was changed once again, incorporating many of the recommendations. While it certainly wasn’t perfect, it was a positive change on campus led by a group of student leaders.

Nowadays, I find myself in another room full of students on a Thursday night, this time in a classroom at the Stanford Graduate School of Business where we’re evaluating a business case about an airline. Vermeer 180, discussing something vital to the operational constraints of an airline, I would never have thought this would happen. I have the Central community to thank for that.”
WE CAN’T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1, 2023

central.edu/homecoming