

SUMMER 2023

# CENTRAL

CENTRAL COLLEGE

CIVITAS

ALUMNI MAGAZINE



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# RECLAIMING CIVIL DISCOURSE

STORY BY: MARK PUTNAM, CENTRAL COLLEGE PRESIDENT



When I was a candidate for the presidency of Central College in 2009, I was reminded that one of the core functions of executive leadership is discourse. My formal visit to the campus comprised of nearly three days of conversations in which the topics were recursive, even as the participants changed from hour to hour. The thematic backdrop, however, was a recognition by all stakeholders that on a college campus we collectively face an inevitability – we don’t always agree. Though the question took many forms, the composite inquiry was, “What is the role of a college president in resolving disagreements?”

My answer to this question was consistent: “The role of the college president is to facilitate the tension.” This response was satisfying to some and admittedly confusing to others. Forty years in this work has taught me that unanimity is never a worthwhile pursuit in an academic community. In fact, it is antithetical to the mission of higher learning.

One day I was engaged in a conversation with an alumnus who asked me about a controversial topic. I always welcome such inquiries. His interest was in knowing how I handled situations in which those associated with the college disagree strongly about ideological matters. I replied that it’s quite easy: “I’m president of the whole college. For me, everyone belongs.”

The Central Welcome Statement articulates our shared commitment to discourse.

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 want to live. I am an independent, centrist, moderate, pragmatic, technocrat. Perhaps that makes me an inderepublicratatarian.

Sure, it sounds like something Dr. Suess would have invented, but it’s perfectly me. I am persuaded by data, information and evidence. I’m not particularly interested in winning an argument, but I love having a principled debate.

This is where learning occurs. When we see and hear each other enough to really listen, then despite our disagreements, we share one thing in common – we are citizens of the same community. ■

## CENTRAL COLLEGE CIVITAS ALUMNI MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2023 | ISSUE 1

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641-628-5154



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

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

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



10% Post-Consumer Fiber

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



# CELEBRATING HOO-RAH DAY AND THE 53-MILE CHALLENGE

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 tying 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 1 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!

# Scholarship CELEBRATION



MORE THAN  
**\$360,316**  
RAISED



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.

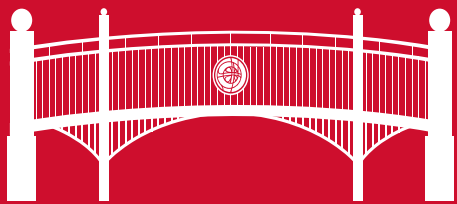
Central President **Mark Putnam** addressed all in attendance saying that "a scholarship is a leap of faith." Our donors' investments in our students and their experiences are just that. And because of their leap, our students can do remarkable

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](https://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](https://central.edu/give) or call 641-628-5154 and ask for **Michelle Wilkie**, director of development. ■





# AROUND THE POND



## ◀ VANDE KIEFT NAMED CENTRAL CIO

**Joe Vande 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. Vande Kieft returns to campus with more than 20 years of experience in IT software development, security systems and entrepreneurial leadership.

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

## CENTRAL RECEIVES \$480,000 GIFT FROM GEISLER PENQUITE FOUNDATION

The Geisler Penquite Foundation awarded Central a two-part gift totaling \$480,000. The foundation has committed \$300,000 to create three endowed scholarships for students accepted into the education program. In addition, the foundation gave \$180,000 to the Geisler Library endowment.

The Geisler Penquite scholarships support exceptional students in the college's education program who exhibit academic success, progress in the program and potential for leadership in the field of education. In 2023, 25 education majors at Central will benefit from their support.

The Geisler Penquite Foundation also gave a gift toward the library endowment, a space now named in honor of John Edward Geisler and Gertrude Setzer Geisler. The library endowment supports the purchase of new books, research resources, library supplies and digital media.

"As the state and nation face teacher shortages, Central's exceptional teacher preparation program works to develop well-equipped new teachers. The Geisler Penquite scholarships and library endowment will have a lasting impact on future teachers and generations to come," says **Jen Diers**, director of the education program. "We are extremely grateful to the Geisler and Penquite families and their foundation for this increase in their giving to encourage future teachers and instructors."



## ▲ 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 Fyfe '20**, assistant director of community-based learning at [fyfev@central.edu](mailto:fyfev@central.edu).



## ◀ 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 Hoo-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.



## ▲ MLK 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.



## ▲ 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's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Students gained valuable tax preparation experiences and residents received free tax preparation services.



**PUBLISHED IN NEUROLOGY**

**Sara Shuger Fox**, associate professor of kinesiology, and **Joshua Cheek ’21**, grad student at the University of Iowa’s Carver College of Medicine, along with a team of six 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 neurology 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.



**◀ 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. Bob” Robert Leonard, KNIA/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 **Óscar Reynaga**, Class Dean for the Class of 2023 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 employees completed a service-learning project; Geisler 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.

**PACE ALLIANCE 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. Putnam served in the role since 2017.

“I’ve had the privilege of serving on the executive board with Mark and what you learn quickly about him is he’s a terrific leader,” says Karen Eischen, PACE executive director. “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 all the accomplishments we achieved, a lot of those wouldn’t be possible without Mark’s leadership and guidance.”

Service to the community is a core value at Central. Putnam is in his 13th year as Central’s president. Under his leadership, Central has raised more than \$74 million in donations and completed major expansions and renovations of the college’s arts, athletics and student center facilities and Peace Mall in the heart of campus. In addition, he has helped the college expand offerings to include an engineering major, leadership and career-readiness programming and student-faculty research while also deepening the college’s collaboration with Pella and Central Iowa.

**FREED PUBLISHES LIVING A LIFE WORTH REMEMBERING**

**Jann Freed ’77**, professor emerita of business management, released her sixth book “Breadcrumb Legacy: How Great Leaders Live 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 breadcrumb legacy.

Freed taught business management at Central for 30 years.

**PELLA WELLNESS CONSORTIUM PRESENTED LYNDSY FENNELLY**

Pella Wellness Consortium welcomed Lyndsey Fennelly, a motivational speaker, former standout Iowa State University basketball player and successful businesswoman, as she shared a conversation about her mental health journey.

The former All-American is a passionate advocate for mental health education and care. Fennelly shared her own mental health struggles and how she has learned to live with them.

**MILLS GALLERY FEATURED STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY**

The Mills Gallery welcomed a “Wildlife” photography exhibit by **Kayla Lindquist ’25**.

“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.

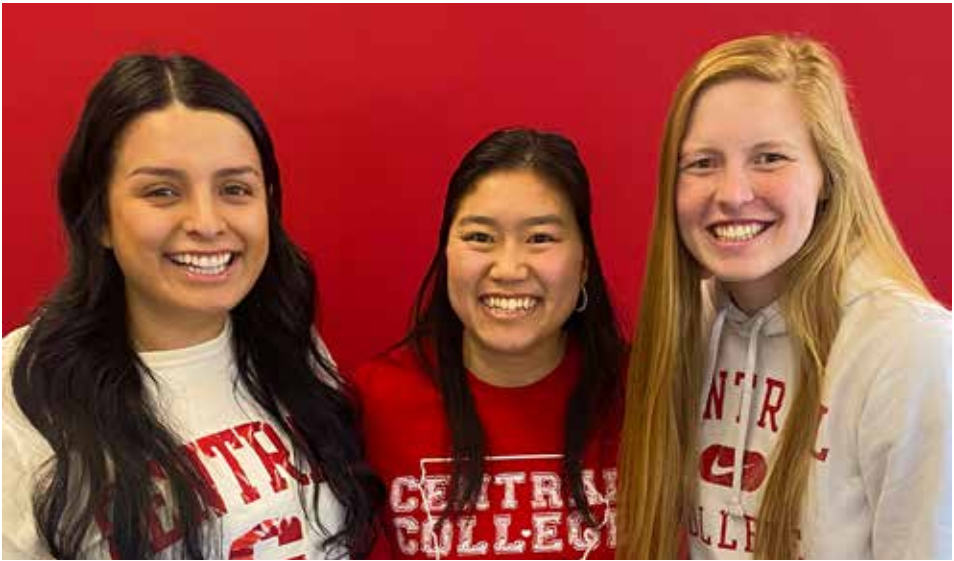


**◀ BONNSTETTER PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING**

**Steffanie Bonnstetter** was named the 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.

“Steffanie’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 ’99**, vice president for advancement.



**▲ CENTRAL REPRESENTED AT IMPACT CONFERENCE**

A Central team presented at the national IMPACT conference in February at the University of Massachusetts - Amherst.

**Tori Fyfe ’20**, *center*, assistant director of community-based learning at Central, along with **Gloria Montiel ’23**, *left*, communication studies and Spanish major, and **Quinn Deahl ’23**, *right*, 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 **Jess Klyn De Novelo ’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 DEI 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.

**WRITERS READING SERIES**

The Spring 2023 Central Writers Reading Series featured Debra Rienstra, professor of English at Calvin University. Rienstra read from her latest work, “Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth,” a book discussing eco-theology and climate change.

“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 **centraldutchnetwork.com**.

**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.



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 continues to focus on college affordability and scholarships for students. During the first half of the fiscal year, the college received \$680,721 designated for the Journey Scholarship Fund. In the first six months of the fiscal year, 162 donors contributed \$1,000 or more to the Journey Scholarship Fund.

“The generosity of Central family members who choose to invest in the future of our students is so amazing,” says **Sunny Gonzales Eighmy ’99**, vice president for advancement. “Journey Scholarships and endowed scholarships combined with our tuition pricing make Central very affordable and attainable. We recognize students have a choice in selecting a college and these scholarships funded by our donors make a big difference to our students. In Fall 2022, the generosity of our donors allowed the college to provide every new incoming student with a Journey Scholarship. We are so grateful for the amazing support shown to our students.”



▲ REVIVING PELLA'S KLOKKENSPEL

**Amelia Brown ’25** and **Fynn Wadsworth ’25** restored four-foot-tall mannequin models of Wyatt Earp, Maria Scholte, Dominie Hendrik Scholte baptizing a baby and a pioneer blacksmith that adorn the north side of Pella’s Klokkenspel. The weather and years have not been kind to their nearly 40-year-old clothes and frames.

The Klokkenspel, owned by the Pella Historical Society, was built in 1984. One incredible feature is the figurine performance, which occurs five times a day. Eight mannequins portray various historical figures who impacted Pella. Brown and Wadsworth, along with **Emily Wassink ’25** restored four Klokkenspel mechanical miniatures in 2022.

Lessons learned from the previous year streamlined work in 2023 for Brown and Wadsworth. With assistance from **Mat Kelly**, professor of art; **Brian Roberts ’92**, professor of art, and **Susan Swanson**, associate professor of art, Brown and Wadsworth gained great career-building skills.

“We definitely had to do a lot of problem-solving,” Wadsworth says. “We got a really good taste of what we would do for commissioned or freelance jobs. For example, we have a lot of freedom yet we’re checking with the client to make sure a change would be okay. We talk about what we can change and still be authentic. I want to go into museum studies and restoration. So, this project has been incredibly helpful.”

Brown is considering costume design, so this commissioned project is a positive experience. The fabric work, sewing knowledge, painting techniques, color mixing and challenge of finding just the right red are all helpful for her career goals.

GOODMAN PRESENTS RESEARCH ON PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION PREDICTIONS

**Russell Goodman**, professor of mathematics, presented research revealing the theoretically lowest percentage of the popular vote that a presidential candidate would need to win a presidential election.

At the Neumann University Colloquium in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Goodman remotely presented “Narrow Margins: Winning the Presidency with Minimal Popular Vote.” The mathematics model predicts a shocking (approximate) 20% to 24%, depending on the year.

The topic is relevant to the 2024 election identifying the candidates and their strategies for winning the presidential election. Five of 46 presidents have come into office without winning the national popular vote. Mathematicians show the data that makes it possible.

REYNAGA SELECTED FOR CHICAGO SEMESTER'S SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

**Óscar Reynaga**, senior lecturer of Spanish and class dean of the Class of 2023, has been selected for the Chicago Semester’s Summer 2023 Scholar-in-Residence Program.

During the workshop experience, Reynaga will have the opportunity to collaborate with other scholars on the research and development of courses. Reynaga plans to update three of his courses: Latinos in the U.S., Spanish and Latin American Film and Spanish Conversation Through Film. He will create new teaching materials that align with the new Engaged Citizen Core curriculum at Central.

As the Central faculty advisor for the Organization of Latinx American Students, this opportunity will support Reynaga as he plans cultural trips and events with student leaders.

STUDENTS PLANT PRAIRIE

**Russ Benedict**, professor of biology and director of Prairies for Agriculture Project, took part in the seeding of a new prairie around Lake Red Rock dam. Benedict orchestrated students from his class as they developed a seed mixture and gathered seeds from various sources.

“We collected seeds from local, never-plowed prairies — which is a rare thing in Iowa — and from Central’s planted prairies and bought seed from a local seed dealer,” Benedict says. “I worked with Missouri River Energy Services, the company that built the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project, to arrange a small prairie planting near the project below the Red Rock dam.”



▲ PUTNAM PUBLISHED IN AGB TRUSTEESHIP MAGAZINE

The magazine AGB Trusteeship featured an article entitled, “Managing the Presidency Through the Arc of Time,” and discussed the legacy of leadership over many years at Central. **Mark Putnam**, Central president and author, outlined how continuity can be incredibly powerful and a key for managing college presidencies and advancing institutional priorities.

The article discusses the roles of trustees and administrations at institutions of higher learning and instructs all to think strategically and long-term when managing colleges and universities. Central is an interesting case study where Putnam is only the 21st president of an institution that is 170 years old. The continuity of leadership over many years has helped steward a prosperous inheritance for future generations.



▲ THEATRE STUDENTS HONORED AT FESTIVAL

Central theatre students attended the regional Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival in Des Moines, Iowa. Of those in attendance, five Central students were recognized while participating in the program.

**Amelia Brown ’25** earned recognition for Innovation in Costume Technology with paper costumes and was the Sharon Sobel Costume Design Honorable Mention for their design of “Lend Me a Tenor.” **Kami Waymire ’24**, **Meredith Ackerman ’22** and **Mia Condon ’22** were recognized for their ensemble acting work in “Crimes of the Heart” in spring of 2022. **Bryson McGowan ’24** and Waymire received callback invitations for professional summer theatre work.

**Kate Kanne-Smith**, assistant professor of theatre, was also recognized for her scenic design work on “H.M.S. Pinafore.” **C.D. Adamson**, associate professor of theatre, served as the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship Coordinator with more than 250 students competing from the six-state region.

2023 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER ANNOUNCED

**Heather Burr Isaacson ’97** was selected as the 2023 Commencement ceremony guest speaker. Isaacson came to Central as a first-generation college student and now serves as the By Degrees Foundation director of programs. The foundation is closing the opportunity gap by fostering community partnerships to reduce barriers and incorporate postsecondary and career readiness activities, financial education and asset building for whole neighborhoods of students.

Read more on Commencement on page 26.

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 editor, at [carlsonb@central.edu](mailto:carlsonb@central.edu).

To read full articles, go to Central’s news site at [central.edu/news](https://central.edu/news).



# SCHIPPER STADIUM TO THE STATE CAPITOL

STORY BY:  
LARRY HAPPEL '81

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.



**Adam Gregg '06** made sure that Central football has prominent representation in an Iowa Capitol hallway display case outside of the office suite he shares with Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds. Gregg played defensive back for the Dutch.

Sure, advising the governor of Iowa as you anxiously 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 pressed his fingers into the turf while lining up near the outside of Central's punt return formation, serving as Iowa's lieutenant governor more than a decade later was far from his mind. The temperature only reached 53 degrees on that cloudy November afternoon in Waverly, Iowa, in 2005, and Gregg's adrenaline was surging off the charts.

## THE PLAY OF A LIFETIME

The Dutch were trailing 14-10 at the half and coach **Jeff McMartin '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!"

"It's hard to keep it all in because you want to go, you've got to be going right on the snap," Gregg explains. "But also, not to jump too early and maybe give up a first down and also to exercise judgment in the moment of whether you can get there or not. Because if you're wrong and you're a little bit late, that's a game-changing play. And you're going to come off the field and get an earful from (former special teams) **Coach Kevin Sanger '93**, I'm going to get an even worse earful from **Don DeWaard '82** (former defensive coordinator) and Coach Mac is going to let me know about it, too."

But just as the 4.0 student did for every class, Gregg did his homework. During Monday night film sessions, Gregg focused intently on the special teams plays. 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-bob, 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 lineman 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 could almost see the laces on the ball."

A muffled thud. The ball squirted free along the turf and **Colby Myers '09** 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 undersized reserve safety's moment.

"I remember almost blacking out," he says. "I remember even after celebrating with Colby 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 (punt blocking) was my thing and that's the role I wanted to play."

## PREPARATION

Iowa's lieutenant governor is sitting in his expansive office in the nation's only state capitol building that features a Central football helmet perched on a glass display case shelf. Gregg sees football parallels with his current job.

"Preparation is a huge part of it," he shares. "That's one of the things that's really carried over into the rest of my education and career. It seems that the more you prepare, the more likely you are to be successful, especially when things don't go quite exactly as planned."

But it was what Central offered, beyond a red jersey and sore muscles that helped

rocket him to a state leadership post.

"What I found through my experience at Central was it opened up some amazing opportunities," Gregg says.

Opportunities like summer internships in Washington, D.C., with the Department of Defense and Congress; a semester in London and an internship with a member of Parliament; and political science conferences at the Air Force and Naval academies. He's grateful to former Central President **David Roe**, a cherished mentor whose portrait now hangs on Gregg's office wall, as well as to **Jim Zaffiro**, professor of political science, among others, who opened doors for such opportunities.

A history and political science major at Central where he graduated first in his class, Gregg graduated with high honors from Drake University Law School. He joined BrownWinick Law in Des Moines, Iowa, ran unsuccessfully for state attorney general in 2014 and then was named the state public defender. When Terry Branstad resigned as governor to become U.S. Ambassador to China in 2017, incoming Gov. Kim Reynolds appointed Gregg as acting lieutenant governor at age 33, surprising many — except those who knew him.

"He was incredibly smart and driven and had a lot of ambition," recalls former Dutch teammate **Drew Sikkink '06**. "Knowing some of the internships he'd had while we were in college and some of the contacts he'd made at the Capitol here in Iowa, you kind of knew he was destined to do big things."

## 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 shares. "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-suited to quietly handle his second-team 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 approvingly 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," DeWaard recalls. "But there are other projects that involve city and state things and I feel very comfortable contacting him. One thing I know is that 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 like it," De Waard shares. "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," he recounts. "We didn't know at that time if we were going to win. Eventually, more of the rural Iowa vote totals came in and we ended up winning by about 30,000 votes. Someone happened to capture a picture of the moment that we found out. It's probably the closest thing I've





Iowa Lieutenant Governor **Adam Gregg '06** and his family make their entrance at the Reynolds-Gregg 2023 Inaugural Ball Jan. 13 in Des Moines. (Left to right) daughter Lauren Gregg, Adam Gregg, wife **Cari Rehder Gregg '07** and son Jackson Gregg.

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 Hawarden (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 Beatty '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 tourney 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.

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

# POLITICAL SCIENCE: Much More than Campaign Trails

STORY BY:  
**JEANETTE BUDDING**

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



Commencement bridges the future for Central students between great experiences on campus and their careers. From left: **Whitney Longnecker '09**, **Carol Mendez '09**, **Erinn Lauterbach '09** and **Stephanie Uthe '09**.

**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 graduate 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.

While at Central Lauterbach studied abroad twice. In London, England, she interned with the British Parliament and the office of Jeremy Hunt.

“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.





**Carol Mendez '09 and Erinn Lauterbach '09** share a day of sunshine and great memories during their senior year at Homecoming 2008.

“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 plug-ins 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 teaching and research look at representation and its impact as well as the separation of powers in the federal government.

Teaching political science in a polarized environment is difficult. Like other political science academics, she explains that the country has been polarized for decades but the past eight years have been harder.

“I try to be open with students. There are facts and opinions and biases,” she says. “We all have biases. I explain to students we have different opinions and that’s okay.”

The classes Lauterbach teaches focus on how government works. Her classes create a space to talk about this and opinions on how things work. She works to help students understand the difference between opinions and how government structures work. Students can have opinions about the process and then debate whether or not they can make changes for the better.

Lauterbach started teaching at the University of California, Riverside. The student body at UC Riverside is one of the most diverse in the country. The majority of students come from underrepresented groups. In contrast, Villanova is a private Catholic university. Lauterbach explains the students from these schools are wildly different in their experience with the government.

“In class, we focus on issues, not people. Students can be scared to talk about things because they don’t want to be judged for their opinions on either side of the political spectrum. Once you make 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 compared to my cohorts. That training on how to learn helped me in every job I’ve had.”

“Being in an atmosphere where you’re in small classes, where your professors care and you focus on your education, means that you’re getting all you could possibly get out of it,” Lauterbach says.



In September 2022, **Holly Schaffter Chari '99** (right) and her husband U.S. Air Force Col. Raja Chari, NASA astronaut, spent the day at Central discussing their careers with students and the community.

### SERVING OTHERS IS BIGGER THAN OURSELVES

**Holly Schaffter Chari '99** headed to Central unsure of what she wanted to do but had a strong desire to help people. She just wasn’t sure how to best use her skill sets and strengths. She now serves as an attorney in the Office of General Counsel to the U.S. 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 sliver 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 governance,” 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 Veteran 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 VHA 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.”

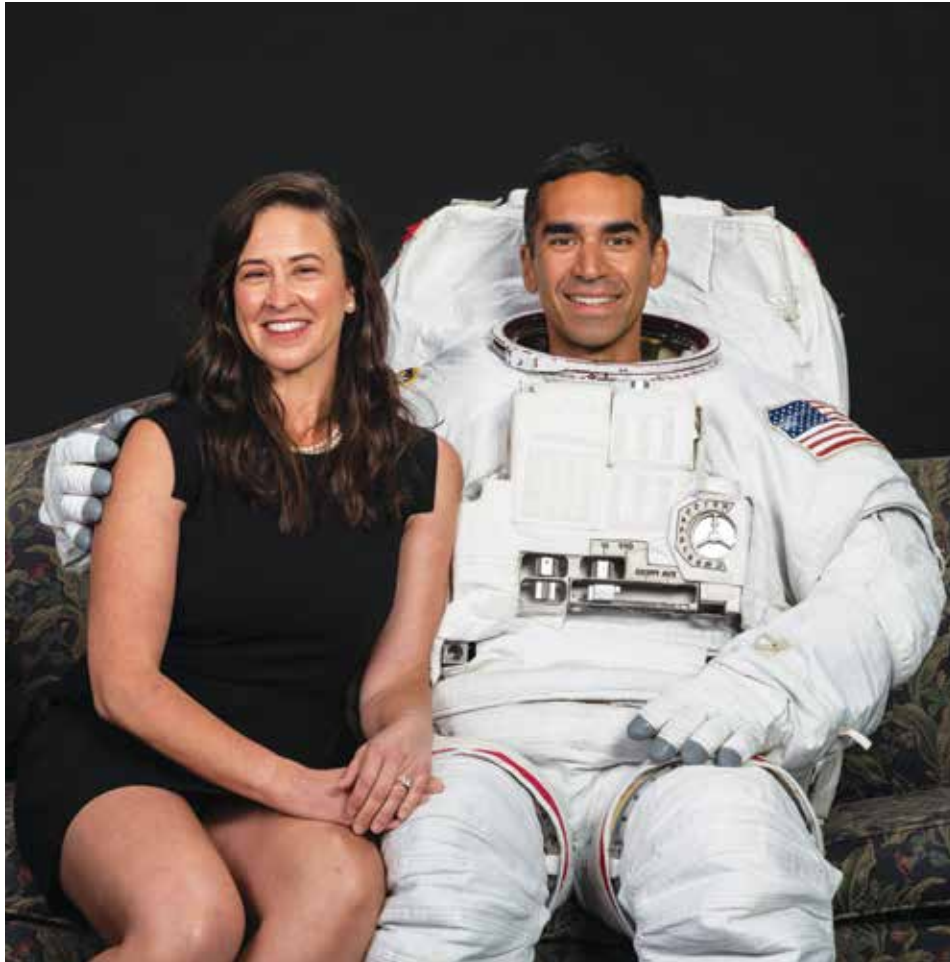
### FINDING HER PATH THROUGH CENTRAL

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





**Holly Schaffter Chari '99** (left) choose a career with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which allowed her to move frequently with her husband who advanced through the Air Force to become commander of the NASA Space X Crew-3 mission

interest in political science, policy and governance. She also enjoyed taking classes with **Jim Zaffiro**, professor of political science, **Jon Witt**, professor of sociology and **Donald Maxam** and **Dale De Wild**, emeritus professors of sociology.

“As an attorney, I never really saw myself as a litigator,” Chari says. “I’m interested in different forms of conflict resolution like mediation. I attribute my interest in conflict resolution to Professor De Wild and the sociology class I took from him that explored the different types of conflict resolution models. That foundation has proved instrumental in my practice of law and in my current role at the VA.”

Chari studied in London, England, in her second year and interned with the Future of Europe Trust, based in the House of Commons – an experience that taught her about geopolitical challenges facing Europe and expanded her knowledge of international relations. On campus, she represented her peers on student government and served for a time as president of the Campus Activities Board.

“The wonderful thing about Central is you have the opportunity to explore, 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 Drake University Law School. She married her high school best friend, Raja, in 2002, after graduating from Drake. During their first year of marriage, they lived separately – one in Sioux City, Iowa, and one in Boston, Massachusetts.

While she was in law school, he was earning his master’s in aeronautical and astronautical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

“I accepted a judicial clerkship following graduation and moved to Sioux City, Iowa. That was an incredible experience and

helped me hit the ground running, opening some opportunities for me, especially as I faced the reality of moving frequently with my husband’s military posts,” she explains. “Raja could finish his pilot training for the air force, and I could work and enhance my legal education. We both spent that year preparing for our careers. I passed the Iowa bar.”

Their military travels as a couple began when they moved to Goldsboro, North Carolina, for Raja to finish his F15 E Strike Eagle training. Holly interned at a small law practice because she was not licensed in North Carolina.

After Raja graduated from pilot training in North Carolina, he was assigned to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage, Alaska.

“The two kids from Iowa were heading to Alaska — a place we’d never been. We were excited, nervous and preparing to purchase our first home. It was an incredible experience,” Chari says.

Once in Alaska, she sat for the Alaska Bar Exam. Chari accepted a position as an assistant attorney general.

She worked in the Health and Human Services Division representing adult protective services, supporting the safety and care of adults, particularly elderly individuals.

“That’s where I felt a calling to work – where I could help people,” she says. “I represented the social workers from APS in guardianship and conservatorship proceedings in Anchorage, as far south as Kodiak and up north in places like Bethel, Nome and Barrow, including several smaller Alaska Native Villages.”

She also represented the clinicians at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute on behalf of the attorney general’s office for involuntary commitment proceedings.

“It was a difficult and, oftentimes, heart-wrenching experience. It was shocking and eye-opening to learn the pain that humans inflict on others, especially their loved ones,” Chari admits.

“We worked to both prevent the problem from starting and stop the problem from existing,” she says. “I worked with adult protective services to protect those vulnerable adults who were being taken advantage of either physically, mentally, emotionally or financially.”

Chari had the opportunity to learn about many different cultures and ethnicities. She participated regularly in court proceedings telephonically, especially in distant, smaller locales. Translators helped Chari serve the

diverse populations. She represented APS in proceedings to protect all Alaskans including vulnerable adults from the large Alaska Native population, Russian, Hmong and Asian populations that live in the state.

“It was a fascinating opportunity to learn more about people and their window into the world. I grew a lot as an attorney there. It was definitely trial by fire,” Chari laughs.

### MILITARY MOVES AND TWIST CAREER PATHS

In the military, moves are referred to as a permanent change of stations. The next PCS was to the Royal Airforce Lakenheath. The couple moved to Bury St. Edmunds, England.

“The move was devastating to me professionally because I couldn’t practice law and that presented a challenge. But as one door closes another one opens. I had to change my mindset. For the first time I felt like part of the military spouse community,” she admits.

Chari joined the military spouse club on base, a non-profit, social/welfare private organization that supports spouses by organizing social events and providing education about military life, base resources and local services. During their time there, Chari interned with the legal office on base.

They were stationed in England for about six months when Raja was selected to attend 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.

“I 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 VA in the Office of General Counsel, Health Care Law Group,” Chari says.

They spent a year in southern Maryland for her husband’s test pilot training, then moved to Valparaiso, Florida, for Raja’s next assignment at Eglin Air Force Base.

“As you can imagine, this posed a challenge for my employer; it was pre-COVID-19. I approached them about working remotely in my current position. They understood thus, allowing both Raja and me to pursue our service to our country,” she explains.

“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 back in the Midwest 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, Bolling Air Force Base. Chari returned to in-person work a few days a week at VA’s Central Office. The couple welcomed a third child while stationed there.

“Raja went to Florida to train in the F-35A 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.

They stayed in California until July 2017, when they moved to the Houston, Texas, area when 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 who serve. 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. ■

## NO DEBATE ABOUT IT – MOCK TRIAL BUILDS SKILLS

Central College’s Mock Trial team welcomes students – no matter their major – who are passionate about debating, competing with others, court cases and acting.

**Tyler Ernst '13** serves as the Central Mock Trial coach along with his wife, **Molly Ward Ernst '15**. Both participated while at Central and decided to come back in 2021 to coach the team.

“It’s a great activity for all students,” Ernst says. “You learn to think on your feet, which is a great skill for any major. It’s an activity you can participate in when looking at any career path.”

Mock Trial is a form of debate where students are given a fictional case, civil or criminal, and are tasked with putting together a trial where the members act as both attorneys and witnesses to portray the case. Central’s current team has eight to 10 students, with a minimum of six. With larger teams, multiple people can prepare for witness roles as well as legal debaters.

In college competitions, there are no divisions. Central competes at invitationals with hundreds of other schools – from large universities to private, liberal arts institutions.

“I enjoyed mock trial at Central because we set up the team with a wide variety of students,” Ernst says. “Some participants want to go to law school and become attorneys. That was my plan when I went to Central. Other students want the challenge of public speaking or acting.”

Ernst says participating in mock trial really set him up for law school. “I was in a much better spot knowing the rules of evidence and being comfortable with some of the lingo.”

Ernst enjoys many memories from his time at Central and in mock trial. “Molly and I met in mock trial so that’s obviously a great memory of my time at Central,” Ernst says.

Tyler earned a J.D. degree from Drake University after graduating from Central. He currently works at LaMarca Law Group in Des Moines, Iowa. Molly works at WesleyLife as a marketing coordinator.





## CENTRAL SCENE

PHOTO BY: DAN VANDER BEEK

*(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.*



# LED TO SERVE

STORY BY:  
BRITTANY CARLSON PROKUPEK '16

Central College graduates give back to their communities through public service. Like so many Central College alumni, **Bob Andeweg '84, Sarah Hennesy '91 and Justin Fletcher '02** felt called to do more for the good of others. While all serve their communities in different ways, each acknowledges it's the guidance from key players in their Central experiences as well as the things they learned at Central that led them to where they are today.



**Bob '84 and Charity Andeweg.** A native Iowan, Andeweg has had a fulfilling career in law and serves as mayor for the City of Urbandale.

## 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,

EJ 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."

As one can imagine, there are many meetings for a mayor to attend. "I can be gone from sunup 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 helped Andeweg pursue his work in public service. "I've been very blessed to be with law firms that are very patient. The firm I work for actually puts an emphasis on public service. They value the fact that it's not just about doing your legal work, but rather about being a valuable member of the community."

"I truly appreciate that I have 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.

## 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. 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."



## 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 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 get to know a student, but to help them find direction," Hennesy shares. "And that's why I think Central is so significant to me. It'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 public defender in Des Moines, Iowa. She did this for two years, later moving to Spain to teach English 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. "I loved being a 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



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

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."

"I hadn't really thought about being a judge and I didn't know 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 loves to support other women. She saw something in me that made her think I would enjoy this work and she was right."

## JUDGMENT DAY

The opening came toward the end of 2011.

"It had been almost a full year and I was told it would take several rounds of applying to get a job," Hennesy says. "So, I wanted to put my name in the ring. To my surprise, I ended up getting it the first time around! I wasn't quite ready and my family wasn't either. I went from working part-time and still being sort of a part-time stay-at-home mom to being hired for a job in that was more than full time. It was an adjustment for me and my family, but I'm glad that I got the opportunity."

Unlike some states, in Minnesota, you must be appointed and then elected to be a judge, standing for election every six years. Hennesy is in her second elected term as a judge and was elected Seventh Judicial District Chief Judge in 2021.

## 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 juries."

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 efficiencies 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."

With more greatness 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 and Central seems to have 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."



**Justin Fletcher '02** is a manager of investment accounting by day and gives back to his community as a member of the Norwalk Community School District School Board.

## THE ROAD TO CENTRAL

**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 things, be a 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.

## SCHOOL: A FAMILY TRADITION

"A lot of people in my family have worked in schools — my wife, mom, brother, grandparents, cousins — in many different roles," he shares. "While being a teacher wasn't what I wanted to do, I've always had an interest in our schools and passion for the important work that happens there."

Years later, Fletcher learned about a couple of openings on the Norwalk Community School District School Board. Given his desire to give back to the community, family history in education and professional journey, he decided to run for one of the open positions and was elected for the first time nearly 10 years ago.

Fletcher's grandfather instilled in him that if you wanted to see a difference, you needed to put in the work to make it happen and make it better.

"If you're not willing to be part of the solution, it's just noise," he says. "So, roll up your sleeves and do the work, make good

decisions and help make a difference."

And his work certainly has made a difference. They've completed countless capital projects and made changes within programs and the district for the better.

"On the school board, we're always thinking about the stakeholders of the district — the students, of course, staff, taxpayers, the state — and how all these pieces come together or may be affected by a decision," Fletcher explains. "It's all about what's in the best interest of the district. We can do a lot of things, we just can't do everything. It's our job to be good stewards of the resources the district and voting taxpayers have trusted us with."

No longer the "new kid" on the board, Fletcher has had the opportunity to help the school district in many different ways, including mentoring new board members.

"It's a volunteer role, so you know the folks on school boards care about this work and the community," Fletcher says. "Sure, there's some community recognition for these roles, but individuals serving on school boards are driven by their passion for their community, the students and education. It's about having the frame of mind to learn, listen and evaluate decisions, not based on your personal thoughts, but more so thinking about it on the spectrum of a timeline. How will this decision impact us today, tomorrow or however many years from now?"

There's a lot of growth going around the Des Moines metropolitan area, Norwalk included. Fletcher's hopes for this growth involve strengthening the community, more opportunities for the students, providing a great experience and so much more.

"The relationships and experiences I had at Central 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 very 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. ■



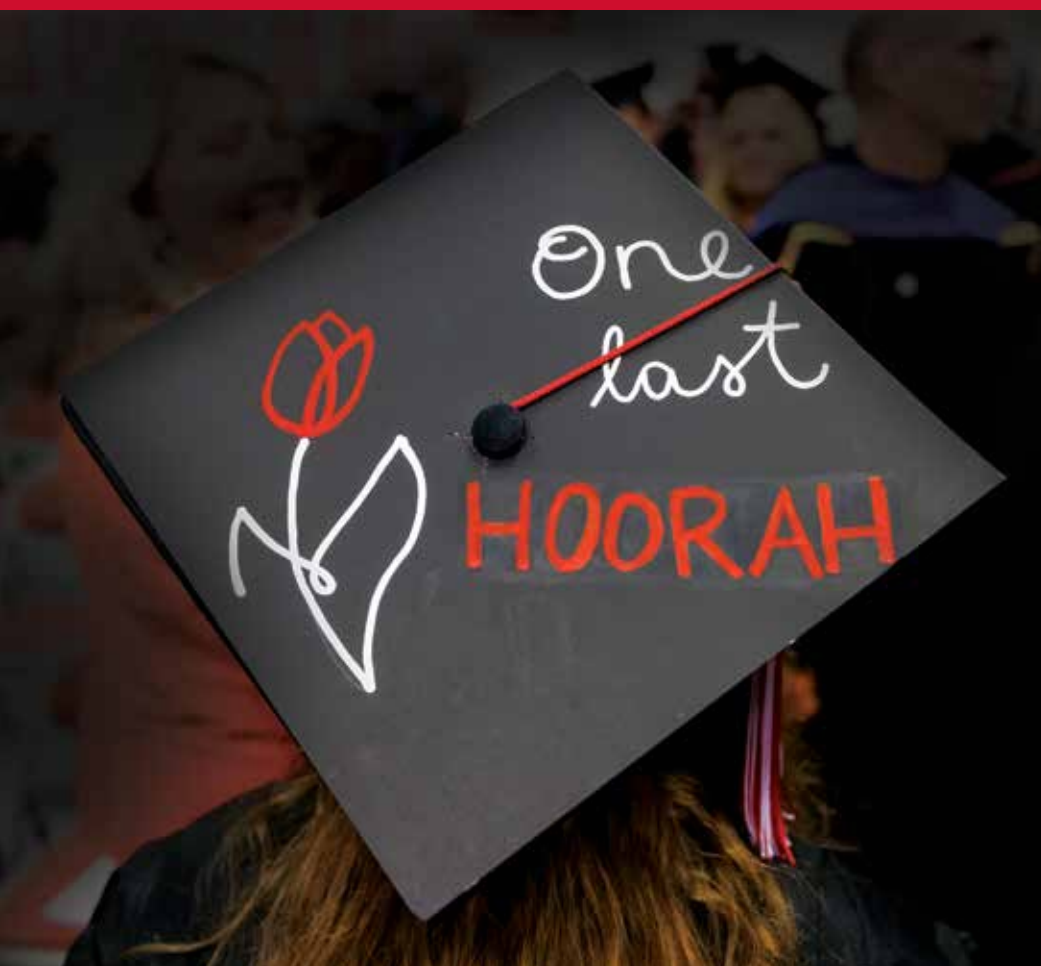
Commencement 2023

# Continued Resilience

The 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



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

Central College celebrated the Class of 2023 Commencement ceremony Saturday, May 13. Families, friends, faculty, staff and guests were present to honor the 232 graduates and **Heather Burr Isaacson '97** delivered the keynote speech. Isaacson, 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 P.H. Kuyper Gymnasium from Ron and Joyce Schipper Stadium in the days leading up. Guests and

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

It started like any other graduation day. The excitement and pride were palpable. Students lined up in H.S. Kuyper Fieldhouse for the culmination of their four years at Central. They processed into the gym along with faculty and administrators.

Moments after Isaacson began speaking, emergency weather alerts notifying attendees of a tornado warning sounded on every cell phone in the gym. Led by the guidance

of first responders and the emergency preparedness team, all took shelter not long after.

In true Midwest fashion, graduates and guests were light-hearted and not willing to let a storm dampen their spirits on this special day. After receiving the all-clear notification, everyone was brought back into the gym to resume the ceremony.

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 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.

**Take the world by storm, Dutch, and know that you are always welcome home. Congratulations Central Class of 2023.**



## LETICIA FRANCISCO PASCUAL '23

**HOMETOWN:** Ottumwa, Iowa

**MAJORS:** Sociology and Spanish

**CAMPUS ACTIVITIES:** Organization of Latinx 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 courthouses," 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."

## 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 here." — **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**

"So 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 Fegley '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 if I've ever seen it." — **Mark Putnam**, Central president



## 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 Weihe**, 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 Weihe. He really propelled me forward, 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. "They gave me the right opportunities and the right pathways to take in order to be successful in the future and I have definitely taken advantage of all of them. So, I'm very grateful. Thank you, Central." ■



# NEWSNOTES

## THE '40s

**Wilma Damhof Hoekstra '45** wrote a children's book about a Monarch butterfly entitled, "Mona and Me," when she was 98 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: "Mariology: 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



▲ **Dolores Van Arsdale Butler '61** and **Ginny Weeks Wassink '61** planned their reunion back to Central's campus for months.

**Lesley Diehl '65** was recently awarded another book contract for a six-book, cozy mystery series, The Maddie Sparks Mysteries. The first in the series, entitled "Spiked Punch," will appear this summer. Diehl resides in Morris, New York.

## 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 Lafferty '81** was promoted to the regional director of sales and client relations for To The Rescue.

**Jan Damsteegt DeJong '86** retired from teaching after 35 years. DeJong is currently working as an adjunct professor for Calvin University as the supervisor of special education student teachers in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Kim Butler Hegedus '86** has been named the Business Record Forty Under 40 Alum of the Year.

**Mary Whisenand '86** accepted a position with GradGuard in December 2022. Mary is the assistant vice president and resides in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Tony Huegel '88** was promoted to director of asset and performance management at LCS Real Estate.

**Gary Shaver '89** is the president and managing director at Grenzebach Envelon.

**Mark Zinkula '89** was appointed to the board of directors for Diamond Hill Investment Group, Inc. in Columbus, Ohio.

## THE '90s

**Brad Leighton '90** was appointed president of AgriSampo North America by Sampo International.



▲ **Steven Jacobsen '92** and **Rachel Heatwole Mandi '18** both attended the National Association of Interpretation South Central Region conference and quickly realized their Central connection. Jacobsen is currently an assistant nature center manager and Mandi is a naturalist for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

**Bonnie Slykhuis '90** retired in December 2022 from Des Moines Area Community College after 22 years as a lean consultant. She is now an independent consultant, the owner of the Holistic Health & Wellness Center and co-owner of H3 Hypnosis in Knoxville, Iowa, offering alternative therapies and certification courses. Slykhuis resides in Knoxville, Iowa.

**Clay Thompson '90** retired as president of Caterpillar financial aftermarket services 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 '90s (continued)

**Deann Wiebensohn 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.

**Cory Gilday '99** is the new head strength and conditioning coach at Texas A&M International in Laredo, Texas.

**Julie Lambirth '99** is an operations analyst for Aureon IT, Inc. in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Eva Creydt Schulte '99** is the new executive director of Friends of the San Juans located in Friday Harbor, Washington.

**Mike Spencer '99** started a new position as an account executive at Pure Storage.

## THE '00s

Maurice McDonald and **Lyndsay De Nooy '02** celebrated their love March 4, 2023, in Tampa, Florida.

**Robert Zirkelbach '03** returned to PhRMA in April 2023 to lead public affairs and a new strategic initiatives function.

**Lacy Klapperich Bove '04** is an events coordinator for Ravensburger North America and resides in New York City, New York.

**Sarah Kohl '04** is the head of global customer experiences and events at Motorola Solutions in West Des Moines, Iowa.

**Stephanie Spoelstra McCuen '04** works for Trib Connect as an account executive and lives in Bondurant, Iowa, with her family.

**Mandy Bunch Shannon '05** is the new Prairie City Monroe Community School District's elementary assistant 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.

**Ethan Vaas '05** works for Siegwark USA as a human resources business partner. Vaas resides in Newton, Iowa.

**Nate Weir '05** was named the National Football Conference recipient of the Tim Davey Assistant Athletic Trainer of the Year for 2023. Weir works for the Green Bay Packers as an associate athletic trainer and director of rehab and return to play.



▲ **Angela Lowenberg Jones '04** and **Jill Young Whitham '04** reunited with **Esther Streed-Johnson**, emerita professor of education at Central.

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

**Josh Porter '06** is Fort Dodge Community School District superintendent in Fort Dodge, 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 operations analyst at Wells Fargo.

**Derek Knutson '09** was promoted to lieutenant of the Pasco Fire Department in Pasco, Washington, in 2022. Knutson 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.



THE '10s

**Dave Baker '10** was profiled in the genealogy edition of Ankeny Living Magazine. Baker resides in Ankeny, Iowa.

**Michael O'Rourke '11** started a new position as director of innovation at American Enterprise Group.

**Jessica Baker Pappalardo '12** works at Jacobs as an environmental engineer in Pensacola, Florida. She married Alexander Pappalardo January 5, 2023.

Andrew and **Sara Gregory Nielsen '13** married September 3, 2022. The couple resides in Norwalk, Iowa.

**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.

**Jordan 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.

**Heidi Heckenberg Gossen '16** is the owner and interior designer at Inside Out Creatives. Gossen 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 Stoakes-Dilks '18** opened her own chiropractic practice in East Moline, Illinois, called Quad Cities Family Chiropractic.

**Caitlyn Dixson Enoch '18** works for Hickey Plumbing, Air and Electrical as an operations administrator in Amherst, Virginia.

**Josh Prokupek '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 Shanno '19** is working at Kinetic Edge Physical Therapy as a physical therapist in Pella, Iowa.



▲ **Michael Pastrono and Justine Celoni '11** married June 23, 2022. The couple lives in Wichita, Kansas.

*First Row: Cassie Gerster Petersen '11, Justine Celoni-Pastrano '11 and Jessica Williams Fisk '11. Second Row: Graci Martsching Zeiger '10, John Celoni '84, Teresa Beiermann Goodenow '11, Melissa DeRuitter Carlson '11, Kaylee McElree Parsons '11 and Lanette Porter Celoni '86.*

THE '20s



▲ **Evan '20 and Grace Vaughn Kratochvil '20** married December 31, 2022.

*Left to Right: Gretchen Morrison Baldwin '90, Taunya Van Surksun Westhoff '89, 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 Piña '19.*

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 Trees 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.

ADVANCED DEGREE

**Ann Heerde '95** earned her Doctor of Social Work from Capella University in 2020. Heerde resides in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**Jessica Baker Pappalardo '12** earned her Ph.D. in civil engineering at Colorado State University. Pappalardo resides in Pensacola, Florida.

**Rachel Purdy Eash '13** earned her Master of Education from Northwestern College in August 2022. Eash resides in Ames, 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 his master's in health administration from Louisiana State University in 2021.

**Marie Hakeman Ryerson '19** earned her MBA from Northwest Missouri State University in September 2022.

NEW ARRIVALS

Katelin and **Tim Valster '99**, daughter Raegan Michelle, Dec. 30, 2022.

Steffanie and **Kevin Bonnstetter '05**, son Kal Logan, Feb. 6, 2023.

Leslie and **Nathan Weir '05**, daughter Josephine Jude, Jan. 24, 2023.

Jon and **Rachel Boeke Capers '09**, daughter Jovi Josephine, Feb. 1, 2023.

**Greg '10 and Lindsey Oliver Jansma '10**, son Krew Alan, March 8, 2023.

**Loren '10 and Kiley Lythberg Liming '11**, son Tucker Lawrence, Jan. 30, 2023.

**Will '14 and Sarah Rankin Folkerts '13**, daughter Ada Madson, Dec. 29, 2022.

**Jack '14 and Mallory Sturtz Shipley '13**, daughter Ruby Lou, Jan. 13, 2023.

Grant and **Rachel Connelly Atherton '14**, daughter Rylie Jean, Feb. 7, 2023.

Robert and **Mariah Brammer Watson '14**, son Robert Daniel, March 6, 2023.

**Levi '14 and Emily Lewis Spain '16**, daughter Lena Grace, Feb. 7, 2023.

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

**Tim '15 and Lauren James Kahl '16**, daughter Linnley Helen, March 1, 2023.

**Jordan '15 and Lindsay Young McDonald '15**, daughter Hallie Lynn, Feb. 7, 2023.

**Daniel '15 and Morgan Gardalen Page '18**, daughter Daisy, Jan. 18, 2023.

**Brett '15 and Makenzie Harris Schouten '17**, son Cade James, Nov. 30, 2022.

Larissa and **Ethan Van Kooten '15**, son Langston Kent, Feb. 20, 2023.

**Aric '16 and Ellen Murphy Balk '16**, daughter Emilia Marie, Jan. 31, 2023.

MacKenzie and **Travis DeFrancisco '16**, son Thaddeus John, June 17, 2022.

**David '16 and Alex Savolt Demmer '15**, daughter Eierman Avery, May 3, 2022.

Breanna and **Colin Kramer '16**, daughter Jovie Jean, March 12, 2023.

**Adelmo '17 and Sarah Bowen Marchiori '17**, daughter Emelia Lynn, Jan. 25, 2023.

**Logan '17 and Arissa Marine Moeller '17**, son Merrick James, Feb. 21, 2023.

**Justin Dilks '18 and Ellie Stoakes-Dilks '18**, son Graham Edward, Feb. 4, 2023.

Ryan and **Tabitha Taylor Jansen '18**, daughter Jorah Lynn, Nov. 18, 2022.

Dallas and **Katie Berkley Johnson '19**, daughter Harper Rose, March 9, 2023.

**Chase '19 and Anna Rethmeier Petty '20**, daughter Ava, Dec. 7, 2022.

**Brandon '19 and Marie Hakeman Ryerson '19**, daughter Linnley Ann, Dec. 20, 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).



## NEWSNOTES

### IN MEMORIAM

**Shirley Kimzey McPherson '43**, Indianola, Iowa, Jan. 22, 2023.

**Duane Brand '59**, Sully, Iowa, Jan. 15, 2023.

**Roger Harmelink '59**, Newton, Iowa, March 12, 2023.

**Jane Koskamp Ratmeyer '60**, Stockbridge, Georgia, March 20, 2023.

**Donald "Jack" Klein '62**, Lakewood, Colorado, March 25, 2023.

**Vicki Bouma May '62**, Fitchburg, Wisconsin, June 13, 2022.

**Phil Sprague '64**, Lawrenceville, Georgia, March 20, 2023.

**Larry Furda '65**, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Feb. 27, 2023.

**Robert Knight '68**, Asheville, North Carolina, Jan. 11, 2023.

**Kathy Schaefer Logsdon '73**, Urbandale, Iowa, Jan. 24, 2023.

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

**James Cleverley Jr. '77**, Newton, Iowa, Jan. 27, 2023.

**Doug James '78**, Tacoma, Washington, Dec. 30, 2022.

**Lee Ann Knickerbocker Kjer '82**, Ottumwa, Iowa, Feb. 18, 2023.

**Jeff Wallerich '91**, Sigourney, Iowa, Feb. 7, 2023.

**Shawna Scholten-Maasdam '95**, Sully, Iowa, Feb. 1, 2023.

**Gloria Boodt**, former faculty member, Denver, Colorado, Dec. 8, 2022.

### MEMORIAL GIFTS AT CENTRAL

Some alumni and friends inquire about making a memorial gift in honor of a special member of the Central family. If you would like to do so, please call 641-628-5154 and ask for **Michelle Wilkie**, director of development.

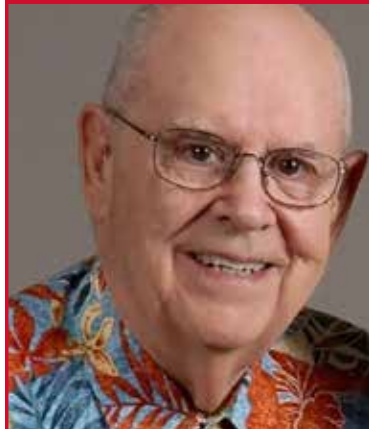
# CENTRAL COLLEGE

## WE'LL SEE YOU AT THE IOWA STATE FAIR!

Central College is taking over the Visit Pella booth Thursday, Aug. 17, and Saturday, Aug. 19.

Wear your Central gear when you stop by the Varied Industries Building to say hello and get your alumni gift!

### IN MEMORIAM

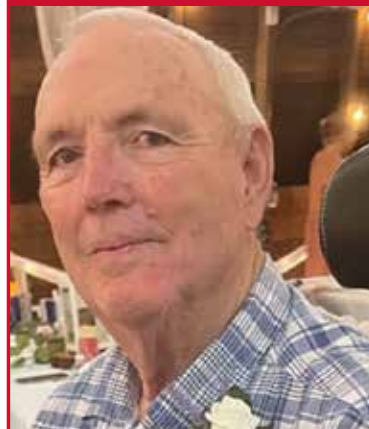


### ED BANFIELD

**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.

### IN MEMORIAM



### DELMAR WICHHART

Longtime Central employee **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.



### 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!



# FROM CHINA WITH LOVE

STORY BY: ERIN KAMP



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

**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 his peer mentioned he was attending a new study abroad program in China, Pratt knew this was the inspiration he was looking for. Before he knew it, Pratt had purchased his plane ticket and was calling his parents to let

them know he was heading to China.

"It was so random but it's such a big part of my life now," he says. "By the time we finished the semester in China, I knew I wanted to come back."

Pratt finished his undergrad at Central before attending law school and starting a career as a lawyer, but his desire to return to China never went away.

In 2011, Pratt officially made his return to Beijing, where he began teaching at Peking University until 2020. His courses focused on American law. After nearly a decade of teaching in China, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a change. His teaching career was put on hold, but a new passion is surfacing in its place.

"In 2020, amidst COVID-19 and everything, I decided to go in a more philosophical direction," Pratt shares. This philosophical direction led him to focus on

research translating ancient Chinese texts.

"The reason I started translating these texts is because I wanted to use some passages from them for what I was trying to express about politics or economics," Pratt adds. "The current translations didn't express what the texts seem to me to be saying very holistically. I've put the politics aside, but I probably will come back to it."

His change in career continues to enhance his connection with colleagues in Beijing. He stays in touch with friends from his time teaching and collaborates with them on his research.

And despite the geographic distance from Pella, Iowa, Pratt stays connected with people from his days at Central, too.

"The Central community epitomizes a kind of kindness and a kind of goodness," Pratt shares. "I've always felt that. In that way, I always feel close to it."

Pratt's connections to the college go beyond his appreciation toward people he interacted with as a student.

"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 philosophers from around the world. As for whether he'll return to teaching or continue his research, Pratt can't say for certain, but he loves what he does every day.

"To think that a person like me coming from a small town in Iowa would end up doing this type of thing and in this type of atmosphere is really amazing. I would never have thought this would happen. I have the Central community to thank for that." ■

**Central continues to accept gifts of all sizes to help support off-campus experiences. To make a donation, contact Michelle Wilkie, director of development, at [wilkiem@central.edu](mailto:wilkiem@central.edu) or Sunny Gonzales Eighmy '99, vice president for advancement, at [eighmys@central.edu](mailto:eighmys@central.edu).**

# CENTRAL TO LEADERSHIP: EXPERIENCE MATTERS

STORY BY: JOE EILERS '18



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 Vermeer 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 company. Suddenly, I find myself having a moment of déjà vu. The class content, work product and relevant customers are all different from what I worked on at Central, but the process of working collaboratively to solve real problems is exactly the same.

With Central's small class sizes and strong history of academic engagement, students are uniquely positioned to gain

leadership experiences that will serve them well over the course of their careers. Whether it was leading as a captain of an athletics team, exploring other cultures during a semester abroad or serving as student body president, these experiences truly shape a person. They set students on a positive trajectory for the rest of their lives. Now, as a student once again, I am reminded of the positive effects of my time at Central.

At Stanford, I am furthering my development as a leader and honing my skills. I get to benefit from some of the best business professionals in the world, and yet I still use the skills I learned in Vermeer 180. From engaging in customer interviews for a startup, to process mapping for my operations class, I find myself constantly using what I learned in Pella, Iowa, to affect change in Stanford, California.

Being part of the Central community changed my life for the better, and serving on Student Senate was core to my Central experience. This is not unique to me, as so many of my classmates were positively affected by the activities they were involved with both in and outside of the classroom. While every member of the Central community is unique in their experience, the outcomes are nearly universally positive.

I encourage all future students to explore every single opportunity at Central, because you never know what might change your life. For current students, focus on the leadership roles you currently hold on campus as pilots for the leadership roles you will have in the future. And for fellow alumni, reflect on your experiences at Central. Your positive impact on the Central community is greater than you think and extends far beyond the borders of campus.

There's nothing quite like experience, and I believe at the core of my professional growth is my time at Central. I am forever grateful for my time there, and I know I will continue to see the impact of a Central education for the rest of my career. ■





812 University St., Pella, Iowa 50219

Summer 2023 Vol. 44 No. 2USPS096-840

# CENTRAL COLLEGE HOMECOMING

## WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU!

### SEPT. 29-OCT. 1, 2023

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